

Envisioning an Intercultural Gerontology Curriculum for  
Undergraduate Gerontology Programs in Canada: Attributes and Resources

by

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## Abstract

Intercultural gerontology curriculum development at the baccalaureate level has been discussed as a response to the challenge of global aging and a culturally diverse student population. As students learn, live, and work on campuses, at home, and abroad as global citizens, the need for a curriculum that reflects cultures and relationships among cultures will only continue to grow. Based on this context, the questions driving this project were the following: What should an undergraduate university-based intercultural curriculum in gerontology encompass? How might it be delivered? As an exploration of these questions, this study examined the theories and practices associated with intercultural curriculum development in educational studies as well as the theories and practices associated with culture and aging in the field of gerontology. A qualitative study that explored the current thinking of university-based stakeholders associated with intercultural and/or gerontology curriculum followed. Education's constructivist and humanist learning theories in combination with gerontology's life course perspective, social construction theory, and cultural gerontology's emphasis on narratives provided the theoretical lenses for the analysis and integration of the findings. The results of the study included ten attributes of an intercultural gerontology curriculum for Canadian universities and suggested tools for educators in gerontology.

*Keywords:* aging, gerontology, curriculum, constructivist theory, life courses perspective, narratives.

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## Table of Contents

|  |      |
|--|------|
| Thesis Defence Committee.....  | ii   |
| Abstract.....  | iii  |
| Acknowledgements .....   | iv   |
| Table of Contents .....  | vi   |
| List of Figures.....   | xii  |
| List of Tables .....   | xiii |
| Glossary of Terms .....  | ix   |
| Chapter 1: Introduction to Envisioning an Intercultural Gerontology Curriculum ..... | 1    |
| Gerontology Education Responds to the Aging of the Global Population.....            | 3    |
| The Author's Lens .....  | 5    |
| Context of the Literature Review .....   | 6    |
| The Internationalization of Canadian Universities .....                              | 6    |
| The Aging of the Global Population .....   | 9    |
| Preview to the Literature Review .....   | 13   |
| The Aging Specialists on an Intercultural Gerontology Curriculum.....                | 14   |
| The Cultural Specialists on an Intercultural Gerontology Curriculum .....            | 14   |
| The Educational Specialists on an Intercultural Curriculum.....                      | 15   |
| Significance of the Literature Review .....  | 16   |
| The Theoretical Perspectives of this Study .....                                     | 16   |
| The Research Methods of this Study .....   | 19   |
| Chapter 2: A Review of the Literature .....  | 21   |
| A-The Aging Specialists on an Intercultural Gerontology Curriculum .....             | 21   |

|   |    |
|---|----|
| The Current Culture and Aging Curriculum .....                              | 23 |
| Ethnogerontology and Ethnogeriatrics .....                                  | 25 |
| The Association of Gerontology and Geriatrics in Higher Education.....      | 25 |
| Program Infusion versus Course Elective .....                               | 26 |
| A Sample Module on Culture and Aging .....                                  | 27 |
| Cultural Competency and/or Cultural Sensitivity .....                       | 30 |
| Summary .....   | 31 |
| Theories and Concepts in the Culture and Aging Curriculum .....             | 32 |
| Social Theories of Aging.....   | 32 |
| Limiting Concepts: “Minority Elders” and “Essentialism” .....               | 36 |
| Summary.....  | 38 |
| The Future of Culture and the Aging Curriculum .....                        | 39 |
| Major Topics for the Intercultural Gerontology Curriculum .....             | 40 |
| Including the Older Adult in Curriculum Development.....                    | 41 |
| International Students and Global Gerontology .....                         | 42 |
| Summary.....  | 43 |
| Conclusion .....  | 43 |
| B-The Cultural Specialists on an Intercultural Gerontology Curriculum ..... | 45 |
| Cultural Gerontology.....   | 45 |
| The Current Cultural Gerontology Curriculum.....                            | 48 |
| Religion and Spirituality and Aging Curricula.....                          | 49 |
| Literature and Aging and Film and Aging Curricula .....                     | 50 |
| Cultural Studies and Aging Curricula .....                                  | 52 |

|  |    |
|--|----|
| Conclusion .....   | 55 |
| C-The Education Specialists on an Intercultural Curriculum.....                          | 55 |
| The Intercultural Curriculum.....  | 56 |
| Culture .....  | 57 |
| The Many Names for Culture in Curricula.....   | 58 |
| Educational Theories Addressed in the Literature on an<br>Intercultural Curriculum ..... | 59 |
| Teaching and Learning about Culture .....  | 63 |
| Cultural Awareness, Cultural Sensitivity, Cultural Competence,<br>Cultural Safety .....  | 68 |
| The Hidden Curriculum in Intercultural Curriculum .....                                  | 70 |
| Constructing an Intercultural Curriculum .....   | 71 |
| Considering the Extent of the Curriculum Change .....                                    | 71 |
| Scaffolding in an Intercultural Curriculum .....   | 72 |
| Internationalization of Higher Education and a Canadian Response .....                   | 76 |
| Conclusion .....   | 78 |
| Chapter 3: The Research Methods .....  | 80 |
| Rationale.....   | 81 |
| Statement of the Problem .....   | 81 |
| Purpose of the Research .....  | 81 |
| Research Questions .....   | 82 |
| Limitations.....   | 82 |
| Procedures .....   | 83 |
| Qualitative Strategy .....   | 83 |



|   |    |
|---|----|
| Theoretical Perspectives .....  | 83 |
| Role of the Researcher.....   | 85 |
| Data Collection .....   | 85 |
| Participants .....  | 85 |
| Semi-Structured Interviews .....                                      | 87 |
| Secondary Data Collection .....                                       | 88 |
| Ethics Approval .....   | 89 |
| Practicing the Interview Questions.....                               | 89 |
| Analysis and Discussion.....  | 89 |
| Thematic Analysis of Transcripts.....                                 | 89 |
| Strategies for Validating the Findings.....                           | 90 |
| Study Presentation .....  | 91 |
| Summary.....  | 91 |
| Chapter 4: Findings .....   | 93 |
| Context and Participants.....   | 93 |
| Themes and Subthemes .....  | 93 |
| Multiple Perspectives on Cultural Diversity .....                     | 94 |
| Traditional Perspective .....   | 95 |
| Contemporary Perspective.....   | 95 |
| Complex Perspective .....   | 96 |
| The Dynamic Nature of Cultural Diversity and Aging .....              | 97 |
| A Critical Approach to Teaching Cultural<br>Diversity and Aging ..... | 98 |

|  |     |
|--|-----|
| An Applied Approach to Teaching Cultural<br>Diversity and Aging .....  | 99  |
| Flow of an Intercultural Curriculum.....   | 100 |
| Principles and Practice for an Intercultural Curriculum.....   | 103 |
| Social Theories that Inform Teaching Culture and Aging in an<br>Intercultural Gerontology Curriculum.....        | 103 |
| Educational Approaches that Inform Teaching Culture and<br>Aging in an Intercultural Gerontology Curriculum..... | 106 |
| Recommended Resources for an Intercultural<br>Gerontology Curriculum .....                                       | 110 |
| Institutional Culture for an Intercultural Curriculum .....  | 110 |
| Formal Statements by the Institution.....  | 111 |
| Workshops.....   | 111 |
| Student Centres.....   | 112 |
| Faculty .....  | 112 |
| Summary.....   | 114 |
| Chapter 5: Discussion.....   | 117 |
| What Should a University-based Intercultural Gerontology<br>Curriculum Encompass?.....                           | 118 |
| Multiple Cultural Perspectives .....   | 118 |
| The Dynamic Nature of Cultural Diversity and Aging .....   | 119 |
| Flow of an Intercultural Curriculum.....   | 120 |
| How Should the Envisioned Curriculum be Delivered? .....   | 121 |
| Re-visiting the Concept of Flow and Intercultural Curriculum.....  | 122 |
| Teaching Practices.....  | 124 |
| Scaffolded Learning .....  | 124 |

|  |     |
|--|-----|
| Active Learning Strategies .....   | 126 |
| Experiential Learning Strategies .....   | 127 |
| Modeling.....  | 128 |
| Internet-based Learning Strategies .....   | 128 |
| Institutional Culture for Intercultural Curricula .....  | 129 |
| Re-visiting Theory.....  | 132 |
| Reflection on Personal Contributions to this Study and Integration of<br>Study Findings into Practice.....   | 134 |
| A Snapshot of the Envisioning .....  | 139 |
| Limitations.....   | 144 |
| Directions for Future Research, Practice, and Policy.....  | 145 |
| Final Thoughts.....  | 147 |
| References .....   | 149 |
| Appendices   |     |
| A. Letter of Invitation to Participate in the Research.....  | 173 |
| B. Consent Form.....   | 176 |
| C. Letter of Permission.....   | 179 |
| D. Ethics Approval .....   | 181 |
| E. Summary Report on Course Outlines .....   | 182 |
| F. Resources Recommended by Interview Participants for an Intercultural<br>Undergraduate Gerontology Curriculum.....   | 190 |
| G. Suggested Tools: Resources for Developing an Intercultural Undergraduate<br>Gerontology Curriculum found in the Literature and the Study Interviews ..... | 191 |

## **List of Figures**

|  |     |
|--|-----|
| Figure 1: Themes and Subthemes.....                                      | 93  |
| Figure 2: Multiple Perspectives on Cultural Diversity.....               | 96  |
| Figure 3: Ten Attributes of an Intercultural Gerontology Curriculum..... | 140 |

## **List of Tables**

|   |     |
|---|-----|
| Table 1: Age and Culture Module .....   | 29  |
| Table 2: Key Stakeholders' Responses to the Invitation to Participate in the Study .....                  | 87  |
| Table 3: Subthemes in the Flow of an Intercultural Curriculum: Content,<br>Students, Teachers .....       | 102 |
| Table 4: Recommended Teaching Practices for an Intercultural Undergraduate Gerontology<br>Curriculum..... | 107 |

## **Glossary of Terms**

### **Constructivist Learning Theory**

Constructivism proposes that learning is an active process in which students build knowledge by making connections with what they already know through communication with others and by means of reflection on themselves (Freedman, 1998; Leonard, 2002; Mestenhauser, 1998). The teacher assists students to actively construct their own knowledge rather than be passive recipients of the teacher's expert knowledge and thus it is referred to as a learner-focused educational paradigm (Leonard, 2002).

### **Cultural Awareness**

Cultural awareness refers to the basic learning goal of recognizing differences between cultures. In curriculum development, cultural awareness is what Banks (2006) refers to as including “heroes and holidays” in the course plan so as to highlight major cultural leaders, celebrations, or representations of a culture.

### **Cultural Competence**

Cultural competence is generally defined in terms of knowledge, skills, and values involving the ability to interact with someone of a culture other than one's own (Hanson & Wiebe, 2005, Hart-Wasekeesikaw, 2009, National Aboriginal Health Organization, 2008). Learning cultural competence is a life-long process requiring both intention and practice (Yee, 2002).

### **Cultural Gerontology**

Cultural gerontology is a relatively new subfield of gerontology that explores how we construct aging, how we create representations of aging, and how individuals form cultural identities as they age (Featherstone & Hepworth, 2009).

## **Culturally Responsive Teaching**

“It acknowledges the legitimacy of the cultural heritages of different ethnic groups, both as legacies that affect students’ dispositions, attitudes, and approaches to learning and as worthy content to be taught in formal curriculum. It bridges the meaningfulness between home and school experiences as well as between academic abstractions and lived socio-cultural realities” (Gay, 2000, p. 29).

## **Cultural Sensitivity**

Cultural sensitivity in the context of this paper refers to a learning goal. Cultural sensitivity requires awareness and some type of action that demonstrates a respectful relationship to the “other.” That “other” may refer to any of the diverse ways humans have of being different: race, ethnicity, gender, age, sexual identity, socio-economic status, ability, or other quality or characteristic of a group of people.

## **Cultural Studies**

“Cultural Studies is an umbrella term used to refer to various efforts to discuss contemporary texts and cultural practices. Cultural studies draw from anthropology, sociology, gender studies, feminism, literary criticism, history and others” (Davis, 2004, p. 205).

## **Culture**

“Culture is the sum total of ways of living adopted by a people. Cultures offer meaning structures for interpreting events, judging the qualities of services, making decisions, and implementing life plans” (Capitman, 2002, p. 11).

## **Curriculum**

“Curriculum refers to both the process and substance of an educational program. It comprises the purpose, design, conduct, and evaluation of educational experiences. Curricula exist at

different levels, ranging from the single course to the educational program to the department or discipline or the college or university. The organization of curricula is defined by educational philosophy, the structure and content of knowledge imparted, and the institutional context and climate. Effective curricula have coherence and explicit definitions of aims and standards of attainment. They accomplish their aims through sequence and structure of learning experiences to facilitate student learning and development. They provide sufficient content and coverage to exhibit but not exhaust the limits of the subject of study. They include mastery of basic terms, concepts, models, and theories as well as some application of them to situations appropriate to the student, the learning aims, and the institutional context. Good curricula have the hallmarks of effective instruction and the evidence of enhancement of student learning” (Ratcliff, 1997, p. 12-13).

### **Ethnogeriatrics**

Ethnogeriatrics is a sub-field of gerontology and a specialty of geriatrics (the health and care of older people). Its focus is knowledge of ethnicity and health care of older people.

### **Ethnogerontology**

Ethnogerontology is a sub-field of gerontology and focuses on knowledge of culture and aging.

### **Essentialism**

Essentialism is the practice of ascribing an identity to an individual or group in the form of a set of characteristics (Chappell, Gee, McDonald & Stones, 2003). Essentialism is problematic when learning about culture because (1) it limits one’s perception of the complexity of culture; and (2) it is risky when students apply it in practice situations.



## **Experiential Learning**

Experiential learning is dynamic and involves experiences that challenge students to conceptualize their ideas by means of creativity, intuition, observational modes and participatory modes of inquiry (Bertrand, 1995). Experiential learning is associated with service learning, internships, and work-integrated learning opportunities.

## **Gerontology**

Gerontology is the study of aging and the aged. Its disciplinary status is debated in the literature; it is understood to be both a multidisciplinary and interdisciplinary field of study. The masthead of the *Canadian Journal on Aging*, the journal of the Canadian Association of Gerontology refers to gerontology as a multidisciplinary field of study. Its core disciplines are biology, psychology, and sociology.

## **Global Citizenship**

Global citizens “view the world and its inhabitants as interdependent and work to develop the capacity to act or advance both their own enlightened self-interest and the interest of people elsewhere in the world” (Appiah-Pad, 2001, n.p.).

“Global citizenship is related to caring about and for other beings and the environment; it is related to staying curious about the world, to asking questions, to making commitments, and taking action in accordance with our values” (Harlap & Fryer, 2011, p. 14).

## **Hidden Curriculum**

“Hidden curriculum involves all factors that influence learning, including the unintentional and unconscious ones, be it attitudes or prejudices of teachers, nonverbal communication, remarks by a teacher at break times, seemingly non-related content of other subjects, learning acquired from other resources than just the ‘official’ ones, generally everything that may influence the final

result of learning. If teachers are aware of the hidden aspects of curriculum, they may use them either in a synergic way (in positive cases) or teach pupils how to cope with controversial issues and minimize [the] impact of negative factors in a given society, school, class. The phrase ‘hidden curriculum’ was originally coined by Brian Jackson” (“Life In Classrooms,” 1968 <http://www.sociology.org.uk/tece1tl1.htm> cited in INTER Project, 2007, p. 217).

### **Humanist Learning Theory**

Humanist learning theories are oriented toward fostering student cognitive and emotional development so as to reach one’s individual potential. The student’s role is to be in charge of and direct his or her own learning, and the teachers’ role is to foster the opportunity for the student’s learning (Bertrand, 1993).

### **Identity**

Identity refers to the self and social identity that arises out of reflexivity in thinking about one and one’s social world. It is a micro-perspective on human aging that emphasizes individual agency and choices made throughout the life course (Hendricks, 2010). “The self is reflexive in that it can take itself as an object and can categorize, classify, or name itself in particular ways in relation to other social categories or classifications” (Stets & Burke, 2000 p. 224).

### **Intercultural Competence**

“Intercultural competence is conceived more broadly and understood as an individual's ability to manage cultural difference...This may be understood as an individual's response to difference: (a) considering it a problem; and (b) regarding it as an opportunity for learning and personal growth” (Yershova, DeJaeghere, & Mestenhauser, 2000, p. 43).

## **Intercultural Curricula**

An intercultural curriculum is a planned program of study with intentional inclusion of culturally-diverse content and a culturally-safe learning environment that, in combination, fosters cognitive and affective learning. The intercultural curriculum may be designed for both local and international students (Mestenhauser, 1983; Shenk, Moore & Davis, 2004) and for on-campus as well as Internet-assisted distance education courses (Guo & Jamal, 2007; Kurubacak, 2011). Such a curriculum enables students in a variety of disciplines to broaden their perspectives, to develop a multi-layered understanding of the content, and to respond to cultural diversity (INTER-Project, 2007; Yershova, DeJaeghere & Mestenhauser, 2000).

## **Internationalization of Universities**

Internationalization is defined as “the process of integrating an international, intercultural, or global dimension into the purpose, functions or delivery of postsecondary education” (Knight, 2003, p. 2). Knight intentionally establishes a triad of options for internationalization:

“international” refers to the relationships between and among nations, cultures, and countries;

“intercultural” refers to the cultural diversity within countries, communities and institutions; and

“global” refers to the relations on a worldwide scope.

## **Intersectionality**

Intersectionality is an analytic tool for theorizing identity and oppression or for theorizing identity in general; it takes into account interlocking vectors, most often race, gender, class, and sexual orientation, to interrupt single perspectives when exploring identity (Nash, 2008).

## **Life Course Perspective**

The life course perspective is used in many disciplines to understand the social pathways of human experiences including career paths, family roles, trajectories and transitions, and

normative experiences, within historical contexts (Elder, Johnson & Crosnoe, 2003). Its longitudinal approach to understanding an individual or a generational cohort, considered in combination with accounting for time and place (or history and environment), provides a framework for integrating theories of culture and aging.

### **Scaffolding Learning**

Scaffolding is a strategic practice in course and program design that involves planned supports for learning. Scaffolding does not refer to building course content; rather, it refers to building learning capacity through activities (e.g., baseline assessments, formative assessments, guides for discussion groups, questions in class, supportive commentary, reflective assignments, or group work) that support students' learning and may include socially-based or technology-based activity (Pea, 2004).

### **Social Constructionist Learning Theory**

Similar to the constructivist approach, the social constructionist approach acknowledges that knowledge is constructed through connections and reflection with others in the learning environment (e.g., the classroom, study session, or online discussion). Social constructionism, however, sees these connections as taking place in discourse and, specifically, critical dialogue that challenges hegemonic discourse.

### **Transmissive Learning Theory**

Transmissive approaches to education are associated with traditional education in which the teacher, as expert, shares knowledge with the learner, typically, in lecture format. The result is a reproduction of the expert's knowledge of the content (Witcher, Sewall, Arnold, & Travers, 2001).

## **Chapter 1**

### **Introduction to Envisioning An Intercultural Undergraduate Gerontology Curriculum**

The internationalization of Canadian campuses and the sustained multicultural character of this country are affecting both the content and delivery of programs in Canadian universities. As students learn, live, and work on campuses, at home, and abroad as global citizens, the need for a curriculum that reflects culture and relationships among cultures will only continue to grow. An intercultural curriculum is suggested as a response to this need because it engages students' thinking, prompts reflection, and sparks dialogue on multiple cultural perspectives. Further, it facilitates students' appreciation and respect for their own culture as well as an appreciation and respect for others' cultures. By participating in this type of curriculum, students develop the skill to take a "third" position, to suspend judgment, to maintain cognitive flexibility, and to practice intercultural competence (Ortiz, 2000). This curriculum approach is particularly relevant as Canadian universities are recruiting more international students to their programs and mobilizing more Canadian students to participate in education in international settings. Curriculum assessment and reform, then, are high priorities for universities in order to equip students to participate in international education (Advisory Panel on Canada's International Education Strategy, 2012). Finally, as Canada welcomes more new immigrants, there is a need for global understanding of aging both within our curriculum and within our borders. This introduction to intercultural curriculum in the context of the internationalization of Canadian universities provides the initial context for an exploratory research study of an intercultural curriculum for gerontology.

A second critical issue of the 21st century is the aging of the global population. This demographic shift is frequently represented in graphic form as a population pyramid that is

growing wider at the top while it grows narrower at the bottom. The actual population statistics provide an even clearer picture of the aging of the population. In Canada, the percentage of the population age 65 or older in 2012 was 14% (Population Reference Bureau, 2012) with a projected increase to between 23% and 25% by 2036 (Statistics Canada, 2010). Across the globe, 8% of the population was 65 and older in 2010; by 2050, this percentage will increase to 16% (National Institute on Aging and World Health Organization [NIA & WHO], 2011). As the global population is getting older, the old are getting older too. The World Health Organization's Global Health Observatory [GHO] provides statistical data to support this assertion. In 1990, a person 60 years of age could expect to live another 18 years and, in 2012, a person 60 years of age could expect to live another 20 years (GHO, 2014). Factors such as national income and sex influence life expectancy rates. In higher income countries, life expectancy at age 60 is another 23 years while, in lower income countries, life expectancy at age 60 is another 17 years (GHO, 2014). Women live six years longer than men in higher income countries while women live three years longer than men in lower income countries (GHO, 2014). These statistics are just a few of the many population statistics employed by international organizations to guide policy development in response to the aging of the global population. Such organizational responses contribute to the research context and are discussed later in this introduction.

Universities around the world are responding to the aging of the global population through research, service to older population groups, and teaching and learning in the field of gerontology. Gerontology is a program of study with a multidisciplinary foundation that includes sociology, psychology, and biology as well as interdisciplinary expertise from other fields such as anthropology, history, and cultural studies. Geriatric education is also of great

importance but, for the purpose of this research, it is not considered to be part of the curricular domain for gerontology. Instead, geriatric education is a specialization of medicine that requires specific professional practice competencies beyond the scope of gerontology education. The ebb and flow of disciplinary participation in gerontology characterizes it as an organic field guided by what gerontologists refer to as a gerontological imagination (Ferraro, 2006).

### **Gerontology Education Responds to the Aging of the Global Population**

The unprecedented aging of the world has had, as implied, multiple and complex consequences. One now struggles to find areas of life not affected by aging and greater numbers of older adults... Virtually every aspect of the media, business, and government is aware of this demographic evolution and, to the point, has mounted its own take on what aging means and how to teach and train or at least respond to it. The genie is out of the bottle. (Ansello, 2011, p. 201)

The academic community is responding to global aging by developing gerontology programs around the world and teaching students about the aging of the global population through these programs (Ansello, 2011; Coulson, Minicheillo, Kao, Linn, & Wan, 2000; Ingman, Amin, Clarke & Brune, 2010; Kunkle, 2008; Shenk & Groger, 2005). The field includes population statistics that are used to describe and prescribe for the aging population rather than target understanding the aging individual and the aging population (Ansello, 2011). Individual courses on global aging and other courses that explore global aging often use comparative approaches much like those used in anthropology courses (Kunkle, 2008). Generally, the comparative approach interests students, but it does not foster the deeper levels of learning that challenge students to think and respond to what they are learning (Kunkle, 2008). In a policy and aging course, for example, students might compare pension systems in different countries;

however, it is unlikely that they will examine the cultural ideologies, historical contexts, cultural values, and policy processes that are important to analyzing policy (Kunkle, 2008). The comparative approach to learning about global aging does not always encourage students' reflection on their own cultures or foster appreciation of the culture under study.

The field is also exploring global aging from a postmodern perspective in which individual agency and life choices over the life course provide the lens for inquiry and understanding. Narratives and critical analysis are employed to understand culturally diverse older adults' experiences of aging in today's complex world where cultural borders are crossed and new cultures are forming. These perspectives are evident in gerontology courses based on texts such as *Cultures of Ageing* (Gilleard & Higgs, 2000), *Contesting Aging and Loss* (Graham & Stephenson, 2010), and *Cultural Aging* (Katz, 2009). This approach is taken up in cultural gerontology, a relatively new field in gerontology education, but one that blends social gerontology and anthropology, cultural studies, and other fields associated with the humanities.

According to the Association for Universities and Colleges of Canada (AUCC), nine universities in Canada offer undergraduate programs in gerontology. Each program is different and includes faculty who are assigned from other departments, thus contributing to the multi-disciplinary nature of the programs. While there are no national or provincial guidelines for gerontology education, Canadian universities may refer to the Association for Gerontology in Higher Education (AGHE), affiliated with the educational unit of The Gerontological Society of America, for curriculum guidelines. These AGHE guidelines do not mention global aging specifically. They do, however, recommend a course in cross-cultural perspectives on aging as an elective in a gerontology degree-based program. Ontario universities' undergraduate gerontology programs do identify knowledge of global aging as an academic competency in an



undergraduate degree in gerontology (Mercer, 2010). The phrase “knowledge of” before global aging suggests that the expected academic competency is at a basic level of understanding of global aging rather than a deeper level resulting from analysis, interpretation, and reflection.

In summary, Canadian and international students enrolled in Canadian gerontology courses require courses and programs that reflect interdisciplinarity and intercultural principles and practices so they can respond to the diversity of Canada’s and the world’s aging population and become leaders as global citizens. The need for knowledge about the intersection of cultures, gerontology, and education was what drove this project.

### **The Author’s Lens**

I teach in a gerontology program that includes an increasing number of international and foreign-born Canadian students pursuing gerontology education on campus and via distance education methods. My experiences in teaching have led to concerns about the curriculum and its relevance to students’ learning and preparation for engagement with older adults of diverse cultures within and outside of Canada. These concerns are informed by previous research and professional experience in social work-related positions with culturally diverse older adult clients in government social services departments, hospitals, long-term care homes, and community-based palliative care services. My concerns, if addressed, would lead to an improved gerontology curriculum and foster global citizenship among gerontology students. My first concern is the Western-Eurocentric perspectives, rather than global perspectives, of gerontology resources. For example, a gerontology counselling textbook, *Psychotherapy with Older Adults* (Knight, 2004), now in its third edition and translated into four languages, does not refer to culture or diversity anywhere in the text. The unstated assumption in this text is that psychotherapy for older adults is appropriate for all older adults of all cultures. A second

concern is the traditional life course perspective, a theoretical perspective employed in many disciplines to understand aging, that frames aging according to the traditional life course (school, family, work, retirement, death) and not according to the life course of cycles, migrations, and re-engagements that exist in a modern culture. Third, cultural values such as filial piety are often presented in textbooks as if they are essential to a culture rather than as socially constructed concepts supported by policies, historical practice, and individual agency. This practice of ascribing a characteristic to a nation or to a culture does not foster intercultural understanding; instead, it fosters stereotyping. As an academic who is interested in professional development in teaching and learning, it has been my privilege to learn from the educational literature in order to improve my teaching and to dialogue with colleagues regarding curriculum change in gerontology. I have received encouragement from national and international colleagues in the field of gerontology as they affirm the need for intercultural education on aging given the cultural diversity of the aged and of students.

### **Context of the Literature Review**

Two critical issues then establish the context for this study: the internationalization of Canadian universities and the aging of the global population. These issues are the subject of discourse in the media as well as in universities, government, international forums, committees, and public dialogue. In this next section, I will present the key terms and the current statuses of both issues as the context for the development of intercultural curriculum in gerontology.

**The internationalization of Canadian universities.** The internationalization of universities has a reasonably extensive history in Canada; its roots are in the cross-cultural training and the student exchange programs of the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century. Friendly Relations with Overseas Students and Canadian Service for Overseas Students and Trainees were two

organizations established in the 1940s in response to the need for knowledge and skills in international relations. These international exchange programs were important to the establishment and maintenance of peace, economic recovery, trade, and diplomatic relations in the post World War II era. In 1966, the newly incorporated Canadian Bureau of International Education (CBIE) assumed the role of fostering the development of international education, and previous international student relations programs in Canada were closed (CBIE, 2012). The 1960s was also the time in which the post-World War II generation, the cohort referred to as baby-boomers, began to enroll in universities; this increase in university enrollment created the need for new faculty and postgraduate programs. Government funding to universities for graduate programs was implemented at that time, while the demand for faculty and postgraduate programs was so great that universities opted to recruit faculty from abroad (Bond & Scott, 1999). The internationalization of Canadian universities increased through the international faculty present on campuses.

National organizations also contributed to the internationalization effort, including the Canadian International Development Association (CIDA), the Association of Universities and Colleges of Canada (AUCC) and the Canadian Education Centres Network (CECN) (Shubert, Jones, & Trilokekar, 2009). The internationalization of a university is a process of systemic change that enables research, teaching, and service to have an international orientation (Lemasson, 1999). An international orientation does not mean that research, teaching, and service necessarily take place in international geographic locations. Rather, it means that the university's culture is open to the world and that the university is able to prepare its students to be open to and participate in that world (Lemasson, 1999).

In 1999, the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development defined internationalization of higher education as follows: “Internationalisation of higher education is the process of integrating an international/intercultural dimension into the teaching, research and service functions of the institution” (Knight, 1994, as cited in Knight & DeWitt, 1999, p. 16). Also during this period, the Canadian federal government adopted the terms “international dimension” and “internationalization of higher education” into the discourse and policy papers of the Department of External Affairs and International Trade (Trilokekar, 2009). The term “internationalization” continued to evolve beyond international education to “transnational education,” “borderless education,” and “cross-border education”; this evolution required a new working definition for internationalization. Knight suggested the following:

“Internationalization at the national, sector, and institutional levels is defined as the process of integrating an international, intercultural, or global dimension into the purpose, functions or delivery of postsecondary education” (Knight, 2003, p. 2). Her definition is significant in this study because it delineates interculturality as a distinct process and not just as another way to refer to international education. Knight intentionally established a triad of options for internationalization: “international” refers to the relationships between and among nations, cultures, and countries; “intercultural” refers to the cultural diversity within countries, communities, and institutions; and “global” refers to relations on a worldwide scope.

The internationalization of universities is a global phenomenon; however, in Canada, the process has been one of fragmentation of university services and efforts complicated by challenges related to shifts in economics, government deficits and cost cutting, and international competition (Jones, 2009). Driving the competition for internationalization are economic implications that will benefit the university and the country as a whole. In Canada, these

implications include investments in innovations in science and technology, creation and dissemination of global knowledge for future international relations, creation of a skilled labour force in a knowledge-based economy, and increased university revenues through increased tuition dollars (Advisory Panel on Canada's International Education Strategy, 2012). According to the Advisory Panel, a university's response to global competition should target the development of an international education profile that will attract international students to the university and offer domestic students international education that prepares them to work abroad and develop international networks in their fields of study.

The number of international students coming to Canada continues to increase. A recent report indicates an increase of 67% in the number of international students arriving in Canada between 2002 and 2009 (from 52,650 to 87,798) (Choudaha & Chang, 2012, p.1). This increase places Canada in fourth place behind the United States, the United Kingdom and Australia in numbers of international students. Approximately 7% of the undergraduate student body and close to 18% of the graduate level student body are international students in Canada (Association for Universities and Colleges in Canada, 2009). This increase in the number of international students also means an increase in opportunities for intercultural exchange in courses and the university environment.

**The aging of the global population.** Another critical issue of the 21<sup>st</sup> century is the aging of the global population. The significance of this issue is well articulated in a United Nations document on the world's population that claims the following: "Population aging is unprecedented, pervasive, enduring, and has profound implications for most facets of human life" (United Nations, 2002, p. xxviii). It is important to recognize that all regions of the globe, not just developed regions, are experiencing increases in the number of older people. Thus,

while this is a global issue, it will require regional responses consistent with the values and capacity of the region. The United Nations statement also indicates that global aging is not part of a demographic cycle which will dissipate and return us to population patterns of past generations. Instead, the population projections presented in the next paragraph indicate that the aging of the global population is creating a new population paradigm in which there will be more older adults than children. This population paradigm will create new challenges as well as new opportunities.

Current population projections suggest that, between 2010 and 2050, the global population will increase by two billion people and that 1.3 billion of the overall increase will result from the number of older adults who are 60-plus years of age (Global Agenda Council on Ageing, 2012). The aging of populations does not occur in a uniform manner; rather, it occurs at different rates in different regions. More developed regions<sup>1</sup> already have relatively high percentages of older adults in the population. For example, in 2012, Japan had the oldest population in the world with 31.92% of its population age 60 or older, followed by Italy and San Marino with 26.97% of the population age 60 and over, and Germany, Bulgaria, Finland, Greece, and Sweden with over 25% of the population age 60 and over (Global Health Observatory Repository, 2014). In contrast, in nine African and six Eastern Mediterranean<sup>2</sup> countries, 4% or less of the population was age 60 or older (Global Health Observatory Repository, 2014). The regions that will experience the greatest percentage increase by 2050 are the less developed regions of the world; in these regions, the projected increase is more than 250% as compared

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<sup>1</sup> The terms “more-developed regions” and “less-developed regions” will be used in this paper as per the UN Population Division documents: “The less-developed regions include all the regions of Africa, Asia (excluding Japan), and Latin America and the Caribbean, as well as Melanesia, Micronesia and Polynesia. The more-developed regions comprise Australia/New Zealand, Europe, Northern America and Japan” (Dept. of Economic and Social Affairs: Population Division, 2004, p. x).

<sup>2</sup> Eastern Mediterranean countries in this region include Afghanistan, Bahrain, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, and United Arab Emirates.

with a 71% increase in more developed regions (National Institute on Aging and World Health Organization [NIA & WHO], 2011).

The aging of the global population can be attributed to many factors including access to clean water, sanitation, nutrition, and safe living conditions. Other significant factors are associated with other improved public health services, primarily the decrease in infant mortality because of improved maternal health and obstetric care; the decrease in death in early life due to infectious and parasitic diseases; and the increase in life expectancies resulting from advanced health-care services (NIA & WHO, 2011). A consequence of the success of public health services on population health is its effect on life expectancy. The statistics on life expectancy in the different regions of the world also tell a story with Japan leading the world in aging statistics with a life expectancy of 83 years. The average life expectancy in other more-developed regions is 78 years; in less-developed regions, life expectancy is 68 years and, in the least-developed regions, life expectancy is 59 years (Population Reference Bureau, 2012). As life expectancy increases, the number of very old people, those who are 85 years of age and older, increases as well. Projections indicate that the number of very old people is expected to increase by 351% by 2050 (NIA & WHO, 2011). This population change presents challenges for social, economic, and political planning. The needs of older adults require dedicated policies and programs.

International organizations are responding to the aging issue by conducting research, engaging in discussions, establishing action plans, and producing resources and toolkits for knowledge dissemination about the aging of the global population. International forums and conventions of the World Health Organization, the World Bank, the World Trade Organization, the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development, and the United Nations, in partnership with national institutes of health and population study throughout the world, are

leading the international agenda (Kunow, 2010). The most prevalent approach taken by these organizations is to view aging in terms of challenges, including changes in labour force participation, retirement, and pensions; issues of gender imbalance and fairness for women over the life course; the need for health-care system reform to increase geriatric-oriented care (dementia and chronic illnesses) and to increase health promotion and illness prevention over the life course; and supports for family networks and intergenerational relations (Global Agenda Council on Ageing Society, 2012; NIA & WHO, 2011; Kinsella & He, 2009).

In the public arena, the challenges of population aging rather than its opportunities dominate. These perspectives are supported by ageist beliefs about aging as a time of decrepitude, burden on the social and health care systems, and drain on the family and economy. From this perspective, the aging of the population is a risk to the world as we know it. The phrase “silver tsunami” sums up this perspective on population aging quite well, suggesting an impending natural disaster. Alternatively, some experts condemn the misuse of the demographic information and refer to it as “apocalyptic demography” and “voodoo demography.” In *The Overselling of Population Aging*, the authors critique the presentation and interpretation of demographic data on population aging, suggesting that data are used to make predictions as if the statistics will determine the fate of the planet rather than human agency and the complexity of social, political, and economic policy. The authors further critique neo-liberal responses to the statistics, including cuts to social policy and programs (Gee & Gutman, 2000).

If a shift in perspective takes place and the opportunities, not only the challenges, of an aging population are recognized, then research and policy can target the human capital of this increasing resource (Global Agenda Council on Ageing Society, 2011; NIA & WHO, 2011). The human capital associated with older adults includes life experience, life skills, and social and



professional networks that may manifest as paid or unpaid work as mentors, consultants, care-givers, and organizers in communities. The social and financial support provided by older generations to younger generations is also integral to dialogue and policy formation. A balanced perspective that explores the demographic indices and their meaning as well as the complexity of an aging population's challenges and opportunities is the approach that is needed for understanding the aging of our global population.

The context of the present research is the internationalization of Canadian universities and the aging of the global population. The global aging issue is described as “unprecedented, pervasive, enduring, and [having] profound implications for most facets of human life” (United Nations, 2002, p. xxviii). It is an issue that is relevant to each student as he or she considers the personal experience of aging and the aging of family members and friends. Adding to the context of the research is the internationalization of Canadian universities which involves education for international, intercultural, and global understandings within and outside of Canada (Knight, 2003). One of the outcomes of internationalization of universities is increased numbers of international students enrolled in Canadian universities who learn from and contribute to intercultural understandings. When intercultural learning in Canadian universities and population aging converge, researchers, educators, policy makers, and others are challenged to discover creative responses to the aging of the global population. A curriculum that fosters intercultural engagement for domestic and international students in addressing the issue of an aging population is an important opportunity for gerontology in Canadian universities.

### **Preview to the Literature Review**

Intercultural curriculum development in gerontology is, by its nature, interdisciplinary; it blends expertise from the fields of educational studies and gerontological studies with the

disciplines that contribute to gerontology, including biology, sociology, psychology, cultural studies, anthropology, demography, and geography. The following chapter will address the gerontological, cultural, and educational literatures as they contribute to answering the three questions: “What do aging specialists say about the current status of and need for intercultural curriculum in gerontology in higher education?”; “What do cultural specialists say about the current status of and need for an intercultural curriculum in higher education?”; and “What do learning theorists and learning designers say about the theories, concepts, and delivery approaches for an intercultural gerontology curriculum?” The major stakeholder groups included in the literature review are identified in the subsequent paragraphs.

**The aging specialists on an intercultural gerontology curriculum.** The specialists in aging include scholars from many disciplines, multidisciplines, and interdisciplines who have contributed to the literature of culture and aging in gerontology. In this part of the dissertation, this literature is summarized and organized into three sections: current culture and aging curricula, theories and concepts incorporated into culture and aging curriculum, and the future of culture and aging curriculum. Selections from courses, resources, and pedagogical tools typically used for teaching culture and aging are provided to ground the discussion. Overall, the review reveals that comparing cultures and learning activities so as to encourage students to recognize their own cultures are primary strategies for teaching the topics of culture and aging. Additionally, this part of the review of the literature reveals a number of gaps in knowledge and curriculum development.

**The cultural specialists on an intercultural gerontology curriculum.** The cultural specialists, like the aging specialists, are associated with many disciplines, multidisciplines, and interdisciplines from the humanities and the social sciences. The sub-field of cultural

gerontology is explored and compared to other sub-fields in gerontology, namely, ethnogerontology and ethnogeriatrics. Cultural gerontology addresses how we construct aging, how we represent aging, and how aging identities are formed. In this review, the literature on cultural gerontology curriculum is organized along the themes of religion and spirituality, film and literature, and cultural studies. Current cultural gerontology curricula are presented as found in the academic literature, textbooks, select course descriptions, and courses outlines from Canadian university gerontology programs. While there are no references to an intercultural curriculum in these courses, the course design and teaching strategies associated with an intercultural approach are highlighted in this review.

**The educational specialists on an intercultural curriculum.** An intercultural curriculum is a planned program of study with intentional inclusion of culturally diverse content and a culturally-safe learning environment that, in combination, fosters cognitive and affective learning. This working definition was selected after reviewing the literature on culture and the many ways of describing such curricula including “multicultural,” “cross-cultural,” “intercultural,” and “diversity.” The literature on learning theories, in particular, transmissive, constructive, social constructive, humanistic, and experiential learning theories, informed my understanding of how these theories might be used in students’ learning about culture and aging.<sup>3</sup> Additional exploration of culture and the concepts of cultural awareness, cultural sensitivity, and cultural competency assisted me in understanding the fabric of a culturally-safe learning environment. Understanding the learning environment involves recognition and examination of the hidden curriculum as well as the structuring or scaffolding of the learning experience. The latter includes course content and learning assignments as well as the interactions among the

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<sup>3</sup> The reader is invited to consult the glossary at the beginning of this document. It provides brief definitions of key terms such as transmissive, constructive, social constructive, humanistic, and experiential learning theories and other, perhaps unfamiliar terms, included in this document.

learning stakeholders. In this review of literature, I also examine the context for the current investigation of intercultural curriculum and Canada's market model approach to the internationalization of higher education (Hanson, 2010). An alternative to the market model is suggested, one that blends liberal and transformative models. Notably, the literature identifies global citizenship as an ideal for student and teacher development. Global citizens "view the world and its inhabitants as interdependent and work to develop the capacity to act or advance both their own enlightened self-interest and the interest of people elsewhere in the world" (Appiah-Pad, 2001, n.p.). The term "global citizen" originated in ancient Greek and Roman times and has since appeared in the lexicon of multiple sectors such as the United Nations and the Society for Teaching and Learning in Higher Education Green Guide Series.

**Significance of the literature review.** The internationalization of Canadian universities and the aging of global populations are two critical 21<sup>st</sup>-century issues that raise challenges for curriculum development in gerontology. Gerontology students require programs that reflect interdisciplinary and intercultural principles and practices so they can respond to diversity in both the aging and the student population. The gap between these concerns and current gerontology education indicates a need for curriculum transformation that will foster global citizenship in domestic and international student learning.

### **The Theoretical Perspectives of the Study**

This interdisciplinary study integrates educational and gerontological theory and principles for the purpose of envisioning an intercultural gerontology curriculum. The envisioned curriculum will enable students to learn about aging as process; they will learn to see the interactions, negotiations, identities, power differentials, and moral stances of a heterogeneous, aging global population. Furthermore, students will need to integrate knowledge

of their own cultural identities with appreciation for the cultural diversity of fellow students and aging adults. This type of personal development is important for gerontology students who will develop public policy and provide services and care to older adults in Canada and elsewhere; such personal development is associated with education for global citizenship. Careful selection of appropriate educational and gerontological theory and principles must occur to guide this interdisciplinary exploration.

Constructivism, underpinned by humanism, is the educational perspective that informs this study. Constructivism is a process of building knowledge through students' connections with prior knowledge, communications with others, and integration of the new knowledge by way of reflection (Freedman, 1998; Leonard, 2002; Merriam & Brockett, 2007; Mestenhauser, 1998). The curriculum design guided by this theory is learner focused and prompts students to be actively engaged in their learning rather than passive recipients of knowledge (Leonard, 2002; Kemp, 2013; Tangney, 2014). This approach is necessary for intercultural curriculum in which knowledge is acquired through an iterative process of engagement with one's own ideas of cultural diversity, others' ideas of cultural diversity and reflection on one's own cultural identity. Humanistic educational theory is also recognized as an underpinning theory of this study since it presumes that learning is for human development and growth. This is significant to an intercultural curriculum that aims to foster cognitive development as well as emotional and relational development. Key principles for constructivist learning in an intercultural gerontology curriculum include the following: dialogue, reflection, fluidity in teaching (similar to culturally responsive teaching), scaffolding learning, experiential learning, teacher modeling, and a culturally safe learning environment.

The gerontological theories that guide this study are the life course perspective and social construction theory and the latter's associated practice of inquiry through critical analysis and reflexivity\*<sup>4</sup>. Social construction theory maintains a broad lens on aging that brings into focus the social institutions, structures, and policies that contribute to the context of aging. These theoretical foundations are informed by the scholarship of culture and aging by Blakie (2006), Featherstone and Hepworth (2009), and Katz (1996, 2009), and are associated with cultural gerontology and social gerontology. Narratives, the stories provided by older adults, are important to culture and aging study and an intercultural curriculum. Narratives include memoirs, biographies, visual presentations of aging in documentaries, and films, and representations of aging that may occur in dance, art, or other forms of expression. These narratives give voice to the multiple life experiences of aging in Canada and elsewhere, and contribute to the co-construction of multiple aging identities (Kunow, 2010).

The life course perspective (Elder, Johnson & Crosnoe, 2003) is important to this study because it is the matrix by which many disciplines that contribute to gerontology can intersect and build knowledge. The life course perspective has evolved beyond its original iteration: that is, beyond its limited scope on a Western, role-based, linear trajectory of a life course that involved history and geography. The life course perspective is now conceptualized as a flexible and multidimensional framework into which intersectionality<sup>5</sup> and cultural diversity can be integrated and explored. A course or program that acknowledges its connection to the life course perspective and offers a coherent curriculum is important to Canada's and the world's aging population.

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<sup>4</sup> Reflexivity refers to the process of thinking and reflecting on oneself in relation to what is being analyzed or constructed.

<sup>5</sup> Intersectionality refers to "the notion that subjectivity is constituted by mutually reinforcing vectors of race, gender, class, and sexuality" (Nash, 2008, p. 89).

Two similar principles are found in the education and gerontology literatures. The first is the iterative nature of reflection on learning derived from education and reflexivity in critical analysis from gerontology. The principles complement one another; they are not the same but they lead to skills that enhance a student's capacity to achieve deep learning. The second is the concept of other or othering. In gerontology, this idea of othering or alterity (Blakie, 2006) is described as a process of constructing identities by observing and seeing what one is not. This learning about oneself by seeing the other is how older adults may think about themselves. A statement like, "I'm not like so-and-so, I've still got my marbles," or a question posed to an observer, "Am I old?" are examples of alterity. The current indications are that negotiation of this aging identity includes resistance to the stereotype of old age (Gilleard & Higgs, 2000). Therefore, this principle is important to a gerontology curriculum. Like aging persons, students, too, are negotiating their cultural identities and affiliations through comparing, contrasting, and reflecting on other students' cultures and on culturally diverse content. The intercultural educational literature refers to this as cultural sensitivity which first requires awareness and then some type of action that demonstrates a respectful relationship to the "other."

### **The Research Methods of this Study**

In response to the need for knowledge about intercultural gerontology curricula, a qualitative study was carried out in which the thinking of university-based stakeholders associated with intercultural and/or gerontology curricula were explored. This exploration involved twelve semi-structured interviews (two face-to-face and ten via Skype) with a purposive sample of stakeholders. Secondary data included a collection of thirteen gerontology course descriptions. Inductive thematic analysis techniques were applied to interview transcripts, and content analysis was applied to the course outlines. The research methods are

described in detail in a subsequent chapter; it includes details about the rationale, procedure, analysis, and discussion. The appendices include documents pertaining to participant selection, recruitment, and informed consent.



## Chapter 2

### A Review of the Literature

This interdisciplinary study casts a wide net in its review of the literature and gathers relevant knowledge of theory, concepts, and practice related to culture and aging and to intercultural curricula. This review of the literature is organized into three areas of expertise: Section “A” is informed by the aging specialists, Section “B” is informed by the cultural specialists, and Section “C” is informed by the educational specialists. The disciplinary expertise contributing to this review includes social gerontology, cultural gerontology, and education.

#### A- The Aging Specialists on an Intercultural Gerontology Curriculum

Interest in the aging of the global population has created a large literature on aging and the policies, programs, and practices needed to respond to population aging. Included in this section of the review of the literature is exploration of culture and aging as a topic of research and as a topic in university curricula. Literature published in English language journals including *Journal of Cross-cultural Aging*, *Journal of Aging and Ethnicity*, *Aging International*, *Journal of Aging and Identity*, *Gerontology and Geriatric Education*, and *Educational Gerontology*, along with recently published books and textbooks, were investigated to learn how culture and age are addressed in university-based curricula. This literature is authored by specialists on aging from numerous fields of study including gerontology, sociology, psychology, geography, anthropology, thanatology, and professional schools related to health services, public policy, and social work. The review will be organized into three sections: current culture and aging curriculum, theories and concepts, and the future of culture and aging curricula. Selected examples of academic courses, resources, and pedagogical tools for teaching

about culture and aging will be integrated throughout this review to enliven and ground the discussion.

In the first section, the current state of culture and aging curricula will be considered. Several points of focus will be identified so that the reader will gain an understanding of what instructors of gerontology and other disciplines are teaching about culture and aging. First, the study of culture and aging is formally known as “ethnogerontology” as well as “ethnogeriatrics.” While these two specialties are subfields of social gerontology, many other disciplines also contribute to curricula. These disciplines include anthropology, epidemiology, and demography. A second point is that culture and aging can sometimes be the focus of a stand-alone course; alternately, sometimes, culture and aging are infused within one or more courses in gerontology programs. The benefits and requirements of these two approaches are discussed and debated in the literature, and a summary presentation and case example are provided in this review. A third point is that there are similarities and differences in the learning goals of current culture and aging curricula. Most often, the ethnogerontology curriculum is oriented to the development of cultural awareness or cultural sensitivity, whereas the ethnogeriatric curriculum is oriented to developing cultural competency.

In the second section, formative theories and perspectives from the field of social gerontology are presented and then critiqued as inadequate for explaining the complexity of culture and aging. The social construction of aging, however, is recognized as an important lens for this study. The life course theoretical perspective, a perspective adopted by many disciplines in the study of aging, is suggested as an analytic tool for theorizing culture and aging. In this section, I will describe the key points of the life course perspective and how it is employed by multiple disciplines, including gerontology. Two concepts in the literature raise specific

concern, “minority elders” and “essentialism”; these concepts will be discussed and critiqued in order to gain insight into the sensitive nature of this curriculum. This section ends with a review of the academic and grey<sup>6</sup> literature to identify educational theory and practice in culture and aging curricula. This review indicates a gap in the literature and the need for more scholarship on teaching and learning about culture and aging.

The third section presents themes in the literature that inform the future of curriculum development on culture and aging. The first is the importance of interdisciplinary courses and interdisciplinary approaches to important topics in the context of culture and aging; the second is the role of older adults in curriculum development; and the third is the need for international consultations on gerontology education and international exchange opportunities. International students in Canada and elsewhere are identified as important resources for gerontology’s global development and a reason for increased scholarship in teaching gerontology with an international perspective.

### **The Current Culture and Aging Curriculum**

The importance of the culture and aging curriculum is growing because of the aging of the global population and the increased cultural diversity of the aging population in many regions. In Canada, for example, a large percentage (28.4%) of people who are 65 and older are immigrants. Half of these older immigrants are long-term immigrants (14.9%), meaning they immigrated to Canada prior to 1961 (Turcotte & Schellenberg, 2007). These older long-term immigrants are primarily from European regions (68%). The more recent immigrants who are now 65 or older are from diverse regions: 19% are from Asia and the remaining 13% are from the United States, the Caribbean, Africa, Central and South America, and other regions (Durst,

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<sup>6</sup> Grey literature includes documents that may or may not have been peer-reviewed but are produced for public review. Examples of grey literature included in this study are course outlines, gerontology program reviews, and gerontology program descriptions provided on Canadian university web pages.

2005). The increasing cultural diversity of Canada's and other regions' aging populations is identified as a major reason for curriculum development on culture and aging.

The reality of increasing cultural diversity draws attention to the diversity of meanings of culture in the literature. As the initial discussion of immigrant populations indicates, culture sometimes refers to the nation of origin. It may also refer to race, ethnicity, and the values, beliefs and practices of a group of people. These various meanings of culture are evident in the social gerontology textbooks used in Canadian gerontology programs which include chapters such as "Aging in Other Countries and Across Cultures in the United States" (Hooyman & Kiyak, 2011); "Historical and Cultural Perspectives on Aging" which explores the ideas of acculturation, assimilation, values and ethnocentrism (McPherson & Wister, 2008); and "The Cultural Context of Aging," which investigates ethnicity, race, immigration, and visible minority status (Chappell, Gee, McDonald & Stones, 2003). In some of the literature in Canada and the United States, the phrase "minority elder" is used (Crewe, 2004; Tatara, 1995; Wykle & Ford, 1999; Yee & Tursi, 2002; Yeo, 1996; Yeo & McBride, 2008). Similarly, minority elder groups are identified as American as in Japanese American, Mexican American, Native American, and so on. Another concept addressed in the culture and aging literature is the notion of rural/urban/suburban cultures (Elliot, 2005; Ingman, Amin, Clarke & Brune, 2010). The people living in these geographic areas have values, beliefs, and practices that distinguish their members from those living in other geographic areas. In summary, the references to culture in the culture and aging literature address the following: nation of origin, race, ethnicity, and geography. By comparison, there are infrequent references to gender, sexual orientation, and ability, which might be associated with the term "diversity" as in the educational literature.

**Ethnogerontology and ethogeriatrics.** A course or program that addresses issues of culture and aging is formally recognized by social gerontologists as ethnogerontology (Chappell, Gee, McDonald, & Stones, 2003; Crewe, 2004; Novak & Campbell, 2010; Yeo and McBride, 2008). Health professionals call this same area of study ethnogeriatrics (McBride & Napieribere, 2004; Severance & Yeo, 2006; Wadsworth & FallCreek, 1999; Yeo, 1999; Yeo & McBride, 2008). These curricula explore culture and aging primarily via cross-cultural comparison (Kunkle, 2008; Liang, 2003). Alternately, cross-cultural comparisons and the cultural context of aging are the approaches taken in both ethnogerontology and ethnogeriatrics (Elliot, 2005; Gutmann, 1997; Shenk & Sokolovsky, 1999). A course description is provided here to illustrate the use of cross-cultural comparison and the context of demographic challenges:

Sociological and anthropological analysis of the social and cultural conditions related to the process of aging. Comparative study of criteria and rites in different societies that determine the passage to old age. Examination of the existing conditions of seniors and the relations they maintain with other age categories (social roles, activities, leisure, support, and accompaniment. Local and global context of demographic challenges.

(Givechian, 2012)

Courses investigating culture and aging, such as the one described above, are an important part of gerontology curriculum development.

**The Association for Gerontology in Higher Education (AGHE).** Courses in ethnogerontology and courses which address culture and aging help gerontology programs to meet the curriculum *Standards and Guidelines for Gerontology and Geriatric Programs* (Gugliucci, Moore & Miller, 2008) established by the Association for Gerontology in Higher Education (AGHE). This Association is affiliated with the Gerontological Society of America;

its mission is to advance education on aging. There is no education-based association such as this in Canada or anywhere else in the world. While university-based programs in gerontology or geriatrics are not required to conform to these standards and guidelines, the standards are recognized internationally as a benchmark for program development (Ansello, 2011). In the United States, thirteen university gerontology programs, ranging from certificate to doctoral programs, have met these standards and guidelines and been recognized by the AGHE as a Program of Merit (AGHE, 2012). The *Standards and Guidelines* recommendation is that an elective course in culture and aging be included in an undergraduate curriculum in gerontology (Gugliucci, Moore & Miller 2008). To assist with program development, the AGHE publishes sample course outlines. In the AGHE *Collection of Courses in Aging: Cultural Diversity/Minority Aging* (2012), there are six sample course outlines that present different approaches to culture and aging. Two of these courses include service-learning experiences for learning about culture and aging; two other courses employ texts and readings for comparing cultures and aging issues; the two final courses feature multidisciplinary and integrative approaches to learning about culture and aging. These sample courses reflect diverse approaches to gerontology's study of culture and aging with disciplinary contributions from psychology, sociology, biology, communication studies, anthropology, and the interdisciplinary field of human development.

**Program infusion versus course elective.** The *Standards and Guidelines* recommend that a course addressing culture and aging be an elective in an undergraduate gerontology program; at the same time, however, the *Standards and Guidelines* do not address the challenge and opportunity of infusing core courses or the program with a theme such as culture and aging. The benefits and detractors of a single course approach versus an infusion approach is a matter of

debate. The benefits of a single course approach are twofold: first, this approach meets the needs of students interested in specialized knowledge; second, the course or curriculum approach meets the interests of faculty who may be keenly interested in this topic (Berg-Weger, 2008). One example of this type of course is an interdisciplinary nursing graduate seminar course on end-of-life care offered at Wayne State University in Detroit, Michigan. The course weaves cultural context throughout its content and appeals to students who are seeking specialized knowledge about death and dying; it is also attractive to students for the multidisciplinary teaching team, consisting of a medical anthropologist, a cross-cultural nurse ethicist, and a sociologist/gerontologist (Doorenbos, Briller, & Chapleski, 2003).

In contrast, an infused approach ensures education about culture and aging for all students in a program rather than for only those students who take the special course on culture and aging. The infused approach requires more than one faculty member to develop learning goals for culture and aging content in a number of courses or perhaps the entire program (Hooyman, 2008). While the infusion of ethno gerontology education is evident in social work education (Crewe, 2004) and allied health professionals' education (Glista & Petersons, 2003), it is difficult to determine if gerontology education is infusing culture and aging into its curricula in Canada or if it is requiring students to take a culture-and-aging-related stand-alone course. Although the learning outcome referred to as "appreciation of diversity in aging" is an expectation for graduates of university undergraduate gerontology programs in Ontario (Mercer, 2010), it is not clear whether this learning occurs in a single course or if appreciation of diversity in aging is infused throughout an entire gerontology program.

**A sample module on culture and aging.** The academic literature includes a few examples of modules or courses that address the topic of culture and age in gerontology or

gerontology-related programs. The following example demonstrates the type of content and course structure required for engaged learning about culture and age. In the United States, Project Age: Alliance for Gerontology Education prepares allied health workers to work with older adults (Glista & Petersons, 2003). The project's interprofessional faculty team developed discrete modules on age and cultural diversity, age and assistive technologies, age and interdisciplinary teamwork, and age and health promotion. Each module includes established learning goals, process objectives, and outcomes (Refer to Table 1, Age and Culture Module). The modules include readings, Internet links to resources, and a number of in and out-of-class activity options that correspond to the goals. An evaluation of these modules was conducted, and the results indicate that students had positive experiences learning about their own and other students' cultures and that they wanted to have more time to explore their own cultures and what other students thought about certain topics (Glista & Petersons, 2003). The results also indicate that faculty were positive about the modules for a number of reasons: the modules were well structured and clear; they contained substantial Internet resources so that learning was not entirely dependent on faculty expertise on age-related issues; and faculty could select from various activities the ones for which there was sufficient class time or homework time (Glista & Petersons, 2003).



Table 1 “Age and Culture” Modules for Infusion in Allied Health Professional Education: Learning Goals, Sample Process Objectives, and Sample Outcome Objectives

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Goal 1: Understand the concept of cultural competence and know how one’s own culture affects behavior and values related to aging and health.

Sample Process Objective: Students will use the Internet and government statistics to explore the demographic trends of aging in the U.S.

Sample Outcome Objective: Students will list and discuss five trends in the demographics of aging in the U.S.

Goal 2: Understand how family and community systems in different cultures may affect beliefs, attitudes, and behaviors related to health.

Sample Process Objective: Students will discuss case studies to apply gathered information to situations encountered in health care.

Sample Outcome Objective: Students will be able to discuss five ways in which family and community structure of ethnic groups affect caregiving.

Goal 3: Know how cultural and ethnic differences may affect health and the delivery of health and human services to the elderly.

Sample Process Objective: Students will fill out worksheets answering questions relating to one or all of the following topics:

- Traditional beliefs about health, illness, and healing
- Morbidity and mortality among America’s ethnic groups
- Ethnicity and health care utilization
- Ethnicity and health promotion

Sample Outcome Objective: Students will be able to describe traditional beliefs about health and illness in three ethnic groups and discuss how these beliefs may present barriers to seeking and following treatment in Western medical settings.

Goal 4. Develop strategies for establishing relationships with clients from cultural backgrounds that are different from one’s own.

Sample Process Objective: Students will interview an allied health professional working in a multicultural setting regarding use of interpreters.

Sample Outcome Objective: Students will develop a list of ethnic foods and visit area stores to find these items.

(Glista & Petersons, 2003, pp. 32-33)

This module was designed to share knowledge about culture and aging and to foster development of cultural competency by scaffolding active learning strategies. The module demonstrates the infusion approach for curricular reform aimed at the development of cultural competency for practice.

**Cultural competency and/or cultural sensitivity.** The phrase “cultural competency” is often employed in the culture and aging literature as a learning goal or objective for a course or program for professional practice, such as in geriatric and social work education. There is an acknowledged need for more knowledge about culture to treat and advocate for patients/clients (Braun, Pietsch & Blanchette, 2000; Crewe, 2004, Tripp-Reimer, 1999). The educational approach to cultural competency is described as “a complex integration of knowledge, attitudes, and skills that enhances cross-cultural communication and appropriate/effective interactions with others” (Lenburg Lipson, Demi, Blane, Stern, Schultz & Gage, 1995, cited in Tripp-Reimer, 1999, p. 241). The complexity of this concept cannot be overstated; cultural competency requires an integration of knowledge from the fields of epidemiology, demography, sociology, anthropology, cultural studies, communication studies, and more. Furthermore, patients and clients may or may not identify with the cultural group noted on their chart or case files, so cultural competency also includes skill in assessing patient/client level of affiliation with a particular culture (Braun, Pietsch & Blanchette, 2000; Wadsworth & FallCreek, 1999). It is wrong to assume that clients or patients hold values or beliefs associated with a particular culture and to act on these assumptions; this can lead to actions or inactions that place clients or patients at risk. Cultural competency is a combination of knowledge and skill that requires time to develop and practice; it is not accomplished in a learning module or a weekend workshop (Tripp-Reimer, 1999).

In contrast with ethnogeriatric curricula, the ethnogerontology curriculum is more diverse with regard to learning outcomes related to cultural awareness, cultural sensitivity, cultural competency, and appreciation of diversity. For example, one of the learning outcomes for the gerontology program at Ryerson University in Toronto, Ontario is “to recognize the diversity in aging as it relates to ethnicity, culture, gender, and sexuality and its impact on Canadian demography” (Nippak, Lee-Blickstead, Kerr & de Sousa-Hitzler, 2010, p. 6). There are also gerontology courses that identify cultural competency as a learning outcome (Elliot, 2005) or identify understanding issues, principles, and applications of cultural competence as learning outcomes (Medcalf, 2011). These courses, however, do not require observation of cultural competency in practice as one would find in an ethnogeriatric curriculum.

**Summary.** To summarize this section on the current state of culture and aging curriculum, I return to the premise that curricula are influenced by the aging of the global population and the associated increase in cultural diversity of the aging population. Specialists in aging are developing curricula that are intended to enable cultural sensitivity and, in some cases, the curricula are intended to develop cultural competency. Most often, a comparison approach to learning about culture is taken, and, in some programs, the cultural context of the experiences of aging in diverse cultures is also part of the curricula. While the Association for Gerontology in Higher Education provides minimal guidance on culture and aging to gerontology programs, affiliated disciplines, ethnogerontology and ethnogeriatrics, it does provide support and a network of experts on culture and aging. The Association further provides a forum for debates such as whether to create specific courses with the intent of fostering cultural sensitivity and competency, or to infuse some or all of a gerontology program with modules and resources that will foster the development of cultural sensitivity and competency.

## **Theory and Concepts in Culture and Aging Curricula**

**Social Theories of Aging.** The theoretical perspectives that provide the foundation for culture and aging research and curriculum development are based on sociological theories which are typically described in the social gerontology textbooks required in introductory gerontology courses. The theories are applied to the study of older adults and the study of older adults who are immigrants or who are affiliated with ethnic groups. Modernization theory was the first of these theories to explain the relationship between culture and the experiences of aging. Cowgill and Holms proposed this theory in 1972 (cited in Chappell et al., 2003; Hooyman & Kiyak, 2011; McPherson & Wister, 2008; Novak & Campbell, 2010) and attributed the decline in older adults' status to the modernization of traditional agricultural societies. Simplistic presentations of rural and urban cultures and denial of the heterogeneity of older adult populations are two of many criticisms of this theory. Despite these critiques, modernization theory continues to be employed to explain the impact of industrialization in developing regions (McDonald, 2010). A second relevant theory is assimilation theory. This theory proposes that immigrants adapt to new regions by adopting the cultural practices of the new home region and losing their cultural identity (Chappell, et al., 2003). This all or nothing approach to adopting a new cultural identity has been regarded to be too simplistic and led to scholars' making adaptations to the theory in order to account for the management of cultural identities as individuals age and the generational differences of assimilation (Chappell et al., 2003). McDonald (2010) observes that, despite the fact that assimilation theory does not adequately address culture and aging, it is still employed by researchers in Canada as they examine the frequency and effects of speaking one's first language within the home environment as an indicator of assimilation.

The literature on social gerontology curriculum includes phenomenological approaches to exploring culture and aging. These approaches investigate interpretations and meaning making in everyday life as a way to understand rather than explain topics on aging. Two of these phenomenological approaches are social constructivist and social constructionist in nature. The social constructivist approach acknowledges individual interpretations and making meaning of knowledge in everyday life; it is employed in investigations at the individual or micro-level (Chappell, et al., 2003; Hooyman & Kiyak, 2011). Research conducted from this perspective emphasizes that individual choices and reflection on these choices increase individual identity formation (Andersson & Oberg, 2006). Social constructionists are similar to social constructivists in that they explore topics that are negotiated and given meaning. However, social constructionists are different in that the exploration is at the macro level as well. For example, age can be viewed as a social construction derived from economic policies that establish retirement age and public pensions. In contrast, a social constructivist approach focuses on an individual's perception of retirement and what retirement means to him/her. Chappell et al. (2003) caution that these theoretical approaches are not well developed and do not capture the complexities of culture and of age at the structural level. This is understandable given these are phenomenological approaches, and the expectation is that they will result in explorations of meanings in everyday life and not hypotheses or predictions. In the case of social constructionism, meanings will be deconstructed to discern how they are developed and where they are located. Thus, the problems of aging and the structural barriers associated with aging can be addressed (Hooyman & Kiyak, 2011).

Social identity theory provides a similar lens to the study of aging and culture which integrates sociological and psychological perspectives on human development. Social identity

theory directs attention to the subjective experiences of individuals as actors and focuses on individual identity and identity formation. Identity formation occurs through reflexivity on the self and involves self-categorization into groups and engaging in continual social comparison (Stets & Burke, 2000). Identity formation and potential reformation are experienced throughout the life course as actors reflect on their group affiliations, their salience, and their costs in terms of social capital (Hendricks, 2010). Hendricks contributes the phrase “practical consciousness” as a way to ground the practice of thinking about oneself, preserving oneself, and negotiating one’s investments of emotions and energy in an identity (2010).

The most frequently cited theoretical perspective in the culture and aging literature is the life course perspective. This perspective arose from the desire to understand the social pathways of human experiences including career paths, family roles, trajectories and transitions, and normative experiences within historical contexts (Elder, Johnson & Crosnoe, 2003). In some cultures, the life course perspective includes transitions beyond a mortal lifetime and into life after death (Cattell & Albert, 2009). The life course perspective’s longitudinal approach to understanding an individual or a generational cohort, considered in combination with accounting for time and place (or history and environment), provides a framework for integrating theories of culture and aging. The life course perspective is employed by many disciplines including anthropology, developmental psychology, sociology, history, and demography (Albert & Cattell, 1993; Cattell & Albert, 2009). It is likewise pervasive in the field of gerontology, as is evident in textbooks (Wellin, 2010), gerontology research (Alley, Putney, Rice & Bengsten, 2010), and international policy development on aging (World Health Organization, 2002; World Health Organization, 2007). The life course perspective is further prevalent in the study of culture and aging (Aguilar, 2001; Crewe, 2004; Damron-Rodriguez & Effros, 2008; Stroller & Gibson,

1997) and is suggested to be the best integrative framework for exploring aging and immigration (McDonald, 2010). As a perspective, it helps in the examination of the social construction of life course events and the many interpretive theories for understanding culture and aging (McDonald, 2010).

There are challenges, however, to this perspective, and various recommendations have been suggested relative to research in culture and aging. Critical gerontologists argue that the life course perspective gives priority to a single style of life trajectory, a trajectory that emphasizes continuity as the pathway to successful aging rather than multiple pathways and experiences of successful aging that arise in various cultures and as a result of globalization (Biggs & Daatland, 2006; Phillipson, 2006; Torres, 2003; Warnes, 2006). The traditional life trajectory of childhood, followed by schooling, employment, establishing a family, retirement, grandparenthood, and, finally decline may have been the social pathway of many Western and more developed regions; however, in other cultures and in a modern world, this pathway is only one of many pathways through life. Research on migrant workers and the immigration experiences of older adults challenges this traditional life course perspective and points to the need to review and revise it. For example, in a study of older Iranian migrants living in Sweden, the researcher discovered that older Iranians shifted their perspective on aging from acceptance of physical and mental declines as natural aging to more scientific perspectives which emphasize that physical and mental changes can be “handled” and that surrender to decline is not helpful (Torres, 2006). Torres further suggests that, by exploring the non-linear, destabilized experiences of older adults who have migrated or continue to migrate between cultures, there is an opportunity to understand the “in-between cultures” that are being created. She points to opportunities for exploring the emerging trajectories in later life. Warnes (2006) challenges the

traditional life course model by reflecting on the experiences of workers who leave a poor region to work in a developed region, in addition to those who work in a remote employment setting while maintaining a home and kinship ties in the poor region. There is a need for more research into the life course perspective that takes into account population diversity due to population migration.

Other social theories, including political-economy, feminist theories, and critical gerontology have contributed to understandings of significant issues about aging, including culture and aging. According to Powell (2006), these approaches over-generalize issues and are too focused on structures and systems. Instead, a postmodern approach to investigating the aging body in terms of popular culture, gender, and the biotechnologies that are reconstructing aging bodies (cyborgs) is suggested as an approach for integrating the individual and the systems perspectives (Powell, 2006). This literature will be discussed in the next section that reviews literature authored by specialists in culture.

**Limiting concepts: “minority elders” and “essentialism.”** Two concepts in the culture and aging literature limit understanding of the complexity of culture; these concepts need to be challenged. The first is the phrase “minority elders” which refers to older adults who are not part of the majority white culture (Mehrota & Wagner, 2009; Tatara, 1999; Wykle & Ford, 1999; Yee & Tursi, 2002; Yeo, 1996). This phrase is used in book titles such as *Serving Minority Elders in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century* and *Understanding Elder Abuse in Minority Populations* as well as a course entitled *Minority Aging*. The term “minority elders” is based on the assumption that the majority of the population is white and that this majority establishes the norm for all elders. In Canada, the phrase “ethnocultural minority elder” is employed by the federal government and by provincial agencies. In the American literature on diversity, the minority groups are categorized



as follows: Asian/Pacific Islanders, Latino/Hispanic, Black, and Native Americans (Mehrota & Wagner, 2009; Tataara, 1999). While the term “minority” may be viewed as a neutral and accurate descriptive term, the term “minority elder” dis-empowers the older adults of a particular group by emphasizing their relatively smaller number (Crewe, 2004). This dis-empowerment is extended to teachers and students who are members of these minority groups and who are engaged with curricula that include the phrase “minority elders.” If this term is included in a curriculum, there needs to be an opportunity for discussion and reflection on its meaning and effect on elders, teachers, and students.

A second concept that needs to be challenged is essentialism, the practice of ascribing an identity to an individual or group in the form of a set of characteristics (Chappell et al., 2003). This concept underpins assimilation theory and cross-cultural studies in which people and nations are characterized as possessing specific attributes that are relatively fixed. Essentialism is problematic when learning about culture because (1) it limits one’s perception of the complexity of culture; and (2) it is risky when students apply it in practice situations. For example, filial piety is a cultural value attributed to Japanese people. However, if a hospital discharge planner takes an essentialist approach and, assumes that an older Japanese adult is being cared for by his/her family does not arrange home care, then the older adult may be at risk of being discharged with no follow-up care (Tripp-Reimer, 1999). Essentialism needs to be addressed in curricula through critical analysis of the commonalities and the variations within and between cultural groups to ensure that learners understand cultural heterogeneity.

As mentioned earlier, the term “minority elder” and the concept of essentialism are problematic because they limit knowledge about the complexity of culture and aging. Appropriate responses to these limitations are to acknowledge and explore them through

teaching practices. Such practices include demonstrating transparency, engaging in reflection, and conducting critical analysis. These are teaching approaches developed through participation in scholarship and practice in teaching. Strongly recommended resources for the study of culture and aging in the context of learning are the journals *Gerontology and Geriatric Education* and *Educational Gerontology* and books that include key presentation papers from conferences. Shenk and Groger's 2005 *Aging Education in Global Context* is one example of this kind of collection. Although these resources frequently provide descriptions of course objectives, assignments, readings, and program evaluations, the educational theories that guide these courses are not often identified. The reader needs to discern and interpret the theory or theories that are applied. In the literature reviewed for this dissertation, only five articles included a reference to the educational theory that guided the course development. These theories include constructivist, experiential, and social constructionist (Damron-Rodriguez & Effros, 20008; Doorenbos, Briller & Chapleski, 2003; Stoller & Gibson, 1997), as well as combinations of these perspectives (Gelish-Gugliuccu, 1999; Glista & Petersons, 2003). This general lack of explicit theory is problematic because theory is important to curriculum development. Theory provides the rationale for the selection of one or another curricular approach. For example, in the five articles that identify one or more educational theories, active learning and experiential learning approaches for learning about aging are recommended.

**Summary.** Social gerontologists have attempted to explain the experiences of culture and aging via modernization theory, assimilation theory, social constructivism, social constructionism, social identity theory, political-economic theory, feminist theories, and critical gerontology theory. At the same time, a number of these theories are criticized for not capturing the complexity of the two constructs. Present-day aging specialists are joining numerous other

disciplinary specialists to explore culture and aging from the life course perspective and to integrate theory into this framework. There is no indication that an all-encompassing grand theory will evolve over time, but there is an expectation that a matrix of theory organized around the life course perspective will be the basis of a culture and age theory.

Two challenges to understanding the complexity of culture and aging have been discussed. The first identifies the phrase “minority elder” as a disempowering phrase that compromises the learning environment. Elders and, by extrapolation, teachers and learners who are referred to as a minority, may be diminished and disempowered by this phrase, depending on the social context. Essentialism was also critiqued because it presumes a homogeneous culture and does not account for diversity within and between cultures. These challenges to culture and curricula on aging may be addressed through teaching practices, including transparency, reflection, and critical analysis.

Finally, the current state of knowledge of educational theory and educational practice in culture and aging curriculum has been explored. The literature on culture and aging curriculum development, educational theory, and educational approaches is limited, and scholarship is needed in order to discover and to disseminate knowledge of best practices in curricular design. The next section will provide an indication of the directions that specialists in aging are taking in culture and aging curriculum.

### **The Future of the Culture and Aging Curriculum**

There is no overarching direction for culture and aging curricula indicated in the literature reviewed for this dissertation. There are, however, a few repeated themes that bear mentioning. These themes include the following: recommendations for interdisciplinary courses and interdisciplinary approaches to major topics in the context of culture and aging;

recommendations for the role of older adults in curriculum development; and the role of international students for global gerontology education.

**Major topics for the intercultural gerontology curriculum.** The complexity of the global aging phenomenon requires an interdisciplinary response from the academic community in order to discover solutions to the challenges of an aging population and possible lost opportunities associated with current curricula. One strategy for addressing these challenges is by applying an interdisciplinary and a cross-cultural lens to major areas of specific concern. These areas include elder abuse (Tatara, 1999), dementia care (Yeo, 1996), end of life care (Braun, et al, 2000), and professional caregiving (Waxler-Morrison, Anderson, Richardson & Chambers, 2005). Although these topics represent significant challenges for aging studies, a recent survey indicates that the most significant age-related issue across the globe is *aging in place* (International Federation on Aging [IFA], 2012). Aging in place refers to providing older adults the opportunity to choose where they want to live, making this choice from a selection of meaningful options, and receiving support in order to live where they want to live in old age (IFA, 2012). This idea of aging in place was once conceived of as the provision of support services that would enable older adults to age in their own homes; however, the idea of growing old in a home community may be changing as opportunities for immigration and travel increase, family kinship networks shift, and cultural neighborhoods form or become transnational communities (Phillipson, 2006). The creation of an environment that can meet the aims of aging in place will involve many stakeholders and decision-makers, and there will be a need for increased cultural sensitivity by the persons who create this environment (Phillipson, 2006). Given its relevance in a time of global aging populations, exploration of aging in place should be considered for inclusion in an interdisciplinary-culture-age-based curriculum.

**Including the older adult in curriculum development.** Curriculum development and curriculum reform typically are the responsibility of faculty. However, the literature in Canada and the United States contains examples of faculty consultations with older adults in the development of age-related curriculum. This practice pertains to the development of all gerontology curricula and not just culture-and-age-related curricula; it is an approach that is consistent with feminist perspectives and critical gerontology perspectives that gives priority to the expert's voice, in this case, the older adult. In the first of three examples of this practice found in the literature, an American researcher and teacher gives voice to the experts as they discuss the concept of aging in place. Gelish-Gugliucci's (1999) research for her dissertation involved group and individual consultations that were audio-recorded and then integrated into an actual curriculum. These taped "voices of the elders" continue to be used as learning objects<sup>7</sup> for class discussion and debate. This approach is an example of authentic consultation with older adults guided by constructivist and experiential learning theory and practice. In a second example, Canadian faculty researchers asked a team of older adults to review course content on aging prepared by faculty and to provide advice on audiovisual materials and teaching aids (Greave, Lewis & Hammond, 1995). In this example, the consultation effort was a request for endorsement of the prepared materials rather than an authentic opportunity to contribute to the curriculum. The third project involving elder voice in curriculum was part of the GeroRich program in the United States in which gerontology education was being infused into social work education. Dorfman, Murty and Ingram (2008) indicate that the older adult consultants on this project missed a number of meetings due to ill health and transportation problems. These circumstances resulted in very limited contributions to the curriculum by the older adults. One

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<sup>7</sup> Learning objects are digital, often Web-based, tools for learning and may include audio and/or visual recordings of interviews, films, TEDTalks, YouTube, podcasts, and so forth.

of the lessons learned from these examples is that, when extensive effort is made by the researcher, as PhD student researcher Gelish-Gugliucci reported in her dissertation, the consultation process with older adults can be fruitful and lead to tangible learning objects for integration into the curriculum. Other lessons learned are that extra care is required in the consultation process to ensure that the older adults who are invited to participate in the creation of a program do so rather than simply approve the program. As well, meetings need to be scheduled and carried out in a manner that accommodates older adults' special needs. In all, the ideal role for older adults in age-related curriculum is not that of consultant, but as expert on his/her own experience. As experts about their own values, beliefs and experiences, older adults can be guest speakers and sources of expert knowledge that enrich the curriculum.

**International students and global gerontology.** The global network of experts in the field of gerontology is supporting the development of gerontology curriculum in many countries around the world. The literature indicates that faculty in gerontology in the United States are working as consultants in the development of gerontology curricula in many countries including Japan and India (Ansello, 2011), China, Mexico, Jamaica (Ingman, Amin, Clarke & Brune, 2010) and Africa (King, Gachuhi, Ice, Cattell & Whittington, 2005). The developing regions indicate a need for gerontology education, but there is also a preference for curriculum development within the country itself (Tsukada & Tatara, 2005). International gerontology curriculum will develop, but caution is necessary to ensure that present day Eurocentric curricula (Guo & Jamal, 2007) are not exported to a culturally diverse global population. International students are identified as important resources in developing an international network for gerontology education. Such students contribute to the collaborative international community,

international service learning, and the development of gerontology education in their home countries (Ingman, Amin, Clarke & Brune, 2010).

The importance of international students to the global development on gerontology education heightens awareness of scholarship in teaching international students in gerontology. Specialists in aging recognize the importance of cultural sensitivity and cultural competency when working with older adults (Braun, Pietsch & Blanchette, 2000; Crewe, 2004, Tripp-Reimer, 1999), but there is little to no discussion of how to teach culturally diverse students and/or international students about aging. Given the increasing numbers of international students in Canadian universities and the aging population as a global issue, it is important to respond to this gap in scholarship.

**Summary.** To summarize, the current literature addresses the future of culture and aging curriculum in three main areas: major topics for interdisciplinary curriculum development, older adults as experts, and international students in global gerontology education. The literature also suggests that culture and aging is a timely and relevant topic as new gerontology programs develop internationally. International academic experts and international students are working as consultants to develop global gerontology programs. Scholarship in intercultural gerontology curriculum development is encouraged to support growth in global gerontology education.

## **Conclusion**

In Canada, and the United States, the gerontology curriculum on culture and aging generally takes a cultural comparison approach and, in some curricula, the cultural context of aging is part of the curriculum (Kunkle 2008; Sokolovsky, 2009). Specialists on aging are also developing curricula that include specific learning objectives for cultural sensitivity and cultural competency (Elliot, 2005; Glista & Petersons, 2003; Medcalf, 2011; Yeo, 2011). In Canada,

culture and age-related curricula are oriented to the current Canadian population mix of a majority culture (white and European) and ethnocultural minority elder culture, as well as the rural, suburban, and urban mix that exists in Canada. Canadian textbooks in social gerontology provide demographic information on the ethnocultural makeup and the rural/urban mix of the country as a foundation for culture and aging studies; these textbooks include: *Aging in Contemporary Canada* (Chappell et al., 2003); *Aging as a Social Process: Canadian Perspectives*, 5<sup>th</sup> ed. (McPherson & Wister, 2008); and *Aging and Society: A Canadian Perspective*, 6<sup>th</sup> ed. (Novak & Campbell, 2010).

There is no association in Canada that oversees gerontology curriculum. However, Canadian and international scholars in gerontology directed me to the Association for Gerontology in Higher Education (AGHE) as the international association that provides support and guidance for gerontology curriculum development. The *Standards and Guidelines* and the curricular resources provided by AGHE establish an international benchmark for gerontology education. The current AGHE guideline for cultural and aging education in gerontology is to offer an elective course in culture and aging for an undergraduate degree program. In view of the increasing cultural diversity of the Canadian population and the increasing cultural diversity of the global aging population, this standard for gerontology curriculum may be inadequate in meeting the needs of gerontology students' preparation for working with culturally diverse aging populations. An alternative to offering an elective course on culture and aging is to infuse the gerontology curriculum with education on culture and aging. This alternative may enable gerontology programs to establish cultural awareness, cultural sensitivity and/or cultural competency as a learning goal for the entire program rather than limit these learning goals to an elective course.



## **B - The Cultural Specialists on an Intercultural Gerontology Curriculum**

Current literature on culture and aging is found in many fields of study associated with the humanities and social sciences, including English, History, Anthropology, Philosophy, Cultural Studies, Film Studies, Religious Studies, Women's Studies, and more. These disciplines all contribute to our understanding of human aging and are referred to, in aggregate, as "cultural gerontology" in this section of the literature review. Twigg (2012), co-editor of the first handbook of cultural gerontology, describes cultural gerontology in the following manner.

Cultural Gerontology has opened out the subject matter, encompassing new topics such as the body, identity, consumption, sexuality, leisure. It explores global and transnational ageing. It engages with new theorising whether from a post-modern, post-structuralist or Critical Realist approach, and encompasses new methodologies in relation to visual methods, literary and biographical analysis, media productions and more. Ageing is now seen to be intrinsically linked to the wider social and cultural context in which we live. (n.p.)

In the first part of this section, cultural gerontology is explained by comparing it with ethnogerontology and ethnogeriatrics. In the second part, current cultural gerontology curriculum is explored, primarily through examples of relevant courses. While there are no references to an intercultural curriculum in these courses, after careful consideration of teaching approaches and assignments included in these courses, I have identified characteristics that are associated with an intercultural approach. These characteristics are highlighted in this review.

### **Cultural Gerontology**

Cultural gerontology is a relatively new subfield of gerontology that explores how we construct aging, how we create representations of aging, and how individuals form cultural

identities as they age (Featherstone & Hepworth, 2009). These topics require a humanistic lens to the study of culture and aging as well as integration of many disciplines and perspectives. I will begin this discussion of cultural gerontology by comparing it to the other two subfields of gerontology that focus on culture and aging: ethnogerontology and ethnogeriatrics. This comparative approach is consistent with how cultural gerontologists suggest individuals define their own aging. Blackie (2006) explains that older adults construct identity by comparing themselves with others so as to determine what they are and what they are not. Blackie describes the cultural gerontologist's perspective in the following passage:

In deploying the concept of *alterity* or *otherness* cultural theorists posit the idea that identities are constituted less by what people are than by what they are not. That is to say, it is in knowing the difference between ourselves and others that we understand what makes us distinctive. In placing ourselves, we find common ground with some individuals as well as points of departure or complete unconnectedness from others. (p. 86)

One difference between cultural gerontology and ethnogerontology/geriatrics is the manner in which knowledge is established in the two fields. Cultural gerontology establishes knowledge primarily through interpretation of texts, discourse, and narratives in order to understand human aging. English and Women's Studies specialists, for example, employ fiction, biographies, memoirs, and poetry in order to explore older adults' experiences of aging (Cruikshank, 2009; Waxman, 2005; Wyatt-Brown, 2010). Books listed on courses in cultural studies include chapters that focus on ethnographic study of cultural groups, such as Canadian "snowbirds" living in Florida (Katz, 2009), elders on reserves in South Africa (Oakley, 2010), and elders in the Netherlands (von Faber & van der Geest, 2010). In contrast,

ethnogerontology/geriatric knowledge is largely grounded in the collection and analysis of quantitative data such as demographic variables. These data are then used to describe, correlate, and/or predict outcomes on aging and age. At the same time, ethnogerontology/geriatric knowledge production is not limited to quantitative data collection. It includes case studies, narratives, ethnographic examinations of culture and aging, and interpretive methods of knowledge production. While this exploration of gerontology's subfields based on Blakie's "othering" (2006) serves to identify the strengths of each subfield, it would be an overstatement to say the subfields are distinct and separate within gerontology.

In gerontology, whether it is considered from the perspective of specialists on aging or specialists on culture, both culture and aging are complex areas. How they are explored and responded to may be different depending on one's specialization. Ethnogerontology/geriatrics literature and education offer two major responses to the complexity of culture and aging: these responses are acknowledgements of the heterogeneity within and between cultural groups and development of cultural sensitivity or cultural competence for working with older adults. This applied approach responds to the problem of complexity by calling for increased research and education on cultural competency for care providers and policy makers. The approach of cultural gerontologists is to ensure that multiple life experiences are heard and contribute to the co-construction of multiple aging identities (Kunow, 2010). In *Learning to be Old*, Cruikshank (2009) posits that narratives are the best resource for learning about multiple life experiences; they tell the stories of how individuals have constructed their identities as they have aged. Cultural gerontologists deconstruct these stories and offer explanations of the complexity of aging or, as Kunow (2010) suggests, the co-construction of multiple aging identities.

Cultural gerontology is criticized as a postmodernist field of study built on the assumption that an increased individualistic society will cause aging to be more individualistic as well. This assumption does not take into account the cultural diversity across the globe and the varied values regarding individualism and community. An additional criticism is that postmodernist perspectives overestimate individual agency in aging experiences and minimize the effect of social structures on aging experiences (Walker, 2009). Criticisms are addressed by Gilleard and Higgs (2000) who suggest that the “cultural turn,” or increased interest in understanding everyday experiences of aging, is part of the increasing reflexivity in current times. Cultural gerontology contributes to the investigation of meanings in aging in individuals’ lives, social institutions, and change processes of social institutions.

In the next section, literature on existing cultural gerontology curriculum in addition to descriptions of undergraduate courses found in the field of cultural gerontology are reviewed. This review will address the manner in which cultural identity formation is experienced and co-constructed in religion, ritual, art, film, literature, and contemporary culture.

### **The Current Cultural Gerontology Curriculum**

The literature on cultural gerontology curricula is dispersed throughout the humanities and social sciences literature and is not limited to gerontology journals and resources. In this review, *A Guide to Humanistic Studies in Aging* (Cole, Ray & Kastenbaum, 2010) has been very important. So too have a number of edited books and textbooks associated with cultural gerontology. This review focuses on Canadian undergraduate gerontology programs and their course offerings as described on program websites and in course outlines. The gerontology programs included in this review are offered at Bishops University, Lakehead University, Laurentian University, Mount Royal University, Ryerson University, St. Thomas University, the

University of Ottawa, and the University of Waterloo. The three major disciplinary streams presented in this review are as follows: religion and spirituality, literature and film, and cultural studies.

**Religion and aging and spirituality and aging curricula.** Religion and aging, or spirituality and aging, are addressed in varied ways in a gerontology curriculum. Social gerontology survey courses include content on religion and spirituality in later life as do courses on the sociology of aging and the psychology of aging. These courses address religion and spirituality and aging as correlates of well-being, as part of the social network of support in later life, and as part of human development and growth toward wisdom or despair. Humanities-based courses in religion and spirituality and aging are generally electives in gerontology programs, and they are available in at least two of the eight gerontology undergraduate degree programs in Canada: the programs offered by Laurentian University in Sudbury, Ontario and St. Thomas University in Fredericton, New Brunswick. A course titled *Religion and the Elderly*, an elective course in Laurentian University's gerontology program, covers topics related to life stage development, loss, spiritual well-being in older adults, and applied spiritual care practices (active listening, music, storytelling, contemplation, prayer, and so forth). These topics, in combination with others such as rites, rituals, values, and beliefs about aging in major world religions, comprise the framework of the course. The methods of classroom instruction include lectures, films, group discussions, experiential learning through role-plays and rituals, and in-class reflective activities. Alternatively, when this course is offered via distance education, the methods of instruction include study of texts, a study guide, recommended YouTube videos, and written assignments. The assignments require students to write a research essay based on academic resources and informal information gathering from a faith-group leader such as a rabbi,

priest, or imam. A second assignment involves interviewing an older adult to explore his or her experience of religion or spirituality. The course is structured so as to develop sensitivity to religious and spiritual beliefs and practices among older adults. In the case-study experience, students have the opportunity to apply this sensitivity, learn what religion and spirituality mean to the participant, and practice two spiritual care activities with the participant. In this final assignment, students are guided to comment on their experience of co-construction of knowledge about religion and spirituality and aging.

Religion and spirituality are relational in nature, meaning that there is a need to communicate with self, others, and God/Higher Power in order to construct and maintain relationship (McFadden & Ramsey, 2010). Communication that involves expression of oneself through creative arts is not well addressed in the cultural gerontology literature although it is suggested by specialists in spirituality and aging that opportunities for meaningful creative expression are essential to spiritual well-being (McFadden & Ramsey, 2010). Creativity and the arts and aging is evident in the gerontology curriculum in a limited number of courses; in Canadian gerontology programs, the following courses are listed: *Music Therapy and Aging* and *Art Therapy and Aging* at Laurentian University; *Recreation, Leisure and Aging* at St. Thomas University; and *Aging and Leisure* at the University of Waterloo in Waterloo, Ontario.

**Literature and aging and film and aging curricula.** A review of the course offerings in Canada indicates that only one course on film and aging is offered (St. Thomas University) and that no courses on literature and aging are offered in undergraduate gerontology programs in Canada. This is not to say that literature and film are never employed in gerontology courses as a way to infuse cultural gerontology perspectives. However, the near absence of literature and

film courses on aging is an indication of the low priority given to this field in the gerontology programs in Canada.

At the same time, the literature does reveal that there are many resources available should a course on literature and aging or film and aging be targeted for development in Canada. Two American-based articles on literature and aging are included in this review. In the first one, Wyatt-Brown (2010) recommends a collection of literary texts for students to learn about today's culture and the nature of aging. These works of fiction, in combination with narratives by older adults, are annotated and grouped into categories such as life review, swan songs, disability, and mourning. By reading multiple books and memoirs on a particular theme, students learn about the variety of representations of aging developed by authors and older adults themselves (Wyatt-Brown, 2010). A second article describes a literature course in which students are made aware of the invisibility of the aged in present-day American culture through comparative study of American and Chilean texts (Waxman, 2010). Based on the assumption that literature reflects and constructs cultural values, this course teaches students how old age is socially constructed (Waxman, 2010). Rosenblatt's (1993) reader response theory is employed in order to transform student thinking (cited in Waxman, 2010). Students learn that old age is valued in Chile and not valued in America. These realizations are supported by the instructor's first-hand accounts of deference shown to elders in Chile in contrast with representations of invisibility in America (Waxman, 2010).

Films, like literature, represent aging in cultural contexts and are employed in many courses within and outside of cultural gerontology related courses. The literature reviewed for this section features the work of Robert Yahnke, a professor emeritus from the University of Minnesota's Department of Education and Human Development. Yahnke (2005) proposes

integrating films in courses so students can experience individual experiences of old age in many different countries; his selection of international films depicts older adults as mentors and catalysts of change in their communities. Yahnke (2010) updated his annotated listing of international films and grouped them along themes so that faculty and course designers do not have to sift through all the film titles to find helpful resources. Instead, they can select from titles based on gerontological themes including intergenerational relations, love in old age, religion, mentors, poverty, and more. For example, aging in place is a topic of interest globally, as identified by the International Federation on Aging (2012). Recommended films in this category include *Waking Ned Devine*, *Shower*, *Cinema Paradiso*, *Babette's Feast*, and *The Straight Story*. Literature and films are powerful tools in the study of gerontology because they communicate through storytelling which is an effective means of communication about culture (Abrahamson, 2009) and aging (Yahnke, 2005).

**Cultural studies and aging curricula.** Cultural studies courses comprise the third disciplinary stream. The literature that deals with cultural studies addresses issues of identity and identity formation in a cultural context. A review of the gerontology courses offered in Canada found two courses which include textbooks with a cultural studies focus as required reading. These courses include *Sociology of Aging* at Lakehead University in Thunder Bay, Ontario and *Ageing Here and Elsewhere* at the University of Ottawa. There may be other courses that address this area of study, but the available course descriptions and reading lists did not allow me to discern the courses' learning objectives or disciplinary perspective.

In the course outline for *Ageing Here and Elsewhere*, the instructor indicates her intention to teach about culture and aging from multiple approaches (Givechian, 2012). Her primary focus is cross-cultural comparisons of aging population groups; the second involves the



local and global demographic challenges experienced by these groups; and the third explores the construction of aging identities. The course outline notes that the teaching strategies include lectures, discussions of readings, and discussions of students' projects. Assessment of learning involves tests, class participation and quizzes, and a review essay in which the student applies skills related to comparative cultural study in gerontology.

*Aging, Culture and Experience* is a course on culture and aging offered at the University of Southern Florida and, while it is not a Canadian course, the course description and course outline are extensive and provide a rich example of a cultural gerontology course. The course textbook, *The Cultural Context of Aging: Worldwide Perspectives*, edited by Sokolovsky (2009), is grounded in cross-cultural and comparative gerontology. The course addresses current contexts of aging and interpretive approaches to understanding aging through exploration of life course perspectives, ethnographic research, and etic and emic observations of culture and aging. Assignments are structured to systematically scaffold students' learning about culture and aging via critical analysis, experiential learning, and reflection on learning. Admittedly, this course may be more anthropological than it is cultural studies oriented, but the textbook and course outline also provide references and resources that explore significant issues associated with cultural studies including cultural identity formation (Featherstone & Hepworth, 2009); mobility (Katz, 2009); discourse (Rosenberg, 2009); and globalization and aging (Fry, 2009).

Cultural studies contribute to cultural gerontology through a number of academic texts that are used in gerontology courses offered in Canada: *Contesting Aging and Loss* (Graham & Stephenson, 2010); *Cultures of Aging: Self, Citizen and the Body* (Gilleard & Higgs, 2000); *Cultural Aging: Life Course, Lifestyle, and Senior Worlds* (Katz, 2009); and chapters of *The Cultural Context of Aging: Worldwide Perspectives* (Sokolovsky, 2009). Curricula employing

these texts bridge the gap between traditional models of aging that are prominent in modern Western culture and the current and evolving culture of aging. These texts and courses are bridging the cultural lag in curriculum development in cultural gerontology.

In the cultural studies literature, globalization and its effect on constructions of aging are discussed and expand previous perspectives on aging. For example, Kunow (2010) examines the impact of globalization on images of retirement identities. He describes the “gray nomad” identity as the retiree with financial means, health, and interest in travel. In contrast, the “aging migrant” identity refers to the labourer who migrated to find work and is now retired in a foreign land (Kunow, 2010). In cultural studies one of the noted effects of globalization is increased opportunity for choices not only in later life but throughout life; these many choices throughout the life course make the formation of an identity in later life all the more complex (Gilleard & Higgs, 2000).

Cultural studies, literature and film studies, and religious studies contribute to knowledge and curricula that explore the construction of aging and identity formation. They accomplish this by investigating what it means to be old and by interpreting the representations of aging in popular culture, such as media, texts, film, ritual, ceremony and more. Cultural gerontology is not well developed in current gerontology curriculum, but it is present in some of Canada’s gerontology programs. Gerontology curriculum in Canada is not standardized; hence, there are differences in gerontology programs. One of these differences is that some programs offer cultural gerontology-related courses while others infuse cultural gerontology-related knowledge and approaches within select courses through film and literature.

## **Conclusion**

A cultural gerontology curriculum does not address global aging in terms of the numbers of aged people and their impact on health care services or fiscal policy. At least, it does not focus on the statistics. Instead, cultural gerontology addresses how we construct aging, how we represent aging, and how aging identities are formed. The literature explores these phenomena through ethnographic study, analysis of elders' narratives, and analysis of discourse found in texts, art, films, and literature. There is no discussion of "intercultural" in this literature or related curricula. The articles that describe courses and recommended course content do indicate that education for the purpose of student transformation is often a learning goal. Some of the course outlines describe learning strategies that are associated with constructivist, social constructionist, and experiential learning theories. Overall, cultural gerontology makes a significant contribution to gerontology curriculum because it focuses on the voices of older adults and their lived experiences.

### **C - The Education Specialists on an Intercultural Curriculum**

This section provides a review of the educational literature on intercultural curricula in university-based education. It begins with a general orientation to intercultural curricula and then addresses important themes that arise within the literature, including culture and the many terms associated with culture, educational theories, teaching and learning about culture, learning goals related to culture, and hidden curriculum. This last concept, the hidden curriculum, is arguably the most significant issue to address in intercultural curriculum development because it is subtle and sometimes escapes notice. A hidden lesson in current gerontology curriculum is that Western-mainstream culture is assumed to be the culture best suited for understanding aging. In the second section of this review, attention is directed to applied practice and, specifically, the

practice of scaffolding for teaching and learning about culture. Several examples are included to demonstrate how scaffolding is currently employed in intercultural curricula. These examples are evidence of the potential for intercultural curricula, and they serve to communicate the interest faculty have in developing such curricula. The current trend toward internationalization of Canadian universities is documented in the final section of this review and linked to education for global citizenship as a response to internationalization, a response which is also consistent with intercultural curriculum development.

### **The Intercultural Curriculum**

An intercultural curriculum is a planned program of study that, with intentional inclusion of culturally-diverse content and a culturally-safe learning environment, fosters cognitive and affective learning. This is the working definition for intercultural curricula established after reviewing the literature on culture and the many ways of describing such curricula including “multicultural,” “cross-cultural,” “intercultural,” “inclusive,” and “diversity.” The intercultural curriculum may be designed for both local and international students (Mestenhauser, 1983; Shenk, Moore & Davis, 2004) and for on-campus as well as Internet-assisted distance education courses (Guo & Jamal, 2007; Kurubacak, 2011). Such a curriculum enables students in a variety of disciplines to broaden perspective, to develop a more multi-layered understanding of the content, and to respond to cultural diversity (INTER-Project, 2007; Yershova, DeJaeghere & Mestenhauser, 2000). These goals are accomplished primarily through the strategies of transformative learning and scaffolding learning. These learning practices foster engagement by students with the content as well as with fellow students’ knowledge of content. Additionally, student reflection on their learning is an important strategy (Sandstrom & Duncan, 1999; Tisdell & Tolliever, 2009).

**Culture.** The educational literature is prolific in its definitions of culture; one 1990 study examined 128 definitions (Soudijn, Hutschemaekers, & Van de Vijver, cited in Matsumoto, 2009). A generally-accepted definition of culture is “a dynamic yet stable set of goals, beliefs and attitudes shared by a group of people” (Gurung, cited in Matsumoto, 2009, p.12). Culture is also characterized as organic and responsive rather than static (Triandis, 1983), as fluid and dynamic rather than essentialized (Tisdell & Tolliever, 2009) and as a process of hybridization (Grant, 2011). It is not only race or ethnicity that form culture; gender, class and other organizing characteristics also play a role (Guo & Jamal, 2009). Other definitions list variables or components of culture. Triandis’ (1983, p. 84) elements of culture are listed below:

- patterns of dress;
- use of a particular technological innovation;
- methods of economic activity;
- patterns of social interactions;
- patterns of child rearing and of educating the young;
- patterns of decision-making and conflict resolution (i.e., politics);
- beliefs and behaviors relevant to the regulation of the place of humans in the universe;
- behaviors that produce aesthetic satisfactions;
- behaviors that increase understanding (i.e., philosophy); and
- behaviors that are required in communication (i.e., language).

Capitman (2002) presents a working definition that summarizes the aforementioned qualities of culture: “Culture is the sum total of ways of living adopted by a people. Cultures offer meaning structures for interpreting events, judging the qualities of services, making decisions, and implementing life plans” (p. 11).

Mestenhauser (1983), speaking of higher education, observes that the disciplines often assign discussions of culture to anthropology, thereby marginalizing culture within the curriculum by giving it the status of an elective. This is true for the gerontology programs that comply with the *Standards and Guidelines for Gerontology and Geriatrics Programs* (4<sup>th</sup> ed.) of the Association for Gerontology in Higher Education (2008) which, for bachelor's degree programs in gerontology, identify one course in cross-cultural perspectives on aging as one of the electives in the social science cluster of course options. Mestenhauser, however, sees culture more broadly, proposing that culture is part of all disciplines and is transdisciplinary, like race and gender. He asserts that "...much research evidence suggests that culture is a higher-level concept than disciplines" (1983, p. 31).

**The many names for culture in curricula.** Many closely-related terms describe the relationship between culture and curriculum, including "multicultural," "cross-cultural," "intercultural," and "diversity." It is a challenge to organize and discuss these terms, as their meanings are not always clear; in fact, they are sometimes used indiscriminately. For example, in a recent seminar called *Four Strategies to Engage the Multicultural Classroom* (Oulette & Stanley, 2012), the presenters began by providing a definition of diversity as the foundation for their presentation. Their definition and case examples reflected the broad spectrum that diversity may include: race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, ability, and socioeconomic status. The presenters, however, employed the terms "multicultural" and "diversity" interchangeably throughout the session. The same indiscriminate use of the terms is found in the literature (Kitano, 1997; Rosenfelt, 1997; Yee & Tursi, 2002). The term "cross-cultural" is generally used when comparing cultures and refers to values, beliefs, and practices within ethnic groups (Brislin, Landis & Brand, 1983; Heale, 1999). In these cases, the boundaries between cultures

are assumed and comparison is for the purpose of understanding differences between them.

Marginson (2009) contends that cross-cultural curriculum content is neutral and does not require a relationship or a response to the content.

A poignant example of the imprecise use of terminology can be found in the 1983 three-volume series titled *Handbook of Intercultural Training*. In these volumes, the term cross-cultural is used in a majority of the chapters with the exception of one chapter entitled “Canadian Multiculturalism: The Solution or the Problem?” (Smith, 1983, p. 260). Canadian multiculturalism is conceptualized as an ideal that fosters knowledge about cultures for the purpose of acceptance of those cultures; however, it is also critiqued as a concept that ultimately perpetuates the perception of difference between and among cultures. As a solution, Smith proposes identifying the intercultural curriculum as a better model for education because it attends to the differences and the commonalities between and among cultures. Moreover, he suggests that an intercultural curriculum requires an active relationship or response to differences and similarities (Smith, 1983). This recognition of the intercultural curriculum as distinct from multicultural and cross-cultural curricula is significant in understanding intercultural curriculum. An intercultural curriculum encompasses more than other cultures or diverse groups of people; it also serves to promote an understanding of and response to one’s own culture. Smith (1983) calls this cognitive and affective learning, while Olguin and Schmitz (1997) refer to it as comparative and relational learning. These two perspectives contribute to an understanding of intercultural curriculum.

**Educational theories addressed in the literature on an intercultural curriculum.** A number of educational theories are particularly relevant to an understanding of intercultural curricula. These include theories based in constructivism, social constructionism, humanism,

and experientialism. These four schools of thought and some of the theories and practices related to them will be reviewed in the following paragraphs. Prior to review of the noted theories, transmissive approaches to teaching and learning will be discussed.

Transmissive approaches are built on traditional theories and practices that are found in higher education. In these approaches, the teacher, as expert, shares knowledge with the student, typically, in lecture format. The result is often a reproduction of the expert's knowledge of the content (Witcher, Sewall, Arnold, & Travers, 2001). This is an effective method of knowledge exchange especially for students who learn through a didactic learning approach. Transmissive approaches to learning are oriented to transmitting content and fostering cognitive learning. Intercultural curricula, however, require a safe learning environment for developing not only cognitive learning but also affective learning. While transmissive approaches may be included in intercultural curricula, they need to be supplemented by other learning approaches to ensure students are reflecting on their affective responses to cultural diversity. Transmissive approaches are not often referred to in the intercultural curriculum literature. In the following paragraphs, I will focus on teaching and learning theories that are addressed in the literature on intercultural curriculum.

Constructivism proposes that learning is an active process through which students build knowledge by making connections with what they already know by communicating with others and by means of personal reflection (Freedman, 1998; Leonard, 2002; Merriam & Brockett, 2007; Mestenhauser, 1998). The teacher assists students in active construction of their own knowledge. The goal is students who are active participants, rather than passive recipients of the teacher's expert knowledge. For this reason, constructivism is referred to as a learner-focused educational paradigm (Leonard, 2002; Kemp, 2011; Tangney, 2014). In the constructivist school



of thought, both teaching and curriculum design minimize learning by lecture and maximize active learning through student engagement with the content (Noddings, 2012). Constructivist approaches include case-based learning, collaborative learning, engaged learning, problem-based learning, ladder learning, team-based learning, and many other approaches to learning in both the classroom and via Internet-based education technologies (Leonard, 2002).

Another closely related school of thought found in the literature on intercultural curriculum development is social constructionism. This perspective is similar to constructivism: it acknowledges that knowledge is constructed through connection and reflection with others in the learning environment (e.g., the classroom, study session, or online discussion). In social constructionism, however, these connections take place in discourse and, specifically, critical dialogue that challenges hegemonic discourse where hegemonic discourse refers to communication of dominant values and beliefs. This is the educational philosophy of Freire (1967, 1970) as described in *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* and *Education for Critical Consciousness*. Freire's work involved transforming the prevailing dialogue that the poor and poorly-educated knew nothing and were, therefore, powerless. By modeling critical thinking rather than didactic narrative, he empowered students to be in dialogue, to engage in critical thinking, to construct their own expertise, and to challenge the status quo.

Humanism underpins many of the learning theories that contribute to an intercultural curriculum. The tenets of these learning theories include the belief that humans are basically good, humans are autonomous beings with free will, and humans seek growth and fulfillment in life (Leonard, 2002; Merriam & Brockett, 2007). The aim of humanistic learning theories is development of student potential through cognitive and emotional development. The student's role is to be in charge of and to direct his or her own learning. The teacher's role is to foster the

opportunity for student learning (Bertrand, 1993). Humanist learning theories are oriented toward developing humanistic thinking. Leonard (2002) describes this type of thinking when he writes the following: “Human thinking is a growth process that leads to a greater tolerance for ambiguity, a greater acceptance of self and of other people, and a personal transformation through new insights that result from peak life and learning experiences” (p. 86). This description of humanistic thinking is in concert with the definition of an intercultural curriculum used in this study. Here I am referring to the characteristics of affective learning (Smith, 1983) and relational learning (Olguin & Schmitz, 1997) that are included in the working definition of intercultural curriculum. Furthermore, humanistic thinking is evident in cultural competency, briefly defined here as a skill acquired over time that includes the ability to manage cultural differences. Cultural competency is explored later in this review of literature as a potential learning goal of intercultural curricula.

A number of learning theories are associated with the humanist school of thought. Adult learning theories and holistic learning theories are humanistic learning theories in which the experiences of the student are drawn into the learning; in the holistic learning theory, an additional aim is to foster greater wholeness of the student (Leonard, 2002; Tangney, 2014). A Gestalt learning approach is a type of holistic approach that requires students to investigate and integrate all aspects of an issue, including the student’s subjective experiences of the topic, in order to understand the whole. In the Gestalt approach, the teacher’s role is to foster the student’s “consciousness” of the subjective experience, and this insight contributes to understanding the issue as a whole (Leonard, 2002).

Experientialism is a theoretical approach that is associated with humanism and other theoretical schools such as constructivism. The experiential learning theories and approaches as

promoted by humanist psychologist Carl Rogers are characterized by self-directed learning that result in individual maturation (Leonard, 2002). They were prominent in the 1960s and 1970s in “experimental schools” in which the goal was to develop the individual student’s full potential (Bertrand, 1993). Experiential learning theories are not limited to education in the early years, however. Experiential education is dynamic and involves experiences that challenge students to reconceptualize their ideas by means of creativity, intuition, observational modes, and participatory modes of inquiry (Bertrand, 1995). Diaz-Lazaro, Cordova and Franklyn (2009) suggest that, when students experience a concept, they make a connection to previous experience, encoding their new experience for subsequent learning, or challenging previous inaccurate beliefs or understandings of the concept. This experiential learning is associated with internships and service learning opportunities in a curriculum.

The theoretical perspectives are not always acknowledged in the academic literature on intercultural curriculum, but they are evident as underpinning assumptions in models, approaches, and case examples. No one theory is identified as the most appropriate learning theory for intercultural curriculum. This review of theory, however, indicates the pervasiveness of humanism in intercultural teaching, in combination with constructivist theory and practice in current culture-related curriculum. This idea is reinforced in the subsequent discussion on teaching and learning about culture.

**Teaching and learning about culture.** The literature related to teaching and learning about culture is substantial. Educational researchers Gudykunst and Hammer (1983), for example, suggest three differing approaches for teaching on the topic of culture: self-awareness, cultural awareness, and intercultural awareness. Each of these approaches begins with the

student, not the content. Furthermore, each of these approaches is based on a different assumption regarding how students learn about culture.

In the self-awareness approach there is the assumption that students need to learn about their own values and beliefs first, then about their culture's values and beliefs, and, finally, about the values and beliefs of other cultures. If any stage in this process is omitted, students will not grasp the reality that their values and beliefs are affected and/or constructed by the culture they live in, just as others' beliefs are affected and constructed by their cultures. Several examples of this approach are found in Soysa, Dawson, Kanner, Wagoner, and Soltano (2009). In one example, students maintain portfolios containing assignments on social identity. In the assignments, students are required to investigate sources of information and to obtain accounts of personal experiences from individuals in a stereotyped group. In another example, students write their autobiographies based on identity and their racial affiliation as a member of a minority.

According to the cultural awareness approach, students learn first about their own culture and then about other cultures. Only after being exposed to this new knowledge are they able to compare, contrast, and, ultimately, develop an awareness of their personal values and beliefs (Gudykunst & Hammer, 1983). Curriculum choices that foster cultural awareness include didactic or experiential approaches, as well as exposure to the arts, literature, and films from a variety of cultures. Heale (1999), for example, describes a course that employs film to examine cultures and discern similarities with respect to children, generations, education, gender roles, work, social stratification, patriotism, the land, and ritual.

The final approach by Gudykunst and Hammer (1983) is intercultural awareness. In this approach the assumption is that students cannot understand themselves until they experience being in another culture; only after this kind of experience can they distinguish their own culture

and its influence on the self. This approach requires intercultural curriculum design that ranges from course assignments that involve exposure to another culture, to simulated experiences of another culture, to drawing on past experience with another culture, and to a cultural immersion experience. Phan (2009), in *Getting Culture*, provides several examples of simulation games for the classroom to generate experiential learning about diversity. In this same book, Lahar writes of a project shared between students in the United States and Japan and their discoveries of one another's culture by means of online discussion boards. The experiences gained through cultural immersion opportunities outside of formal education, such as the former Katimavik program or the World University Service, are also beneficial in developing intercultural awareness (Smith, 1983).

Although the order differs, the same three elements are evident in all three perspectives: (1) awareness of one's own values and beliefs, (2) awareness of one's cultural values and beliefs, and (3) awareness of another culture's values and beliefs. Within each element, as a number of scholars have identified, reflection is fundamental to the development of the student's and the teacher's cultural awareness. (Gravett & Peterson, 2009; Jones, 2009; Marginson & Sawir, 2011; Taylor, 2009). Mestenhauser (1998) explains the process of reflection in greater depth. He explains that students learn about culture through an etic perspective; that is, through the observation of another culture. At the same time, he maintains that students also learn by means of an emic perspective, an observation from within their own cultures. Flexibility in thinking develops when the student engages with both perspectives in an iterative process of comparing and contrasting two cultures.

Teaching and learning about culture does raise some concerns. The first pertains to students' readiness for relativism, while the second involves the consequences of critical

awareness of culture. These two concerns are important to keep in mind as culture-related curriculum is revised or developed for undergraduate education. They are explored in the following paragraphs.

The caution about students' readiness for relativism refers to the tendency of some students to take the easy path of the relativist and accept all differences rather than make informed judgments when faced with cultural values and practices other than their own (Heale, 1999). Curricula need to challenge students to examine biases, values, and generalizations and to avoid unexamined acceptance of differences. Students will develop an appreciation of cultures only if these cultures are critically examined and understood (Heale, 1999).

In contrast with the challenge of student readiness for relativism is the challenge of supporting their critical awareness of their own culture. Learning about a culture is sometimes a shock followed by a slow process of absorption of realization about the culture; it takes time to make sense of the impact of this realization and to work through a process of appropriation and renegotiation (Claxton, Pollard & Sutherland, 2003). For example, in introductory gerontology courses, students are sometimes shocked when they realize their own stereotypes, biases, and mythologies about older adults. Gerontology teachers and textbooks are attentive to this process of critical awareness and are prepared with information on myth "busting" and case examples of diverse experiences of aging to help students renegotiate their beliefs about aging. Preparing for critical awareness among international students requires careful consideration by curriculum planners in gerontology. An example of an international student's experience of critical awareness, from my background as a gerontology teacher, is offered to ground this discussion:

Living arrangements and alternative-opportunities housing for older adults was the topic of the day. We began with a brainstorming exercise on the meaning of home as a place

of comfort, privacy, traditions, memorabilia, and so on. I then provided students with current information on the housing options available in the province, including supportive housing, retirement homes, long-term care homes, and so forth. An international student raised his hand and asked, “Why are there places for the elderly in Canada? Don’t they live with their children?” (paraphrased from memory) It was a forthright question, but it wasn’t just his question that caused concern; it was the look on his face indicating he couldn’t believe what he was hearing.

I explained that many Canadian elders elected to live as independently as possible and that home care and residential care were valued aspects of the Canadian health and social system. The international student’s look of disbelief remained as he realized that Canadian values were very different from those of his home country. His fellow classmates remained silent, and, in retrospect, I consider this to be a missed opportunity for peer learning on many levels.

Positively, the opportunity for deepening critical awareness took place in a dialogue between the student and me after the class. In this exchange, he argued that it would be unthinkable not to care for elders in a family. I replied that many Canadian older adults value their independence and prefer intimacy at a distance rather than living with an adult child and his or her family. The opportunity for realizing that cultural values are constructed was part of our discussion, but I do not know if the student understood this realization.

Critical awareness is achieved when a deeper level of understanding is reached, and teachers and students realize that their way of seeing is just one of many ways of seeing. The international students risk their loyalties, identities, and affiliations as they renegotiate affiliations and values while living in a foreign land (Claxton, et al., 2003). Teachers, curricula,

and the services and institutions supporting international students must be prepared to provide a supportive learning environment for international and domestic students.

**Cultural awareness, cultural sensitivity, cultural competence, cultural safety.** A number of terms relating to the goals or intent of the intercultural curriculum are found in the educational literature, specifically “cultural awareness,” “cultural sensitivity,” “cultural competence,” and “cultural safety.” These terms represent increasing levels of understanding of culture and increasing levels of application of this understanding. Similar to the indiscriminant use of the terms “intercultural,” “multicultural,” and “diversity,” these terms - “cultural awareness,” “cultural sensitivity,” “cultural competence,” and “cultural safety” - are often ill-defined in the gerontology curriculum-related literature

Cultural awareness refers to the basic learning goal of recognizing differences between cultures. Recognizing difference through observation is a part of everyday experience for students and for the cultural anthropologists. In curriculum development, cultural awareness is what Banks (2006) refers to as including “heroes and holidays” in the course plan so as to highlight major cultural leaders, celebrations, or representations of a culture.

Cultural sensitivity requires awareness and some type of action that demonstrates a respectful relationship to the “other.” That “other” may refer to any of the diverse ways in which humans are different: race, ethnicity, gender, age, sexual identity, socio-economic status, ability, or some other quality or characteristic of a group of people. A simple example of cultural sensitivity and, in particular, sensitivity to language is evident in a teacher-education international exchange program in Malaysia reported by Lazarus and Tay (2003). In this example, foreign teachers eliminated the previously-existing clinical supervisor role and initiated a new mentor type of role for teacher supervision. They knew that the Malaysian word for



“mentor” was imbued with elements of spirituality and that these elements were not part of the newly-initiated teacher-mentor role. To avoid confusion and misappropriation of cultural beliefs, the foreign teachers took action to find a more appropriate Malaysian word for mentor, thereby demonstrating cultural sensitivity. Thoughtfulness about a culture other than one’s own and action taken in response to that thoughtfulness are evidence of cultural sensitivity.

A more complex learning goal, cultural competence, is generally defined in terms of knowledge, skills, and values involving the ability to interact with someone of a culture other than one’s own (Hanson & Wiebe, 2005, Hart-Wasekeesikaw, 2009, National Aboriginal Health Organization, 2008). Learning cultural competence is a life-long process requiring both intention and practice (Yee, 2002). Yershova, DeJaeghere, and Mestenhauser, (2000) note that “intercultural competence is conceived more broadly and understood as an individual's ability to manage cultural difference...This may be understood as an individual's response to difference: (a) considering it a problem...[or] (b) regarding it as an opportunity for learning and personal growth” (p. 43).

Cultural safety goes beyond sensitivity, awareness, and competency and requires the acknowledgement of and response to power differentials in learning environments. This type of safety is most often addressed in the nursing and health-care literature where, using this lens to discern differences in power, health-care professionals are challenged to make changes in their individual practice and to advocate for changes in the health system, primarily through education of the self, the patient, and the system (Hart-Wasekeesikaw 2009). Power differentials are prevalent throughout the higher education system, including the on-campus and online classroom. This power differential is part of the hidden curriculum in which students are disempowered in their learning, particularly by transmissive approaches to education. In these

cases, the “otherness” of a student in relation to the teacher and/or fellow students creates perceived if not actual vulnerability.

**The hidden curriculum in the intercultural curriculum.** At the core of the higher education literature on the intercultural curriculum is the challenge to uncover the hidden curriculum on culture (Guo & Jamal, 2007; Howard-Hamilton, 2000; Ignelzi, 2000; Jones & Young, 1997). The hidden curriculum is the set of unstated assumptions or rules that are in play but not necessarily articulated in a course, program, or institution. Students learn the unofficial rules about power and structure in order to succeed in the academic environment. For example, there is the unacknowledged assumption that we learn from the experts and a corollary assumption that we place higher value on knowledge presented by people in power (Jones & Young, 1997). The hidden curriculum that pertains specifically to culture asserts that mainstream culture is a natural and fitting lens. It affirms that anything that is not of the main stream is understood to be “other,” viewed as separate, not necessarily relevant, and, ultimately, marginalized (Jones & Young, 1997; Rosenfelt, 1997). Howard-Hamilton (2000) contends that it is the teacher’s responsibility to make the hidden curriculum visible and to challenge it. Students, too, can take responsibility for making visible the underpinning assumptions of the curriculum. This co-discovery of limitations and assumptions can be empowering for students and teachers alike. The literature identifies strategies for meeting this responsibility, some of which are being transparent about the intentions of creating a culturally- safe classroom or an online discussion space; modeling appropriate language of inclusion; and supporting student participation (Gurung 2009; Jones & Young, 1997). These strategies can serve to overturn hidden assumptions and create culturally-safe environments. What is evident in the educational literature is that rationalizing one’s choice of how teaching and learning occur is theoretically

just as significant as rationalizing one's choice of what is being taught and learned.

### **Constructing an Intercultural Curriculum**

The literature on internationalizing universities and the literature on curriculum design are sub-specialties within the broader educational literature and inform the discussion on constructing an intercultural curriculum. The approach to curriculum construction may begin by determining what level of change is going to be undertaken. The specialists in internationalizing the Canadian universities have addressed this question and distilled three levels of curriculum change; these are discussed in the following section as “add on,” “infusion,” and “transformative.” The curriculum design literature suggests another important issue to consider, scaffolding for intercultural learning. Important strategies for scaffolding, including teacher modeling and student assessment are part of this review. Finally, this review presents examples of scaffolding learning in culture-related courses offered on campuses and via online course-delivery systems.

**Considering the extent of the curriculum change.** Included in the literature on internationalizing curriculum in Canadian universities are questions and considerations that are relevant to constructing an intercultural curriculum. The extent of curriculum change is an important consideration. Curriculum change may take place by “adding on” new elements into curricula; “infusing” elements into curricula; or “transforming” current curricula (Bond, 2003). In applying these terms to intercultural curriculum reform, the add-on approach is the easiest but is generally limited to enhancing cultural awareness. Examples of an add-on approach include inviting a guest speaker to class, adding a reading or assignment, or sampling foods, fashion or music (Banks, 2006; Bond, 2003). The infusion approach involves more planning on the part of the teacher as learning goals and objectives are re-oriented or added to ensure the development

of cultural sensitivity or cultural competency. Infusion may take the form of assignments, readings, and active learning strategies within a course or program that reflect diverse viewpoints, including students' viewpoints and experiences (Bond, 2003). The transforming approach requires the most extensive change to the curriculum and has the potential to change the teacher and the student. Immersion in a culture is one example of a transformational curriculum, most often experienced in international exchange programs (Bond, 2003).

**Scaffolding in an intercultural curriculum.** Scaffolding is a strategic practice in course and program design that involves planned supports for learning. It is both a noun and a verb and may be a concrete entity like a written plan, learning objective, action, or process (Pea, 2004). Scaffolding does not refer to building course content; rather, it refers to building learning capacity through the activities (e.g., baseline assessments, formative assessments, guides for discussion groups, questions in class, supportive commentaries, reflective assignments, and group work) that support students' learning and may include socially-based or technology-based activity (Pea, 2004). Ignelzi (2000) describes scaffolding as the practice of building bridges from what the student already knows to student self-direction and authoring of his or her own ideas. These bridges however, are not lengthy, linear spans for students to travel on; rather, they are incremental learning assignments that enable the next level of thinking. This is true for learning about gerontology; it is also true for learning about cultural awareness, cultural sensitivity, cultural competency, and cultural safety.

Scaffolding an intercultural curriculum may progress from understanding one's own culture to understanding a different culture to understanding how the members of a different culture perceive one's own culture. As previously shown, this is one of three potential approaches to developing cultural awareness described by Spodek (1983). He asserted that while

learning the details of a culture (e.g., language, rituals, geography) and its frameworks (e.g., patterns, structures, roles) is foundational, comparing and contrasting these elements with one's own culture fosters intercultural understanding and empathy. He further maintained that, in the later stages of an intercultural curriculum, students learn broader concepts such as how cultures view aid, interdependence, immigration, citizenship, and obligations. Students develop an understanding of the complexity of cultural systems, intercultural relations, and their own locations within this complexity (Spodek, 1983). Spodek indicated that, in practice, scaffolding takes a student from learning about a culture to learning to enjoy other cultures and, finally, to learning how to interact with others of another culture.

Teacher modeling is one of the most common scaffolding strategies used in classroom instruction. Modeling may involve telling students what is happening in the process of thinking through an idea or task. This may involve demonstrating the steps in solving a problem or thinking-out-loud about the thinking process (McLoughlin, 2002). Teacher modeling of cultural sensitivity and cultural competency may also take place. The strategy, in this case, is for the teacher to be transparent as to how and why inclusivity and openness to culture is part of the learning environment. An example of teacher modeling and learning about cultural sensitivity is included in the Cultural Mosaic course, described later in this chapter.

In online education, teacher modeling is extended and mediated by the technology, resources, and opportunities for communication available to learners and teachers. One such example of scaffolding is found in the online course on Communication and Cultural Competence, designed for new international medical graduates and described in an article by Nelles, Smith, Lax and Russell (2011). This course employs multiple supports such as a baseline assessment, printed material, videotaped model interviews, quizzes, and access to an instructor.

Such tools assist students in learning appropriate communication skills in a Canadian context. Students are given a video introduction to the course and the observation guide that they are to employ as they view doctor/patient vignettes also presented on video. After watching a vignette and following the observation guide, students answer a series of questions about their experience, their observations, and their responses. This is an authentic learning task that serves as an example of scaffolding. Additional scaffolding is in place throughout the course which employs more complicated case examples and builds on cognitive knowledge and support through expert responses or comments. Further, students engage in reflective exercises and receive expert feedback that prompts deeper understanding and recursive learning.

In addition to teacher modeling and electronically mediated student engagement with learning, prior assessment of each student is valuable. Prior assessment of international students is especially important because many international students have already established patterns and styles of learning. A strong foundation for a learning scaffold requires that teachers identify and build on students' existing strengths and learning styles. For example, some international students are highly skilled at review and memorization, because these practices are not always recognized or supported in Westernized universities, these students are expected to deny or ignore their learning skills and proficiencies in order to learn through Western, generally constructivist, methods (Marginson & Sawir, 2011). This exact scenario was evident in a recent online LinkedIn group - *Teaching Professors*. In this case, a theology professor solicited advice on how to respond to students enrolled in his distance education course. Students from India had expressed concern about his teaching approach which he referred to as "gestalt type" and through which students were to be attentive to personal reflection and their own discovery of knowledge. The responses from other professors with considerable experience teaching across international

borders recommended he return to more traditional methods of teaching and learning so that students could apply their well-practiced learning skills and develop confidence in the subject prior to being introduced to new learning strategies. Marginson and Sawir (2011) sum up the importance of knowing one's students: "Unless the prior education and self-formation of each international student is taken into account, no teaching and learning strategy will be fully effective. The scope for incremental learning becomes reduced because the early foundations are removed from sight and the scaffolding kicked away" (p. 70).

Scaffolded learning is often associated with collaboration in learning which requires a relationship among students, teachers, content, and the process created for learning. This social nature of learning is addressed by Russian social psychologist L. S. Vygotsky (Johnson & Dyer, 2006, McLoughlin, 2002; Pick, 1998). In his book *Mind and Society*, Vygotsky (1978) proposed the concept of the "zone of proximal development." This zone is the continuum of learning that may occur beyond what individuals may learn on their own and the more expanded learning they might accomplish when helped by or in dialogue with others (Bertrand, 1995). This social interaction is significant to the learning process and includes the learner, peers, experts, and teachers. Vygotsky recognized that many things influence learning, including the selection of appropriate examples, the teacher's modeling of engaged learning and critical thinking, and the learning atmosphere of the classroom or virtual classroom (McLoughlin, 2002). Scaffolding is not just a tool box of strategies to be implemented or integrated into a course; it is a system of carefully-selected supports and approaches for each course and learning outcome designed to optimize student learning.

What sometimes emerge are biases and unexamined values, generalizations, and judgments (Heale, 1999). Students sometimes seek the path of the relativist rather than relying

on informed judgment. The intercultural curriculum challenges the assumption that cultural relativism should be acceptable without critique; the critique, however, is conducted in a safe learning environment. Creating open and safe places for dialogue to occur is recognized as fundamental in the scaffolding of intercultural education.

### **Internationalization of Higher Education and a Canadian Response**

Theories and practice in curriculum development have, over time, been affected by social and political ideology (de Alba, Gonzale-Gaudiano, Lankshear, & Peters, 2000). As indicated in the Introduction to this dissertation, Canada's history of internationalization of education for the purpose of international exchange and development has shifted with the international trend toward the internationalization of universities. The increased interest in international education is due, in part, to pragmatic factors, including the global demand for higher education as a means to employment; the increased interest in lifelong learning which includes re-tooling the aging workforce; the potential for student mobility; the acceptance of English as the language of global communication; and the development of regional economic unions that encourage cross-national cooperation and standardization (Ryan & Zuber-Skerritt, 1999). Many of these factors reflect a "market model" that aims to provide students with a competitive global advantage (Hanson, 2010). In contrast, the "liberal model," associated with intercultural and international activity, is aimed at cooperation and understanding on a global level. A third model, the "social transformation model," is similar to the "liberal model," but also involves critical social analysis and is in opposition to the "market model" (Hanson, 2010). These three models have dissimilar educational goals; put simply, they are education for advantage, understanding, or change; it is, therefore, important that curriculum developers recognize and understand these goals and orient the curriculum accordingly.



Taking a stance or position on curricular reform is occurring in Canada in a number of universities. The University of Guelph in Ontario, for example, recently adopted campus-wide learning outcomes that will be embedded into curricula and one of these planned learning outcomes is “global understanding” (Communications and Public Affairs, 2012). The University of British Columbia is actively reviewing curricula in order to promote intercultural understanding as part of its commitment to developing global citizens (Toohey, 2009). York University, in Toronto, Ontario, conducted an undergraduate curriculum review in 2002-2003 under the auspices of the Curriculum Diversity/Equity Project and in keeping with the University’s mission: “York university is open to the world; we explore global concerns” (Barndt, 2004, n.p.). The internationalization of higher education has inspired some scholars to develop and adopt the concept of global citizenship as a desired “liberal model” and/or “transformative model” (Harlap & Fryer, 2011). The Society for Teaching and Learning’s Green Guide called *Global Citizenship in Teaching and Learning*, and authored by Harlap and Fryer is a valuable resource on this topic. It explains that citizenship does not refer to citizenship in terms of the responsibilities and protection of a nation or a global nation; rather, “global citizenship is related to caring about and for other beings and the environment; it is related to staying curious about the world, to asking questions, to making commitments, and taking action in accordance with our values” (Harlap & Fryer, p. 14). The learning environment for global citizenship fosters inquiry, not indoctrination. The intent is to develop local to global literacy, in contrast with only developing global literacy (Harlap & Fryer, 2011). Global literacy in this context refers to knowledge of global issues, whereas local to global literacy refers to understanding or discovering the relationships that link a particular area with other regions of the world. The authors differentiate education for global citizenship from internationalization of

higher education by explaining that global citizenship is oriented toward exploring interdependencies and multiple relationships; internationalization, however, is focused on international students or exchanges. It is posited here that the two need not be mutually exclusive; instead, curriculum development for global citizenship (i.e., caring about others and the environment, fostering inquiry and action) may also be linked to intercultural curriculum development for international education. Hanson (2009) proposes that global citizenship is accomplished through transformative education strategies including critical reflection for self-transformation and the active role an educator takes in teaching and modeling that critical reflection.

## **Conclusion**

Curriculum is a powerful organizational tool, for both sharing knowledge and learning. This review of current knowledge of the intercultural curriculum demonstrates some of the complexities of such a curriculum, including theory, conceptualizations of key terms, learning processes, and integration of theory and process. The discussions are sometimes confounded when authors and presenters are imprecise in their word choices and employ terms such as “multicultural” and “diversity.” At the same time, the examples of intercultural teaching and learning provided in the literature help to inspire thinking about intercultural experiences and teaching strategies.

The need for an intercultural curriculum in gerontology is grounded in two critical issues: the internationalization of higher education and the aging of the global population. The first creates an opportunity and a responsibility for Canadian faculty to establish a curriculum that takes both local and international students into account. This is especially important in the fields of study that address global issues such as the aging of the global population. Both local and

international students need to understand the challenges and opportunities of aging populations at home and abroad. The identified goal of such an intercultural curriculum is to foster global citizenship in local and international students.

## **Chapter 3**

### **The Research Methods**

A qualitative study was conducted for the purpose of exploring the thinking of international and Canadian university-based stakeholders associated with intercultural education and/or gerontology curriculum development and to describe the attributes of and possible resources for an undergraduate intercultural program in gerontology for Canadian universities. The study design was grounded in the constructivist paradigm and, as an interdisciplinary study, a combination of theoretical lenses were applied. Constructivist learning theory and elements of humanist learning theory, in addition to elements of social constructionism, the life course perspective, and cultural gerontology guided this study. The research methodology is presented in the following pages in three sections: rationale, procedure, and analysis and discussion.

The first section on rationale includes discussion of the problem, purpose, question, and limitations. The second and largest section addresses the procedure, the paradigm, constructivism, and the role of the researcher. The procedures section provides descriptions of the participants, the semi-structured interview process and questions, the process and elements of the relevant secondary data collection, ethics considerations, and a pilot of the interview process and questions.

The third section of this chapter addresses the data analysis process and discussion structure. Inductive thematic analysis (Cresswell, 2012; Guest, Namey & Mitchell, 2013; Ryan & Bernard, 2003) informed by the constructivist paradigm (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011) was employed in the analysis of interview transcripts. Strategies for validating this analysis included member checking and triangulation of primary and secondary data sources. Appendices relevant

to this chapter include Appendix A Letter of Invitation to Participate in the Research, Appendix B Consent Form, Appendix C Letter of Permission, and Appendix D Ethics Approval.

## **Rationale**

**Statement of the problem.** The internationalization of Canadian universities and the aging of global populations are two critical 21<sup>st</sup> century issues that tie to curriculum development in gerontology. The current state of the undergraduate gerontology curriculum in Canada gives priority to Western perspectives on aging, while explorations of culture and aging are limited primarily to cross-cultural comparisons. These approaches are not always sufficient for students' reflections on their own cultures or for generating understandings of cultural diversity and aging. Gerontology students require programs that reflect interdisciplinary and intercultural principles and practices so they can respond to diversity in the aging population as well as diversity in the student population. The gap between these concerns and current gerontology education represents a need for curricular transformation that will foster global citizenship in domestic and international student learning. What will this transformed curriculum encompass? How will it be delivered? These were the questions explored in this study.

**Purpose of the research.** The purpose of this qualitative study was to explore and describe an undergraduate level intercultural gerontology curriculum for universities in Canada. In this study, an undergraduate intercultural gerontology curriculum was defined as a planned program of study with intentional inclusion of culturally diverse content and a culturally safe learning environment that fosters cognitive and affective learning about the cultural diversity of aging. This curriculum is intended for domestic students and international students who are enrolled in Canadian universities and who may or may not be majoring in gerontology but who are taking a course in gerontology. This student population may include students born in

Canada, permanent residents in Canada, sponsored refugees in Canada, international students studying in Canada, and students living in countries other than Canada who are enrolled in courses via distance education. This research explored cultural diversity and aging at the meta-level and did not focus on any one cultural group of older adults.

**Research questions.** The first research question was as follows: What should an undergraduate university-based intercultural program in gerontology encompass? This question included many avenues of exploration: (1) participants' views on infusing intercultural learning within a gerontology curriculum; (2) participants' views on structuring courses in order to be responsive to students' cultural affiliations; (3) participants' views on the range of intercultural experiences that may be employed or suggested for an intercultural gerontology curriculum.

The second question was as follows: How should this curriculum be delivered? In relation to this question, participants shared their views on methods of course delivery for an intercultural gerontology curriculum. These suggested methods of course delivery included face-to-face methods such as the traditional classroom setting, traditional print-based distance education, on-line learning, blended learning, mobile learning, and so forth. In discussing methods of course delivery, there were many opportunities to discuss learning activities, recommended resources, and student learning services provided by universities.

**Limitations.** This exploration focused on gerontology curriculum in Canada. While I sought and obtained insights from both international colleagues and Canadian colleagues, the purpose of this study was to suggest a curriculum for the Canadian university system. This curriculum may or may not be appropriate as a curriculum offered outside of Canada.

An internal limitation of the study was that some participants were not familiar with the concept of an intercultural curriculum. A definition of intercultural curriculum was provided in

the Invitation to Participate in the Research (Appendix A), the Consent Form (Appendix B), and the Preamble to the interview (See page 87 of this document) in an effort to address the limitation.

## **Procedures**

**Qualitative strategy.** This exploratory study investigated, analyzed, and integrated primary and secondary data sources in order to recommend attributes, resources, and modes of delivery for an undergraduate intercultural gerontology curriculum for Canadian universities. Qualitative methods were appropriate for this research question because they enabled me to discover the relevant issues, investigate these issues in depth, and identify trends, concerns, and barriers.

The primary data collection strategy was face-to-face (two in person and ten video-Skype) semi-structured one-hour interviews with a purposive sample of twelve key stakeholders, all of whom were associated with the concept of an intercultural curriculum and /or gerontology curriculum. These interviews were recorded on my iPhone (for face-to-face interviews) or laptop computer (employing the software programs Audio Hijack Pro and Audacity) and transcribed into Word documents for analysis. Additional data sources that contributed to understanding this topic included the literature reviewed for this study, university-based course outlines (See Appendix E, Summary Report on Course Outlines), and my own professional experience in practice, research, and teaching gerontology. These data sources contributed to the overall richness of the study.

**Theoretical perspectives.** This research was informed by the constructivist paradigm and, thus, the research was grounded in a “relativist ontology,” a “subjectivist epistemology,” and a “naturalistic methodology” (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011 p. 13). In other words, this research

was based on the understanding that knowledge of the social is not an immutable set of laws or facts; rather, it is constructed by individuals and groups of individuals who agree on what is true or real. Lincoln, Lynham, and Guba (2012) refer to the nature of knowledge in the constructivist paradigm as “reconstructions sometimes coalescing around consensus” (p. 101). In my research, key stakeholders with experience with intercultural curriculum and/or gerontology curriculum contributed their knowledge and expertise to a description of an intercultural gerontology curriculum for Canadian universities. Their expertise contributed to the plausible and authentic character of the research. The themes, subthemes, and suggested resources constitute a toolbox for future dialogue and potential construction of intercultural gerontology curricula. The constructivist paradigm situates research investigations in natural settings. This research study took place in the real-world setting of the university and involved discussions with key stakeholders at universities engaged in the development of intercultural curriculum and/or gerontology curriculum. Additionally, the secondary data identified earlier in this chapter were part of the natural setting of the research and contributed to the credibility and authenticity of the research.

Inductive thematic analysis techniques were employed in the analysis of interview transcripts (Cresswell, 2012; Guest, Namey & Mitchell, 2013; Ryan & Bernard, 2003). Similar to the techniques associated with grounded theory (Glaser & Strauss, 1967), this approach involved simultaneous data collection and analysis, coding, constant comparison of codes, identification of emergent themes, memo-writing about category and theme development, and iterative analysis (Charmaz, 2006). At the beginning of the analysis work, I conferred with my supervisors to validate my process and preliminary findings.



**Role of the researcher.** My role as a researcher included recruiting participants, conducting and recording the interviews, arranging transcriptions of the interviews, analyzing the data, and integrating and synthesizing the findings into this final dissertation. My primary supervisor provided oversight of the analysis of the transcripts, theme development, and coding. Consultation with all committee members was maintained throughout the research process.

### **Data Collection.**

**Participants.** A purposive sample of key stakeholders was established for this research. Two questions informed the selection of participants for this survey: Who might want to have a voice in exploring and developing an intercultural gerontology curriculum at a Canadian university? What disciplinary orientations should be included in this project to ensure its interdisciplinary nature? Responding to these concerns, I used five stakeholder groups with at least two interview participants from each group:

1. Professors who teach courses that include the topics of cultural diversity and aging within undergraduate gerontology programs in Canadian universities.
2. Professors who teach or conduct research related to cultural diversity and aging but are not aligned with undergraduate gerontology programs in Canada.
3. Academic leaders and administrators at university-based Teaching and Learning Centres that address intercultural teaching and learning and global citizenship.
4. Academic leaders of international student centres that address intercultural teaching and learning.
5. Academic leaders in gerontology education living outside of Canada.

A confidential list of potential participants was prepared for this research. Some persons on this list were included because I had met them or read about them over the course of my preparation for this research; this sampling method consisting of 42 names was supplemented by six names obtained through snowball sampling. These 48 individuals were contacted via a letter of

invitation to participate in the research. This correspondence was sent by email and followed up with a telephone call and, in cases where there was no response to the email or telephone message, one additional reminder email was sent.

A total of 12 individuals were interviewed. Eleven were female and one was male. The participants were not asked to indicate their ages as part of the interview process. However, estimations based on face-to-face contacts lead me to propose that two were under 40; eight were between 40 and 60; and two were over 60. The people who spoke about their retirements were assigned to the over 60 category. The participants' educational levels were high and included six persons with PhD's, three Master level degree holders, and three individuals with baccalaureate degrees and other certificates.

Ten of the participants were from Canada of which three were from the western provinces and seven were from Ontario. The larger number of participants from Ontario is not unusual given that most undergraduate gerontology programs are in Ontario. The remaining participants were from outside of Canada; one participant was from Europe; and one was from the United States of America. The participants from Canada came from four stakeholder groups: professors teaching about culture and aging in gerontology programs (three participants); professors teaching about culture and aging in programs other than gerontology (two participants); administrators or leaders of teaching and learning centres (three participants); and administrators or leaders of international student centres (two participants). The remaining two participants were professors who teach about culture and aging at universities outside of Canada. Five of the teachers were full-time faculty while two were part-time faculty. The remaining five participants were full-time employees at their universities. Table 2 entitled Key Stakeholders' Responses to the Invitation to Participate in the Study shows the numbers of responses from each

of the stakeholder groups. There were 28 individuals who did not respond to the interview invitation and eight individuals who responded but declined the opportunity to participate, indicating they were on leave (three), too busy (four), or did not think they could contribute to the study (one).

Table 2 Key Stakeholders' Responses to the Invitation to Participate in the Study

| Group |      | Interviewed | No Response | On Leave | Too Busy | Not Suitable |
|-------|------|-------------|-------------|----------|----------|--------------|
| #1    | (16) | 3           | 10          | 0        | 3        | 0            |
| #2    | (7)  | 2           | 3           | 2        | 0        | 0            |
| #3    | (9)  | 3           | 4           | 1        | 0        | 1            |
| #4    | (4)  | 2           | 2           | 0        | 0        | 0            |
| #5    | (12) | 2           | 9           | 0        | 1        | 0            |
| Total | (48) | 12          | 28          | 3        | 4        | 1            |

***Semi-structured interviews.*** Interviews of no more than one hour in length were scheduled at the participants' and researcher's mutual convenience. Two interviews took place face-to-face and ten took place via Skype. The interviews were carried out in an informal conversational manner, but they were guided by four broad interview questions. Additionally, the expertise and examples of participants were integrated into subsequent interviews with other participants. The preamble and four interview questions were as follows:

Preamble: Our interview conversation will be about intercultural gerontology curriculum. We may have differing ideas about what this means, so to provide a starting point for this conversation, I am proposing an intercultural gerontology curriculum refers to: (1) a program of study in gerontology at the undergraduate level (a certificate, minor, major, specialization or

other similar designation); (2) it includes content on cultural diversity and aging; (3) it is conducted in a culturally safe learning environment; and (4) it engages both cognitive and affective learning about culture.

1. Tell me about your experiences or thoughts on teaching and/or developing gerontology courses or a gerontology program that addresses the diversity of cultures of older adults?
2. Would you say there are areas or subjects you wish to explore further in your teaching and/or curriculum development in relation to cultural diversity and aging? Here I am inviting you to dream a bit and talk about what you think is important for undergraduate education in Canada.
3. What are your experiences or thoughts on teaching and learning with culturally diverse students enrolled in a gerontology course? By culturally diverse you might think of international students, students not born in Canada, or students coming from a rural setting to an urban university or visa versa.
4. If you could dream, how would you envision the delivery format for teaching and learning in intercultural gerontology programs in Canada?

Finally, I would like to know if you have any questions for me, or if you wish to revisit or add to this discussion. Thank you.

Interviews were conducted in a manner consistent with good qualitative interview practices as identified by Cresswell (2012), including reviewing the consent form, testing the recording technology, and providing a welcome to build rapport. The questions were open-ended while probes were used to focus on participants' accounts and details. It was important to avoid judgments, arguments, and leading comments, and to respect the time frame established for the interview. I was an active listener who remained open to the participants' ideas and who participated in the dialogue.

***Secondary data collection.*** Thirteen university-based gerontology course outlines (syllabi) that refer to culture and aging were assembled and reviewed for this study. The data collection process, a brief summary of the data, and a descriptive summary table of the course outlines can be found in Appendix E, Summary Report on Course Outlines. Relevant data from

course outlines were integrated into the discussion of the interview-based study and provided support and context to the discussion.

**Ethics approval.** Laurentian University's Research Ethics Review Board approved this study. See Appendix D. Another Canadian university research ethics board approved this study. However, the name of the university remains confidential in order to protect the confidentiality of the participant(s) from that university. Laurentian University's Research Ethics Review Board also approved the secondary data collection. See Appendix C for the Letter of Permission associated with the secondary data collection.

**Practicing the interview questions.** A single practice interview was conducted with a colleague from a university gerontology program. This practice interview served to test the research protocol, interview questions, and my abilities to manage the interview process. After the interview, the interviewee indicated that the questions were very good and the interviewing was paced well. A few days later, I shared my transcription of this interview, and it was found to be accurate. The transcript of the interview was not included in the final research.

## **Analysis and Discussion**

**Thematic analysis of transcripts.** Transcripts of the interviews were analyzed using inductive thematic analysis which includes careful reading of the transcripts for key words, ideas, and trends (Guest, MacQueen & Namey, 2012). The analysis included initial coding and in vivo coding (Charmaz, 2006; Cresswell, 2012). In vivo coding involves using the participants' own words rather than the words of the researcher or researcher's discipline as codes. In this study, "flow" and "dynamic" were the participants' own words and were used for coding the transcripts. A codebook was developed to ensure clarity and transparency in the coding process. Codes were then reviewed for clustering, repetitions, similarities/differences, metaphors, and

missing data (Ryan & Bernard, 2003) in order to identify themes in the transcripts. The themes were reviewed and discussed in the context of the interviews, the literature, and my own theoretical sensitivity. Theoretical sensitivity is defined as knowledge derived from the literature review, professional experience, and personal experience (Strauss & Corbin, 1990). Engagement with the themes in this manner requires integration of relativity and reflexivity throughout the research process (Charmaz, 2011; Cresswell 2009). The themes reflected multiple perspectives and complexity.

**Strategies for validating findings.** Two strategies for validating the results of the research were implemented: member checking and triangulation of data sources (Cresswell, 2012). To accomplish member checking, I summarized two participants' transcripts and identified initial themes in these transcripts. I then invited the two participants to review half of his or her summarized account and the identified themes for accuracy and fair representation. This took place early in the interviewing schedule in the event that I might need to respond to criticisms or recommendations made by the participants. However, the participants confirmed the accuracy of the transcriptions and the initial themes.

Triangulation of data was accomplished by using diverse sources of data and integrating their findings. First, there were the participants themselves who were all stakeholders in the development of intercultural and/or gerontology curriculum who were located in very different roles, institutions, and geographic locales. This non-homogeneous sample group contributed to the breadth and depth of this exploratory research. The second data source was the course outlines assembled for this project. These records provided a grounded perspective on current teaching practices and the content of culture and aging courses in gerontology in present-day courses offered by Canadian universities. Triangulation thus occurred when two data sources

converged to focus on the same phenomenon (Creswell, 2012). Supplementary data included the researcher's more than ten years' experience as a professor in the field of gerontology in a university community and previous research and professional experiences working with an older adult client-base.

**Study presentation.** The results of a qualitative study need to be presented in a convincing manner "so that the reader experiences 'being there,'" (Cresswell, 2009, p. 46). In this study, verbatim statements, stories, and metaphors used by the participants were integrated throughout the analysis and discussion. This approach provides readers with a sense of the language, emotion, concepts, and issues of the interviews. The writing style meets formal academic standards, but the final document includes many descriptive accounts and examples of curricular practices as presented in the interviews and secondary data.

## **Summary**

This chapter explains the rationale, procedure, analysis strategies, and approach to discussion for the study on undergraduate intercultural gerontology curriculum. This curriculum likely does not yet exist and, therefore, exploratory research is appropriate in order to discover what it might encompass and to learn how it might be delivered in Canadian universities. Twelve key stakeholder with varying disciplinary affiliations and from different positions within Canadian and international universities contributed to this exploration. One hour long recorded interviews with these individuals provided rich accounts of their experiences and thinking about an intercultural gerontology curriculum. Applied thematic analysis was selected as an appropriate means for discerning the themes for discussion. Secondary data from gerontology course outlines was identified as a resource for the triangulation of data and was further supported by my own teaching and professional experiences. Lastly, anecdotes and verbatim

accounts provided by the key stakeholders were recognized as a means for communicating the authenticity of the study and ensuring readers' interest.



## **Chapter 4**

### **Findings**

#### **Context and Participants**

Twelve interviews with key university-based stakeholders were conducted for the purpose of this study. In the preamble to each interview, the context for the conversation on intercultural gerontology curriculum was carefully set. An undergraduate intercultural gerontology curriculum was defined as a planned program of study with intentional inclusion of culturally diverse content and a culturally safe learning environment that, in combination, fosters cognitive and affective learning about cultural diversity in aging. The participants were invited to share their thoughts and experiences on this topic. Ten of the participants were from Canada and two were from outside of Canada; that is, one was from the United States and one was from Europe. The participants from Canada were from four stakeholder groups: faculty teaching about culture and aging in gerontology programs (three participants); faculty teaching about culture and aging in programs other than gerontology (two participants); administrators or leaders of teaching and learning centres (three participants); and administrators or leaders of international student centres (two participants). The remaining two participants were faculty teaching about culture and aging at universities outside of Canada.

#### **Themes and Subthemes**

Five themes were identified: multiple perspectives on cultural diversity; the dynamic nature of cultural diversity and aging; flow of an intercultural curriculum; principles and practices for an intercultural curriculum; and institutional culture and intercultural curricula. These themes and their relevant sub-themes (See Figure 1, Themes and Subthemes) are described in the following pages and supported by quotations taken from the interview

transcripts. The numbers following the quotations refer to the interview transcript number and page number.

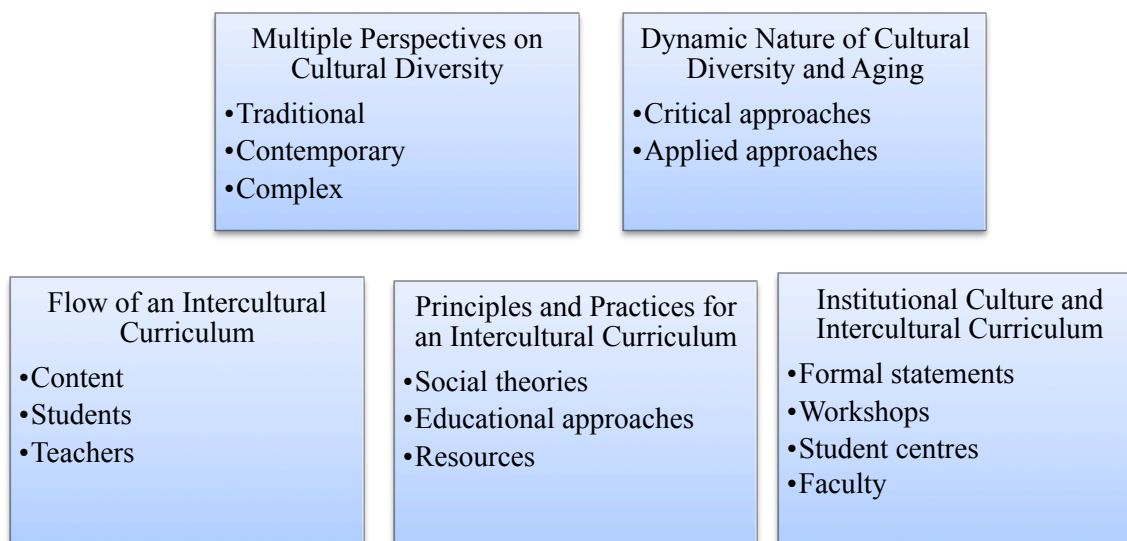


Figure 1. Themes and Subthemes

**Multiple perspectives on cultural diversity.** A significant theme in the interview conversations was multiple ways of thinking about and experiencing cultural diversity in the context of a curriculum. While the term diversity served as an umbrella term incorporating the various ways the human population is different in Canada and the world at large, it also encompassed multiple perspectives on content that explores cultural diversity. These perspectives fall into three categories: traditional, contemporary, and complex. Each participant incorporated more than one of these perspectives in their conversations as demonstrated by this statement, “Gender, race, class, ethnicity, physical ability, sexual orientation, these are all cultures” (1.6). Sometimes all three perspectives were discussed which serves to demonstrate the various understandings of a recommended intercultural gerontology curriculum.

***Traditional perspective.*** The traditional perspective of cultural diversity refers to diversity in terms of ethnicity, nation of origin, and spiritual traditions. This traditional perspective, according to the participants, is reflected in gerontology course textbooks and ethnogerontology studies. For example, a participant indicated that a new edition of a Canadian gerontology textbook was about to go to press and that it contained a chapter on culture:

They have now included a chapter in the new edition...they've included a chapter on culture. That's the first because you have to have it [culture] in the textbooks. I lobbied for that for so long, so I'm really glad that we have that...I think they are also doing more on religion and spirituality. (11.8)

In many cases, the traditional perspective served as the default position on cultural diversity. For example, when participants talked about culture and aging in general, they often provided an example of ethnicity and aging, or religion and aging, or nation of origin, and less often pointed to gender and aging, race and aging, sexual orientation and aging, or some other form of diversity. The traditional perspective on cultural diversity was common across all the stakeholder groups, as were the contemporary and complexity perspectives.

***Contemporary perspective.*** In contrast with the traditional perspective, some participants emphasized an interest in a contemporary perspective. In these cases, participants referred to sexual orientation, indigenous peoples, the economic status of older adults, and the health status of older adults as especially important to teaching and learning about cultural diversity and aging. A number of the participants emphasized moving past traditional perspectives and taking into account these additional elements of culture, "I think we have to get away from the traditional view on diversity. We have to address, as well, issues such as low and high income, single, married, or partnerships, and difference in sexual orientation" (4.9).

**Complex perspective.** A third prevalent perspective in the interviews was how the cultural diversity of older adults involves the intersection of multiple cultures including cultures of race, gender, socioeconomic status, religion, sexual orientation, nation of origin, age, immigration experience, physical/mental ability, and rural/urban environments. This complex perspective was identified by the majority of the participants as relevant and appropriate for current gerontology education. While there were times when participants defaulted to traditional perspectives, or highlighted contemporary perspectives, the overall trend was to acknowledge cultural diversity as complex. The following statement was one of many made by participants that demonstrate the complex perspective, “I do recognize that it's not just cultural background, as in what country or continent you grew up in. The context is more diverse and it includes familial context and different types of abilities” (6.1).

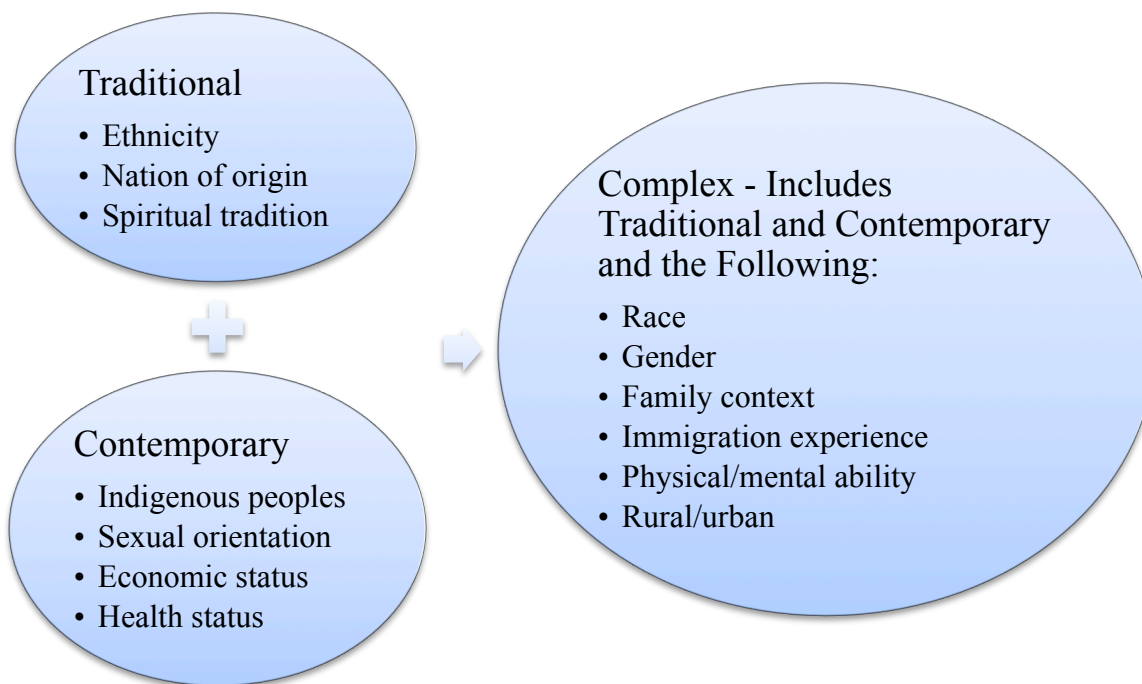


Figure 2 Multiple Perspectives on Cultural Diversity

The participants' three perspectives on cultural diversity are summarized in Figure 2. The traditional and contemporary perspectives coalesce to populate the broader and more inclusive

complex perspective. The complex perspective further includes elements such as race, gender, family context, and so forth.

**The dynamic nature of cultural diversity and aging.** “It was like Princess Diana cleaning your toilet” (2.7). This image of royalty and bathroom hygiene was offered by a participant as a synopsis of a student’s learning experience at a long-term care facility. The story highlights the dynamic nature of cultural diversity and aging. The story, paraphrased in order to shorten the account, is as follows:

There was a man in the retirement home who was from India and she [the student] could tell by his last name that he was from a low caste. In Canada he was quite well to do and he was paying for a very expensive residence. In comes a Personal Support Worker (PSW) who was, according to her last name, from a higher caste in India. She was to provide service to the low caste resident. The student observed that the PSW was very uncomfortable and the resident was uncomfortable... It was like Princess Diana cleaning your toilet. (2.7)

This student’s account provides an opportunity for reflection on experiences of culture and aging and an interesting way to introduce the theme of culture’s dynamic nature. Participants pointed out that the dynamic nature of culture and aging needs to be explicit throughout a gerontology curriculum. First, educators must ensure that students recognize that diversity comes in many forms. Here again, participants referred to the varied elements of cultural diversity including ethnicity, race, gender, socioeconomic status, health status, spiritual traditions, sexual orientation, nation of origin, age, immigration experience, physical ability, rural or urban setting, and more. Second, educators must ensure that students understand that older adults have had a lifetime to grow more and more diverse as they experience their cultures.

Their experiences over time contribute to their individual diversity in addition to their cohorts' diversity. Third, the curriculum must present cultural diversity in a manner that demonstrates how a culture may not be primary at any given time in an older adult's life; there may be an ebb and flow to its importance in a person's life. For example, a curriculum on aging may investigate ethnicity over the life course, but it also needs to investigate immigration experiences and cultures of poverty that affect an individual or cohort group. The dynamic nature of cultural diversity and aging as they are experienced over time and over place emerged as an important theme in the interview conversations. This theme was discussed in two ways: as a critical approach to teaching cultural diversity and aging, and as an applied approach to teaching cultural diversity and aging.

*A critical approach to teaching cultural diversity and aging.* While participants recognized that teaching about cultural diversity and aging was complex and challenging, they further identified that it was an important goal in a gerontology curriculum. They criticized past approaches to teaching about culture and aging when culture was circumscribed to stagnant typologies of customs and beliefs. An alternative provided by the participants is use of a critical approach that examines the context of cultures and aging. Context includes the institutions, structures, and histories of cultures, especially as they affect the older population. Learning about context fosters a comprehensive understanding of a cultural group. This understanding is richer and better informed than understandings achieved through comparative study. A participant stated this in the following: "It's so dynamic when we talk about one group (referring to Indigenous People of Canada). What are all the contexts, the institutions, and the structures around them? I think that a critical approach is important whenever we talk about cultures" (1.11).

*An applied approach to teaching cultural diversity and aging.* The dynamic nature of cultural diversity and aging was also evident as participants discussed the need to prepare students for future practice with older adults. Preparing students to think critically when they are in the field and to be sensitive to the values, beliefs, and practices important to an older adult was highlighted as particularly significant. One way of preparing students is to present case examples of encounters with culturally diverse older adults and to explore culturally appropriate responses in these cases. Participants shared many examples, addressing topics such as capacity assessments, end of life decision-making, power of attorney, elder abuse and neglect, beliefs about ill health, and responsibility for good health. While they emphasized that there is no single response to the challenges of older adults' experiences, it is important to develop an appreciation for how cultures affect older adults' perceptions and decision-making. In the following statement, a participant makes this point:

When you're trying to help somebody, it's important that you understand their life experiences, beliefs, values, and culture. It all plays into how they receive and interpret information. It all plays into how they react to information. These are things they [older adults] have acquired throughout their lives, so they are made up of that mix. (7.2)

The purpose of using real-life examples is to raise students' awareness of the many ways that cultural diversity might affect their everyday experiences with older adults. Participants indicated that students should be reminded to ask questions, listen, and confirm understanding as a regular part of their future practice. These and other learning activities assist students in being open to the importance of culture and to practice critical thinking.

The dynamic nature of cultural diversity and aging was a theme in many of the conversations with participants. It arose out of many stories, examples, and accounts of teaching

about culture and aging. The statement, “It was like Princess Diana cleaning your toilets,” provides an image of values and traditions turned on their head and how they are experienced in current times. This theme indicates that culture, experienced over a lifetime and in many environments, is dynamic. It is not a static set of rules or traditions. Therefore, students need to be open and curious and to think critically about culture and aging. The participants’ accounts of teaching about the dynamic nature of culture and aging tended to take either a critical approach or an applied approach. They emphasized the importance of learning about the context of cultures, and the interplay between cultures over a life course. Preparing gerontology students to respond to the dynamic nature of culture and aging was a priority for the participants.

**Flow of an intercultural curriculum.** In their conversations on intercultural gerontology curriculum, participants expressed their preferences and practices for how to structure learning about culture and aging. Common to the participants’ preferences and practices was the underpinning theme that there was a flow to the process. For example, a participant stated, “It’s like cooking. Once I know who is coming for dinner, then I find the right dishes and then the right ingredients” (1. 10). The attribute of flow was evident in discussions regarding the selection of course content, students’ cultural diversity, and the teacher’s role in developing an intercultural curriculum. These three subthemes are presented in Table 3 entitled, Subthemes to the Flow of an Intercultural Curriculum: Content, Students and Teachers.

Each of the three subthemes includes complementary elements that characterize flow in the curriculum. An intercultural curriculum may be structured, but it is not static. According to participants, it is responsive to students’ cultural affiliations, experiences, and diverse origins. For example, participants talked about the flow of content from generic material to tailored material within a course. Generic material includes descriptive demographic data and



generalizations about values, beliefs, and practices of various cultural groups. Tailored content involves students' culturally diverse interests or affiliations. Other participants described the flow of an intercultural course as going in the opposite direction: the course begins with exploration of identity, personhood, and social locations and progresses to contents on cultural diversity and aging.

The flow of an intercultural curriculum is not limited to course content; it is also evident in students' learning about cultural affiliations. In this subtheme labeled "Students," the flow is characterized as "general to authentic" and "untapped resources to curiosity." In both contexts, student learning flows from a general understanding of culture to a personal understanding of culture. The participants in this study saw many advantages to the presence of culturally diverse students in the classroom. Student voices contributed authentic experiences not previously accessible to the students or the teacher. Their contributions to courses enabled a natural integration of diverse perspectives reflecting the world beyond the classroom. The participants also recognized that some students, previously unaware of their own cultural affiliations, developed a greater interest in their cultures and a sense of curiosity about cultures in general.

Finally, the concept of flow was discussed in relation to teachers. Teachers were described as "open and adaptive." There were many accounts of adaptations of assignments, special speakers, and personalized experiential learning experiences that teachers crafted in order to respond to students' cultural affiliations. Teachers were likewise depicted as progressing or flowing from a "don't do to can do" perspective. The participants recognized that intercultural curriculum development requires teacher awareness of cultural diversity, creativity, additional work, and a dedication to the fostering of cultural awareness in order to integrate it into a curriculum.

Table 3 Subthemes in the Flow of an Intercultural Curriculum: Content, Students and Teachers

| Subtheme | Flow   | Participants' Comments   |
|----------|--|--|
| Content  | Generic to Tailored:<br>From foundational content on culture and aging to select content that is specific to students' affiliations and interests.                   | It's like cooking. Once I know who is coming for dinner, then I find the right dishes, and then the right ingredients. I will cook according to who is there, what is the purpose of the dinner, and how I want to present it so that would be most appreciated. (1.10)  |
|          | Identity Issues to Aging Issues:<br>From exploration of identity/ personhood/ social location to issues of culture and aging for critical analysis and reflection.   | I can't teach just about culture anymore. I just refuse to do it without talking to people about their social location and their other identities that interact and are interconnected... I have people do a lot of reflection about their own identity before I'll teach them about culture. (11.1)                                       |
| Students | General to Authentic:<br>From texts and teachers' examples to authentic examples from culturally diverse students.   | These days I always hope I'm going to get some diversity in the class because then you've got a ready made little laboratory right there in your classroom...people who have experiences and beliefs about aging in their own cultures. (9.3)  |
|          | Untapped Resources to Curiosity:<br>From limited self awareness to development of cultural awareness.  | The students from a small town were not necessarily exposed to a lot of differences and so it was about education, it was about politics, all of those layers of diversity. It was something that they had not considered in their identities that suddenly they became aware of. All of that has an impact on how we see the world. (3.4) |
| Teachers | Open to Adaptive:<br>From an open approach to course content and student learning about culture and aging to creative and adaptive teaching about culture and aging. | If the question or the assignment question is open enough, then the instructor has the freedom, has the space, to gauge the students' understanding or wherever they are coming from and how they are approaching the subject and how much they are able to articulate and absorb and give back to the instructor and the course as a      |

whole. So the fluid approach is doable but it takes a lot of thinking, on the part of the instructor. (1.3)

Don't do to Can do:  
From teachers' lack of interest or awareness about intercultural curriculum to interest in intercultural curriculum.

It is probably mostly the last decade that I've been really aware of and engaged in the international literature on growing old in other cultural settings. I've been able to consciously incorporate that diversity into my teaching and now I can't imagine not doing it. (9.2)

The flow of an intercultural curriculum was an important theme that underpinned many of the conversations with the participants. They recognized the importance of fluidity as opposed to rigidity in course delivery content and design. Fluidity in a course allows for the selection of content that is relevant to the diverse students and contributes to the teacher's capacity to model inclusivity and creativity.

**Principles and practice for an intercultural curriculum.** Throughout the interviews, participants identified principles and practices that inform and guide their teaching and understanding of intercultural gerontology curriculum. An underpinning idea in the conversations was that intercultural work is a very human endeavor and, as one participant stated, "you work as if you are trying to change the world, one conversation at a time" (7.5). The principles and practices presented as three subthemes: social theories that inform teaching culture and aging in an intercultural gerontology curriculum; educational approaches that inform teaching culture and aging in an intercultural gerontology curriculum; and resources that contribute to an intercultural gerontology curriculum.

***Social theories that inform teaching culture and aging in an intercultural gerontology curriculum.*** While the references to theories during the interviews were infrequent, they were relatively consistent. The words identity, critical analysis, and intersectionality were used to

depict the principles guiding an intercultural gerontology curriculum. There were also single references to social construction, anti-oppression, and global citizenship. However, because only one participant mentioned each of these, they will not be discussed here.

Identity, as presented by the participants, refers to the self-selection of categories or groups with which one aligns and the values and beliefs one recognizes as one's own. The following comment reflects this theoretical perspective:

I would probably say helping people understand who they are, their values, their identities, is probably the place where we should start people at. Help the student understand that every culture has those deep seated core values and beliefs and all of that, that makes that culture and that we are all in that sense... normal in the sense that it has its own, or you have your own sense of values and beliefs.... everybody has that superficial level of just the clothes and the food but that's not what makes a culture, that's just the expression of that culture. So, it's just to help the student understand that there's a deeper level, and that that deeper level we all have sets of values and beliefs. (7.4-5)

In order to understand culture at deeper levels, critical analysis was recommended. This approach fosters exploration of the contexts of cultures. For example, critical analysis of immigrant experiences with pension programs or health care systems in particular political and economic contexts contributes to a deeper understanding of older immigrant populations. A participant suggested that she engages students in critical analysis of diverse cultures by providing questions after a reading: "When the students do a reading, if it is appropriate, then we will ask them questions like, 'did the reading address just one population group?' or 'how does this relate to another group?'"(12.2). Critical discourse was recommended for deeper understanding of specific topics. As an example, a participant talked about the meanings and

perceptions of family in North American and African cultures; it was her sense that critical discourse is a part of the field of aging and, therefore, needs to be a part of students' learning about culture in aging:

I think what is missing in a lot of our teaching and research is looking critically beyond some of the discourses about aging. For example...the discourses in all countries say families are really important, families are central in the lives of their older people. But, when I talk to my colleagues in Johannesburg and in other parts of Africa, where I'm working quite a lot nowadays, what they say to me is the belief in that part of the world is that they have large families, and they benefit from these large families because everybody supports one another....I think we need to be a bit more critical and certainly undergraduate students, I think, are in a good position to do some of that. (9.3)

Intersectionality (Nash, 2008) was recommended as a way to approach culture and aging in an intercultural gerontology curriculum. Intersectionality complemented the finding that cultural diversity involves the intersection of multiple cultures including cultures of race, gender, socioeconomic status, religion, sexual orientation, nation of origin, age, immigration experience, physical ability, and rural/urban environments. Recognition and study of the intersection of multiple cultures was suggested to be important for understanding older adults as complex people:

This is the way we are dealing with older people, they are diverse, they are diverse in sexual orientation, they are diverse in culture background, they are diverse in religious backgrounds and that kind of diversity must be incorporated in each, in the teaching material. (4.4)

***Educational approaches that inform teaching culture and aging in an intercultural gerontology curriculum.*** The most common approach to designing and teaching an intercultural gerontology curriculum was described as infusing culture and aging content and learning activities throughout a course. This approach requires teachers to consciously disperse culturally diverse content at various points in the course and to be open to inclusion of other relevant content as it presents. Participants suggested that the inclusion of culturally diverse readings, examples, and learning activities were the foundations of this approach. Scaffolded learning, active learning strategies, experiential learning in and out of the classroom, teacher modeling, and Internet-based learning were discussed. Table 4 summarizes the participants' recommendations.

Table 4 Recommended Teaching Practices for an Intercultural Gerontology Curriculum

| Practice                            | Description   | Examples  |
|-------------------------------------|---|---|
| Scaffolded Learning                 | Course design that first supports learning about students' cultural identities, biases, and assumptions and, second, supports learning about cultural diversity in aging.                               | Plan a class discussion that poses a series of hypothetical questions such as: Where will your parents live if they become frail? What will your parents think? What will the family think? Subsequently, organize a panel of older adults and propose the questions: Where will you want to live when you are old and grow frail?" |
|                                     | Course design that first supports learning about diverse cultures and, second, supports learning about students' individual cultural, identities biases, and assumptions.                               | Infuse course materials with examples of aging in diverse cultures and conduct critical analysis of the issues raised in the examples.  |
| Active Learning Strategies          | Individual or group learning activities designed to engage students with course content and their cultural identities.  | Problem-based course design, assignments that foster reflection on students' cultural identities, in-class discussions on students' cultural beliefs and practices, and interviews with older adults.   |
| Experiential Learning Opportunities | Course design that includes praxis, or the opportunity to integrate or reflect on theory and practice.  | Internships, community service assignments and field trips as well as on-campus meetings with older-adult volunteer mentors.  |
| Teacher Modeling                    | Teachers can model the characteristics they wish to teach: to be inclusive, to be open, to share the self; and to have an appreciation of cultural diversity.   | Identify cultural perspectives frequently: qualify course material that may be other than inclusive of cultural diversity; utilize examples from diverse cultural groups as a regular practice, share personal experiences with diverse older adults.   |
| Internet-based Learning             | A curriculum or course that requires students to use the Internet for access to resources (readings texts, lectures, videos, podcasts, etc.) and for communication with the teacher and other students. | Open-access resources such as TED talks, YouTube videos, and National Film Board can be required reading/viewing for distance education or tutorials. A WIKI assignment can support student research and postings to a compendium of community services and policies across the globe.  |

In addition to the above recommendations, participants referred to the practice of creating a safe learning environment. There were two different standpoints on this issue. One standpoint was that, to ensure a safe learning environment, the teacher should not address students' diversity in an undergraduate classroom. From this standpoint, the teacher does not ask students to identify their cultural groups or affiliations although students can volunteer to identify with one or more cultural groups. The teacher's stance is to tread lightly when discussing values, beliefs, and practices and to try to keep his or her position culturally neutral. This standpoint is evident in the following comment:

I do not think that the classroom is a safe space. You don't know about confidentiality because you don't know, you just don't know what happens. They may not be quite mature enough plus, if something sensitive came up, then who is professionally responsible for mopping up if you brought something up that was an issue? (2.5)

The contrary standpoint was that it is important to ensure a safe learning environment by being as open as possible. This openness may be modeled by the teacher's self-disclosure of cultural affiliations and supported by "rules of engagement" for the classroom:

[I] have a good discussion with them about rules of engagement. I set out the expectations and get them to identify them, but then I also add to them...for example, if somebody is expressing an opinion in the front row and I can see somebody rolling their eyes in the background...that's just not all right with my classroom. So we talk about lots of different ways, even when they're talking to each other, how they're going to face each other and apologize if they offend somebody. We get everything discussed up front and then I call them on it. If three classes into the class somebody's not remembering what the rules were, I will say, as we discussed..., and so then people are just more



accountable for their behaviour. They also know that's it safe because I'm going to make sure it's safe. (11.4)

Challenges to a safe learning environment included students' level of maturity and their, sometimes, limited exposure to cultural diversity. The students' emotional well being was of concern to participants, and a number of participants recommended enhanced preparation of students for learning activities that might challenge their sense of cultural safety.

Participants from teaching and learning centres and international student services were particularly vocal about their observations on a safe learning environment. Their general perspective was that the responsibility for a safe learning environment was the teacher's:

The professor really is the key to providing or creating an atmosphere where students feel safe to contribute. The negative stories that I've heard are mostly from students that don't feel their ideas will be welcomed or understood. They feel shy about their accent or their lack of vocabulary at that point in time. But, the positive experiences have mostly been due to a professor who creates an atmosphere in the classroom where all contributions are valued and that the professor helps that process along. (5.2)

In sum, according to the participants, the creation and maintenance of a culturally safe learning environment is, in large part, the responsibility of the teacher. Participants who were/are teachers talked about how they present themselves to students as a means of modeling how students are to present themselves to the class. They identified the need to prepare students for learning experiences in culturally diverse settings and to reinforce guidelines for cultural safety in the classroom. Participants from student centres, speaking on behalf of students, indicated that a safe learning environment is one in which students' ideas are valued and students' differing abilities are taken into account.

***Recommended resources for an intercultural gerontology curriculum.*** Resources for curriculum development and course delivery were suggested by some of the participants. These resources included Internet sites to be used as the basis of learning activities, assessment tools, films, conference proceedings, books and textbooks. The disciplinary perspectives of these recommended resources included cross-cultural communications, health sciences, integrative studies, social gerontology, and social psychology. These multiple disciplinary resources are evidence of the robust nature of an intercultural gerontology curriculum. A list of these resources is found in Appendix F, Resources Recommended by Interview Participants.

**Institutional culture for intercultural curricula.** The culture of institutions of higher education was part of the conversations about an intercultural curriculum. Values, beliefs, and practices related to intercultural curricula, the presence of international students, and faculty development strategies were sometimes discussed in these conversations. Often, the conversations began with participants' descriptions of their affiliations or identities within an institution; the participant was, for example, a faculty member, program chair, director of a centre, or a workshop leader. These identities were then linked to an academic program or a centre at the university. For example, participants said something like the following, "We are a new program"; "We are a small program"; or "We are part of a long-standing centre at the university." In the course of the conversations that followed, participants linked their affiliations and work with one or more of four subthemes of institutional culture. They spoke about the importance of official statements on cultural diversity and inclusivity by the university, faculty and teaching assistant workshops, student academic or international centres, and the intercultural experiences of faculty. Participants identified how these aspects of institutional culture affect or influence intercultural curriculum development.

**Formal statements by the institution.** According to the participants, institutional mission statements, mandates, visions, core values, and strategic plans sometimes articulate the organization's stand on cultural diversity, international students, and preparation of global citizens. In one case, the university's mandate reflected the long-term commitment of the institution to cultural diversity while, in another case, the institution's mission statement and goals specified greater accessibility and inclusivity locally and globally. The participants referred to these formal statements as evidence of the institution's commitment and orientation to intercultural education. Some participants linked their work in intercultural teaching and learning to these statements. For example, one participant stated that the university's goal to be a more inclusive community was the rationale for a collaborative effort by international student centres and faculty learning centres to deliver workshops, courses, and training in teaching and learning in a culturally diverse community. Another participant indicated that she and others were granted release time to develop and attend training in intercultural curriculum development as part of the university's strategic plan. In other cases, institutional statements were not clearly supportive of cultural diversity and intercultural curriculum. The mandate at one participant's university was to provide standardized curriculum that is transparent and uniform. The participant stated that this did not foster an open or flexible curriculum in which faculty can be responsive to students' interests and differing abilities and, therefore, did not support an intercultural curriculum.

**Workshops.** University funding for workshops on intercultural curriculum development or other faculty development workshops were described to be short-term and project-oriented. The most frequent attendees at workshops were teaching assistants, not full-time faculty. While these workshops varied in orientation, the recurring workshops were the following: teaching

international students, developing intercultural competency, developing inclusive course content, and active learning strategies. A number of the participants were workshop leaders or facilitators in these areas. One participant described workshops on intercultural curriculum in the following way:

Our student engagement centre put on a couple of workshops about interculturalizing the curriculum. So that's one of the projects being done here at this university. It's already a part of things and because we have such diverse students, it is a part of the philosophy already of the university (12.4).

***Student centres.*** Student centres were noted to provide academic and social support for culturally diverse students including international, indigenous, lesbian-gay-bisexual-transgendered, female, and ethnic students. These supports, especially the academic supports that enhanced understanding of Canadian academic culture and academic practices at universities, contributed to fostering culturally safe learning environments and, ultimately, to student success. A number of participants were directly affiliated with international student services and commented on student orientation to academic culture:

We offer academic orientation to students, there is social and academic orientation, but there is a focus on the academic pieces. We're specifically addressing transitions to new academic cultures. We are doing intercultural communication workshops with students and one of the biggest challenges that international students tend to have is with plagiarism. (6.3)

***Faculty.*** A final but significant subtheme of institutional culture was faculty. Participants identified faculty as key to the creation and delivery of intercultural curricula. There were multiple factors associated with faculty interest in intercultural curriculum and cultural diversity.

Some of these factors were engagement with literature on aging in other countries, international research, study and travel, a cadre of international faculty in a department, and recognition of international work and life as the new norm for graduates. Faculty provided their personal accounts of how they came to be interested in intercultural curricula as well as their experiences working with other faculty in intercultural curriculum development. In some cases, faculty-based committees were influential. One faculty described committee work as follows:

The committee on diversity and inclusion was particularly interested in trying to really make sure that we all understand that it's important for us as an entire college to have our own culture of acceptance and our own culture of appreciating that the world is a changing world and that, literally, we are a global society now and that we can't just think about the local. (11.3)

Not all participants experienced support in intercultural gerontology curriculum development. Part-time faculty participants referred to being isolated from other faculty and the overall development of the gerontology curriculum. The part-time faculty participants were interested in developing intercultural elements in the courses they taught, but they did not have a sense of the gerontology program as a whole and did not know what was being taught in other courses. One participant indicated that a lack of oversight of the gerontology program at her university was a barrier to her involvement in curricular development.

The theme of institutional culture and intercultural curricula included four subthemes: formal statements, workshops, student centres, and faculty. Participants declared their affiliations with their institutions and often linked their statements on intercultural curricula and cultural diversity to formal statements by their educational institutions. There were some formal statements, however, which did not clearly support intercultural curricula as a part of the

institutional culture. Instead, some participants indicated that the university supported standardized curriculum and professional competency-based curriculum and that academic policies did not support accommodations for culturally diverse students. Workshops in student support centres and among faculty members and faculty groups were identified as opportunities for intercultural curriculum development. Participants identified, however, that few faculty participated in these workshops. The degree of faculty engagement with intercultural curricula was influenced by opportunities that involved intercultural and international experiences and opportunities, or lack of opportunities, associated with an academic community. The findings indicate that intercultural curriculum is both supported and not supported by academic cultures.

### **Summary**

What should an intercultural gerontology curriculum encompass? How should it be delivered? These two questions were explored in this research study. Twelve university-based key stakeholders were interviewed in the spring of 2013 and asked to share their thoughts and experiences about an intercultural gerontology curriculum. Thematic analysis of the transcripts of the interviews uncovered five major themes: multiple perspectives on cultural diversity; the dynamic nature of cultural diversity and aging; flow of an intercultural curriculum; principles and practices for an intercultural curriculum; and institutional culture and intercultural curricula. These five themes were further analyzed and subthemes were identified. In this account of the findings, quotations from the interview transcripts provided evidence of each major theme and subtheme.

An overview of the themes and associated subthemes was provided in Figure 1. The first theme indicated participants' multiple perspectives on cultural diversity. The perspectives were

referred to as traditional, contemporary and complex. The complex perspective includes both traditional and contemporary perspectives. These perspectives are illustrated in Figure 2.

The dynamic nature of cultural diversity and aging was the second theme reported in this chapter. This theme builds on the diversity of culture perspectives and points to the influences of time and space experienced over the life course. Approaches to facilitating learning about the dynamic nature of culture and aging were identified; they included critical and applied approaches.

The third theme was the flow of an intercultural curriculum, where the term flow refers to the responsive character of intercultural curriculum that occurs within and among content, students, and teachers. Table 3 presents these three subthemes, descriptions of flow, and relevant quotations from the interview transcripts that elaborate on the subthemes.

Theme four focused on principles and practices affiliated with intercultural curriculum in three areas: social theories, educational approaches, and recommended resources. Identity theory, critical discourse, and intersectionality were the social theories suggested for inclusion in an intercultural gerontology curriculum. The recommended educational approach was to infuse culturally diverse content throughout a course by means of culturally diverse readings, examples, and learning activities. Additional practices were summarized in Table 4, Recommended Teaching Practices for an Intercultural Gerontology Curriculum. A further learning consideration was the creation of a culturally safe learning environment. Although participants had varied perspectives on how to accomplish this goal, they were in agreement that it is the responsibility of faculty to foster and maintain cultural safety. The last topic in this theme was identification of resources for an intercultural gerontology curriculum. Resources have been

compiled and listed in Appendix F, Resources Recommended by Interview Participants for an Intercultural Gerontology Curriculum

The final theme, institutional culture and intercultural curricula, was analyzed and four subthemes were identified. Participants identified themselves with their institutions and formal institutional statements dealing with culture, diversity, and inclusion; they referred to mandates, core values, strategies, and so forth as supportive of intercultural curricula in some institutions and as unsupportive in other institutions. Intercultural teaching and learning workshops for faculty and students was the second subtheme, followed by the subtheme of student academic and international centres. Participants indicated that these two resources were in place at their institutions and were helpful fostering intercultural curricula. Faculty was the final subtheme of institutional culture. Participants remarked that faculty were key to creating and delivering intercultural curricula and that they were influenced by variables such as personal experiences with cultural diversity, travel, and international research. Collegial contacts, lack of collegial contacts, and program oversight were also noted as variables. Overall, the findings indicate that there are elements of an institution that support intercultural curricula just as there are elements of an institution that do not support intercultural curriculum.



## **Chapter 5**

### **Discussion**

Changing global demographics and the internationalization of Canadian universities were both considerations in the two questions explored in this study: What should an undergraduate university-based intercultural gerontology curriculum encompass? How should this envisioned curriculum be delivered? This chapter is dedicated to the discussion of these two questions based on study findings. The interview findings are considered in relation to the academic literature, as well as gerontology program literature and course outlines gathered as part of the study (See Appendix E, Summary Report on Course Outlines). Further consideration includes my professional experience as a social worker, researcher, and teacher as well as my application of some of the lessons I experienced as a result of this study. The discussion will indicate there is no one vision of an intercultural undergraduate gerontology curriculum; there are, however, many perspectives on how such a curriculum will be delivered. Therefore, while this discussion does not arrive at a curriculum map, it does synthesize the findings and outlines ten attributes of an intercultural gerontology curriculum. In addition, resources shared by the participants and resources gathered over the course of this study are assembled as suggested tools in relation to an intercultural gerontology curriculum (See Appendix G, Suggested Tools). Threaded throughout this discussion are references to disciplinary contributions to a conceptualization of an intercultural gerontology curriculum. These disciplinary references are intended to cue the reader to the disciplinary diversity within gerontology and to emphasize the opportunity for interdisciplinary thinking and teaching in intercultural curriculum development in undergraduate gerontology programs in Canada. Study limitations, directions for future research, practice, and policy, and the final thoughts of the researcher are also discussed.

### **What Should a University-based Intercultural Gerontology Curriculum Encompass?**

The envisioned intercultural gerontology curriculum is complex. However, three criteria for establishing content for such a curriculum were recommended by the study participants. First, cultural diversity and aging involves the intersection of multiple cultural perspectives rather than a single perspective on culture. Second, the dynamic nature of cultural diversity and aging needs to be reinforced throughout a gerontology curriculum so that students are sensitive to diversity among older adults. Third, in selecting content, the teacher and others such as educational developers need to be sensitive to and reflect on the diverse cultural affiliations of students and teachers. This orientation requires a certain flow to content selection that can be a challenge for curriculum development. At the same time, it is consistent with the goal of designing a curriculum for global citizenship (Harlap & Fryer, 2011). Each of the four criteria introduced here is discussed in the following pages.

**Multiple cultural perspectives.** An intercultural curriculum should include multiple perspectives on cultural diversity and aging and not be limited to only one perspective. This idea was a fundamental finding based on the interviews and was supported by the analysis of course outlines. These sources indicate three ways of viewing cultural diversity: traditional perspectives, contemporary perspectives, and complex perspectives. Traditional perspectives on culture and aging were frequently referred to in the anecdotes and examples offered in the interviews and were frequently identified in the course outlines. The traditional perspectives include ethnicity, nation of origin, and spiritual tradition, and have their origins in the subfield of social gerontology referred to as *ethnogerontology* (Chappell, Gee, McDonald, & Stones, 2003; Crewe, 2004; Novak & Campbell, 2010; Yeo & McBride, 2008). At no time in the interviews did a participant recommend only a traditional perspective for an intercultural curriculum nor did

anyone use the term ethnogerontology. This circumstance suggests that an envisioned intercultural gerontology program encompasses cultural diversity perspectives beyond a traditional perspective. Contemporary perspectives on cultural diversity and aging focus on indigenous people, sexual orientation, economic status, and health status. These perspectives reflect current Canadian and global issues which multiple fields of study such as indigenous studies, gender studies, economics, and the health sciences investigate. The complex perspective on cultural diversity and aging includes traditional and contemporary perspectives as well as other elements of diversity such as race, gender, family context, immigration experience, physical/mental ability, and rural/urban environment. The analysis of current gerontology course outlines revealed that multiple perspectives on cultural diversity and aging are already present in the curricula represented by the documents. Gender and aging was the most prevalent way of exploring cultural diversity, followed by ethnicity, nationality, religion and spirituality. In order to develop an intercultural gerontology curriculum that addresses the complexity of cultural diversity and aging, the expertise of practitioners and professionals in multiple disciplines is required.

**The dynamic nature of cultural diversity and aging.** Cultures, cultural identities, and cultural affiliation(s) are not static. They are transformed by economic, political, social, ideological, environmental, and personal experiences that occur over the life course of individuals and generational cohorts. Because of this, the dynamic nature of culture needs to be embedded in the curriculum. Critical study of the context of aging that includes knowledge of institutions, social structures, and historical events and their influence on individuals and generational cohorts is essential (Elliot, 2005; Gutmann, 1997; Shenk & Sokolovsky, 1999). This approach contrasts with comparative approaches to learning about cultural diversity and

aging. A curriculum that takes into account context avoids being derailed by cultural tourism or misrepresented by a single story.

The curriculum should also provide experiential opportunities for authentic engagement with older adults. Students need to encounter culturally diverse older adults as guest speakers, panelists, participants in case studies, interviewees, community members, clients, and patients in classes, fieldwork, and various other opportunities that occur in face to face and Internet-based contexts. Accessing culturally diverse older adults may involve going beyond the local network of older adult groups and crossing regional and national borders.

**Flow of an intercultural curriculum.** An intercultural curriculum needs to be distinguished by flexibility in order to include the cultural knowledge, interests, and affiliations of students and teachers. As mentioned earlier, one participant in the interviews described the flow of an intercultural curriculum this way, “It's like cooking, once I know who is coming for dinner, I will find the right dishes... I will find the right ingredients, and then I will cook according to who is there, what is the purpose of the dinner, and how I want to present it so that it would be most appreciated” (1.10). Course content, readings, case examples, discussion topics, and so forth should reflect the cultural diversity and expertise of those in the learning environment. Curricular resources, therefore, include students’ knowledge of their own cultures, “These days, I always hope I’m going to get some diversity in the class because then you’ve got a ready made little laboratory right there in your classroom...people who have some experiences and beliefs about aging in their own cultures” (9.3). The large number of international students (Chroudaha & Chang, 2012) and culturally diverse students in Canada are valuable resources for an intercultural curriculum.

There are multiple challenges to enacting flow in curriculum design and delivery. Curriculum development typically includes careful selection of course topics, readings, and resources prior to a course's launch, and, generally, there is little opportunity for content fluidity. Further, limited time and resources often prohibit responsiveness to cultural diversity once a course has started. Another challenge arises when, in cases of a standardized or regulated curriculum, specific content must be covered to meet pre-determined and expected learning outcomes. Such requirements do not allow flexibility in an already content-dense curriculum. This concern is echoed in the gerontology literature, "Reconciling the need to accommodate ethnic, cultural, and other kinds of diversity with the equally important need to standardize policies, assessment protocols, best practices, and services is a major theoretical and practical challenge for gerontology" (Elliot, 2005, p. 24).

An intercultural curriculum is inclusive of cultural diversity in its content, students, and teachers and, because it is a human endeavor, it is not uniform. It is fluid, and, at times, it is messy. Educators support intercultural education as a means to promote intellectual and personal maturing that incorporates students', including international students' worldviews and ideas (McVicker-Clinchy, 2000). Developing cultural sensitivity and cultural competence during a university career is important because graduates will work, at some time in their careers, with co-workers, customers, clients, or patients from cultures other than their own (Sandstrom & Duncan, 1999).

### **How Should the Envisioned Curriculum be Delivered?**

The findings of this study provide a rich pedagogical landscape for the envisioned curriculum but no single pathway to conceptualize or deliver the curriculum. Instead, the many practical ideas for curriculum design and delivery offered by study participants and the resources

identified in the literature are reported as Suggested Tools in Appendix G. What follows here is an integration of the literature, the reviewed course outlines, and interview findings that pertain to the delivery of an intercultural gerontology curriculum

**Re-visiting the concept of flow and intercultural curriculum.** The flow of an intercultural curriculum refers to the fluid nature of learning within a curriculum. The idea of flow is evident in the early work of intercultural trainers and teachers. Gudykunst and Hammer (1983) proposed three different approaches for teaching about culture: self-awareness, cultural awareness, and intercultural awareness. In each approach, the curriculum involves a different start and end point; all three approaches, however, include learning about one's values and cultural values and others' cultural values. The participants in this study made similar recommendations as found in Table 3 on the Flow of an Intercultural Curriculum. In particular, they recommended that content may flow from "General to Tailored" or, the reverse from "Identity Issues to Aging Issues" while student learning may flow from "General to Authentic" and "Untapped Resources to Curiosity." The findings indicate that, while flow is significant to an intercultural curriculum, the direction of the flow is not something fixed.

An example of the flow of intercultural learning is evident in the careful design and sequencing of assignments in one of the course outlines. The titles of the assignments are "Understanding Your Own Ethnicity," "Memoir and Ethnogerontology," and "Immigrant Seniors and Chronic Illness." The flow from awareness of personal values and culture to awareness of an older adult's values and culture to awareness of the Canadian older immigrant's experiences of chronic illness and health services is an example of a self-awareness approach for intercultural learning (Gudykunst & Hammer, 1983). This type of flow in intercultural learning is called "identity issues to aging issues" in Table 3 and is evident in the active learning exercise,

“Where I’m From...” (Tolan, 2011) listed at Suggested Tools in Appendix G. Furthermore, this approach structures learning so that students will grasp the reality that their values and beliefs are affected and constructed by the cultures they live in, just as others’ beliefs are affected and constructed by their cultures.

Bringing a theoretical lens to the theme of flow in an envisioned intercultural curriculum in gerontology is important. Identity theory posits that individuals select, consciously or unconsciously, affiliations and roles, and that these are associated with values and beliefs (Hendricks, 2010, Stets & Burke, 2000). An appropriately designed and delivered intercultural curriculum fosters students’ awareness of these identities and encourages reflection on cultural awareness and the construction of identity. Generally, study participants provided positive accounts of students’ development of self-awareness, describing how students recognize themselves and their families beliefs and practices in the readings for their courses. Program evaluations indicate that students are interested in others’ cultural identities, beliefs, and practices and wish to spend more time in dialogue with other students (Glista & Petersons, 2003). Learning from others and developing an appreciation for one’s culture and others’ cultures was evident in the accounts of the participants when they reflected on their students.

While many of us will gravitate to the benefits of an interculturally grounded curriculum, there are risks to an intercultural curriculum too. Increasing awareness and reflection on identity by students who are not mature, or who are new to a Canadian university, can be risky. One participant indicated that students are not mature enough to discuss cultural diversity in classes or on-line because their identities are not formed yet. The risks may increase when the students are international students because their traditional supports are not close at hand to reinforce their identities and cultural affiliations. Claxton et al. (2003) identify this risk, indicating that, at times

of critical awareness, individuals realize that their way of seeing is just one of many ways of seeing. Individuals risk personal loyalties, identities, and affiliations as they re-negotiate affiliations with previously held values. One of the important assumptions in thinking about an intercultural gerontology curriculum is that teachers need to be competent in creating safe environments where this type of reflection and negotiation within and between students can occur respectfully and comfortably. An expectation of gerontology curriculum reform is support for students and faculty. The interview transcripts indicated that student services are, in general, increasing but they are not accessible year-round. Students, including international students who are required to take courses during the summer term, have little or no academic support during the summer sessions. Faculty development on intercultural curriculum development and culturally safe learning environments is beginning at some universities in Canada but not in others. The topic of faculty development is explored later in the chapter at Institutional Culture for Intercultural Curricula.

**Teaching practices.** Scaffolded learning, active learning, experiential learning, teacher modeling, and Internet-based learning are the recommended delivery practices for an intercultural curriculum in gerontology. These practices are indicated in the literature, the interviews, and the course outlines and, considered together, contribute to a better understanding of how an intercultural curriculum in gerontology might be delivered.

***Scaffolded learning.*** The act of scaffolding learning involves building bridges from what the student already knows, whether this is prior learning or the student's own cultural experience or traditions, to where the student needs to be (Ignelzi, 2000). Gerontology students require practice in critical analysis, responding to situations of cultural diversity, and reflecting



on cultural diversity and aging in order to become culturally-sensitive global citizens who can contribute to local and global understanding of issues of aging.

In the findings, two scaffolding approaches were described. These approaches mirror the two approaches to the flow of intercultural curriculum. One scaffolding approach begins, as does the self-awareness approach (Gudykunst & Hammer, 1983), by supporting learning about one's own culture and values on aging issues. Cultural identities, biases, and assumptions are explored and, in some courses, shared with other students in class or via Internet-based discussion boards, chat-rooms, and so forth. This sharing experience contributes to learning about similarities and differences in values and cultures and affords opportunities for reflection on one's own values and culture. The careful planning of opportunities for sharing knowledge and experience is a significant step in scaffolded learning. Collaborative learning takes place in the zone of proximal development as identified by Vygotsky (1978). This zone includes what students may learn on their own and extends along a continuum of learning when students are helped by or in dialogue with others (Bertrand, 1995). Building on this foundation, opportunities are designed for students to learn what culturally diverse older adults think about aging through narrative accounts available in class, in readings, by viewing and responding to films, and through interactions with Internet-based resources. Critical analysis of the context of the older adult's culture and life course experiences should be included in modules or courses. The "Where I'm From" exercise and the "Ethnic Me" course (See Appendix G Suggested Tools) are examples of scaffolding learning for self-awareness although they do not specifically focus on learning about cultural diversity and aging.

The second scaffolding approach explores the values and cultures of culturally diverse older adults as the foundation for students' discovery of their own values and culture; this

approach mirrors that of the cultural awareness approach (Gudykunst & Hammer, 1983). “Our Culture, Their Culture” (Heale, 1999) and “Caribbean Mosaic” (Sandstrom & Duncan, 1999) are examples of interdisciplinary courses that take the cultural awareness approach to learning about values and culture. While these course examples are not specific to learning about cultural diversity and aging, they are listed in Appendix G, Suggested Tools for consideration.

***Active learning strategies.*** Some of the active learning strategies available for delivery of an intercultural gerontology curriculum include problem-based learning activities assignments and reflection on students’ identities, guest speakers from diverse cultures or from agencies serving diverse cultures, in-class engagement activities, group discussions, and interviews with older adults. In the analysis of the course outlines, it was evident that the majority of the teaching takes place via lecture (10 of 13 course outlines) and, therefore, transmissive approaches to learning dominate over other teaching approaches. At the same time, eight course outlines include active learning strategies and refer to constructivist approaches to learning. Both transmissive and constructivist approaches are important in an intercultural curriculum. Transmissive approaches ensure that foundational content is made available to students for their cognitive learning. These approaches may also be familiar to many students including international students whose learning style is often linked to rote learning and memorization. As such, they may enable students to feel comfortable and safe in the learning environment (Marginson & Sawir, 2011). This being said, active learning approaches engage students cognitively while providing occasions for experiencing affective and relational learning as students participate in dialogue with one another and with older adults. Careful staging of transmissive learning strategies and active learning strategies for scaffolded learning throughout a curriculum is recommended.

***Experiential learning strategies.*** Experiential learning strategies in and out of the classroom were suggested by many of the participants and may include internships, field placements, field trips, and sustained engagement with older adult groups such as older adult mentorship groups. These experiences are often associated with students' reflections on learning and increased awareness of their assumptions about cultures and about aging. Journaling, for example, is a learning tool that facilitates learning through critical thinking and reflection and may be assigned in internship-type courses such as the one found in the course outline collection. In my own teaching experience, internship students request chances to communicate with fellow students in order to garner support and reduce their sense of isolation while they are off campus. Internet-based communication tools such as chat rooms, discussion boards, and Facebook can offer valued means for the exchange of ideas, sharing of stories, and communicating challenges that may be experienced when students are on placement.

International exchange programs are another example of experiential learning. In the words of one participant, "You have to travel because that's the only way you can learn and understand different cultures...If you meet people from different cultures, you also learn how they perceive aging and what is important to them" (10.6). Despite the fact that this perspective that was expressed by many of the participants, there is no indication of Canadian undergraduate gerontology programs participating in international exchanges. This experiential learning gap may be due to the amount of work involved in planning and administering an international exchange experience while holding a full-time teaching position, as suggested by one of the participants. Experiential learning through international exchanges is not yet a feature of intercultural gerontology curricula in Canada.

***Modeling.*** Teachers who model intercultural sensitivity and openness are important to an intercultural gerontology curriculum. Teachers need to model what it is they are teaching and demonstrate what it looks like to be open, to share information about themselves, to be inclusive of all students, and to have an appreciation of cultural diversity (Tisdell & Tolliever, 2009). Teacher modeling requires a mindset that seeks out experiences for inclusion of culturally diverse students and culturally inclusive resources. Teachers can also model intercultural learning by being transparent about their own critical thinking and reflection as it occurs in the classroom (McLoughlin, 2001). Modeling critical reflection is recommended by Hanson (2009) as part of transformative learning for global citizenship. Even distance and blended learning courses can include teacher modeling. A participant explained that teacher modeling can occur in virtual learning contexts through writing that includes inclusive language, diverse learning resources, and design of assignments that causes students to think critically and reflectively on their learning. The modeling of intercultural sensitivity is likely the most powerful tool in an intercultural curriculum and, as such, intercultural sensitivity should be part of faculty training and development.

***Internet-based learning strategies.*** Internet-based learning strategies have been mentioned at several points in this discussion as valuable to teachers and students. While some participants did not think that intercultural learning could take place outside of a face-to-face encounter, others saw Internet-based strategies as an important means to make local and global connections. Internet-based communications among students from different cultures and countries can be a powerful learning experience that can be integrated in course development on culture and aging. The literature includes examples of activities that may enhance cultural sensitivity such as students speaking with other students from other countries (Lahar, 2009) and

simulation games (Phan, 2009). Students can connect with culturally diverse older adults and other experts on culture and aging via Skype, or they can learn from open access resources such as TED talks, You Tube videos, blogs, and the National Film Board. The reviewed course outlines indicated that some e-tools are currently being employed but in limited fashion. University-based learning management platforms are used in some courses to distribute course readings and lecture notes, and a few courses require students to view videos on YouTube prior to class time. The interviews revealed that there are champions of Internet-based strategies for intercultural learning and there are others who dismiss the use of the Internet because its resources frequently perpetuate essentialism<sup>8</sup> within cultures. All considered, the findings appear to suggest that delivery of an intercultural curriculum is enhanced with Internet-based learning strategies, and that Internet-supported learning is important to the future of gerontology education in Canada and elsewhere.

**Institutional culture for intercultural curricula.** According to Capitman (2002), "Culture is the sum total of ways of living adopted by a people. Cultures offer meaning structures for interpreting events, judging the qualities of services, making decisions, and implementing life plans" (p. 11). This was the definition of culture used in this study; the same definition also highlights that a university has a culture as well. The participants began the interview conversations by stating their affiliations and providing brief descriptions of their positions as if to locate themselves within the university culture. As the researcher, I too stated my affiliation and location as a PhD student as well as a teacher in a gerontology program in a university. As individuals and as a collective, the participants and I were embedded in university

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<sup>8</sup> Essentialism is evident in Internet-based easy-access reference guides that describe cultures as homogeneous groups of people with the same values, beliefs, traditions, and practices.

culture and, from this perspective, the supports and gaps within academic settings were made evident.

In general, the support of a university for intercultural curricula is represented in formal statements and strategic plans that are put into action. These formal statements reflect the university's culture and establish an institutional context and climate for curricula (Ratcliff, 1997). Some of the participants referred to formal statements as indicators of institutional support for intercultural curricula development while others spoke about these statements as descriptors of the reality of culturally diverse campuses. The literature points out that internationalization is a key goal for many universities in Canada and, therefore, mandates and strategic plans are in place to support internationalization and intercultural curricula (Advisory Panel on Canada's International Education Strategy, 2012). Not all universities are pursuing international student enrollment, however, and these universities may or may not have formal statements that support intercultural curricula. Other universities may promote standardization and uniformity of curricula to foster student mobility and enable transfers between universities as well as for accountability or credentialing reasons (Ryan & Zuber-Skerritt, 1999). These universities reflect a market model approach to higher education and student competitive global advantage (Hanson, 2009). The institutional climate in these universities may not be amenable to the envisioned attributes of flow and fluidity in content selection or teaching approaches. Curricular reform, while primarily a responsibility of faculty, can be enabled or disabled by institutional culture.

Professional development sessions on internationalizing or interculturalizing curriculum contribute to the context and climate for intercultural curricula. Some participants remarked that these services are increasing or that they expect that new supports will be put in place at their

universities. Institutional culture, however, can falter because teachers do not often access development workshops and this, in turn, presents a challenge to the development of intercultural curricula (Carter & Brokerhoff-MacDonald, 2011). In some cases, teachers have work priorities that take precedence over professional development. An alternate explanation is that teachers may see the principles and practices of an intercultural curriculum as a challenge to their view of fairness in teaching, and they prefer a uniform curriculum with standard student assessments and teaching practices.

Most of the participants in this study were interested in developing an intercultural gerontology curriculum, and they were enthusiastic about their experiences with culturally diverse students and cultural diversity and aging in general. They commented that a mind that is open to cultural diversity soon sees opportunities for developing cultural sensitivity. The nature of their interest is evident in the following statement about university culture, "...it's important that we have our own culture of acceptance and our own culture of appreciating that the world is a changing world, and that, literally, we are a global society now and we can't just think about the local" (12.3).

A university culture of acceptance and appreciation of cultural diversity is foundational to intercultural curricula. One part of creating such a culture is a university's formal statements and strategic plans and how they demonstrate to faculty and others the directions in which the university plans to go and what it supports. If Canadian universities continue to prioritize internationalization and intercultural curricula, then supports for intercultural curricula should follow. If, however, Canadian universities pursue other goals such as uniformity of curriculum and standardization of student assessments, then intercultural curricula as envisioned in this study for gerontology may be limited to cross-cultural studies of aging.

## **Re-visiting Theory**

Humanism establishes the context, content, and practices of an intercultural gerontology curriculum by espousing values that promote respect, appreciation, and human development of the student and of the aged. It fosters pluralistic perspectives on culture such that teaching and learning is about understanding that one's own culture is one of many cultures, and that all cultures have meaning for the affiliated individuals. This study has brought an interdisciplinary lens to a complex curricular area that bridges the theories, knowledge, and practices of education and gerontology.

Education's constructivist theory provides a theoretical framework for the principles and practices of an intercultural curriculum. This theory proposes that learning occurs when connections are made between prior knowledge and new knowledge; it is an active process accomplished through communication and reflection (Freedman, 1998; Leonard, 2002; Mestenhauser, 1998). In this study, the constructivist lens was used to focus on knowledge of cultures and the multiple ways students can learn about cultures and reflect on their own cultures. The constructivist lens highlighted the iterative nature of learning about culture through which students engage with a topic, reflect on it, share it with others, and then integrate this new knowledge into their schema of culture. In this study, the constructivist lens was used to investigate knowledge of cultural diversity and aging.

Gerontology's social construction of aging lens was also used in this study. Social construction of aging focuses on the social relations that formulate ideas about aging, problems of aging, and structural barriers associated with aging (Hooyman & Kiyak, 2011). In this study, this lens was applied to demonstrate that there is not only one perspective on culture and aging. Instead, there are multiple perspectives on cultural diversity and aging. Use of traditional



elements of cultural diversity (i.e., ethnicity, religion, nation of origin) and essentializing cultures (Chappell, Gee, McDonald & Stones, 2003) are common approaches in gerontology. However, they are not sufficient for an intercultural gerontology curriculum. The social constructionist lens was applied to bring the dynamic nature of aging into focus; it debunks the idea that aging is a static topic to be studied through comparing and contrasting one culture with another. In short, social construction theory was applied when the context of culture was critically analyzed.

The life course perspective was the suggested framework for connecting the multiple perspectives on cultural diversity and aging within an intercultural gerontology curriculum. Its longitudinal approach to understanding an individual or a generational cohort takes time and place (or history and environment) into consideration, and it follows the social pathways of human experiences (Elder, Johnson & Crosnoe, 2003). This perspective provides a lens on individual and population aging that is amenable to many disciplinary approaches to aging and facilitates bridge building across disciplinary perspectives on culture and aging. The life course perspective also aligns with the principle of intersectionality (Nash, 2008). Students can investigate issues of poverty, gender, and race and hold them in place in the larger context of the life course perspective. As a perspective, it provides a matrix for critical analysis of multiple contexts and experiences.

In the course of this study, the significance of narratives became evident for learning about aging. Narratives are rich accounts of the older adults' lived experiences of aging and may include memoirs, diaries, films, videos, interviews, panel discussions, guest lectures in a classroom, and virtual learning experiences. They are powerful resources for learning about the co-construction of multiple life experiences of older adults in all their diversity (Cruikshank, 2009; Kunow, 2010).

## **Reflection on Personal Contributions to this Study and Integration of Study Findings into Practice**

I begin this reflection with a consideration of what I brought to the study in terms of perspective as well as my practical professional experience. My lens is that of an educator with real hands-on experience teaching gerontology courses at my university. As I indicated earlier in this dissertation, my university teaching experience in gerontology spans more than 10 years. Therefore, I brought to the study a sense of the challenges that faculty face when their courses involve understanding older adults from diverse cultures. I was also aware of the implications of internationalization on a university campus. In my own university, over the last ten years, the number of students in undergraduate programs from diverse cultural backgrounds has increased significantly. This has meant, of course, a rich and varied character in my classes. While this has been a largely positive experience, it has also introduced a cultural complexity and variance in worldviews that has, at times, been challenging. In addition to my knowledge and experience in the classroom, I have experience as a distance educator and am aware of the potential of educational technology. Each of these components of my identity as a university professor was valuable in the context of the study.

My professional work in social work, pastoral care in long-term care homes, and palliative care was also valuable to the study. This work included one-to-one supportive casework, family support, and group advocacy with older adults in addition to extensive learning from Innu and Inuit in Labrador, outport Newfoundlanders, rural Northern Ontarians, and immigrant families who came to Canada to work in mines, shops, forestry, and the railroad. Their life course experiences enhanced my appreciation of older adults as culturally diverse individuals who may fail in their endeavors or succeed and prosper through multiple transitions.

I have a genuine appreciation for the complexity of aging that causes me to challenge students when they fall into compassionate stereotyping or make over-generalizations about aging. My experienced-based lens on an intercultural gerontology curriculum contributes to and complements the academic perspectives provided by interviewees and the course outlines.

My previous research experiences, especially program evaluations in long-term care homes and program reviews of university gerontology programs, also contributed to this study. In all my research and evaluation work, I selected and used data sources and evaluation frameworks that were relevant to the topic under study. As an example, I assessed spiritual care in five long-term care homes according to the Ministry of Health and Long Term Care's Standards and Guidelines for Spiritual Care. The data sources for this study included interviews with key stakeholders, my practical experience as a pastoral care visitor, and records of resident participation in spiritual care activities. These data were integrated into the discussion that was framed by the Standards and Guidelines. In another study, I assessed academic competencies in Ontario's university undergraduate gerontology programs by reviewing multiple types of documents including program reviews, program descriptions, programmatic learning outcomes, and course descriptions. Further, the study included reviews of competency documents from other disciplines and consideration of these materials as possible frameworks for describing gerontology's academic competencies. My interests and abilities in the selection, analysis, and integration of appropriate resources for this study on intercultural gerontology curriculum were enhanced by these previous research experiences.

Throughout this study on intercultural gerontology curriculum, I was intrigued with what I was learning and incorporated a number of new ideas into my on-campus and distance-based courses in gerontology. My learning about relevant educational theories and approaches

empowered me to step out of my comfort zone of practice and become the teacher I want to be: an authentic and caring guide to students in their learning. This, in combination with my consideration of concepts such as cultural safety, cultural diversity, cultural awareness and cultural sensitivity, resonated with my values and interests in teaching about culture and aging. These discoveries and their application in my work are discussed in the following section.

One of the first ideas that intrigued me was the creation of a culturally safe learning environment. My first exposure to the phrase culturally safe was in 2008 when I was attending the Summer School in Social Science Research at the International Observatory on End-of-Life Care at Lancaster University in the United Kingdom. In this setting, I learned about conducting culturally safe research with Indigenous people, but I did not link the principle of cultural safety in research to cultural safety in learning settings. This was ironic given the culturally diverse makeup of the summer school. As we dined on an array of food from India, we identified ourselves as a mini-United Nations with representation from Australia, Canada, Germany, Ireland, Uganda, the United Kingdom, and the United States. It was in this context, my first trip abroad, that I experienced openness, curiosity, and acceptance of cultural diversity in a learning environment. It was not until I actually read about cultural safety in the classroom that I made the connection and realized that I could create that same environment in my classroom, whether it be an on-campus or online setting. *Teaching to Promote Intellectual and Personal Maturity* (2000) and *Getting Culture* (2009) were helpful resources because they grounded my good intentions with examples of intercultural teaching and concepts. Howard-Hamilton's writing (2000) about the hidden curriculum was an important stepping-stone to understanding a culturally safe learning environment.

My teaching practice now includes a conscious effort to create a sense of safety as well as an appreciation for cultural diversity. I express appreciation when students share their cultural knowledge or perspectives, and I model an open and interested stance toward diversity. Sometimes, I ask students to frame a response to a question with the phrase “where I’m from,” a strategy I adapted from work by Tolan (2011). This strategy seems to help students choose to identify or not identify with the belief or practice they are speaking about and, as a result, facilitates a safe way to express an idea. Another way I help create a safe learning environment is to design assignments so that they are inclusive and avoid assumptions of a Western perspective. Instructions for an assignment are stated in the following manner, “Critically define and analyze your own age cohort in the region you call home. For example, home may be rural Canada, urban Beijing, small town southern Ontario, and so forth.”

Inclusion of culturally diverse perspectives in course content is something I now do very consciously. For example, my current work on a learning guide for a gerontology course called “End-of-life Care with Older Adults” is now infused with examples of hospice care from all over the world and not only examples from Canada or the United Kingdom. In the guide, these services are discussed in context rather than in relation to each other. The context is explained via the stories of individuals and the community groups that pioneered the care services. This attention to narrative is a direct result of the lessons learned from the study interviews and literature review.

At the start of my study, I knew little about educational theory and learning strategies so these areas presented me with the greatest challenges and the richest rewards. My discovery of humanistic and constructivist learning theory now provides me with language and an orientation to learning that makes sense to me and validates my positive experiences as a learner and a

teacher. I am learning to plan for and support discussion and reflection on learning. This is a change from my previous note-driven lectures, avoidance of student presentations, and professional aversion to group work. Through the review of the literature conducted for the study and the comments of interviewees, I am convinced that students need to learn from one another and to learn with one another. They need the opportunity to experience cultural diversity with their fellow students and to query and investigate their identities and affiliations in a culturally safe environment.

One of the issues inspiring this study is the aging of the global population and the associated need for global education in gerontology that is culturally safe, sensitive, and inclusive. I see now that this may be accomplished through online learning which can be accessible to students beyond Canada's borders. My collection and analysis of course outlines indicates that this is not the case in current gerontology programs in Canada. Only two of the thirteen culture and aging related courses were available via a distance education model. It is my intent to work with my university to develop an intercultural gerontology program that will be available totally online so that undergraduate gerontology education will be accessible in Canada and globally.

Overall, I am encouraged by the transformation I see in myself, my teaching approaches, my scholarship, and the learning environments that I can create. Additionally, these opportunities and my discovery of new resources including the books, multimedia materials, training options, and workshops that are available for learning about culture and aging demonstrate the timeliness of this study of an intercultural gerontology curriculum. Finally, it is my belief that such a curriculum will make a substantive contribution to the preparation of

university graduates to work at home in Canada and around the world with culturally diverse older adults.

### **A Snapshot of the Envisioning**

Based on the premise that intercultural learning should be infused throughout a gerontology program and not situated in just one course or a particular series of courses, it is recommended that all courses in a gerontology program be reviewed and revised in order to ensure that content on aging is culturally diverse and taught in manners that are culturally responsive (Donker, 2011). This recommendation applies to gerontology courses as well as courses contributing to multidisciplinary gerontology programs such as the biology of aging, psychology of aging, and sociology of aging, as well as other courses in women's studies, religious studies, English, public policy, environmental design, and others. The following ten points are provided as a summary of the envisioned gerontology curriculum based on this study and how it might be delivered. A visual organizer of these ten points is presented in Figure 3, titled, "Ten Attributes of an Intercultural Gerontology Curriculum." The figure shows the linked structural, theoretical, and content attributes of an envisioned curriculum, which are carried out within the encompassing attribute of cultural safety.

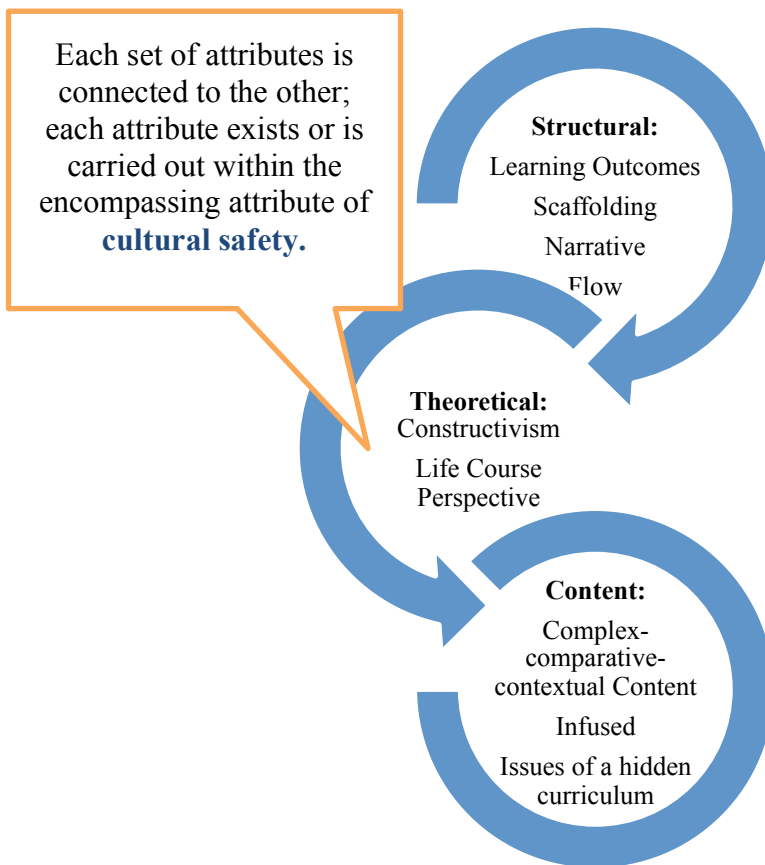


Figure 3 Ten Attributes of an Intercultural Gerontology Curriculum

Ten attributes of an intercultural undergraduate gerontology curriculum at the undergraduate level as based on a review of the literature, the findings of this study, and my reflections as an instructor in gerontology are as follows:

1. **Cultural Safety.** A learning environment needs to be a safe place in which students can learn about their cultural identities and others' cultural identities and practice respect for one another's cultures. This means that the curriculum needs to include culturally diverse content, resources, guests, case examples, and so forth, allowing students to see themselves and their cultural views on aging accurately reflected in the course. If a cultural perspective is absent or if the material does not apply to a cultural group, then



teachers are encouraged to acknowledge its absence or non-applicability. This way, the teacher models cultural sensitivity and enhances an inclusive learning environment.

2. **Learning Outcomes.** The overall goal of an intercultural undergraduate curriculum is to foster learning about cultural diversity and aging. Infusing the study of culture and aging study into each course will contribute to this overall goal and, in the process, students will learn about their own cultures, others' cultures, and older adults' cultures.

Establishing learning outcomes for each course that direct learning to the goal may be a practical step forward. Potential learning outcomes for this envisioned curriculum would necessarily include development of cultural sensitivity to diversity in Canada and elsewhere; knowledge and appreciation of the cultural diversity of older adults in Canada and elsewhere; and growth towards global citizenship.

3. **Scaffolding of Learning.** Curriculum design that scaffolds learning in order to develop cultural sensitivity is recommended for an intercultural curriculum. Scaffolding learning involves careful selection of learning activities for the purpose of building learning capacity and does not involve the selection of content. One of the most significant scaffolding strategies for intercultural learning is teacher modeling of cultural self-awareness, cultural sensitivity, critical thinking, and an open attitude toward cultural diversity.
4. **Narratives.** Culture and aging identities can be explored through the voices of older adults, often found in narratives such as memoirs, films, presentations, art, and other forms of representation (Cruikshank, 2009). Narratives often pique students' interest in the subject as a lived experience and not just an object of study. Narratives of culturally diverse individuals are accessible in multiple media (on-line documentaries, films, books,

articles, older-adult blogging sites, podcasts, and so forth). These resources attest to the availability of culturally diverse content for multiple forms of curriculum delivery.

5. **Flow.** Curriculum design and course content are affected by the culturally diverse make-up of students and the knowledge they bring to the learning environment. Selection of content flows from assessment of the cultural diversity of the students enrolled in a specific course or program. For example, the learning activity, “Where I’m From...” (Tolan, 2011) elicits student discussion on topics about where they are from and helps to demonstrate their sense of belonging to a place and its values. Selection of content and learning activities that are responsive to cultural affiliations is recommended so that students can share their cultural knowledge, provide authentic accounts of aging in their cultures, and contribute to fellow students’ knowledge of local and global cultures and aging.
6. **Constructivism.** The recommended overarching educational theory for an intercultural gerontology curriculum is constructivism. The practices associated with constructivism enable students to engage with content, other students, and the teacher. In the case of learning about cultural diversity and aging, constructivist curriculum design guides students to engage with cultural identity including their own, that of others, and that of older adults. There are many constructivist approaches to teaching culture and aging amenable to multiple forms of program delivery.
7. **Life Course Perspective.** The life course perspective provides a framework for exploring aging that is accepted by many disciplines contributing to gerontology curriculum (Elder, Johnson, & Crosnoe, 2003). It is recommended as a lens for gerontology curriculum in Canada and elsewhere and is useful for integrating the complexity and dynamic nature of

culture and aging (MacDonald, 2010). The life course perspective may examine individual and/or generational cohort aging and includes the effects of biological predispositions and maturation, the physical environment, historical events, migrations, institutions, structures, ideologies, and more.

8. **Complex-Comparative-Contextual.** Cultural diversity and aging is complex and includes race, gender, socioeconomic status, health status, religion, sexual orientation, nation of origin, age, immigration experience, physical/mental ability, rural/urban environments, and other perspectives with which a person may be identified. This complexity also includes the intersections of all these elements of culture since each one mediates the other. Study of the intersection of cultures involves comparative analysis and contextual analysis; comparative analysis alone is not sufficient. Contextual analysis of a topic takes into account important factors that influence the topic. These factors may include values, beliefs, institutions, immigration and migration patterns, structures, politics, history, the economy, the environment, and more.
9. **Infused.** Learning experiences about culture and aging should be infused throughout course content and not limited to a single example, chapter reading, discussion, lecture, or course. Culture is pervasive throughout life, and all topics on aging will be affected by culture and cultural diversity. Students' learning about aging is influenced by his or her culture as well; this too needs to be taken into account when curriculum is being designed so that diverse cultural examples are included. When culturally diverse elements are infused into the curriculum, they contribute to inclusive teaching (Bond, 2003).
10. **Revealing a Hidden Curriculum.** Revealing a hidden curriculum (Howard-Hamilton, 2000) involves making visible the assumptions about culture and aging that may be

embedded in a curriculum. Essentialism and marginalizing minority groups are two issues that are sometimes hidden in the curriculum. Asking questions of a resource such as “does this apply to all population groups?” is one way to reveal hidden assumptions about the resource and to assess if the resource is inclusive or exclusive of cultural diversity.

### **Limitations**

A limitation to the study is the number of persons who agreed to be interviewed (12 of 48 potential interviewees). Additional interviews may have contributed further experiences, thoughts, and suggested tools for application in an envisioned curriculum. In particular, different perspectives may have been provided from instructors and other experts in the United States where there are more undergraduate gerontology programs than in Canada. Similarly, the perspectives of gerontologists in other parts of the world may have added relevant insights on content, teaching principles and practices, and institutional culture. A further limitation associated with the interviewees is a potential self-selection bias; that is, the twelve interviewees may be biased in support of intercultural gerontology curriculum development and that is why they agreed to participate in the study. By contrast, the individuals who did not respond to the invitation to participate may be dis-interested or opposed to such a curriculum. The absence of the experiences and thinking of stakeholders who oppose intercultural gerontology curriculum is a limitation that invites further investigation.

Another potential limitation of the study is the conversational style of the interviews. While the interviews were exploratory in nature and included established open-ended interview prompts like “Tell me more” or “Can you give me an example of that?” (Cresswell, 2012), the interviews were not limited to my questions and participants’ answers. In the course of the

interviews, I sometimes shared my experiences or the experiences of previous interviewees (maintaining interviewees' anonymity) as a response to the interviewee's comments. This may have encouraged the interviewee to pursue the same line of thinking rather than shift to another idea. The results may be that the subject of conversation was addressed in depth but at the expense of breadth of exploration.

Finally, this study's results are limited to envisioning ten attributes of an intercultural gerontology curriculum rather than envisioning a curriculum map. This is due to the nature of the subject under study. As was evident as the study unfolded, themes and subthemes revealed the complexity of culture, its diverse nature, the importance of contextual analysis, and the multiple effects of intersectionality that increase exponentially over the life course. This fractionation of culture and aging results in a subject area that is not amenable to a curriculum plan for content. Therefore, the recommended attributes for an intercultural gerontology curriculum, based on this study, comprise a limited but appropriate resource.

### **Directions for Future Research, Practice, and Policy**

Future research on intercultural gerontology curriculum is recommended. Researchers and teachers are encouraged to avoid the piecemeal process of good intentions to a scholarship of intercultural curriculum and contribute to the transformation of curriculum in a systematic manner (Svensson & Wihlborg, 2010). The conceptual frameworks such as those reviewed by Indiana University-Purdue University Indianapolis (IUPUI) on service learning establishes criteria for quality research on service learning and demonstrates such a systematic approach (Clayton, Bringle, & Hatcher, 2013). Based on the findings of this study on intercultural gerontology, I suggest that key elements of curricula that need to be systematically assessed are course content, resource development, teaching practices, and institutional culture. Further,

research on curricular reform should include Canadian and international gerontology students and gerontology graduates as co-researchers. The inclusive and more comprehensive nature of this approach will contribute to the development of curriculum and to gerontology's international network of researchers. Goldstein (2009) provides an example of a curriculum review process involving teachers and students in order to learn about skills in curricular work and the need for critical awareness of bias, exclusion, and diversity in curriculum.

Teaching practices, as suggested in the Suggested Tools, may be adopted and adapted for integration into an intercultural gerontology curriculum while the instructor continues to be mindful that cultural diversity and aging should be infused throughout a curriculum and not added as a special topic or learning activity. To ensure an infused approach, it is recommended that a learning goal or outcome related to the development of cultural sensitivity and aging be included as part of each course in a gerontology program. Learning outcomes should be set out in a manner that is consistent with constructivist principles, such that cultural sensitivity is developed and supported throughout a program at increasing levels of skill and cultural knowledge of self and others. The resource provided in the literature review called "Age and Culture Modules for Infusion in Allied Health Professional Education" (Glista & Petersons, 2009) is one approach to preparing for curricular reform and provides examples of learning goals that foster increasing levels of engagement with cultural diversity and aging. This resource provides a potential template for learning about aging and culture and suggests principles and teaching strategies for intercultural gerontology curriculum.

This study may contribute to current discussions on curriculum reform, review, and credentialing taking place within the Association for Gerontology in Higher Education (AGHE). The ten attributes of an intercultural gerontology curriculum that arose from this study may

inform, add, or resonate with the standards currently under review. An executive summary of this dissertation that focuses on the ten attributes will be sent to the interview participants, the working group on curriculum review at AGHE, and interested parties who request this information.

The vision of intercultural curricula in this study includes university mandates, policies, and services that recognize and support cultural diversity and development of global citizenship. Formal statements and student services are foundational to building this type of university culture. So too are faculty supports for intercultural teaching and learning. Universities need to establish policy and practice for faculty training in cultural sensitivity and intercultural competence. These policies need to address and lead to the supports necessary for faculty training, including release time from teaching; financial support to attend training; recognition of intercultural curriculum development; and support for scholarship on intercultural curriculum development. Intercultural learning is a lifelong process and, thus, policy planning for faculty intercultural development requires integration into long-term strategic plans at Canadian universities.

### **Final Thoughts**

Canadian and international key stakeholders in the field of international and gerontology education have been enthusiastic contributors to this study. Fittingly, the ideology associated with this study is humanistic and reflects the nature of the topic and the participants. The interview conversations were rife with good will towards individuals, both aging individuals and students as individuals, and the tone of the interviews was almost always positive. Most of the envisioning was about the potential curriculum while being grounded in successful experiences in teaching and supportive university culture.

This exploratory study of an intercultural undergraduate gerontology curriculum is a launching point for curricular reform. A snapshot of the envisioned curriculum has been discussed in this chapter. Based on the interviews, analysis of culture and aging related course outlines, academic literature, and my professional and teaching experiences in gerontology, ten attributes of an intercultural gerontology curriculum have been suggested for review and integration into undergraduate gerontology programs in Canada. Suggested tools and resources for planning and implementing this envisioned curriculum have also been compiled for ready reference. The list of resources continues to grow even as the final draft of the study was submitted. An example is UNICollaboration, an Internet platform that fosters intercultural exchange between classrooms across the globe via online learning projects. While this tool is not specific to gerontology or aging, it is a potential resource for intercultural gerontology teaching activities that is listed in Appendix G as a Suggested Tool. This example is an indication of the timely nature of this study. An intercultural gerontology curriculum that is inclusive of culturally diverse older adults and culturally diverse students who will plan public policy, provide personal care, design senior-friendly communities, and engage with older adults in Canada and elsewhere will most certainly be a richer curriculum than those found in undergraduate gerontology programs in Canada today.



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## **Appendix A**

### **Letter of Invitation to Participate in the Research**

#### **LU LOGO**

Re: Letter of Invitation to Participate in Research on Undergraduate Intercultural Gerontology Curriculum

Dear \_\_\_\_\_,

My name is Lorraine Mercer. I am a PhD student in the Human Studies Program at Laurentian University in Sudbury, Ontario. I am conducting a research study as part of the requirements of my degree and would like to invite you to participate in this study through a semi-structured interview conducted at your convenience.

I am conducting an exploratory study of undergraduate intercultural gerontology curriculum in Canadian universities. An undergraduate intercultural gerontology curriculum is generally defined as a planned program of study with intentional inclusion of culturally diverse content and a culturally safe learning environment that, in combination, fosters cognitive and affective learning about the cultural diversity of aging. Importantly, this study with its focus on an intercultural curriculum is a response to the challenge of two critical issues of the 21<sup>st</sup> century that affect gerontology and university-based education; that is, the aging of the global population and the internationalization of Canadian universities.

The interview is designed to explore two questions: What will this transformed curriculum encompass? How might it be delivered? If you decide to participate, you will be asked questions about your thoughts and experiences of teaching and/or curriculum development regarding diversity of cultures of older adults. You will also be asked to identify the content areas you consider important for an intercultural gerontology program and how a program such

as this might be delivered. This one-hour interview will take place face-to-face or via Skype at your convenience. At the end of the interview, I will ask if I may contact you a second time should I need to clarify interview information.

Your participation in this study is voluntary, and you may withdraw at any time. As well, confidentiality will be maintained throughout the study. No one will know who is or is not interviewed, pseudonyms will be assigned to all participants, and identifying information will be excluded from references and quotations. There are no anticipated risks to participating in this study other than the inconvenience of scheduling an hour of your time for the interview. Although you may not benefit as an individual participant, study findings including a descriptive summary of an intercultural gerontology curriculum may benefit the gerontological communities of education and practice in Canada and across the globe.

A digital audio recording of the interview will be professionally transcribed for me to review and analyze and retained on a password-protected laptop computer. This recording and transcript will be destroyed two years after completion of my dissertation.

If you are interested in participating in this research or you would like to offer a comment or ask a question, please contact me via email at [lorrainemercer56@gmail.com](mailto:lorrainemercer56@gmail.com).

Alternately, if you wish to express concerns about this study to my supervisors, please contact Dr. Cynthia Whissell at 705-675-1151, ext. 4251, or email [cwhissell@laurentian.ca](mailto:cwhissell@laurentian.ca) or Dr. Lorraine Carter at 705-474-3450, ext. 4602, or email [lorrainec@nippissingu.ca](mailto:lorrainec@nippissingu.ca). If you have any questions about ethical issues or complaints about this research, please contact the Research Ethics Officer, Laurentian University Research Office, telephone: 705-675-1151 ext 2436 or toll free at 1-800-461-4030 or email [ethics@laurentian.ca](mailto:ethics@laurentian.ca)

In closing, thank you for your consideration of this opportunity. I will follow up with you by phone within the next two weeks to discuss your possible participation.

With kind regards,

Lorraine Mercer

PhD Student in Human Studies

Laurentian University

Sudbury, ON

Canada

Lorrainemercer56@gmail.com

## **Appendix B**

### **Consent Form**

LU LOGO

Dear \_\_\_\_\_,

Thank you for agreeing to participate in this research on undergraduate intercultural gerontology curriculum. The purpose of this study is to explore and describe an undergraduate level intercultural gerontology curriculum that may be taught by faculty in gerontology programs at universities in Canada. An undergraduate intercultural gerontology curriculum is generally defined as a planned program of study with intentional inclusion of culturally diverse content and a culturally safe learning environment that, in combination, fosters cognitive and affective learning about the cultural diversity of aging. This curriculum is intended for domestic students and international students who are enrolled in Canadian universities and who may or may not be majoring in gerontology but are taking a course in gerontology. This student population may include students who are born in Canada, permanent residents in Canada, sponsored refugees in Canada, international students studying in Canada, and students living in countries other than Canada who are enrolled in the programs and taking courses via distance education. This proposed study explores cultural diversity and aging at the meta-level and does not focus on any single cultural or national group of older adults.

There are no benefits to individual participants of this study. However, the study's descriptive summary of an intercultural gerontology curriculum may benefit the gerontological communities of education and practice in Canada and across the globe.

In this study, you will be asked for your thoughts and experiences on teaching or curriculum development regarding diversity of cultures of older adults; the content areas you

consider important for an intercultural gerontology program; and how a program such as this might be delivered. This one-hour interview will take place face-to-face or via Skype at a time and place mutually agreed upon. Upon completion of the interview, you will be asked if the researcher may contact you a second time should she need to clarify interview information. A digital audio recording of the interview will be professionally transcribed for review and analysis.

There are no physical or psychological risks to you in this study but it is recognized that participation does create an inconvenience to you. The researcher is mindful of busy schedules that place demands on your time and so every effort will be made to accomplish the interview within one hour.

Your participation in this study is confidential. No one will know who is or is not interviewed. Pseudonyms will be assigned to all participants and these pseudonyms will be employed throughout the research study discussions and documents. Any identifying information will be excluded from any references to or quotations of participants.

All data including the recordings will be stored in a locked drawer in the researcher's home office. No one will have access to the data other than the researcher. All data (field notes, transcripts and recordings) will be destroyed two years after the completion of the researcher's dissertation is accepted.

If you have any questions regarding this study or your participation in this study, please contact the researcher, Lorraine Mercer, at [lorrainemercer56@gmail.com](mailto:lorrainemercer56@gmail.com). Please keep one copy of this consent form for your records and sign and return one copy to the researcher.

**Having read, understood and had full explanation of this consent form and the research study, I voluntarily consent to participate in this research study and to have my audio interview recorded electronically.**

|                                       |                          |       |
|---------------------------------------|--------------------------|-------|
| _____                                 | _____                    | _____ |
| Name of Participant<br>(please print) | Signature of Participant | Date  |

**I confirm that I have explained the nature and effect of this study to the person who signed the above consent form.**

|                                      |                         |       |
|--------------------------------------|-------------------------|-------|
| _____                                | _____                   | _____ |
| Name of Researcher<br>(please print) | Signature of Researcher | Date  |

## Appendix C

### Letter of Permission

LU Logo

Dear Name of Course Author,

I am a PhD student in Human Studies at Laurentian University conducting research on intercultural undergraduate gerontology curriculum in Canada. I have a copy of your course outline for Course Name, Course Code, Term/Year and would like to request your permission to include this document in my formal research.

With your permission, I will include your course outline in a data set that will be reviewed for content related to ethnicity and/or culture and aging. I will summarize the results to indicate the recommended texts, the range of learning objectives or learning outcomes, and the approaches to teaching as evident in the course outlines (lecture, group work, reflective assignments, service-learning, integration of on-line learning approaches, assignments and more).

No identifying information (your name, the course name, or the university's name) will be associated with the course content, data set or descriptive summary.

If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me at [lorrainemercer56@gmail.com](mailto:lorrainemercer56@gmail.com)

Please return this email with an added text line indicating,

*Yes, I give my permission for Lorraine Mercer to use my course outline at part of a data set in the Envisioning an Intercultural Gerontology Curriculum Study.*

Thank you,

Lorraine Mercer

If you wish to express your concerns about this study to my supervisors, please contact Dr. Cynthia Whissell at 705-675-1151, ext. 4251, or email [cwhissell@laurentian.ca](mailto:cwhissell@laurentian.ca) or Dr. Lorraine Carter at 705-474-3450, ext. 4602, or email [lorraine@nippissingu.ca](mailto:lorraine@nippissingu.ca). If you have any questions about ethical issues or you have complaints about this research, please contact the Research Ethics Officer, Laurentian University Research Office, telephone: 705-675-1151 ext 2436 or toll free at 1-800-461-4030 or email [ethics@laurentian.ca](mailto:ethics@laurentian.ca)



**Appendix D**  
**Ethics Approval**



**Laurentian University**  
**Université Laurentienne**

**APPROVAL FOR CONDUCTING RESEARCH INVOLVING HUMAN SUBJECTS**

Research Ethics Board – Laurentian University

This letter confirms that the research project identified below has successfully passed the ethics review by the Laurentian University Research Ethics Board (REB). Your ethics approval date, other milestone dates, and any special conditions for your project are indicated below.

| TYPE OF APPROVAL / New X / Modifications to project / Time extension          |  |
|---|--|
| <b>Name of Principal Investigator and school/department</b>                   | Lorraine Mercer  |
| <b>Title of Project</b>   | <b>Envisioning an Intercultural Gerontology Curriculum</b> |
| <b>REB file number</b>  | 2013-03-10   |
| <b>Date of original approval of project</b>                                   | April 17, 2013   |
| <b>Date of approval of project modifications or extension (if applicable)</b> |  |
| <b>Final/Interim report due on</b>  | April 17, 2014   |
| <b>Conditions placed on project</b>   | Final report due on April 17, 2014                         |

During the course of your research, no deviations from, or changes to, the protocol, recruitment or consent forms may be initiated without prior written approval from the REB. If you wish to modify your research project, please refer to the Research Ethics website to complete the appropriate [REB form](#).

All projects must submit a report to REB at least once per year. If involvement with human participants continues for longer than one year (e.g. you have not completed the objectives of the study and have not yet terminated contact with the participants, except for feedback of final results to participants), you must request an extension using the appropriate [REB form](#).

In all cases, please ensure that your research complies with [Tri-Council Policy Statement \(TCPS\)](#). Also please quote your REB file number on all future correspondence with the REB office.

Congratulations and best of luck in conducting your research.

Susan James, Acting chair  
Laurentian University Research Ethics Board

## **Appendix E**

### **Summary Report on Course Outlines**

This study is an examination of selected course outlines from university gerontology programs taught across Canada. The purpose of this examination is to learn how present day gerontology programs address the topic of culture and aging in the curriculum. Utilizing content analysis and drawing on my own knowledge as a gerontology professor and researcher, I reviewed, analyzed, and described 13 relevant course outlines. The findings corroborate some of the findings based on interviews with university based key stakeholders such as the complex perspective on cultural diversity (culture as race, gender, socioeconomic status, religion, sexual orientation, nation of origin, age, immigration experience, physical/mental ability, rural/urban environments and other) and the dynamic nature of cultural diversity and aging (the interplay of culture over time and place). The analysis of the course outlines demonstrates that culture is most often infused throughout courses and is not limited to an “add on” approach. As well, in only a few cases, is it part of a transformative learning experience. Overall, the course outlines indicate that cultural diversity and aging are integrated into the content of gerontology courses but they are less clear about how this content is taught and learned. In the following pages, I describe the study’s context, methods, findings, and a description of the course outlines.

#### **Context of the Study**

The course outlines summarized and analyzed in this report demonstrate some of the current practices in teaching about culture and aging in Canadian gerontology programs. This report serves as a secondary source of data to a larger study. The larger study explores undergraduate intercultural gerontology curriculum provided at universities in Canada.

## Methods

Content analysis was employed in the review of relevant course outlines (syllabi) for undergraduate gerontology courses offered in Canada. Permission to review and report on thirteen outlines was obtained.

**Data collection.** All Canadian university websites where undergraduate gerontology programs are offered (n=10) were explored for this study. Program descriptions and information about required or elective courses included in certificates, minors, majors and/or specialization in gerontology were downloaded and printed for review. This step indicated that there were 15 courses that made reference to one or more of the following phrases in the course title or course description: culture and aging, multicultural societies and aging, ethnicity and aging, diversity and aging, or global aging. These courses were identified and the course outlines were obtained from the instructors, the program office, or the Internet. Permission to include the course outlines in this study was obtained from 13 course authors. Two course authors did not respond to the request for permission and, thus, their two course outlines were excluded from the study.

**Data description.** A descriptive summary of the course outlines is provided here. It includes a number of indicators: course code, type of course delivery (on campus or distance), course prerequisites, and course level. The course codes referenced the courses' disciplinary orientations: six were gerontology courses (GER), three were sociology courses (SOC), and the remaining four were a combination of gerontology and sociology, gerontology and psychology, psychology and sociology, or sociology and anthropology. Most of the courses (n=11) were taught in the classroom and one of these included a field placement. Two courses were taught via distance education. All of the courses were valued at three credits and only two of the courses had prerequisites for admission to the course. The lack of prerequisites may be attributed to

missing information on the course outline and does not mean that these courses are all entry-level courses. A closer look at the language of the course descriptions indicates that at least two courses may be at the upper level. One of these courses includes a field placement and, therefore, is associated with an upper level course. The other course description includes the words “analysis,” “examination,” “local and global,” and “critical, analytic thinking” which suggest advanced level courses. In other course descriptions, terms such as “introduction,” “increase awareness,” and “expand student understanding” were used.

**Data analysis.** Each of the course outlines was reviewed and analyzed with five questions in mind: (1) How is culture referred to in the course outlines? (2) At what level and how (add-on, infused, transformative) is culture integrated into the courses, as discussed by Bond (2003)? (3) What learning theories are indicated in the course outlines? (4) What learning approaches (lectures, scaffolded learning, case-based, group work, and so forth) are described in the course outlines? (5) What gerontology theories or perspectives are mentioned in the course outlines? These questions are relevant to understanding how gerontology courses address cultural diversity and aging and how these courses are delivered. Finally, the required textbooks and readings for these courses are listed at the end of this report.

## **Findings**

The findings of the content analysis of 13 course outlines are reported in Table 1, Content Analysis of Course Outlines. The table is described and summarized in the following paragraphs.

**How is culture referred to in the course outlines?** The first column of content displays the 20 culture-related terms found in the course outlines. This large number of items is consistent with the interview findings that indicate culture is a complex construct composed of many elements. The elements of culture identified most often in the course outlines were gender,

ethnicity, nationality, religion, and spirituality, in ranked order. With the exception of gender, these terms fall into the subtheme of traditional ways of understanding culture, as described in the larger interview-based study.

**At what level is culture integrated into the courses?** The next column shows that culture was infused throughout most of the courses; this was the case in 11 of the 13 courses. As Bond (2003) indicates, the infused approach includes discussions of cultural diversity throughout the content of the course for the purpose of teaching about the culturally diverse world as opposed to a world depicted as Western, white, male, privileged, able-bodied, heterosexual, and urban. While this approach was prevalent, there were three courses that included culture at the add-on level. The add-on level refers to segmenting learning about culture to a chapter or lecture topic. Only one course included culture at the transformative level and this learning was associated with experiential learning in a field placement. Overall, the integration of culture at the infusion level is a reasonable expectation for this group of course outlines because they were selected for their reference to culture within the course title or course description. This prevalence of the infused approach cannot be assumed for gerontology courses in general. It is specific to this group of courses.

**What learning theories are indicated in the course outlines? What learning approaches are described in the course outlines?** The learning theories that guide these courses were not named in the course outlines, but careful reading of the documents provided indicators associated with learning theories. The primary indicators were learning approaches such as lecture, case study, reflective paper, and so on. In some of the documents, teachers' statements about the importance of student participation, exchange, or reflection provided additional indicators of the learning theory guiding the course. Course outlines that identified

lectures as the primary means of course delivery were assigned the label “transmissive” (Witcher, Sewall, Arnold & Travers, 2001); those that commented on the importance of discussion or participation or reflection were labeled “constructivist” (Freedman, 1998, Leonard, 2002). One course outline that indicated challenges to the current discourse on culture and aging with the words “politicized critique of the re-formulation of knowledge” was labeled “social constructionist” (Freire, 1967, 1970). Finally, one course outline that included a field placement was labeled “experiential” (Diaz-Lazaro, Cordova & Franklyn, 2009). As Table 1 shows, transmissive learning theory (n=10) and constructivism (n=8) were the prevalent learning theories guiding the delivery of courses.

**What gerontology theories or perspectives are mentioned in the course outlines?** The final column of Table 1 shows gerontological theories and perspectives that identified in the course outlines. Social construction theory and the life course perspective were referred to most frequently, six times and five times respectively. Cross-cultural study, cultural gerontology, and life-span developmental theory (a social-psychology theory) were each noted two times in the documents. Most of the course outlines referred to more than one gerontology theory or perspective rather than a single explanation or perspective.

Table 1 Content Analysis of Thirteen Course Outlines

| Code # | References to Culture  | Integration of Culture into Course                | Learning Theories                       | Learning Approaches   | Gerontology Theories or Perspectives  |
|--------|--|---|---|---|---|
| 1      | ethnicity, heritage, religion, spirituality                      | Infused   | Constructivist                          | study guide, case study, scaffolded assignments                     | Critical Gerontology, Social Construction   |
| 2      | citizenship, class, ethnicity gender                             | Infused   | Transmissive and Social constructionist | lecture, group exercises and participation                          | Cultural Gerontology  |
| 3      | ethnicity, diversity, gender, health, race, socioeconomic status | Infused   | Transmissive and Constructivist         | lecture, videos, class projects                                     | Social Construction, Life Course  |
| 4      | Aboriginal people, class, "culture," gender                      | Infused and Add on (Chapter on Aboriginal People) | Transmissive and Constructivist         | lecture, encourages discussion                                      | Conflict, Symbolic Interaction, Feminist, Structural Functionalism (All were identified as Sociological Theories) |
| 5      | ethnicity, gender, immigration, religion, spirituality           | Infused   | Transmissive and Constructivist         | lecture, guest speakers, videos, participation                      | Life Span Developmental, Life Course, Social Construction   |
| 6      | diversity, ethnicity, gender, other                              | Infused   | Transmissive and Constructivist         | lecture, discussion   | Cross-Cultural Comparison; Cultural Gerontology   |
| 7      | gender, other, socioeconomic status                              | Infused   | Transmissive                            | lecture, discussion   | Social Construction, Political Economy  |
| 8      | "cross-cultural," religion                                       | Add on  | Transmissive                            | lecture, discussion   | Life Span Developmental   |
| 9      | gender, national, international, spirituality                    | Add on  | Transmissive                            | lecture, student presentations                                      | Health Determinants and Successful Aging  |
| 10     | "multicultural," gender  | Infused / Transformed                             | Experiential, Constructivist            | lecture, guest speakers, case studies, discussions, field placement | Multidisciplinary and Interprofessional Practice  |
| 11     | gender   | Infused   | Constructivist                          | case study, course study guide                                      | Life Course, Social Construction  |
| 12     | gender, nationality, sexuality                                   | Infused   | Transmissive and Constructivist         | lecture, films, seminar, discussion                                 | Life Course, Cross-Cultural Comparison  |
| 13     | class, ethnicity, gender, nationality, race                      | Infused   | Transmissive and Constructivist         | lecture, seminar, discussion  | Life Course, Social Construction  |

## **Discussion**

The findings in this study provide a snapshot of current practice in courses that address culture and aging in undergraduate gerontology programs in Canada. When viewed with a gerontological lens, the snapshot demonstrates the multidisciplinary nature of studying culture and aging. The contributing disciplines are identified by course codes such as GERO, SOC, PSYC, ANTHR, or combinations of these codes, and these same disciplines are mirrored in the theories identified in the course outlines. Gerontology's life course perspective, sociology's social construction theory, psychology's life span developmental perspective, and anthropology's cross-cultural comparison theory all contribute to understanding culture and aging.

When examined with an educational lens, the infused approach to integrating culture into courses was most evident. The diverse elements of culture are reflected in lectures, readings, learning activities, and learning objectives. In only a few courses is culture taught as a discrete topic through one chapter, lecture, or assignment. The integration of culture at the transformative level is apparent in one course that includes field experiences. While the courses are oriented to learning about cultural diversity, they are not focused on individual or social transformation.

## **Conclusion**

Thirteen relevant course outlines were collected and analyzed to provide a descriptive summary of culture and aging related courses from university undergraduate gerontology programs in Canada. The findings indicate that culture, with its many elements, is integrated throughout these courses at the infused level and is guided by transmissive and constructivist learning theory. Additionally, multiple disciplinary fields and theoretical perspectives contribute



to teaching about culture and aging. Most frequently, through gerontology's life course perspective and sociology's social construction theory these university courses provide the theoretical framework for understanding culture and aging.

**Required and Recommended Readings Listed on Course Outlines on Culture and Aging**

Chappell, N., Gee, E., McDonald, L., & Stones, M. (2003). *Aging in contemporary Canada*.

Toronto: Prentice Hall.

Clark, J. N. (2008). *Health, illness and medicine in Canada*. (5<sup>th</sup> ed.). Oxford University Press.

Choy, W. (2010). *Not yet: A memoir of living and almost dying*. Anchor Canada.

Holmes, E. R., & Holmes, L. D. (1995). *Other cultures, elder years*. (2<sup>nd</sup> ed.). Thousand Oaks,

CA: SAGE Publications, Inc.

Hooyman, N., & Kiyak, H. A. (2011). *Social gerontology: A multidisciplinary perspective* (9<sup>th</sup>

ed.). Boston, MA: Pearson Education.

Katz, S. (2009). *Cultural aging: Life course, lifestyle, and senior worlds*. Toronto: University of

Toronto Press.

Lamb, S. (2009). *Aging and the Indian diaspora: Contemporary families in India and abroad*.

Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press.

McPherson, B. D., & Wister, A. (2008). *Aging as a social process: Canadian perspectives* (5<sup>th</sup>

ed.). Don Mills, ON: Oxford University Press.

Novak, M., & Campbell, L. (2010). *Aging and society: A Canadian perspective* (6<sup>th</sup> ed.).

Toronto: Nelson Canada.

Wallis, M. & Fleras, A. (2008). *The Politics of Race in Canada*. Oxford University Press.

## Appendix F

### Resources Recommended by Interview Participants for an Intercultural Undergraduate

#### Gerontology Curriculum

##### Books

Adams, M., Bell, L. A. & Griffin, P. (Eds.). (2007). *Teaching for diversity and social justice* (2<sup>nd</sup> ed.). Routledge.

Cummings, S. M. & Galambos, C., (2005). *Diversity and aging in the social environment*. Taylor and Francis.

Novak, M. & Campbell, L. (2013). *Aging and society: A Canadian perspective* (6<sup>th</sup> ed.) Scarborough, ON: Nelson Thomson Learning.

Storti, C. (1999). *Figuring out foreigners: A practical guide*. Boston, MA: Nicholas Brealey Publishing.

Wetherell, M. (1996). *Identities, groups, and social issues*. SAGE Publications.

##### Class Exercise

Alligator River Story available via Google

##### Film

Comers, E. *Elder Project*, National Film Board available at [www.nfb.ca/film/elder\\_project](http://www.nfb.ca/film/elder_project)

##### Resource for Organizational Assessment of Intercultural Competency

Hammer, M. R. *Intercultural Development Inventory*. Information available on line at <http://www.idiinventory.com>

##### Conference Papers

Diversity and Inclusion: Preparing Ourselves to Advance Health Equity, Presentation slides and abstracts from the Conference at the University of Missouri, College of Health and Human Services, held February 20-21, 2013. Available at: <http://www.wmich.edu/hhs/diversity-conference-2013>

## Appendix G

### Suggested Tools: Resources for Developing an Intercultural Undergraduate Gerontology

#### Curriculum found in the Literature and the Study Interviews

#### Activities for Intercultural Learning

Alligator River Story. A classroom exercise for building discussion, collaboration, and appreciation of different values within the classroom. Available at:  
<http://teacherweb.com/NY/Arlington/MrsChastain/Alligator-River-Handout.pdf>

UNICollaboration. An Internet site supporting online intercultural exchange between university classrooms around the globe. "In these exchanges, students from universities in different countries collaborate together using online communication tools to carry out collaborative projects and to learn about each other's language and culture."  
<http://uni-collaboration.eu>

#### Films for Intercultural Learning in Gerontology

Comers, E., *Elder Project* National Film Board. Available at [www.nfb.ca/film/elder\\_project](http://www.nfb.ca/film/elder_project)

Yahnke, R E. (2010). The experience of aging in feature-length films: A selected and annotated filmography. In T R. Cole, R. E. Ray, & R. Kastenbaum (Eds.), *A guide to humanistic studies in aging: What does it mean to grow old?* (pp. 363-379). Baltimore, MD: The Johns Hopkins University Press.

#### Books and Journal Articles for Intercultural Curriculum Development

Adams, M., Bell, L. A. & Griffin, P. (Eds.). (2007). *Teaching for diversity and social justice* (2<sup>nd</sup> ed.). Routledge.

Chavez, A. F., Guido-DeBrito, F. & Mallory, S. L. (2003). Learning to value the "other": A framework of individual diversity. *Journal of College Student Development* 44(4), 453-469. DOI: 10.1353/csd.2003.0038

Guo, S., & Jamal, Z. (2007). *Cultural diversity and inclusive teaching*. London, ON: Society for Teaching and Learning in Higher Education.

Gurung R. A. R. & Prieto, L. R. (Eds.). (2009). *Getting culture: Incorporating diversity across the curriculum*. Stirling, VA: Sylus Publishing.

Select chapters provide ideas for higher education:

Goldstein, S. B. (2009). "Enlisting the participation of students in diversifying the curriculum."

A descriptive summary of a program for involving students in curriculum review for the purpose of identifying gaps and developing resources for diversifying the curriculum. Key issues for student empowerment and critical thinking are discussed.

Lahar, C. J. (2009). "Developing global connections."

Lahar writes of a project shared between students in the United States and Japan and their discoveries of one another's culture by means of online discussion boards.

Phan L. U. (2009). "Intercultural simulations and games."

Several examples of simulation games for the classroom to provide experiential learning about diversity.

Soysa, Dawson, Kanner, Wagoner, and Soltano (2009). "Assignments and course content in teaching diversity."

In one example, students maintain portfolios containing assignments on social identity. The assignments require students to investigate sources of information and to obtain accounts of personal experiences from individuals in a stereotyped group. In another example, students write their autobiographies based on identity and their racial affiliation as a member of a minority.

Harlap, Y., & Fryer, M. (2011). *Global citizenship in teaching and learning*. London, ON: Society for Teaching and Learning in Higher Education.

Marginson, S., & Sawir, E. (2011). *Ideas for intercultural education*. New York: Palgrave MacMillan.

Seabury, M. B. (Ed.). (1999). *Interdisciplinary general education: Questioning outside the lines* (pp. 273-287). New York: The College Entrance Examination Board.

Selected chapters provide relevant curricular examples:

Curtis, Rauche & Weinswig (1999). "Understanding ethnic identity through expressive culture: An interdisciplinary approach."

The "Ethnic Me" multistage project engages students in acknowledging their cultural identity and developing a narrative that is shared through an artifact and through art. The shared narratives make the diversity of cultures evident. The next stage in the "Ethnic Me" project involves a learning encounter in which students have cultural experiences outside of the class at planned venues followed by synthesis assignments. Additionally, the project includes guest artists and presenters and a class project such as making a quilt.

Heale, V. (1999). "Our culture, their culture: The interdisciplinary path to cross-cultural study."

The author describes a course that employs film to examine cultures and discern similarities with regard to children, generations, education, gender roles, work, social stratification, patriotism, the land, and ritual.

Sandstrom, H. M., & Duncan, E. (1999). "Making meaning: An epic journey across cultural and disciplinary boundaries". Caribbean Mosaic, an interdisciplinary course demonstrates scaffolding intercultural learning. The learning objective in this case was to recognize the role of values and their impact on daily life. Students learned about the Caribbean by watching a tourism film, followed by discussions on tourism and trade amid poverty. They next explored their own cultural identity through an exercise in which they described themselves and, after sharing the results, came to recognize difference and diversity in their fellow students and teachers. The teacher modeled self-disclosure and support of diversity in order to assist students to learn and to develop empathy. The course proceeded by building on this foundation with varied narrative styles, active student participation in knowledge generation, and linking personal identity with global diversity. The final pedagogical tool in the course was a journal assignment in which students were asked to synthesize their thoughts about what they had learned during the course.

Storti, C. (1999). *Figuring out foreigners: A practical guide*. Boston, MA: Nicholas Brealey Publishing.

Tolan, D. (2011). Making visible the invisible. 11 strategies for managing your online courses. Faculty Focus Online Education. Retrieved from:  
<http://www.facultyfocus.com/topic/free-reports/>

This publication describes a learning activity in which students talk or post messages about their home community. They respond to a set of questions by starting with the sentence stem, "Where I'm from." In this way, students learn about the diversity of their classmates' backgrounds. The learning objectives in this activity are designed to encourage cultural awareness, avoid ethnocentric statements and assumptions, and encourage inclusive thinking and discussions. The "Where I'm from" activity is a singular one that may be infused into a course as a means to establishing an open and safe learning environment for students of diverse cultural backgrounds.

Wetherell, M. (1996). *Identities, groups, and social issues*. SAGE Publications.

### **Books of Interest for Intercultural Gerontology Curriculum Development Including Potential Course Textbooks**

Chappell, N., Gee, E., McDonald, L., & Stones, M. (2003). *Aging in contemporary Canada*. Toronto: Prentice Hall.

Choy, W. (2010). *Not yet: A memoir of living and almost dying*. Anchor Canada.

Cummings, S. M. & Galambos, C. (2005). *Diversity and aging in the social environment*. Taylor and Francis.

- Ethnogeriatrics Committee of the American Geriatrics Society. (2004). *Doorway thoughts: Cross-cultural health care for older adults* (Vol. 1&2). Mississauga, ON: Jones and Bartlett Publishers.
- Gilleard, C., & Higgs, P. (2000). *Cultures of aging: Self, citizen and the body*. Toronto: Pearson Education.
- Graham, J. E. & Stephenson, P. H. (Eds.). (2010). *Contesting aging and loss*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press.
- Herd, G. & de Vries, B. (2003). *Gay and lesbian aging: Research and future directions*. NY: Springer.
- Holmes, E. R., & Holmes, L. D. (1995). *Other cultures, elder years*. (2<sup>nd</sup> ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications, Inc.
- Hooyman, N., & Kiyak, H. A. (2011). *Social gerontology: A multidisciplinary perspective* (9<sup>th</sup> ed.). Boston, MA: Pearson Education.
- Katz, S. (2009). *Cultural aging: Life course, lifestyle, and senior worlds*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press.
- Keating, N. (Ed.). (2008). *Rural ageing: A good place to grow old?* Bristle, UK: The Policy Press.
- Kunkle, S. R., Brown, J. S., & Whittington, F.J. (2014). *Global aging: Comparative perspectives on aging and the life course*. NY: Springer.
- Lamb, S. (2009). *Aging and the Indian diaspora: Contemporary families in India and abroad*. Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press.
- Lynch, C. & Danely, J. (Eds.). (2013). *Transitions & transformations: Cultural perspectives on aging and the life course*. New York: Berghahn Books.
- McPherson, B. D., & Wister, A. (2008). *Aging as a social process: Canadian perspectives* (5<sup>th</sup> ed.). Don Mills, ON: Oxford University Press.
- Mehrota, C. M. & Wagner, L. S. (2009). *Aging and diversity: An active learning experience* (2<sup>nd</sup> ed.). New York: Routledge.
- Novak, M. & Campbell, L. (2013). *Aging and society: A Canadian perspective* (6<sup>th</sup> ed.). Scarborough, ON: Nelson Thomson Learning.
- Sokolovsky, J. (Ed.). *The cultural context of aging: Worldwide perspectives* (3<sup>rd</sup> ed.). Westport, CN: Greenwood Press.

Stoller, E. P., & Gibson, R. C. (Eds.). (1997). *Worlds of difference: Inequality in the aging experience* (2nd ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Pine Forge Press.

Wacker, R. R. & Roberto, K. A. (2011). *Aging social policies: An international perspective*. Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE.

Wallis, M. & Fleras, A. (2008). *The Politics of Race in Canada*. Oxford University Press.