

2019

Intercultural Humility in Social Work Education

Bibiana Koh

Augsburg University, koh@augzburg.edu

Anthony A. Bibus III

Augsburg College, bibus@augzburg.edu

Follow this and additional works at: https://idun.augszburg.edu/faculty_scholarship



Part of the [Social Work Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

Anthony A. Bibus & Bibiana D. Koh (2019): Intercultural Humility in Social Work Education, *Journal of Social Work Education*, DOI: 10.1080/10437797.2019.1661925

This Article is brought to you for free and open access by Idun. It has been accepted for inclusion in Faculty Authored Articles by an authorized administrator of Idun. For more information, please contact bloomber@augzburg.edu.

Intercultural Humility in Social Work Education

Abstract

This conceptual study draws from social work, education, psychology, and moral philosophy (i.e., virtue and Confucian ethics) to inform our conceptual definition of *intercultural humility* (ICH) with five interrelated features. Starting with cultural humility in the context of the Educational Policies and Accreditation Standards (EPAS) for Baccalaureate and Master's Social Work Programs of the Council on Social Work Education (CSWE, 2015), we examined conceptualizations of humility and cultural humility as virtues required for ethical social work practice. Implications for social work education are discussed by outlining rationales and strategies for developing each ICH feature.

Key Words: cultural humility; humility; ethics; explicit curriculum; implicit curriculum

Introduction

The Educational Policies and Accreditation Standards for Baccalaureate and Master's Social Work Programs (EPAS) of the Council on Social Work Education (CSWE, 2015) specify that social work education programs provide a context within the educational environment for students to develop a commitment to cultural humility (Educational Policy 3.0 – Diversity). Cultural humility, however, is not explicitly defined by EPAS (CSWE, 2015). The primary objective of this article is to operationalize the concept.

Toward this end, we begin with a conceptual definition of humility as a virtue. Next, we offer a corresponding conceptualization of cultural humility based on literature from social work and other disciplines such as education, psychology, and moral philosophy. Suggesting ways to operationalize this conceptualization in social work education, we reframe the concept as *intercultural humility*. Implications of *intercultural humility* for social work education are discussed.

Humility

To develop a conceptual definition of *intercultural humility*, we first review how humility has been defined previously in moral philosophy and psychology. As one of the personality traits humans share across cultures, humility becomes an enduring virtue when honored in vital relationships and by society at large (Li, 2016). Humility is one virtue in a constellation of virtues that can lead to a meaningful, fulfilling life as well as be an asset for ethical and effective social work practice (Bibus, 2013, 2015).

Western social constructions of humility are problematic. Humility is often constructed to imply that a humble person is meek, deferential, self-deprecating and self-abasing, and modest to a fault – qualities stereotypically associated with the role of women in patriarchal societies.

This connotation anecdotally may be especially troubling for social workers, most of whom in the US are women (85% according to the George Washington University Health Workforce Institute, 2017, p. 5).

Fortunately, humility has recently been formulated with less pejorative meaning. For instance, in philosophy and psychology, the term “humility” generally has a more positive connotation than in some colloquial usages. One influential conceptualization by psychologist June Tangney (2009) posited six key elements of humility:

- “an accurate assessment of one’s abilities and achievements...”
- “an ability to acknowledge one’s mistakes, imperfections, gaps in knowledge, and limitations...”
- “openness to new ideas, contradictory information, and advice”
- keeping oneself in perspective, “one person in the larger scheme of things...”
- “a relatively low self-focus...recognizing that one is but a part of the larger universe” and
- “an appreciation of the value of all things, as well as the many ways that people and things can contribute to our world.” (p. 485)

Building on Tangney’s work in their systematic and comprehensive categorization of character strengths and virtues, Peterson and Seligman (2004) considered humility a strength of the classic cardinal virtue of temperance. They saw true humility as judging oneself neither too severely as unworthy nor too proudly as above any need for approval or praise by others.

Rather, a humble person is non-defensive, authentically takes in feedback on both strengths and shortcomings, and deflects attention to others without obsessive internal focus. Among criteria indicating the presence of humility, they suggested that a humble person will act in a manner that (1) leads to a fulfilling life, (2) is morally valued without defensiveness, (3) does not diminish others, and (4) is the opposite of “*arrogance, pride, pomposity, grandiosity, and self-*

centeredness” (pp. 436-437, italics in original).

Contemporary scholarship on humility has focused on several types of humility such as relational, intellectual, and cultural (Watkins, Hook, Mosher, & Callahan, 2018). In their recent edited handbook, Worthington, Davis, and Hook (2017) considered the theory, research, and practice of humility with its complexity of intrapersonal and interpersonal elements. They concluded that humility has “three core aspects”: accurate awareness of self (including limitations), honesty in self-presentation, and orientation to others rather than to self (p. 4).

Empirical studies on humility have been increasing lately (Watkins et al., 2018; Worthington et al., 2017). Findings suggest that humility is positively associated with and predictive of many prosocial behaviors and positive outcomes (e.g., respectfulness, cooperation, helpfulness, improved relationships, forgiveness, gratefulness, harmony at work and school, commitment to social justice, compassion, leadership, and avoidance of deception (Leman, Haggard, Meagher, & Rowatt, 2017; Li, 2016; Van Tongeren & Myers, 2017; Watkins et al., 2018; Watkins, Hook, Ramaeker, & Ramos, 2016). Conversely, humility is negatively associated in studies with grandiosity, motivation to achieve a high status and obtain resources at the expense of others, and other undesirable social behaviors (Leman et al., 2017; Watkins et al., 2018). Psychological and neurobiological studies also reveal that human beings are prone to self-righteousness and self-enhancement bias (Van Tongeren & Myers, 2017).

We consider humility a useful virtue for social workers. Developing the good habit of being humble may lead to more respectful, careful, and collaborative practices and relationships – professionally and personally. Thus, humility is a character strength that social workers can wholeheartedly develop, improve, and exercise over a lifetime. We want to be seen by others in our group or community as praiseworthy, and hence distortions cloud our memory of what we

did and why (Haidt, 2012; Dovidio & Gaertner, 2010; Molenberghs, 2013). Therefore, we need humility as a counterweight to make a more valid accounting of our actions to ourselves as well as others.

Cultural Humility

Cultural humility came into use as an alternative to the term *cultural competence* within the health professions in the mid-1990s (Tervalon & Murray-García, 1998; see also Abell, Manuel, & Schoeneman, 2015; Danso, 2016; Fisher-Borne, Cain, & Martin, 2015; Ortega & Faller, 2011). In the latest iteration of NASW's standards of cultural competence (2015), the term *cultural humility* was introduced and identified as an important component of *cultural competence*. Nursing scholars Foronda, Baptiste, Reinhold, and Ousman (2016) conducted an extensive and systematic review of literature on these two concepts including publications from the fields of social work and faculty-student relationships. Their conceptual analysis concluded that gaining cultural humility “involves a change in overall perspective and way of life” (p. 214). “Cultural humility,” they continued, “is a way of being” (p. 214; i.e., a personal characteristic employed on a daily basis – treating all with kindness, civility, and respect; recognizing differences in power within relationships; and leading to mutually beneficial collaborations and partnerships).

To date, there has been a “paucity of empirical research” on cultural humility (Danso, 2016, p. 16) though signs of its positive potential are emerging (Hook, Davis, Owen, Worthington, & Utsey, 2013). Mosher, Hook, Farrell, Watkins, and Davis (2017) conducted a systematic review of the literature up to February 2016, and found only 21 empirical studies of cultural humility. They concluded that “overall, the research designs of most studies appeared to lack rigorous methodologies found in established fields” (p. 98). Fisher-Borne and colleagues

also noted “a lack of empirical data” on cultural humility (2015, p. 172): “While there is burgeoning literature documenting the positive impact of cultural humility in educational trainings, acknowledgement of how institutional accountability and mitigation of systemic power differences factor into the core model of cultural humility are [sic] missing from the literature” (p. 173). This lack is particularly pertinent for social work as indicated in Greeno and colleague’s study identifying the challenge that their MSW students experienced attempting to practice culturally informed and humble approaches in the field (Greeno, Fedina, Rushovich, Moore, Linsenmeyer, & Wirt, 2017). Holding themselves accountable to practice collaboratively with clients, students observed that such an approach sometimes differed from a more authoritarian agency climate.

Intercultural Humility

We reframe cultural humility conceptually as *intercultural* humility based on the above conceptualizations of humility and cultural humility and both virtue ethics (Adams, 2009; Banks, 2012; Barsky, 2019; Fowers, 2005; Peterson, 2013; Pullen-Sansfaçon, 2010; Swanton, 2003; Van Slyke, Peterson, Reimer, Spezio, & Brown, 2013; Wolfer & Brandsen, 2010; Zagzebski, 1996), and Confucian ethics (Angle & Slote, 2013; Angle & Tiwald, 2017; De Bary, 1989; Lai, 2013; Legge, 1971; Li, 2016; Rushing, 2013; Tu, 1978, 1985; Van Norden, 2004). Virtue ethics and Confucian ethics emphasize the role of relationships with others, especially exemplars, in development of virtues such as humility. Additionally, the NASW *Code of Ethics* (2017) states the following: “Ethical responsibilities flow from all human relationships, from the personal and familial to the social and professional” (p. 3). We add “*inter*” to reflect this important context of relationships in social work.

To formulate our definition of *intercultural* humility, we first reviewed how humility has

been defined recently in moral philosophy and psychology as summarized above. Next, we drew from virtue ethics, a strain of moral philosophy that is relevant to social workers because it focuses on developing character. From the point of view of virtue ethics, humility is among virtues such as integrity that can lead to a meaningful, fulfilling life as well as ethical and effective social work practice (Banks, 2010). We also drew from an Eastern tradition in moral philosophy that offers social work educators another theoretical perspective: Confucian ethics. Finally, in our conceptualization of cultural humility as *intercultural* humility, we emphasize building collaborative partnerships to address disparities in power; however, this emphasis must be seen in the light of the need for more research on whether and how cultural humility may help with empowerment and collaboration.

From these aggregated sources, we offer the conceptual definition below of cultural humility as a virtue that has the following *five interrelated features*:

Feature 1: Developing a habitual strength of character over a lifetime in the context of self and others;

Feature 2: Growing awareness of one's own cultural backgrounds, including intersecting social identities;

Feature 3: Recognizing one's biases, limitations, imperfections, strengths, and privileges in relation to self and others;

Feature 4: Committing to learning about others' cultural backgrounds from their perspectives without putting them on the spot to teach or represent any culture; and

Feature 5: Addressing disparities in power in a relational context by recognizing power differences and fostering empowering collaborations.

Each feature develops in the context of self and others. Because of this, we refer to our defined

concept as *intercultural humility* (ICH).

To begin applying this conceptualization in social work education, we next suggest ways for social work educators to provide an educational environment (i.e., implicit curriculum) that results in students' commitment to developing cultural humility (ICH) as required by the Council on Social Work Educational Policies and Accreditation Standards (CSWE EPAS 3.0 – Diversity, 2015, p. 14).

Intercultural Humility (ICH): Implications for Social Work Education

In this section, we outline rationales for each ICH feature based on professional standards from the Council for Social Work Education (CSWE) and the National Association of Social Work (NASW). Specific mandates from these national organizations include the Education and Policy Accreditation Standards (EPAS), the *Standards and Indicators for Cultural Competence in Social Work Practice* (NASW, 2015), and the *Code of Ethics* (NASW, 2017). For instance, we suggest considerations for implementing each in “an integrated curriculum” – as defined by CSWE’s 2015 Educational Policy on Accreditation Standards (EPAS). According to EPAS “integrated curriculum design is comprised of (1) program mission and goals, (2) explicit curriculum, (3) implicit curriculum, and (4) assessment” (CSWE, 2015, p. 5).

With respect to an “integrated curriculum,” our focus is on the explicit and implicit curriculum. According to EPAS: “The explicit curriculum constitutes the program’s formal educational structure and includes the courses and field education used for each of its program options” (CSWE, 2015, p. 11). Regarding the implicit curriculum, or the learning environment, Education Policy 3.0 states the following with respect to diversity: “The program’s expectation for diversity is reflected in its learning environment, which provides the context through which students learn about differences, to value and respect diversity, and develop a commitment to

cultural humility” (p. 14).

While we recognize there are implications for all four EPAS-defined curricular integrative components, concentrating on implicit as well as explicit curriculum is likely to bear fruit in more conscious attention to the daily human interchanges between and among students, faculty, and community members. Procedures for evaluating a program’s success in carrying out its mission and processes for implementing program improvements could benefit from ICH applications – for instance, by encouraging faculty to invite feedback and input from others; including people who are clients of students or community agencies in program planning; gathering information regarding the effect of students’ work; and deliberating on improvements or changes needed in the curriculum (Curry-Stevens, 2010; Bent-Goodley, 2018).

Each ICH feature (both independent and interdependent, but ideally holistically integrated) entails the dimensions of values, knowledge, skills, and cognitive and affective processes highlighted in EPAS’s description of a multidimensional integration of the curriculum (CSWE, 2015). Claims to have achieved an advanced level of these ICH features could be indications of actually missing one of its key features. Commentators on humility point out how the more we think we are humble the less likely others might agree with this self-congratulatory assessment. Those who truly are humble may not realize it (Ruberton et al.; see Peterson & Seligman’s cautionary discussion on self-report measures of humility (2004, pp. 464-466). Keeping in mind this cautionary note and the need for further research, we (a) outline the rationale from professional mandates that supports each dimension and (b) suggest strategies for developing ICH in the (implicit or explicit) curriculum.

ICH feature 1: Developing a habitual strength of character, ICH, over a lifetime in the context of self and others.

Rationale: This feature is supported by EPAS' standards for the explicit and implicit curriculum (CSWE, 2015), the NASW (2015) *Standards and Indicators for Cultural Competence in Social Work Practice*, and the NASW (2017) *Code of Ethics*. The NASW (2017) *Code of Ethics* calls upon social workers to develop their ethical character over time. The code specifically states that “ethical decision-making is a process” (p. 3). It further states the following: “...a code of ethics sets forth values, ethical principles, and ethical standards to which professionals aspire and by which their actions can be judged. Social workers' ethical behavior should result from their personal commitment to engage in ethical practice” (p. 4). This implies that a habitual strength of character develops over time.

Strategies: Exemplars can offer instructive models of how this ICH feature developed over time in their social work practice. In consideration of the readiness that students demonstrate for seeking guidance and models of ICH, social work educators can identify and evaluate where and how students connect with contemporary or historical exemplars of ICH. These culturally humble exemplars could be particular faculty members or field instructors, community leaders involved with the program, or historic personages who influenced the program's development in important ways (e.g., a program's founders).

While students should not be expected to have fully developed this ICH feature, looking to exemplars in the process of building up a habitual strength of character may help in this aspirational goal. Although most of us might be able to demonstrate humility sometimes and under some circumstances – especially if we live in a community or society in which humility is positively valued and prevalent – it is probably unusual for any of us to attain a high degree of humility as either an enduring character trait or temporary state (Eddington & Shuman, 2017; Ruberton, Kruze, & Lyubomirsky, 2017; Van Tongeren & Myers, 2017). As Van Tongeren and

Myers wrote, “One irony about humility is that people may not be the best judges of their own humility” (p. 156). Hence, looking to their professors and field instructors as exemplars, students should show commitment to growing in both humility and specifically this ICH feature as part a lifelong journey.

ICH feature 2: *Growing awareness of one’s own cultural backgrounds, including intersecting social identities.*

Rationale: The value of “self-awareness” is evident in the NASW (2015) *Standards and Indicators for Cultural Competence in Social Work Practice* and in the learning outcomes expected from explicit curriculum (EPAS, 2015). Getting to know ourselves, identifying our own cultural backgrounds and intersecting social identities, and recognizing the cultural strengths and vulnerabilities that are influencing us are critical cognitive and affective processes in developing ICH.

Standard 2 in NASW’s expectations for social workers highlights self-awareness as key for striving to be culturally competent (2015, p. 22). The process of becoming aware of the intersections in our own cultural and social identities aids in recognizing assumptions we make about others and stereotypes that we tend to use as shorthand and hence superficial and inaccurate denominators of others’ culture or identity. Moreover, NASW’s interpretation accompanying *Standard 2* notes that when we realize that our own identities and backgrounds intersect and how unique they are in some respects compared to others from our group and in other respects how similar, we “can be more open to diversity within other groups” (p. 23). Among the indicators of competencies related to this standard, field instructors and teachers could consider how well students “use relationships with supervisors, mentors, and colleagues to enrich self-awareness and self-reflection” (#6, p. 24).

“Self-awareness” is also embedded in EPAS (2015) Competency 2: Engage diversity and difference in practice. As this competency indicates: “The dimensions of diversity are understood as the intersectionality of multiple factors including, but not limited to, age, class, color, culture, disability, ability, ethnicity, gender, gender identity and expression, immigration status, marital status, political ideology, race, religion/spirituality, sex, sexual orientation, and tribal sovereign status” (p. 7).

Strategies: Models that encourage and increase our capacity for self-awareness may best support this ICH feature. For instance, a model developed by medical educators intent on transforming the training and preparation of health professionals could be useful in designing assessments of social work students’ awareness of their social identities and cultural backgrounds; it is drawn from a studied conceptualization of cultural humility that included Confucian traditions (Chang, Simon, & Dong, 2010). This model is called QIAN, an acronym created from the Chinese characters for the word “humbleness” (p. 274). It could provide structure for field instructors and students to follow in assessing the development of ICH.

As the authors explained, the first letter stands for the “Questions” that healthcare professionals should ask themselves before meeting or questioning patients. One question to ask themselves is what assumptions they have formed about the world that are influenced by their backgrounds and social identities. The second letter represents “Immersion” of one’s self in the culture of the patient in a mutual “bi-directional process” that potentially will result in equalizing power between practitioner and patient as each gains a beginning understanding of differences as well as commonalities between their cultural backgrounds and social identities (p. 274). The authors suggested that practitioners ask themselves how they would like to be treated if they were in the patient’s shoes. The third letter “A” is for “Active Listening,” a skill that most social

work students will have been practicing; in using the model, the authors reminded the health care practitioners to attend to non-vocal communication (e.g., body language) as well as vocal and to listen carefully to perceptions, emotional expressions, and stories from patients' family members and colleagues as well as from the patients. Finally, "N" is for negotiation between practitioner and patient as to the goals of care, plans for treatment, tasks and course of action. The virtue of *zhi*, learning from our own experiences and the wisdom of others, can help in attaining a balance of the other virtues needed in this work. When the negotiation is successful, this partnership becomes a "therapeutic alliance" benefiting the helping system and community at large (p. 275).

ICH feature 3: *Recognizing one's biases, limitations, imperfections, strengths, and privileges accurately in relation to self and others.*

Rationale: Competency 2: Engage diversity and difference in practice in EPAS highlights the importance of this ICH feature (CSWE, 2015). Research on implicit bias also supports the importance of this feature. As the literature suggests, we should be constantly aware of our brains' innate tendency to have prejudiced or biased responses, often implicit or outside of our conscious awareness (Banaji & Greenwald, 2013; Van Tongeren & Myers). Social psychology research increasingly supports a neurological basis for both prejudice and moral judgements (Terbeck et al., 2016; Terbeck, 2016). Specifically, the limbic brain is thought to be associated with both implicit bias and prejudice (Amodio, 2014; Cikara & Van Bavel, 2014; Molenberghs, 2013; Terbeck, 2016).

Swanton (2003, p. 262) argued that private examination of one's virtues as well as biases is not sufficient; rather, we need to submit our self-assessment to the appraisal of others, who often are better able to identify our inherent biases than we are. Integrative field seminars and students' sessions with field instructors are potentially productive venues for publicly examining

and rectifying biases. Curriculum that focuses on intergroup relations is also another important venue for this ICH work (as will be further examined in number 4 below).

Strategies: According to EPAS (CSWE, 2015) Accreditation Standard 2.2, Field education is the signature pedagogy in social work education. Providing a field education placement that immerses students in the life of a community with cultures that differ from their own can lead to students' learning ICH. However, being complacent about one's own humility or other virtues or competencies can present a pernicious barrier at first (Lavelock et al., 2007). A study of the effectiveness of an immersive service-learning experience for nursing students in an American Indian community found that students' self-assessment of cultural competence may be over-confident before the immersion (Isaacson, 2014). However, after the immersion in the field, there were indications that the students were "capable of learning cultural humility" and showed progress toward more accurate and modest self-awareness, insightful self-reflection, and some appreciation of what experiencing vulnerability entails (p. 257).

ICH feature 4: *Committing to learning about others' cultural backgrounds from their perspectives without putting them on the spot to teach or represent any culture.*

Rationale: Consistent with ICH feature 3, this feature is highlighted by Competency 2: Engage diversity and difference in practice from EPAS (CSWE, 2015).

Strategies: A powerful strategy for facilitating intercultural exchanges that could enhance students' commitment to cultural humility is to incorporate intergroup dialogue pedagogy (Gurin, Nagda, & Zuniga, 2013) into students' experience through a resource on campus or in a community or field setting (implicit curriculum) or in a course (explicit curriculum). Intergroup dialogue is a stage-based group intercultural competency model designed to create self-awareness of prejudicial attitudes; the pedagogy seeks to reduce social

identity prejudices and to increase systemic action skills to reduce prejudices and biases (Dessel & Rodenburg, 2017; Gurin et al., 2013). Since this model may be part of the program's implicit and explicit curriculum, in this section we will assume that programs could incorporate intergroup dialog method in either the implicit or explicit curriculum or both.

Studies have found that participants in structured intergroup dialogue groups experience reductions in prejudice, gains in knowledge about other cultures or social groups, and improvements in understanding others (Dessel, Bolen, & Shepardson, 2012; Rodenburg & Boisen, 2013; Rodenburg & Bosch, 2009). In this group process, students learn about others' cultural backgrounds in a confidential and relatively safe yet challenging environment. Intergroup dialogue groups are co-facilitated by a member from the dominant group (e.g., White), and a member from a non-dominant group (e.g., non-White). Each group is comprised of students with different social identities (Schoem & Hurtado, 2001).

Both implicit and explicit curricular outcomes may be potential indicators of this aspect of ICH. For instance, if programs have incorporated intergroup dialogue groups into their curriculum, evaluative outcomes from assessment of their effectiveness could reveal some aggregated information about students' commitment to developing cultural humility. Likewise, programs may already integrate into classroom and field assignments samples of literature from diverse perspectives (especially those of clients); attendance at films, plays, events such as pow-wows; or study tours and exchanges, domestic or international. If so, evaluation of the effects of such experiences on students' learning could include assessment of their commitment to developing cultural humility. Deliberately and explicitly focusing the attention of students, teachers, and field instructors on all of the dimensions of cultural competence and humility (values, knowledge, skills, cognitive and affective processes) potentially enhances the usefulness

of subsequent evaluations and assessments especially if outcomes and insights are shared with other programs or formally published (e.g., Greeno et al., 2017).

Some of the tools that could be useful to employ in developing ICH include cultural genograms and autobiographies for understanding our cultural backgrounds and identifying strengths and limitations; action plans to build on strengths and address weaknesses, biases, and vulnerabilities; and “perhaps most important” as an area of focus in these plans, regular opportunities to be in contact with people from cultural backgrounds and social identities that are different from our own (Hook et al., 2016; see especially their reminder that these contacts be “...*from a position of equal status*. It is common for individuals to engage with culturally different individuals and groups from a position of ‘helper’ or ‘expert.’ This position of engagement often still regards one’s cultural worldview as superior” [p. 157, italics in original]).

ICH feature 5: *Addressing disparities in power in a relational context by recognizing power differences and fostering empowering collaboration.*

Rationale: This final ICH feature is important in the context of the implicit curriculum as defined by EPAS (CSWE, 2015): “The implicit curriculum refers to the learning environment in which the explicit curriculum is presented. It is composed of the following elements: the program’s commitment to diversity; admissions policies and procedures; advisement, retention, and termination policies; student participation in governance; faculty; administrative structure; and resources” (p. 14).

Strategies: At the institutional level, social work programs must also hold themselves accountable to the mission of social work education. That accountability is fundamentally to people and communities that the program serves, and thus evaluative and assessment procedures need to include methods for gathering, understanding, and responding to feedback from

constituents and communities. One source of such feedback could be the public members (if available) on the boards of social work or regulatory bodies that license social work practice in the program's jurisdiction. These public members could be invited to join in designing evaluation and assessment measures and interpreting results focused on determining the degree to which students are committed to developing ICH and suggesting improvements in the program's curriculum. Then, they along with social work clients, peer-support specialists, or community activists could be included on the program's curriculum committee (Curry-Stevens, 2010).

At the levels of dyads, groups, community and society, Fisher-Borne et al. (2015) observed that if we are exercising cultural humility, we “confront imbalances [in power] rather than just acknowledge that they exist” (p. 177). Understanding and deconstructing these power imbalances in professional social work relationships can be complex work. A series of questions developed by Fisher-Borne et al. can be helpful in this process (2015, Table 2, p. 176). For example, students, teachers, advisors, field instructors, and members of the programs' advisory committee or client groups or other constituencies can be asked to rate how well students “*actively* address inequalities both internally (i.e., policies and procedures) and externally (i.e., legislative advocacy)” (p. 176, italics in original).

Building on the work of Fisher-Borne et al., Yates (2017) suggested that we and students ask ourselves how much room we make for clients to share with us their experiences with economic and social barriers and oppressive systems as well as their cultures and social identities. Moreover, social work faculties need to identify ways they and their students are actively addressing inequalities in all levels of relationships including the primary relationship between people and their community or government (e.g., participating in lobby days at the state

capitol, national congress, or United Nations; engaging in protests and rallies; testifying on results of community-based research; supporting ongoing projects to rectify injustices; serving on commissions, boards, or taskforces; campaigning for and holding political office; writing letters or posting comments to media or political leaders; and the like). The social work faculty can also model ICH in the way they genuinely include students as empowered participants in program administration and governance (e.g., coming across to students as modest and assured, open and welcoming, secure and confident though not expert on everything; curiously listening to students' voices and perspectives without defensiveness; seeking partnership and information rather than approval or vindication across differing roles and power; and actually incorporating students' input in program and curriculum development).

Disparities in power are inherent in many relationships whether between individuals in similar roles (such as between classmates in a social work program) or in different roles (between social work students and their field instructors). Recognizing the importance of modeling ICH and nurturing a working relationship with students, social work field instructors and faculty members should be ready to identify and respond to ruptures in their working alliances with students (Watkins et al., 2016). Such ruptures may result in accentuated power imbalances or in a misuse of power which can in turn aggravate differences in cultural background or social identity. For example at the interpersonal level, a serious rupture is likely to occur when a faculty member or field instructor imposes their own worldview on a student in a circumstance within which the student feels they must abandon their perspective in order to conform and successfully complete the program.

By identifying ruptures when they happen, clarifying the differences in power and roles between students and their field instructors and teachers, and working to repair the ruptures, we

can model through parallel processes how best to address disparities in power that arise in social work practice with individuals, families, groups, organizations, communities, and policies (Estrada, 2018; Shulman, 2010). Faculty members or field instructors should bring up a rupture with those involved by acknowledging our role in mistakes that led to the rupture. Then, after sincerely apologizing, we should analyze the rupture with the parties and mutually plan actions to remedy or repair the damage in the relationship and the working alliance. We should be sure to follow through with our part in the plan, asking for and listening to others' perceptions and feedback on progress and effectiveness as the plan unfolds (Watkins et al., 2016).

Conclusion

In this article we have conceptualized cultural humility as *intercultural humility* (ICH) based on scholarly literature from social work, education, psychology, and moral philosophy (i.e., virtue and Confucian ethics). Introducing the term *cultural humility*, EPAS (CSWE, 2015) assigns to social work educators in the United States the responsibility to create a context for students' learning that is conducive to developing a commitment to this virtue. This responsibility is fundamentally relational in a number of ways. Teamwork among faculty members, field instructors, students, program constituents, clients, and others is crucial both in creating the implicit curriculum and in evaluating its success. We cannot fully encourage students' commitment to developing ICH without manifesting a commitment to hold ourselves accountable to being *interculturally humble* in relationship with others.

Competency 1 (Demonstrate ethical and professional behavior) in EPAS states the following: "Social workers recognize the importance of life-long learning and are committed to continually updating their skills to ensure they are relevant and effective" (CSWE, 2015, p. 7). In the tradition of Confucian ethics, the virtue of love of learning is consistent with this

commitment to lifelong learning (Lai, 2013). As social work educators ourselves, we hope to cultivate ICH as a whole with its five interrelated features on a daily basis. If we model development of ICH in our own practice, we will be continuing our own learning and professional journeys.

References

- Abell, M. L., Manuel, J., & Schoeneman, A. (2015). Student attitudes toward religious diversity and implications for multicultural competence. *Journal of Religion & Spirituality in Social Work: Social Thought*, 34, 91–104. doi:10.1080/15426432.2014.943920
- Adams, P. (2009). Ethics with character: Virtues and the ethical social worker. *Journal of Sociology & Social Welfare*, 36(5), 83-105.
- Amodio, D. M. (2014). The neuroscience of prejudice and stereotyping. *Neuroscience*, 15, 670-682. doi:10.1038/nrn3800
- Angle, S., C., & Slote, M. (Eds.). (2013). *Virtue ethics and Confucianism*. New York, NY: Routledge.
- Angle, S. C., & Tiwald, J. (2017). *Neo-Confucianism: A philosophical introduction*. Cambridge, UK: Polity Press.
- Banaji, M. R., & Greenwald, A. G. (2013). *Blindspot: Hidden biases of good people*. New York, NY: Delacorte Press.
- Banks, S. (2010). Integrity in professional life: Issues of conduct, commitment and capacity. *British Journal of Social Work*, 40, 2168-2184.
- Banks, S. (2012). *Ethics and values in social work* (4th ed.). Basingstoke, UK: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Barsky, A. (2019). *Ethics and values in social work* (2nd ed.). New York, NY: Oxford University Press.
- Bent-Goodley, T. B. (2018). Empowerment in action: #SWLeadAdvocateChampion. *Social Work*, 63(2), 101-103.
- Bibus, A. A. (2013). Applying approaches from moral philosophy, especially virtue ethics, when facing ethical dilemmas in social work. *Journal of Czech and Slovak Social Work*, 13(5), 33-50.
- Bibus, A. A. (2015). Supererogation in social work: Deciding whether to go beyond the call of duty.

- Journal of Social Work Values and Ethics*, 12(2), 27-40.
- Chang, E., Simon, M., & Dong, X. (2010). Integrating cultural humility into health care professional education and training. *Advances in Health Science Education*, 17, 269-278.
- Cikara, M., & Van Bavel, J. J. (2014). The neuroscience of intergroup relations: An integrative review. *Perspectives on Psychological Science*, 9(3), 245-274. doi: 10.1177/1745691614527464
- Council on Social Work Education (CSWE). (2015). *Educational policies and accreditation standards for baccalaureate and masters social work programs* (EPAS). Alexandria, VA: Author.
- Curry-Stevens, A. (2010). Journey toward humility: Complexities in advancing pedagogy for the privileged. *Reflections: Narratives of Professional Helping*, 16(1), 61-72.
- Danso, R. (2016). Cultural competence and cultural humility: A critical reflection on key cultural diversity concepts. *Journal of Social Work*, 0(0), 1-21. doi: 10.1177/1468017316654341
- De Bary, W.T. (1989). *The message of the mind in Neo-Confucianism*. New York, NY: Columbia University Press.
- Dessel, A., Bolen, R., & Shepardson, C. (2012). Hopes for intergroup dialogue: Affirmation and allies. *Journal of Social Work Education*, 48(2), 361-367.
- Dessel, A. B., & Rodenborg, N. (2017). An evaluation of intergroup dialogue: Addressing segregation and developing cultural competency. *Journal of Social Work Education*, 53(2), 222-239. doi: 10.1080/10439997.2016.1246269
- Dovido, J. F., & Gaertner, S. L. (2010). Intergroup bias. In S. I. Fiske, D. T. Gilbert, & G. Lindzey (Eds.), *Handbook of social psychology* (5th ed.) (Vol. 2, pp. 1084-1021).

- Hoboken, NJ: John Wiley & Sons.
- Eddington, N., & Shuman, R. (2017). *Continuing education for social workers, counselors, and therapists* (NASW approved). San Diego, CA: Continuing Psychology Education, Inc.
- Estrada, D. (2018). Training and supervision across disciplines to engage in cross-cultural competence and responsiveness: Counseling and family therapy. In S. Singh Poulsen & R. Allan (Eds.), *Cross-cultural responsiveness & systemic therapy* (pp. 101-117). New York, NY: Springer.
- Fisher-Borne, M., Cain, J. M., & Martin, S. L. (2015). From mastery to accountability: Cultural humility as an alternative to cultural competence. *Social Work Education, 34*(2), 165-181. doi: 0.1080/02615479.2014.977244
- Foronda, C., Baptiste, D-L, Reinholdt, M. M., & Ousman, K. (2016). Cultural humility: A concept analysis. *Journal of Transcultural Nursing, 27*(3), 210-217. doi:: 10.1177/1043659615592677
- Fowers, B. J. (2005). *Virtue and psychology: Pursuing excellence in ordinary practices*. Washington, DC: American Psychological Association.
- George Washington University Health Workforce Institute. (2017). *Profile of the social work workforce: Report to the Council on Social Work Education and National Workforce Initiative Steering Committee*. Washington, DC: Author.
- Greeno, E. J., Fedina, L., Rushovich, B., Moore, J. E., Linsenmeyer, D., & Wirt, C. (2017). “They tippy toe around the race issue”: The impact of a Title IV-E program on culturally informed practice for child welfare students. *Child & Family Social Work, 22*(4), 1374-1382. doi: 10.1111/cfs.12355
- Gurin, P., Nagda, B. A., & Zuniga, X. (2013). *Dialogue across difference*. New York, NY:

Russell Sage Foundation.

Haidt, J. (2012). *The righteous mind: Why good people are divided by politics and religion*. New York, NY: Vintage Books.

Hook, J. N., Davis, D. E., Owen, J., Worthington, E. L., & Utsey, S. O. (2013). Cultural humility: Measuring openness to culturally diverse clients. *Journal of Counseling Psychology, 60*, 353-366.

Hook, J. N., Watkins, Jr., C. E., Davis, D. E., Owen, J., Van Tongeren, D. R., & Ramos, M. J. (2016). Cultural humility in psychotherapy supervision. *American Journal of Psychotherapy, 70*, 149-166.

Isaacson, M. (2014). Clarifying concepts: Cultural humility or competency. *Journal of Professional Nursing, 30*(3), 251-258.

Lai, C. (2013). Virtue ethics and Confucian ethics (E. W. Li, Trans.). In S. C. Angle & M. Slote, (Eds.), *Virtue ethics and Confucianism* (pp. 15-27). New York, NY: Routledge.

Lavelock, C. R., Worthington, E. L., Jr., Griffin, B. J., Garthe, R. C., Davis, D. E., & Hook, J. N. (2017). Humility intervention research: A qualitative review. In E. L. Worthington, Jr., D. E. Davis, & J. N. Hook (Eds.), *Handbook of humility: Theory, research, and applications* (pp. 274-285). New York, NY: Routledge.

Legge, J. (1971). *Confucius: Confucian Analects, The Great Learning, and Doctrine of the Mean*. New York, NY: Dover Publications, Inc.

Leman, J. C., Haggard, M. C., Meacher, B., & Rowatt, W. C. (2017). Personality predictors and correlates of humility. In E. L. Worthington, Jr., D. E. Davis, & J. N. Hook (Eds.), *Handbook of humility: Theory, research, and applications* (pp. 137-149). New York, NY: Routledge.

Li, J. (2016). Humility in learning: A Confucian perspective. *Journal of Moral Education, 45*(2), 147-

165. doi: 10.1080/03057240.2016.1168736
- Molenberghs, P. (2013). The neuroscience of in-group bias. *Neuroscience and Behavioral Reviews*, 37, 15301536. doi: /10.1016/j.neubiorev.2013.06.002
- Mosher, D. A., Hook, J. N., Farrell, J. E., Watkins, Jr., C. E., & Davis, D. E. (2017). Cultural humility. In E. L. Worthington, Jr., D. E. Davis, & J. N. Hook (Eds.), *Handbook of humility: Theory, research, and applications* (pp. 91-104). New York, NY: Routledge.
- National Association of Social Workers (NASW). (2105). *Standards and indicators for cultural competence in social work practice*. Washington, DC: Author.
- National Association of Social Workers (NASW). (2017). *Code of ethics of the National Association of Social Workers*. Washington, DC: Author.
- Ortega, R. M., & Faller, K. C. (2011). Training child welfare workers from an intersectional cultural humility perspective: A paradigm shift. *Child Welfare*, 90(5), 27-49.
- Peterson, C., & Seligman, M. E. P. (2004). *Character strengths and virtues: A handbook and classification*. Washington, DC: APA.
- Peterson, G. R. (2013). Virtue, science, and exemplarity: An overview. In J. A. Van Slyke, G. R. Peterson, K. S. Reimer, M. L. Spezio, & W. S. Brown (Eds.), *Theology and the science of moral action: Virtue ethics, exemplarity, and cognitive neuroscience* (pp. 27-46). New York, NY: Routledge.
- Pullen-Sansfaçon, A. (2010). Virtue ethics for social work: A new pedagogy for practical reasoning. *Social Work Education*, 29(4), 402-415.
- Rodenborg, N., & Boisen, L. A. (2013). Aversive racism and intergroup contact theories: Cultural competence in a segregated world. *Journal of Social Work Education*, 49(4), 564-579. doi: 10.1080/10437797.2013.812463

- Rodenborg, N., & Bosch, L. (2009). Intergroup dialog: Introduction. In A. Gitterman & R. Salmon (Eds.), *Encyclopedia of social work with groups* (pp. 78-83). New York, NY: Routledge.
- Ruberton, P. M., Kruse, E., & Lyubomirsky, S. (2017). Boosting state humility via gratitude, self-affirmation, and awe: Theoretical and empirical perspectives. In E. L. Worthington, Jr., D. E. Davis, & J. N. Hook (Eds.), *Handbook of humility: Theory, research, and applications* (pp. 260-273). New York, NY: Routledge.
- Rushing, S. (2013). What is Confucian humility? In S. C. Angle & M. Slote (Eds.), *Virtue ethics and Confucianism* (pp. 173-181). New York: NY: Routledge.
- Schoem, D., & Saunders, S. (2001). Adapting intergroup dialogue processes for use in a variety of settings. In D. Schoem & S. Hurtado (Eds.), *Intergroup dialogue: Deliberative democracy in school, college, community, and workplace* (pp. 328-344). Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan.
- Shulman, L. (2010). *Interactional supervision* (3rd ed.). Washington, DC: National Association of Social Workers.
- Swanton, C. (2003). *Virtue ethics: A pluralistic view*. New York, NY: Oxford University Press.
- Tangney, J. P. (2009). Humility. In C. R. Snyder & S. J. Lopez (Eds.), *Oxford handbook of positive psychology* (pp. 483-490). New York, NY: Oxford University Press.
- Terbeck, S. (2016). *The social neuroscience of intergroup relations: Prejudice, can we cure it?* Plymouth, UK: Springer.
- Terbeck, S., Savulescu, J., Chesterman, L. P., & Cowen, P. J. (2016). Noradrenaline effects on social behavior, intergroup relations, and moral decisions. *Neuroscience and Biobehavioral Reviews*, *66*, 54-60. doi: 10.1016/j.neubiorev.2016.03.031

- Tervalon, M., & Murray-García, J. (1998). Cultural humility versus cultural competence: A critical distinction in defining physician training outcomes in multicultural education. *Journal of Health Care for the Poor and Underserved, 9*(2), 117-125.
- Tu, W. M. (1978). *Humanity and self-cultivation*. Boston, MA: Cheng & Tsui Company.
- Tu, W. M. (1985). *Confucian thought: Selfhood as creative transformation*. Albany, NY: State University of New York Press.
- Van Norden, B. W. (2004). The virtue of righteousness in Mencius. In K. Shun & D. B. Wong (Eds.), *Confucian ethics: A comparative study of self, autonomy, and community* (pp. 148-182). New York, NY: Cambridge University Press.
- Van Slyke, J. A., Peterson, G. R., Reimer, K. S., Spezio, M. L., & Brown, W. S. (Eds.). (2013). *Theology and the science of moral action: Virtue ethics, exemplarity, and cognitive neuroscience*. New York, NY: Routledge.
- Van Tongeren, D. R., & Myers, D. G. (2017). A social psychological perspective on humility. In E. L. Worthington, Jr., D. E. Davis, & J. N. Hook (Eds.), *Handbook of humility: Theory, research, and applications* (pp. 150-164). New York, NY: Routledge.
- Watkins, C. E., Jr., Hook, J. N., Mosher, D. K., & Callahan, J. L. (2018). Humility in clinical supervision: Fundamental, foundational, and transformational. *The Clinical Supervisor*, online publication: doi: 10.1080/07325223.2018.1487355
- Watkins, C. E., Jr., Hook, J. N., Ramaeker, J., Ramos, M. J. (2016). Repairing the ruptured supervisory alliance: Humility as a foundational virtue in clinical supervision. *The Clinical Supervisor, 35*(1), 22-41.
- Wolfer, T. A., & Brandsen, C. (Eds.). (2015). *Virtues and character in social work practice*. Botsford, CT: North American Association of Christians in Social Work.

- Worthington, Jr., E. L., Davis, D. E., & J. N. Hook (Eds.). (2017). *Handbook of humility: Theory, research, and applications*. New York, NY: Routledge.
- Yates, J. (2017). Religious fundamentalist families in school social work. In C. Franklin, (Editor in Chief), *Encyclopedia of social work*. Washington, DC. NASW Press & Oxford University Press. Online publication: DOI: 10.1093/acrefore/9780199975839.013.1235
- Zagzebski, L. T. (1996). *Virtues of the mind: An inquiry into the nature of virtue and the ethical foundations of knowledge*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.