ABSTRACT

AN EDUCATIONAL PROGRAM FOR PARENTS GOING

INTO TRANSRACIAL ADOPTION:

A GRANT PROPOSAL

By

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May 2015

The purpose of this project was to write a grant to provide educational classes for prospective adoptive parents who are going into a transracial adoption. The program will address issues around cultural and racial identity development and will educate potential adoptive parents on crucial aspects of cultural competence. An extensive literature review was conducted in order to identify the unique needs of transracial adoptive families, as well as the challenges associated with transracial adoption. When children are adopted into families that are culturally and racially different from their own ethno-cultural origin, the adoptees' cultural identity development can be compromised. In the process of equipping adoptive parents with the tools and knowledge to support their transracially adopted children's identity development, educational classes constitute a valuable component. The actual submission and/or funding of the grant was not a requirement for the successful completion of the project.

AN EDUCATIONAL PROGRAM FOR PARENTS GOING

INTO TRANSRACIAL ADOPTION:

A GRANT PROPOSAL

A THESIS

Presented to the School of Social Work

California State University, Long Beach

In Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree

Master of Social Work

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May 2015

UMI Number: 1587922

UMI

Dissertation Publishing

UMI 1587922

ProQuest®

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

For Cory, Benny, Simon, and all my other beautiful kids whose resilience continues to inspire me every day.   Thank you to Laura, Cristiana, Emily, and Jesi for being the best support system I could have asked for.   Jenny, thank you for countless Skype sessions and for having put up with me for over 20 years—you are the best. Mom and dad, words cannot express how grateful I am to you for unconditionally supporting my wild aspirations even if they take me halfway around the globe.   Chikako Nagai, thank you for having been so supportive while giving me the room to explore my own ideas.   Lastly, I am indebted to Kinship Center for supporting this thesis and letting me tap into their wealth of expertise.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

This grant project aims to obtain a grant for the establishment of an educational program for prospective adoptive parents going into a transracial adoption. In this context, this thesis examines the impact of parental cultural competence on transracial adoptees' well-being, as well as the ways in which adoptive parents utilize cultural socialization skills. Moreover, this thesis explores the prevalence and efficacy of educational trainings on cultural competence. A grant proposal was selected for this project due to the fact that very few existing programs address the issue of transracial adoption, thus implying a need for more awareness and funding in this area.

Overview of the Issue

Transracial adoptions have formed families in the United States since the late 1940s (Simon & Altstein, 2002). In 2009, 4 in 10 adoptions in the United States were transracial (Vandivere, Malm, & Radel, 2009). The majority of transracially adopted children are children of color adopted into non-Hispanic White families (Padilla, Vargas, & Chavez, 2010). The prevalence of children of color being raised by White parents can partly be attributed to the fact that children of color are vastly overrepresented in the U.S. foster system. In 2013, African American children constituted 24% of all foster children, despite only representing 13% of the general population (U.S. Department of Health & Human Services, Children's Bureau, 2014).

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While any adoption brings with it a number of challenges, families formed by transracial adoption encounter unique needs and challenges.   When children are adopted into families that are culturally and racially different from their own ethno-cultural origin, the adoptees' cultural identity development can be compromised.   This is reflected in the fact that among South Korean adoptees who were raised in White U.S. families, 78% considered themselves to be or wanted to be White as children (McGinnis, Smith, Ryan, & Howard, 2009).   Similarly, young African American adults who were raised in Caucasian families reported feelings of identity confusion and a disconnect from Black communities (Butler-Sweet, 2011a).

In helping transracial adoptees navigate their cultural identity development, adoptive parents' cultural socialization practices play a crucial role.   Parental support for cultural socialization practices is positively correlated with feelings of belonging and levels of self-esteem among transracially adopted adults who have been raised by White parents (Mohanty, Keoske, & Sales, 2007).   However, not all prospective adoptive parents are prepared to parent a child of a different cultural and racial background. Among White international adoptive mothers, attitudes towards their children's racial identity ranges from high awareness of racial distinctions to a deliberate ignorance of such differences—a notion often described by White parents as *color-blind (*Crolley-Simic & Vonk, 2011).

In order to help transracial adoptive parents navigate their adopted children's identity development, educational programs geared towards this particular demographic are a crucial factor that contributes to the parents' level of cultural competence (Vonk &

Angaran, 2001).   Despite the need for culturally competent trainings for prospective

adoptive parents, a study of 157 private and public adoption agencies that facilitate

transracial adoptions in the United States found that only 53% of agencies provided

cultural competence training for adoptive parents (Vonk & Angaran, 2003).   These

numbers indicate a significant need for more culturally sensitive educational programs.

<u>Purpose Statement</u>

The purpose of this project was to obtain a grant to develop an educational

program for prospective parents going into transracial adoption.   The goals of this

project were to: (1) increase transracially adopted children's well-being by providing

them with a home environment that fosters a healthy cultural identity development, (2)

provide education on cultural identity for prospective adoptive parents, and (3) increase

cultural competence among adoptive parents.

The classes funded by this grant address the unique needs and challenges

encountered by families formed through transracial adoption and are held at Kinship

Center in Tustin.   Program cycles of five sessions each will be held every 6 months over

a 1 year grant period.   A psychoeducational approach is used to inform the prospective

adoptive parents about issues around cultural competence.   This program differs from

existing programs in that it specifically addresses cultural competence in transracial

adoption.   It provides an additional resource for adoptive parents that was not previously

available at the agency, as issues of cultural competency in transracial adoption were only

addressed in one section of a general educational program for adoptive parents.

Conceptual Definitions

In order to explore the unique needs of families formed by transracial adoption, it is crucial to understand the definition of what transracial adoption entails. The following definitions are used in this thesis project.

Transracial adoption is defined as an adoption that involves the placement of a child in a family that is racially and culturally different from them (Barn, 2013). In this sense, transracial adoption can occur domestically or internationally in the context of an intercountry adoption (Lee, 2003). However, it should be noted that while the majority of international adoptions involve children being placed in families that are racially different from them, not all international adoptions are also transracial (Vandivere et al., 2009). Nevertheless, it is crucial to be mindful of the fact that even an international adoption in which the child and adoptive parents share the same race constitutes a substantial cultural change for the adopted individual and can pose a significant challenge for the adoptee's identity development.

Cultural identity is defined as an individual's subjective identification with a particular cultural group (Usborne & Sablonnière, 2014). As such, cultural identity as a broad concept encompasses a variety of other aspects of identity, such as ethnic and racial identity. While these terms refer to different aspects of identity, they are interrelated and encompass overlapping components. Consequently, the terms are often insufficiently defined and used interchangeably within the research community (Ponterotto & Mallinckrodt, 2007; Trimble, 2007). In the context of this thesis, the term cultural identity will be utilized and understood to include aspects of ethnic and racial identity.

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Cultural socialization refers to a variety of parental practices. According to Lee, Grotevant, Hellerstedt, and Gunnar (2006), cultural identity is defined as

> the manner by which parents address ethnic and racial issues within the family
> and the ways parents communicate or transmit cultural values, beliefs, customs,
> and behaviors to the child, as well as the extent to which the child internalizes
> these messages. (p.572)

Cultural competence constitutes a crucial skill for adoptive parents. According to the National Association of Social Workers (NASW; 2001), cultural competence refers to

> the process by which individuals and systems respond respectfully and effectively
> to people of all cultures, languages, classes, races, ethnic backgrounds, religions,
> and other diversity factors in a manner that recognizes, affirms, and values the
> worth of individuals, families, and communities and protects and preserves the
> dignity of each. (p.11)

When addressing parental management of adoptees' cultural identity development, Vonk (2001) stipulates that cultural competence for transracial adoptive parents should encompass three aspects: (1) racial awareness, (2) multicultural family planning, and (3) survival skills. *Racial awareness* refers to the degree to which individuals are conscious of the ways in which the factors of race, ethnicity, culture and related power status influence their own and others' lives (Vonk, 2001). *Multicultural family planning* refers to the extent to which transracial adoptive parents facilitate ways for their adoptive child to participate in and be educated about their birth culture (Vonk,

2001).   *Survival skills* refer to the extent to which parents are able and willing to prepare their children of color to successfully cope with racism (Vonk, 2001).

<center>Social Work and Multicultural Relevance</center>

Social workers are concerned with the well-being of children and constitute a significant portion of employees in the child welfare sector, with 40% of child welfare workers having a degree in social work (Barth, Lloyd, Christ, Chapman, & Dickinson, 2008).   As the number of adoptions in the United States increases (Child Welfare Information Gateway, 2011), social workers in the child welfare sector interact with growing numbers of transracial adoptive families.   In order to provide effective services for transracial adoptive parents and children, social workers need to be aware of the multitude of ways in which culture and cultural competence influence family relationships and individual identity development.

Moreover, the NASW (2008) emphasizes the importance of cultural competence in social work practice.   The NASW (2008) Code of Ethics stipulates that "social workers should obtain education about and seek to understand the nature of social diversity and oppression" (para. 34).   This understanding of the dynamics of diversity and oppression is particularly important for social workers who interact with families formed by transracial adoption.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

This chapter analyzes the existing literature surrounding the topic of transracial adoption. It explores the history of transracial adoption, as well as statistics and prevalence rates. Moreover, this section addresses attitudes towards transracial adoption, as well as the unique needs and challenges associated with transracial adoption. Lastly, this literature review examines the services that are currently available for adoptive parents.

<u>Historical and Political Overview of Transracial Adoption</u>

For decades, adoption agencies adhered to the practice of placing children based on a system of race matching. This system operated on the assumption that in order for adoptions to be successful, children and their prospective adoptive parents should share physical and cultural characteristics (Papke, 2013; Simon & Altstein, 2002). Transracial and intercountry adoption was not prevalent in the United States until the late 1940s when the aftermath of World War II left large numbers of children orphaned and in need of new families (Simon & Altstein, 2002). Many Japanese and Korean children who had been orphaned during World War II and the Korean War were adopted into families in the United States during the 1950s and 1960s (Barn, 2013). The numbers of intercountry adoptions increased further during the Vietnam War (Barn, 2013). From the 1950s to the 1970s, intercountry adoptions between the United States and many Asian

countries constituted a significant aspect of international relations between those countries, with narratives of Asian children being *rescued* by Caucasian American families adding another layer of power imbalance to international and domestic race relations (Choy, 2009).

While the majority of transracial adoptions were comprised of intercountry adoptions, domestic transracial adoptions also occurred in the late 1950s with the placement of Native American and African American children with mostly Caucasian families (Barn, 2013).   However, the adoption of African American children into Caucasian families was met with resistance and criticism (Barn, 2013; Papke, 2013).   In 1961, Parents to Adopt Minority Youngsters (PAMY), an organization that aimed to provide African American homes for African American children, was founded in Minnesota (Simon & Altstein, 2002).   In 1972 the National Association of Black Social Workers criticized transracial adoption for denying African American children access to their cultural and racial heritage and called for an end to the practice of placing African American children in Caucasian homes (Barn, 2013).   As a result, the number of African American children who were adopted transracially declined during the 1970s (Papke, 2013).

The sentiment of keeping children in their culture of origin was also mirrored in the adoption of the Indian Child Welfare Act (ICWA) in 1978.   Prior to the enactment of ICWA, between 1969 and 1974, 25 to 35% of all Native American children were removed from their biological families and placed in mostly non-Indian families (Johnson, 1999).   With the adoption of ICWA, the U.S. Congress emphasized its

responsibility to support Native American tribes by providing stricter regulations for the removal of Native American children from their biological families (Johnson, 1999). Among other regulations, ICWA established that for adoptive placements of Native American children preference must be given to the child's extended family, members of the child's native tribe, or other Native American families (Johnson, 1999).

Over the two decades following the enactment of ICWA, attitudes towards transracial adoption began to shift towards a more positive view of transracial placements (Barn, 2013). In 1994, the U.S. Congress passed the Multiethnic Placement Act (MEPA) to encourage transracial placements and to account for the fact that, then, children of color constituted 60% of children in foster care and waited twice as long for families as Caucasian children (Jennings, 2006). In 1996, an amendment to MEPA, the Interethnic Adoption Provision (IEP), made the consideration of race in the adoption placement process a punishable offense (Barn, 2013; Jennings, 2006).

While MEPA-IEP makes it illegal for agencies to consider factors of race in placement decisions, the act also requires agencies receiving federal funds to recruit adoptive parents that reflect the cultural backgrounds of the children they serve (Hines, Lemon, Wyatt, & Merdinger, 2004). Moreover, the implementation of MEPA-IEP does not apply to the placement of Native American children as regulated by ICWA (U.S. Department of Health & Human Services, Administration for Children & Families, n.d.).

Despite the enactment of MEPA-IEP, many prospective adoptive parents remain hesitant to adopt a child that is racially different from them. In a qualitative study of 14

women who struggled with infertility, Jennings (2006) found that many of the prospective mothers were unwilling to consider a transracial adoption placement. The reasons the women gave for their decision included trepidations rooted in racial prejudice, as well as concerns that the children's well-being would be impaired by racist attitudes within their support system (Jennings, 2006). In addition to concerns voiced by prospective adoptive parents, attitudes towards transracial adoption remain ambivalent among professionals and scholars alike, with studies emphasizing or negating the potential harmful effects of inadequate cultural socialization (Barn, 2013).

<u>Statistics and Prevalence Rates</u>

In 2007 and 2008, approximately 136,000 children were adopted annually in the United States (Child Welfare Information Gateway, 2011). While this represents a 6% increase in absolute annual adoptions since 2000, the adoption rate per 100,000 adults decreased by 5% over the same time (Child Welfare Information Gateway, 2011). According to the National Survey of Adoptive Parents (NSAP) of 2007, 25% of adoptions in the United States that year were international, compared to 37% that occurred from foster care and 38% from private adoption agencies (Vandivere et al., 2009).

As numbers of total adoptions increased slightly, the number of children in the U.S. foster system decreased from 463,792 in 2008 to 402,378 in 2013 (U.S. Department of Health & Human Services, Children's Bureau, 2014). However, in 2013, children entering the foster system outnumbered those that were exiting the system by 16,624, indicating an increase in foster children (U.S. Department of Health & Human Services,

Children's Bureau, 2014).   While not all children that are placed in the U.S. foster

system become eligible for adoption, there is a significant percentage of foster children

who are in need of adoptive families.   In 2013, alone, 101,840 children were waiting to

be adopted out of the foster system (U.S. Department of Health & Human Services,

Children's Bureau, 2014).   While many children are still waiting for adoptive families,

those that were adopted out of the foster system had a relatively speedy adoption process.

Of all children adopted out of the foster system through a public agency in 2013, 66%

were adopted within a year of the termination of their birthparents' rights (U.S.

Department of Health & Human Services, Children's Bureau, 2014).

Despite the implementation of MEPA-IEP, children of color are still vastly

overrepresented in the U.S. foster system.   In 2006, 10 years after the enactment of IEP,

African American children accounted for 32% of all foster children, despite only

representing 15% of the general population (U.S. Government Accountability Office,

2007).   In 2013, African American children constituted 24% of all foster children (U.S.

Department of Health & Human Services, Children's Bureau, 2014).

Since 1999, almost a quarter of a million children have entered the United States

through international adoption (U.S. Department of State, 2013).   In the state of

California, alone, over 17,000 children were adopted internationally in the same time

frame (U.S. Department of State, 2013).   In 2013, 7,094 children were adopted into the

United States through intercountry adoption (U.S. Department of State, Bureau of

Consular Affairs, 2014).   This constitutes a dramatic decrease over the past 10 years,

from 21,654 intercountry adoptions in 2003 (U.S. Department of State, Bureau of

Consular Affairs, n.d.).   California received the second highest number of international

adoptees out of the U.S. states, with 477 children being adopted internationally by

Californian families in 2013 (U.S. Department of State, Bureau of Consular Affairs,

2014).   The majority of children adopted into the United States in 2013 originated from

China, Ethiopia, Russia, South Korea, and Ukraine (U.S. Department of State, Bureau of

Consular Affairs, 2014).

International adoptions constitute the majority of all transracial adoptions in the

United States.   Among children adopted internationally, 84% were in a transracial

placement, compared to 28% of foster care adoptions and 21% of private domestic

adoptions (Vandivere et al., 2009).   Overall, 4 in 10 adoptions in the United States were

transracial (Vandivere et al., 2009).   The majority of transracially adopted children are

children of color adopted into non-Hispanic White families (Ishizawa, Kenney, Kubo, &

Stevens, 2006; Jennings, 2006; Padilla et al., 2010; Vandivere et al., 2009).   An analysis

of the 2000 and 2005 Adoption and Foster Care Analysis and Reporting System Reports

conducted by Padilla et al. (2010) revealed that children placed in transracial adoptions

were significantly younger at the time of placement than those placed with parents of the

same race.   Moreover, children of color were significantly younger at the time of

placement than Caucasian children (Padilla et al., 2010).   These findings could be

reflective of adoptive parents' hesitations to adopt older children of color due to concerns

about challenges addressed in subsequent chapters.

Attitudes Towards Transracial Adoption

Among White potential adoptive parents, the openness towards adopting a child of color varies depending on various factors such as the prospective parents' gender and sexual orientation.   In a qualitative study of 54 lesbian and 93 heterosexual White couples in the United States, Goldberg (2009) found that lesbian couples were more likely to report being open to transracial adoption.   Eighty-seven percent of lesbian couples stated being open to adopting children of color, compared to only 55% of heterosexual couples (Goldberg, 2009).   One of the reasons lesbian couples gave for their openness was the feeling that their family was already different, and they therefore felt more prepared to parent children from a different cultural background (Goldberg, 2009).

Moreover, females reported being more open to adopting children of color than males (Goldberg, 2009).   Goldberg (2009) found that out of 24 heterosexual couples who disagreed on their willingness to adopt transracially, in 14 cases the women were open but their husbands opposed, while in 10 cases the men were the proponents of transracial adoption.   This finding was also reflected in a quantitative study of 1,027 undergraduate students at a U.S. university conducted by Wolters, Zusman, and Knox (2008).   The authors found that 77.6% of females expressed views in favor of transracial adoption, compared to 60.1% of males.   In the same study, race also proved to be a significant determinant of attitudes towards transracial adoption, with African American participants expressing more favorable views of transracial adoption placements than their White counterparts.   Overall, African American females were most likely to

express positive views of transracial adoption (85.6%), while White males were the least likely (54.9%; Wolters et al., 2008).   This result was in contrast with the critical view on transracial adoption expressed by the National Association of Black Social Workers and warrants further research.

Overall, negative views on transracial adoption are still prevalent in the United States.   In a study of 167 undergraduate students conducted in the United States by Katz and Doyle (2013), participants were shown a picture of a transracial or racially homogeneous White family, respectively.   Students who had viewed the photo of the transracial family subsequently reported less favorable views of adoption than those who had seen the picture of the racially homogeneous family (Katz & Doyle, 2013).

<u>Unique Needs and Challenges Associated with Transracial Adoption</u>

While any adoption brings with it a number of challenges for both the children and the adoptive parents, families formed by transracial adoption have unique needs that should be taken into account when providing pre-adoption education.   The challenges faced by transracial adoptive families include difficulties navigating the adopted child's cultural and racial identity development, as well as the parents' level of cultural competence.

<u>Cultural Identity Clarity</u>

Cultural identity is known to be a crucial factor in the construction of an individual's personal identity (Usborne & Sablonnière, 2014).   In addressing the topic of transracial adoption, it is essential to examine how cultural identity clarity affects the well-being of transracially adopted individuals.   Usborne and Sablonnière (2014) define

cultural identity clarity as "the extent to which beliefs about identity that arise from one's cultural group membership(s) are clearly and confidently understood" (p.8).

A study of 135 Canadian undergraduate students conducted by Usborne and Taylor (2010) found that the extent to which individuals had confident and clearly defined beliefs regarding their own cultural identity was positively associated with personal identity clarity across different cultural groups.   In a similar study of 279 Canadian undergraduate students, Stinson, Wood, and Doxey (2008) found a positive correlation between self-concept clarity and self-esteem.

 Cultural Identity in Transracial Adoption

When children are adopted into families that are culturally and racially different from their own ethno-cultural origin, identity clarity can be compromised.   A study of 179 South Korean adoptees raised by White parents in the United States found that 78% of the participants considered themselves to be or wanted to be White as children (McGinnis et al., 2009).

Similarly, in a qualitative study of 32 young African American adults conducted by Butler-Sweet (2011a), participants who had been raised in Caucasian families reported feelings of identity confusion and a disconnect from Black communities.   Moreover, participants from transracial families tended to equate African American culture with low-income urban milieus, a fact which added to their conflicted identity, considering their own middle-class status (Butler-Sweet, 2011a).   Furthermore, many of the participants that had been raised by White parents reported race as being a secondary

descriptor of their identity, with family related identities such as *brother* or *sister* being listed as the more crucial identifying aspects (Butler-Sweet, 2011b).

Identity struggles were also reported by several adoptees in a qualitative study of 20 transracial adoptive families conducted by Vidal de Haymes and Simon (2003). Many of the children in the study reported experiencing pressure by peers and society to choose a racial identity. Several children of color expressed internalized stereotypes against their own racial group and reported being able to relate more to White peers. Moreover, many of the adoptees reported feelings of ambivalence regarding their racial identity. In a mixed-method study of 123 international adoptees of color being raised by Caucasian parents, several participants reported feeling higher levels of belonging once they left their mostly White adoptive communities and joined more diverse peer groups in a college environment (Godon, Green, & Ramsey, 2014).

In the process of mitigating identity confusion among transracial adoptees, adoptive parents' cultural socialization practices play a crucial role. In a web-based study of 82 transracially adopted adults who had been raised by White parents, Mohanty et al. (2007) found that parental support for cultural socialization practices was positively correlated with the participants' feelings of belonging and levels of self-esteem. While the authors discovered no significant correlation between cultural socialization and the adoptees' sense of identity, adoptees whose parents supported their cultural socialization reported feeling significantly less marginalized within the dominant culture.

Similarly, a study of 241 families of children adopted from South Korea and raised in the United States revealed a significant correlation between the parents' level of

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support of their children's ethnic socialization and the adoptees' level of positive feelings regarding their culture of origin (Yoon, 2004).   Moreover, participants who had been raised in culturally diverse neighborhoods reported higher levels of self-esteem than those who lived in more ethnically homogenous areas (Yoon, 2004).

These findings are supported by a qualitative study of 83 adult Korean-born adoptees raised in the United States conducted by Basow, Lilley, Bookwala, and McGillicuddy-DeLisi (2008).   The authors found that participants who reported a stronger sense of ethnic identity displayed higher levels of psycho-emotional well-being.

In addition to being associated with self-esteem, cultural socialization and cultural identity clarity can affect the degree to which adopted individuals display maladaptive behaviors.   A study of 1,003 adoptive families across the United States conducted by Johnston, Swim, Deater-Deckard, and Petrill (2007) found that a higher degree of cultural socialization correlated with a reduction of aggressive and delinquent behavior in transracially adopted adolescents.

While findings from the aforementioned studies imply that the unique challenges which transracially adopted individuals face might have a detrimental effect on their self-esteem, a meta-analysis of 64 studies conducted by Juffer and van Ijzendoorn (2007) revealed no significant difference in self-esteem between transracial and same-race adoptees.   Moreover, self-esteem levels of adopted individuals did not differ from those of their non-adopted peers (Juffer & van Ijzendoorn, 2007).

As transracial adoptees struggle with identity clarity, many of them eventually attempt to reconcile their culture of origin with their own experience of identity.   Baden,

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Treweeke, and Ahluwalia (2012) suggest that international transracial adoptees go through a process of attempting to gather information about their roots and connecting with their birth culture.   While this process of reculturation can occur for all international adoptees, a study of 68 internationally adopted children conducted in Spain conducted by Reinoso, Juffer, and Tieman (2013) found that transracial international adoptees expressed higher levels of interest in their culture of origin than their same-race counterparts.   Moreover, Godon et al. (2014) found that out of 123 international adoptees of color raised by Caucasian parents, those who lived in predominantly White communities were more likely to search for their birth families than those who were raised in more diverse neighborhoods.   These findings suggest that adoptees who face more experiences of otherness in their adoptive communities might develop a stronger desire to connect with their birth families and explore their cultures of origin.

Cultural Competence among Adoptive Parents

Vonk (2001) stipulates that cultural competence for transracial adoptive parents should encompass three aspects: (1) racial awareness, (2) multicultural family planning, and (3) survival skills.   While cultural competence is crucial for all transracial adoptive families, it is particularly relevant for Caucasian parents raising children of color, as these families constitute the majority of transracial adoptive families (Jennings, 2006; Vandivere et al., 2009).   Moreover, the controversy surrounding transracial adoption is largely fueled by the question whether White parents, as members of the dominant culture, are able to instill a child of color with a healthy sense of cultural identity (Crolley-Simic & Vonk, 2008).

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Racial awareness.   Racial awareness refers to the degree to which individuals are conscious of the ways in which the factors of race, ethnicity, culture and related power status influence their own and others' lives (Vonk, 2001).   In a qualitative study of White transracial adoptive mothers, Crolley-Simic and Vonk (2011) found that the mothers' views on the topic of race could be categorized into four groups: "color-blind," "ambiguous," "multiple perspectives," and "coming together" (p. 173).   Mothers who reported views in line with the notion of color-blindness tended to deny their children's distinct ethnic characteristics by claiming not to see them as racially different.   On the other end of the spectrum, mothers whose views could be categorized as 'multiple perspectives' were more likely to express awareness of how their children's experiences were affected by their racial background (Crolley-Simic & Vonk, 2011).

A similar discrepancy in adoptive parents' perceptions of race could be found in a qualitative study conducted by Barn (2013).   Among 15 White mothers who had adopted their children in international or domestic transracial adoptions, Barn identified themes described as "humanitarianism," "ambivalence," and "transculturalism" (p.1280).   Mothers who were categorized as 'humanitarianism' based their parenting on the principle of love and minimized the relevance of their children's ethnicity and birth culture.   Some mothers reported that the fact that they had been parenting their children since infancy negated any cultural differences.   Conversely, mothers who fell into the category of 'transculturalism' actively acknowledged the importance of cultural identity and the prevalence of racism encountered by their adopted children.   Mothers who

displayed 'ambivalent' views were aware of cultural differences, but unsure how to address these differences (Barn, 2013).

Similar categories of racial awareness were used by Kim, Reichwald, and Lee (2012), who conducted a mixed-method study of 30 families of South Korean adoptees raised by Caucasian parents. The authors found that in six families the parents rejected the notion of cultural differences between parents and their children, while nine families expressed awareness of these differences. The remaining 15 families displayed discrepant views among the parents. Analogous to the mothers in Crolley-Simic's and Vonk's (2011) study, parents who rejected the idea of racial differences often invoked themes in line with the notion of color-blindness (Kim et al., 2012).

While views on race differ among adoptive parents, perceptions of parental cultural competence can also vary between parents and their adopted children. In Vidal de Haymes' and Simon's (2003) study of 20 transracial adoptive families, several parents reported that adopting their children vastly increased their levels of racial awareness. However, many of the adopted children who were interviewed in the study reported that their parents often displayed avoidant behaviors with regards to issues of race and tended to minimize their children's experiences of racism. Similarly, Kim et al. (2012) discovered that Caucasian parents of South Korean adoptees assessed their own levels of cultural socialization as much higher than did their children. While parents in de Haymes' and Simon's (2003) study reported an increase in racial awareness generated by parenting their adopted children, a longitudinal study of 327 parents who had adopted transracially from China revealed no significant attitude change over the course of five

years (Thomas & Tessler, 2007).   These findings indicate that transracial adoptive parents might benefit from educational pre-adoption programs to increase their level of understanding of their children's needs.

      <u>Multicultural family planning.</u>   Multicultural family planning refers to the extent to which transracial adoptive parents facilitate ways for their adoptive child to participate in and be educated about their birth culture (Vonk, 2001).   In a mixed-method study of 37 families formed through international, transracial adoption, Carstens and Juliá (2010) found that 91% of the adoptive parents reported that the family socialized with members of their children's culture of origin.

      A qualitative study of eight White mothers of internationally, transracially adopted children conducted by Crolley-Simic and Vonk (2008) found that participants utilized different approaches to support their children in their racial and cultural identity development.   While some mothers strove to integrate the children's culture or origin into their daily lives by living in culturally diverse neighborhoods and embracing elements of language, food, and lifestyle, others' socialization practices remained mainly within the parents' White culture, with only occasional references to the children's birth culture.   A third group of families displayed efforts to normalize the family's racial make-up by socializing with other transracial adoptive families.   The degree to which parents were willing to immerse themselves in their children's culture of origin also had an impact on how much they were able to integrate the perspectives of people of color in their conversations with their children (Crolley-Simic & Vonk, 2008).

Some of the aforementioned qualitative findings are also reflected in an analysis of the data of the 2007 National Survey of Adoptive Parents conducted by Vonk, Lee, and Crolley-Simic (2010). The authors extracted data pertaining only to transracial adoptive families and examined cultural socialization practices of parents of 438 children who were adopted domestically, as well as 364 children who joined their families through international adoption. Among both groups, the most frequently used socialization practices included providing books and entertainment that included references to the adopted children's culture, preparing foods congruent with the child's culture of origin, as well as choosing friends who shared their children's racial background. While the adoptive parents in the study seemed to be aware of the importance of providing their children with culturally congruent role models, as evidenced by their diverse choice of friends, fewer than 50% of the participants chose to live in racially diverse neighborhoods or employed racially congruent care providers. Despite the fact that both domestic and international adoptive parents used socialization practices, international adoptive parents were more likely than their domestic counterparts to participate in religious or recreational activities and holidays that were congruent with their adopted children's culture of origin, read books associated with their children's birth culture, and prepare culturally compatible foods (Vonk et al., 2010).

While some transracial adoptive families specifically choose to move into racially diverse neighborhoods, some research findings indicate that being surrounded by a diverse support system also increases an individual's openness to considering adopting transracially in the first place. In Goldberg's (2009) study of White prospective adoptive

parents, participants who expressed openness towards adopting a child of color most frequently cited having friends or family members of color, as well as living in diverse communities, as the main factors that positively influenced their attitude towards transracial adoption.

In addition to diverse neighborhoods, church congregations can also constitute a resource for cultural socialization.   In this context it is important to consider how the respective congregation's racial composition influences the extent to which its members are supportive of transracial adoption. Perry (2010) examined data collected by the 2005 Baylor Religion Survey and found that White individuals who attended more racially diverse churches were significantly more likely to have positive views of transracial adoption than those whose congregations were more racially homogeneous.   Among White participants who attended churches whose members were 99 to 100% White, 69.8% expressed views favorable of transracial adoption, compared to 86.5% of participants whose churches had 75% or fewer White members (Perry, 2010).

Survival skills.   Survival skills refer to the extent to which parents are able and willing to prepare their children of color to successfully cope with racism (Vonk, 2001). In a qualitative study of 13 adult African American adoptees and their Caucasian adoptive parents, Smith, Juarez, and Jacobson (2011) found that the White parents were generally aware of incidents of racism that their children of color encountered and were willing to advocate on behalf of their children.   However, the study also revealed that many of the transracial adoptees were taught to think about race from a White perspective and accept Whiteness as the societal norm.   Moreover, White parents tended to interpret racism as

being rooted in White ignorance so as to not take away from the prevalent narrative of White goodness and virtue (Smith et al., 2011).

In a study of 761 families of internationally adopted children raised predominantly by White parents in the United States, 78% of the parents stated that they had engaged their children in conversations about racism and discrimination in the school setting (Lee et al., 2006). The older the children were, the more likely the parents were to have approached this topic. However, parents who had expressed views in line with the notion of color-blindness were significantly less likely to broach the topic of racism with their children. Moreover, the study did not measure the extent to which parents addressed more subtle issues of racism in addition to blatant incidents of discrimination (Lee et al., 2006).

<u>Services for Transracial Adoptive Parents</u>

In order to help transracial adoptive parents navigate their children's identity development and well-being, educational programs are a crucial component in creating awareness and competence (Vonk, 2001). Multiple studies conducted in the field of transracial adoption call for the implementation of more culturally sensitive trainings for prospective adoptive parents (Mohanty et al., 2007; Vonk, 2001). Despite the fact that research supports this call for trainings, a study by Vonk and Angaran (2003) found that out of 157 private and public adoption agencies that facilitate transracial adoptions in the United States, only 53% provided cultural competence training for adoptive parents. However, these results suggest a moderate improvement in the availability of training programs since 1993, when a study by Kallgran and Caudill explored seven adoption

agencies in several metropolitan areas in the United States and found that only two of the agencies provided racial awareness programs for prospective transracial adoptive parents.

The lack of educational programs for transracial adoption is also reflected in prospective adoptive parents' level of satisfaction with services provided by adoption agencies. In Vidal de Haymes' and Simon's (2003) study of 20 transracial adoptive families, many parents reported that they did not feel sufficiently supported by their agencies. With the exception of two parents, all interviewees expressed frustration with the amount and quality of resources and trainings that were available to them. Several parents voiced a need for more education on parenting children of color and called for the creation of more parenting classes to cater to this particular demographic (Vidal de Haymes & Simon, 2003).

Recognizing the need for educational programs for transracial adoptive parents, Vonk and Angaran (2001) conducted a pilot study that aimed to evaluate the effectiveness of a 3-hour training for transracial adoptive parents. The training specifically addressed the three cultural competences identified by Vonk (2001): (1) racial awareness, (2) multicultural family planning, and (3) survival skills. The participants were exclusively Caucasian and most of them were in the pre-placement stage of the adoption process. The authors evaluated 42 parents' responses to pre- and post-test surveys and found significant increases in awareness of all three competences. While education about cultural competence should be an ongoing process throughout the various pre- and post-adoption stages, Ku (2005) supports the assertion that the pre-placement stage of the

adoption process constitutes the most effective time to incorporate trainings for transracial adoptive parents.

In addition to the instructive aspect of educational programs for adoptive parents, the social component can play a significant role in supporting transracial adoptive parents, as well. A quantitative study of 912 Caucasian parents of children adopted from either China or South Korea revealed that participation in post-adoption support groups was the strongest predictor of higher levels of parental cultural competence (Vonk & Massatti, 2008). While none of the studies examined long-term changes in the parents' awareness or the effects of educational programs on the adoptees' well-being, the results substantiate the call for pre-adoption trainings for transracial adoptive parents.

<u>Limitations of the Literature</u>

While a considerable amount of research exists around the subject of transracial adoption, some limitations emerge in the literature. The fact that some of the studies specifically address either domestic or international adoption, while others address transracial adoption in general, compromises the comparability and reproducibility of results. Furthermore, most of the research on transracial adoption focuses on children of color being raised by Caucasian parents, with virtually no studies acknowledging other transracial adoption constellations. Among adoptees of color, children of Asian and particularly South Korean origin seem to be vastly over-represented in the research. Moreover, very few studies address the availability and nature of pre-adoptive educational programs. Additionally, only one study was able to give insight into the effectiveness of educational programs for transracial adoptive parents, and none explored

their impact on the adopted children's well-being.   More research is needed to address these gaps in the literature.

CHAPTER 3

METHODS

This chapter provides detailed descriptions of the nature of the program and interventions, the target population, host agency, identification of potential funding source, criteria for the selection of the grant, a description of the selected foundation, a needs assessment, proposed budget, as well as plans for the evaluation process.

Interventions and Nature of the Program

The purpose of this program was to provide educational classes for prospective adoptive parents going into a transracial adoption in Orange County, California. The classes will address the unique needs and challenges encountered by families formed by transracial adoption and will provide prospective adoptive parents with information aimed at increasing their levels of cultural competence. Educating parents about cultural competence is a crucial component in ensuring the adoptees' socio-emotional adjustment. This is particularly relevant as high levels of parental cultural competence and competent cultural socialization practices are associated with increased levels of cultural identity and well-being among transracially adopted individuals (Basow, et al., 2008; Mohanty et al., 2007; Yoon, 2004).

Five 3-hour classes will be held once a week on Thursday nights from 6:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m. at Kinship Center in Tustin. The classes will be held at night in order to accommodate parents who work during the day. Program cycles of five sessions each

will be held every 6 months over a 1-year grant period.   The first program cycle will

begin in September 2015.   A psychoeducational approach will be used to inform the

prospective adoptive parents about issues around cultural competence.

This program will fill a void in the adoption community, as the unique needs of

transracial adoptive families are rarely addressed in the context of specific pre-adoptive

classes (Vonk & Angaran, 2003).   This class will differ from existing programs in that it

will specifically focus on cultural competence in transracial adoption.   It provides an

additional resource for adoptive parents that was not previously available at Kinship

Center, as issues of cultural competency in transracial adoption were only addressed in

one section of a general educational program for adoptive parents.

Target Population

The classes will be open to parents who are in the adoption process and have been

or are likely to be matched with a child of a different racial background.   It is crucial to

acknowledge the formative role that adoptive parents play in their children's cultural

identity development.   In order to ensure that parents go into the transracial adoption

process with the knowledge they need to support their children's identity development,

these classes will focus on parents who are in the pre-placement stage of the adoption

process.   Moreover, implementing educational classes for prospective transracial

adoptive parents during the pre-placement stage has been recommended in the literature

(Ku, 2005).

Participants will be recruited among the clients of Kinship Center adoption

agency.   Prospective adoptive parents will be eligible to participate in the program if

they are clients of Kinship Center adoption agency and have been recommended for this class by their adoption social worker. While this educational program is aimed at prospective adoptive parents in the pre-placement stage, classes will be open to selected adoptive parents who are already parenting their transracially adopted children, if it is determined by their adoption social worker that they will benefit from participating in the program.

Participants will benefit from the program by gaining knowledge and awareness of the unique needs of transracial adoptive families. The classes aim to equip adoptive parents with relevant information, tools, and resources to navigate the challenges that arise from parenting a child of a different cultural background. While the primary focus of the program centers on education, the participants will also benefit from the opportunity to interact and socialize with other transracial adoptive parents who share similar experiences, as postulated by Vonk and Massatti (2008).

<div align="center">Host Agency</div>

Kinship Center, a member of Seneca Family of Agencies, offers a variety of services throughout California. Kinship Center is a California nonprofit agency that creates and supports permanent families for children through adoption, relative caregiving or other guardianship. Since 1984, Kinship Center has provided services for thousands of children of all ages. Kinship Center is headquartered in Salinas, California with facilities in eleven California counties. Kinship Center operates around the core belief that every child deserves a family and provides the full spectrum of family-centered support to strengthen the families and communities they serve (Kinship Center,

2015).   This program will support the agency's mission by strengthening adoptive

families through providing education that will assist adoptive parents in ensuring their

children's well-being.

The agency will support this project by providing information on the needs and

characteristics of the target population.   The proposed intervention will benefit the

agency by providing an additional resource for adoptive parents that is not currently

available, as issues of cultural competence in transracial adoption are currently only

addressed in one section of a general educational program for adoptive parents.

<center>Identification of Potential Funding Source</center>

The process of identifying potential funding sources was completed primarily

through Internet search.   This grant writer used Google and Yahoo search engines, as

well as resources provided by California State University, Long Beach.   Moreover,

government and private foundation websites were examined, such as the Dave Thomas

Foundation for Adoption (www.davethomasfoundation.org), U.S. Department of Health

& Human Services Children's Bureau (www.acf.hhs.gov), and www.grants.gov.   In the

process of reviewing selected articles, several theoretical terms were recognized as

significant.   The following terms were used as keywords to search for potential funding

sources: "grants," "adoption," "transracial," and "education."   Moreover, the following

combinations of keywords were also used: "transracial adoption and grant," "adoption

and grant," and "adoption education and grant."

Through the search process, various potential funders were identified.   One of

the potential funders identified was the RKG Foundation, which funds programs in the

areas of community programs, education and health.   Moreover, the Foundation for Child Development was considered, but did not meet the criteria due to the fact that they primarily fund research projects.   Lastly, the Dave Thomas Foundation for Adoptions was identified as a potential funder, however, the foundation's grants focus specifically on programs that aim to find adoptive families for America's longest-waiting children in foster care.

Criteria for Selection of Actual Grant

After a thorough review of the identified foundations, Hearst Foundations were selected as the final potential funding source.   The foundation was selected due to the high level of congruence between its grant criteria and the characteristics of the program at hand.   The Hearst Foundations provide funding for programs in the field of social services, which is congruent with the purpose of the program.   On a geographic level, Hearst Foundations fund programs that are located throughout the entire United States. Moreover, the foundation accepts applications year round without specific deadlines, which allows the program to meet its scheduled start date of September 2015.   Lastly, past grant recipients have received amounts of up to $150,000.00, which meets and exceeds the financial needs of this program.

Description of Selected Foundation

The Hearst Foundations are nation-wide philanthropic funding resources for organizations in the areas of culture, education, health, and human services.   In 1945, newspaper publisher William Randolph Hearst founded The Hearst Foundation, Inc. Three years later, in 1948, Hearst founded the California Charities Foundations, which

was later renamed The William Randolph Hearst Foundation.   Both foundations are managed as one entity.   The East Coast headquarters are located in New York City, while the West Coast headquarters operate out of San Francisco.   Since 1945, the foundations have awarded over 19.000 grants totaling over $925 million (Hearst Foundations, 2015a).

The foundations' mission is to "fund outstanding nonprofits to ensure that people of all backgrounds in the United States have the opportunity to build healthy, productive and inspiring lives" (Hearst Foundations, 2015c, para. 1).   Applications are submitted online through the online application portal and are accepted at all times throughout the year.   Once submitted, the applications go through a six-week evaluation process to determine eligibility.   The evaluation process includes a proposal review, team discussions, as well as a thorough financial analysis.   Applications that are considered for board approval will undergo a site visit before final funding decisions are made (Hearst Foundations, 2015b).   The Hearst Foundations have previously funded programs related to adoption and foster care, such as *Child Advocates* and *The Children's Shelter* (Hearst Foundations, 2015d).

<div align="center">Needs Assessment</div>

The needs of transracial adoptive families were assessed through thorough review of the existing literature, as well as personal communication with agency personnel. Multiple studies suggest that there is a need for educational programs for transracial adoptive parents (Mohanty, et al., 2007; Vonk, 2001).   However, a study by Vonk and Angaran (2003) found that only 53% of adoption agencies that facilitate transracial

adoptions provided cultural competence training for adoptive parents.

This lack of educational programs is relevant, as it affects a significant number of families in the United States.   The 2007 National Survey of Adoptive Parents revealed that four in ten adoptions in the United States were transracial (Vandivere et al., 2009). In personal communication, Kinship Center Adoptions Program Director, Sherie Dechter, indicated a need for an educational program for prospective transracial adoptive parents and stated that the agency currently only provides information on cultural competence in the context of one session of their eight-session general adoption education class (personal communication, October 7, 2014).

Proposed Budget

The estimated funding for this project will be $ 35,875.00.   The budget will include $ 30,800.00 of salaries and wages for curriculum developers and program facilitators, as well as $ 5,075.00 for other program operating costs.   Operating costs include: resource materials, office supplies, travel expenses and mileage, presentation equipment, food, and miscellaneous expenses.   As the Kinship Center offices already include a conference room that is used for various educational classes, no funds will be required to rent a space.

Evaluation

In order to monitor the progress of the program and to determine the extent to which the goals and objectives are met, Kinship Center will conduct an evaluation in the form of anonymous pre- and post-surveys to be completed by the participants and analyzed by an external evaluator.   The survey will allow participants to provide

feedback in the form of criticism and suggestions for future implementations of the program.   Questions will examine the participants' attitude and knowledge around cultural competence.   The survey will include items that ask participants to rate statements such as "I feel confident that I am able to support my child in his or her identity development" and "I believe that it is important for my child to learn about his or her culture of origin."   Ensuring the completion of the surveys will be a crucial aspect in measuring the success of the program and in allowing for improvements of future program cycles.   In addition to the completed surveys, participants' attendance rates will also be utilized to measure the success of the programs.

After the successful completion of the first two program cycles, future funding will have to be acquired.   This can either be obtained through a successful renewal of the grant or other fundraising efforts.   Other fundraising strategies include fundraising events or grants provided by other foundations.

CHAPTER 4

GRANT PROPOSAL

Proposal Summary

Transracial adoption has shaped families across the United States since the late

1940s (Simon & Altstein, 2002). While adoption can be a mutually beneficial way to

build a family, transracial adoption often constitutes specific challenges for the adoptees'

identity development (McGinnis et al., 2009). This affects a large number of families,

as four in ten adoptions in the United States are transracial (Vandivere et al., 2009). The

complex dynamics of identity development are compounded by the fact that the majority

of transracial adoptees are children of color who are adopted into non-Hispanic White

families (Padilla et al., 2010).

In order to mitigate the negative effects that transracial adoption can have on the

adopted individual's identity development, educational programs for adoptive parents

have been recognized as a crucial component in creating cultural awareness and

competence (Vonk, 2001). Kinship Center, a member of Seneca Family of Agencies in

Tustin, California, hereafter referred to as Kinship Center, aims to preempt some of the

challenges that transracial adoptive families face by providing educational classes for

prospective adoptive parents. The purpose of this proposal is to establish educational

classes for prospective transracial adoptive parents in Orange County, California.

Classes will focus on providing prospective adoptive parents with information aimed at

increasing their levels of cultural competence in order to equip them with the knowledge they need to adequately support their adopted children's identity development. Reaching parents through education will therefore contribute to the project's goal of increasing transracial adoptees' well-being by providing them with a family environment that is supportive of their cultural and racial identity development.

In the context of this project, educational classes will be conducted at the Kinship Center offices.   Program cycles of five sessions each will be held every six months over a one-year grant period.   If the one-year pilot program proves successful, the program will be continued and expanded to accommodate more frequent implementations.   The instructors will use a psychoeducational approach to inform the participants about various aspects of cultural competence.   The educational program will be available to prospective transracial adoptive parents who are clients of Kinship Center adoption agency and have been recommended for this class by their adoption social worker.

<u>Introduction</u>

Kinship Center is a Californian nonprofit agency that creates and supports permanent families for children through adoption, relative caregiving or other guardianship.   Since 1984, Kinship Center has provided services for thousands of children of all ages.   Kinship Center's services are based on the fundamental belief that every child deserves a family.   In order to support children and their families, Kinship Center provides the full spectrum of family-centered support to strengthen the families and communities they serve (Kinship Center, 2015).   Through their sustained efforts to provide much-needed services to some of the most vulnerable children and families in

California, Kinship Center has earned an excellent reputation within the adoption community.   In this sense, Kinship Center shares the Hearst Foundations' mission to prioritize programs that have proven successful in strengthening families.

<center>Needs Assessment</center>

Within the adoption community, there is a significant need for educational resources around transracial adoption and cultural competence (Vonk & Angaran, 2003). Many transracial adoptees report struggling with their cultural identity and feeling disconnected from their culture of origin (Butler-Sweet, 2011a; Vidal de Haymes & Simon, 2003; Godon et al., 2014).   This is struggle for identity is epitomized in a study conducted in 2009 by McGinnis et al., which found that among South Korean adoptees growing up with Caucasian parents, 78% reported that they considered themselves to be or wanted to be White as children.

In order to mitigate these effects of identity confusion, adoptive parents need to be equipped to support their children's identity development in a culturally sensitive way. The important role of the parents' cultural competence cannot be overstated, as research has found a positive correlation between parental support for cultural socialization practices and transracial adoptees' levels of self-esteem and feelings of belonging (Mohanty et al., 2007).   Despite this crucial realization, parents are not always equipped with the necessary knowledge and skills to adequately support their children.   In fact, several studies revealed that oftentimes, adoptive parents assess their own level of cultural competence as higher than do their adopted children (Vidal de Haymes & Simon, 2003; Kim et al., 2012).

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Although professionals and scholars alike express a need for culturally sensitive trainings for adoptive parents, the implementation of such classes has been lacking over past decades.   In 2003, only 53% of adoption agencies that facilitate transracial adoptions in the United States provided cultural competence training for adoptive parents (Vonk & Angaran, 2003).   Kinship Center endeavors to narrow this gap by providing educational classes for prospective transracial adoptive parents.   This proposed program will add to our already extensive list of services, which currently address the topic of cultural competence in the context of one session of our eight-session general adoption education class.   Through our newly introduced classes for prospective transracial adoptive parents, Kinship Center aims to increase the well-being of transracial adoptees by providing parents with the skills and knowledge they need to successfully support their children's identity development.

<div align="center">Program Objectives</div>

The goal of increasing the well-being of transracial adoptees will be achieved by providing them with a culturally competent family environment through an educational program targeting prospective adoptive parents.   Thus, adoptees as secondary beneficiaries will profit from their adoptive parents' increased knowledge and awareness. The program's success will be evaluated by its ability to meet the following objectives.

Objective 1: To increase prospective adoptive parents' cultural awareness by 50% as evidenced by pre- and post-tests measuring the participants' attitudes towards race and culture.

Objective 2: To increase the prospective adoptive parents' cultural competence by 30% as evidenced by pre- and post-tests measuring the participants' knowledge regarding multicultural family planning and survival skills.

The development and implementation of the program will take place over the span of one year.   By Month 1, the parameters of the program such as implementation times and location will be discussed and approved by the Kinship Center Program Director and affiliated staff members of Kinship Center.   By Month 3, the curriculum will be developed by the program facilitators.   By Month 4 participants will be recruited among the clients of Kinship Center.   Month 5 and 6 will comprise the first implementation cycle consisting of five 3-hour classes.   By month 7, data collected in pre- and post-tests during the first program implementation cycle will be evaluated.   By month 8, potential adjustments will be made to the curriculum in order to incorporate feedback gathered during the first implementation cycle.   Month 11 and 12 will comprise the second implementation cycle, as well as the collection of evaluation data.

Methods

In order to meet the program's objectives and to accomplish the goal of increasing transracial adoptees' well-being, the program will provide educational classes for prospective adoptive parents.   This approach of implementing educational classes during the pre-placement stage of transracial adoptions has been recommended in the literature (Ku, 2005).   Each implementation cycle will consist of five weekly 3-hour classes, which will be held on Thursday nights from 6:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m. at Kinship Center in Tustin.   The classes will be administered at night in order to accommodate

participants' work schedules.   Program cycles of five sessions each will be held every six months over a one-year period.   The first program cycle will begin in September 2015.   Program facilitators will utilize a psychoeducational approach to inform the prospective adoptive parents about cultural competence.   Classes will address the three components of cultural competence that have been identified by research as being relevant for transracial adoptive parents: (1) racial awareness, (2) multicultural family planning, and (3) survival skills (Vonk, 2001).   Component 1, racial awareness, will contribute to generating an increase in parental cultural awareness in fulfillment of objective 1.   Components 2 and 3 will aim to increase the prospective adoptive parents' cultural competence as stipulated in objective 2.

<div align="center">Evaluation</div>

In the interest of providing the best services for its clients, Kinship Center emphasizes the importance of consistently evaluating and improving its programs.   To measure the extent to which the program's objectives have been met, participants will complete pre- and post-tests.   Prior to participating in the first class, the prospective adoptive parents will fill out a survey measuring their attitudes and knowledge surrounding culture, race, and cultural competence.   After the fifth and last program session, participants will complete the same survey in order to measure a change in knowledge and attitudes.   Moreover, the post-test will include a feedback section to evaluate the participants' satisfaction with the program, as well as to gather suggestions to improve future curriculum implementations.   In addition to surveys, other data such as consistency of participant attendance will also be used to measure the program's

success.   The insights garnered by an analysis of the pre- and post-tests will be utilized to adapt the curriculum and other implementation parameters for future program cycles. If the evaluation results indicate the success of the one-year pilot program, the program will be continued and possibly expanded to accommodate more frequent implementations.   Future implementations will be financially sustained through further fundraising efforts, such as donations, grants, and fundraising events.

<div align="center">Budget</div>

The total estimated budget for this program amounts to $ 35,875.00.   The budget will include staff salaries, as well as direct and indirect program costs.   See line-item budget in Appendix A.

Salaries

Executive Director (5% FTE): The Executive Director of Kinship Center will authorize and oversee the program development, implementation, and evaluation. Including benefits, the Executive Director's prorated salary amounts to $ 3,570.00.   The executive director's salary will be granted in kind.

Group Coordinator (12% FTE): The group coordinator is involved in the creation and coordination of all educational and support groups held at Kinship Center.   In this capacity, he or she will consult with the Executive Director and the group facilitators in order to streamline curriculum and implementation parameters.   The group coordinator's prorated salary and benefit amount to $ 7,854.00 and will be granted in kind.

Group Facilitator/Curriculum Developer (20% FTE): The groups will be facilitated by two adoption social workers who will be hired on a part-time basis to

develop the curriculum and implement the groups at Kinship Center adoption agency. The facilitators will have a Master's of Social Work degree and will devote 20% FTE to the development of the group curriculum, as well as to conducting the groups. The total prorated salaries and benefits amount to $ 20,000.00.

Evaluator: An external evaluator will be hired to analyze the program's efficacy as measured by pre- and post-test surveys. The evaluator's honorarium will amount to $ 7,000.00.

Direct Program Cost

Office supplies: Office supplies will be used in the process of the curriculum development, as well as other administrative duties. Supplies include essential items such as binders, pens, staplers et cetera. The cost of the supplies needed for the creation and implementation of the first year of the program is estimated at $1,200.

Printing cost: The cost for printing and copying materials for the creation and implementation of the program is estimated at $500. This includes handouts and other information materials.

Presentation supplies: The majority of equipment needed for the implementation of the presentations will already be available at the Kinship Center offices. This includes computers, projectors, whiteboards et cetera. Use of this equipment is estimated at $ 2,000 for the first year and will be granted in kind. The remaining supplies such as markers and easels will have to be purchased and are estimated at a cost of $300.

Food: On nights that classes are held, participants will be provided with snacks and beverages. The budget allocated for refreshments over the course of two program

cycles of five sessions each amounts to $ 450.

     Rent: Kinship Center will provide a conference room at the Kinship Center offices for the implementation of the classes.　The cost to use the room is calculated at $ 1,500 for the first year and will be granted in-kind.

CHAPTER 5

DISCUSSION

<u>Lessons Learned</u>

The process of writing this thesis revealed a number of lessons. Conducting a thorough review of the research allowed this grant writer to become more familiar with the needs of transracial adoptive families, as well as the challenges they face on a daily basis. These insights will be useful in informing future research conducted by this grant writer, as well as social work practice with this population. In addition to conducting the literature review, establishing a program budget provided this grant writer with valuable lessons. Learning about the grant writing and budgeting process introduced this grant writer to an aspect of social work practice that was previously unfamiliar to this grant writer. This new knowledge will undoubtedly prove useful throughout this grant writer's future practice.

<u>Analysis of the Process</u>

This grant writer encountered a number of challenges throughout the grant writing process. As this grant writer had no previous experience with grant writing, this grant writer encountered a steep learning curve. The grant writer sought to mitigate the lack of experience by attending a grant-writing workshop and conducting research on the topic of grant writing.

Another challenge occurred in the context of conducting a literature review and establishing the needs of the population. While a significant amount of research exists on the topic of transracial adoption, most studies focus on children of color being adopted into Caucasian families, while ignoring other transracial adoption constellations. Due to this fact, it proved difficult to conduct a comprehensive needs assessment that was inclusive of all subsections of the population. This constitutes a significant limitation, as the program was developed based on the information garnered from the literature and therefore may not account for the needs of a segment of the population that was underrepresented in the literature.

It should also be noted that the program developed in the context of this thesis is unique in that there have not been any similar programs in the past. With the exception of a pilot study conducted by Vonk and Angaran (2001), there is no evidence of similar programs in the literature. Despite the fact that the need for educational classes for transracial adoptive parents has been well-documented in the literature, there are no previous implementations to build on. While this supports the fact that this program will fill a need within the population, it is problematic in that only little information is known about the effectiveness of such a program. In this sense, this program will constitute a significant asset to the population, but will also expose the participants to a program that is unprecedented and untried.

<u>Strategies to Enhance the Project and Recommendations</u>

In order to mitigate some of the challenges encountered in the grant-writing process, several actions could have been taken to improve the project. First, allowing

for a longer timeframe to conduct research might have resulted in a more thorough review of existing literature and therefore might have shed more light on some of the needs of the population that were not covered in the context of this project.

Moreover, exploring more funding options could potentially have revealed a foundation that might have been even more compatible with the project's goals. While the Hearst Foundations promise to be a good match for the proposed project, this grant writer does not want to discount the possibility that there could be a funder that would promise a higher possibility of receiving a grant.

Through the process of conducting the literature review, this grant writer identified several areas of study that could benefit from further research. As previously mentioned, more research is needed on challenges encountered by transracial adoptive families of varying constellations to compensate the prevalence of studies on children of color and their Caucasian adoptive parents. Furthermore, more studies are needed to examine the effectiveness of educational classes for transracial adoptive parents. This constitutes a significant gap in the literature which should be addressed in future studies.

<u>Implications for Social Work and Multicultural Practice</u>

Providing educational classes for transracial adoptive parents is a crucial step towards supporting transracial adoptees in their identity development. Having worked with adoptive families, this grant writer is aware of the impact that adoption can have on all family members and the adopted child in particular. As social workers continue to interact with families of various backgrounds and constellations, it is important for social workers to be mindful of the challenges faced by transracial adoptive families. In

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supporting the implementation of educational classes for transracial adoptive parents, social workers contribute to the process of creating favorable, culturally sensitive family environments for adopted individuals of various backgrounds. Through the promotion of cultural competence among adoptive parents, this project makes a valuable contribution to social work practice in a multicultural context. The project may be used to inform future social work practice and policy by providing insight into the needs of transracial adoptive families. Equipped with this information, more agencies can provide adequate trainings for their adoptive parents, as well as include mandatory educational classes for transracial adoptive parents in their policies.

<div align="center">Conclusion</div>

This project conducted a thorough review of the existing literature around transracial adoption and identified significant needs and challenges faced by transracial adoptive families. Moreover, the project included a grant for educational classes for prospective transracial adoptive parents. By addressing this population, this project aimed to shed light on the needs of transracial adoptive families, as well as improve services available to this population.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

HOST AGENCY AGREEMENT LETTER

10/7/2014

California State University, Long Beach
School of Social Work
1250 Bellflower Blvd.
Long Beach, CA 90840-0118

To Whom It May Concern:

Kinship Center, a member of Seneca Family of Agencies, agrees to be a host agency to support
Sonja Schaefer's thesis grant proposal project, "An Educational Program for Parents going into
Transracial Adoption" required by California State University, Long Beach, School of Social
Work. Sonja Schaefer is allowed to use the agency name, data, and resources as approved by the
agency in her thesis report.

Sincerely,

Sherie Dechter, LCSW
Kinship Center – Director of Adoptions
714-979-2365

APPENDIX B

DETAILED BUDGET FOR PROPOSED PROGRAM

APPENDIX B: Detailed Budget for Proposed Program

Expenses	Amount Requested	In Kind
Salaries		
Executive Director supervision @ 5% FTE		
of $ 60,000 annually		$ 3,000.00
Benefits @ 19% of FTE		$ 570.00
Group Coordinator @ 12 % FTE		
of $55,000 annually		$ 6,600.00
Benefits @ 19% of FTE		$ 1,254.00
Group Facilitator/Curriculum Developer (MSW)		
@ 20% FTE of $50,000 annually		
(times 2 facilitators)	$ 20,000.00	
Benefits @ 19% of FTE	$ 3,800.00	
Evaluator	$ 7,000.00	
Total Salaries	$ 30,800.00	$ 11,424.00
Direct Program Cost		
Office Supplies	$ 1,200.00	
Printing Cost	$ 500.00	
Presentation Supplies	$ 300.00	$ 2,000.00
Food	$ 450.00	
Rent ($ 50 per hour times 3 hours per week		
times 5 sessions per cycle times 2 cycles annually		$ 1,500.00
Total Direct Program Costs	$ 2,450.00	$ 3,500.00
Indirect Program Cost (10% of Total Program Costs)	$ 2,625.00	
TOTAL PROJECT COST	$ 35,875.00	$ 14,924.00

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