

# Lectio Divina

## An Embodied Practice to Support Multicultural Conversations within Counselor Education Programs

Counselor educators need a reliable process in which to engage doctoral students in multicultural conversations. In turn, doctoral students need a process that can carry them forth into their future as culturally responsive counselor educators. Lectio Divina is an embodied, contemplative andragogical strategy that addresses the need for high quality doctoral instruction to foster meaningful multicultural conversations and promote inclusive learning environments within counselor education and supervision programs. The use of Lectio Divina offers future counselor educators a powerful method that can be applied within their own classrooms to broach sensitive cultural topics, thereby supporting diversity and inclusivity.

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### KEYWORDS

*Lectio Divina, contemplative andragogy, counselor education, doctoral instruction, embodied learning*

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The prime aims of the American Counseling Association (ACA) are to enhance the quality of life in society by promoting the development of professional counselors and to safeguard respect for human dignity and diversity (ACA, 2014). Foundationally, the mission of the ACA is carried out within counselor education and supervision (CES) programs across the country. The training of doctoral students within high quality CES programs plays a critical role in producing multiculturally competent counselor educators (CEs; Preston et al., 2020). According to the 2024 Council for Accreditation of Counseling and Related Educational Programs (CACREP, 2023) standards, counseling doctoral students are expected to competently assume the responsibilities of CEs upon graduation after engaging in advanced training in the areas of teaching, counseling, leadership, supervision, and research during their programs (CACREP, 2023; Litherland & Schulthes, 2020). CES program faculty must be prepared to educate doctoral students who will, in turn, lead future generations of counselors (DeDiego et al., 2022; Litherland & Schulthes, 2020) who serve as the frontline in providing competent care and maintaining the welfare of clients seeking counseling services in an ever-growing diverse world.

Future CEs are called upon to embrace diversity and engage students in an inclusive manner and, therefore, must be adequately prepared to address multicultural and social justice (MCSJ) issues in counseling (Hilert et al., 2022; Ratts et al., 2016). While much of the counselor education research addresses the training needs of master-level students, less attention has been paid to the needs of doctoral students (Litherland & Schulthes, 2020), and it is unclear how CES programs advance doctoral students' MCSJ competence (Hilert et al., 2022). Without specific and meaningful instruction on how to initiate and facilitate productive multicultural conversations, new CEs may be at a loss. We propose the use of a contemplative andragogical approach, called *Lectio Divina* (LD), to contribute to the development of MCSJ competencies and add to the literature addressing the needs of doctoral students. In so doing, we offer a pragmatic and embodied instructional strategy that can be used to promote high-quality teaching and inclusive learning environments for doctoral students within CES programs. In addition, the use of LD as an instructional strategy in doctoral education offers future CEs a powerful method that can be applied within their own classrooms to broach MCSJ issues and to support diversity and inclusivity.

## Contemplative Andragogy

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Contemplative practice refers to any activity in which one engages with the intention of calming the mind, deeply concentrating, cultivating awareness of the present moment, and creating a mindful presence in oneself (Center for Contemplative Mind in Society [CMind], 2017). While providing techniques that encourage creativity and the learning of course content, contemplative andragogy offers educators a wide range of methods that support the development of attention, emotional balance, empathic connection, and altruistic behavior in students (Zajonc, 2013). Dalton and colleagues (2021) describe contemplative practice as

an active and experiential method offering students “opportunities to draw upon the creative impulse that originates in the soul, giving voice, color, texture, and shape to the human experience through self-expression” (p. 99). Contemplative practices can help students develop compassion for others and an understanding of the interconnectedness of all life (Beer et al., 2015), thereby enriching their relationship with the world around them, increasing global awareness, and the ability to explore, adapt, and deal with complexity (CMind, 2017).

Many disciplines within higher education, including biology, medicine, law (Zajonc, 2013), writing (Howes & Smith, 2017), philosophy (Wright, 2019), art, and teacher education (Dalton et al., 2021) are now being taught with contemplative instruction. Importantly, contemplative practices have also been applied to multicultural (Hilert & Tirado, 2019; Quigley & Nelson, 2023), anti-oppression, and social justice andragogy in higher education (Berila, 2015; Howes & Smith, 2017). Contemplative teaching practices offer instructors a way to help students recognize cultural programming (Heselmeyer, 2014) and to challenge deeply held ideologies in an effort to unlearn oppressive ways of being and create alternative, more empowering ways of relating to one another without alienating students from the learning process (Berila, 2015). Contemplative andragogy is particularly well-suited to the counseling field for its potential to regulate affect, facilitate equanimity, empathy, and creative connection to others and communities.

While the use of contemplative andragogical strategies in CES is growing, empirical evidence to support its effectiveness is still burgeoning. Thus far the research on contemplative andragogy within CES has yielded benefits for counseling students which include cultivating therapeutic presence (Campbell & Christopher, 2012), increasing counselor empathy (Fulton & Cashwell, 2015), and stress reduction (Gutierrez et al., 2016). Other studies have shown that contemplative practice is predictive of counseling self-efficacy (Greason & Cashwell, 2009) and improved relational well-being (Dorais et al., 2022) for counseling students. Within the sphere of multicultural education, contemplative strategies have been shown to increase multicultural awareness in counseling students (Quigley & Nelson, 2023) and to promote a safe environment in which to explore biases, manage potentially distressing thoughts and emotions, and develop greater capacity for embracing others through the cultivation of an accepting, nonjudgmental attitude (Heselmeyer, 2014).

## Addressing the Multicultural Needs of Doctoral Students

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Doctoral students need support to develop a strong identity as CEs (Preston et al., 2020), especially when it comes to addressing MCSJ issues. The Multicultural and Social Justice Counseling Competencies (MCSJCC; Ratts et al., 2016) and the CACREP (2023) standards are clear about the importance of training counselors to competently address MCSJ issues in counseling by infusing culturally relevant content throughout CES curriculum. However,

insufficient attention has been paid to the educational and training needs of doctoral students (Litherland & Schulthes, 2020) and on the specific strategies required to build their MCSJ competence (Hilert et al., 2022) to address gatekeeping functions (Rapp et al., 2018) and produce research (Anekstein & Vereen, 2018) in a culturally responsive manner. In addition, researchers have found that CES programs would benefit from increasing self-awareness of their program's cultural climate and including diverse worldviews to provide doctoral students with the necessary skills and to appropriately train their future students to become ethically effective cross-culturally (Baker & Moore, 2015).

When choosing a potential CES program, doctoral students are drawn to programs that value their own cultural background and appear to be best supported by programs that communicate, through actions, the valuing of diversity (Ju et al., 2020). In addition to support from faculty, doctoral students also need support from peers and value the ability to share their voice, particularly regarding cultural issues, which is especially important for doctoral students from backgrounds often underrepresented in higher education (Baker & Moore, 2015). CES programs can intentionally value and promote a multicultural orientation when focusing on doctoral student success and the development of leadership skills through understanding of students' culture, which may be highly impactful for doctoral students who feel marginalized and isolated (Baker & Moore, 2015; DeDiego et al., 2022; Ju et al., 2020). Students in the majority also require support to investigate and develop their cultural identity and to manage shame (Heselmeyer, 2014) and to accept others' realities when it comes to forms of discrimination (Yoon et al., 2014). Finding ways to help doctoral students maintain ethnic identity and establish a clear voice are imperatives for CES programs (Ju et al., 2020).

Hilert and colleagues (2022) highlight several key points that may help to improve the training and preparation of doctoral students within CES programs. For example, designing curricula that fosters greater opportunities for the development of MCSJ competence by infusing meaningful multicultural andragogy throughout the program is essential as doctoral students often perceive their training in this regard as inadequate and lacking sufficient depth. Hilert and colleagues (2022) also assert the need for CEs to facilitate meaningful classroom discussions related to MCSJ. However, CEs face challenges due to the emotionally charged nature of MCSJ topics and would benefit from evidenced-based strategies to engage doctoral students in deep multicultural conversations across the curriculum (e.g., teaching, service, and research) to prepare students for successful futures as educators (Hilert & Tirado, 2019; Yoon et al., 2014).

## How Lectio Divina Can Support Multicultural Conversations

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LD is a medieval, monastic contemplative practice that means *divine reading* in Latin that has been applied to contemporary andragogy in higher education (Dalton et al., 2021; Howes &

Smith, 2017; Quigley & Nelson, 2023; Wright, 2019). Before LD was secularized, Benedictine monks engaged in the practice as a means of communing with God through the reading of sacred texts. In academic settings, LD has been applied to non-religious written passages as a form of contemplative reading and listening that encourages students to move slowly through a text, engaging multiple dimensions of self, resulting in deepened learning (Dalton et al., 2021). Slowing down requires students to interact with written materials in ways that counter the quick-paced reading that students typically employ when completing course work (Howes & Smith, 2017). Applying LD to CES instruction seems like a natural fit for its ability to foster a state of inner calm and centeredness, preparing the ground to address sensitive topics.

Because discussions involving MCSJ often produce physical and emotional discomfort for both students and instructors alike, instructors and students require the requisite tools to work through such inquiry for these conversations to be effective (Berila, 2015). Educators may struggle to bridge the gap between intent and articulation when endeavoring to raise issues of social justice and may feel limited in their ability to engage students who are “grappling with moving into academic discourses and experiencing new ideological frameworks” (Howes & Smith, 2017, p. 3). To support students in fully developing as whole, integrated human beings, educators can enhance the learning experience by engaging students at the intersection of mind, body, emotions, spirit, and society, where embodied learning occurs (Berila, 2015; Dalton et al., 2021). As an embodied way of learning, LD harnesses the emotions that are registered in the body as a vital part of the learning process which can facilitate an open heart and the production of empathy toward others (Dalton et al., 2021).

To facilitate deep and meaningful multicultural conversations, LD can provide students space to explore reactions to course material in a way that enhances awareness of their reactions and how these reactions inform their worldviews with a clearer understanding of self and others (Howes & Smith, 2017; Wright, 2019). For example, some White students may have difficulty acknowledging forms of oppression experienced by Students of Color (Yoon et al., 2014) and may have an increased sense of shame as they begin to gain awareness surrounding issues of privilege and power (Heselmeyer, 2014). Some Students of Color may question the qualifications of White instructors and doubt the instructor’s ability to understand the oppressive experiences they encounter (Yoon et al., 2014). LD provides a structured and supportive environment in which to encourage students to step back, broaden their views, and strengthen their ability to contextualize how their own ideologies and use of language may be experienced in relation to one another (Howes & Smith, 2017; Quigley & Nelson, 2023). LD offers CES instructors a way of engaging doctoral students in embodied multicultural conversations to increase cognitive understanding of the material and insight into how their noncognitive reactions impact their thinking.

LD can be implemented on an intermittent basis in CES classes using a variety of written materials, such as a poem, philosophical text, an autobiographical work, or case vignette containing MCSJ themed content. Instructors can also ask doctoral students to submit written passages of their choosing that highlight a MCSJ concern that can be used over the course of the semester. Initially, instructors can set the tone for the method by explaining to students the history of LD, the goals of contemplative andragogy, how the exercise works, and the potential

benefits (Wright, 2019). To create a contemplative space, students should be encouraged to remove distractions and sit comfortably as to engage wholly and intentionally with the text (Wright, 2019). The process typically takes about 30 minutes but can vary depending on how long discussions last. The secularized LD technique, adapted from Wright (2019) has four steps, as outlined below.

1. In the first step, *lectio*, students silently read the selected passage and internally note connections and patterns that arise. *Lectio* (reading) requires the cultivation of inner quiet and taking a text in, allowing it to become part of the self, to be touched, inwardly listening with the *ear of the heart* (Dysinger, 2008).
2. The second step, *meditatio*, requires the facilitator to read the passage aloud and provide two to three minutes for students to reflect on the reading. The key areas of reflection include (a) how the passage affects them, (b) the main message they receive, (c) why the author makes a point in a particular way, (d) the difficulty of understanding the text, and (e) emotional reactions. *Meditatio* (meditation) is the inward and gentle repetition of a text that allows it to slowly touch the heart as additional words, images, and insights arise, providing a glimpse of the self that is typically frank and candid and sometimes uncomfortable (Dysinger, 2008).
3. *Oratio* (prayer) is traditionally conceived as dialogue with God (Dysinger, 2008), but here in the secularized version, it represents inner dialogue, perhaps with the higher self, as well as dialogue within small groups. In the third step, the facilitator asks students to participate in small group discussions about their reactions to step two and to exchange general thoughts about the passage. Students are encouraged to share insights they had during the reflective portion.
4. The final step, *contemplatio*, allows students two to three minutes to personally reflect upon the overall experience before returning their attention to the class for full group discussion. *Contemplatio* (contemplation) can be understood traditionally as an act of *gazing* that entails participation in and communion with the object of contemplation (Dysinger, 2008). In an academic setting, contemplation is another opportunity for students to silently and individually reflect on the entirety of their experience.

LD practice requires individuals to speak with their own creative voice in a self-directed process of first-person inquiry and meaning making (Dalton et al., 2021). The all-class discussion provides students the opportunity to describe their experiences, insights, and takeaways from the examined passage. Discussions can run between 10 and 15 minutes or as long as students have contributions to share and time permits. The discussion allows for comments summarizing individual reactions, interactions during the small groupwork, or reactions to points raised during the all-class discussion. To encourage students to share tentative or potentially problematic reactions to the text, instructors should stress that the goal of the discussion is to catalogue reactions, rather than to evaluate them (Wright, 2019). With a sense that there are no right or wrong answers, students are given the space to connect their personal emotions and embodied experiences with their intellectual processing, which helps them approach a

text more openly (Dalton et al., 2021). Discussion points are collated on a classroom white board or large screen to create a record of the conversation, to organize responses, and as a reference for further dialogue throughout the remainder of the class (Wright, 2019). Below is a quick reference for the LD instruction (see Table 1), including a description of the steps, instructor and student roles, and expected outcomes.

**Table 1**

*LD Instruction Guidelines*

Steps/Description	Instructor role	Student role	Expected outcome
1. Silent reading: Reading slowly to draw attention to the text itself	Provides access to chosen passage; explains embodied learning; invites students to read silently	Each student reads the text silently to themselves	Attention is drawn to particular words or phrases; flavor of the text begins to emerge; awareness of subtle nuances and embodied reactions
2. Repetition and reflection: Second reading	Reads passage aloud; gives prompts; provides 2-3 minutes of silence to reflect	Students listen deeply as they pay attention to their full sensory experiences; write down all that comes to mind	Additional words, images, feelings, bodily sensations, and insights arise; connections between the students' lives and parts of the text bring new awareness of self
3. Receptive dialogue: Students share an insight gained through contemplation	Places students into small groups for brief sharing of main insights (5 minutes)	Students are encouraged to share embodied insights about the passage and sensory experiences from silent reflection	Space to connect personal emotions and embodied experiences with intellectual processing; students build connection to and empathy for one another, and others
4. Transformation: All-class discussion; catalogue students reactions and organize responses	Reconvenes students for final silent reflection (2-3 minutes); large group discussion (15 minutes)	Students reflect on the entirety of their experience; share reactions and insights with class	Space to speak with ones' own creative voice in a self-directed process of first-person inquiry and meaning making in a judgement-free zone

## Implications

Applying contemplative andragogy to the multicultural training of doctoral students within CES programs provides several advantages for instructors. Research has shown that doctoral students want formal curricular experiences in teaching, research, and service (Preston et al., 2020) and multicultural instruction with sufficient depth as part of their training (Hilert et al., 2022). LD offers instructors a reliable method of broaching sensitive topics empathically by slowing down the learning process, encouraging embodied reactions, and celebrating varying perspectives. Specifically, LD can facilitate multicultural conversations, increase multicultural awareness, provide a voice for doctoral students, and give structure for future teaching and learning.



## **FACILITATING MULTICULTURAL CONVERSATIONS**

CES instructors may not always find it easy to facilitate deep and meaningful multicultural conversations due to the emotionally charged nature of the material (Yoon et.al, 2014). Contemplative andragogy is an avenue for CES instructors to facilitate these conversations and help students regulate affect, manage uncomfortable emotions, and increase a sense of safety (Heselmeyer, 2014). By engaging with texts through LD, students have the opportunity to “push past the often knee-jerk reactions to difference” (Howes & Smith, 2017, p. 6) and establish more well-rounded perspectives. Because the aim of the activity is to collect student responses without evaluation, students are more willing to offer novel or risky interpretations and are more comfortable voicing concerns and expressing confusion or frustration about the text, its meaning, or the author’s intentions (Wright, 2019). Although all students read the same text, each reading is different as students make sense of their embodied experiences and receive the varied responses of others while participating in the same flow of conversation (Dalton et al., 2021). In our experience, counseling students have reported finding value in having their personal views challenged by differing opinions in their participation with LD during multicultural instruction (Quigley & Nelson, 2023).

## **INCREASING MULTICULTURAL AWARENESS**

After engaging counseling students in multicultural conversations facilitated through LD, research has shown that students’ multicultural awareness was significantly greater than before the intervention (Quigley & Nelson, 2023). Multicultural awareness is foundational to increasing multicultural competence and in maintaining a humble attitude towards others. If instructors fail to help students become multiculturally aware before imparting knowledge or skills, students may develop a false sense of mastery and risk stereotyping different cultural groups based on cursory information acquired from coursework (Yoon et al., 2014). Zajonc (2013) notes that contemplative andragogy connects students to the practical demands of life and that insights attained through contemplative inquiry are actionable. As students realize their positionality across multiple identities (e.g., privileged in social class but oppressed in race), they may be inspired to learn of others’ experiences and worldviews and to develop skills to work effectively cross-culturally (Yoon et al., 2014). Multicultural awareness is a critical starting point for developing empathy and the motivation to work towards social justice (Hilert & Tirado, 2019).

## **GIVING DOCTORAL STUDENTS VOICE**

Research has shown that doctoral students from backgrounds often underrepresented in higher education face ongoing challenges in their ability to establish a clear voice and maintain their ethnic identities within CES programs (Ju et al., 2020). By inviting doctoral students to provide written material of their choosing for the LD activity, CES instructors can share power and co-create a more inclusive space for students to express their unique opinions and discuss varying cultural worldviews. When underrepresented students see themselves reflected in the curriculum, they feel validated and included (Berila, 2015). Doctoral students have identified



the importance of having supportive faculty and peer relationships as critical components of high-quality CES programs (Preston et al., 2020). Howes and Smith (2017) pose listening as a means towards community. LD allows for the inclusion of marginalized voices and offers a space for authentic relationships to organically develop into a supportive community that values multiple identities. To best care for and successfully retain doctoral students within CES programs, instructors must support students' cultural identities as well as their values (Ju et al., 2020). In this sense, LD can serve to validate underrepresented students' experiences, bring awareness to majority students' understanding of their peers, and strengthen relationships.

## **STRUCTURE FOR FUTURE TEACHING AND LEARNING**

Despite evidence that learning requires embodied engagement, the view of the body as a central location of wisdom and learning is not widely supported in the current educational system (Berila, 2015; Dalton et al., 2021). LD offers a way of engaging CES students with material in a deep manner that can be applied to future endeavors. LD can move students away from the view that the instructor is the sole source of knowledge and towards confidence in their own abilities (Wright, 2019) to facilitate meaningful multicultural conversations independently. In the field of teacher education, Dalton and colleagues (2021) noted that students endorsed LD as a valuable method to engage their own future students and understood the benefits of reading slowly, cultivating mindfulness, and focusing on process over product. Doctoral students perceive their growth towards MCSJ competence as an endeavor towards ever-increasing cultural humility, which entails a continual process of learning and growing over the course of a lifetime (Hilert et al., 2022). LD provides a means to incorporate diverse worldviews within CES programs to foster a culturally diverse climate in which to provide doctoral students the necessary skills to appropriately train their future students.

## **Ethical Considerations**

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Perhaps the greatest ethical consideration, when considering using LD, is the perceived religious nature of the practice. As Wright (2019) suggested, such activities may garner concern that students are being compelled to engage in a spiritual practice or are negatively appropriating a practice, yet we are unproblematically surrounded by secularized versions of spiritual practices every day, such as yoga and mindfulness. Reflective, contemplative, and meditative capacities are innate human abilities that transcend religious doctrine and rituals. As CEs, we can speak to these concerns by honoring the practice and its creators, by discussing the historical roots and cultural context, and by sending appreciation and thanks to the many individuals who have carried the practice forward to our current time. Another point of ethical consideration involves doctoral students' familiarity with contemplative practices. CEs who incorporate contemplation into coursework should have sufficient familiarity with contemplative practice before teaching them (Hilert & Tirado, 2019) and could prepare students by providing introductory contemplative exercises before instruction.

## Instructor Reflexivity

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Contemplative practice facilitates personal reflection and self-awareness, which allows one to take accountability for what and how they teach and deepens the understanding of the / who teaches (Dalton et al., 2021). As CEs, we acknowledge the importance of maintaining awareness of potential biases concerning LD as an instructional strategy. Through our implementation of LD, we attempt to remain open to the process by closely examining our personal perceptions and reactions. While we are diverse in our clinical experiences, both authors are White women aligned in their belief that contemplative practices are beneficial in theory and praxis. We understand that our position may cloud our expectations on how students might receive the LD experience. We are aware that doctoral students may be at different levels of development and maturity in their journey towards ever-increasing MCSJ competence. Before presenting any material to the class, the instructors practice with the text by going through the steps of the LD process to uncover potential biases and become aware of possible countertransference issues. Our own contemplative learning experiences are recorded during and after class discussions in a self-reflective journal.

## Resources for Implementation

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The resources needed to successfully implement the LD process in CES classrooms, to facilitate meaningful multicultural conversations, include sufficient time, instructors' comfort with reflection and contemplation, the four-step process, a selected passage that contains a story of diversity, marginalization, or an issue of social justice, and a whiteboard or a projected screen upon which to catalog student responses. Tips on how to start a contemplative practice can be found at The Center for Contemplative Mind in Society (CMind, 2017) and in their free resource, *The Activist's Ally: Contemplative Tools for Social Change*, which can be found at [contemplativemind.org](http://contemplativemind.org) under the resources tab within the Contemplative Action section.

## Evaluation and Assessment

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A recent mixed methods study about the effect of LD among master's-level counseling students indicated that LD increased multicultural awareness (Quigley & Nelson, 2023). Emerging themes from the qualitative inquiry included (a) challenging assumptions and biases, (b) increasing empathy and understanding, and (c) suspending judgement, which support the quantitative

findings of increased awareness. Because LD allows time for reflection and the scaffolding of complex reactions to emotionally charged texts (Howes & Smith, 2017), it provides the instructor a richer perspective on the difficulties students may face in their conversations involving MCSJ issues in real time. As CEs catalog student responses during LD discussions, themes emerge which provide insights into students' level of awareness and ongoing needs. Structured pre- and post- assessments, such as the Multicultural Competence Inventory (MCI; Sodowsky et al., 1994) or the Multidimensional Cultural Humility Scale (MCHS; Gonzalez et al., 2021), can provide objective measures to assess student learning. In addition, CEs can offer an anonymous survey at the end of the class to capture students' perceptions of the instruction across various domains, such as comfort and distress levels, feelings of inclusivity, and likelihood of using LD in their own teaching by applying a five-point Likert scale for each question.

## Considerations and Limitations

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While contemplative teaching practices can help students recognize and challenge cultural programming and create alternative, more empowering ways of relating to one another in diverse contexts (Berila, 2015; Heselmeyer, 2014), there are considerations and limitations worth mentioning. Because of the subjective nature of choosing a text for the LD exercise, CEs would benefit from reflection upon several key elements when selecting a passage. The passage itself should be connected to the learning objectives for the class session. For example, if the aim is to increase awareness of how clients experience discrimination, then the passage should describe discrimination across aspects of race, class, gender, sexual identity, etc. Pertinent questions to ask oneself while selecting a text may include:

- Does this passage help me understand what is essential to the topic?
- Does the passage speak truth and shed light on injustice?
- Does the passage ignite awareness that can impact client care?
- How might this text support students' personal conceptualization of client problems free of stereotypes and openness towards clients' differing physical appearance, age, color, sexual and gender identity, level of ability, or socioeconomic status?

In addition, to maintain students' attention, it is best to choose a reading of approximately 200 words (Boyer, 2020).

Although 30 minutes has been identified as sufficient time to carry out the lesson and process content with master-level counseling students (Quigley & Nelson, 2023), there is no empirical evidence on the time needed to account for the individual needs of doctoral students. Because of the time commitment required for the LD activity, a limitation of its application in promoting meaningful conversations for doctoral students may be in not allotting requisite space for their advanced level of understanding. Doctoral students may need longer than 30 minutes to

sufficiently address the overall process and content that is generated during the activity, and in particular, the information that is catalogued and generated during the all-class discussion in the last step. Doctoral students may need more time to organize and sufficiently analyze themes that emerge and discuss how they might see themselves applying LD in their future roles as CEs.

## Future Directions for Practice and Research

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The counseling profession would benefit from continued organized, focused, and high-quality scholarship of doctoral-level training (Litherland & Schulthes, 2020). Empirical evidence on how doctoral students receive MCSJ training across curricula and how this training supports MCSJCC and CACREP standards would help move the profession forward. Researchers could examine whether contemplative andragogy enhances openness to multicultural class material and whether it increases learning outcomes, compared to traditional andragogy (Hilert & Tirado, 2019). While initial research has yielded promising results supporting the use of LD in the multicultural instruction of master's level counseling students (Quigley & Nelson, 2023), no known study exists in which LD has been applied to doctoral-level instruction. Many variables, including the instructor, students, subject matter, and instructional contexts, interact to create complex dynamics within classrooms (Yoon et al., 2014). Researchers could investigate LD's general utility in MCSJ training, along with the mediating and moderating roles of LD within doctoral-level classroom dynamics.

## Conclusion

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Applying contemplative andragogy to the MCSJ training of doctoral students within CES programs provides several advantages for instructors, which in turn impacts the training of master's-level students and ultimately results in better care for the welfare of clients seeking counseling services in an ever-growing diverse world. Doctoral students are drawn to programs that value their own cultural background and feel supported by programs that communicate the valuing of diversity in action (Ju et al., 2020). CEs need a reliable process in which to engage doctoral students regarding MCSJ. In turn, doctoral students need a process that can carry them forth into their future as culturally responsive CEs. LD is an embodied instructional strategy that addresses the need for high-quality doctoral instruction to foster meaningful multicultural conversations and promote inclusive learning environments for doctoral students within CES programs. The use of LD as an instructional strategy offers future CEs a powerful method that can be applied within their own classrooms to broach MCSJ topics and to support diversity and inclusivity.

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