Cultural Competence in School Psychology: How to Demonstrate Effective Curricula

NICHOLAS A. CURTIS & TAMMY GILLIGAN
JAMES MADISON UNIVERSITY
Presentation Objectives

As a result of this presentation, participants should be able to:

1. Identify aspects of the JMU culturally competent practitioner initiative as examples of best practice in culturally competent/responsive training.

2. List and explain reasons that self-report measures of cultural competence/responsiveness are inadequate in providing the information training programs need.

3. Describe the advantages of using anchoring vignettes to adjust self-report scores of cultural competence/responsiveness.
Context

- School systems across the country are experiencing tremendous growth in the cultural diversity of their student populations (Frisby & Reynolds, 2005)
- Cultural biases in the schools, whether conscious or not, can have a negative effect on assessment and service delivery (Frisby & Reynolds, 2005; Imel et al., 2011)
- Cross, Bazron, Dennis, and Isaacs (1989) examined the importance of cultural competence over twenty years ago

“Operationally defined, cultural competence is the integration and transformation of knowledge about individuals and groups of people into specific standards, policies, practices, and attitudes used in appropriate cultural settings to increase the quality of services; thereby producing better outcomes” (King, Epstein, & Brisbane 1997).
Central to the program focus is the understanding of children within a system's context, including the family, the school, and the socio-cultural environment. The program emphasized the role of the culturally competent school psychologist as that of a facilitator of an individual's overall well-being and potential. Within an integrated theoretical framework, students are prepared to be culturally competent, interpersonally skilled, data oriented problem solvers.
Curriculum - CCPI

- Focused training for all students enrolled in our program

- Elements include:
  - Issues of diversity, advocacy and social justices infused in all course
  - Required course on Multicultural Perspectives in Intervention
  - Practicum experiences to include diversity
  - Program Sponsored Training Modules
  - Community Awareness Experiences
  - Evaluation of Cultural Competencies and Responsiveness
Please rate yourself on your practical knowledge or skill in culturally competent/responsive assessment:

Can we now collect your responses and use them to compare the knowledge and skills of everyone in the room?
Initial Instrument Results

![Graph showing MACCS scores across different skill levels.]

- Undergraduate: 26.86
- 1st year: 37
- 2nd year: 37
- Expert SP: 43

School Psychology Program - Dept. of Graduate Psychology, James Madison University
Correction Procedure

Please read the following scenario:

Juanye Alarcon, an eight year old student at Apple Elementary, was referred for a full psycho-educational in January. Juanye and his Spanish-speaking parents moved from Guatemala at the beginning of the year and teachers have expressed concerns about his academic progress. He rarely speaks in class and the teachers believe that he has limited English proficiency.
Correction Procedure

Please Consider the Response of the Two Psychologists Below:

Psychologist A: Decides to use the DAS-II cognitive battery. In order to account for the influence of language, she decides to use the Special Nonverbal Index. She plans to complete a full review of records and gather information from the teachers.

Psychologist B: Decides to use a cross-battery approach and the cultural-linguistic matrix, which allows her to select the subtests, according to the approach, with the least amount of cultural and language influence. She plans to conduct several observations in different settings, interview the teacher and parents, and complete a full review of records.
Correction Procedure

**Psychologist A:** Decides to use the DAS-II cognitive battery. In order to account for the influence of language, she decides to use the Special Nonverbal Index. She plans to complete a full review of records and gather information from the teachers.

**Psychologist B:** Decides to use a cross-battery approach and the cultural-linguistic matrix, which allows her to select the subtests, according to the approach, with the least amount of cultural and language influence. She plans to conduct several observations in different settings, interview the teacher and parents, and complete a full review of records.

Please rate the two psychologists and yourself on practical knowledge or skill in culturally competent/responsive assessment:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Little Practical Knowledge</th>
<th>Some Practical Knowledge</th>
<th>Average Practical Knowledge</th>
<th>Greater than Average Practical Knowledge</th>
<th>Advanced Practical Knowledge</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Rate Psychologist A</td>
<td>⬜</td>
<td>⬜</td>
<td>⬜</td>
<td>⬜</td>
<td>⬜</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rate Psychologist B</td>
<td>⬜</td>
<td>⬜</td>
<td>⬜</td>
<td>⬜</td>
<td>⬜</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rate Yourself</td>
<td>⬜</td>
<td>⬜</td>
<td>⬜</td>
<td>⬜</td>
<td>⬜</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## Correction Procedure

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rate</th>
<th>Little Practical Knowledge</th>
<th>Some Practical Knowledge</th>
<th>Average Practical Knowledge</th>
<th>Greater than Average Practical Knowledge</th>
<th>Advanced Practical Knowledge</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Psychologist A</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Psychologist B</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yourself</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Initial Instrument Results

- Undergraduate: 26.86
- 1st year: 37
- 2nd year: 37
- Expert SP: 45
The Madison Assessment of Cultural Competence/Responsiveness in School Psychology (MACCS)

![Graph showing MACCS scores across different skill levels]

- Undergraduate: 16.7
- 1st year: 24
- 2nd year: 35
- Expert SP: 49

Skill Level: Undergraduate, 1st year, 2nd year, Expert SP
Validity of the Interpretations: MACCS

- Patterns reflected known differences in cultural competence/responsiveness between groups
- Believed to be correcting for differential interpretation of items and the “do not know what you do not know” effect
- Validity of interpretations is limited due to the specificity of the overall scenario
  - Can really only say that the groups differ in their cultural competence/responsiveness related to the specific scenario
  - Good progress though!
Broader claims: MACCS-2

- Recruited five experts in cultural competence/responsiveness related specifically to school psychology
- Average of 24 years experience in culturally competent/responsive school psychology practice
- Average of more than 11 graduate courses or seminars focused on cultural competence
- 3/5 fluent in a language other than English (2/5 learned English as a second language)
- 5/5 have lived in a country other than the United States
- Surveyed experts to generate list of essential traits typical of an expert in culturally competent/responsive school psychology practice.
Broader claims: MACCS-2

- Expert responses corresponded with previous research and were used to identify which experts would write which items.
  - Culturally competent/responsive cognitive assessment
  - Culturally competent/responsive academic assessment
  - Culturally competent/responsive intervention efforts
  - Culturally competent/responsive response-to-intervention
  - Culturally competent/responsive understanding of acculturation
  - Culturally competent/responsive self-awareness and recognition of biases
  - Culturally competent/responsive willingness to learn about others beliefs, attitudes, and values
  - Culturally competent/responsive understanding of one's own limitations and when to seek help
  - Culturally competent/responsive understanding of institutional biases and positive changes
  - Culturally competent/responsive counseling
  - Culturally competent/responsive family consultation
  - Culturally competent/responsive student support
  - Culturally competent/responsive student-family communication
  - Culturally competent/responsive support of LGBTQ students
Broader claims: MACCS-2

- 2 to 4 items were written by each of the experts, including an expert in working with the LGBTQ+ community.

- All 16 items were then presented to a group of 7 experts consisting of a mix of item writers and non-item writers. This was to ensure that experts were rating the scenarios as 2 and 4 respectively.

- 15 items resulted in less than a .3 difference from 2 and 4. 1 Item resulted in an average of .75 difference from 2 for the lowest scenario and was dropped from the final item list.

- Items were then piloted with a convenience sample of school psychology students in the 1st year, 2nd year, and 3rd year of a Masters/Ed.S. level program.
MACCS-2: New Procedure

Please read the following scenario:

A 3rd grade child is referred for a special education assessment. This child is identified as an English language learner by the district and is receiving English language acquisition support daily. As the school psychologist, you are determining what cognitive assessment measures you will give to this child. What will influence your decision?

Please take a few moments to consider how you would respond to this situation.
MACCS-2: New Procedure

Please take a few moments to consider the responses of two hypothetical school psychologists.

**Psychologist A responds:** I would consult with his English language acquisition teacher and his parents about his language development. Since he has been in the schools for a few years and he will likely have good English skills, there are many different cognitive assessments I could give.

**Psychologist B responds:** First I would need to learn more about English and native language proficiency and obtain state language proficiency test results over time. Depending on the amount of language input and instruction in the native language and English, I would determine if a native language assessment is warranted. If the student has more developed English language proficiency but is not yet fluent, cognitive measures will be selected that have a lower linguistic and cultural loading.
Please rate Psychologist A, Psychologist B, and yourself on practical Awareness, Knowledge, or Skill concerning culturally competent/responsive cognitive assessment. (Practical knowledge, awareness, and skill is information or abilities that can be used right now)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Little Practical Knowledge</th>
<th>Some Practical Knowledge</th>
<th>Average Practical Knowledge</th>
<th>Greater than Average Practical Knowledge</th>
<th>Advanced Practical Knowledge</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Rate Psychologist A</td>
<td>◯</td>
<td>◯</td>
<td>◯</td>
<td>◯</td>
<td>◯</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rate Psychologist B</td>
<td>◯</td>
<td>◯</td>
<td>◯</td>
<td>◯</td>
<td>◯</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rate Yourself</td>
<td>◯</td>
<td>◯</td>
<td>◯</td>
<td>◯</td>
<td>◯</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
MACCS-2: Results

Before Correction!

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Skill Level</th>
<th>MACCS Score</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>First Year</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Second Year</td>
<td>46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Third Year</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Experts</td>
<td>54</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
MACCSS-2: Results

With Correction

School Psychology Program - Dept. of Graduate Psychology, James Madison University
Potential Uses of the MACCS-2

- NASP Accreditation
  - NASP Program Standards Rubric Element 4.1
    - “...evidence that candidates acquire knowledge of... cultural... influences on academic skills; human learning, cognitive, and developmental processes; and evidence-based curriculum and instructional strategies.”

- Institutional Response
  - Many institutions ask programs to demonstrate exemplary assessment of learning
    - Direct evidence of student learning is observable, specific, and measureable and tends to be more compelling evidence of exactly what students have and have not learned.

- Curriculum Development/Learning Improvement
  - This is what we, as educators, are all about
    - What are the strengths and weaknesses of our curricula and student experiences?
    - Where can we best focus our effort, time, and attention?
Invitation to partner on the MACCS-2

- *Initial* validity evidence is promising to be able to make the inferences that we want to make
  - Patterns of responses align with expectations given explicit interventions
  - Experts developed and cross-validated the items on the scale
  - Experts consistently rate the scenarios at level 2 and 4 respectively

- We are now beginning to collect further validity evidence to see if the interpretations of student MACCS-2 scores hold across school psychology programs.

- Please see us at the conclusion of the presentation if you would like to pilot the MACCS-2 at your institution. Program-level reports will be provided to all programs who participate.