

The Inclusion Of Multicultural Competencies Across The Curriculum In Higher Education

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The paper explicates utilization of multicultural competencies at the California School of Profession Psychology (CSPP) as a model for inclusion in institutions of higher education. CSPP, composed of four campuses, each with its own multicultural emphasis areas, is the largest professional school in the United States for the training of psychologists. A systemwide Institute, namely the Multicultural Research, Intervention, Research, Intervention, and Training Institute (MERIT) facilitates collaboration in training, research and multicultural development of all campuses and other diversity activities. In addition, the paper provides suggestions for structuring a department of multicultural education at a graduate institute. Archival material from the MERIT Institute by various authors has been utilized with citations in the reference section.

Counseling and therapeutic practices in most countries have modeled themselves on Euro-American practices primarily developed for mainstream Europeans or Americans. No matter how homogeneous a population within a given country is perceived, there

are nevertheless cultural differences that exist within the mainstream and minority populations. Traditional forms of treatment may not be effective for those who constitute a cultural group. The therapist needs to take cultural factors into account because culture influences, worldviews, values, perceptions, expectations, expression of symptoms, the nature of symptoms, differences between treatment and cure or healing, help-seeking behaviors, and a host of other cultural considerations. It is also important to acquire knowledge of the sociopolitical and sociocultural bases of human behavior, as well as develop awareness of interethnic relationships, racism, and the historical antecedents of oppression that have served as a negative legacy on these groups. A helpful development in remedying this situation is to focus on the training of prospective psychologists and others in the therapeutic professions during their graduate schooling. To this end an explication of the CSPP (MERIT) model will be helpful.

The CSPP (MERIT) Model

According to the MERIT Institute (1993) competency constructs incorporate attitudes, knowledge and skill attainment in relation to clinical practice, research and professional projects and activities. It is understood that the attitudes need to be addressed before acquisition of knowledge can be attained followed by skill attainment. It is expected that throughout the courses taught at the institutions, multicultural issues are properly integrated into the curriculum across all subject matters. In addition to the integration of multicultural issues specific courses and curriculum offerings on multicultural issues should be required to assist in developing the multicultural competencies of psychology students. In the light of this process, MERIT (1993) recommended the following constructs and minimum course requirements for all psychology trained doctoral students.

Year 1 - Targeted at Attitudes about Multicultural Populations

Competencies Attained at Year 1

a) Develop awareness of and sensitivity to one's own cultural heritage, and value and respect racial/ethnic differences; b) develop awareness of one's own values and biases and how these affect clients of other ethnic populations; c) develop comfort with differences that pertain to race and beliefs; d) understand one's behavior and personal biases that interfere with communication and understanding of persons of other cultures.

Course Curriculum Requirements for Year 1

- * An Intercultural Lab of at least four credits, two credits taken in the first half and two credits in the second half of the academic year that is focused on exploring and processing the issues related to diversity in a multicultural society.
- * Appropriate supervision and training at the pre-practicum training site on multicultural issues in a clinical setting for PsyD students.

Evaluation of Students' Competencies

- * Successful completion of the Intercultural lab course.
- * Successful completion of the multicultural section of the comprehensive doctoral exams taken at Year 1.

Year 2 - Targeted at Knowledge about Multicultural Populations

Competencies Attained at Year 2

a) Knowledge of history, experiences, cultural values, families, and lifestyle of various racial/ethnic groups; b) knowledge of operation of sociopolitical systems and their treatment of multicultural populations including the impact of cultural racism upon the development of identity and worldviews; c) knowledge of theories, research and intervention strategies pertaining to the assessment and treatment of multicultural populations; d) attainment of competence in assessment of intellectual and personality functioning, cognizant of the limitations of current standardized instruments to multicultural populations; e) competency in diagnostic intake assessment with at least one or more multicultural populations other than one's own; g) develop an awareness of and sensitivity to circumstances which would necessitate referral to another therapist who is competent in treating clients of particular race, ethnicity and set of beliefs; h) ability to make attributions about the client's behavior, understand how the client perceives the social environment and evaluate the behavior in that context; i) ability to determine whether tests developed in a dominant culture are relevant for use with specific cultural and linguistic groups.

Course Curriculum Requirements for Year 2

- * A three credit didactic course on sociopolitical issues based on a specific population or a combination of groups. This course must be completed before the second year and advancement to candidacy.
- * Appropriate supervision and training at the practicum training site on multicultural issues in a clinical setting.

Evaluation of Students' Competencies

- * Successful completion of the Intercultural Lab course.

- * Successful completion of the practicum training incorporating multicultural issues.
- * Successful completion of the multicultural section of the comprehensive doctoral exams taken at Year 2.

Year 3 - Targeted at Skill Attainment, Interventions, Research and Scholarly Critiques

Competencies Attained at Year 3

a) Attain basic competencies in the treatment of an ethnic/racial group(s) other than one's own; b) attain skills in institutional interventions which can be used on behalf of multicultural populations e.g. advocacy, case management, community interventions, interdisciplinary approaches, and grass roots/community based strategies (self-help groups); c) ability to identify the problem of the culturally different client and select appropriate techniques for intervention; d) ability to assist the client in transferring insights and behaviors learned in the therapy setting to everyday situations once therapy is terminated; f) ability to critique research and scholarly contributions in the literature in relation to their consideration of issues related to multicultural populations; e) ability to design, critique and propose research and professional projects that involve multicultural populations.

Course Curriculum Requirements for Year 3

- * Appropriate supervision and training at the practicum or internship training site on multicultural issues in a clinical setting.
- * Outside reviewer critique of the dissertation proposal.

Evaluation of Students' Competencies

- * Successful completion of the practicum or internship training focused on multicultural issues.
- * Positive review by the project reviewer regarding the expressed and explicit integration, consideration and discussion of multicultural issues.

Year 4 and 5 - Targeted at Advance Clinical Skills and Professional Project and/or Research Skills related to Multicultural Populations.

Competencies Attained at Year 4 and 5

a) Attain research and/or professional project experience in areas related to multicultural populations; b) further develop competencies in the treatment of an ethnic/racial(s) other than one's own; c) attain advanced skills in institutional interventions which can be used on behalf of multicultural populations e.g. advocacy, case management, community interventions, interdisciplinary approaches, and grass roots/community based strategies (self-help groups); d) further develop the ability to determine client expectancies concerning the outcomes of the therapy process; e) further develop the ability to assist the client in transferring insights and behaviors learned in the therapy setting to everyday situations once therapy is terminated; f) further develop the ability to critique research and scholarly contributions in the literature in relation to their consideration of issues related to multicultural populations; g) ability to implement doctoral project or dissertation research idea that addresses issues related to multicultural populations.

Curriculum Requirements for Year 4 and/or 5

- * Completion of the dissertation with inclusion of multicultural issues in the document as appropriate.
- * Appropriate supervision and training at the practicum training site on multicultural issues in a clinical setting.

Evaluation of Students' Competencies

- * Successful completion of the practicum or internship training focused on multicultural issues.
- * Positive review by the doctoral dissertation or doctoral project committee regarding the expressed and explicit integration, consideration and discussion of multicultural issues as appropriate.

Structuring a Multicultural Emphasis Psychology Department

The primary purpose of initiating a department of Multicultural Education, Research, Intervention, and Training (MERIT) is the preparation for the delivery of multicultural education, research, intervention, and training in a manner that is effective and responsive to individual needs, societal needs, and diversity. The learning environments, including resources and curriculum, should be designed in a manner that accomplishes this goal, and should be open to continuous development and evaluation.

Multicultural education begins with human needs and experiences and is embedded in the real social, political, and economic circumstances of our society. Because of the wide ranging, diverse, and fluid nature of these conditions, the epistemological basis of disciplined inquiry in education must be comprehensive and responsive to these social contexts. Multicultural education values the sharing of power, equal access to opportunity, social justice, affirmation of differences and the prevention of marginalization as primary goals.

Multicultural education has a central role of improving society in politics, public policies, and dissemination of the knowledge and services that are provided. Multicultural education should develop and maintain a socially responsible science, one including, but not limited to, concerns of gender, physical status, spirituality/religion, sexual orientation, race/ethnicity, national origin, socioeconomic status, ability/disability, and

age, that necessitates a respect for diversity of models and ways of knowing. No social issues or problems should be excluded as beyond the realm of a broad based multicultural education.

Curricula that educate educators and students should address current and emerging social concerns, with a focus on those that affect education, intercultural sensitivity, and mental health. Curricula comprise a broad set of explicit learning experiences that include courses, seminars, practica, and experiential learning. There also are socialization processes that comprise an implicit curriculum in professional education that include education methods, teacher characteristics, the nature of student-teacher relationships, program culture, and the attitudes and values of the total education community. The synergistic relationship between the explicit and implicit components of the program must be considered in program design and implementation.

The primary task of education is the preparation for effective functioning in the multiple roles graduating students will fill in the course of their careers. Multicultural education values and should work toward the development of these new roles, so as to create viable jobs and career paths that are responsive to community needs.

Multicultural education training programs should develop interdisciplinary models of training, including partnerships with other professions in service delivery, as well as joint degree programs with other educational institutions. Preparation for teaching involves the education of the personal and professional selves of teacher trainees.

Furthermore, all teaching is relationship centered. A central and integrating feature is the awareness of self and self-other relatedness. In appreciation of our professional responsibilities as educators, the creation and nurturance of respectful, collegial, and empowering relationships with students is of central importance. Teachers are responsible for being models of professional excellence, personal integrity, and interpersonal effectiveness. The knowledge of how inequalities of power and authority determine the nature of relationships, and the promotion of responsible use of power and authority, are critical elements of this experience.

Multicultural education needs to promote an understanding of the historical and cultural relevance of education, with special attention to the future. We need to understand the historical circumstances that shaped our society, deal with the misunderstandings of others, and develop processes to quickly transform education in ways that will be responsive to the needs of society. In establishing multicultural education a focus on the following is required:

1. The education, research, intervention and training of the proposed department should be characterized by and embrace the following:
 - (a) Intellectual curiosity and flexibility, (b) Scientific skepticism, (c) Open-mindedness, (d) Psychological health, (e) Belief in the capacity for change in human attitudes and behavior, (f) Appreciation of individual and cultural diversity, (g) Interest, courage, and compassion in providing human services, especially to undeserved populations, (h) Personal integrity and honesty, (i) Capacity for developing interpersonal skills (empathy, respect for others, personal relatedness, (j) Self-awareness, (k) Appreciation of and sensitivity to social political contexts in order to make our services relevant and effective.
2. Cross-cultural theory and application should be characterized by a disciplined and scientific attitude.
3. Diversity of teachers, students, and staff enhances the learning environment. Diversity of personal and academic background should be promoted.
4. Professional consultative relationships within and external to the education environment are a valuable means of enhancing the quality of professional judgments in the professional application of multiculturalism.
5. Programs should also actively be engaged in treating the stress experienced by professionals that is the cumulative legacy of oppression.

6. The multicultural program should make explicit its values as they relate to students education and training.
7. Education and training should focus and address the implications of poor self-esteem, violence, lack of opportunity and other social evils that results in poor performance of students.
8. The MERIT department should solicit sufficient resources for teacher and faculty development that supports professional attitudes and values.

Multicultural Education

Multicultural education should value diversity and inclusiveness as fundamental elements of human experience. Considerations of and attention to diversity should be integrated throughout the scientific-academic and professional elements of the program, particularly the curricula. Education that addresses these areas includes an analysis and understanding of power and oppression. The implementation and monitoring of diversity training is the responsibility of all the educators, administration, and staff across the entire educational process. Curricula innovations with regard to diversity require particular attention and reinforcement.

A variety of things should be done with regard to diversity:

1. The department should adopt as an urgent priority the training, hiring, and promotion of educators, administrators, and staff with knowledge, proficiency, and expertise in areas of diversity as well as the integration of a diverse group of students. It is also important in all of these groups to have a critical mass of persons from diverse backgrounds. There should be an explicit recruitment strategy supported by the development of articulated programs designed to attract and support diverse students, educators, administrators, and staff.

2. Curriculum offerings designed to prepare all students in relevant aspects of diversity and intercultural sensitivity should be implemented especially as these relate to undeserved groups and populations.
3. The value of ethnic/racial diversity should be articulated within each institution and school's mission statement.
4. Specific plans that delineate how the institution is addressing issues of ethnic/racial diversity should be developed. They should address the following domains: (a) Ethnically/racially diverse representation and composition of the school population, (b) Development and offering of courses that address issues of ethnic/racial diversity across the curriculum, (c) Development of linkages within their respective communities to assist in program development and implementation from an ethnically/racially diverse perspective, (d) Development and implementation of consciousness raising and other attitude change activities to increase the teacher/student's awareness, sensitivity, and responsiveness to issues of ethnic/racial diversity, (e) Development and support of ethnic/racial student organizations, (f) Involvement of experts in addressing issues of ethnic/racial diversity, (g) Allocation of financial and other institutional resources for the development and support of ethnically/racially diverse administration, teacher, and student recruitment and retention programs.
5. The parameters of ethnic/racial diversity should be specified in each school's catalogue, materials, and curricula.
6. Particular retention and academic advancement efforts should be geared toward offering financial, emotional, and academic support to ethnically/racially diverse students.
7. As a goal, an administration, educators, and student body should be created that is at least as ethnically/racially diverse as the general population.

8. Teacher activity directed toward achieving ethnic/racial diversity should be given significant consideration in regard to workload assignments as well as teacher recruitment, retention, and promotion.
9. Academic, experiential, and supervised clinical and research activities that lead to competence in the provision of psychological services to culturally diverse populations should be provided.
10. The education department should help their teachers change and grow with regard to diversity issues. This is a difficult process, since it includes changes in power relations and privilege and changes within training models and methods of education.
11. MERIT has the responsibility to identify and disseminate examples of the integration of diversity issues into the education, training, and service delivery models of education departments on the local, provincial, and national levels.

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