



Clarion University of Pennsylvania

Facilitating Cultural Fluency for a Multicultural Society

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Multiculturalism: A Working Definition

The existence of more than one cultural group in the same environment, with each being equally valued and given equal opportunity regardless of differences in race, ethnicity, culture, language, religion, gender, sexual orientation, and/or physical ability.

(Morey & Kitano, 1997)

Multiculturalism: A Working Definition

An individual's or group's diverse perspectives, developed and maintained through a variety of unique experiences, are to be acknowledged, respected, valued, and treated with equality and equity.

(Carson, 1999; Robinson, 1996)

Multiculturalism in the Curriculum: An Historical Perspective

Multiculturalism did not formally emerge in the curriculum of higher education until the late 1960s.

At that time its inclusion in the curriculum was seen as a means of changing post-secondary education practices which precluded achievement by minority students and, subsequently, reinforced discrimination and ethnic stereotyping

(McCarthy & Apple, 1988; Morey, 2000; Sawchuk & Taylor, 1997; White, 2003)

Multiculturalism in the Curriculum: A Renewed Emphasis

“Increasingly, we in the United States are required to function in more than a single language, adapt to the demands of more than a single culture, meet the behavioral demands of more than a single situation, and understand the symbols and rituals of people other than those with whom most of us have been socialized.”

(Gordon, 1999, p. 171)

Multiculturalism in the Curriculum: A Renewed Emphasis

- **The importance of multiculturalism in the contemporary curriculum has been underscored by the Association of American Colleges and Universities (2002).**
 - ▶ **Students must develop skills and abilities which will enable them to communicate effectively, both in their native language and also, if possible, in a second language.**
 - ▶ **Students must develop skills and abilities which will enable them to understand and work within complex systems and diverse groups.**
 - ▶ **Students must develop skills and abilities which will allow them to acquire knowledge of one’s self and develop respect for the complex identities of others, their histories, and their cultures.**

(AAC&U, 2002)

Cultural Fluency : A Working Definition

“The ability to move comfortably among cultures from the family culture of home and the ethnic culture of one’s community to the educational culture of school and the corporate culture of one’s particular workplace.”

(Sawchuk & Taylor, 1997, p. 2)

Cultural Fluency: Individual Characteristics

- **The culturally fluent individual has an understanding of self.**
 - ▶ **Cognizant of his/her own individual values, beliefs, and biases**
 - ▶ **Continually self-assesses for the potential development of new biases and stereotypes, independently modifying such perceptions when surfaced**

(Battle, 2000)

Cultural Fluency: Individual Characteristics

- **The culturally fluent individual respects diversity.**
 - ▶ Recognizes and acknowledges those boundaries which serve as points of differentiation between others, addressing said differences through a process of individual accommodation and adaptation
 - ▶ Recognizes commonalities which bind individuals together as a people, viewing them as being equally important as any differences which might exist



(Battle, 2000)

Cultural Fluency: Individual Characteristics

- **The cultural fluent individual respects reciprocity.**
 - ▶ Recognizes that others have the power to make choices and changes in their own lives
 - ▶ Recognizes that others have the individual right to participate in the greater society in a culturally and personally appropriate manner

(Battle, 2000)

Cultural Fluency: Individual Characteristics

- **The culturally fluent individual is responsive to the needs of others.**
 - ▶ Views others as individuals and not merely as smaller parts of a much larger group
 - ▶ Recognizes that though an individual may possess similarities binding him/her to a specific group, he/she will also manifest differences which are unique to the general group

(Battle, 2000)

Facilitating Cultural Fluency: A Matter of Best Practice

Multicultural aspects of professional practice will continue to be important, and become increasingly more so, in the provision of speech and hearing services.

(Wallace, 1999)

Facilitating Cultural Fluency: A Matter of Best Practice

“As professionals, we must be prepared to provide services that are responsive to diversity to ensure our effectiveness.”

(ASHA, 2004, p.1)

All professionals must, regardless of personal culture, practice setting, or caseload demographics, strive for culturally and linguistically appropriate service delivery” if clinical performance is to optimally benefit the client.

(ASHA, 2004, p. 2)

Facilitating Cultural Fluency: A Core Value

ASHA members are not to make assumptions about individuals based on culture, ethnic, or linguistic differences, as well as have (or acquire) the competence needed to accommodate these differences and/or know when and where to seek assistance.

(ASHA, 2005)

Facilitating Cultural Fluency: A Core Value

CODE OF ETHICS (Principal I, Rule C)

“Individuals shall not discriminate in the delivery of professional services or the conduct of research and scholarly activities on the basis of race or ethnicity, gender, gender identity/gender expression, age, religion, national origin, sexual orientation, or disability.”

(ASHA, 2010, p.1)

CODE OF ETHICS (Principal IV, Rule K)

“Individuals shall not discriminate in their relationships with colleagues, students, and members of other professions and disciplines on the basis of race or ethnicity, gender, gender identity/gender expression, age, religion, national origin, sexual orientation, or disability.”

(ASHA, 2010, p.4)

Facilitating Cultural Fluency: Fundamental Characteristics of the Curriculum

▪ A multicultural curriculum includes provisions for:

- ▶ Recognizing that different cultures have strengths and value
- ▶ Functioning as a community model of respect for cultural differences
- ▶ Developing and implementing educational content based upon the principles of social justice and equality
- ▶ Fostering the attitudes and values necessary for continuation of democratic a society
- ▶ Working with local communities to create environments that respect and support diversity

(Gallnick & Chinn, 2002)

Facilitating Cultural Fluency: Process of Curricular Implementation

- **The framework for systematic change in higher education can only be successfully implemented if an environment accepting of curricular modification has been established.**
 - ▶ A shared vision for change must exist among all of an institution's many and varied constituencies
 - ▶ Institutional leadership, policies, and resources that promote change and foster transformation must be in place

(Morey, 2000)

Facilitating Cultural Fluency: Recommendations for Curricular Change

- **Specific recommendations for curricular change include:**
 - ▶ Increasing faculty expertise in multicultural issues
 - ▶ Generating a knowledge base applicable to multiculturalism through programs of research and scholarship
 - ▶ Infusing the curriculum with content and instructional strategies appropriate to multicultural teaching and learning
 - ▶ Forming linkages with organizations that have a multicultural focus so as to draw upon their expertise
 - ▶ Increase student diversity

(Morey, 2000)

Facilitating Cultural Fluency: Role of the Culturally Responsive Facilitator

- **Implement skills related to and impart knowledge of the following:**
 - ▶ Cultural differences influence learning and behavior
 - ▶ Culture impacts the way individuals interact with those in authority
 - ▶ Cultural differences affect the means and modes in which feedback should be delivered
 - ▶ Assimilation and acculturation play a role in an individual's behavioral responses
 - ▶ Cultural and linguistic differences impact interactions with clients and/or their significant others

(ASHA, 2008)

Facilitating Cultural Fluency: The Process of Facilitating Cultural Fluency

The facilitator must be willing to first explore his/her own self-identities, assessing and reflecting upon individual cross-racial, cross-ethnic, and cross-cultural values.

By so doing, the facilitator can begin to expand his/her understanding and skills to effectively work with students, each of whom possesses his/her own unique background(s), priorities, and preferences.

(Myers & Rhoades, 2006)

**Facilitating Cultural Fluency:
The Process of Facilitating Cultural Fluency**

The facilitator must be open and accepting of student differences, putting forth the effort required to become familiar with each student as an individual in and out of the academic environment.

Open and accepting supervisors can create open and accepting environments, establishing a positive and beneficial learning climate.

(Fish, n.d.; Myers & Rhoades, 2006)

**Facilitating Cultural Fluency:
The Process of Facilitating Cultural Fluency**

Facilitators must be “fearless”, willing to try different things, self-assured enough to avoid taking things personally, and non-judgmental in thought, word, and action.

(Canning, 1995)

**Facilitating Cultural Fluency:
The Process of Facilitating Cultural Fluency**

Facilitators, in many respects, serve as role models, demonstrating abilities upon which cultural fluency is based (e.g., critical thinking about differences, forestalling or reducing bias, cultivating acceptance, mediating conflict).

(White, 2003)

**Facilitating Cultural Fluency:
Assessing the Facilitator**

- **Key Indicators to Assess Facilitator Success:**
 - ▶ Has an atmosphere reflecting acceptance and respect for differences been created?
 - ▶ Are multiethnic and multicultural materials used as instructional aids?
 - ▶ Is emphasis placed on similarities and differences among individuals?
 - ▶ Are societal problems and group member experiences incorporated into the learning process?

(White, 2003)

Facilitating Cultural Fluency: Assessing the Facilitator

- **Key Indicators to Assess Facilitator Success:**
 - ▶ Has sound knowledge of concepts and generalizations concerning people of different heritages been developed?
 - ▶ Are realistic examples and materials addressing ageism, sexism, racism, handicapism, etc. being used?
 - ▶ Are stereotypic- and ethnocentric-based practices avoided?

(White, 2003)

Facilitating Cultural Fluency: Student Outcomes

- **Key Student Outcomes:**
 - ▶ An understanding of the concept of culture and its characteristics (e.g., traditions, rituals)
 - ▶ Identification of similarities and differences among individuals from different cultures (e.g., values, languages, lifestyles)
 - ▶ An appreciation of the significance of events, customs, traditions, that are specific to different groups
 - ▶ An understanding of how stereotypes originate, persist, and damage relationships

(Sawchuk & Taylor, 1997)

Facilitating Cultural Fluency: Student Outcomes

- **Key Student Outcomes:**
 - ▶ Recognition of various forms of stereotypes, prejudice, and discrimination
 - ▶ The ability to examine cultures other than their own, including the recognition of individual biases and assumptions about a culture in question
 - ▶ Development and maintenance of positive relationships with other individuals or groups, including the ability to constructive resolve conflicts which might arise in these relationships

(Sawchuk & Taylor, 1997)

“Teaching multiculturally means teaching about the real world, a world that includes individuals and groups with cultural backgrounds very different from one’s own. It is our responsibility to help students understand the historical and contemporary experiences of their own and other groups. We live in an increasingly interdependent world and nation, a fact that requires us to learn to respect cultural differences.”

(Gollnick & Chinn, 1994, p. 311)

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