Multicultural Competencies and Training in School Psychology: Issues, Approaches, and Future Directions

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Emilia C. Lopez, Margaret R. Rogers
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MULTICULTURAL COMPETENCIES
AND TRAINING IN SCHOOL
PSYCHOLOGY: ISSUES,
APPROACHES, AND FUTURE
DIRECTIONS

Emilia C. Lopez
Queens College, City University of New York

Margaret R. Rogers
University of Rhode Island

Given the significant demographic changes occurring in the U.S., many practicing school psychologists are delivering services to a clientele diverse in ethnicity, race, language and cultural background, and nationality. Currently, White students make-up 62.1% of public school enrollments, African Americans 17.2%, Hispanic/Latinos 15.6%, Asian Americans 4%, American Indians 1.2% (National Center for Education Statistics, 2002) and youngsters whose native language is not English comprise 16.7% of the school-age population (U.S. Census, 2001). This diverse demographic profile implies that school psychology training programs must prepare their graduates to work with a diverse clientele.

Irrefutable evidence exists that there are differences in important quality of life indices on the basis of one’s racial, ethnic, linguistic, cultural, and socioeconomic status in the U.S. Different subgroups of the American population have different histories with and exposure to prejudice, discrimination, institutionalized oppression, environmental risks, and social stigmatization. These experiences, as well as the stress associated with them, likely have a profound influence on psychological development and functioning. A person’s race, ethnicity, language, gender, sexual
orientation, and socioeconomic status affects identity, health status, and access to health care including mental health services (Bradford, Ryan, & Rothblum, 1994; Clark, Anderson, Clark, & Williams, 1999; Fisher et al., 2002; Garbarino, 1995; Lott, 2002; McLoyd, 1998; Vaughan, 1993; Williams, Yu, Jackson, & Anderson, 1997). In a recent report, the U.S. Surgeon General documented the existence of racial/ethnic disparities in mental health services for adults as well as children and youth, and explored the consequences of the disparities on psychological and physical well-being (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 2001). There can be little doubt that school psychologists need to be informed about the nature of these disparities, and about how life events and experiences with prejudice and discrimination shape perceptions and daily life. Yet, it is quite likely that many school psychologists are not well informed, or if they are informed, are not clear about how to integrate this information into their professional practices. Empirical evidence in the school psychology literature is often lacking about how to make psychological services more effective, relevant, and contextually congruent on the basis of clients’ diverse backgrounds and life experiences (e.g., see Henning-Stout & Brown-Cheatham, 1999; Sheridan, 2000). Contributing to this dilemma is the fact that many pertinent advances and research developments helpful to more fully understanding the complex issues involved in serving clients from diverse cultural and language backgrounds are so recent that they are just now beginning to enter mainstream psychological knowledge and have as yet to trickle down to practicing school psychologists.

Despite these barriers trainers are faced with the press to respond to calls from the American Psychological Association (APA 2002b) and the National Association of School Psychologists (NASP, 2000a) to increase the cross-cultural competencies of school psychology graduates (American Psychological Association [APA], 2002b; National Association of School Psychologists [NASP], 2000a). A call has also been issued by the APA and NASP via their ethical standards for practicing school psychologists to increase their cross-cultural expertise (APA, 2002a; NASP, 2000b). However, those calls for increasing school psychologists’ cross-cultural knowledge and skills are not accompanied by a comprehensive discussion of what we know and what we need to accomplish in order to respond. The present chapter is designed to provide a discussion of: (a) the history of multicultural training in school psychology within the context of cross-cultural competencies, (b) the challenges that the profession faces in developing and improving school psychologists’ cross-cultural competencies, (c) suggested approaches to meet those challenges, and (d) future implications for research in this area. The term culturally and linguistically diverse (CLD) will be used throughout the chapter when referring to individuals from diverse ethnic, racial, national, cultural and language backgrounds.

THEORETICAL AND RESEARCH BASIS

The early history of school psychology training is documented in a number of surveys conducted in the 1960s and 1970s that gave scant attention to multicultural issues. The surveys are similar in recording the number of school psychology pro-
grams and their institutional locations, the degrees offered, the degree requirements, the number of students and faculty, and the types of financial support offered (e.g., Bardon & Walker, 1972; Brown & Lindstrom, 1978; Cardon & French, 1968–1969; French & McCloskey, 1980; Smith, 1964–1965; White, 1963). Several surveys carried out during this time period also examined the training emphasis, content, and curriculum of programs (e.g., Bardon & Wenger, 1976; “Descriptions of Representative Training Programs,” 1964–1965; French & McCloskey, 1980; Goh, 1977; Pfeiffer & Marmo, 1981; White, 1963) but none reported any programs offering diversity issues courses nor any type of multicultural training. Bardon and Wenger’s survey is the first from this group to have asked about and reported the racial/ethnic breakdown of enrolled students. According to their sample, about 10% of the students attending school psychology programs were identified as CLD graduate students. A handful of case studies of individual training programs were also found (e.g., Bardon & Bennett, 1967; Zach, 1970). Zach’s description of the program at Yeshiva University appears to be among the first to describe a training environment actively devoted to training school psychology students to provide services to a low-income urban CLD population. Altogether, with these two exceptions, published studies from the 1960s and 1970s about school psychology training provide little information about the extent to which programs were attending to multicultural training.

It is not until the 1980’s that we begin to see evidence in the school psychology literature of a growing attention to the status of culturally diverse group members within the profession, culturally diverse student and faculty recruitment efforts, and coverage of multicultural issues in coursework and applied training. Zins and Halsell’s (1986) nationwide survey of school psychology training programs examined students’ and faculties’ ethnic diversity group membership as well as recruitment strategies employed by programs to recruit students from diverse backgrounds. They found that 11.5% of the students and 17.5% of faculty were from culturally diverse backgrounds and noted an array of recruitment strategies used by the programs. Like Zins and Halsell, Barona and Flores (as cited in Barona, Santos de Barona, Flores, & Gutierrez, 1990) studied the kinds of information APA accredited programs presented to applicants from diverse cultural backgrounds. They found that about 58% indicated the presence of culturally diverse students, 37% employed a culturally diverse faculty member, and 26% offered financial aid.

Other studies looked at the curriculum provided at training programs across different levels of training. Brown and Minke (1986) examined the courses offered at 211 school psychology programs and found that doctoral degree programs could be distinguished from specialist degree programs by being more likely to offer cross-cultural coursework. They noted this distinction while also pointing out that the NASP and APA training guidelines that existed at that time required exposure to cross-cultural content in the curriculum, suggesting that at least some specialist programs were out of compliance with NASP guidelines. These studies, in combination, began to flesh out the demographic composition of students and faculty in school psychology programs, noted the need for increased representation of culturally diverse group members in the field, offered a glimpse at recruitment strategies leading programs already used, and revealed the uneven presence of multicultural coursework across programs.
Two articles published in the mid–1980s took the field a step further by beginning to articulate the content of multicultural training and discussing specific cross-cultural competencies. Figueroa, Sandoval, and Merino (1984) identified six major areas of competencies school psychologists need when delivering assessment services to limited English proficient (LEP) Hispanic children. These assessment-related competencies included proficiency in a second language, knowledge of first and second language development, skills in working with interpreters, knowledge of appropriate assessment techniques used with LEP youngsters, and knowledge of cross-cultural differences. Rosenfield and Esquivel’s (1985) article on the competencies school psychologists need when working with bilingual and bicultural populations emphasized three major skill areas: language competencies, cross-cultural knowledge competencies, and assessment competencies. Figueroa et al. and Rosenfield and Esquivel enriched our understanding of the specific cross-cultural competencies needed by professionals when working with bilingual and bicultural clients and provided trainers with a beginning look at cross-cultural competencies to use in designing culturally relevant training experiences.

The 1990s were characterized by even more widespread and sustained attention to multicultural training and diversity issues in the school psychology literature, and provide evidence of significant gaps between the needs of an increasingly diverse clientele and the training that school psychologists receive. The first nationwide survey of multicultural training in school psychology programs (Rogers, Ponterotto, Conoley, & Wiese, 1992) showed that 40% of the programs did not offer diversity issues courses, over 90% of the programs devoted less than 25% of class time in core courses (assessment, interventions, consultation, and roles and function) to diversity issues, 31% provided students with minimal exposure to CLD clients during applied training, and about 13% of the faculty and 15% of the students were identified as culturally diverse group members. Consistent with Brown and Minke (1986), doctoral programs in the Rogers et al. study were more likely to offer diversity coursework than non-doctoral programs. These findings imply that many students were receiving insufficient preparation for work with a diverse clientele in their courses as well as their field placements.

More recent research raises added concerns about students’ level of preparedness. Ochoa, Rivera, and Ford (1997) investigated the training experiences and professional assessment competencies of school psychologists working with bilingual and Hispanic clients. Ochoa et al. targeted school psychologists working in the eight states (Arizona, California, Colorado, Florida, New Jersey, New Mexico, New York, and Texas) with the highest concentrations of Hispanic and bilingual group members in the U.S. to find out how prepared they were to perform psychoeducational assessments in their communities. They found that about 80% of the school psychologists had not taken a bilingual assessment course and 87% considered their training in conducting bilingual psychoeducational assessments to be inadequate. The implication of these findings is clear: School psychologists with the greatest likelihood of serving bilingual students are most likely ill-prepared to do so. These results are compounded by the shortage of bilingual school psychologists nationwide. Curtis, Hunley, Walker, and Baker (1999) showed that
about 10% of school psychologists speak a language other than English, suggesting that the need for bilingual professionals is outstripped by current availability. The findings raise serious concerns about the degree that training programs have prepared school psychologists for the needs of the bilingual and racially/ethnically diverse students in their care.

At least part of the difficulty trainers may have experienced in integrating multicultural content into their curriculum and training experiences may have been their own lack of knowledge about the specific skills school psychologists need to effectively serve a diverse clientele. Following Figueroa et al. (1984) and Rosenfield and Esquivel’s (1985) discussions of cross-cultural assessment competencies, the cross-cultural competencies that school psychologists need received sporadic attention in the school psychology literature. More than 10 years after these early contributions, a number of publications appeared in school psychology venues to help expand and further clarify important cross-cultural school psychology competencies. In 1997, Gopaul-McNicol made recommendations about the competencies needed by monolingual school psychologists who work with CLD students.

Recent studies by Lopez and Rogers (2001) and Rogers and Lopez (2002) empirically identified the cross-cultural school psychology competencies that school psychologists should have within 14 domains: Academic Interventions, Assessment, Consultation, Counseling, Culture, Language, Laws and Regulations, Organizational Skills, Professional Characteristics, Report Writing, Research Methods, Theoretical Paradigms, Working with Interpreters, and Working with Parents. In both studies, a panel of experts in cross-cultural school psychology formulated the final set of competencies. The Lopez and Rogers experts identified 89 competencies and the experts from the Rogers and Lopez study identified 102 competencies, and together these competencies reflect those needed to provide a complete array of psychological services (assessment and intervention, consultation, counseling, report writing, research) as well as work with specific groups (e.g., interpreters, organizations, parents). Now, for the first time, school psychology trainers have a comprehensive picture of cross-cultural competencies most relevant to the practices delivered by school psychologists to guide their curriculum transformation efforts.

Several scholars have described and explored the characteristics of school psychology programs that specialize in multicultural training. For example, Palmer, Juarez, and Hughes (1991) described a training option available at Texas A & M University’s school psychology program that prepares bilingual students to specialize in service delivery to Hispanic clients with disabilities. In addition, descriptions of nine school psychology programs (Arizona State University, Brooklyn College—CUNY, Georgia State University, Howard University, San Diego State University, Temple University, University of Nebraska-Lincoln, University of Texas—Pan American, and Utah State University) renowned for their efforts to engage in multicultural training were presented in the Fall and Winter 1995 editions of the Division 16 publication The School Psychologist.

More recently, Rogers (2006) studied the features of 17 school psychology programs identified as exemplary models of multicultural training. At the exemplary programs, 94% required a diversity issues course, all exposed their students to...
CLD clients during field training, 59% specialize in training students to work with specific CLD populations, and most programs used multiple multicultural curriculum models. In addition, the programs used a wide range of student recruitment and retention techniques to attract CLD students, with all programs offering financial aid and making personal contacts with applicants as recruitment techniques. Twenty-five percent of the program faculty at the exemplary programs were bilingual, and 25% of the program faculty and 31% of the students represented a CLD group member.

Studies carried out within the closely related specialty of counseling psychology provide additional insight about the content of multicultural training. Studies have looked at various methods used to train for cross-cultural competence (e.g., Pedersen, 1988; Ridley, Mendoza, & Kanitz, 1994), examined student’s assessments of the multicultural training they received (Mintz, Rideout, & Bartels, 1994; Neville et al., 1996; Phillips & Fischer, 1998), and assessed outcomes of multicultural training for clients as well as trainees (Constantine, 2002; Diaz-Lazaro & Cohen, 2001; Fuertes & Brobst, 2002; Kiselica, Maben, & Locke, 1999). Four models of multicultural training are generally recognized (i.e., separate course, interdisciplinary, area of concentration, integration) (LaFromboise & Foster, 1992). The separate course model involves offering students a single course in multicultural issues. The interdisciplinary model involves students taking core multicultural courses in departments outside of the department that houses the graduate psychology program. The area of concentration model combines didactic coursework in multicultural issues with applied training involving CLD clients. The integration model refers to infusing multicultural content into all graduate courses, including applied training activities. Even though the integration model is generally considered to be superior to the others, virtually all published studies conducted to date have looked at the impact of a separate diversity issues course (e.g., Brown, Parham, & Yonker, 1996; Heppner & O’Brien, 1994; Leonard, 1996; Neville et al., 1996; Phillips & Fischer, 1998; Sevig & Etzkorn, 2001; Steward, Wright, Jackson, & Jo, 1998).

In sum, the profession of school psychology and those who train school psychologists face multiple challenges in developing and improving school psychologists’ and future school psychologists’ cross-cultural competencies. A shortage of bilingual and multiculturally competent school psychologists, gaps in knowledge about best practices for providing psychological services to CLD clients, and the press to understand and act on inequities affecting the mental health of group members are all realities shaping the present context of multicultural training.

**IMPLICATIONS FOR PRACTICE**

We propose that there are two major challenges that must be addressed to reach the goal of equipping school psychologists with cross-cultural competencies: (a) continuing efforts to investigate and validate cross-cultural competencies, and (b) meeting training needs. Those challenges are explored below with examples provided to further operationalize those challenges. Readers will note that the examples given may be universal in the sense that they are prevalent nationally across settings and locations, whereas some examples may pertain to specific locations.
Continuing Efforts to Investigate and Validate Cross-cultural Competencies

Although several researchers have identified competencies for school psychologists working with culturally and linguistically diverse populations, most have relied on reviews of the literature or the authors’ own expertise to generate the areas of competency (Gopaul-McNicol, 1997; Figueroa et al., 1984; Rosenfield & Esquivel, 1985). Research based competencies were recently generated by Lopez and Rogers (2001) and Rogers and Lopez (2002). Both investigations asked panels of experts to identify essential cross-cultural competencies. However, those two investigations generated two sets of essential cross-cultural competencies that are not yet integrated nor validated.

Specific competencies must also be investigated and validated for bilingual psychologists working with bilingual students and English language learners. Bilingual language skills (i.e., skills in communicating in two languages) are only some of the competencies that bilingual school psychologists need to provide effective services to linguistically diverse children and their families (Figueroa et al., 1984; Rosenfield & Esquivel, 1985). Bilingual school psychologists must also have knowledge of language development in the languages that they are proficient in to be able to examine children’s first and second acquisition skills. Such skills would be helpful to bilingual school psychologists as they examine children’s assessment results in two languages (e.g., assessment of cognitive, academic and/or language skills in Chinese and English). Also relevant is knowledge about how the use of two languages can impact the counseling process as in situations where clients may respond to issues differently depending on the language(s) used during sessions (e.g., speaking to a client in her native language about family relationship issues may evoke themes that did not emerge in previous discussions conducted only in English; Oquendo, 1996).

School psychologists who are bilingual in specific languages (e.g., a Chinese and English speaking school psychologist) are also often called to work with other linguistically diverse clients via interpreters (e.g., clients speaking Spanish, Urdu, Hindi, or Russian). As such, bilingual school psychologists need to have, in addition to special competencies related to the specific language groups they support, skills and knowledge relevant to working with other linguistically diverse clients.

In addition to the challenge of systematically identifying cross-cultural competencies, there is also a need to develop valid and reliable tools to assess the cross-cultural competencies of graduate students in school psychology programs, faculty in training programs, and of practitioners in the field. The counseling field has clearly taken the lead on confronting this challenge. For example, three tools reviewed by Ponterotto, Rieger, Barrett, and Sparks (1994) are available as self-report measures of multicultural counseling competencies. A fourth measure, the Cross-Cultural Counseling Inventory-Revised (LaFromboise, Coleman & Hernandez, 1991) was designed for supervisors to evaluate counselor’s multicultural competencies. In school psychology, the only published instrument is the Multicultural School Psychology Counseling Competency Scale (Rogers &
Ponterotto, 1997), a measure specifically designed to assess counseling skills. Other instruments are needed to assess the full array of services that school psychologists deliver.

Meeting Training Needs

The challenges related to meeting training needs are multiple and interrelated. The available research suggests that there is a shortage of practicing school psychologists well prepared to provide psychological services to CLD clients (Ochoa et al., 1997). The shortage of multicultural competent school psychologists leads us to question the consequences of providing services to populations we are not equipped to work with. For example, what are the consequences of (a) using psychological and educational measures not validated for specific populations of students, (b) translating tests on the spot and using those scores as if they are representative of students’ levels of functioning, and (c) developing and implementing interventions that do not take into account the children’s and families’ cultural backgrounds? These questions and many others must be examined to continue to move the field to further explore cross-cultural competencies in practice and training.

Training programs face the challenges of meeting the training standards set by the NASP (2000a) and the accreditation guidelines established by the APA (2002b) regarding multicultural training. A careful examination of these standards point to areas of overlap as well as points of divergence. Both the NASP and the APA training standards emphasize coverage of multicultural issues in all aspects of the curriculum, and stress the need to provide applied training experiences and placements with diverse clients. In addition, both advise programs to promote the recruitment and retention of CLD students and faculty. APA’s standards go one step further by noting that minority recruitment efforts must be “systematic, coherent, and long-term” (p. 12). NASP’s standards extend to include the need for training programs to communicate their commitment to diversity in their mission and program philosophy. In addition, NASP’s standards also make specific statements about the need for future school psychologists to (a) recognize their own biases and the ways that bias affects “decision-making, instruction, behavior, and long-term outcomes for students” (p. 29), and (b) “develop…interventions that reflect knowledge and understanding of children and families’ cultures...” (p. 28). What the standards do not state are specific recommendations for how training programs should engage in these objectives, leaving trainers with little explicit guidance or insight about how to achieve excellence in these areas.

Training programs may not have faculty with cross-cultural expertise to train future school psychologists to work with CLD populations. Questions then arise as to the need to prepare trainers so that they are able to integrate cross-cultural issues into the program curricula and applied training experiences. Do trainers recognize their own need for cross-cultural competencies? How do we go about preparing trainers? What areas do we emphasize when preparing trainers (e.g., specific cross-cultural competencies related to their areas of specialty, overview of issues)? Of concern also is research in psychology and education suggesting that CLD faculty members who are hired for tenure track positions confront a number of per-
sonal and institutional barriers that may result in lower retention rates of CLD faculty within university settings (e.g., lack of CLD faculty serving as models and mentors, lack of institutional support, unfamiliarity with the tenure process and demands) (Hendricks, 1997).

Training programs encounter barriers when attempting to recruit CLD graduate students. For example, financial constraints prevent CLD students from attempting graduate school. In addition, the university community may not be ethnically diverse or may not reflect the students’ backgrounds (Constantine & Ladany, 1996). Muñoz-Dunbar and Stanton (1999) suggest that CLD students may measure institutional sensitivity to cultural diversity by the presence or absence of faculty members from diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds.

Bilingual graduate students may be difficult to recruit because although they may have oral language skills in English and/or a language other than English, those bilingual skills may not translate into proficiency in reading and/or writing. This pattern is not unusual because oral skills in a second language typically develop earlier than writing skills (Collier, 1992). Other bilingual applicants may also be able to communicate well orally in their first language but never had the opportunity to receive instruction in reading or writing in the first language and thus lack the corresponding reading and writing skills.

Retention of CLD graduate students is also a challenge for training programs. Studies suggest that relative to White students, minority students tend to experience greater feelings of alienation and isolation in academic environments that lack cultural diversity (Bernal et al., 1999). When culturally diverse faculty are not present in a graduate program or department, CLD students lack role models, mentors, and important sources of support (Constantine & Ladany, 1996). Other CLD students struggle with acculturation conflicts as in situations where women students experience confusion and stress as a result of their culturally traditional families questioning their desire to acquire a higher level of education and a profession. Graduate students from CLD backgrounds who were not educated in American educational systems also experience difficulties in understanding how to succeed in an university system that is new to them, and in figuring out how to function in fieldwork settings (e.g., clinics, schools) that reflect majority values and use unfamiliar instructional or classroom practices.

Trainers also face the often difficult task of identifying practicing school psychologists who are multiculturally competent and/or bilingually proficient to provide supervision to trainees during field-based training. Potential supervisors may not have had adequate training in multicultural and/or bilingual issues during their own formal preparation, may vary in their utilization of best practices in service delivery to bilingual and racial/ethnic diverse students, or may be ill-equipped to address the structural and interpersonal inequities that CLD group members face. Studies have shown that both practicing psychologists and psychologists-in-training frequently report being unprepared for delivering services to Blacks/African Americans, Latinos, Asian Americans, Native Americans, people with disabilities, and gays/lesbians/bisexuals (Allison, Crawford, Echemendia, Robinson, & Knepp, 1994; Mintz, Bartels, & Rideout, 1995; Phillips & Fischer, 1998). Furthermore, Allison et al. (1994) found that even though the clinical and counseling psychologists in their sample did not feel competent to deliver services to some
CLD group members, they continued to provide services. Ochoa, Rivera, and Ford (1997) found that about 80% of the practicing school psychologists they sampled had not been trained to perform bilingual psychoeducational assessments although more than half (57%) had conducted such assessments. The practice of providing highly specialized services to clients in the absence of demonstrated competency raises serious ethical concerns about the practitioner’s compliance with both the APA (2002a) and NASP (2000b) ethical codes and the degree that the services provided meet the highest standards for service delivery.

Specific challenges also exist in locating bilingual school psychologists to supervise practica and internship students. Some bilingual school psychologists have the experience that, by virtue of being the only bilingual school psychologist in a specific district, they are assigned to restricted roles such as only conducting assessments because of a backlog of bilingual assessment cases. Practicing supervisors in such situations would provide limited experiences for practica and internship students because they do not deliver consultation, counseling, and intervention/prevention services. Districts with serious shortages of bilingual school psychologists and other bilingual personnel assessment personnel often respond to their immediate needs by contracting with outside agencies to complete bilingual assessment cases instead of planning long-term by hiring a CLD cadre of school psychologists who can meet their communities’ ongoing needs.

Other systemic issues also impact training experience. Bilingual school psychologists may be hired to work in urban districts where most community members use a language different than the bilingual school psychologist’s second language (e.g., Greek speaking school psychologist is hired to work in a Polish speaking community instead of in a district with a Greek speaking community) because the school system and the union dictate school placements not by need (i.e., what the community needs) but by seniority (i.e., school psychologist X has more seniority and gets to choose what school to work in within the district).

Given the challenges in identifying competencies, meeting training needs, recruiting and retaining CLD students and faculty, and confronting systemic issues, it seems imperative to identify actions to meet those challenges. The next section discusses approaches to meet the identified challenges.

**IMPLEMENTATION AND APPROACHES**

The approaches discussed in this section identify the steps we need to engage in to address the identified challenges. Part of the process of meeting these challenges is to identify the goals that will help our profession to prepare school psychologists to work with children and families from CLD backgrounds.

**Approaches to Investigating and Validating Cross-cultural Competencies**

Our first goal must be to continue to conduct research to systematically identify cross-cultural competencies for all school psychologists. Although the work has begun in that area (Lopez & Rogers, 2001; Rogers & Lopez, 2002) more work is needed to validate the competencies in practice. The work must also be extended to identify and validate specific competencies for bilingual school psychologists. An-
other goal is to develop valid and reliable tools to identify school psychology students’ and practitioners’ competencies. Such tools will be instrumental in helping university programs to establish training goals and conduct program evaluations (e.g., Are students obtaining cross-cultural competencies in courses and field experiences?). Those tools will also help practitioners as well as school psychology students to self-assess their cross-cultural knowledge and skills.

Approaches to Meet Training Needs for Practitioners

The goal of preparing practicing school psychologists to work with CLD populations entails training programs and school systems working together to develop training experiences for practitioners and students in a variety of forums (e.g., university training program, workshops within the district, internet courses). Training can be provided in specific areas of functioning (e.g., assessment, counseling, consultation), specific topics (e.g., second language acquisition, acculturation), and about specific groups (e.g., working with a variety of Latino/Hispanic populations such as Ecuadorians, Hondurians, Puerto Ricans). Research suggests that specific courses (Keim, Warring, & Rau, 2001; Neville et al., 1996), workshops (Byington, Fischer & Walker, 1997) and a variety of learning activities such as structured feedback, surveys, and games are effective means to improve cross-cultural awareness, knowledge and skills (Dana, Aguilar-Kitibutr, Diaz-Vivar, & Vetter, 2002; Kim & Lyons, 2003; Roysircar, Webster, & Germer, 2003). Training experiences can include self-exploration, structured activities designed to increase awareness of diverse groups (e.g., trips to ethnically diverse communities led by members of the community or peers from those communities), reading of the literature, and supervised work experiences (LaFromboise & Foster, 1992). Developing communities of peer support via local (e.g., peer supervision provided within a district or across districts) or national mentoring programs (e.g., use of technology and the internet for distance supervision support and distance learning) should also be explored. The training research supports the use of follow-up mentoring, supervision, and coaching to help practitioners apply the knowledge and skills learned in workshops and courses (Showers & Joyce, 1996). In addition, the field needs more training programs for bilingual school psychologists.

One way to meet the many training needs is through the creation of national and regional training centers. Regional centers may be established through APA and NASP or through funding from federal and state sources to address diversity issues such as training, recruitment and retention issues for practitioners, graduate students and faculty. Such centers can provide training opportunities and disseminate information. For example, the Queens College and Brooklyn College, City University of New York campuses obtained a three-year grant (1998–2001) to create the Bilingual Psychological and Educational Assessment Support Center. The Center was supported through New York State Education funding and was created to provide training support to school psychologists and other school professionals working with CLD children and youth. The Center (a) created and received feedback from an Advisory Council composed of trainers, practitioners, and researchers; (b) provided support to various New York State Education programs and offices about training issues; (c) implemented workshops on a variety of topics and in
a variety of locations (e.g., national, at the two campuses, at local school districts), (c) provided consultation services (e.g., to local school psychology programs about training issues, to school districts about locating bilingual assessment personnel, to practitioners seeking information about assessment practices); and (d) created a website where a variety of information was disseminated (e.g., syllabi, training materials, newsletter summarizing research as well as practice based information [http://forbin.qc.edu/ECP/bilingualcenter/]).

Greater collaboration is needed between university training programs, state education departments, school districts, unions, and community leaders to draft common goals to increase the number of school psychologists with multicultural competencies and the numbers of CLD school psychologists, including bilingual psychologists, who can respond to the individual needs of each community. For example, the New York State Education Department (NYSED) consulted with school psychology trainers to create a bilingual specialization for school psychologists. Bilingual school psychologists are now credentialed by the NYSED and must take a series of courses on bilingual and multicultural issues. In addition, they must complete a bilingual fieldwork experience and must demonstrate bilingual language skills via a language proficiency exam given by the NYSED. This decision has led to the credentialing of many bilingual school psychologists throughout the State and has provided an incentive for school psychologists with bilingual expertise to seek appropriate training. Incentives must also be provided to encourage school psychologists to acquire multicultural expertise, perhaps through a national certification or specialization in multicultural issues, local incentives (e.g., salary increments), and special recognitions (e.g., credentials awarded through state education departments).

Practitioners, trainers, and professional organizations also need to work together to expand the roles of bilingual school psychologists beyond the roles of assessors to focus on prevention and intervention roles and provide a full compliment of psychological services. Collaboration amongst those sources can also lead to mutually beneficial ventures such as identifying specialized field placements that provide future school psychologists with opportunities to work with CLD groups

**Approaches to Meet Training Needs in School Psychology Graduate Programs**

Recruitment and retention strategies are also needed targeting school psychology graduate students committed to working with CLD populations. Recruitment strategies found to be effective at increasing enrollments for CLD students include financial support, personal contacts from CLD faculty and students, soliciting recruits from other higher education institutions (particularly historical institutions of color), employing CLD faculty, offering peer support groups, mentorship programs, involvement in special projects and research with mentoring from faculty and/or field supervisors (Maton & Hrabowski, 2004; Rogers, 2006; Rogers & Molina, 2005; Salzman, 2000). Bidell, Turner, and Casas (2002) found that information included in application materials had an impact on enrollment rates for diverse students. Specifically, high enrollments of a diverse student body were found at programs that included financial aid information, an antidiscrimination policy,
and a statement communicating a commitment to diversity in training and student recruitment in their application materials. Among other strategies that can be used are developing a strong national campaign through local, state, and national contacts; developing recruitment materials targeting CLD graduate students; working with community leaders to refer promising students; advertising in local newspapers that target particular communities and groups; and conducting presentations with community agencies (Garman & Mortensen, 1997; Muñoz-Dunbar & Stanton, 1999; Puente, Blanch, & Candland, 1993).

Outreach activities designed to target young children as well as high school and undergraduate students are other sources of recruitment that can be adopted and evaluated. For example, members of the Education and Science directorate within the APA participated in a program where children of all ages were exposed to activities (e.g., puzzles, hands-on activities) and demonstrations designed to introduce them to psychological concepts (“Encouraging Children to Discover Psychology,” 2005). The APA Teachers of Psychology in Secondary Schools and the APAPSychology Teachers at Community Colleges organized activities designed to provide information to high school students about careers in psychology (“Ethnic Minority Recruitment Project,” 2005). The creation of a school psychology recruitment day or week with dissemination of specially designed materials developed through the school psychology division of the APA (Division 16) and the NASP can encourage practitioners and trainers across the country to plan and implement recruitment activities for students of all ages with emphases on recruiting a culturally diverse cadre of future school psychologists. School psychology courses on roles and functions can also incorporate recruitment assignments whereby CLD school psychology graduate students can participate in presentations and demonstrations based within schools. Within the APA, the Office of Ethnic Minority Affairs and the Commission on Ethnic Minority Recruitment, Retention, and Training in Psychology have published a number of helpful guides, pamphlets and brochures describing how graduate programs can improve their minority recruitment and retention efforts (see the Resources section at the end of this chapter).

Bilingual and bicultural training experiences can also be provided within training programs and in collaboration with other training programs. For example, reading and writing workshops for bilingual school psychologists who lack literacy skills in languages other than English, and national as well as international exchange programs should be explored (e.g., taking series of courses in another university in the country or outside of the country).

Providing direct contact with CLD clients through local, national as well as international field placements may also provide school psychology students with exposure to a variety of practical experiences with different populations and contexts (e.g., rural, urban). Field experiences should be comprehensive in providing graduate students with the opportunity to engage in assessment, counseling, consultation, research and other activities with CLD children and families. Investigations in counseling psychology have demonstrated that counseling students acquire multicultural knowledge and skills through workshops, coursework, structured experiences with CLD clients (e.g., the percentage of caseloads are of culturally and linguistically diverse clients), contact with CLD staff, training seminars, assignments of supervisors from ethnically diverse backgrounds and with cross-cultural exper-
tise, assessment of the interns’ acquisition of cross-cultural knowledge and skills, annual client feedback surveys, case presentations, self assessments of cross-cultural competencies, and participation in multicultural research (Manese, Wu, & Nepomuceno, 2001; Pope-Davis, Reynolds, Dings & Ottavi, 1994).

We need to identify useful strategies and techniques to develop the cross-cultural competence of existing faculty, and recruit and retain CLD faculty. Faculty would benefit from course releases to learn about multicultural curriculum transformation and to incorporate their new competencies into their teaching. Mentorship relationships whereby faculty with cross-cultural expertise provide feedback and support as peers develop syllabi, plan courses, choose readings and activities may also be fruitful. One of the challenges of teaching multicultural issues is that faculty often encounter situations where learners respond to diversity issues with a range of emotions that include anger (e.g., “I have no right to speak up because I am not from a culturally diverse background!”), withdrawal (e.g., “I am afraid to talk about my cultural group because others may not understand”), defensiveness (e.g., “I am not a racist!”), guilt (e.g., “As a member of the majority group I feel responsible for acts of racism”), and confusion (e.g., “How do I integrate this new knowledge given my current perceptions and experiences?”) (Jackson, 1999). Support in the form of a workshops, supervision or mentorship is helpful as faculty confront the challenges associated with teaching diversity issues that are often charged by conflicting points of view and emotions.

**IMPLICATIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH**

The challenges are numerous as well as complex. A research agenda focusing on these challenges will likely improve our future practice and training. Although fields such as counseling, social psychology, and education have a substantial body of research focusing on CLD clients and diversity issues, there is a dearth of relevant research in school psychology. Training future school psychologists as scientist practitioners will benefit our profession by enhancing practice based research efforts designed to focus on multicultural issues. A national research center focusing on multicultural and bilingual school psychology with block grants that can be awarded to researchers throughout the country may stimulate research in this direction. Future research investigations exploring issues related to cross-cultural competencies and training should utilize a variety of research methods and procedures. Researchers will also need to engage practitioners, trainers, as well as school professionals from other disciplines (e.g., teachers, administrators) in validating cross-cultural competencies for school psychologist. Validation methods can incorporate surveys as well as qualitative approaches to further identify and clarify relevant competencies.

Pope-Davis et al. (2002) found that cultural competence was identified as important by counseling clients depending on the nature of the counselor-client relationship, the issues recognized by the client, and the level of skill that the counselor ex-
hibited in incorporating diversity within the counseling process. Consequently, it will also be crucial to engage CLD children, youth and families (i.e., our clients) in identifying the knowledge and skills needed by school psychologists and other school professionals to demonstrate cross-cultural competencies in school settings. Methods based on interviews and focus groups will be helpful to investigate clients’ perceptions of cross-cultural competencies.

The competencies identified should be useful in the training and practical arenas so that trainers, school psychology students, and practitioners are able to translate those competencies into plans for training and supervision (e.g., establishment of workshops in specific issues, provision of supervisory experiences in specific areas). In the cross-cultural competency counseling research, most studies rely on graduate students’ and practitioners’ self reports, which means that the outcomes are based on beliefs rather than actual demonstrations of awareness, knowledge and/or skills (Constantine, 2001). Observations of school psychologists’ actual behaviors delivering services to CLD clients are needed to supplement self-report assessments.

Research is also needed that updates our understanding of the status of multicultural school psychology training in programs across the country. The last investigation was by Rogers’ et al. in 1992 and current research is needed to understand more recent practices. Investigations are also needed examining the effectiveness of services delivered by graduates of programs specializing in multicultural training versus graduates of other programs. Most research currently available on the effectiveness of multicultural training models has focused on the outcomes associated with taking a single diversity issues course and has not looked at the impact of other models of multicultural training (e.g., Phillips & Fischer, 1998; Steward et al., 1998). Consequently, future research efforts should be directed at examining the impact of the integration, interdisciplinary, and area of concentration models of multicultural training. Examining outcomes from a variety of teaching models will be helpful in planning future training programs and restructuring existing programs.

Future research investigating effective recruitment strategies, retention strategies, and fieldwork experiences within training programs will benefit training programs as they plan and implement effective practices. Practice-based and qualitative research that suggests strategies for overcoming challenges and barriers have the potential to benefit clients from diverse CLD backgrounds as well as practitioners and training programs.

CONCLUSION

The issues that trainers confront in attempting to integrate multicultural content and experiences into the curriculum and training environment—dealing with gaps in the knowledge base, translating the NASP and APA training guidelines into high quality training experiences, and providing for the continuing education needs of
field-based supervisors—are complex and require considerable energy and expertise to address. Despite the vexing nature of these issues, school psychology trainers must ensure that trainees learn to deliver the highest quality psychological services to all clients.

**ANNOTATED BIBLIOGRAPHY**


This is an excellent resource for practitioners. The first section of the book begins with a conceptual framework for cross-cultural competencies. Cultural perspectives of families from diverse cultural backgrounds are discussed in the second section of the book. The book ends with a discussion of implications for practice. The authors provide practical suggestions for working with families from diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds.


The two articles cited above provide readers with the results of investigations designed to systematically identify cross-cultural competencies for school psychologists across 14 domains: Academic Interventions, Assessment, Consultation, Counseling, Culture, Language, Laws and Regulations, Organizational Skills, Professional Characteristics, Report Writing, Research Methods, Theoretical Paradigms, Working with Interpreters, and Working with Parents.

**RESOURCES**

American Psychological Association:  
[www.APA.org/pi/online.html](http://www.APA.org/pi/online.html)


National Association of School Psychologists pages on Culturally Competent Practice:  

The website provides the following titles: “Why NASP is Committed to Culturally Competent Practice,” “Defining Culture,” “Journey to Thinking Multiculturally,” “The Provision of Culturally Competent Services in the School Setting,” and other resources for cultural competence among professional, advocates and families.
REFERENCES


