Assessing Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Students: The Role of Acculturation, Language Development and Assessment (Advanced)

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Abstract: IDEA requires that evaluation procedures for children with suspected disabilities be multifaceted, comprehensive, fair, useful, and valid. For culturally and linguistically diverse (CLD) children, this assessment paradigm includes measuring their level of acculturation and language development in order to effectively design culturally responsive assessment batteries that validly measures their cognitive abilities and academic skills. Coupled with reviewing current literature on acculturation and language development, attendees will be exposed to a comprehensive, evidence-based, and practitioner friendly assessment model that effectively differentiates between language difference and disability (particularly Specific Learning Disability) for CLD students. Implications for influencing practice and policy decisions in local school divisions will be discussed.

Learning Objectives:
1. Participants will develop an understanding of the implications of acculturation on assessment procedures and develop the skills to design culturally sensitive assessment batteries to validly assess diverse students’ cognitive abilities and academic skills.

2. Participants will develop an understanding of the implications of acculturation on psychosocial interventions.

3. Participants will develop the necessary skills to make data-based decisions in order to more effectively serve diverse students and families.

4. Participants will be exposed to a comprehensive, evidence-based, and practitioner friendly assessment model that effectively differentiates between language difference and disability (particularly Specific Learning Disability) for English Learner (EL) students.

5. Implications for influencing practice and policy decisions in local school divisions related to serving diverse students and families will be discussed.

Biographies:

Charles Barrett’s passion for working with children began while he was a counselor at a summer camp in the Catskill Mountains following his freshman year in college. Serving young people mostly from New York’s inner cities, Charles’ life was forever changed after spending seven weeks with a group of intelligent and energetic boys. While he considered a career in speech pathology—after stuttering for several years throughout elementary and middle school—his desire to serve children and families became even more evident after this pivotal experience.
Charles graduated with honors from St. John’s University with a Bachelor of Arts in psychology and English. As a Ronald E. McNair Scholar—a federally funded initiative to prepare undergraduate students for doctoral studies through research and other scholarly activities—Charles studied anger and aggression in adolescents under the supervision of Dr. Raymond DiGiuseppe. He later earned a Master of Education in Human Development and a Doctor of Philosophy in School Psychology from Lehigh University. His doctoral dissertation, The Cross-Cultural Assessment of ADHD: Influence of Acculturation and Socioeconomic Status on Maternal Ratings of Black and White Boys, is a demonstration of his interest in developing an understanding of the factors that contribute to the misidentification and overrepresentation of culturally diverse students with various disorders and disabilities.

Anchored by an unwavering commitment to equity and justice, Charles is frequently invited to present at state and national conferences and has published in a variety of outlets, including peer-reviewed journals and Ebony magazine. In September 2016, Charles received the Virginia Academy of School Psychologists’ Best Practices Award (School Psychologist of the Year) in recognition of his service to the commonwealth’s families and students, particularly his commitment to providing services to disadvantaged students and his research, publications, and presentations on serving and assessing culturally and linguistically diverse students.

A nationally certified school psychologist, Charles is a lead school psychologist and assistant director of Loudoun County Public Schools’ (LCPS) APA-Accredited Doctoral Internship in Health Service Psychology. Additionally, he actively supervises interns and chairs the training program’s Committee on Diversity. To teach and mentor future school psychologists, Charles serves as adjunct faculty in the Graduate School of Education at Howard University. Charles’ current leadership positions within the National Association of School Psychologists (NASP) include being a member of the Nominations and Elections Committee, Social Justice Committee, Publications Committee, and Bilingual Interest Group; chair of the Multicultural Affairs Committee; and the Virginia Delegate to the NASP Leadership Assembly. Charles and his family reside in Northern Virginia.

Dr. Carlos O. Calderón is an assistant professor at Northern Arizona University, and a Nationally Certified School Psychologist. Born and raised in Mexico, he completed his undergraduate studies in Riverside, California, and his M.A. and Ph.D. degrees at Arizona State University. His areas of interest and expertise include multicultural and bilingual psychology practice; stereotyping, prejudice, and discrimination; and assessment and research methodology issues with culturally and linguistically diverse populations. Dr. Calderón has been a regular presenter at the National Association of School Psychologists (NASP) annual meeting, and has been recognized by the Arizona Association of School Psychologists (AASP), Arizona Psychological Foundation, Arizona Neuropsychological Society, California Association of School Psychologists, among other professional and academic institutions. He currently serves as the Professional Standards Committee chair for AASP, and as a Social Justice Committee member for NASP.