

Assessing your Cultural Competency

Self-Reflection for Inclusive Practice in the Classroom and Beyond

The concepts of cultural competence and cultural humility originated within the health professions. The term “cultural competence” first appeared in Social Work and counseling psychology literature in the 1980s (Gallegos, Tindall & Gallegos, 2008). “Cultural humility” was first used to describe the approach and perspective that medical professionals should take when providing care for patients belonging to cultures different from their own (Tervalon & Murray-Garcia, 1998). Since the 1990s, the terms have been expanded to include a variety of disciplines. **Below are some perspectives from various content areas. As you work with your students, think about what the definitions would look like in your field.**

<h3>Cultural COMPETENCY</h3>	<h3>Cultural HUMILITY</h3>
<p>Education: Cultural competence is the state of having and applying knowledge and skill in four areas: awareness of one’s own cultural worldview; recognition of one’s attitudes toward cultural differences; realization of different cultural practices and worldviews; and thoughtfulness in cross-cultural interaction. Over an extended period of time individuals and organizations develop the wisdom and capability to: 1) examine critically how cultural worldviews influence perceptions of power, dominance and inequality; and 2) behave honorably within the complex dynamics of differences and commonalities among humans, groups and systems” (President’s Commission on Human Rights and Equity, Fresno State University, 2013).</p>	<p>Education: “[F]ostering cultural humility in teacher candidates can be seen as a life-long process that involves self-reflection and self-critique, learning from and actively listening to culturally diverse students, building partnerships with students and communities, and a willingness to negotiate mutually acceptable alternatives to communication, engagement, and education” (Chang, Simon, & Dong, 2012).</p>
<p>Speech Pathology and Audiology: Cultural competency “involves understanding and appropriately responding to the unique combination of cultural variables and the full range of dimensions of diversity that the professional and client/patient/family bring to interactions” (American Speech-Language Hearing Association, 2018).</p>	<p>Speech Pathology and Audiology: “Cultural humility is comprised of three major elements: (1) self-awareness, (2) openness, and (3) transcendence (Morris, Brotheridge, & Urbanski, 2005; Ortega & Faller, 2011). These concepts are relatively basic in nature; however, time and effort must be taken to implement on an ongoing basis” (Gormley, 2017).</p>
<p>Social Work: Cultural competence “implies a heightened consciousness of how culturally diverse populations experience their uniqueness and deal with their differences and similarities within a larger social context. Concurrently, cultural competence requires social workers to use an intersectionality approach to practice, examining forms of oppression, discrimination, and domination through diversity components of race and ethnicity, immigration and refugee status, religion and spirituality, sexual orientation and gender identity and expression, social class, and abilities. Furthermore, it requires social workers to acknowledge their own position of power vis-à-vis the populations they serve and to practice cultural humility” (National Association of Social Workers, 2015 and Tervalon & Murray-Garcia, 1998).</p>	<p>Social Work: “To practice cultural humility is to maintain a willingness to suspend what you know, or what you think you know, about a person based on generalizations about their culture. Rather, what you learn about your clients’ culture stems from being open to what they themselves have determined is their personal expression of their heritage and culture, what I call their personal culture” (Moncho, 2013).</p>
<p>Law: Cultural competence is “the ability to adapt, work and manage successfully in new and unfamiliar cultural settings” (Stevens, 2009).</p>	<p>Law: Cultural humility involves “identifying the areas in which cultures are most likely to differ, learning about those areas, and employing ‘tentative generalizations accompanied by a disciplined naiveté.’ Tremblay suggests that [lawyers] identify some cultural differences in advance and learn about them, but then to open themselves up to learn from the particular client before them” (as cited in Chopp, 2017).</p>

Tips for Fostering your Cultural Competence

Various authors from fields as diverse as education, healthcare, and social work have developed tips that will aid one in continually developing cultural competence over one's lifetime.

A few common suggestions across disciplines and contexts are:

- 1 Self-Reflection.** Our backgrounds and experiences lead us to develop certain values and beliefs. Underlying these are often unexamined assumptions. As you move through your cultural competency journey, you must be willing to inquire into the reasons why you believe what you believe or think the way you do (APTA, 2015). Ask yourself what facts, conditions, or contexts shape my values? Be open to ask others what the foundations of their beliefs are. By examining and challenging your beliefs and values, you come to understand the complexity of not only your own cultural frames but others as well. Having the ability to do this will better allow you to navigate new cultural experiences.
- 2 Listening to understand.** So often, when we listen to others, we are listening for reasons not related to fully understanding what the other means (Brickey, 2001). We might be listening to confirm that the other person thinks like we do. We might listen just to tell our own experience that we think is related to what someone else has said. We sometimes are so preoccupied that we are not listening to the other person at all. To facilitate growth in cultural competency, it is important to listen to understand. That means to listen for the full story. To listen to the reason why a thing happens and not just how it happens. This involves listening from a nonjudgmental point of view and without the goal of solving or fixing anything. This approach to listening will better allow you to navigate and negotiate new cultures and build mutually beneficial relationships and solutions.
- 3 Seeking to see the bigger picture.** When we consider a culture, we must consider that every culture has unique history, systems of business, family, education, and norms that influence its members and what they believe to be expected and acceptable (APTA, 2015). Recognizing this will aid you in negotiating interactions with others, fostering new relationships and new understanding as well as creating ways to build on existing ideas and move forward towards greater inclusion and acceptance.
- 4 Cultural competency is an unending process.** We are constantly entering into environments with unique cultural markers and norms. Thus, we will regularly encounter environments where we will need to learn the standard beliefs and values (APTA, 2015). It is important to realize that you have to become a learner again and again in order to develop the knowledge and skills that will allow you to adapt and negotiate the new culture.



THE UNIVERSITY OF
TENNESSEE
KNOXVILLE

TEACHING & LEARNING
INNOVATION

References

- American Physical Therapy Association. (2015, July). Five tips on cultural competence. PTinMotion Newsletter. Retrieved from <http://www.apta.org/PTinMotion/News/2015/7/16/CulturalCompetenceTips/>
- American Speech-Language Association. (2018). Cultural Competence - Overview. Retrieved February 19, 2018, from <https://www.asha.org/practice-portal/professional-issues/cultural-competence/>
- Brickey, R. (2001). Roles, Relationships, and Thought: Using Collaborative Action Research to Improve Facilitator Practice. Dissertation, University of Tennessee.
- Chang, E., Simon, M., & Dong, X. (2012). Integrating cultural humility into health care professional education and training. *Advances in Health Sciences Education*, 17(2), 269-278. doi:10.1007/s10459-010-9264-1
- Chopp, D. (2017). Addressing Cultural Bias in the Legal Profession. *NYU Review of Law and Social Change*, 41(367), 367-406. Retrieved February 19, 2018, from https://socialchangenyttest.files.wordpress.com/2017/09/chopp_digital_9-6-17.pdf.
- Gallegos, J., Tindall, C., & Gallegos, S. (2008). The Need for Advancement in the Conceptualization of Cultural Competence. *Advances in Social Work*, 9(1), 51-62.
- Gormley, J. (2017, May 9). Cultural Humility. Retrieved February 19, 2018, from <https://communicationmatrix.org/Community/Posts/Content/9769>
- Moncho, C. (2013, August 19). Cultural Humility, Part I - What Is 'Cultural Humility'? Retrieved February 19, 2018, from <https://thesocialworkpractitioner.com/2013/08/19/cultural-humility-part-i-what-is-cultural-humility/>
- Morris, J.A., Brotheridge, C.M., & Urbanski, J.C. (2005). Bringing humility to leadership: Antecedents and consequences of leader humility. *Human Relations*, 58, 1323-1350.
- National Association of Social Workers. (2015). NASW Standards for Cultural Competence. Retrieved February 19, 2018, from <https://www.socialworkers.org/LinkClick.aspx?fileticket=PonPTDEBrn4%3D&portalid=0>
- Ortega, R.M., & Faller, K.C. (2011). Training child welfare workers from an intersectional cultural humility perspective: A paradigm shift. *Child Welfare*, 90, 27-49.
- President's Commission on Human Relations and Equity. (2013). Retrieved February 21, 2018, from [http://www.fresnostate.edu/studentaffairs/pchre/index.html/](http://www.fresnostate.edu/studentaffairs/pchre/index.html)
- Stevens, S. (2009, January). Cultural Competency: Is There an Ethical Duty? Retrieved February 19, 2018, from <https://www.osbar.org/publications/bulletin/09jan/barcounsel.html>
- Tervalon, M., & Murray-García, J. (1998). Cultural Humility Versus Cultural Competence: A Critical Distinction in Defining Physician Training Outcomes in Multicultural Education. *Journal of Health Care for the Poor and Underserved*, 9(2), 117-125. doi:10.1353/hpu.2010.0233