Exploring the cultural beliefs and practices for teachers of students with disabilities

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Culture

The way of life of a social group, made up by the worldview, values, styles and language of that group. Culture is learned, shared, it is an adaptation, and is a dynamic system that changes constantly.
Why is cultural competency important?

• 1990: - 24.3% population comprised of ethnic minority groups;

• 2000: - that number grew to 28.7%.

• Between 1990 and 2000:- the Black population increased from 11.8% to 12.2%

• Hispanics from 9% to 11.9%

• Asian and Pacific Islanders rose from 2.8% to 3.8%.

• Over the same period of time, the White population fell from 75.7% to 71.3%

• According to the latest census, one of every 10 Americans is foreign born.

• It is also projected that by 2050, minority-ethnic subpopulations will make up 47.5% of the total population,

• by 2056, Whites will be a minority in the United States.

• In short, the cultural landscape of the United States will undergo seismic changes.
Part C of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act of 2004 requires family-focused interventions, with collaboration among professionals and significant others during all phases of the service delivery process, through the Individualized Family Service Plan.

This renewed focus on the family—their concerns, strengths, needs, and resources—entitles parents to share as equal participants in their children’s educational program (Harry, Klingner, & Hart, 2005; Scheffner Hammer, 1998).

It also requires that professionals reflect on their own belief systems, the beliefs and values of the families they are serving, and the impact of those beliefs on the service provision process (American Speech–Language–Hearing Association, 2005).
Facts

- Having language or linguistic differences and cultural differences put one at double jeopardy
- African Americans are over represented in various classifications (ID and ED)
- Latinos are over represented
- Asians are underrepresented
CASE STUDY DISCUSSION

How will you respond to these situations?
Cultural Reciprocity Posture

STEPS

• Step 1: Identify Cultural Values that are embedded in professional interpretation
• Step 2: Find Out if the family recognizes these values
• Step 3: Acknowledge the values and give explicit respect
• Step 4: Discuss & Collaborate

Levels of awareness:

1. Overt: language, dress
2. Covert: invisible and little in-depth
3. Subtle:
How can we build a community that embraces cultural diversity in all its practices?

- Challenge Assumptions
- Examine the Social Constructs
- Examine Personal Values
- Embracing Sustainable Systemic Change

*Learning about cultures will not only help understand our own beliefs but will also help us learn about people around us.*
Questions

• What cultural information do you need to work with these children and their families?

• Where would you look for these kinds of resources?

• What kind of goals would you set for these children and families?
Strategies

- Know yourself, and your family roots, beliefs, attitudes and experiences
- Learn about your students family, cultures and traditions
- Share your own experiences and culture with your students and family
- Use home visits to learn from families about the child's interests (observe teaching materials, interaction patterns
- Arrange and equip the classroom to reflect children's family experiences (life sized objects rather than toys, family oriented play, clothing, cooking equipment's, art objects)
- Consider the community the children live in as you select materials for the classroom (farming communities, toy barn gardens, toy buses, taxis or street signs)
Strategies cont....

• Encourage parents to share special interests and skills
• Look for opportunities to talk with parents (face to face, news letters and bulletin boards)
• Talk with parents informally during drop off and pick up (encourage parents to allow 10 minutes for drop off and pick up)
• Plan field trips, social get together and educational meetings
• Plan parent conferences
THANK YOU