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ABSTRACT

While many undergraduate disciplines are revising curricula to address issues of diversity more effectively, it is commonly assumed that courses in cross-cultural psychology are less in need of revision due to their inherent multi-cultural focus. The field of cross-cultural psychology, however, is not immune to Eurocentric and androcentric biases. For example, cross-cultural research on women is often marginalized through its exclusion from key publications, while studies of males are frequently generalized to reflect characteristics of an entire culture. And cross-cultural research on gender and relationships is often based on an assumption of heterosexuality. Terminology in cross-cultural psychology can be changed to reduce inherent biases (e.g., the term "European American values" can replace "American values" when the values of minority groups are not included). In addition, research should endeavor not only to describe, but also to evaluate cultural differences, especially when segments of a study population possess differential access to power. Instructors should also emphasize the diversity within ethnic, class, and gender groups, so as not to stereotype individuals based on a single dimension of their appearance or orientation. In addition, teachers can consider more diverse learning styles; redefine student "participation" to include less verbal forms of participation; and utilize humanistic, activist, and feminist pedagogic approaches. The tools of the cross-cultural psychologist could potentially transform the entire discipline of psychology, but only if the biases and assumptions inherent in the cross-cultural approach, itself, are thoroughly examined first. (PAA)

Curriculum Integration and Cross-Cultural Psychology

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Curriculum Integration and Cross-Cultural Psychology

Over the past decade teachers of undergraduate psychology have begun, along with colleagues in other disciplines, to revise their curricula in order to more effectively address issues of diversity. Among individuals involved in the curriculum integration of psychology courses the assumption is often made that the cross-cultural psychology course is the area in least need of revision. After all, the focus of cross-cultural psychology is the comparison of psychological phenomena across cultures. Furthermore, issues of cultural sensitivity are inherent in the methodology; a methodology that strives for cross-cultural equivalence in the functions of phenomena studied, instrumentation and procedures used, and interpretation of data. The field of cross-cultural psychology, however, is not immune from the Eurocentric and androcentric biases that have shaped psychology as a whole. Little attention has been given to the teaching of cross-cultural psychology and we have not addressed inclusiveness as a pedagogical concern. This paper explores the need for curriculum integration in the cross-cultural psychology course and discusses how cross-cultural research and methodology may be useful in the curriculum integration of psychology courses in general.

Issues of bias in cross-cultural psychology have become increasingly relevant to all of us regardless of whether or not we teach a cross-cultural psychology course. Many psychologists are turning to the cross-cultural literature as a curriculum integration resource (as suggested by Tourney-Purta, 1984 and by Triandis & Brislin, 1984, among others). Those who have not personally chosen to include a cross-cultural dimension in their courses are increasingly likely to find such issues addressed in their textbooks. Many of this year's introductory psychology texts, for example, have been advertised as including a significant cross-cultural or diversity component.

What is the nature of these biases in cross-cultural psychology and where are the opportunities for revision or transformation? Despite emphasis on being sensitive to cultural diversity we are insensitive on other dimensions. Cross-cultural research on women is often marginalized in terms of exclusion from key cross-cultural publications and journals. Studies of males are frequently generalized to reflect the characteristics of an entire culture. Cross-cultural research on gender and relationships is often based on an assumption of heterosexuality and the use of dichotomous gender categories. Issues of disability, if discussed at all, may be classified with the topic of abnormality.

There are a number of dimensions on which curriculum integration may be addressed. The following discussion of curriculum integration will focus on marginalization as a product of language usage, boundaries that determine the inclusion of, and value assigned to, content areas, as well as pedagogy, and placement of diversity-related materials within the curriculum.

Although cross-cultural psychology includes a significant number of studies on the interaction between language and thought, we have been careless about our own use of terms that foster ethnocentrism or marginalization. Segall (1990) points out the ethnocentric nature of terms used to describe changes in social and political environments, such as Westernization, civilization, modernization, and detribalization. We may unknowingly set implicit standards of comparison with the use of such seemingly trivial terms as huts as opposed to houses. If these represent functional equivalents then the use of different terms may serve only an evaluative purpose. As cross-cultural psychologists we frequently refer to a Western/Nonwestern dichotomy, which reinforces the view that anything Western is central, and thus the standard of comparison, and everything else is less significant.

The terms we use in cross-cultural comparisons also fail to acknowledge the

diversity within populations studied. Research on "Western values" or "American behavior," for example, is often based on data collected from white, middle class, male participants. A study of the values of Americans of Chinese ancestry would be clearly labeled as such. A study of the values of Americans of European ancestry should be equally specified rather than labeled as a study of "American values." Perhaps as cross-cultural researchers we need to broaden the definition of cross-cultural research. What has been traditionally termed subcultural differences may be equally or more significant than cultural differences tied to nationality. The invisibility of Americans of color in the cross-cultural literature has a major impact on classroom process. With the absence of cross-cultural research methodology applied to studies of culturally diverse groups within North America, students of color may only see people of similar ancestry in discussions of less technically developed societies, often in conjunction with cognitive abilities testing. Such structural biases in the cross-cultural literature may best be made explicit and the object of class discussion. In my own cross-cultural psychology class a number of students of color expressed the view that they did not feel included in descriptions of "American self-disclosure patterns" in the cross-cultural literature. Through discussion of these cultural differences in level of self-disclosure among U.S. populations we were able to hypothesize a series of variables related to the phenomenon of self-disclosure. The exploration of ethnocentrism and marginalization must extend beyond the classroom, however, to our own speech and writing, discussions with colleagues, feedback to textbook publishers, and comments in journal article reviews.

Ironically, even through our attempts at reducing ethnocentrism we may overlook aspects of diversity; specifically diversity associated with differential access to power. In an effort to avoid cultural bias, cross-

cultural psychologists, anthropologists and others studying cultural variability have endeavored to produce research which describes rather than evaluates cultural differences. Students may emerge from a cross-cultural psychology course anxious to embrace ideas of cultural relativity and striving for a nonjudgemental perspective. Such an approach is critical, yet it may lead some to overlook manifestations of oppression. As teachers of psychology we need to separate the goals of cultural sensitivity and cultural relativity from the acceptance or sanctioning of existing power structures.

An additional concern of curriculum integration involves the investigation of content areas within an academic discipline. What is the source of these content areas and why are they differentially valued? A useful concept for exploring the extent to which course content is culture-bound is the emic-etic distinction. Pike (1954) first used the words "emic" and "etic" to describe approaches to the study of language and culture. The term emic is derived from phonemics (sounds specific to a particular language) and is used to describe culture-specific phenomena. The term etic is derived from phonetics (universal speech sounds) and is used to describe phenomena that are universal across cultures. In cross-cultural psychology, and psychology in general, we often find emic concepts imposed as if they are etic. Need for achievement, for example, has been studied widely across cultures, yet seems unlikely to be a universally salient dimension of motivation. The emic-etic distinction may be a useful concept for exploring ethnocentrism in course content across the psychology curriculum. I have found it useful and enlightening to teach this concept to students in a variety of courses in an effort to work toward cooperative exploration of the differential value assigned to content areas within the psychology curriculum.

In order to fully address issues of diversity in the content of psychology

courses we may need to reconceptualize our criteria for what constitutes psychology and who qualifies as a psychologist. Although we may define psychology broadly as the investigation of behavior and mental processes and psychologists as individuals who study such phenomena, in actuality we limit psychology to material published in psychology journals, primarily English language journals from North America and Europe. As Enriquez (1979) points out, other psychologies exist, but are marginalized. While we rarely refer to "Western psychology," Asian psychology is always designated as such, "Asian." In addition, we limit the category "psychologists" to people with academic degrees in psychology. Enriquez states that this definition of "psychologist" excludes the work of individuals with degrees in other disciplines and "...the unwritten but no less real psychologies of peoples who may not even have a tradition of publishing journal articles in psychology to speak of (p.10)." Although academic training in psychology is increasingly accessible in many parts of the world, one might ask to what degree is acculturation a part of this educational process. By taking a cultural equivalence perspective in defining psychology and psychologists we may expand our knowledge of the diversity of human behavior.

A major goal of curriculum integration is a more inclusive pedagogy. Addressing issues of diversity involves fostering a classroom atmosphere in which all students feel safe and no student feels excluded. Across the curriculum, whether or not students feel welcome depends not only on teaching style, but on such factors as the nature of readings and examples used, the costs of books and materials, and the safety of class times and location. In courses dealing with issues of diversity a further concern is with the likelihood of stereotyping. Bronstein and Quina (1988) state that the risk of creating stereotypes is particularly high when people are labeled based on a single dimension and placed

in opposition to other labeled groups for the purpose of comparison. This is precisely the format in which cross-cultural findings are typically presented. Faculty striving to develop more inclusive courses may find themselves dealing with a greater volume of racist, sexist, heterosexist, and classist remarks in classroom. Part of the challenge of addressing diversity in our classes is to respect students' experience and expertise yet avoid setting students up as representatives of a single group. This tendency to stereotype may be diminished through an emphasis on within group diversity. In addition it is often useful to discuss the mechanics of stereotyping and make explicit the cognitive aspects of the stereotyping process. This allows for the separation of stereotyping from prejudice and enables students to point out stereotypic comments without making personal attacks.

Within the cross-cultural literature there are a number of concepts and findings which may inform our teaching and lead us toward a pedagogical style which is more sensitive to issues of diversity. Diverse participation and learning styles may be a topic area within the cross-cultural psychology course (e.g. Cushner, 1990), but should also be a consideration for the teaching process. Are students graded on participation and if so, how is participation assessed? Does one need to be aggressive or interrupt the instructor or other students in order to participate in a discussion? Are there opportunities to participate in less verbal ways? In regard to learning styles, cross-cultural psychology has compared traditional ("informal") education with school based ("formal") teaching. Informal education has been characterized as involving more cooperative learning environments, issues that are closely tied to life experiences, multiple individuals serving as teacher, and learning that extends beyond specific hours or a specific physical setting (Scribner & Cole, 1973). Many of these characteristics of traditional education correspond to what is

currently being discussed as ways to empower students through humanistic pedagogy, activist pedagogy, and feminist pedagogy. The integration of such techniques into the undergraduate psychology classroom may be particularly useful for students who are not being well served by the formal educational system.

An additional area of the cross-cultural literature which may relate to pedagogy is the recent research on culture shock. We know from the work of Bochner (1986), for example, that the experience of coping with unfamiliar cultures may be best conceptualized not as an adjustment process, in which poor adjustment is a function of personal deficiencies, but as a learning process, in which problems are remedied by learning the necessary skills for operating in that culture. For many college students, the campus and classroom environments represent unfamiliar cultures. Do we attribute difficulties in this setting to personal deficiencies or is this a matter of culture learning? Our answer to this question may determine the degree to which we take on the role of cross-cultural trainer in the classroom. What do we explain in our classes and what do we assume that everyone knows? It may be useful to reconsider our assumptions about the familiarity of our students with aspects of the campus or classroom culture, such as how to read a syllabus or expectations for a term paper. This focus on "cross-cultural training" of students, however, does not preclude the necessity of institutional change toward greater inclusivity.

Finally, curriculum integration must address the placement of cross-cultural material, in the broader context. Treating diversity at the periphery reinforces notion that diversity is not central to an understanding of human behavior. The position of the cross-cultural psychology course, and other courses addressing issues of diversity, within department offerings sends an important message to faculty and students. For these courses, such factors as whether they are designated as requirements as opposed to electives, assigned a regular course

number, included in the course catalogue, and offered regularly each contribute to institutional legitimacy and work against marginalization of diverse perspectives. Ideally the cross-cultural course would not be offered in isolation, but as a complement to a fully transformed curriculum.

Similar issues of marginalization relate to the placement of cross-cultural material across the psychology curriculum. Whether information on issues of diversity appears in primary texts as opposed to supplementary materials, is covered by exam questions, and is a part of class discussions and key assignments will influence the message conveyed about the importance of diverse perspectives. We must also carefully attend to issues of marginalization in the growing volume of cross-cultural material included in psychology texts. Although it is laudable that such material is appearing in these texts, the content and presentation reflect what has been described as the initial stages of curriculum integration (McIntosh, 1985) in that it generally functions as providing a contrast with "the exotic other" rather than encouraging students to question universality of Western psychological thought.

The tools of the cross-cultural psychologist may be the most important instrument we have for the curriculum integration of psychology courses and the transformation of the discipline. Cross-cultural methods potentially enable us to examine the cultural biases and ethnocentric assumptions across the psychology curriculum. We must first turn, however, to an examination of those biases and assumptions inherent in the structure of cross-cultural psychology itself. We must extend our knowledge of diversity beyond traditional definitions of culture and draw on this information as we strive toward a more effective and inclusive pedagogy.

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