

# Chapter 1

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## Toward Multiculturalism Competence: A Practical Model for Implementation in the Schools

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### OBJECTIVES

1. To define multiculturalism within schools
2. To describe multiculturalism practice in a school setting
3. To present a continuum of multiculturalism competence
4. To identify strategies for extending multiculturalism professional development

### INTRODUCTION

For more than two decades, school psychology has known about the necessity for, and importance of, developing multicultural competence (Fouad & Arrendondo, 2007). From research, ethics, and practice standards, school psychologists and other school personnel have been aware that an effective school professional is multiculturally competent and able to make sense of students' sociocultural, socioracial, and sociopolitical backgrounds that present themselves within a classroom setting. Multiculturally competent professionals are informed as to which environmental, academic, and community factors combine to support all students' learning and development across ages and abilities.

A growing body of knowledge, grounded in research and embellished by best practice, has argued the importance of school multiculturalism to support children and their optimal learning

(Oakland, 2005). School psychologists, other school personnel, and mental health professionals have witnessed the growth and proliferation of clinical and assessment services that have advanced and redefined how multiculturalism is practiced on behalf of school children.

Twenty-first century American schools are changing in dramatic ways partly because of shifting demographics in rural and urban communities and in public and private educational institutions, as well as among students who are homeschooled. These changes have produced a new generation of multilingual, multiracial children with racial, ethnic, cultural, and linguistic differences; multiple learning styles; native language learning; and changing family constellations. Some of today's learners also come from families with multiple and/or generational family traumas and dysfunctions. These challenges and the shifts in student enrollment demographics are creating new demands on schools' teaching and learning services.

Moreover, economic, human, and technologic resource shortfalls have strained school districts well beyond the point of efficiency. Today's schools struggle constantly to keep their doors open as they compete for shrinking local tax dollars that are needed for other local needs, such as highway and prison construction. Such factors, when combined with underfunded mandates from crumbling governmental infrastructures for performance assessments, leave schools with limited time, energy, and resources to adequately address multicultural demands.

These demographic, structural, and learning changes impact how school psychologists and other school personnel provide instruction and deliver psychological services. The diverse needs of multinational, multilingual, and multiracial students, coupled with multiple intelligences and the intersection of cultural identities, present new and challenging demands for learning and service delivery for today's schools.

This chapter introduces and showcases multiculturalism competence in the schools. It highlights the necessity for schools to recognize, reward, and retain a multiculturally competent school workforce. A continuum of multicultural competence is presented, and suggestions are offered for how to integrate multiculturalism into all areas of school instruction and service delivery. Using case examples, suggested activities will illustrate best practices in moving toward multiculturalism competence. We begin this discussion by providing a framework and working definition for multiculturalism in a school setting.

## **WHAT IS MULTICULTURALISM?**

*Multiculturalism*, as practiced in the schools, is a process, an ideology, and a set of interventions in which school psychologists and other culturally competent professionals engage. It is a world view that recognizes and values the uniqueness of diverse learners, cultural backgrounds, and identities. The outcome of this set of clinical and learning processes creates exemplary services for students, families, schools, districts, and communities today, tomorrow, and into the future.

The *practice* of multiculturalism must be fluid and flexible enough to give voice to diverse student learners who have multifaceted learning, social, psychological, and spiritual needs—learners who thrive in urban, suburban, rural, and homeschooled communities, each with ever-changing demographics. Multiculturalism is systemic, occurring across a school's educational and learning environment. It permeates our school structures in deliberate and intentional ways, from

building design and usage to school policies, procedures, and practices. How schools achieve this synergistic outcome is an untold story.

Historically, multiculturalism began as a practice movement in counseling, psychology, education, and the behavioral sciences (Pedersen, 1991a, 1991b). Its applications have extended to other disciplines, such as management, economics, organizational behavioral sciences, and even traditional sciences.

For this discussion, we borrow a concept definition of multiculturalism from the American Psychological Association’s (APA’s) multicultural practice guidelines and standards (2002). The APA practice guidelines define multiculturalism as recognizing broad dimensions of individual identity, including “race, ethnicity, language, sexual orientation [sexual expression/identity], gender, age, disability, class status, education, religious/spiritual orientation, and other cultural dimensions” (p. 9). In this regard, multiculturalism is a framework for understanding groups of individuals.

Noted school psychologist Thomas Oakland (2005) defines multiculturalism as a process in which individuals “construct reality through networks of social agreements that involve historical, cultural, and social experiences” (p. 6). Oakland notes that the reality of multiculturalism is expressed through language, metaphors, and cultural symbols. Similarly, Frisby (2005) argues that multiculturalism is a sociopolitical ideology and represents an organized set of assumptions, beliefs, attitudes, and practices associated with intergroup relations with a given society (p. 45). When viewed within this context, it is seen as a movement of change and directs the way in which children are engaged as learners.

Multiculturalism is realized as behaviors presented within the social context in which they occur (Sue, et al., 1998). Ten elements combine to create critical components of multiculturalism.

### **Ten Components of Multiculturalism**

1. Values cultural pluralism and realizes that the United States (U.S.) is a cultural mosaic—not a melting pot. Multiculturalism is viewed as a national treasure.
2. Promotes social justice, cultural democracy, and equity and strives to make certain these goals are realized.
3. Promotes the development of attitudes, knowledge, and skills needed to function effectively in a pluralistic society.
4. Extends well beyond race, ethnicity, social class, and gender and extends to differences in religion, sexual orientation, disability, age, and geographic region. Each dimension contributes to individual and collective diversity.
5. Emphasizes the importance of using multiple perspectives to study multiple cultures.
6. Is an essential component of analytical thinking.
7. Celebrates the rich contributions and achievements of the U.S. and other cultures, but also leaves us with the obligation to examine the positive and negative elements of various groups.
8. Promotes change within and across individuals, organizations, and society.
9. Means becoming honest about and confronting painful realities about self, one’s own group, and our society. It can involve tension and conflicts regarding what constitutes reality. Conflict is inevitable.

10. Is concerned with achieving positive individual, community, and societal outcomes. It values inclusion, cooperation, and movement toward mutually shared goals. (Sue et al., 1998)

## **Multiculturalism in Clinical Practice**

Counseling practitioners have considered that multiculturalism is the *fourth force in counseling* (Pedersen, 1991a, 1991b). It is one of the four dominant theoretical and practice forces that have shaped counseling practices for more than a half century. Mental health professionals have argued that multiculturalism complements psychoanalytic, humanistic, and behavioral frameworks that were dominant in psychology and human development (Sue et al., 1998).

A hallmark of multiculturalism is the belief in multiple realities or perspectives, built within a social constructivist framework. This practical belief system encourages individuals to construct their own social realities based upon their own personal experiences. Multiculturalism helps to explain how individuals construct their personal realities within a cultural context (Gonzalez, 1997; Highlen, 1996; Sue, Ivey, & Pedersen, 1996).

School psychologists and other school personnel are encouraged to understand how students construct and make meaning of their own multicultural experiences. School personnel should make certain that the school learning environment is open and flexible, accommodates and values students' own personal multicultural experiences, and gives equal importance to every student in the classroom. This notion of multiculturalism as constructed experiences and personal meaning builds upon and respects students' unique life experiences and charges school officials to create learning environments that will promote free and open self-expression within a safe context.

Sue and Torino (2005) define the clinical practice that stems from multiculturalism as multicultural counseling and therapy (MCT), and they clarify roles and processes for the mental health professional. They define multicultural counseling as

. . . both a helping role and process that uses modalities and defined goals consistent with the life expectancies and cultural values of clients, recognizes client identities to include individual, group, and universal dimensions, advocates the use of universal and culture-specific strategies and roles in the healing process, and balances the importance of individualism and collectivism in the assessment, diagnosis, and treatment of client and client systems. (p. 42)

This active definition sets an operational framework for establishing competence. It highlights six elements that are critical to successful culture-specific school interventions while articulating a paradigm for multiculturalism competence for the school professional.

1. Multiculturalism recognizes that school personnel have cultural messages that are embedded in designated or statutory roles and duties.
2. Multiculturalism requires that individuals perform actions that are consistent with life experiences and cultural values.

3. Multiculturalism recognizes and values dimensions of existence, including individual, group, and universal elements.
4. Multiculturalism informs and teaches universal and culture-specific strategies and interventions.
5. Multiculturalism makes clear the distinctions between individualism and collectivism. It values both world views.
6. Multiculturalism teaches professionals to take responsibility for clients and client systems at all levels of school service.

Multiculturalism is an active change process for school professionals. It prescribes the manner with which children should be treated as human beings and as learners. It provides a context for managing the school structure, including the climate, curriculum, and assessment of learning. Multiculturalism guides and directs school psychologists toward multicultural competence and performance excellence by creating a template for professional standards of practice.

Multiculturalism contextualizes the school learning environment according to individual and group culture-specific requisites and identifies a paradigm for understanding future students' needs. Lastly, it obligates school professionals to see learners, their families, and communities within the context of culture, race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, and all those other cultural lenses that give meaning to students' daily learning experiences.

## **BENCHMARKS FOR ASSESSING AND MAINTAINING MULTICULTURAL SCHOOLS**

The noted multicultural educator, James Banks, has written prolifically about ways to transform schools into effective and successful multicultural schools (2006a, 2006b, 2008). He argues that schools today must prepare our children for the competitiveness of a global society. For more than two decades, Banks has helped to transform school curriculum, set directions for children in global citizenship, and build the framework for developing an effective multicultural school.

### **Eight Characteristics for an Effective Multicultural School**

Schools that are successful and forward in the competitive global marketplace are the ones that are transformed by multiculturalism. Banks (2008) outlines eight characteristics for an effective multicultural school, including systemic and organizational attributes that illustrate the application of multicultural principles and practices:

1. The teachers and school administrators have high expectations for all students and show positive, caring attitudes toward them. They also respond to them in positive and caring ways.
2. The formalized curriculum reflects the experiences, cultures, and perspectives of the range of cultural and ethnic groups, and represents both genders.
3. The teaching styles used by the teachers match the learning, cultural, and motivational characteristics of the students.
4. The teachers and administrators show respect for the students' first languages and dialects.

5. The instructional materials used in the schools show events, situations, and concepts from the perspectives of a range of cultural, ethnic, and racial groups.
6. The assessment and testing procedures used in the schools are culturally sensitive and result in students of color being represented proportionately in classes for the gifted and talented.
7. The school culture and the hidden curriculum reflect cultural and ethnic diversity. [The hidden curriculum is defined as “that curriculum that no teacher teaches explicitly, but that all children learn” (Jackson, 1992, cited in Banks, 2008, p. 38).]
8. The school counselors have high expectations for students from racial, ethnic, and language groups and help these students to set and realize positive career goals. (p. 36)

The context for achieving and building a multicultural school, according to Banks, requires that the school transform itself to a *global learning environment*, one that teaches students to construct meaning from their daily learning experiences from within a transformative learning setting. So how can school personnel build and sustain this transformed multicultural setting? What are the roles and responsibilities in a transformed multicultural school?

The National Association of School Psychologists (NASP) and APA’s ethical and practice standards provide the baseline for multicultural action (Fouad & Arrendondo, 2007). However, effective, multiculturally competent school personnel are challenged to go well beyond these standards. What does that mean? How can professionals be transformed beyond minimal practice standards toward new competence and multiculturalism in the schools? Banks has set the structural and organizational framework for multicultural competence, but making this transformation happen requires the active and proactive participation of human factors—teachers, school psychologists, counselors, paraprofessionals, administrators, and school board personnel. How then can we guide these professionals toward multiculturalism competence in practice, policy, and performance? Four practice elements, or flashpoints, must combine to form a working framework or foundation for multiculturalism competence in the schools.

## **MULTICULTURAL FLASHPOINTS FOR CHANGE**

Transforming a school environment requires a battery of committed, competent, transformed professionals at all levels, from maintenance staff to teachers to school psychologists to the superintendent. If schools are successful in their multiculturalism efforts, then students, teachers, school administrators, staff, parents, and community members will each be able to see direct, enforceable multiculturalism measures. First, school professionals must become energized about transformational change. Next, they must become tooled in creative and invigorating ways to be able to carry out much-needed transformational changes. Four critical skill sets are important as we prepare professionals for transformational change. These skills are referred to as *multicultural flashpoints*.

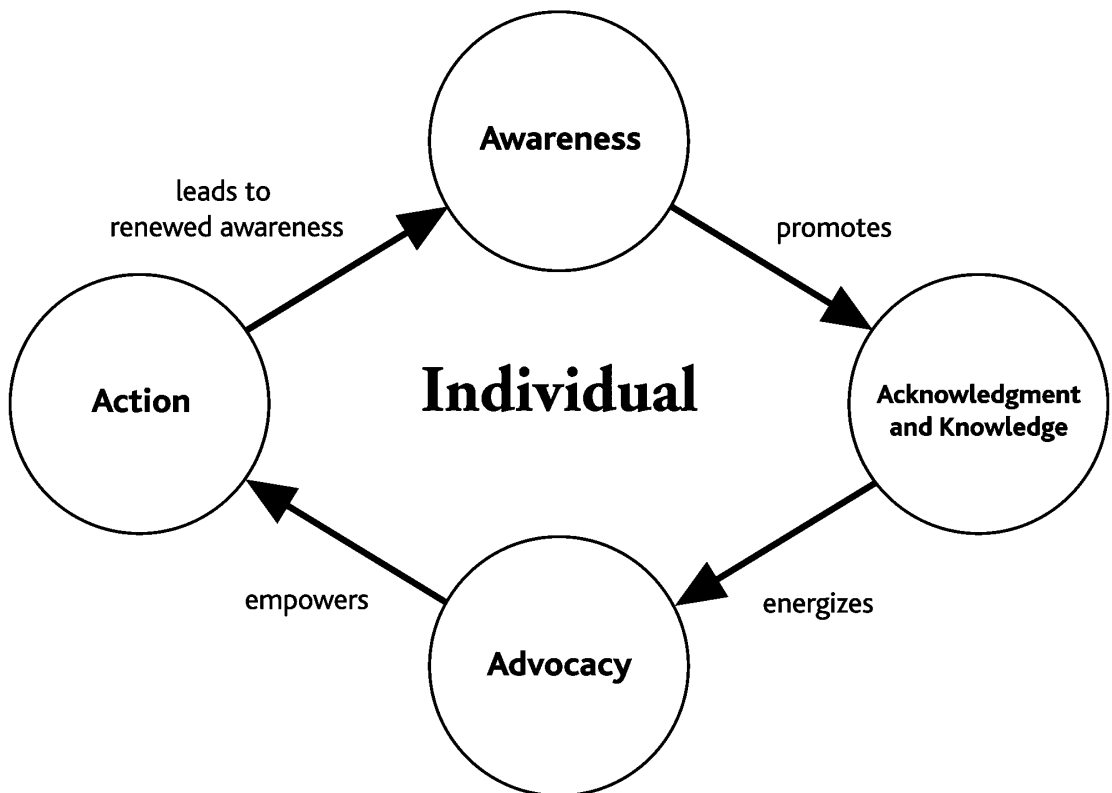
What are flashpoints? They are definable, measurable evidence of multicultural practices/activities or actions/policies. They represent a cluster of awareness, lenses, and practices that promote and sustain transformational change within an organization. These interpersonal and communication skills are strengthened by new cognitive maps that change the cultural lenses through which transformation is envisioned and planned.

Flashpoints fall into one of four general skill areas: (a) awareness, (b) acknowledgment and knowledge, (c) advocacy, and (d) action. (Figure 1 presents a graphic representation of these flashpoints.) The flashpoints are interdependent, and each builds upon the others to strengthen the breadth and depth of their application within a school setting. As agents of transformational change, they begin with simple awareness.

### Awareness

Classic multicultural research literature has informed us that awareness is a precursor to any long-lasting multicultural change (Pedersen, 1991a). So, it is no surprise that awareness presents itself as the first stage of transformation toward competence. Awareness begins with the school professional realizing one's own awareness as a cultural being. Multicultural counseling and therapy research has informed us that awareness of one's own personal self as a cultural being is crucial in forming successful counseling or therapeutic interventions. Recent research (Sue & Torino, 2005) suggests that as members of a culturally heterogeneous cultural community, we each have multiple identities that are either overlapping one another or, at best, intersecting with each other.

**FIGURE 1. Multicultural flashpoints for change for the individual school psychologist and school personnel.**



*Awareness* has four components:

- Awareness of *self* and own personal values and beliefs
- Awareness of *others and their multiple identities*
- Awareness of systemic issues such as privilege or ableism
- Awareness of relational cultural identities into the future

At the awareness stage of the continuum, a school professional learns to take responsibility for recognizing overlapping or intersecting identities to be healthy, informed, and productive members of the school community. The multiculturally competent professional is one who also possesses an active awareness of others in the world and recognition of the multiple cultural identities of others.

Awareness involves a responsibility to recognize systemic cultural bias issues in all their forms and understand their impact upon learners, especially those children at risk in the school or community. School psychologists and other school personnel must challenge themselves to see organizational and management issues within the school setting. By gaining awareness, professionals gain an important tool for change.

The last component of awareness asks the professional to be aware of the implications of decisions today, tomorrow, and into the future. In this regard, multiculturalism considers relational ethics as an important ingredient for transformational change. Consider the following example.

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### **CASE SCENARIO: DR. JACKSON**

School psychologist Dr. Mikla Jackson is preparing to meet with Johnnie and his parents, Sam and Brenda Jones, whose family has recently moved into the school district from Detroit. Their son Johnnie was previously identified as having a learning disability. Mr. and Mrs. Jones have come to the school to discuss his Individualized Education Program (or IEP) and educational recommendations. Dr. Jackson has presented them with some background material to review that describes the purpose of this meeting and offers suggestions to parents for their involvement. Dr. Jackson explains Johnnie's progress and says that he will need special help next year in algebra because that is the place where his learning disability is most problematic. She tells Mr. and Mrs. Jones that they should sign a form that indicates that they have received information regarding their son's educational progress.

Dr. Jackson turns away to gather up some papers and a file, and Mrs. Jones takes the paper and turns to Mr. Jones, pointing to exactly where he is to sign. He stares blankly at the paper. Mr. Jones says that he cannot read the document because he forgot his glasses and asks Dr. Jackson to tell him what is contained in it. Mrs. Jones comes to her husband's aid and offers to read it to him. During the paper shuffling, Mr. Jones stands up and a pair of glasses falls out of his jacket pocket. He glances up sheepishly, and hands the paper to his wife to read, and says, "I'm still blind as a bat and can't see, even with these 10-year-old specs." Dr. Jackson silently asks herself, Can Mr. Jones read? What is her responsibility here? How does this awareness shape her work with Johnnie and Mr. and Mrs. Jones? Can she ignore it? If Mr. Jones has reading difficulties, what does that have to do with Johnnie's learning disability?



## REFLECTION

Recognizing cultural issues in context builds a firm foundation of awareness. This family scenario represents a multicultural relational awareness issue. Mr. and Mrs. Jones are caring, concerned parents whose primary concern is Johnnie's best interest. However, Mr. Jones's suspected reading difficulties contextualize how the family understands and provides support to Johnnie regarding school matters. Having awareness of the cultural elements that impact Johnnie's family support is a critical ingredient. It contextualizes how Mr. and Mrs. Jones can support Johnnie. Such awareness provides Dr. Jackson with a first impression about family cultural and relational issues. Although adult reading difficulties are not considered a cultural deficit, they are a cultural family issue that can shape how Mr. and Mrs. Jones support Johnnie. This case illustrates the importance of helping school personnel become aware of the ways in which cultural family issues such as adult reading difficulties can shape the home learning environment for children. Having awareness means understanding the student and the family now, tomorrow, and into the future.

## Acknowledgment and Knowledge

Stage two, *acknowledgment and knowledge*, is a two-stage cognitive process that is contextualized by the individual's world view and own personal cultural self-awareness. In this growth stage, the school personnel realize important cognitions regarding multiculturalism within the school organizational climate and take ownership for those cognitive maps or frames. Acknowledgment involves a cognitive process that recognizes and accepts multiculturalism within the organizational climate. The second part of this process involves a new reconsideration of knowledge.

## CASE SCENARIO: SALLY

Sally Smith is a school psychologist who is well attuned to the cultural differences of school children in the district. She understands the cognitive implications of native language learning and takes account of such cultural differences when conducting assessments, in IEP team meetings, and in conversations with native language parents. She is the first to require a translator and takes professional responsibility for the accuracy of the translations. She makes certain that all written correspondence to the parents is in their native language and that assessment information is translated appropriately for parents.

Ms. Smith is aware of the school board policy regarding English-only communication in the district. However, she is naïve regarding the system-wide impact that this decision has on her students today, tomorrow, and in the future. While she is not in favor of this board policy privately, she admits her helplessness to influence the school board's decision. Ms. Smith considers how best to work with her native language students within the context of this decision.

Days later, Ms. Smith travels to the annual NASP conference and attends a preconvention workshop that addresses issues of power and privilege in the public schools. In the middle of the workshop, a realization hits her. She remarks to herself, "Oh, now I get it!"

## REFLECTION

Ms. Smith believes that the English-only initiative is not in the best interests of her native language learners; however, she is unable to make sense of the systemic and pervasive issues of power and

privilege that accompany such a policy declaration. She acknowledges that this policy, as an organizational policy, sets her native language learners apart from other children and devalues their native language life experiences. Ms. Smith's acknowledgment has returned her to the textbooks and to the research literature to learn about the systemic nature of power and privilege in school settings. It has also led Ms. Smith to do more reading about the impact of English-only communication initiatives on children's growth and development.

With new cognitive tools in the struggle for equity, Ms. Smith has acquired a new cognitive mind-set for viewing her work on behalf of her native language students. While it is significant and powerful to have awareness of cultural and linguistic differences, Ms. Smith's authentic roles are strengthened by her change in her cognitions regarding power and privilege and their impact on school policy development. This acknowledgment and knowledge changed her world view and cognitive frame for designing appropriate school interventions for her native language children. The addition of acknowledgment and new knowledge is powerful and presents a new professional world view for Ms. Smith.

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## **Advocacy**

In a school that is undergoing transformational change, advocacy is the kindling that lights the fire of action toward transformational change. *Advocacy* is a process that takes one's awareness, beliefs, knowledge, and acknowledgment and transforms them into a plan for effecting change. In a multicultural context, it becomes a set of systemic interventions that promote transformational change toward multiculturalism. This attribute is mentioned in NASP and APA's practice standards and ethics, but appears in a cursory way. The school psychologist or other school personnel who possess advocacy show a commitment to improving the lives of children by supporting positions and policies that promote the best interests of children and their family systems today, tomorrow, and into the future. The following example helps to illustrate the importance of advocacy.

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### **CASE SCENARIO: ASHA'S ADVOCACY**

Parents across the entire Smithville School District have petitioned to create a diversity education and equity coordinator position. This position could be funded in part by federal monies that support No Child Left Behind initiatives in the school and could be used to support teachers in classrooms and schools whose performance is lacking. The district's Diversity Commission, created by parents and community leaders, has endorsed this new position during each of the last three years, but with little success. The superintendent did not endorse the idea, and as a result, it failed to receive adequate support. However, with the hiring of a new superintendent, Dr. Jonas Smetkin, there is renewed interest in the diversity education and equity coordinator position.

Ms. Asha Kalib is an elementary school counselor working in an at-risk school near a military base. She has been an ardent supporter for this position. As a member of the Diversity Commission, Ms. Kalib helped the commission to survey students and teachers in the district regarding diversity issues. The findings revealed that 90% of the students and teachers surveyed were satisfied with the diversity climate in the schools. Former Superintendent Sara Dickson-Lee used those survey findings to say that there was satisfaction on diversity issues across the district.

Ms. Kalib saw the data from a different viewpoint. She pointed out that of those 10% who did not agree that the district climate was good for diversity, more than 65% of those respondents were students of color and also from families that were receiving free and reduced lunch support. Ms. Kalib presented these survey findings to Superintendent Smetkin, who understood them and shared her concerns regarding students of color. From her advocacy efforts, the district reexamined the diversity coordinator position. When thanked for her perseverance and hard work, Ms. Kalib stated humbly that she spoke out on behalf of the children, especially students of color who are voiceless all too often in administrative meetings.

## **REFLECTION**

These actions by Ms. Kalib, coupled with the caring work of the parents and the Diversity Commission, illustrate a classic example of a committed person who is moved to speak out on behalf of a population that cannot represent itself fully because of institutional barriers, as was certainly the case with the children of color in the Smithville District. The children benefit from this new position, and the district does as well.

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## **Action**

The final stage is action. This stage is the place where the advocacy takes form and is realized in practice. *Action* is the act and art of doing something in a proactive way to promote multiculturalism. It can be seen as a willingness to speak out on behalf of a cohort of voiceless children. Action involves a conscious, intentional, and deliberate act or activity whose outcome benefits children, teachers, parents, or the community today, tomorrow, and into the future. Action is a broader set of events or activities than advocacy efforts. Its outcome benefits more than a single child or family. Rather, action produces systemic change within a school or district. Its outcome is far-reaching and widespread, impacting the lives of many children. Consider the following example.

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## **CASE SCENARIO: A TEACHER TAKES ACTION**

Smithville High School teacher Jack Brown was determined to help 17-year-old senior Malik Ali find a quiet place for prayers during Ramadan. Malik and his family moved to Smithville at the beginning of the school year from New York City. Mr. Brown spoke first with the Smithville High School Principal, Mika Jones, who consulted with the district’s attorney. Together, Principal Jones and Mr. Brown visited with Malik’s parents, Juwann and Jackie Ali, who confirmed the prayer request. Two days later, Principal Jones informed Mr. Brown that it was acceptable for the school to designate a prayer room for Malik’s use during his daily Ramadan prayers. Mr. Brown encouraged Malik to visit with his counselor Sam Smith regarding how best to adjust his class and lunch schedule to accommodate daytime prayers. Counselor Smith helped Malik change his lunch break so that it coincided with the early afternoon prayer time. Mr. and Mrs. Ali were extremely grateful for Mr. Brown’s help and sent a letter of thanks to the principal. Shortly thereafter, Principal Jones sent a letter to teachers informing them of this arrangement. She asked teachers to help students to celebrate and value religious differences and encouraged teachers to find ways to use this multicultural experience in their classrooms. Principal Jones directed the assistant principal to create in-service workshops that focus on respecting religious differences.

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## **REFLECTION**

Mr. Brown moved through advocacy when he decided to help Malik. His quiet action was the simple act of calling the principal to make the prayer room request. By making this request, Mr. Brown affirmed Malik's civil rights as they are applied in school settings and created a positive learning environment for Malik and other Muslim students. He modeled actions that respect and value individual differences, especially religious differences. Principal Jones was also moved to action by introducing change at the system—not just the individual—level.

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## **RUBRIC FOR PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT**

Multicultural flashpoints blend together awareness, knowledge and acknowledgment, advocacy, and action within the context of a social justice agenda to renew skills for transformational change within an organization such as a school. These flashpoints create a working template as professionals promote transformational change. A simple process of skill development, the flashpoint model creates a mechanism to support students while endorsing systemic change for a school or community group.

These multicultural flashpoints are presented as a rubric in Table 1, which gives examples for how to assess one's multiculturalism professional growth. The rubric is a working assessment document, and it can be utilized to determine where the school professional falls on the multicultural skill assessment continuum. The four flashpoint components, *awareness, acknowledgment and knowledge, advocacy, and action*, are located on the horizontal axis. Along the vertical axis is a listing of seven key multicultural components: (a) values cultural pluralism; (b) promotes social justice, cultural democracy, and equity; (c) promotes skills to function in pluralistic society; (d) promotes individual diversity; (e) promotes collective diversity; (f) emphasizes multiple perspectives; and (g) achieves positive individual, community, and societal outcomes.

## **CONCLUSION**

Throughout this chapter, the importance of defining multiculturalism in a school environment is emphasized. Multiculturalism is an essential part of the school learning environment. It is a process, an awareness, a clinical practice, and an outcome of a transformational change. School psychologists and other school personnel are challenged to build upon their existing learning environments to develop multiculturalism throughout the entire school.

Multiculturalism issues are located all across schools and school districts. Addressing the issues within four settings is essential for transforming a monocultural to a multicultural learning environment: (a) policies and policy formation; (b) curriculum; (c) assessment: classroom, formal, and psychological evaluation; and (d) the psychological climate, including interpersonal and staff relations, and the physical climate, involving school buildings and physical plant needs. School administrators and school boards are charged to examine these multicultural elements to determine how they have applied and utilized multiculturalism in satisfying their community's learning needs best.

**TABLE 1. Rubric for Professional Development in Multiculturalism**

CONTENT AREAS	RATING CATEGORIES			
	Awareness	Acknowledgment and Knowledge	Advocacy	Action
	1	2	3	4
<i>Values cultural pluralism</i>	Shows awareness of core elements of cultural pluralism in daily work.	Takes ownership of own cultural values publicly. Shows knowledge about cultural dynamics in practice.	Shows leadership to change policies that devalue multiculturalism in practice.	Performs daily activities using appropriate cultural value frameworks that promote multiculturalism.
<i>Promotes social justice, cultural democracy, and equity</i>	Is aware of social justice, democracy, and equity issues as present daily in the schools daily.	Acknowledges the existence of social justice issues in formal school settings. Knows about their impact on children daily.	Advocates for changes in practices/policies locally & nationally that change the power balances surrounding social justice, democracy, and equity issues.	Performs school interventions that promote social justice, democracy, and equity.
<i>Promotes skills to function in pluralistic society</i>	Is aware of professional culture-specific work skills necessary in a multicultural school setting. Understands requisite skills for school personnel.	Takes responsibility for own culture-specific skill development. Knows requisite multicultural skills for future self-growth.	Advocates for establishment of permanent multicultural in-service training for school personnel. Support policy changes in annual evaluation, to include multicultural skill evaluation.	Creates interventions and activities for multicultural skill development for school personnel. Promotes similar learning for children.
<i>Promotes individual diversity</i>	Is aware of cultural group differences among students and staff.	Acknowledges cultural group differences in formal school events. Shows knowledge of group differences in work activities.	Advocates locally and nationally for school learning environment changes that recognize and value cultural group differences.	Can modify learning environment to accommodate individual differences, including assessments.
<i>Promotes collective diversity</i>	Is aware of cultural group populations in the school and community.	Acknowledges right for these groups to exist. Shows knowledge in formal school interactions.	Advocates locally/ nationally for systemic changes that raise the power differential of a collective group.	Designs learning environments to support collective group development.
<i>Emphasizes multiple perspectives</i>	Can identify multiple and intersecting identities in the school environment.	Acknowledges multiple and intersecting identities in formal school interactions. Knows learning characteristics of groups.	Advocates for the re-identification of cultural groups based upon multiple and intersecting identities.	Creates age-appropriate learning activities that promote multiple and intersecting identities.
<i>Achieves positive individual, community, and societal outcomes</i>	Can identify appropriate positive outcomes for cultural groups.	Takes responsibility for identifying appropriate community and societal learning outcomes. Knows the developmental outcomes of positive growth for children.	Advocates for changes in the school/community environment that achieve positive learning outcomes for children, families, and communities.	Designs learning environments that promote positive learning growth and outcomes for children, teachers, and administrative staff. Supports positive learning by personal actions.

In the flashpoints-for-change model, four multicultural flashpoints were noted: (a) awareness, (b) acknowledgment and knowledge, (c) advocacy, and (d) action. These individual flashpoints help professionals to extend and expand their multiculturalism competency skills. These flashpoints are anchors to help school professionals as they progress toward multiculturalism competence.

## **Recommendations**

The following recommendations are presented to schools and their professionals as guidelines to support transformational change. School personnel are wise to examine these recommendations daily, or as often as needed, to ensure their successful implementation.

1. All policies, whether presented in oral, written, or electronic form, should be written using culturally and linguistically appropriate language. NASP and APA's ethics and professional practice guidelines affirm the importance and accuracy of second language translations, even to satisfy nonclinical needs such as clarifying school or district policies. Although these suggestions are standard practice, multiculturalism requires a second level of attention. It is not sufficient to translate into a second language a school policy statement that is class biased. The policy itself must be reexamined for its relevancy within a new multiculturalism climate. Accommodating an insensitive policy does little to advance multiculturalism. The policy, as a systemic issue, must be challenged also, requiring the school professional to become a child advocate. The child cannot learn in an environment in which policy statements are class biased or perpetuate a culturally insensitive practice. Moving toward multiculturalism requires that school psychologists and other professionals become advocates to change or remove policies and practices that restrict or inhibit multiculturalism.
2. Curricula and related teaching resources that support a teacher's work in the classroom must be reexamined. This category extends to examining how and in what ways multicultural elements are infused into curricula and assessment activities.
3. The assessment literature is rich with guidelines and recommendations regarding culturally appropriate assessment issues such as the language of assessment, culture-specific assessment interventions, the structural and organizational mechanisms in which assessment outcomes are applied (i.e., to support the student's best learning environmental contexts), and so forth.
4. Climate factors are environmental and psychosocial factors such as (a) physical climate elements (the location of classrooms, libraries, and buildings) and (b) interpersonal climate elements (teacher-student interactions, relationships among key school personnel relationships between school personnel and community members).

Four multicultural flashpoints are highlighted in a linear model that illustrates steps toward multicultural competence. Awareness, acknowledgment and knowledge, advocacy, and action are placed alongside seven multicultural skills in a professional development rubric that provides benchmark behaviors that help school psychologists and other school professionals support transformational change. Such change requires the collective spirit and collaboration of all school personnel. Achieving multiculturalism competence requires institutional and organizational commitment along with district and statewide financial support.

## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. What are some of the multicultural practices that are emphasized in your school?
2. In your professional role, how might you move from advocacy to action in a challenging political climate?
3. What are some ways that you can explore the eight characteristics of an effective multicultural school with other school personnel?

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