Assessing culturally and linguistically diverse students: a discussion for professionals in the schools

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Assessing culturally and linguistically diverse students: a discussion for professionals in the schools

Abstract
This paper is intended for professional school psychologists, school social workers, consultants in special education and other professionals involved in assessment issues in the schools. It is necessary for school professionals to have an understanding of the general socio-political context which surrounds the issues involved in language and culture to better assess the mental/cognitive abilities of language minority students through the dominant language and culture.

It is beyond the scope of this paper to present such issues in their entirety. Therefore, the focus of this paper will center on "voluntary minorities", specifically those who are learning English as a second language and those minorities who are from linguistically and culturally diverse groups.
Assessing Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Students:

A Discussion for Professionals in the Schools

By

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INTRODUCTION

This paper is intended for professional school psychologists, school social workers, consultants in special education and other professionals involved in assessment issues in the schools. It is assumed that the reader has an MAE degree and experience within the school system. It is also assumed that this experience has included some contact with students from diverse cultures and language backgrounds.

It is necessary for school professionals to have an understanding of the general socio-political context which surrounds the issues involved in language and culture to better assess the mental/cognitive abilities of language minority students through the dominant language and culture. It is beyond the scope of this paper to present such issues in their entirety. Therefore, in an effort to present one piece of a very complex concern, this paper will focus primarily on issues surrounding the psychological assessment of one type of minority group. The focus of this paper will center on "voluntary minorities" (a term coined by John Ogbu, of which more discussion follows), specifically, those who are learning English as a second language and those minorities who are from linguistically and culturally diverse groups. Within such groups exists a subgroup of students who will experience greater difficulties than the "average" or typical immigrant or linguistically different minority student. School psychologists may be called upon to use their skills in assessment to help address learning difficulties in voluntary minority subgroups. Therefore, it is the goal of this paper to introduce practicing school psychologists and other school professionals to the most significant factors to keep in mind when working with students from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds.

To that end, this paper will

- present significant highlights from Ogbu's article (Ogbu, 1992) which articulates the difference between voluntary and involuntary minorities and the effects of each status
• a brief overview of the most commonly accepted current theories of second language acquisition
• relevant information regarding standardized intelligence tests and their use
• significant highlights in the history of culturally and linguistically diverse students in regard to the national educational system
• alternative models of assessments developed specifically for this subgroup
• implications for school psychologists and a recommended assessment procedure for use in evaluating culturally and linguistically different students.

Definition of CLD

For the purposes of this paper, the phrases "culturally and linguistically diverse" or "culturally and linguistically different" will be interchangeable and sometimes abbreviated to CLD. The term refers to students who are not part of the mainstream dominant culture, i.e. they are not White (non-Hispanic) middle-class Americans. Although CLD students could include those who identify themselves as African American or Black, Native American, Hispanic or Latino, Mexican American, Asian American, etc., it also includes those who speak a non-standard form of English or a language other than English in their homes, people who have come from other countries and thus different cultures, as well as those from different socio-economic groups, primarily any socio-economic group with fewer resources available than found in the middle-class.

Exceptional students are students who are physically, mentally, or emotionally challenged. In other words, they would be candidates for special educational services. Culturally and linguistically diverse exceptional (CLDE) students fit the above definition for being culturally and linguistically diverse as well as being "exceptional". Carrasquillo (1990) defines language minority students with disabilities as
...those students whose impairment adversely affects their ability to benefit from a regular educational program (including ESL and bilingual programs) and who require special education and related services. Such students may be categorized as deaf or hard of hearing speech impaired, learning disabled, mentally retarded, orthopedically impaired, other health impaired, autistic, emotionally disturbed, visually impaired, or multiply handicapped (p. 12).

Special education programs can be designed to serve CLDE students. A growing number of special education programs are specifically designed to accommodate bilingual special education students.

Students who do not possess an intrinsic impairment or disability but who are undereducated or "miseducated" cannot be considered special education students. For example, some students have been out of school for a period of years due to political unrest or instability in their country of origin and so their schooling has been disrupted. Because they have not been in school, they are seriously behind their peers in all academic areas. Other students have received minimal or poorly conceived support services in their current school environment. For these students, lack of progress can be explained by poor or inadequate instruction. In other words, external conditions rather than a condition within the learner are disabling the child. In comparison, special education is for those students who have a documented disability or handicapping condition that they bring to the learning situation and that seriously impedes their achievement despite the fact that they are offered an adequate and continuous educational program.

An additional acronym which often appear in the literature is LEP which stands for "limited-English proficient". This phrase is used less often in the more current
literature as it is thought that the word "limited" has a negative connotation. Associated with that acronym is NEP, which stands for "non-English proficient". For those wanting to promote a more positive connotation, this phrase is sometimes replaced with PEP which stands for "potentially-English proficient". FEP stands for "fluent-English proficient, but refers to those for whom English in not a "native" or first language.

Education is seen by many as the ladder to success. Parents and teachers often advocate for their students to do well in school and continue on through completion of college. The placement of students within special programs in elementary and high school can affect the opportunities these students have to continue their education. Therefore, it is vital that professionals who are responsible for assessing and deciding students' educational placement have an understanding regarding the process of second language acquisition and the effects that variables such as motivation and "home" culture can have on learning as demonstrated through use of standard American English. It is assumed that the reader has had training and/or experience in evaluating students for placement into special education programs, therefore discussion of whether a student qualifies for such placement will be addressed only within the context of determining whether the reason for referral might stem from the linguistic circumstances of the student.

Definition of Minority

One way to begin to understand the factors which contribute to whether a student is learning and/or using standard American English is to look at the social context from which the student is operating. Ogbu (1992) has described two categories of minorities which are pertinent to understanding affective factors associated with school success or failure. While the focus of this paper will emphasize primarily the first category, which is "immigrant or voluntary minorities", it is important to understand the differences between the two groups in regard to speaking non-standard American English.
Immigrant or voluntary minorities are people who have moved to the United States more or less voluntarily because they seek better economic conditions, better overall opportunities, and/or greater political freedom. Initially, they may experience problems in school because of language and cultural differences but they typically do not experience long-term failure.

He refers to the second category as "castelike or involuntary minorities" because they were originally brought into the United States against their will, or as in the case of the Native Americans, were subjugated by the dominant Anglo group. Ogbi (1992) offers these examples of ways in which minorities were brought into the country against their will,

...through slavery, conquest, colonization; or forced labor. Thereafter, these minorities were often relegated to menial positions and denied true assimilation into the mainstream society. American Indians, Black Americans, early Mexican Americans in the Southwest, and native Hawaiians are United States' examples...It is involuntary minorities that usually experience greater and more persistent difficulties with school learning (p. 8).

It is critical to understand the differences between minority groups and minority status to begin to understand why it is easier for some groups to cross the cultural boundaries and find school success while other groups seem to experience higher rates of school difficulties. Ogbi (1992) offers the explanation that primary cultural differences are differences that existed before the two groups came into contact. Differences in languages, religious beliefs and practices, ceremonial dress, etc. would be examples of primary cultural differences.

Ogbi (1992) defines secondary cultural differences as "...differences that arose
after two populations came into contact or after members of a given population began to participate in an institution controlled by members of another population, such as the schools controlled by the dominant group" (p. 8, emphasis added). Initial contact between two groups are characterized by primary cultural differences. Secondary cultural difference develop later for several reasons and in several ways. They may be a "reinterpretation" of the previously primary cultural differences or they may be newly evolved cultural norms and behaviors.

Both voluntary and involuntary minority groups experience prejudice and discrimination from members of the dominant group. For example, both groups may be relegated to menial jobs or may not receive the same treatment as members of the dominant group. However, immigrant minorities more or less expect this type of hardship. They tend to see the problems as temporary and as problems that can be overcome with time, hard work, or more education. They compare their current situation with the ones they left behind, and although it may be harder in the present, they have a positive outlook on their future possibilities (Ogbu, 1992).

Conversely, members of involuntary minority groups cannot usually generate this positive outlook because they do not have first-hand knowledge of a "former" lifestyle with which to compare their current situation. They do not interpret their menial jobs and low wages as "better" than the situation of others like them. They compare themselves and their status with that of members of the dominant group and usually conclude that they are worse off than they ought to be for no other reason than the color of their skin or their status as belonging to a culturally and/or linguistically different community. They interpret the discrimination against them as permanent and institutionalized. Therefore, involuntary minorities develop a sense of social or collective identity that is in opposition to the social identity of the dominant group. They do so in response to their treatment by the dominant culture in economic, political, social, psychological, cultural, and linguistic
Involuntary minorities, such as Black Americans, developed an oppositional identity after concluding that the treatment they received from Whites was both collective and enduring. They were (and still are) not treated like White Americans regardless of their individual differences in ability, training, education, place of origin or residence, economic status, or physical appearance. They could not (and still cannot) easily escape from their birth-ascribed membership in a subordinate and disparaged group by "passing" for White or by returning to a "homeland" (Green, 1981). Native Americans and Native Hawaiians have no other "homeland" to return to. In the past, some Black Americans sought an escape by venturing to Africa, (Hall, 1978) and, more recently, by converting to Islam (Essien-Udom, 1964) (p. 9).

In regard to school, students who are from voluntary minority groups may initially have problems due to primary cultural differences as well as language difficulties, if the students are learning English. However, these children typically adjust because the differences existed before the student immigrated to the United States. The differences did not arise to maintain cultural/group identity between the minorities and White Americans. That is, these cultural differences did not arise to be oppositional to the mainstream dominant culture. While voluntary minorities may not give up their own cultural beliefs and practices, they often add to their knowledge and skill base by learning the language, attending and working hard in school, and even adopting some customs of
the dominant culture because they believe it will be beneficial to them in the long run.
With this kind of attitude they are able to cross cultural boundaries and do relatively well in school.

Many of the "culture clashes" which occur between members of involuntary minorities and members of the dominant culture are on the surface similar to those caused by primary cultural differences, i.e. conflicts due to cultural misunderstandings, lack of fluency in standard English, and conflicts in teaching and learning styles. However, the underlying factor that distinguishes these problems from those of primary cultural differences lies in the nature of the relationship between the minority culture and the dominant culture. The cultural differences developed to serve as coping functions and to create/maintain boundaries of "us" and "them" under subordination.

As boundary-maintaining mechanisms, they do not necessarily disappear or change when involuntary minorities and Whites are brought together, as in desegregated schools. Involuntary minorities interpret the cultural and language differences as markers of their collective identity to be maintained, not as barriers to be overcome. There is no incentive to learn or behave in a manner considered consciously and unconsciously as inappropriate for members of their group. Among involuntary minorities, school learning tends to be equated with the learning of the culture and language of White Americans, that is, the learning of the cultural and language forms of reference of their "enemy" or "oppressors" (Ogbu, 1992, p. 10).

This theory may offer an explanation as to why some culturally and linguistically diverse students do not to speak standard American English. It is not because they have
been "deprived" or are incapable of learning it. Rather, they are making a choice not to identify with the dominant (Anglo) cultural group whom they regard as the antagonist. They are, in fact, maintaining their own cultural identity through the use of language. It is beyond the scope of this paper to address the implications of this issue any further than to say that the school psychologist and other school professionals must recognize that this may be the situation for some CLD students who are referred for evaluation for special education services. Clearly, the fact that a student is choosing to speak a dialect of English with which s/he identifies is not reason enough for special education assessment.
CHAPTER 1: LANGUAGE ACQUISITION

It is crucial to have an understanding of the process of language acquisition before one can appropriately assess a culturally and linguistically diverse student. There are many situations which require the expertise of one who understands what is normal for first and second language acquisition and what is not. It is this understanding which will help determine whether the student is performing in a manner consistent with what may be expected of a second language learner or whether the student seems to be affected by variables outside of the range of "normal" difficulties associated with learning a new language, quite possible within the context of a new culture as well. It is a long and difficult task to become proficient in a second language.

Language Proficiency

The construct of the phrase language proficiency has a theoretical usage as well as a practical definition. The theoretical orientation refers to one's underlying capacity to handle language ability in general, regardless of the actual language spoken. In a practical sense, it refers to how much control one has over one's second language. It is generally thought of in terms of skills, such as listening, speaking, reading, and writing. While these skills are interrelated they can develop independently so that second language learners may be more advanced in one skill area than another. It is not uncommon for learners to develop listening and speaking skills at levels above their reading and writing skills, just as first language learners develop listening and speaking skills before reading and writing skills.

Cummins (1980) has proposed that language proficiency be thought of on two levels: Basic Interpersonal Communicative Skills (BICS) and Cognitive Academic Language Proficiency (CALP). BICS includes the ability to participate in complex context-embedded face-to-face communication and typically takes two years to master. CALP requires the ability to understand and produce language typical of academic
instruction and requires higher cognitive skills than BICS. Research has shown that when immigrants in the United States and Canada are schooled only in the second language (L2) (as in ESL programs or immersion programs), it takes a minimum of 5 to 10 years to attain grade-level norms, and it takes even longer when students do not have a literacy base in their first language (L1) (Collier, 1987, 1989, 1992; Cummins and Swain, 1986; Genesee, 1987). However, when students are schooled in L1 and L2 (as in a bilingual program) at least through grades five or six, they are able to maintain grade-level norms in L1 and reach grade-level norms in academic L2 in four to seven years (Collier, 1992; Genesee, 1987). Furthermore, after reaching grade-level norms, students schooled bilingually stay on or above grade level; whereas those schooled only through L2 tend to do less well in school in the upper grades (Thomas & Collier, 1997). When academic difficulties arise, assessors must be able to distinguish whether the problems are due to factors associated with the normal process of second language development, or whether the difficulties are due to intrinsic learning impairments that would necessitate legitimate special education intervention. The purpose of this chapter is to provide a brief introduction to the process of second language acquisition in children and how academic performance may be affected.

Cummins (1984) has identified three processes that underlie the attainment of proficiency in the second language: automatic habit formation, conscious rule learning, and natural acquisition of meaningful language. Through habit formation, learners pick up common words and phrases. Automatic language habits, which are based on repeated exposure to a word, phrase, or sentence, give the learner access to automatized responses in specific situations and are typical of beginning level PEP students. For example, in response to meeting someone, one generally says something like, "Hello, how are you today?" In response to that greeting, one typically answers, "Fine, thanks. And you?" regardless of how they might really be feeling.
The second process reflects a more conscious knowledge of the rules of a language. Through this process, the learner develops explicit knowledge about the second language and is able to reflect on the rules of grammar, phonology, and semantics.

The third process is similar to first-language development in young children and reflects an implicit knowledge of language or, rather, the ability to use it. Through this process, language is picked up naturally and emerges through natural stages of development. Students begin with a silent period that precedes production. When production finally occurs, it emerges in word utterances, which eventually turn into longer phrases and sentences. When a second language emerges naturally, errors are likely to occur and are a necessary part of the process not unlike first language acquisition in which children learning to speak their first language make grammatical and lexical selection errors.

**Definition of Bilingualism**

Many people interpret the term bilingual to mean that one is fully fluent and literate in two languages and can function in a variety of settings with either language. In the literature, this is referred to "balanced bilingualism". As ideal as this situation may be, it rarely exists in the United States' public school population. More often than not, a person will be more proficient in one language and have some degree of proficiency in the other. Again, as language skills develop independently, it is possible for one to be more proficient in one language in a skill area and be more proficient in the other language in another skill area. The non-English (as applied to the United States' situation) or "home" language is not necessarily the student's dominant language. Many students may come from environments which have not encouraged the development of skills in the first language, and with the new environment and schooling, the students may be more successful in communicating through English than in their first language.
This is an example of one reason why skills in both languages should be assessed in determining language proficiency.

Bilingualism can also be considered from the perspective of "additive" or "subtractive" (Lambert, 1977). When speakers have reached expected levels of proficiency in their first language and then "add on" another language, they are said to be experiencing "additive bilingualism" in that nothing has been taken away. In "subtractive" bilingualism, the proficiency of the first language decreases as proficiency in the second language increases. Sometimes, this results in students not being very proficient in either language for some period of time. Shutnabb-Kangas and Toukomaa (1976) refer to this as "semilingualism."

Skutnabb-Kangas and Toukomaa (1976) illustrate the concept of additive and subtractive bilingualism in their study of Finnish migrant children in Sweden learning the language of their host country. They found that the extent to which the native language had been developed prior to formal exposure to the second language was strongly related to how well the second language was learned. In other words, a strong foundation in the first language, Finnish, predicted success in learning Swedish as a second language. And, conversely, when the first language was not fully developed, difficulties in learning the second language appeared.

Often, the level of literacy achieved by students directly corresponds to the level of literacy of their parents. Students who are surrounded by literacy, regardless of whether it is in the native language or English, find it easier to develop the necessary prereading skills and literacy orientation that produce successful readers (Weinstein, 1984). Attitudes towards literacy and prereading skills transfer from first language to second language (Cummins, 1979); therefore, even if parents are not literate in English, they will help their children immensely by reading to them and engaging them in conversation in their native language.
Just as a solid base in literacy skills transfers from the first language to the second, so do other language skills. If the first language is adequately developed it provides the necessary foundation on which to build the second language. Much of what is already mastered in a student's first language (grammatical structures, vocabulary, and phonological rules) can be transferred to the second language, especially if the second language is related to the first. For example, Saville-Troike (1984) found that children who speak Indo-European languages are more accurate in their production of English morphology and their use of English syntax than are speakers of non-Indo-European languages.

Transfer also occurs in reading such that reading achievement in English is more dependent on students' native language reading ability than on their oral proficiency in English (Saville-Troike, 1984). The underlying principle that allows for transfer between languages is that certain processes are basic to reading and speaking; once they are mastered in one language, they can be applied to another language (Genesee, 1987; Oller, 1979). It has also been suggested that cognitive academic language proficiency (CALP), which includes literacy-related aspects of language, is common, or "interdependent" across languages (Cummins and Swain, 1986).

de Valenzuela, (1998) however, is one of many linguists who are wary of using the term semilingual. He is concerned in regard to how the student will be perceived with such a label. Teachers who do not understand the process of second language acquisition may become more confused and take inappropriate actions or attitudes. For example, it is natural in the process of second language acquisition for children to go through a "silent period" in which their receptive language skills in English are more advanced than their expressive language skills. In other words, they understand more than they can communicate. He also finds the term semilingual problematic in that a) the term suggests a difficulty in acquiring language and does not recognize that children may
have lost language skills they once possessed, and b) this term implies a resultant
cognitive deficit.

Although bilingual children from nondominant culture backgrounds
do have a higher percentage of below-average academic performance,
there is no evidence that this stems from a cognitive problem brought
about by their bilingualism. Inappropriate academic programs and
home-school incongruities have been suggested as reasons for these
academic problems. In fact, one of the major problems facing our
school system today is the lowered academic achievement of all
culturally diverse youth, regardless of whether they speak a home
language other than English or not (de Valenzuela, 1998, p. 140).

Some theorists do not believe that it is possible to be semilingual. Ovando and
Collier (1985) stated, "Although theoretical descriptions have discussed the term
'semilingualism,' it has never been proven to exist in experimental research conducted on
the issue" (p. 131). They perceive the danger of the label to be in that it implies that the
quality of the student's sociocultural background is unacceptable. In their 1998 edition of
the book, the idea and term are not mentioned.

de Valenzuela has identified two related concepts which are language attrition,
and code-switching. Language attrition is the term used to describe the incidence of
individuals losing linguistic competency in a language. It can occur naturally in
situations where one immigrates without family and has no one with whom to
communicate using the native language. Over time, much of the vocabulary is more or
less forgotten as the individual becomes more and more proficient and communicative in
another language.
Code-switching refers to "the use of two or more linguistic varieties in the same conversation or interaction" (Scotton and Ury, 1977, p. 5). This can involve switching between social styles or registers or between different languages. de Valenzuela (1998) notes that most people code-switch regularly, without realizing that they are doing it, because it happens so naturally. For monolingual English speakers, it occurs between social styles and registers, though obviously not between languages. Thus, when bilingual children or adults engage in code-switching between languages it should not be taken as evidence for balanced proficiency. On the contrary, there is research evidence that code-switching between languages suggests very high control over both languages (Genesee, 1984; Poplack, 1982). It provides for an opportunity to choose from both languages and their respective vocabularies to find just the exact words or phrases the speaker wishes to use to convey an idea or thought.

**Comprehensible Input**

Choosing language and vocabulary that is for the most part comprehensible to second language learners is the key to their growth in the acquisition of the target language. Most second language theorists (e.g. Krashen, 1982; Long, 1983; Wong Fillmore, 1983) currently endorse some form of the "input" hypothesis which essentially states that acquisition of a second language depends not just on exposure to the language but on interaction with target language users that provides access to second language input which is modified in various ways to make it comprehensible. Krashen (1982) posits four characteristics of optimal input for comprehension:

1. Optimal input is comprehensible, i.e. the message is understandable by the learner regardless of his/her level of second language proficiency;
2. Optimal input is interesting and/or relevant;
3. Optimal input is not grammatically sequenced;
4. Optimal input must be in sufficient quantity, although it is difficult to specify
just how much is enough since it depends upon the individual learner (p. 67).

Long (1983) has suggested that among the most important ways of making input comprehensible are a) a "here and now" orientation in conversation and the use of linguistic and extralinguistic (contextual) information and general knowledge, and b) modification of the interactional structure of the conversation by means of devices such as self- and other-repetition, confirmation and comprehension checks, and clarification requests. Underlying the principle of comprehensible input is the obvious fact that a central function of language use is meaningful communication; when this central function of language is ignored in classroom instruction, learning is likely to be by rote and supported only by extrinsic motivation.

Although the process of language acquisition as described is typical for most second language learners, individual variables may influence the rate and level of proficiency attained. Variables such as motivation and attitude, can influence students' learning in positive or negative ways. Students can be influenced by their own motivation and attitude, that of their parents and community, as well as the attitude the teacher holds for them.

Variables Which May Affect Language Proficiency

The student's attitude toward the dominant (English-speaking) culture may influence how proficient the student may become in the second language. If the student has a positive attitude, which increases motivation, the result will be greater second language proficiency. Conversely, if a student has a negative attitude, and motivation is low, the level of proficiency may also be low.

The attitudes of the parents and community also greatly influence the child. When parents encourage the child to learn the second language and are also involved in learning the language, children are usually more motivated to learn. When parents have a negative attitude towards learning the target language or speak negatively of the members
of the dominant culture, the students are less likely to progress quickly in learning the target language.

Also, as demonstrated in the work of Williams (1973), Taylor (1973), and others, negative attitudes held by school personnel toward the speech of nonnative speakers present major pedagogical barriers to both PEP and CLD students. Whether consciously or unconsciously applied, these attitudes can result in the lowering of expectations (Brophy, 1983; Cummins, 1986) and inappropriate referrals (Rodriguez, Prieto, and Rueda, 1984) for special education consideration.

Personality traits are another variable that may affect second language learning. Students who are outgoing and adventurous seem to learn the second language faster than those who are shy and introverted (Tucker, Hamayan, and Genesee, 1976). Often factors, such as a student's preferred learning style, can be manipulated by matching the student with appropriately corresponding teaching styles.

Some of the above mentioned variables could affect first language development as easily as they affect second language acquisition (i.e. teacher expectation, learning style). That is because language development occurs most naturally within the context of culture, whether the language is L1 or L2. Culture influences how one comes to interact with the world. It should not be surprising then, that a change in culture (as is generally the case for voluntary immigrants) might affect a child's communication, motivation, and performance.

Variables Which May Affect Assessment Due to the Process of Language Acquisition

When it seems necessary to assess a student who is still learning to communicate through English for special education service, there are a number of behavior and learning variables that complicate the evaluation. One such variable is the similarity of linguistic behaviors seen in students who are learning English as a second language and
students who are experiencing native language learning impairments. Students learning a second language will be expected to experience difficulties in grammatical forms, lexical selection, fluency, and comprehension on a basic level as already established. Although these are markers which indicate communicative difficulty in monolingual English speakers, they cannot be interpreted in the same context for PEP students. When these problematic behaviors are observed in PEP students, they may only indicate difficulty in English and not necessarily an intrinsic language-learning impairment. Traditional indices of language impairment are insufficient when assessing CLD students. The evaluator must also take into account difficulties due to cultural and interactive differences that might make a normal CLD student appear impaired.

Another complicating variable involves the complexity of second language acquisition as a process. Unlike monolingual English-speaking students who bring a relatively stable English language system to the schools, PEP students acquiring English are typically in a more dynamic stage of language acquisition. Therefore, the performance of these students in English may vary from day to day, across settings, and over time (Dulay, Burt, and Krashen, 1982; Hyltenstam, 1985; Wong-Fillmore, 1979). The concern is that normal phenomena may lead the uninformed evaluator or teacher to form the mistaken impression that the student is a poor language learner when this is not the case.

Assessment of the PEP student should include analysis of the ways in which the first language has potentially affected the student's English performance. Typically, this will require enough knowledge of the first language to conduct an error analysis to differentiate between expected problems due to interference or transfer and problems of a more general type, which might suggest true learning deficits (Eblen, 1982; Wolfram, 1985). In order to identify a true language-learning impairment in the PEP population, indices of communicative difficulty must be present in both the first language and in
There are many variables which influence an individual's language acquisition. The process of language acquisition is like many other processes. It takes time and sometimes the steps are painstakingly small. It can also confuse those who are not aware of the variables involved. For example, while it may appear that a child communicates easily in the second language (BICS) that does not guarantee that the child has the skills to perform at the same level academically (CALP). School psychologists and educators must have a working knowledge of the process of second language development in order to better understand possible differences in language production of culturally and linguistically diverse students.
CHAPTER 2: ISSUES IN ASSESSMENT FOR SPECIAL EDUCATION

PLACEMENT FOR CLD STUDENTS

In the current literature on the roles and functions of school psychology practice (e.g. Fagan and Wise, 1994; Gutkin and Reynolds, 1990), there is much discussion on the roles of school psychologists as consultants and intervention developers as compared to the assessment/placement roles. To understand how to work with and/or for a CLD student, it is the author's position that the school psychologist would be using a multifactored approach to the assessment of the CLD child's needs and strengths and weaknesses. This approach would include observations, interviews, examination of previous school records, testing, learning activity procedures, curriculum based evaluation, sensory channel evaluation, consultation with relevant medical personnel, etc. The goal would be to develop a thorough understanding of the child in the child's ecological context.

Much of the potential for biased input to the decision-making process about a CLD child's educational needs starts with the choice of the assessment procedures, especially the appropriateness of standardized tests of ability and achievement that frequently form the foundation for the discrepancy model of the definition of a disability. In the discrepancy model, a child whose performance and achievement measures are disparate from his/her performance on an ability measure would be a candidate for specialized educational services. The greater the discrepancy, the more severe would be the handicap or disability. Because of the role played by standardized instruments in discrepancy definition model, the author has chosen to discuss the issue of bias as it relates to standardized tests and certification of the child's eligibility for special education services.

Intelligence tests were originally developed to predict school performance and they generally carry out this predictive function quite well for both majority and minority
students (Cleary, et. al., 1975; Jensen, 1980, Reynolds, 1982 and 1983). The basic assumption of the intelligence test is that past learning is indicative of future learning. Thus, the test samples the range of what is considered academic knowledge and skill and compares a child's score to the norm by age.

Intelligence tests came under greater scrutiny because of their use more than because of their characteristics. The use of intelligence tests in special education diagnosis has brought additional controversy to these measures. One of the controversial questions relevant to this paper has been whether it is "fair" to compare children from diverse cultural and socio-economic groups to one another when the test is derived and normed namely the dominant group perspective. In other words, is the mean score difference between students who are CLD and students from the dominant group (the norm group) due to genetics/heredity, or is it due to environmental factors (i.e., culture and language).

Bias in Assessment

The word "bias" has many connotations. One way in which it is used by people is for example, when they believe a test is "biased" if two cultural, linguistic, or racial groups obtain a mean score difference on a test. The use of the word "bias" in this context seems to connote that the test is inherently faulty or "wrong", and in a noble effort to uphold the equality of the races, the test is disdained. However, from the perspective of a researcher, the purpose of a standardized test is to measure the differences among individuals and groups of individuals. In other words, when professionals talk of test bias, they may be talking about vastly different issues than lay individuals or others who are unfamiliar with the science of measurement. The psychometrician is assessing the validity of an intelligence test across groups as opposed to evaluating mean score differences between groups.

Clarizio (1979b) argued that much of the criticism leveled against intelligence
tests results from a failure to distinguish between the concepts of *cultural loading* and *cultural bias*. Cultural loading is determined by the specificity of the test content. Clarizio (1979b) provided the following example, "a test item asking the student to name the last two governors of Michigan is a more culturally loaded item than one that asks the child to name the last two presidents of the United States" (p. 80). He defined cultural bias as "an empirical matter determined statistically by examining the test's predictive validity and internal characteristics" (p. 80) If a culturally loaded test predicts equally well irrespective of group membership, it cannot legitimately be described as culturally biased. Likewise, if internal analyses of a test show the same degree of statistical properties across groups, the test is unbiased in terms of its inherent characteristics (Clarizio, 1979b).

Bias in *content validity* (i.e. cultural loading) was one of the first areas of investigation of intelligence test bias. This is understandable given that the scoring criteria for many intelligence test items seem arbitrary and were devised primarily by Anglo males and females. WISC-R comprehension items are especially prone to arguments of inappropriate content of bias. A definition of content validity bias may be take from Reynolds and Kaiser (1990).

An item or subscale of a test is considered to be biased in content when it is demonstrated to be relatively more difficult for members of one group than for members of another in a situation where the general ability level of the groups being compared is held constant and no reasonable theoretical rationale exist to explain group differences on the item (or subscale) in question (p. 625).
It was, in part, on the basis of content validity that in 1968, the Association of Black Psychologists (BPA), a subgroup of the American Psychological Association (APA), called for a moratorium on the standardized testing of African American students. Williams (1975) a spokesperson for the association, maintained that standardized intelligence testing was harmful to minority students because of the following reasons.

1. Children who are misclassified and labeled as "different" (based on standardized test scores) may be permanently stigmatized and may experience rejection by those in their immediate environment.

2. They may be assigned to inferior educational programs or deprived of their freedom through commitment to an institution.

3. They may be excluded from opportunities which are vital for the full development of their emotional and physical existence.

4. They may be committed to institutions, which define and confirm them as delinquent, retarded or emotionally disturbed. Thus, the child will manifest behaviors which are appropriate to the label. They become more inclined to crime, more disturbed than they would be under more normal growth conditions and less bright than they could be (pp. 17-18).

However, the Council of the American Psychological Association (1976) disagreed with the Black Psychological Association's call for a moratorium on standardized testing. The council stated, ..."Standardized testing, competently administered and evaluated, is a valuable tool in individual, educational, and personnel decision-making. Abuses of testing, through unwarranted labeling or interpretation, are to be avoided" (p. 2). In other words, the APA believed that standardized testing revealed information that was more helpful than harmful. Muir (1984) presents this point of view.
Perhaps the inequities lie in the traditional education rather than merely in the tests. Intelligence tests are satisfactory predictors of success in traditional education. That the educational system fails to adjust to a culturally pluralistic society is not the fault of the tests. Schools seem to prepare students to function in the mainstream, majority culture. If the nature of schools changed radically, mental tests might lose their high predictive validity and no longer be useful (p. 78).

In essence he is saying that standardized tests reflect the real academic discrepancy faced by CLD students as compared to Anglo middle-class students in school. The situation may not be the way many would like it to be, but the tests can only reflect what is "here and now". As Samuda (1975) said, "Test results point up the unfairness of life--not the unfairness of the test" (p. 39). The bias is in the culture, the curriculum, in the background, in medical care, not in the standardized test.

Multiple Intelligences

A different stance from that taken by the APA and BPA is offered by the work of Howard Gardner (Gardner, 1983, 1991, 1993) who approaches the definition of ability from a much more varied model than the definitions behind the Wechsler intelligence scales or the Stanford Binet scales so often used in school psychology practice. Gardner views the human being as being composed of multiple intelligences and not just the two more usual ones of linguistic and logical-mathematical intelligences that seem to be so often chosen to relate "ability" and "achievement" in academic pursuits. By incorporating notions of interpersonal intelligence, intrapersonal intelligences, musical intelligence, spatial intelligence, etc., Gardner has re-opened the debate about the nature of ability/intelligence and the role of assessment in a naturalistic context. Much of this work is still at the conceptual stage, but pilot school projects are underway. Campbell,
Campbell, and Dickinson (1996) have published a guide to using the theory of Multiple Intelligences to develop curricula, pedagogy, and assessments. The implication of Gardner's work seems to be to develop a better conceptual model for what comprises ability so that differences within and between persons are not overly weighted in a discrepancy definition and that previously unmeasured abilities are now give credence as being important to measure. The "bias" may exist in the definition of the construct!

One of the assumptions of this paper is that standardized testing in the United States is "inextricably intertwined with education, social, and economic opportunities. Linguistic factors, in turn, are potent determinants of performance on many standardized tests, and consequently of the extent of access to these opportunities". (Olmedo, 1981, p. 1079). In other words, the results of an IQ test can affect the educational placement of a student. Such a placement affects the opportunities that will be afforded the child. When a child is not fluent in standard American English, the child will most likely receive a lower score on the IQ test, not because the child is less intelligent, but simply because the child is not fluent in the medium (English) of the test. For these reasons it is necessary to pursue alternative assessment procedures as described in Chapter 3 so that the rights of English language learners, as well as every other child, can be ensured to a free and appropriate education in the least restrictive environment as reads Public Law 94-142.

**Litigation and Assessment Bias**

Litigation has supported the rights of English language learners and CLD students. Presented here are two significant court decisions: *Diana v. Board of Education* (1973) and *Lau v. Nichols* (1974). *Diana* established that testing must be done in the child's primary language, and requires extensive supporting data to justify placing culturally and linguistically different students into special education classes. The case dealt directly with the issue of placing CLD students in classes for the mentally retarded on the basis of standard IQ test scores, the Standford-Binet and Weschler Intelligence
Scale for Children (WISC). The plaintiffs on behalf of nine Mexican-American children (from primarily Spanish-speaking homes) in public school in California charged that the children had been improperly placed because the test-based procedures were discriminatory in that they emphasized English language skills and did not take into account Spanish language abilities. It was also claimed that test items were culturally biased. The children's IQ, as measured initially, had ranged from 30 to 72 with a mean of 63. After bilingual retesting, however, there was an average gain of 15 IQ points, and seven of the nine children no longer fell within the mentally retarded range (Olmedo, 1981). Among the key provisions of the settlement was the requirement that children from homes in which English was not the primary language spoken be tested in their home language as well as in English. In addition, the California Department of Education was required to reevaluate Mexican American and Chinese American children who were already in classes for the mentally retarded by retesting them in their primary language (Bergin, 1980).

Although *Lau v. Nichols* didn't involve IQ testing, it did support the recognition that culturally and linguistically diverse students cannot be treated identically in the classroom in terms of instruction. In *Lau*, the Supreme Court ruled that by not providing appropriate language instruction to Chinese American students, the actions of the San Francisco school system violated the students' rights under the Civil Rights Act of 1964. The Court stated because the students did not know English, and that because English was the primary vehicle of instruction, it was not reasonable to require the students to learn English before they could effectively benefit from public education. The Court did not specify a particular method to correct the situation, but a task force of the (then) U.S. Department of Health, Education, and Welfare's Office of Civil Rights developed in 1975 what came to known as the "Lau remedies." The Lau remedies focused on the identification of LEP students, the assessment of their language proficiency and academic
performance, and their placement in appropriate educational programs. Case law has also been advancing the interpretation of the Fourteenth Amendment to the United States Constitution to prevent the government from denying governmental benefits to people because of age, sex, race, or disability thereby also lending support for equal opportunity education.

**Over- and Under- Representation**

In the past, CLD children have often been misdiagnosed and misplaced thus resulting in an overrepresentation in special education programs (Bernstein, 1989). Mercer (1973) in her classic study reported that Mexican-American children were placed in classes for the mentally retarded at a rate of ten times as often as their Anglo peers. Chandler and Plakos (1971) found that Mexican-American students were placed in classes for educable mentally retarded at rates two to three times higher than their Anglo counterparts.

Ironically, there is now evidence that *Diana* and *Lau* and other court cases which were decided in favor of those who complained that school districts had erroneously placed non-Anglo students—especially those with limited English proficiency—into special education programs has led some school districts to hesitate to place even eligible non-Anglo students in special education programs, regardless of their educational needs (Bergin, 1980; Vasquez-Chairez, 1988). Data collected by the California State Department of Education pupil count verifies the trend of shifting from over-identification of minorities in special education to under-representation (Vasquez-Chairez, 1988).

In some districts, students are either placed in bilingual/ESL programs, or in special education programs based on the erroneous assumption that students are ineligible for both types of programs. Other times, teachers in a strong bilingual or ESL program may be hesitant to refer a student to a monolingual special education program fearing that
the linguistic needs of the student will not be met. Believing that they have to choose between linguistically appropriate regular education services that may not meet the special needs of their students and special education services that do not meet the linguistic needs of students, these teachers choose linguistically appropriate educational services. Their rationale often is that special educational services offered in English cannot help students who do not understand their teachers. This is especially likely to be true of immigrant students. As one school official stated,

The tendency of teachers to quickly refer these children for special education consideration, the lack of linguistically and culturally appropriate assessment instruments for the students... who speak languages other than English and Spanish, and our very limited understanding of their cultures make us very reluctant to place a newly-arrived immigrant student who does not present a physical handicap into special education (Nuttall, Landurand, and Goldman, 1983, p. 11).

There is also a nationwide shortage of personnel who are culturally and linguistically competent to assess and instruct limited-English-proficient students in their native languages. Because school districts are reluctant to identify students who may have disabilities when the schools are unable to provide the bilingual assessment and educational services such students would require, many limited-English-proficient students with disabilities are not evaluated, placed or even referred to special education (Nuttall, et. al., 1983). Bergin (1980) points out that this problem will continue as long as school district personnel have only two options for limited-English-proficient students--English only special education classes and/or regular bilingual/ESL education classes--
and as long as district personnel believe that they are more likely to be sued for misplacing such students in special education programs than for failing to provide them the linguistically appropriate services they require.

**LEP and TAG Identification**

The category of special education programs which is most underrepresented by LEP students is the gifted and talented education (GATE) division. According to Baca (1998), "LEP students represent one in a hundred identified students as gifted and talented as compared to more than five in one hundred in the general population" (p. 63). One reason may be that teachers tend to look for behaviors and personality characteristics to identify possibly gifted and talented students that do not always apply to culturally and linguistically diverse gifted and talented students. Grossman (1995) states,

> Because cultures have different values, gifted and talented students demonstrate their superior abilities in different ways. For example, students brought up in competitive societies may demonstrate their abilities by excelling over others in certain endeavors, whereas gifted and talented students from cultures that value interpersonal relationships may demonstrate their abilities in their extraordinary leadership qualities and their skill at fostering good interpersonal relationships and cooperative behavior.... Rural gifted and talented students may receive low grades in academic areas but demonstrate their gifts and talents in non-academic areas such as 4-H projects and auto and tractor repair because their environments foster their development in these areas (p. 257).

Limited-English-proficient gifted and talented students are especially difficult to identify. The limited English proficiency interferes with the students' ability to achieve at
their potential and to demonstrate their superior skills. Therefore, it is essential to observe how these students function in situations in which their limited English proficiency does not impede their achievement.

**Problems in All Special Education Placements for CLD Students**

There are multiple reasons for inappropriate placement of LEP students in special education programs. First of all, many professionals lack specific knowledge regarding assessment of linguistically diverse students. They are unaware of the special characteristics of testing minority students. They may choose an inappropriate instruments for evaluating the abilities and skills of CLD students. They may also be unaware of the process of second language acquisition.

There are also problems with the referral process itself for CLD students (Mercer, 1973). From the 1960s to the early 1980s, almost all of the students who were referred to programs for students with disabilities were assessed and most of them were deemed eligible and placed in a special education program (Algozzine, Christenson, and Ysseldyke, 1982). These same researchers also reported that in 1982, a national survey of directors of special education revealed that 92 percent of students referred to special education were evaluated, and 73 percent of those who were evaluated were found eligible. In 1992, some of the same researchers reported that in some cases, depending on the type of assessment procedures that are used, virtually, all of the students referred are found to be eligible for special education (Ysseldyke, Algozzine, and Thurston, 1992). Research such as this supports the conclusion that the most important decision made in the entire assessment process is the decision by a regular classroom teacher to refer a student for assessment.

Some teachers may refer students for special education consideration without considering that differences in expressive language may be due to differences in culture and language proficiency or language use. Some teachers may have negative attitudes
towards CLD students and may therefore be quicker to refer students for assessment. Finally, the professionals interpreting the test results of CLD students may fail to take into consideration factors such as language dominance, language proficiency, and cultural differences. Well-trained professionals are needed to be able to distinguish between academic difficulties resulting from true physiologically-based disabilities and those resulting from environmental, social, experiential, linguistic, or cultural factors.

**Attacking the Problem of Cultural and Language Bias in Assessment**

There are many approaches being taken to improving the assessment and identification of children in need of specialized educational services. Among these are pre-referral consultations with classroom teachers, teacher assistance teams, functional assessment, attempts to make tests culture free, and procedures to modify the interpretation of ability measure scores to account for cultural and linguistic variables. Historically, the work of Jane Mercer (1973) was the first major approach taken to develop separate norms for CLD children being administered standardized tests of intelligence.

**The System of Multicultural Pluralistic Assessment (SOMPA)**

Jane Mercer (1973) developed the System of Multicultural Pluralistic Assessment (SOMPA) in an effort to develop a comprehensive and more pluralistic assessment for minority students in which student performance is interpreted in relation to normative frameworks that have been developed specifically for individual ethnic or socio-economic groups. The aim of using adjusted norms is an attempt to correct for sociocultural biases in the test by comparing children only with others who have had similar opportunities to learn the test content (Mercer and Yssledyke, 1977). It involves a battery of measures which incorporates medical, social, and pluralistic information in the assessment of the cognitive, perceptual-motor, and adaptive behavior of Hispanic American, African American and Anglo American children between the ages of 5-0 and
11-11 years. The SOMPA used nine measures drawn from three assessment models: the medical model, the social system model, and the pluralistic model.

The Medical Model contained six measures: Physical Dexterity Tasks, Bender Visual Motor Gestalt Test, Weight by Height, Visual Acuity, Auditory Acuity, and Health History Inventories. The purpose of this model was to rule out any biophysical connection for below "average" academic achievement.

The purpose of the Social System Model was to look at the child's role performance relative to social groups. Because the model was based on a social deviance model, the emphasis was on determining whether a child's behavior in a given situation was normal--that is, conformed to expectations of group members. Abnormal behavior was that which violated these expectations. The measures in the social system model were the WISC-R (the intelligent quotients were referred to as School Functioning Level) and the Adaptive Behavior Inventory for Children (ABIC).

The third part of the SOMPA was the Pluralistic Model. This was probably the most controversial part of the system. Multiple norms were used to estimate a child's learning potential (ELP). The goal was to evaluate the child within the context of his or her own social and cultural group rather than by the standards of the majority culture. Two complementary assumptions were made: a) all tests are culture-specific and measure learning; and b) children must be compared with other children from a similar cultural background before any conclusions concerning intelligence can be reached.

The WISC-R was the sole measure in the Pluralistic model, and its interpretation was guided by the use of the Sociocultural Scales. The four Sociocultural Scales were Family Size, Family Structure, Socioeconomic Status, and Urban Acculturation. The weighted raw scores on the scales were converted into scaled scores appropriate for the child's ethnic background. Scores from these four scales were plugged into a multiple regression equation in order to transform the standard WISC-R IQ into an Estimated
Learning Potential (ELP). This adjustment in WISC-R scores was intended to allow for individual differences in children's sociocultural backgrounds. The computation of the ELP is not based on any changes in WISC-R items, administrative procedures, or validity data. Children were awarded points solely on the basis of their more "marginal status."

The SOMPA was normed in the early 1970s on a California sample of 2,100 public school children aged 5 to 11 years. There were 700 Hispanics, 700 African Americans, and 700 Anglos. Parent interviews were conducted by fluent bilingual examiners, and child testing was completed by qualified examiners. The SOMPA seems to have fallen into disuse (Kamphaus, 1993) primarily due to the problem of the predictive validity of the ELP score.

Figueroa and Sassenrath (1989) did a follow-up study on 1,184 of the original SOMPA standardization participants and retested them approximately ten years later, in 1981-1983. The original WISC Full Scale and ELP scores were correlated with students' reading and mathematics scores from the Stanford Achievement Test and various GPAs. The results were that, "For all three ethnic groups VIQ correlated slightly but consistently higher with all the achievement measures than did VIQ-ELP....Consequently, VIQ rather than VIQ-ELP generally appears to be the more sensitive predictor of school achievement" (p. 17).

Brown (1979) and Clarizio (1979a) questioned the norming of the SOMPA. They contend that the California-based norms may not apply to other areas of the country. In fact, they propose that since the socioeconomic distribution of the norm sample is not presented in the technical manual, the norm sample may not even be representative of the school-based population of California children.

On the other hand, Cummins (1984) found the main problem with the SOMPA to be its reliance on the WISC-R. He suggested that sub-tests such as the Information sub-test are so culturally-biased that even administration of the total test raises ethical
problems. The other criticism he had of the SOMPA is that it failed to provide
appropriate pedagogical intervention for those classified as "intrinsically handicapped" or
for those whose poor academic performance was regarded as a function of sociocultural
factors.

The utility of the SOMPA has also been questioned. The information derived
from the SOMPA does not seem to warrant the time required to administer, score, and
interpret the data (Kamphaus, 1993).

In summary, most critics of the SOMPA agreed that while there is a need for less
culturally biased standardized tests to measure cognitive functioning, the SOMPA did not
measure up to the standards they would like to have seen.

**The Kaufman Assessment Battery for Children (K-ABC)**

The development of intelligence testing for CLD students then turned its efforts
towards developing less culturally and verbally biased assessment instruments. The
Kaufman Assessment Battery for Children was an intelligence test specifically developed
to reduce the linguistic bias for the population of students who were not verbally
competent in English.

The K-ABC was designed to be less dependent of verbal interaction than more
traditional intelligence tests. This is one test, not the battery of assessments as found in
the SOMPA. The K-ABC is described in the manual (Kaufman and Kaufman, 1982) as
"an individually administered measure of intelligence and achievement standardized on a
large, representative nationwide sample of normal and exceptional children ages 2 and a
half through 12 and a half years" (p.1). It yields standard scores in four global areas of
functioning: sequential processing, simultaneous processing, mental processing
composite, and achievement. Simultaneous processing refers to the mental abilities of
the child to integrate input all at once to solve a problem correctly. Sequential
processing, on the other hand, emphasizes the arrangement of stimuli in sequential or
serial order for successful problem solving. The Mental Processing Composite is a summary score reflective of the Sequential and Simultaneous scales. On a separate Achievement scale, subtests are combined to form a global Achievement score.

Assessment of the intellectual functioning of hearing-impaired, speech-and language-disordered, and non-English speaking children is facilitated by the inclusion of a Nonverbal Scale composed of selected K-ABC sub-tests that can be administered in pantomime and responded to motorically. Among the goals of the K-ABC are to provide a measure of intelligence that is separate from a measure of acquired factual knowledge, to provide as "fair" as possible a measure for use with exceptional and minority group children, and to yield scores that translate to educational intervention. The role of language ability was deliberately minimized on the Processing Scales in order to prevent contamination of problem-solving ability with level of language development or fluency in verbal expression. Only three out of ten processing sub-tests require vocalization for the responses (Kamphaus, 1993).

An important difference between the K-ABC and conventional IQ tests is that all the sub-tests on the Processing Scales include one sample and two "teaching" items. Should the child fail any of all of these items, the examiner is instructed to demonstrate the correct response and (if necessary) to use virtually any verbal (e.g. child's L1) or nonverbal means to communicate the nature of the task to the child. In addition, the scoring rules for the test accept correct answers given in slang or a non-English language. (Cummins, 1984).

The standardization for the K-ABC was adequate, for the most part, closely matching the 1980 census data. Stratification variables included age, sex, geographic region, socioeconomic status (parental education), race or ethnicity, and community size. A total of 2,000 children between the ages of 2-6 and 12-5 years were tested, with 200 to 300 children, equally divided by sex, at each of nine age levels.
RELIABILITY. Internal consistency reliabilities for the Mental Processing Composite and the Achievement Scale were, on the average, .91 and .93 respectively, for preschool children and .94 and .97, respectively for school-age children. Average internal consistency reliabilities for the other three scales are satisfactory, ranging from .86 to .93. The Mental Processing Composite has an average standard error of measurement of 4.6 points for preschool children and 3.5 points for school-age children. The highest average intercorrelation is between the Simultaneous and Achievement Scales (r = .66) for school-age children, whereas the lowest average intercorrelation is between the Sequential and Simultaneous Processing Scales for preschool children (r = .41). Stability of the K-ABC, measured over a retest interval of two to four weeks for three samples of children is adequate, with median coefficients of .88 for the Mental Processing Composite and .95 for the Achievement Scale. Median gain scores were 4.9 points for the Mental Processing Composite and 2.0 points for the Achievement Scale (Sattler, 1992).

VALIDITY. Evidence of construct validity is presented in the form of increases in subtest raw scores with age. Factor analysis supports the organization of the K-ABC into three scales.

Evidence of concurrent validity is presented in the form of correlations of the K-ABC with various individual and group tests of intelligence and achievement. Median correlations between the Mental Processing Composite and the WISC-R or WPPSI are .50 with the Verbal Scale, .65 with the Performance Scale, and .70 with the Full Scale. These medians are based on 13 to 18 samples. With the Standord-Binet: Form L-M, the median correlation was .63, based on six samples. Median correlations with tests of achievement were .56 for the Mental Processing Composite (based on 12 correlations) and .68 for the Achievement score (based on 13 correlations). Correlations of the K-ABC with various achievement tests administered 6 to 12 months after the K-ABC
indicate adequate predictive validity. Median correlations with the total score on the achievement tests were .56 for the Mental Processing Composite and .80 for the Achievement score (based on six samples) (Sattler, 1992).

The K-ABC is also unusual in that the Kaufmans apparently went to great lengths to remove biased items. Many items were removed at various stages of test development due to concern over gender, regional, or racial/ethnic group bias.

Sattler (1992, p. 302) cites the lack of verbal comprehension or reasoning items on the Mental Processing composite as a fundamental weakness of the K-ABC. He feels that one of the key components of intellectual ability are tasks that measure verbal skills.

Since so much of the bias inherent in test items relates to their bias as language related tasks, other researchers are developing ability tests that are not heavily reliant on language. While not culture free, two recent examples of non-verbal intelligence measures are the TONI-2 and the CTONI.

**Test of Nonverbal Intelligence, Second Edition (TONI-2)**

The TONI was first published in 1982 and revised in 1990. The TONI was intended as a nonverbal measure of intelligence for children and adults. It has an age range of 5-0 to 85-11. The TONI attempts to assess "problem solving."

It does so by using variance of figural matrices. It also uses a multiple-choice format where the child or adult has to select the response that best completes the problem. Typically, the examiner does not use language but rather administers the test in pantomime and the child responds simply by pointing. In order to assist pantomimed or language-free administration, there are several training items at the beginning of the test. The TONI takes approximately 15 minutes to administer. It includes two parallel forms, A and B.

**RELIABILITY.** Internal consistency coefficients are generally in the .80s and .90s. Test-retest coefficients are slightly lower, generally in the .80s.
VALIDITY. Evidence for validity of the TONI comes primarily from correlations with other multiscale intelligence test batteries. There is some evidence of temporal stability, although this is based on small samples. Moderate to high correlations with other measures of ability (e.g. the WISC-R) and achievement are presented as evidence of criterion-related validity, and additional evidence of construct validity (e.g., correlations between age and scores, score differences in groups known to differ in general intelligence, factor analyses) is presented. Because this test is designed for use with special populations, it is critical to demonstrate reliability and validity in these populations, and the test manual does that.

Comprehensive Test of Nonverbal Intelligence (CTONI)

Published in 1996, the CTONI is a battery of six subtests, designed to measure different aspects of nonverbal intellectual abilities from ages 6-0 to 18-11. The six sets are:

1. **Pictorial Analogies** (employing a 2x2 matrix to measure the ability to recognize the relationship of two objects to each other and to find a similar relationship between two different objects)

2. **Geometric Analogies** (the same, using geometric designs instead of pictures of objects)

3. **Pictorial Categories** (measures the ability to deduce the relationship between two stimulus figures and select from five choice items the one that shares the same relationship with the stimulus figures.

4. **Geometric Categories** (geometric designs are used instead of pictures of objects in the same format)

5. **Pictorial Sequence** (problem solving format in which the "rule" guiding the progression of figures must be identified)

6. **Geometric Sequences** (the same as in the pictorial subtest but using geometric
In addition, a Pictorial Nonverbal Intelligence Composite (formed from the combination of the three Pictorial subtests), a Geometric Nonverbal Intelligence Composite (formed from the combination of the three geometric design subtests), and a Nonverbal Intelligence Composite (derived by combining the standard scores of all six CTONI subtests into a summary nonverbal intelligence score) are produced.

The entire test reportedly takes from 40-60 minutes, with individual subtests requiring 5-10 minutes. Instructions can be delivered orally, or by pantomime. The CTONI was normed on 2,129 children and adolescents from 23 states. Students with disabilities who were mainstreamed were also included.

RELIABILITY. Information related to the CTONI's reliability is based on Cronbach's coefficient alpha for internal consistency, delayed (1-month interval), test-retest using the same form, and interrater reliability based on two independent raters. Coefficient alphas are also presented for relevant subgroups. All three types of reliability estimates have acceptably high coefficients for both subtest and composite scores. Interrater reliability estimates are the highest, ranging from .95 to .99, whereas test-retest reliability estimates are the lowest, but still within acceptable ranges (.79 to .94). Measure of average reliability, computed from all three measures, range from .92 to .96.

VALIDITY. The manual provides information for content, criterion, and construct validity. Several sources of information are provided as evidence of content validity. One source relates to item selection, for which the authors used an extensive content analysis of existing nonverbal intelligence measures. They also document the relationship of item content to several models of intelligence (Das, Horn and Cattell, Jensen, Salvia and Ysseldyke, Wechsler). Classical item analysis, using acceptable criteria for item discrimination and item difficulty, was used to retain items.

Aylward (1998) who wrote a review of the CTONI for Mental Measurements
Yearbook finds the test particularly useful in "testing bilingual students, and those with language deficits, auditory processing problems, motor impairments, or children from socially disadvantaged households" (p. 312). He finds the combination of pictorial and geometric content, absence of purely perceptual-performance matching or gestalt closure tasks, potentially advantageous over existing nonverbal tests such as Raven's Progressive Matrices, the TONI and TONI-2.

The last contribution to the assessment reforms movement to be presented in this paper is a brief look at how the child will perform when assisted by a competent model. All the previous solutions discussed (SOMPA, K-ABC, TONI-2, CTONI) place the child in an unassisted mode. The author has chosen to discuss the Learning Potential Assessment Device developed by Feuerstein (1979) as a representation of assisted learning contribution.

Feuerstein's Learning Potential Assessment Device (LPAD)

The learning-potential movement is a very different type of intelligence assessment. It is associated with Feuerstein (1979), Budoff (1987) and Brown and French (1979). The common theoretical thread to these methods is that they all rely heavily on the theories of the Russian developmentalist, L.S. Vygostsky (1962).

Vygotsky offered the notion of the zone of proximal development (ZPD) to explain his theory of cognitive development. The ZPD is the difference between the child's current level of development and the level of development that can be achieved when a child is assisted by a competent model such as a parent, teachers, or accomplished peer.

Feuerstein (1979) developed the Learning Potential Assessment Device (LPAD) as a method of gauging the modifiability of a child's intelligence by assessing the child's ZPD. This paradigm is frequently referred to as a "test-teach-test" paradigm. The first test is the assessment of the initial developmental level, the teaching portion of the
assessment allows the child to benefit from the "coaching" and guidance of a competent model, and the final portion of the assessment measures the developmental level reached as a result of "teaching." The distance (gain) between first and second tests then serves as an estimate of the child's modifiability.

Feuerstein presents a considerable amount of data, including many case studies to demonstrate the success of the LPAD in identifying particular avenues of modifiability in adolescents who had been diagnosed as mentally retarded by conventional psychometric assessment procedures. Many of these individual attained normal levels of academic and intellectual functioning when provided with appropriated intervention procedures designed to teach them how to use effectively their cognitive abilities by focusing attention on significant events and ideas in their environment or in the problem to be solved.

In this type of assessment, the evaluator is looking for the "maximal" performance rather than the "typical" with the emphasis on process rather than on product. LPAD is not a normative procedure; i.e. its purposes do not include classification or ranking within groups, so there are no norms. This type of assessment is appropriate for children who come from culturally and linguistically diverse groups. In teaching the child the skills he/she needs to know before they are assessed the evaluator is in a better position to determine if the present low academic performance is due to intrinsic factors or environmental factors.

In summary, Feuerstein's LPAD must be considered an extremely important advance, both theoretically and clinically, in view of its impressive supporting empirical evidence and the severe limitations associated with conventional psychometric assumptions. Its search for what students may be capable of achieving with mediated intervention provides a much more rational and humanistic basis for psychological assessment than standard psychometric procedures that tend to write off low-achieving
students' potential as a loss or as demanding an unwanted, unprofitable investment (Cummins, 1984).

Cummins (1984) goes on to offer this thought. "From the present perspective, both the K-ABC and the LPAD are considerably more appropriate for use with minority students than the WISC-R or its derivatives (e.g. SOMPA)" (p. 204). He also cautions that care should be exercised in using both measures. In the first place, they too, can be just as dangerous as conventional IQ tests in the hands of psychologist who knows little about minority children's cultural background or learning styles and who may harbor misconceptions about the nature of bilingualism and language learning among minority students.

Glutting and McDermott (1990) cite a central problem with the LPAD research. They believe the malleability of the LPAD methodology make documentation of the effectiveness of the LPAD virtually impossible. They conclude that, "it is impossible to determine empirically whether test performance subsequent to the experimental inducement of mediated learning is due to the treatment or to a host of (variables), not the least of which is IQ" (p. 300).

Summary

Intelligence is a construct that is not easily defined, let alone measured. The traditional standardized intelligence tests were developed to predict school success. However, they have often by criticized by those who feel the mean score differences reflected in the scores of minority students as compared to middle class European American students reflects a bias in the educational system. Jane Mercer (1973) documented the overrepresentation of minority students in special education classes and then developed the SOMPA in an effort to produce a more culture-fair means of assessment. However, the SOMPA did not resolve some of the other issues which had been a concern of those who evaluate CLD students. Soon tests like the K-ABC, the
TONI, and the C-TONI began to appear. This type of intelligence test had been especially designed with intentionally less verbal interaction necessary in an effort to more equitably assess the "intelligence" of CLD students.
CHAPTER 3: IMPLICATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS FOR SCHOOL PSYCHOLOGISTS

This purpose of this chapter is to discuss the roles of the school psychologist in regard to working with CLD students. Recommended procedures for the assessment of second language learners with potential disabilities from an ecological perspective will also be presented. This perspective includes the types of evaluation activities endorsed by the authors (Yssledyke, Dawson, Lehr, Reschly, Reynolds, and Telzrow, 1997) of the National Association of School Psychologist's Blueprint for School Psychology (i.e. data-based decision-making; effective instruction; school structure, organization and climate). It will begin with a discussion of prereferral procedures that can help prevent the erroneous referral of language minority youngsters to special education and will then suggest more reliable practices for assessing second language learners for potential disabilities.

Roles of a School Psychologist

The school psychologist has many roles to fulfill. It is interesting to note that what the psychologist might see as the most important role to fill is not necessarily the same one that takes up the majority of the work week. The traditional role of the school psychologist was characterized by Reschley (1976) as "a referral receptacle, kit-carrying, report-generating robot" (p. 106). While this description intones that school psychologist does (or could) provide more than that which is mentioned, unfortunately, this is all too often the same characterization of school psychologists held by those outside of the field.

A second role of the school psychologist which is very different from the diagnostician is that of consultant. Reschley (1976) points out that while this is not a new role for school psychologists, it has recently been advocated as an answer to problems in the profession such as individual case work being ineffective; testing leading to labeling, rather than to effective interventions; and being unable to effect needed changes in
school personnel and programs. The idea is that if school psychologist can operate primarily in this role, services will be more effective and positively influence greater numbers of people.

In the role of diagnostician, school psychologists have relied heavily on the use of standardized tests, such as IQ tests, in determining which students should qualify for special education. In other words, school psychologists have tried to use an objective device (standardized tests) to help determine which students should be separated from their peers for instructional purposes. Traditional norm-referenced assessment is also referred to as formal assessment. However, as these traditional measures are not adequate for an increasing proportion of the clientele (CLD students), responsible school psychologists must incorporate new methods of evaluation. Informal assessment is defined by Chittooran and Miller (1998) as, "a structured and systematic problem-solving approach to assessment designed to gather information about a child's strengths and weaknesses in academic, cognitive, and social-behavioral domains that can then be translated into instructional objectives" (p. 15). Informal assessments are sometimes interventions tried by classroom teachers prior to formal referral and/or assessment. The emphasis of the problem-solving approach is oriented towards adjusting factors in the environment of the child so that the child can remain in the regular education classroom.

**Ecological Assessment**

Appropriate assessment for nearly all children begins with the school psychologist evaluating the learning environment of the child (teacher expertise, curriculum, and amount and nature of instruction provided) as much as evaluating the characteristics of the student, since either aspect or both could explain the lack of achievement. This type of assessment is known in special education as ecological assessment (Heron and Heward, 1982) because all aspects of the "ecosystem" are considered as possible sources of explanation of learning failure and as potential avenues for interventions to reinstate
effective learning. Cummins's (1989) research has revealed that all too often the learning environment of the child is disregarded in favor of concentrating the evaluation on the child, searching for intrinsic characteristics (deficits) that could explain the child's lack of progress.

In the prereferral process from an ecological perspective, the child's performance is examined in the context of current educational arrangements, and alternative instructional methods are tried within the child's existing placement (Willig, 1986). This is a proactive process that attempts to enhance the learning of children who are currently not achieving by altering the current external learning conditions. It seeks to avoid labeling the child and, wherever possible, referring the youngsters to special educational settings. Prereferral intervention is intended to respond to external factors prior to suspecting internal conditions that would prompt a referral to special education. Where it is documented that a child is being systematically provided with an inadequate instructional program, a referral is totally inappropriate since the performance of the child can be explained by the instruction provided; therefore, it is the quality of the instruction provided that requires "intervention."

For a prereferral intervention to be effective it must take into account internal and external conditions with input gathered from a variety of sources, including teachers, parents, administrators, and students. It is ecological in nature in that it analyzes the learner's performance in context and considers student, teacher, curricular, and instructional variables that impinge on the teaching-learning process. Student-related factors, such as sensory functioning, health, and nutritional status, language performance, sociocultural and experiential background characteristics, learning style, patterns of participation, cognitive functioning, academic achievement, and socioemotional adjustment are assessed (Ambert and Dew, 1982; Ortiz and Garcia, 1988).
In the case of immigrant and refugee students, factors such as culture shock, identity conflicts, language and teaching style differences between the country from which they came and the U.S., the level and quality of their previous educational background, conflicting demands between home and school, impoverished living conditions, being in the country illegally or without documentation, experiences as a refugee, and experiencing prejudice in school and within the community may be present (Grossman, 1995). School psychologists and other school personnel should familiarize themselves with these areas well enough to be able to recognize them and follow up accordingly. Within the community, there may be people with more training and experience that can be called upon for input into the specific issues or the cultural variables which affect how the student is resolving the issue at hand.

In order to collect different types of information, observation in the classroom across settings and at different times of the day over several occasions is necessary. Information collected during classroom observations should be combined with information from school records, educational history, interviews with parents and teachers, and language proficiency test results in order to formulate an effective prereferral intervention.

Researchers have pointed out some difficulties in identifying second language students for referral using procedures designed for mainstream, monolingual youngsters. They point out that if behaviors that are included on problem behavior checklists for native speakers were applied to normally developing second language learners, they would result in misidentification of these learners as disabled. Willig (1986) states,

Many child characteristics that are considered to be symptomatic of learning disability in monolingual children are so closely related to language, that when applied to children trying to function in an
unfamiliar language, they simply describe aspect of the second language learning situation (p. 167).

For example, in the area of language development, such checklists often include behaviors such as "speaks infrequently," "refuses to answer questions" or "has poor comprehension." While these may indicate potential problems for native speakers, in many cases they can lead to misjudgement of second language learners (Ortiz and Maldonado-Colon, 1986). This is why it is important for educators and school professionals to have an understanding of the process and variables involved in second language acquisition. Teachers may also assume that once the child has basic interpersonal communication skills (BICS) that they also have the cognitive academic language proficiency skills (CALPS) as well. As defined earlier, these types of skills are related, but take differing amounts of time to develop. It is erroneous to think that because a child can converse with friends and teachers in English before school and during lunch, that they understand and can perform all the academic tasks required of them in between.

During the prereferral process, an ecological assessment of the student's learning environment needs to be done to assess the classroom situation for factors which could be affecting student outcomes. The evaluator should also be (or become) aware of how the student's culture may be influencing his/her performance. It is also recommended that parents be involved and a determination of their expectations of the behaviors be determined.

The evaluator (i.e. school psychologist) needs to be aware of the student’s cultural background and language (if applicable) and be aware of differences between school culture/expectations and home culture/expectations. If the school psychologist is a member of the dominant mainstream culture, and is working with children from diverse
cultures, it is important that the psychologist understand something of the student’s cultural values. If one believes, for example, that one of the outcomes of public education in the United States is to reproduce the (dominant) culture, then, one may also realize that depending upon which cultural group one belongs to, might affect how one regards school as an institution. The people who are associated with the school, as well as members of the dominant culture may also be regarded in the same manner. Therefore, in an effort to approach a student, the parents, and perhaps even the community of the student, it is important to learn effective rapport building skills (i.e., at the least, it is best to know culturally appropriate body language, forms of address, and social customs).

If a language difference prevents ease of communication between the school psychologist and the family, the use of an interpreter is in order. However, the interpreter must also be aware of the cultural background of the student (i.e., just because the interpreter speaks Spanish does not mean that he or she would automatically be familiar with the cultural background of a Spanish-speaking family).

**The Use of Interpreters**

It is also vitally important that the interpreter be trained and knowledgeable in the assessment process. This includes knowledge of the vocabulary and terms used by psychologists and special education professionals, as well as an understanding of testing instruments so that they can interpret and explain them to families.

Finally, and perhaps most often overlooked, interpreters must be advised and held to the same ethical constraints as psychologists. As interpreters, they become privy to highly sensitive and personal information about families, possibly from within their own community. It is imperative that they understand the expectations of confidentiality, from an ethical and professional perspective, so that students' families will develop and maintain a trust and confidence in the school and its representatives.
Interviews and Observations

During interviews, the family should be asked about their own history, including migration history, their family composition, their English language proficiency, including which language they prefer to use at home. The questions regarding the child should also elicit the child's language preference in the home. Stressors within the family related to the child should be investigated. For example, if the family has recently immigrated, how are they adjusting? Are they experiencing culture shock or dwelling on the past and the family members left behind? Although the school psychologist may not feel trained to help the family in these areas, he or she might contact the school social worker who may also make a home visit and/or refer the family to community resources and agencies as he or she deems appropriate.

It is important to gather as much information as possible in regard to previous academic performance and educational placement within the country of origin or the last school attended in the United States. It is helpful to ascertain information about previous referrals, assessment and interventions. Information in regard to the child's developmental history and medical history are generally requested and helpful if related.

Before assessment (direct observation, interviews, tests, etc.) of the child can begin, the parents must have already given their "informed consent" for an evaluation. Informed consent means that the parents must fully understand the implications of the testing and have agreed to proceed. The child's language proficiency and language dominance information may already be on record, but if this information is not recent, the student should be re-evaluated for current proficiency data. Observations can reveal the student's interpersonal skills and relationships with authority figures and peers. The child's teachers should also be interviewed to gather information about the behavior of the child within the school setting. The teacher may report any adaptations or interventions that have already been made within the classroom for the child and the
success or failure rate. The teacher may reveal an awareness (or lack of awareness) toward culture-specific behaviors.

As previously mentioned, observations should be conducted in different settings across different times of day. The psychologist should not make formal observations until he or she has familiarized him/herself with the culture and culture specific/appropriate behaviors of the student. The psychologist should also have knowledge of the stages of acculturation and know where the child fits in these stages as well as knowledge of the stages of language acquisition, including a possible “silent period”. The psychologist should refrain from jumping to quick conclusions and cross validating observations with different people.

The Tools of Assessment

The tools of assessment must be reliable and valid measures. Standardization samples should include members of the child's cultural and/or linguistic group. Test instruments which have been translated into the dominant (non-English) language of the student should be avoided. There are inherent problems with translating assessment instruments. First of all, translations are not equivalent. Words and meanings do not always translated directly. Secondly, the norms would be invalid. If the test was normed on English speaking children, using the norms for a student who took a different form of the test would not be equivalent.

As was discussed earlier, the way in which the results of any test are interpreted is determined by the perspective of the evaluator. At a minimum, the psychologist should understand the process of first and second language development and their interrelationship to one another. The psychologist should know and be aware of the cultural and linguistic background of the child. S/he should be trained in the use and interpretation of tests so that tests are not used inappropriately.
Changing Demographics

As the twentieth century rapidly approaches, significant shifts in the demographics of the United States are also rapidly occurring. Growing numbers of culturally and linguistically diverse (CLD) students are entering the public school system. For both legal reasons and humanitarian reasons, school psychologists must prepare themselves to serve the needs of all students, including those who are learning to speak standard English and those who may have special educational needs as well.

According to the United States Census Bureau (1991), the U.S. population as a whole increased by almost 10 percent from 1980 to total of 248.7 million individuals in 1990. During that decade, the Asian population grew by 108 percent, the Hispanic by 53 percent, the Black by 13 percent, and the White by 6 percent.

According to all population projections, America will become even more diverse in the decades ahead. The U.S. population will look quite different by 2010; the European-American (White) population will decrease from 75 percent in 1990 to 72 percent in 2000 and to 68 percent in 2010, whereas the Asian American population should continue to increase by 5 percent, the Hispanic American by 5 percent, and the African American by 1.3 percent. The country's emerging population characteristics show that approximately one-third of school-age children will be African American, Hispanic American, and Asian American and that these children may be culturally and linguistically different from their teachers.

The profile of the "average" school psychologist closely resembles that of the typical teacher of the next decade; European-American, female, in her mid-thirties with one or two pre-school-aged children (Fagan and Wise, 1994; Grossman 1995). School psychologists, as well as other school professionals, must take note of the cultural and linguistic differences between themselves and their clients and follow recommended practices to ensure fairness in assessment procedures. There is some evidence that
teachers are more likely to perceive students from a different ethnic background than their own as needing special education (Grossman, 1995). As discussed earlier in the paper, much of the "bias" involved in the evaluation of a CLD student comes not from the test instrument but from the evaluator and the person who initiates the referral. By being unfamiliar with the socio-political history and the cultural of minority students, the teacher and/or evaluator may incorrectly interpret student responses and/or behavior during the assessment procedure. The evaluator is responsible for ensuring a valid measurement both by selecting appropriate instruments and by correctly interpreting the results.

Summary

In summary, an ecological assessment takes into account school and classroom learning climate, physical aspects of the learning environment (lighting, seating, or noise level), interpersonal interactions between the teacher and the student among other students, the effectiveness of the curriculum and instruction provided, and home factors that may be having an effect on student performance. At the same time, it seeks to identify conditions that learners bring to the learning situation which detract from their achievement. In ecological assessment, a variety of data collection procedures are employed, including review of records, interviews, tests (both formal and informal), observations, and work samples. Although such a procedure is time-consuming, it is well worth the time invested because it ensures that students have been accurately evaluated and provides guidance for the development of effective intervention plans. Cummins (1984) sums up these thoughts for school psychologists.

Perhaps the best advice that can be given to psychologists is a) find out as much as possible about the child's background culture (and language) and interpret responses sympathetically in light of this
knowledge; b) never regard an IQ as meaningful for a minority student (because the assumptions of the test have not been met) and compute it only if a quantitative score is necessary for the student to qualify for remedial assistance; in these circumstances communicate actively to administrators and policy-makers how meaningless and dangerous such a label is and attempt to have the procedure changed; c) be sensitive to the misinterpretations that have characterized much psychological assessment of minority students in the very recent past (and present) and realize that the diagnostic tools currently available are not fully adequate to the task at hand (p. 204).

CONCLUSION

Culturally and linguistically diverse exceptional students are the group of students who have been said to have three strikes against them before they even enter school (Rueda and Chan, 1979). They have some type of disability, they are limited in their English proficiency, and they are often disadvantaged in the socioeconomic sense. All of these factors are associated with lowered academic achievement. Therefore, as it is expected of the school psychologist to be able to help the student and increase the academic achievement, it is important that the school psychologist be aware of the most important variables in assessing culturally and linguistically diverse students.

Language and culture are closely connected. Therefore, when a student immigrates to a new country, he/she must often contend with learning a new language as well as learning new dominant cultural norms as well as finding out how to integrate the old with the new. There are many variables in the process of language acquisition that can affect the rate and proficiency of growth in the second language, as well as imitate variables found in first language acquisition. When a school professional is not aware of all variables, he/she may confuse what is “normal” for a student learning a second
language with what might be considered “abnormal” for a native speaker.

When there is reason to assess a student for special education, caution must be taken in applying the tools of assessment, as well as interpreting them. Again, because the most frequently used intelligence tests were normed on dominant culture, native speaking students, the norms will not apply to a student who is not yet fluent in English. Using the ecological approach is a way to assess students from any culture and language.

School psychologists have an ethical responsibility accommodate students' needs. The principles for professional ethics of the National Association of School Psychologists (NASP) contained in its Professional Conduct Manual (1992) address multicultural issues in the assessment and delivery of psychological services. Principle 2 of Section III states, "School psychologists respect all persons and are sensitive to physical, mental, emotional, political, economic, social, cultural, ethnic, racial, gender, sexual preference, and religious characteristics" (p.5).

As the demographics of the population change, so will the culture and linguistic diversity found within the schools. There are many strategies and alternative assessments available to school psychologists which may offer a "truer" picture of the strengths and abilities of students with needs than traditional methods. Ecological assessment serves as a reminder that not everything that fails is the fault of the student. It pushes all school professionals to be alert and aware of their beliefs and practices within the classroom and the effects of those beliefs and practices on the children in their charge.
References


