Definition of Terms

Bias: An attitude, belief, or feeling that results in and helps to justify unfair treatment of a person because of his/her identity.

Culture is the values, beliefs, linguistics, expression, and patterns of thinking and styles of communication that shape our behaviors, expectations and reactions. It is shared by a group of human beings and expressed through behaviors in response to the specific needs of its members. It goes beyond race and color to include ethnicity, physical characteristics and groups with similar values, experiences and orientations/preferences.

Cultural Competence: The ability to think, feel, and act in ways that acknowledge, respect, and build upon ethnic, sociocultural, and linguistic diversity.

Dominant group: A group within a society that has the greatest power, privileges, and social status. It may or may not constitute the majority of the population. Throughout much of the history of the United States, the dominant group has been white, Christian, affluent and male.

Ethnicity: A group classification in which members share a common origin, history, cultural heritage, customs, language, religion, and other cultural factors. Ethnicity exists only to the extent that groups of people actually use it to organize themselves and categorize others.

Ethnocentrism is the tendency to view one's own cultural group as the center of everything, the standard against which all others are judged. It assumes that one's own cultural patterns are the correct and best ways of acting. Historically, many whites have judged culturally different people in terms of value and behaviors of the white, dominant culture. This lack of understanding of, and respect for, ethnic and cultural difference has lead to racism and discrimination, which have been conveyed both subtly and overtly. In order to render culturally sensitive and appropriate care, it is necessary to identify how one's own cultural background impacts on ways of seeing and behaving,

Equity: Fairness and justice or impartiality (getting what you need). Beyond equal educational opportunity (which means providing the same resources, opportunity, and treatment for each student).

Adapted by Janet Gonzalez-Mena and Senta Greene from Project Culturally Responsive and Family Focused Training (California State University, Northridge, Department of Special Education) and Anti-Bias Education for Young Children and Ourselves.

CULTURE AS A PROCESS

Described below are six important concepts about "the deep structure of culture." Awareness of them helps us understand culture as a process.

1. Culture is a set of rules for behavior. You cannot "see" culture because you cannot see the rules; you can only see the behaviors the rules produce. Yet, culture rules do not cause behavior, they influence people to behave similarly, in ways which help them to understand each other.

   It is by understanding your culture's rules that you know how to greet a person younger than you, older then you, a friend, a stranger. Cultural rules help you to know how to hold a baby. Culture rules shape food preferences, and celebrations – determine whether you celebrate the sun or the moon, whether you wear a dress or pants, or nothing at all. These rules give meaning to all the events and experiences of life. The essence of culture is not the behaviors themselves, but the rules that produce the behaviors.

2. Culture is characteristic of groups. The rules of a culture are shared by the group, not invented by the individual, the rules of the *group*, which are passed on from one generation to the next from the core of culture. It is a mistake to confuse individual differences with group cultural differences. Every person develops a unique personality as a result of their personal history, and at the same time develops within a cultural context with some behavioral characteristics, which are shared with other members of the group.

3. Culture is learned. No one is born acculturated; rather, we are born with a biological capacity to learn. *What* each person learns depends upon the cultural rules of the people who raise them. Some rules are taught with words "hold your fork in your right hand, and your knife in your left." Other rules are demonstrated by actions -- when to smile, how close to stand when talking to someone.

   Because culture is learned, it is a mistake to assume a person's culture by the way s/he looks. Someone can be racially black and culturally Irish. A person can also become bi-cultural or tri-cultural by learning the rules of cultures other than his or her own primary group.

4. Individual members of a culture are embedded to different degrees within their culture. Because culture is learned, it can be *well* learned by some people in the group and less *well* learned by others. As children are acculturated, they usually learn the core rules of their culture, yet they may not always learn every cultural rule equally well. Some families are more tradition oriented, others less. Further, even when families and individuals learn the cultural rules, they may not always behave according to the rules they have learned -- some people are conformists,

Adapted from: Brunson Day, C. (2013). Culture and Identity Development: Getting Infants and Toddlers Off to a Great Start in Adapted from: Amini Virmani, E. & Mangione, P.L. (Ed.). (2013). *Infant/Toddler Caregiving: A Guide to Culturally Sensitive Care (2nd ed.)*(pp. 6-8). Sacramento, CA: California Department of Education.
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THE GIVENS OF CULTURE

1. Cultural assumptions are beliefs which are completely accepting within the group that they do not need to be stated, questioned, or defended.

2. Children raised in a particular group are encultured into its "right" ways.

3. Each culture thinks its own ways are superior.

4. Everyone is ethnocentric.

5. Our culture and values influence *what* we see, hear and feel. They also influence *how* we see, hear and feel.

6. We all have biases and prejudices and discussing them is risky.

7. Not every conflict involving people who are different is caused by a cultural problem.

8. In every culture, people respond to respect and disrespect.

9. Cultural conflict does not disappear because we decided to ignore it.

10. Improving intercultural relationships and valuing diversity require patience, tolerance for ambiguity, flexibility, humility, an open mind, and a sense of humor.

Adapted by Douglas Quiett from Project Culturally Responsive and Family Focused Training (California State University, Northridge, Department of Special Education) and Anti-Bias Education for Young Children and Ourselves.

CULTURAL SELF-AWARENESS

1. How do you describe your identity in terms of class, culture, ethnicity, language, religion, race, sexual orientation, or any other aspect of your identity that is important to you?

2. What are some of the values, beliefs, and practices of the family in which you were raised that are a part of you today? In what way do those values, beliefs, and practices affect the way you see yourself?

3. What would you like someone from a different identity group to know or understand about you?

4. Have you noticed ways in which your culture influences how you relate to and care for children?

5. To what extent do your responses above reflect the attitudes, customs, values, practices, thinking, world views, and beliefs of the cultural or ethnic group you most identify as your own?

6. Think of some of your values and beliefs around raising children. Do they differ from the values and beliefs of your family of origin?

7. Think about times when you were confronted with someone with different values, beliefs, and practices from your own. What feelings came up for you in those instances? Did differences lead to misunderstandings or new understandings?

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Conversations We're Not Having About Diversity

Conversations about our differences.....
- only scratch the surface, leaving deeper feelings and issues safely buried
- perpetuate patterns of bias and racism by not naming our feelings and experiences
- have the power to keep the hope of community alive or isolate us in our individual perspectives

Conversations about racism and how it has damaged each of us.....
- we don't know how to begin, and are unsure of how to sustain
- we don't want to have because we're afraid of being hurt or hurting others
- we don't know how to have because no one ever taught us how to talk about our pain

Conversations that reflect our place and power in society.....
- include us because there is a place for our voice
- exclude us because we don't speak the language of the group
- give our words power or silence them by how they are received

Conversations that are the key to change.....
- we must begin to have because if we're not talking to each other there is no hope
- we owe one another because through these conversations we learn to talk about and reconcile our differences
- we have to find the courage to engage in because it is the only way to gain mutual respect and understanding

Conversations that I participate in.....
- weigh heavy on my heart because I know I am part of stopping them
- remind me I can't get into another person's skin, but only listen and try to honor his or her perspective
- I'm responsible for starting because someone has to take the risk

Conversations that are the legacy of our past, the hope of our future.....
- conversations that our ancestors never had, that history has rarely seen
- conversations that have the potential for constructing a more equitable and just world
- conversations that ultimately determine the future we leave our children

Christina Lopez Morgan, DeAnza College

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the Program for infant toddler care

Guiding Principles for Culturally Competent Practice

Knowing everything about all cultures is an impossible goal. Therefore, some general principles are proposed to guide culturally competent practice.

1. Start with some level of self-awareness and basic knowledge about the client's culture. Be particularly careful about knowing what words, gestures and body language may be perceived as pejorative or complimentary, and the significance to the client of nonverbal behaviors such as eye contact, proximity, touching, and silence. Learn cultural strengths as well as weaknesses.

2. Recognizing the great variety of mixture of races, ethnicities, and cultures. Make no assumptions from the clients' physical appearance about their concerns, priorities, and resources. Ask the clients how they identify themselves, how closely or not they follow their traditional cultural beliefs, customs, and practices, and what their culture means to them. Understand the differences between individual family practices and broader cultural traditions.

3. Assess the level of cultural assimilation, acculturation, and cultural conflict – of the family with their environment, and between members of the family. Assess the role cultural factors may be playing in the creation of the clients current difficulties and the role they may play in the resolution of those difficulties.

4. Use the authority of professional knowledge and competence to gain the client's trust and cooperation, rather than the power of law to induce fear and coerce compliance. The use of legal authority does become necessary sometimes; use it judiciously when needed.

5. Despite best intentions, mistakes will be made, cultural faux pas will be committed. It's best to acknowledge them and perhaps ask the client what might have been a more appropriate word or action under the circumstances. Respect for the client and worker intent can be conveyed not only in words but also in the worker's intonations and non-verbal behaviors.

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The Iceberg Concept of Culture

Like an iceberg, the majority of culture is below the surface.

Surface Culture

Above sea level
Emotional load: relatively low

food ▪ dress ▪ music ▪
visual arts ▪ drama ▪ crafts
dance ▪ literature ▪ language
celebrations ▪ games

Deep Culture

Unspoken Rules
Partially below sea level
Emotional load: very high

courtesy ▪ contextual conversational patterns ▪ concept of time
personal space ▪ rules of conduct ▪ facial expressions
nonverbal communication ▪ body language ▪ touching ▪ eye contact
patterns of handling emotions ▪ notions of modesty ▪ concept of beauty
courtship practices ▪ relationships to animals ▪ notions of leadership

Unconscious Rules
Completely below sea level
Emotional load: intense

tempo of work ▪ concepts of food ▪ ideals of childrearing
theory of disease ▪ social interaction rate ▪ nature of friendships
tone of voice ▪ attitudes toward elders ▪ concept of cleanliness
notions of adolescence ▪ patterns of group decision-making
definition of insanity ▪ preference for competition or cooperation
tolerance of physical pain ▪ concept of "self" ▪ concept of past and future
definition of obscenity ▪ attitudes toward dependents ▪ problem-solving
roles in relation to age, sex, class, occupation, kinship, and so forth

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16 Every Child Is a Cultural Being

By Carol Brunson Day, Ph.D.

In order to make genuine progress to address human diversity in early education, we need strategies that go deeper than approaches that stem from our desire to "respect" cultural differences. Beyond learning to reserve judgment about different cultural practices, we need to question the tendency to think about white children of the European-based dominant culture as exhibiting *ordinary human behaviors* while thinking about children of other ethnic ancestries as exhibiting *cultural behaviors*.

Lally, R., Mangione, P., and Greenwald, D., Concepts for Care, San Francisco. WestEd Copyright © 2006 WestEd.

As early education programs strive to promote development for all children, those from diverse cultures as well as those in the mainstream, meeting the challenge of making everyone's culture visible will do more than merely improve program practice — it will reshape the entire field. To discover ways to educate all children, we must also consider the unique differences of individuals. An important influence on these differences is one's culture. As our understanding of culture's influence on the development of all people deepens, our understanding of human universals will increase. So as we work to discover the developing cultural child, we at the same time unveil the human child.

BY PEGGY MCINTOSH

UNPACKING THE INVISIBLE KNAPSACK

White Privilege

ILLUSTRATION: RUSS ANDO

Through work to bring material from women's studies into the rest of the curriculum, I have often noticed men's unwillingness to grant that they are overprivileged, even though they may grant that women are disadvantaged. They may say they will work to improve women's status, in the society, the university, or the curriculum, but they can't or won't support the idea of lessening men's. Denials that amount to taboos surround the subject of advantages that men gain from women's disadvantages. These denials protect male privilege from being fully acknowledged, lessened, or ended.

Thinking through unacknowledged male privilege as a phenomenon, I realized that, since hierarchies in our society are interlocking, there was most likely a phenomenon of white privilege that was similarly denied and protected. As a white person, I realized I had been taught about racism as something that puts others at a disadvantage, but had been taught not to see one of its corollary aspects, white privilege, which puts me at an advantage.

I think whites are carefully taught not to recognize white privilege, as males are taught not to recognize male privilege. So I have begun in an untutored way to ask what it is like to have white privilege. I have come to see white privilege as an invisible package of unearned assets that I can count on cashing in each day, but about which I was "meant" to remain oblivious. White privilege is like an invisible weightless knapsack of special provisions, maps, passports, codebooks, visas, clothes, tools, and blank checks.

Describing white privilege makes one newly accountable. As we in women's studies work to reveal male privilege and ask men to give up some of their power, so one who writes about having white privilege must ask, "Having described it, what will I do to lessen or end it?"

After I realized the extent to which men work from a base of unacknowledged privilege, I understood that much of their oppressiveness was unconscious. Then I remembered the frequent charges from women of color that white women whom they encounter are oppressive. I began to understand why we are justly seen as oppressive, even when we don't see ourselves that way. I began to count the ways in which I enjoy unearned skin privilege and have been conditioned into oblivion about its existence.

My schooling gave me no training in seeing myself as an oppressor, as an unfairly advantaged person, or as a participant in a damaged culture. I was taught to see myself as an individual

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privilege simply *confers dominance* because of one's race or sex.

Earned strength, unearned power

I want, then, to distinguish between earned strength and unearned power conferred systemically. Power from unearned privilege can look like strength when it is in fact permission to escape or to dominate. But not all of the privileges on my list are inevitably damaging. Some, like the expectation that neighbors will be decent to you, or that your race will not count against you in court, should be the norm in a just society. Others, like the privilege to ignore less powerful people, destroy the humanity of the holders as well as the ignored group.

We might at least start by distinguishing between positive advantages, which we can work to spread, and negative types of advantage, which unless rejected will always reinforce our present hierarchies. For example, the feeling that one belongs within the human circle, as Native Americans say, should not be seen as privilege for a few. Ideally it is an *unearned entitlement.* At present, since only a few have it, it is an *unearned advantage* for them. This paper results from a process of coming to see that some of the power that I originally saw as attendant on being a human being in the United States consisted in *unearned advantage* and *conferred dominance.*

I have met very few men who are truly distressed about systemic, unearned male advantage and conferred dominance. And so one question for me and others like me is whether we will be like them, or whether we will get truly distressed, even outraged, about unearned race advantage and conferred dominance, and, if so, what we will do to lessen them. In any case, we need to do more work in identifying how they actually affect our daily lives. Many, perhaps most, of our white students in the United States think that racism doesn't affect them because they are not people of color; they do not see "whiteness" as a racial identity. In addition, since race and sex are not the only advantaging systems at work, we need similarly to examine the daily experience of having age advantage, or ethnic advantage, or physical ability, or advantage related to nationality, religion, or sexual orientation.

Difficulties and dangers surrounding the task of finding parallels are many. Since racism, sexism, and heterosexism are not the same, the advantages associated with them should not be seen as the same. In addition, it is hard to disentangle aspects of unearned advantage that rest more on social class, economic class, race, religion, sex, and ethnic identity than on other factors. Still, all of the oppressions are interlocking, as the members of the Combahee River Collective pointed out in their "Black Feminist Statement" of 1977.

One factor seems clear about all of the interlocking oppressions. They take both active forms, which we can see, and embedded forms, which as a member of the dominant group one is taught not to see. In my class and place, I did not see myself as a racist because I was taught to recognize racism only in individual acts of meanness by members of my group, never in invisible systems conferring unsought racial dominance on my group from birth.

Disapproving of the systems won't be enough to change them. I was taught to think that racism could end if white individuals changed their attitudes. But a "white" skin in the United States opens many doors for whites whether or not we approve of the way dominance has been conferred on us. Individual acts can palliate, but cannot end, these problems.

To redesign social systems we need first to acknowledge their colossal unseen dimensions. The silences and denials surrounding privilege are the key political tools here. They keep the thinking about equality or equity incomplete, protecting unearned advantage and conferred dominance by making these subjects taboo. Most talk by whites about equal opportunity seems to me now to be about equal opportunity to try to get into a position of dominance while denying that *systems* of dominance exist.

It seems to me that obliviousness about white advantage, like obliviousness about male advantage, is kept strongly inculturated in the United States so as to maintain the myth of meritocracy, the myth that democratic choice is equally available to all. Keeping most people unaware that freedom of confident action is there for just a small number of people props up those in power and serves to keep power in the hands of the same groups that have most of it already.

Although systemic change takes many decades, there are pressing questions for

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me and, I imagine, for some others like me if we raise our daily consciousness on the perquisites of being light-skinned. What will we do with such knowledge? As we know from watching men, it is an open question whether we will choose to use unearned advantage to weaken hidden systems of advantage, and whether we will use any of our arbitrarily awarded power to try to reconstruct power systems on a broader base.

Peggy McIntosh is Associate Director of the Wellesley College Center for Research on Women. This essay is excerpted from Working Paper 189, "White Privilege and Male Privilege: A Personal Account of Coming To See Correspondences Through Work in Women's Studies" (1988) by Peggy McIntosh; available for $5.00 from the Wellesley College Center for Research on Women, Wellesley MA 02181. (617) 431-1453. The working paper contains a longer list of privileges.