

Culturally Competent Practitioner Initiative

The James Madison University School Psychology Program's *Culturally Competent Practitioner Initiative* (CCPI) was developed in response to calls by the major national professional organizations of school psychologists (National Association of School Psychologists [NASP] and the American Psychological Association [APA]) to train professionals who are equipped to provide services to children and families whose cultural beliefs, values, and expectations are different from the mainstream. The calls by these organizations are themselves in response to the changing demographics of the American school population. For example, in the county where the JMU program is located, at least 40% of children enrolled in public schools speak a language other than English at home, and they speak over 40 different languages (the three major are Spanish, Russian, and Kurdish). When one of these children experiences learning, behavioral or social difficulties at school, it is often the school psychologist who leads the effort to disentangle language, culture, and disability issues through assessment; engages the participation of parents; and assists the school and larger system to meet the needs of the individual student. The JMU School Psychology program is committed to training culturally competent practitioners who possess unique consultative and assessment skills to better meet the needs of diverse student populations. (Refer to the CCPI Requirements Table below.)

Tier 1 Training

All graduate students enrolled in the JMU School Psychology Program will participate in *Tier 1* of the CCPI. In this tier of training, curriculum, didactic and experiential components dealing with cultural and linguistic minority students and their families have been integrated into every required course. Examples include:

1. In the assessment sequence, attention to issues surrounding the unbiased testing of minorities, immigrants, and students learning English are covered and graduate students complete practicum coursework with cultural and linguistic minority children.
2. In the educational foundations course, graduate students learn to locate and integrate relevant information and schools in different countries.
3. In the statistics and research courses methods of analysis which will allow the effects of culture and language to be evaluated are presented.
4. Additional training opportunities are provided outside of coursework through a series of intentional and sequenced workshops (working effectively with translators and interpreters; nondiscriminatory assessment of diverse students [Dr. Samuel Ortiz]). All graduate students are required to attend these program sponsored workshops, engage in clinical practice with culturally and/or linguistically diverse students (at least 30% of clinical work will involve factors of diversity), and will have the opportunity to develop a research thesis incorporating cultural and/or linguistic diversity issues.

Tier 2 Training

Some graduate students enrolled in the JMU School Psychology Program may elect, with program faculty approval, to participate in *Tier 2* of the CCPI. Successful

completion of Tier 2 requirements allows graduate students to receive a *Certificate of Completion* through the College of Graduate and Professional Programs in the area of Culturally Competent Practice in School Psychology. This certificate opportunity is available to those graduate students who have a demonstrated interest in further development of specific cultural competencies in school psychology *and* a demonstrated capacity to excel in the provision of psychological services to diverse populations.

It is expected that students participating in Tier 2 have at least emerging second language skills and adequate prior experiences with diverse populations (e.g., applied work with culturally and/or linguistically children and families, study abroad experiences, relevant undergraduate coursework, research on topics of diversity). In Tier 2 training, which includes all components of Tier 1 training, graduate students will:

- expand on program offered workshops through additional assigned readings and experiential activities, engage in clinical work with at least 50% of cases involving issues of diversity,
- further develop second language skills through an approved course of study or practice
- develop and complete a targeted self-study plan (this plan must have program faculty approval),
- conduct a research thesis in an area of diversity
- complete an internship with a focus on practice with diverse students and families.

Interested graduate students should meet with the program director, their assigned advisor, and the CCPI director to request admission in to Tier 2 of the CCPI.

Tier 3 Training

The James Madison University School Psychology Program CCPI includes a third level of training and professional development, *Tier 3*, that will be available for school based professionals who already possess a terminal degree in school psychology or a closely related field. Participation in this sequenced program of study will lead to a certification of completion and will be available to select practitioners with program faculty approval in 2008-09.

Because training practitioners with specific cultural competencies targeted to the delivery of psychological services within school settings is a relatively new emphasis within school psychology, no “tried-and-true” methods of evaluating programs or individuals exist. The James Madison University School Psychology Program has developed several measures of knowledge, attitudes, and professional skills specific to school psychology, and they are currently being refined and normed. Evaluation of individuals also occurs through comprehensive examinations, portfolio assessment, and the advising sessions. Program faculty expect changes in knowledge, attitudes and skills as a result of the CCPI.

CCPI REQUIREMENTS TABLE

TIER 1 Integrated Experiences/training for ALL graduate students in program	TIER 2 Experiences/Training for Select Students enrolled in Certificate Program (plus column 1)	TIER 3 Experiences/training for Continuing Education Certificate
Issues of diversity integrated in all coursework <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ At least one targeted course objective in each syllabus ❖ Targeted readings and culturally focused texts and activities (e.g., <i>Comprehensive Handbook of Multicultural School Psychology</i>) 		
Required course: Psyc 749 Multicultural Perspectives in Intervention	Additional coursework <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ 1 hour seminar led by program faculty (summer offering) ** 	Column 2
Practicum Experiences to include diversity <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Head Start case ❖ Ratio of field work (goal of at least 30% of practicum work with cultural aspect) 	Targeted Practicum Site (or required ratio of diverse cases at least 50% of cases with identified cultural aspect) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Harrisonburg City Schools ❖ Other practicum sites ❖ International experience 	Case Study
Program Sponsored Training Modules: 1. Assessment of Culturally and Linguistically Diverse students (e.g., Ortiz presentation) 2. Working with Interpreters and Translators 3. Working with GLBT students	Additional assignment/application/ or readings following training modules	Column 1 plus Column 2
	Required expansion or development of second language skills*** <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Approved program of study ❖ Community activity ❖ Conversation groups ❖ International experience/study abroad 	Column 2
Community Awareness Experiences linked to curriculum (students will visit): Harrisonburg City Schools Intake Center VA School for Deaf and Blind Genesis Alternative School		

Evaluation of Cross Cultural Skills and Knowledge 1. Assessment of cross-cultural knowledge on comprehensive exams 2. Portfolio Evaluation 3. Student Self-Report/evaluation of skills and knowledge		Column 1
	Thesis/research focused on cultural issues or diversity***	Scholarly Paper
	Internship with culturally diverse population***	
	Completion of Self-Study/professional development plan/Independent Readings***	Column 2

* Certificate applicants will complete at least 70 noncredit contact hours that may include additional credit hours. Credit hours may include 1 credit hour seminar offered by program faculty, noncredit hours through program offered training modules, and noncredit hours through expansion of second language skills.

** Summer Seminar will focus on advanced topics in culturally competent practice and application/readings from training modules.

***Must be reviewed and approved by program faculty

Graduate students in school psychology are advised that the CCPI is a relatively new initiative for the school psychology program. Thus, ongoing evaluation will occur and subsequent modifications are possible to the above requirements and sequence of training. Students participating in Tier 2 training should expect to work closely with their advisor, the program director and the current director of the CCPI for assistance with their approved program of study. It is the responsibility of the graduate student to ensure that all requirements for Tier 2 are met in a timely manner.