

Integrating cultural competence into mainstream education and training of health professionals:

What does it mean and does it work?

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Overview:

- Words and meanings
- Common approaches
- Good practice
- Challenges in implementation
- Evaluation of effectiveness
- Future directions

Words and their meanings...

- Integrating → including
- Cultural competence
 - action
 - accountability
 - reciprocity
- Mainstream → prevailing current of thought/values/practices

Cultural competence
education and training
initiatives need to be
contextualised within a
broader multifaceted and
coordinated workforce
development plan...

Range of activities...

- Entry level pre-service and undergraduate preparation
- Continuing in-service and postgraduate professional development

Lack of consensus regarding...

- Meanings
- Standards
- Who, what & when?
- Curriculum content & format
- Evaluation processes

Different approaches...

- 'One-off'
 - culture-specific info sessions
- 'Modular'
 - culture-general workshops
- 'Integrated'
 - core curricula encompass intercultural learning

Challenges of implementation...

- Varying interpretations
- Lack of agreement on elements
- Already-laden curricula
- Institutional culture of system
 - Dominance of 'Western' biomedical model of health care

What is 'Good Practice'?

- Depends on a number of factors
- Generic or context-specific?
- Concurrent vertical and horizontal incorporation of diversity issues
 - longitudinal thread throughout career and across contexts

'Insurgent multiculturalism'...

(Giroux 2000; Wear 2003)

- Move away from a focus on non-dominant social and cultural groups towards a study of power
- Focus on 'self' as much as on 'the other'

Learning experiences designed to...

- Facilitate self-scrutiny
- Enhance skills in critical analysis
- Highlight power relations / inequities
- Develop socially accountable and conscious health professionals

Evaluation of effectiveness...

- How to agree on criteria for measurement?
- Are subjective self-reports enough?
- Does it make any difference to the health consumers it is intended to benefit?

Evaluation strategies...

(Betancourt 2003)

- Pre and post-tests
- Follow-up surveys
- Structured qualitative interviews
- Clinical exams
- Presentations of clinical cases
- Medical record reviews
- Case file audits
- Video-taped clinical encounters

Research questions...

- What core cultural competencies are applicable across disciplines in health care?
- What is the optimum balance of generic skills development to context-specific training?
- Does the Competency-Based Training framework offer a way forward?

Research questions...

- How do we assess whether cultural diversity issues have been truly integrated into curricula?
- How best can we evaluate the impact of education and training efforts on health outcomes for the 'end-users'?

Future directions...

- Cultural humility in acceptance of our lack of cultural competence
- Striving for transformation of the mainstream
- Grappling with conflicting health care discourses



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