

Title of Submission: Cultural Competence in Social Work and Other Helping Professions: The Creation of C.A.L.L.

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Abstract:

The argument for addressing multicultural issues in the helping professions is at least 40 years old. Recent studies have documented inequalities in services to children and families of color when compared to services received by Caucasian children and families. As the statutes and protocols regarding serving people continue to change at a rapid pace, it is essential that adult educators practice building enhanced awareness of social cultural context among helping professionals. Therefore, the purpose of this study was to develop and establish the validity of an instrument to measure cultural appreciation in human services workers. The pool of items for the instrument consisted of the 32 items from the Multicultural Counseling Awareness Scale and the 30 items from the Quick Discrimination Index. Responses to these items were gathered from 768 Department of Human Resources employees in Oklahoma via the Internet. After the instrument was developed and field-tested with various populations, criterion-related validity was established by using the responses of 101 employees of the Oklahoma Vocational Rehabilitation Department.

Findings and Conclusions: Various multivariate analysis procedures were used to create an instrument for identifying levels of cultural appreciation. The instrument was named Cultural Appreciation in

Lifelong Learning (CALL). This study has provided educators and social workers with an instrument for easily identifying various levels of cultural appreciation. This instrument has great potential for use in the training and professional development of social welfare professionals. With this instrument based on a learning strategy instrument, a powerful method for creating instruments that are based on precisely identifying characteristics with a few questions that are based on multivariant statistics instead of having a large array of questions and pooling them to compensate for the error in their measurement has been demonstrated. Since the feasibility of this process for instrument construction for other concepts has been shown, the adult educators at Oklahoma State University have used it to develop a flow-chart like instrument to identify educational philosophies. Collectively, these instruments offer the social sciences a new way of designing instruments for quickly and accurately identifying group placement.

**Cultural Competence in Social Work and Other Helping Professions: The Creation of C.A.L.L.**

The argument for addressing multicultural issues in the helping professions is at least 40 years old. Recent studies have documented inequalities in services to children and families of color when compared to services received by Caucasian children and families. Much of the training that has been conducted related to cultural competence is generic in nature and fails to address specific needs. One of the reasons for this is that no instrument exists for quickly and easily identifying different levels of cultural appreciation and for placing people in different levels of training. Therefore, the purpose of this research was to develop a user-friendly instrument for identifying cultural appreciation. One user friendly instrument has already been developed in the field of Adult Education related to learning strategies. The Assessing The Learning Strategies of Adults (ATLAS) instrument used a combination of innovative procedures to develop an instrument that identified groups of people and which could be completed quickly. The new instrument was modeled after this existing instrument.

This research has important implications for educators for two reasons. The first is that it has produced an instrument for identifying levels of cultural appreciation. The second is that the methodology that used has implications for the construction of other instruments.

The Cultural Appreciation in Lifelong Learning (CALL) instrument was developed as a result of this study. This instrument is based on the results of multivariate analysis and uses a flow-chart design to quickly identify placement in one of four groups of cultural appreciation. These groups differ in their appreciation of cultural differences as follows: Group 1 enthusiastically embraces cultural diversity, Group 2 appreciates cultural diversity, Group 3 does not eagerly embrace cultural diversity, and Group 4 is opposed to cultural diversity. This instrument is available on paper and has been posted on an Internet website for general use (see instrument at <http://members.cox.net/drtapp>). It is available for anyone interested in identifying levels of cultural appreciation. The pool of items for the new instrument consisted of the 32 items from the Multicultural Counseling Awareness Scale and the 30 items from the Quick Discrimination Index. Responses to these items were gathered from 768 Department of Human Resources employees in Oklahoma via the Internet.

Creative data collection and data analysis techniques to create CALL. First, the data for the instrument was collected via the Internet. Approximately 1,000 Department of Human Services (DHS) employees were sent an e-mail request to respond to items related to cultural competency from two existing instruments, and 768 responded by linking to the website with the form for the instruments and by completing the survey items. These responses were automatically e-mailed to the researcher. After downloading the responses from the e-mail messages and transferring them to a data management program, the data were subjected to several analyses. In order to establish the construct validity of the items, the two instruments were scored, and a confirmatory factor analysis was performed on each of the instruments. Both factor analyses supported testing done with these instruments with other populations. Once it was confirmed that the items were valid for use with the DHS sample, a cluster analysis was conducted using all of the items from the two instruments. This process identified the four groups of cultural appreciation. In order to determine the process that separated the groups, a series of discriminant analyses were conducted using the groups produced by the cluster analysis and the items from the two instruments as the discriminating variables. For content

validity, the structure matrixes from each of these analyses produced the material needed for writing the questions that separated the groups at each stage of the flow chart. This process produced an instrument that is simple in design, quick and easy to administer, and nonthreatening to take but that is extremely precise and accurate in what it does. Criterion-related validity was established by further testing with another state agency.

### Conclusions

Cultural Appreciation in Lifelong Learning (CALL) is a valid and reliable instrument for identifying cultural appreciation. Additionally, four distinct groups exist related to cultural appreciation. CALL can be completed by professionals in one to two minutes.

Cultural appreciation can be identified by exploring the concepts of knowledge and awareness. Awareness and knowledge are two components of cultural competence (Ponterotto et al., 1996, p. 17). Awareness is concerned with one's own cultural socialization and accompanying predispositions. Knowledge has to do with the learner's knowledge of the worldviews and value patterns of culturally diverse people. These two components interact to

create four distinct groups in terms of the appreciation of cultural diversity.

For the Cultural Appreciation in Lifelong Learning instrument, each of the four groups was given a non-gender-specific name that would not reflect any type of bias toward the group. The four names selected for each group are (a) Group 1-Chris; (b) Group 2-Alex; (c) Group 3-Lee; and (d) Group 4-Lynn. The first initials of each group combine to form the word CALL. The following descriptors are given for each group in the Cultural Appreciation in Lifelong Learning booklet. Each description is based upon the items from the structure matrix that was used to form the groups.

Chris: Those in this group enthusiastically embrace cultural diversity. They feel that societal forces are firmly established that are often repressive to culturally diverse groups. They are very familiar with the impact and operations of oppression and realize that racial discrimination is deeply rooted in society. They understand the role culture has played in the development of an identity and worldview of those in culturally diverse groups.

Alex: Those in this group appreciate cultural diversity. They feel that societal forces have greatly impacted and

have limited opportunities for culturally diverse groups. They understand the role culture has played in the development of an identity and worldview of those in culturally diverse groups but believe that culturally diverse groups can benefit from assuming some mainstream traditional values.

Lee: Those in this group do not eagerly embrace cultural diversity. They believe that the individual rather than societal forces is the major factor influencing a person's social situation. They do not believe that forces such as oppression and racism are deeply rooted in society and are not aware of many institutional barriers that restrict minority groups. They accept mainstream traditional values. They acknowledge that they have very little knowledge of ways for various ethnic groups to adopt the cultural traits of other groups, but they are aware that being born a minority in this society brings with it far more challenges than faced by White people.

Lynn: Those in this group are opposed to cultural diversity. They strongly believe that the individual rather than societal forces is the major factor influencing a person's social situation. They do not believe that forces such as oppression and racism are deeply rooted in society,

and they feel that far too much attention has been directed toward multicultural or minority issues in society. They are somewhat aware that being born a minority in this society bring with it more challenges than faced by White people and have some knowledge of ways for various ethnic groups to adopt the cultural traits of other groups. Despite this awareness and knowledge, they reject concepts related to cultural diversity and firmly believe that people should marry within their own race. Within the four groups there is clear distinction as each group demonstrates varying degrees of knowledge and awareness regarding cultural appreciation.

Cultural Appreciation in Lifelong Learning (CALL) is used to facilitate correct placement in groups formed by the Multicultural Counseling Knowledge and Awareness Scale and the Quick Discrimination Index. The responses from practitioners in the Department of Human Services were used to conduct the cluster analysis to uncover the groups with varying levels of cultural appreciation. The use of discriminant analysis allowed for identifying the processes that separated these groups and provided the structure matrix of items for writing the precise item for identifying placement in the group. Field testing with practitioners provided clarity and feedback on these items.

Finally, the items were organized into a booklet that could easily be administered, and a website was created for the instrument (<http://members.cox.net/drtapp>). Thus, the format and process for creating Assessing The Learning Strategies of Adults (ATLAS) was also very effective for creating CALL.

Cultural Appreciation in Lifelong Learning can be used by those conducting the training as well as by those receiving training. In this way, it can be utilized to raise the educator's awareness regarding the personal degree of cultural appreciation. This could lead to an examination of personal worldviews, which in turn could lead to an opportunity for a perspective transformation.

Cultural Appreciation in Lifelong Learning (CALL) can also be used to stimulate discussions around how those that are exemplary in a particular area became that way. It is through dialogue that adults attempt to understand and to learn what is valid in the assertions made by others and attempt to achieve consensual validation for our own assertions (Mezirow, 1990, p. 354).

Cultural Appreciation in Lifelong Learning should be used to stimulate thinking and dialogue on the issue of cultural diversity in social services provision, the attitudes of the workers, managers, and administrators and

how these attitudes impact the quality of the services being provided. Regardless of group placement, everyone has the potential to grow in cultural appreciation. Dialogue should be encouraged as to how that growth can be cultivated.

### Research

Cultural Appreciation in Lifelong Learning (CALL) is the result of a product-oriented study. It was developed with adult participants from the United States. CALL warrants further study to find out if it is applicable in international arenas. Research should be conducted to determine how social services workers are prepared to work with the general population outside of the United States and how ethnic diversity is addressed during that preparation. Cultural Appreciation in Lifelong Learning (CALL) was developed to promote consciousness raising among those charged with providing services to people and their families. Studies should be conducted to explore consciousness raising related to cultural appreciation and how it relates to perspective transformation. This sort of inquiry should also address whether people can or have the desire to change.

Inquiry is warranted as a result of this study to determine how adult educators might cultivate the desire to

change within learners. There are various characteristics that make one learner more amenable to change than another. The attitude of the learner needs to be studied to determine its' role in amenability to change. Additionally, the origin of people's attitudes toward various cultures and ethnicities is worthy of study. Research should examine and seek to determine not only where attitudes come from, but also whether or not they are fixed.

Finally, further study is warranted to generate alternatives for how the Chris, Alex, Lee and Lynn groups may interact with each other to collectively enhance their cultural appreciation. This study should include discussion regarding what role the facilitator plays in stimulating such interaction. Such research should also explore the attitudinal posture of the facilitator and how it would impact interaction between the groups.

#### References

Ponterotto, J. G., & Alexander, C. M. (1996). Handbook of multicultural assessment: Clinical, psychological, and educational applications. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass Publishers.

Mezirow, J.(1990). Fostering critical reflection in adulthood a guide to transformative and emancipatory learning. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass Inc.