

Guiding Questions: Cultural Mismatch

YOUR CULTURE:

what cultural expectations do you bring to the situation?

- What is your culture in relation to education, interactions and school? (values, beliefs, traditions, customs, worldview, conversational styles, non-verbal language and parenting styles)
- What are the historic experiences/implications of your culture?
- What are the differences/dissonances between your culture and the student's?
- Are you expecting one-way accommodation from the student for any cultural differences? Why? What accommodations are you expecting?

STUDENT'S CULTURE:

what cultural expectations does the student bring to the situation?

- What is the student's culture in relation to education, interactions and school? (values, beliefs, traditions, customs, worldview, conversational styles, non-verbal language and parenting styles)
- What are the historic experiences/implications of the student's culture?
- What are the cultural characteristics of this student that are strengths in the educational environment?
- What have you determined to be motivating & reinforcing to this student?
- What are the parents'/caretakers' view on the student's behaviors of concern?

The CLASSROOM CONTEXT / ECOLOGY:

what is the cultural environment of the individual classroom based on identified best practices?

- How is your classroom based on collaboration & cooperation rather than competition?
- How is your classroom based on praise & reinforcement rather than punishment?
- How does your classroom environment allow for movement & interaction?
- How does your classroom environment honor student strengths, including this student?

The SCHOOL CONTEXT / ECOLOGY:

what is the cultural environment of the school environment based on identified best practices?

- How is the school environment based on collaboration & cooperation rather than competition?
- What are the key elements of the school's positive behavioral support system (PBIS)?
- Are there any situations where this student has been bullied or shunned by peers due to their cultural identity? If so, please describe why (e.g. appearance, social skills, given name, ability level, etc)
- What is the social culture of your school?

CLASSROOM INSTRUCTION:

what is the teaching style, materials, content, structure, etc?

- How are your methods of instruction designed to meet the cultural strengths & learning styles of the student?
- How have you explicitly taught this student the "cultural capital" needed to succeed in school?
- How do you elicit high expectations for this student?
- How have you clearly demonstrated & explained to this student expected behavioral responses?
- How do you include this student's interests & background in your instruction?

The STUDENT'S BEHAVIOR(S) CONCERN:

what is this student trying to communicate by his/her behavior?

- Describe the student's behavior in terms of the mismatch with the behavioral expectations of the classroom context & instruction.
- Where/when/with whom is/are the mismatch(es) most pronounced?
- What are the expected behaviors this student is not demonstrating?
- What are the replacement behaviors this student needs to learn?
- What are my responses & approaches that I need to change?
- What, if any, concerns are there about the student's health, sleep, diet, meds, attendance, motivation etc that may be affecting behavior?

Any other comments, issues or relevant information?

Definitions:

Cultural capital: the behavior patterns, set of values, and linguistic expressions expected in a specific socioeconomic or ethnic group. Cultural capital in school includes the behaviors and language needed to negotiate the rules, interactions and demands of an educational institution. What counts as cultural capital may be different in varying contexts – yours or those of others. Desirable traits in one context may not be recognized or taught in another context.

Cultural mismatch: mismatch between aspects of the student's home culture and the school culture. It may be appropriate to modify aspects of the school culture to "match" some aspects of the home culture. This can lead to increased academic performance for the student, as well as a better understanding of the student.

Culturally responsive: honoring and maintaining the cultural identify and heritage of another. A culturally responsive teacher uses the cultural knowledge, prior expectations and performance styles of diverse students to make teaching & learning more appropriate and effective.

Culture: the customary beliefs, social forms, behavior patterns, arts, institutions, knowledge and material traits of a racial, religious or social group.

Historical experience/implications of culture: some cultures have been the dominant societal culture (e.g. middle class white) and others have been marginalized through attitudes and control of opportunities. These historical examples affect the current population of a culture. Examples: slavery, segregation, racism, Indian boarding schools, relocation to reservations,

One-way accommodation: the expectation that a student of a diverse cultural background will fully adjust to the typical culture of the school with little or no adjustment on the part of the teacher and/or others in the school.

Student behavior as communication/function of behavior: behavior is a mode of communication or mode to meet a need of the given student. The process of determining the need being met or communication need is called functional behavioral assessment (fba or FBA). The need of the individual is generally not the issue; the way in which the individual seeks to have the need met is often problematic. Example: a student may be seeking adult attention by acting out or disrupting the class. The need for attention is not the problem; the issue is how the student meets his/her need.

Principles used in the development of these questions:

- Every person has a culture & a racial identify.
- The ethnic & racial composition is changing rapidly in the U.S.
- Schools & other institutions have a culture.
- Teachers must respond actively & positively to changing social, economic & cultural patterns.
- Behavioral standards (and behavior deviance) are culture-bound.
- Behavioral interventions that are culturally responsive are more effective.
- Cultural mismatches must be determined before selecting a behavioral intervention, since inappropriate behavior can be a response to a cultural mismatch.
- Behavior occurs in a context. It is a relationship between the student, the teacher, the peers, the classroom, the school, the instruction and the material.
- It is easy to misinterpret or misread behavior.
- Teachers intend the best for their students.
- Parent/family involvement is crucial for school success.