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Writing Psychological and Educational Reports for Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Students

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Much has been discussed in the literature regarding culturally sensitive assessment procedures for culturally and linguistically diverse (CLD) children and youth (Gopaul-McNicol & Brice-Baker, 1998; Padilla, 2001; Ponterotto, Gretchen, & Chauhan, 2001; Sattler, 2001) but very little has been dedicated to addressing the components of a solidly grounded, culturally fair psycho-educational report. As a result, school psychologists in training, and even those in practice, most likely have not developed the necessary skills for culturally and linguistically fair report writing. However, if the guidelines in the literature for conducting multicultural assessment (Ortiz & Flanagan, 2002; Padilla, 2001; Ridley et al., 2001; Prediger, 1993; Sternberg & Grigorenko, 2001; Suzuki, Short, Pieterse, & Kugler, 2001) are followed, it can reasonably be assumed that psycho-educational report writing for CLD children—from a variety of racial, cultural, ethnic, experiential, and linguistic backgrounds—should incorporate the same guiding principles. This assumption

is made clearer when assessment and report writing are viewed as interconnected. From this standpoint, objectives and goals for culturally and linguistically sensitive report writing should be addressed in best practice.

A review of the literature on report writing reveals that no specific guidelines have been proposed for constructing culturally competent reports. Drawing from this lack of criteria, this chapter provides school psychologists with a framework that addresses the competencies and ethics required for writing culturally sensitive psycho-educational reports for CLD children and youth from diverse racial/ethnic backgrounds.

What Is a Psychological and Educational Report?

A psychological and educational report (often termed a psycho-educational report) is an organized, comprehensive, and integrated written account of the results obtained from a psychological/educational assessment. Traditionally, the criteria followed are to write such a report plainly and succinctly, describing personal student history, the results of quantitative measures, clinical deductions, and specific recommendations. There are several purposes for a psychological report; for the school psychologist, the primary reasons are to explain the results of the assessment, to provide recommendations for interventions, and to stress the need for special services when applicable.

Objectives of the Report

The objectives currently available for best practices define several purposes of a psychological report (Sattler, 2001):

1. To provide accurate assessment-related aspects to the referral source and other concerned parties—for example, developmental, medical, intellectual, and educational history, as well as current interpersonal skills, intellectual and cognitive abilities, motor skills, and personality.
2. To serve as a source of clinical hypotheses, appropriate interventions, and information for program evaluation and research.
3. To furnish meaningful baseline information for evaluating (a) the examinee's progress after the interventions have been implemented, or (b) changes that occur as a result of time alone.
4. To serve as a legal document. (p. 677)

In addition, the purpose of the report is to provide parents, teachers, the student, and (when appropriate) health care professionals with the information

gleaned from the overall outcomes of the evaluative process. Hence the completion of the report is the final product of the school psychologist's investigation of the student's current social, emotional, and cognitive functioning. Moreover, since the psycho-educational report constitutes a legal document, it should be a well-written and clinically informative professional testimony of the abilities of the student, because such documents can be subpoenaed in court, whether or not the school psychologist believes the material has the basis of a privileged communication (Tallent, 1998, p. 66). In short, the report is a blueprint that addresses the needs of the student as deduced from the assessment. It is also a conduit for providing information on the current status of the educational and emotional well-being of the student. Most importantly, the report should ensure that the student's cultural ethnic group and values have been respected. Based on this point of view, a psycho-educational report prepared for a CLD student should adhere to the various cultural and language factors that influenced and impacted the assessment.

Professional and Legal Mandates Relevant to Writing Reports

Rogers et al. (1999), representing the APA's Division 16 Task Force on Cross-Cultural School Psychology Competencies, suggest that school psychologists be well informed about local, state, and federal regulations, but be aware particularly of major court cases, both historical and ongoing, that involve CLD children and their families. For example, *Diana v. California State Board of Education* provides the legal underpinnings for school psychologists to examine children in the native (dominant non-English) language. The authors also highlight the need for fluency with regard to: (a) immigration and naturalization laws; (b) civil rights, as they pertain to educational services; and (c) bilingual and ESL program legislation—in particular, the implementation of such laws in different states, and their relative effectiveness. School psychologists are also encouraged to enter the debate regarding public educational policies, and advocate for such policies when they determine they will have a beneficial outcome for their racial/ethnic CLD students. In the *Professional Conduct Manual* prepared by the National Association of School Psychologists (NASP) (2000), culturally diverse populations Practice Guideline 5 highlights the following:

School psychologists have the sensitivity, knowledge, and skills to work with individuals and groups with a diverse range of strengths and needs from a variety of racial, cultural, ethnic, experiential, and linguistic backgrounds.

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Practice Guideline 5.4 further elaborates:

School psychologists incorporate their understanding of the influence of culture, background, and individual learning characteristics when designing and implementing interventions to achieve learning and behavioral outcomes.

These guidelines are certainly helpful, but unfortunately they are not specific enough in many instances. Concerning such guidelines in general, Lopez (1997) comments:

Practitioners are left to implement those guidelines and mandates at a time when the fields of education and psychology are confronted with many questions regarding test bias, lack of assessment resources (e.g., shortage of instrument validity validated with a variety of language groups), and a questionable knowledge base as to how to assess children LEP [Limited English Proficient] and bilingual backgrounds.

In other words, she suggests that, worthwhile as much of this content is, lack of sufficient specific knowledge on the part of the school psychologist could be a considerable handicap.

Ethical Standards

Both the American Psychological Association (APA) and the National Association of School Psychologists have compiled codes of ethics for psychologists to follow when providing services in schools or in independent practice.

The NASP (2000) *Professional Conduct Manual* defines ethical standards for report writing in a list provided for the Professional Practices-General Principles, Assessment and Interventions (Section IV: Professional Practices—General Principles; D: Reporting Data and Conference Results, Point 3, p. 28). This particular principle addresses psychological report writing, and reads as follows:

School psychologists prepare written reports in such form and style that the recipient of the report will be able to assist the child or other clients. Reports should emphasize recommendations and interpretations; unedited computer-generated reports, pre-printed “check-off” or “fill-in-the-blank” reports, and reports that present only test scores or global statements regarding eligibility for special education without specific recommendations for intervention are seldom useful. Reports should include an appraisal of the degree of confidence that could be assigned to the information.

An additional principle cautions school psychologists to “review all of their written documents for accuracy, signing them only when correct.” The ethical principles take account of important aspects of the report, but do not provide in-depth information on how to structure a report, or what to include in it.

As mentioned previously, the literature reveals that specific ethical guidelines for writing culturally competent reports have not been proposed. However, it has been assumed that practitioners who practice ethically appropriate multicultural assessments are both interested in the theoretical and practical considerations in ethics, and put their ethical knowledge into practice (Ridley, Hill, & Li, 1998). As defined in this context, ethics involve acquiring ethical competence and practicing professional responsibility by acting upon the recommended ethics. In this respect, it can be assumed that ethical report writing should abide by the same ethical competence and responsibility. Consequently, report writing has to be interconnected once again to assessment practice in an attempt to review ethical codes and laws. In addition, NASP’s standards recommend the following five areas of sound psychological assessment that should be adhered to, so as to ensure that ethical and legal concerns have been respected (Jacob-Timm & Hartshorne, 1998).

Assessment should be:

- *multifaceted*—it should ensure the use of multiple methods of assessment to avoid a single test score being used as the sole basis for decision-making;
- *comprehensive*—assessments should cover all areas of the child’s difficulties (e.g., health, vision, hearing, social/emotional functioning, intellectual abilities, educational achievement, communication skills, and motor abilities);
- *fair*—the selection of assessment instruments and procedures takes into consideration age, gender, native language, socioeconomic status, disabilities, and cultural and ethnic background. More specifically, for the child with a disability, appropriate assessment procedures must be selected in order to ensure that cognitive ability, educational achievement, and adaptive behavior are fairly evaluated. Additionally, students with limited English proficiency (LEP) should undergo a language proficiency and dominance screening; the latter will aid in the selection of instruments, as well as the interpretation of outcomes. Furthermore, ethical codes and special education laws also mandate that nonbiased assessment methods be adopted for culturally and racially diverse children;
- *valid*—the validity of the test utilized should be assured by following the Standards for Educational and Psychological Testing (AERA, APA, & NCME, 1999). A summary of the standards indicates that school psychologists are ethically responsible for evaluating the technical standards (validity, reliability, standardization norms) of the tests they use, so as to guarantee that they are valid for their intended purposes;
- *useful*—appropriate assessment instruments should be selected that provide the strengths and weaknesses of the assessed child and aid in formulating an assigned

diagnosis. Accordingly, the results of an assessment are shared with parents and educators through a written report and in conferences. Furthermore, parents have a legal right to obtain a copy of their child's psychological report (Public Law 94-142). School psychologists should make certain that reports include recommendations and interventions, and do not solely describe test scores.

It is apparent that all of the above-mentioned ethical standards for fair assessment practice are applicable to psychological report writing, because the two are so obviously intertwined.

Tallent (1998, p. 62) discusses ethical and legal responsibilities and issues of confidentiality in report writing, in particular framing the need for writing that is understandable and serviceable for care providers. A landmark decision reached by a U.S. district court in Alabama in the case of *Wyatt v. Aderholt* in 1974 found that "evidence established that the hospitals [involved in the case] failed to meet the conditions of individualized treatment programs." Patient records were determined to be "wholly inadequate," and both inaccessible and incomprehensible to the aide-level staff whose primary responsibility was the care of the patients. Tallent (1998) submits that individualized case-focused reports are of far more benefit than those written in more general terms. He also argues that psychologists should be mindful when writing reports that, historically, the courts do not share the same code of ethics or guidelines that psychologists do, especially when an individual's rights are at stake.

In general, the scarcity of research conducted on writing reports addressing issues related to CLD populations is substantial.

Practice Implications of Writing Psycho-Educational Reports for CLD Students

It is important to recognize that there are several important variations involved in conducting an appropriate assessment for a CLD child or youth. Among these differences are the gathering of cultural and experiential background, determining language dominance in addition to second-language acquisition, acculturation stages and/or stressors, educational levels, and other important community/school/home factors. This additional essential information obtained from the assessment is vital to the report. Failure to accomplish this results in a more traditional report prepared for a monolingual English-dominant U.S. mainstream student, which will be distinctly unhelpful for the CLD student.

Several additional objectives are needed to provide school psychologists with the appropriate framework for CLD report writing. To carry out this aim, the following culture-specific objectives are presented.

Prior to discussing the objectives of a culturally focused psycho-educational report, the format of a traditional psychological report should be examined. Sattler (2001) describes the typical sections of a report as follows:

1. Identifying Information
2. Assessment Instruments
3. Reason for Referral
4. Background Information
5. Observations During the Assessment
6. Assessment Results and Clinical Impressions
7. Recommendations
8. Summary
9. Signature (p. 678).

The traditional sections that address the objectives of a report continue to be appropriate; however, a review of the literature regarding multicultural assessment competencies revealed additional objectives necessary for inclusion in order to ensure a culturally fair report. Several supplementary objectives are suggested below.

1. Adhere to the recommendations for conducting a multicultural assessment (Armour-Thomas & Gopaul-McNicol, 1998; Gopaul-McNicol & Brice-Baker, 1998; Ortiz, 2002; Rogers et al., 1999; Ridley et al., 1998).
2. Report all results in a culturally sensitive manner.
3. View the report as an instrument to plan instruction and provide guidance with regard to the academic strengths and weaknesses of the CLD student.
4. Consider the impact of social and cultural issues, language, and environmental/political factors (Rogers et al., 1999).
5. Include background information that covers cultural information pertaining to ethnic and racial/biracial identity, religious/traditional beliefs, social class, health care practices, immigration and/or acculturation stages of the student and parents, and disciplinary norms of the family (Gopaul-McNicol & Brice-Baker, 1998).
6. Acknowledge the weight of learning a second language and adjustment to a second culture on the social/emotional and intellectual development of the CLD student (Rogers et al., 1999).

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7. Report language proficiency and, for English Language Learners (ELL), provide a description of the current progress in the acquisition of a second language (Meller, Ohr, & Marcus, 2001; Ortiz, 2002; Rogers et al., 1999).
8. A good report should address cultural and linguistic information (Rogers et al., 1999) and, when appropriate, the results of some screening measure or other qualitative method used to assess the CLD student's language dominance and/or bilingualism (e.g., The Bilingual Verbal Ability Test (BVAT) (Munoz-Sandoval et al., 1998), which is used for students who are less dominant in the native language, and the Woodcock language proficiency assessment).
9. Address the quantitative results of the evaluation, and endeavor to assess the outcomes in an unbiased manner, as well as describe any deviations/modifications adopted during the testing (Ortiz, 2002; Rogers et al., 1999). If a standardized test was used that has not been normed for the CLD student, the results should be explained in a descriptive and qualitative manner (Rogers et al., 1999).
10. Use appropriate comparison groups when discussing the assessed CLD student (Rogers et al., 1999).
11. Incorporate in the interpretation of tests section of the report a *psychometric estimate* of the cognitive results. This section describes the child's potential and provides an estimate of intellectual functioning when certain biases in testing practices are removed or modified (Gopaul-McNicol & Brice-Baker, 1998; Ortiz, 2002).
12. Include qualitative outcomes obtained from *other assessments*. Other assessments imply the integration of alternative methods of assessment that consist of the evaluation of *other intelligences* in the areas of musical, bodily kinesthetic, interpersonal, and intrapersonal abilities, and other domains of functioning (Suzuki et al., 2001). A description of the latter covers those areas of functioning that are not commonly included in a psycho-educational report, causing important areas of functioning of the CLD child to be overlooked. Performance-based assessment, functional assessment, dynamic assessment, and/or developmental assessment techniques can also be regarded as part of qualitative, alternative methods of assessment (Rogers et al., 1999).
13. Include a section that addresses the results of the *learning ecology* assessment which involves the following steps: (a) review of educational records; (b) observation of the student during class instruction, as well as an examination of the content of the instruction; (c) suitability of the curriculum; (d) evaluation of the fit between the student and the curriculum with consideration of the student's needs; (e) deductions made from parent and teacher interviews; and (f) review of medical records (Ortiz, 2002).
14. Ensure that the clinical impressions of the report truly reflect the CLD child's personality and behaviors according to his/her culture and ethnicity.

15. Describe the results of an *ecological* assessment. In this section, the goal is to provide information concerning the CLD child's functioning within her/his family and community (Gopaul-McNicol & Brice-Baker, 1998).
16. Describe the limitations of using interpreters for interviewing or testing purposes in conjunction with a detailed explanation of the interpreters' training and credentials (Hamayan & Damico, 1991; Figueroa, Sandoval, & Merino, 1984).
17. Acknowledge the use of a translated test and to explain that the psychometric structure of the original non-translated instrument and the translated version of the instrument are not comparable (Rogers et al., 1999; Tallent, 1998, p. 250) (see Appendix 7.2 for Checklist of Objectives).

The Relationship Between Assessment and Report Writing

In essence, the main reason for the psycho-educational report is to clearly explain all the procedures/results observed in the assessment and to make appropriate recommendations. Consequently, there is a direct linear relationship between a multicultural assessment and the writing up of the psychological report. Each section of the report follows the steps the school psychologist has taken to ensure a complete evaluation and, just as the assessment practices for CLD children and youth conform to a culturally sensitive approach, so must the report follow the same method. Specifically, the of data obtained during the assessment are *transferred* to written form, although Tallent (1998) stresses that raw data as such must be subject to logical analysis (p. 73)—what he considers “adequate interpretation of such material.” Accordingly, the same culturally centered manner that was followed throughout the evaluation should be narrated with identical sensitivity and accuracy. Thus the report is a final written representation of the assessment procedure and its outcome. It is the most important part of the assessment process, because it is a legal document that records all domains of a student's functioning in tandem with recommendations.

Implications of Quantitative and Qualitative Assessments and Report Writing

Quantitative assessment typically refers to psychometric testing. Ordinarily, the psychological report includes a very detailed explanation of the results of the psychometric tests administered (e.g., intelligence tests, personality assessment scales and/or inventories, behavioral scales, educational tests). However, over the years there have been serious allegations made regarding standardized measures, predominantly intelligence tests. Intelligence

tests have been described as culturally biased and as failing to accurately demonstrate the true achievements and potential of CLD racial/ethnic children. Consequently, various types of authentic and alternative qualitative (non-psychometric) assessments have been implemented for estimating CLD (and/or racial/ethnic) children's abilities (e.g., dynamic assessment, portfolio assessment, curriculum-based measurement, naturalistic observations, other intelligences assessment). Hence it has been recommended that school psychologists incorporate both quantitative and qualitative methods for evaluating culturally diverse children (Armour-Thomas & Gopaul-McNicol, 1998; Ortiz, 2002).

Armour-Thomas and Gopaul-McNicol (1998) have developed a four-tier Bio-Cultural Model of assessment that advocates the integration of quantitative and qualitative measures in assessment. The four tiers are: psychometric; psychometric potential; ecological assessment; and an evaluation of other intelligences. These researchers/practitioners propose conducting culturally fair *bio-ecological* assessments, and suggest incorporating the results under the following sections of the psychological report:

1. *Psychometric Assessment*—Although results are quantitative, they should be described in a qualitative manner, indicating the “child’s strengths and weaknesses in the constructs measured by each subtest” (p. 22).
2. *Psychometric Potential Assessment*—This section describes the following practices in the assessment of potential: (a) suspending time tasks; (b) contextualizing vocabulary appraisal; (c) paper and pencil tasks; and (d) test–teach–retest strategies employed. The section evaluates the child’s potential and/or estimated intellectual abilities; if the child manifests an improvement, the report should include the noted increase.
3. *Ecological Assessment*—This section reports the psychologist’s evaluation of the CLD child’s family/community supports, stage of acculturation, and teacher interview/questionnaire results.
4. *Other Intelligences*—This section includes commonly found intelligences among CLD racial/ethnic children and youth, such as musical, bodily/kinesesthetic, interpersonal, intrapersonal, and naturalistic intelligences. These should be assessed, because intelligence tests do not reflect the other intelligences of CLD children (Gardner, 1999; Gopaul-McNicol & Brice-Baker, 1998; Lopez, 1997).

In the same vein, Ortiz (2002) advocates using a similar framework for nondiscriminatory assessment that suggests taking into consideration cultural and linguistic factors, a reduction of bias in testing practices, and utilizing authentic and alternative assessments.

In summary, a complete report ought to reflect both quantitative and qualitative results obtained in the assessment process; this practice is in keeping with the recommendations made for conducting multicultural assessments (Gopaul-McNicol & Brice-Baker, 1998; Lidz, 2001; Ortiz, 2002; Ponterotto, Gretchen, & Chauhan, 2001; Suzuki et al., 2001; Sternberg & Grigorenko, 2001).

Language and Culture

When conducting a culturally sensitive assessment, school psychologists are advised to assess language within the context of culture. Briefly explained, this implies that language is more than a manner of communicating; it is cultural and is used to socialize children into linguistic and cultural communities/regions. This leads to the development of patterns that aid in differentiating one community (or region) from another (e.g., dialectical differences). Moreover, many CLD children are bilingual (they have the ability to use two languages) or in the process of second language acquisition (English Language Learners, or ELL) (Hakuta, 1986; Cummins, 1984). The interaction between language and culture is a multifaceted process that is vital to the socialization of children into satisfactory cultural patterns—children learn the syntax of their native language and what words mean in varying contexts. Thus, within their own communities, children develop specific language skills; however these skills can differ significantly from school demands (Wolfram, Adger, & Christian, 1999). For this reason, children and adolescents with limited English proficiency or without English language skills should be evaluated cautiously within their cultural milieu.

In the assessment process, it is recommended that a language screening take place either through the use of language scales or informal measures when evaluating language in the CLD child and their parents (Ortiz, 2002; Sattler, 2001). Consequently, as already stated, an objective of a culturally sensitive report is to reserve a specific section dedicated to a description of language screening results, language dominance of the student, and second language acquisition progress within the context of culture.

The report should integrate the following relevant cultural and linguistic information obtained from the assessment:

- the results of an examination of the experiential effects of biculturalism and/or bilingualism during childhood development and their influence on school learning;
- the assessment of native and home language;
- the acculturation stages of both parents and student;

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- the parents' fluency in native and English languages;
- the parents' level of literacy in native and English languages;
- the education and socioeconomic status of the parents (Ortiz, 2002).

Accordingly, the interconnectedness between language and culture should not be overlooked in the assessment of culturally/linguistically diverse children (Cummins, 1984; Gopaul-McNicol & Brice-Baker, 1998; Hamayan & Damico, 1991; Meller et al., 2001; Ortiz, 2002; Sattler, 2001). It should also be borne in mind that the school psychologist's role in writing the report is not only to assess, but to problem-solve, guide, and recommend potential interventions and solutions to the interested parties. In this regard, the report writer should concisely summarize the determined cultural and linguistic issues found, and their ramifications, without resorting to jargon or more abstract concepts. When interested parties understand the language capabilities of the CLD student, and the student's cultural specifics, they will be more motivated to work with the school psychologist in problem solving.

The use of interpreters in psycho-educational assessment is a variable that must not be ignored since it will affect the results of the assessment as well as the way the report is written. Therefore, it is essential to record the use of an interpreter during the evaluation. The section below examines the use of interpreters during assessment and the implications of this type of assessment on report writing.

Working With Interpreters and Implications for Report Writing

The National Association of School Psychologists (NASP) briefly identifies competency guidelines for working with interpreters:

Domain V. Working With Interpreters

1. Knowledge of recommended systemic practices, including guidelines from professional organizations and national and state policies, and plans for hiring, training, and managing interpreters.
2. Knowledge of recommended practices for interpreters translating for parent conferences, including using school personnel and community members as interpreters (never children or family members).

These guidelines address systemic practices and suggest that school psychologists be aware of the recommendations for using interpreters. The guidelines do not, however, provide detailed recommendations with regard

to training or to assessment procedures. Several attempts to further clarify these non-exclusions are found in the literature (Gopaul-McNicol, & Brice-Baker, 1998; Lopez, 2000; Sattler, 2001).

However, in consequence of the scarcity of bilingual school psychologists, the assessment of culturally/linguistically diverse children often requires the use of an interpreter, and any use of an interpreter for interviews and testing should be detailed in the report.

Cross-Cultural Competencies Relevant to Report Writing

The notion of multicultural assessment practice has been summarized in the literature as encompassing several areas of competencies, such as knowledge and skills in cross-cultural issues concerning: (a) clinical interviewing and assessment of individuals from diverse backgrounds; (b) maintaining culturally centered ethics in testing; (c) expertise in cultural identity and acculturation; (d) appropriate selection of assessment instruments; and (e) knowledge of diagnosing individuals from diverse cultures. Correspondingly, knowledge and skills for selecting culturally appropriate interventions and recommendations are also part of cross-cultural practice (Suzuki et al., 2001), and report writing should adhere to the same competencies recommended for cross-cultural assessment practice because the two are directly related.

However, since the field is lacking in specific cross-cultural competencies for report writing, the best way to distinguish the competencies that are relevant to report writing is to review the specific domain of culturally competent practice in assessment advocated by the National Association of School Psychologists (NASP), and observe how it might be connected to psychological report writing.

Standard III. Psychoeducational Assessment:

1. Knowledge of and skills in assessing CLD students, including consideration of variables such as environment, social issues, language development, second language acquisition, acculturation, educational history, quality of educational program, SES and racism.
2. Understanding that normed tests may not be a valid measure for English Language Learners (ELLs) due to inappropriateness of norms, scores reflecting English proficiency, product as opposed to process orientation, fairness of content, and differences in educational background, acculturation, and economic situation; need to be familiar with second language acquisition stages; cultural variables that influence the results of an assessment; use of translators.

Note that many of the considerations stated have a bearing on a culturally/linguistically diverse student's assessment, and therefore should be discussed in the report. Enumeration and a discussion of the interplay of these factors by the school psychologist will suggest possible strategies, interventions, and insights into solving the specific problems first raised by the referring person, which can be communicated to all interested parties.

Rogers et al. (1999) outline several guidelines for cross-cultural competencies that are relevant (Domain 3):

1. Psychologists acknowledge that assessment is a comprehensive process that includes gathering information that considers the impact of socio-cultural, environmental, political, experiential, and language based factors; might include standardized testing; and is baseless unless culturally appropriate and effective interventions are designed and implemented.
2. Psychologists should seek culture-specific confirmatory data, and only compare appropriate comparison group members.
3. Psychologists should be able to differentiate a language disorder from second language acquisition developmental stages.
4. Psychologists should be able to comprehend the verbal ability of the CLD student with reference to the group or familial dynamics of the relevant culture.
5. Psychologists should have the knowledge to select particular standardized instruments, and suggest alternatives when standardized tests normed on non-CLD populations are likely to provide erroneous results when administered to a CLD student; deviations from standard assessment tools to improve assessment of a CLD student should specifically be noted in the report.
6. Psychologists should not assume that the psychometric properties of original and translated versions of a test are comparable in the case of translated tests.

Guide for a Psycho-Educational Report for CLD Students

Addressing the issues mentioned above, Lopez, Elizalde-Utnick and Nahari (2000) developed a psycho-educational report model that integrates language and cultural issues for culturally/linguistically diverse students. This model of report recommends the inclusion of language proficiency data, as well as the procedures and tools used to collect this data, and should document the language proficiency of the student. The authors suggest that it is

necessary to pinpoint the strengths and weaknesses of the student in both languages, and to ensure that it includes relevant interpretations such as the implications of the language proficiency data obtained for future assessment, placement, and intervention activities.

Furthermore, cultural implications such as the varied responses to acculturation that may be exhibited by the student should be incorporated into the report and considered within the learning and assessment context. Finally, the report should clarify whether differences in school behavior are due to cultural differences and whether cultural differences account for much of the discrepancy between achievement and ability seen in culturally/linguistically diverse students (Lopez et al., 2000).

See the box for a sample of this model, with an emphasis on the language and cultural data that need to be integrated within each section of a report written for a CLD student.

Introductory Information

This section should mention Languages Spoken at Home and Languages Used During the Evaluation (see item in italics below).

Name: _____ Date of Testing: _____

School: _____ Date of Birth: _____

Grade: _____ Chronological Age: _____

Evaluator: _____

Languages Spoken at Home: _____

Languages Used During the Evaluation: _____

Evaluation Procedures and Tools

This section includes analysis of all formal as well as informal tools and procedures used to assess CLDs. Examples of informal tools are observations, interviews, and language samples. Informal procedures include type of language samples collected and brief summary of procedures used, use of interpreters and procedures used with interpreters. Included in this section is a description of any modifications of test procedures (i.e., testing of limits) or adaptations of test instruments.

Reason for Referral

Describe the reason(s) for the referral and the referral source (e.g., parent, teacher). If the referral reason is related to language development or second language acquisition issues, provide a description of the referral problem.

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Background Information Related to Language Proficiency and Acculturation

In addition to the usual information, this segment of the report should address background on both native language (L1) and second language (L2), cultural and acculturation information. Answers to questions such as time and reasons for emigration, present contact with the native culture, and cultural factors that impact behavior and achievement will help to explore the possible ramifications of cultural background and acculturation stages on behaviors and on the results of the assessment.

The background information should address both L1 and L2. This section incorporates the history of development for L1 and L2 and documents possible language delays, as well as usage of language at home and with different people (i.e., parents, other family members in home, peers, and teachers). In addition, it should include type of language instruction received and duration, and where this occurred.

The assessor needs to answer questions about areas such as how well developed the student's expressive and receptive language skills are (Payan, 1989), how well developed the student's reading and writing skills are in each language, and in what language(s) the instruction is provided (i.e., primarily in English or native language). The assessor should also review the student's adjustment to the mainstream and to the school culture, and assess how much the student interacts with mainstream peers. This information may be obtained from school records, observations, and interviews (i.e., parent, teacher, and student).

Behavioral Observations

This section includes the observations made by the examiner during the assessment and other observations conducted in a variety of settings (e.g., classroom, home, testing situation, playground), and while the student is interacting with a variety of people (e.g., parents, siblings, peers, teachers). For observations of the child interacting in the classroom, describe the context in which the observation was made (i.e., lesson, individual work, lecture, group activity), the content of the instruction (i.e., topic of instruction, sequence of instruction, presentation style, language(s) used for instruction), and the interactions with teacher(s) and peers. Does the student exhibit linguistic non-fluencies, revisions, delayed responses, use of nonspecific terms, inappropriate responses, poor topic maintenance, or need for repetition? Are these due to the second language acquisition process, language loss, or a language disorder? What is the degree of code switching and under what circumstances does code switching occur? Is there borrowing, and under what circumstances does borrowing occur? (Sattler, 2001).

Test Results and Procedures

This section includes the results of all formal as well as informal tools and procedures used to assess CLDs. Examples of informal tools are observation, interviews, and language samples. Formal tools include the Munoz Language Survey, Language Assessment

Battery (LAB), Language Assessment Scale (LAS), the Universal Non-verbal Intelligence Test (UNIT), the Bateria III–Aprovechamiento (Achievement) and the Bateria III–Cognitiva (Cognitive). There should also be a brief summary of procedures used, use of interpreters, and procedures used with interpreters. Describe any modifications of test procedures (i.e., testing of limits) or adaptations of test instruments (i.e., changes in task or content to reflect linguistically or culturally appropriate stimuli) (Kayser, 1989).

Summary and Recommendations

Discuss the effect of the language proficiency and sociocultural data to make decisions regarding languages for further assessment, future evaluations, program placements, and language and other instructional strategies. Appendix 7.1 contains a sample report that describes the findings of an assessment of a CLD student.

Implications for Future Research and Practice

Obviously, the majority of existing procedures of report writing are designed for the monolingual population. As stated previously, very little is found in the literature that addresses report writing for CLD populations and very few sources are available for practitioners. Culturally and linguistically relevant approaches to report writing need to be explored and documented, with the objective of defining a permanent model that looks for the student's optimal capabilities and is capable of differentiating between those difficulties due to intrinsic disorders of exceptional students and the cultural and linguistic differences of CLD students.

The racial/ethnic, linguistic, and cultural composition of the population serviced by school practitioners challenges both researchers and practitioners, and compels them to reexamine the existing approaches to psycho-educational assessment practices as well as a view toward establishing a different approach to report writing. These changes include an overall reconceptualization of the psycho-educational assessment and report-writing process for racial/ethnic and CLD students. Under this reconceptualization, in this chapter we reviewed the issues that should be addressed: (a) the inclusion of socioeconomic, cultural, environmental, political, experiential, and language-based factors; (b) the need to incorporate linguistic information, including second-language acquisition, and issues of language proficiency; (c) the limitations of standardized instruments; and (d) the use of translated versions, their cultural and linguistic pitfalls, and questionable validity, amongst others.

Psychologists can utilize the techniques and strategies described in this chapter to develop meaningful information and clinical judgments in their report writing. Most importantly, cultural sensitivity and the ability to collaborate with others, such as bilingual personnel, the family, and the teacher, are essential requirements to keep in mind when reporting the results of an assessment.

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Appendix 7.2: Ana's Case

Name: Ana

Date of Testing: xx/xx/xxxx

School: Island Park

Date of Birth: 03/13/1993

Grade: 4

Chronological Age: 10.3

Evaluator: XXXX XXXXXXXXX

Languages Spoken at Home: Spanish and English

Languages Used During the Evaluation: Spanish and English

Background Information

Ana is an only child. Her parents moved to the United States as teenagers. Mr. A. is from Ecuador and Mrs. A. is from Peru. Both parents attended high school in the United States. Mr. A. went on to graduate school from college and is presently employed. Mrs. A. left high school in the eleventh grade to attend vocational training in cosmetology. She is presently employed at a department store.

Ana lives at home with her parents and paternal grandfather. Until three years ago, the grandmother and aunt also lived in the house. When the grandparents divorced, however, the grandmother and aunt moved out of the house. Although Ana continues to see her grandmother, she expressed a desire for her to move back into the house. Ana's maternal grandmother lives in Puerto Rico. Ana does not see her very often; however, they do speak frequently on the phone. She lived with her maternal grandmother in Puerto Rico for a period of two months when she was 3 years old. Her parents were in

the United States during that time. Mr. A. did not elaborate on the reason for Ana's temporary residence with the grandmother.

Ana's linguistic background is Spanish and English, which varies with different family members. English is the dominant language spoken in the home. Her parents communicate with her in English, yet in Spanish with the paternal grandfather. Ana speaks both English and Spanish to her paternal grandfather. In fact, she said her grandfather is teaching her Spanish. Ana speaks to her maternal grandparents on the telephone in Spanish. Communication with the extended family is bilingual, the adults speaking Spanish and the children speaking English. At times, Ana will communicate with her cousins in Spanish.

According to the Social History, Ana was a full-term baby, born of an uncomplicated pregnancy and delivery. Developmental milestones were attained within age expectancy limits. Ana never sustained any major accident or illness. All medical records, including annual vision and hearing screening, are normal.

Ana entered the District as a kindergartner. The kindergarten screening placed her at risk and she was referred for an academic evaluation. Results of Ana's monolingual English evaluation indicated a possible learning disability and she was referred to the Committee on Special Education. The evaluation, conducted *exclusively in English*, found her cognitive functioning to be in the average range with academic achievement significantly below potential. Ana was classified as learning disabled and placed in a first grade special education class. She has remained in self-contained special education classes and is currently a fourth grader in a fourth and fifth grade special class. She does not receive any related services.

A review of Ana's cumulative record indicated Spanish and English were noted as the home languages on her kindergarten enrollment form, yet the screening was administered only in English. No recommendation for an ESL evaluation was made. Her attendance record indicates a high number of absences, particularly in kindergarten, with 32 days off. On her previous Social History, taken in first grade, Ana's parents described her as not liking school and often difficult to get out in the morning. This is further evidenced by her usually high rate of lateness, continuing up to last year with 16 instances in third grade.

Mr. A. expressed concerns about Ana's communication skills in English and sees her struggling to express her thoughts. He describes Ana as English dominant with limited ability to speak Spanish. Mr. A. did say, however, that she understands more than she can speak. In fact, he laughed and said she often understands things she is not supposed to hear. He did not express any strong desire for Ana to speak Spanish. He sees Ana experiencing difficulty with school. Mr. A. would like Ana to be a college graduate, but his primary concern is for her to be happy.

Assessment Results and Discussion

Classroom Observation: Small Group Science Lesson

Ana was observed during a fourth grade science lesson on the way plants reproduce. The student-teacher ratio was 8:1. The teacher began the lesson by introducing the

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vocabulary words in isolation. Ana experienced difficulty pronouncing the words, particularly multisyllabic words such as fertilization. She appeared anxious when the teacher went around the room asking the students to individually say the vocabulary words. The students then began to take turns reading the text aloud. Ana followed along in the text as other students were reading. She read aloud when called upon by the teacher in a slow, hesitant manner, often stumbling over words. When she was unable to decode a word, she would often make an initial consonant guess, sometimes supplying a word that was irrelevant or not contextually correct. When the teacher supplied her with the correct word, Ana would not repeat it. Instead, she skipped the word and continued reading. Although actively engaged in the lesson, Ana did not volunteer to answer questions. When called upon she would respond; however, her answers were frequently incorrect. She appeared to be experiencing difficulty with the concepts of the lesson.

Classroom Observation: Independent Reading Work

On a separate occasion, Ana was observed working independently on reading comprehension questions. She appeared very distracted and had to be refocused to the task several times by the teacher. Ana frequently engaged in conversation with a nearby classmate.

Behavioral Observations During Assessment

Ana is tall and sturdy looking, appearing somewhat older than her actual age. Throughout the evaluation, she was pleasant, outgoing, and cooperative. Ana readily engaged in conversation, not only responding to questions, but also offering much spontaneous conversation. While she presented as social and mature, her responses were often unrelated and difficult to follow.

Ana worked with effort on all tasks presented to her. Directions often had to be repeated before they were understood. She began each task with energy and enthusiasm, yet when items became difficult she typically gave up. Ana freely offered her opinion about difficult items with facial expressions, sighs, and comments such as, "That's a tricky one!" She appeared unconcerned about her failures and readily moved on to the next item, often shrugging her shoulders and stating, "That's the best I can do" or "That's all I know."

Acculturation

Results of the Acculturation Quick Screen identify Ana as In Transition, which coincides with her level of proficiency in English. Linguistically Ana has not developed total fluency in the mainstream language, inhibiting her ability to become more acculturated. Culturally, Ana considers herself Spanish and seems very proud of her ethnic background. She expressed strong desire to learn to read and write in Spanish. Although part of a minority in the Island Park School District, Ana views her diversity as something special. She did not hesitate to engage in a conversation in Spanish with two Spanish-speaking boys in her class and enjoyed the attention it provided.

Informal Language Samples

Informal language samples obtained in both Spanish and English provide further evidence of Ana's English dominance and proficiency.

Tell-a-Story

Ana was able to tell a sequential story in English with a clear beginning and end. Her story contained simple sentences that were grammatically correct, demonstrating understanding of past, present, and future verb tenses. Her Spanish story was not as clear, containing many run-on sentences that were sometimes difficult to follow. She demonstrated numerous errors in syntax, particularly verb tense and subject-verb agreement. She frequently borrowed words from English and specific vocabulary or conjunctions to connect sentences. Her Spanish story contained an element of warmth and personal meaning with numerous adjectives adding emphasis. Ana was very comfortable communicating in Spanish. Unconcerned about lacking vocabulary, she smoothly inserted borrowed English words into her story and went on to her next thought. Difficulty with topic maintenance was evident in both languages.

Woodcock-Muñoz Language Proficiency Survey-R

Results of the language proficiency testing reveal that Ana is dominant and more proficient in English than Spanish. Although Ana does exhibit Basic Interpersonal Communication Skills (BICS) in Spanish, her Broad Spanish Ability Tests at level 1 were of negligible proficiency, with an age equivalent of 3 years and 10 months. Broad Spanish Ability encompasses oral language, pre-reading, and writing abilities. Ana does not demonstrate any Cognitive Academic Language Proficiency (CALP) skills in Spanish.

On Broad English Ability, Ana demonstrated Level 3, or limited English proficiency. The age equivalent of her English CALP skills is 7 years and 7 months. Within her Broad English Ability, Ana demonstrated level 3-4, limited to fluent Oral Language Ability that measures vocabulary and verbal reasoning. Her Reading and Writing Ability fell to level 2-3, very limited English. While demonstrating limited receptive and expressive language skills in Spanish, her English skills are not yet at a level of fluency. Therefore, Ana's English language proficiency will have an impact on her academic success. At level 3, Ana will experience difficulty with the language demands of academic learning tasks that are context-reduced and cognitively demanding.

Wechsler Intelligence Scale for Children (WISC-III)

Ana was administered all subtests of the WISC-III in English and the verbal subtests, with the exception of Digit Span, in Spanish. She does not know the numbers 1 to 10 in Spanish; therefore Digit Span could not be administered. Due to cultural and linguistic diversity, norms are inappropriate for comparison. Therefore Ana's test results will be

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discussed qualitatively. Ana's verbal and performance scores revealed inter- and intra-test scatter, with relative strength in nonverbal abilities.

Verbal Scale Index. More specifically, subtest analysis of the Verbal scale indicates that Ana benefits from open-ended questions in which she can provide lengthy responses. She was not as successful on verbal tasks which required more specific single word responses. Ana displayed adequate general knowledge. Item analysis, however, showed variability in responses. Ana often missed easy items, yet was able to correctly answer more difficult ones. For example, she was unable to state how many days in a week, but correctly named the month that has an extra day during leap year. It appears that retrieval from long-term memory is inconsistent.

Ana demonstrated good skills in placing objects and events together in a meaningful group. However, she required extra time and various attempts to be successful or provide the best answer. For the most part, Ana grouped items in a functional or concrete manner, focusing on superficial rather than essential likenesses. On occasion she was able to expand a concrete response into a broader more complex classification. Given the stimulus horse and cow, Ana responded, "both have tails," "both have four legs," and finally, "they are animals." Noted difficulty with retrieval was again apparent as Ana actively searched for the best and most accurate response. She visibly reacted with facial expression and sighs of relief, almost as if to say, "I finally got it!" when she completed the search process.

An evaluation of Ana's arithmetic skills revealed difficulty with basic addition and subtraction facts. She continues to rely on concrete manipulatives. When no pictorial representation was provided, she counted on her fingers. In addition, she had difficulty understanding word problems as well as remembering numerical information presented auditorily. Ana frequently asked for repetition of the numbers and would repeat the question to herself before answering. On items where Ana put in an effort, she appeared to be using this strategy to allow herself time to process the information. On items perceived to be too difficult, she would immediately guess. Interestingly, in testing limits she did not benefit by extended time or use of paper and pencil. Presented with verbal word problems, Ana was unable to manipulate the numbers and conceptualize the operation necessary for a solution. Ana's difficulty manipulating auditory numerical information was evidenced in her relative weakness in retaining and sequencing numbers. She was significantly stronger when she had to repeat digits exactly as they were presented. In contrast, she had great difficulty repeating digits in a backwards direction. Apparently, manipulating and retaining auditory information is Ana's relative weakness.

Ana's word knowledge seems to be adequately developed, yet her response time was lengthy with numerous pauses and fillers such as "mmm. . . ." She repeated the stimulus word several times before responding and occasionally forgot the word midway through a response. Her definitions typically described actions related to personal experiences.

Ana demonstrated a relative strength in social judgment. Her experiences with numerous adults ranging from her parents to grandparents to aunts and uncles have helped her develop a good understanding of social conventions.

Performance Scale. Ana demonstrated well-developed nonverbal reasoning skills. Her ability to determine the missing part of a picture and sequence pictures correctly to tell a story are relative strengths. However, she again demonstrated difficulty with word retrieval when identifying the missing part of a picture. She frequently pointed to the correct location and described the object, but was unable to label it. Her ability to put puzzle pieces together to form common objects is a relative weakness. Ana's concentration, attention, and temporal sequencing skills are stronger with nonverbal than verbal stimuli. She approached problems in a deliberate, careful manner and did not appear concerned about time limits, often giving up on a difficult task before time ran out. When she was asked to move a pencil through a maze without an overall plan, she frequently got stuck. If an alternative route was not immediately evident, she would stop at that point.

Summary and Recommendations

Ana is an English-dominant youngster with adequate cognitive functioning. Performance skills are somewhat better developed than her verbal skills. Particular strengths lie in her visual alertness and social judgment, manifested in both verbal and nonverbal tests. While overall verbal abilities appear to be adequately developed, informal assessment and behavioral observations indicate language delay which seems to interfere with academic functioning.

Although English-dominant, Ana is a culturally and linguistically diverse youngster. Her bilingual home environment has helped her to develop receptive and expressive skills in Spanish for interpersonal communication. Academic training, while exclusively in English, has not enabled her to develop sufficient cognitive proficiency for success.

Aside from the naturally occurring process of acquiring a second language Ana exhibits language deficits in both Spanish and English. She exhibits difficulties with syntax, semantics, morphology and pragmatics, both receptively and expressively. Most notable are her difficulties with word retrieval and verbal conceptualization. Although she gets to the point, she has to go through a lengthy and complicated process. Language delays interfere with her ability to learn. She is unable to build concepts and make generalizations independently.

Ana has difficulty remaining on task when working independently. Her attention and concentration seem to improve when she is interacting with others. She views school as a cooperative rather than competitive environment. Her very social personality, learning style, and need for auditory feedback lend themselves well to cooperative learning.

Ana's language input needs to be simplified and context-embedded to improve comprehension. Care should be taken to introduce new learning in concrete terms, making association with her personal experiences. Ana would benefit from language instructional techniques which build on personal experiences to enrich her language as well as strengthen reading and writing skills. Task analysis of concepts is essential to assist Ana with organizing and categorizing information. She would further benefit from instruction in learning and problem-solving strategies. Ana is limited in the tools available

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to assist her with learning and retaining information. She needs direct instruction on looking for clue words in arithmetic word problems to identify the correct operation. Additionally, she needs to develop a variety of strategies such as visual imagery and grouping to increase her flexibility in solving problems and learning new information. She needs to strengthen her ability to reflect on and discuss her performance. Portfolio Assessment would be beneficial in developing her ability to devise a plan for dealing with tasks, monitor progress, and evaluate the outcome.

In view of the findings, the following recommendations are offered:

1. speech and language evaluation;
2. continued placement in special education small-class setting;
3. English language enrichment;
4. mainstream in one subject (to be determined by the classroom teacher).

—Dra. Rafaela Delgado Flores Bilingual Psychologist

Appendix 7.2 Checklist of Objectives for a Multicultural Psycho-educational Report

<i>The report includes:</i>	Yes	No
A review of educational records observation of the student during class instruction		
An examination of the content of the instruction		
Evaluation of the fit between the student and the curriculum with consideration of the student's needs		
Deductions made from parent and teacher interviews		
Review of medical records		
Relevant background information that covers cultural information pertaining to:		
ethnic and racial/biracial identity, religious/traditional beliefs		
social class, health care practices, immigration		
acculturation stages of the student and parents		
disciplinary norms of the family		
A plan for instruction		
Guidance with regard to the academic strengths and weaknesses of the CLD student		
A psychometric estimate of the cognitive results, describing the child's potential		
An estimate of intellectual functioning, if certain biases in testing practices were removed or modified		
Consideration of the impact of social and cultural issues, language, and environmental/political factors		
A note that the appropriate comparison groups were used when discussing the assessed CLD student		

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Appendix 7.2 (Continued)

<i>The report includes:</i>	Yes	No
Consideration of the impact of learning a second language and adjustment to a second culture on the social/emotional and intellectual development of the CLD student		
Clinical impressions that truly reflect the CLD child's personality and behaviors according to his/her culture and ethnicity		
The results of some screening measure or other qualitative method used to assess the CLD student's language dominance and/or bilingualism (e.g., The Bilingual Verbal Ability Test or the Woodcock-Muñoz language survey)		
A note as to whether a translator was used during the assessment		
A description of the limitations of using interpreters for interviewing or testing purposes in conjunction with a detailed explanation of the interpreter's training and credentials		
An explanation that the psychometric structure of the original non-translated instrument and the translated version of the instrument are not comparable		
Data on language proficiency		
Details of whether ELL describes current progress in the acquisition of a second language		
A note that the standardized test used is not normed for the CLD student, and therefore results are presented in a descriptive and qualitative manner		
Results reported in a culturally sensitive manner		
Clear adherence to the recommendations for conducting a multicultural assessment		