Exploring Professional Psychology Graduate Students' Training in Culturally Competent Assessment

by

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Abstract

Culture is recognized as a necessary consideration for psychologists to attend to when conducting assessments, the importance of which professional ethical guidelines make clear as well. What is not yet clear from the existing research is if clinical psychology training programs in Canada reflect this shift in awareness to specifically train students to be culturally competent in their assessment practice, particularly from the perspective of those students being trained. The purpose of this qualitative case study was to increase our understanding of professional child psychology graduate students' training experiences in Canada, as they pertain to culturally competent assessment practices; as well as if and how these graduate students believe their training has prepared them to conduct adequate culturally competent assessments. Participants included ten students enrolled in a full-time, CPA accredited School and/or Clinical Child Psychology graduate program in Canada, who had completed all their required PhD coursework. Individual semi-structured interviews were conducted virtually, and each participant was asked questions related to their knowledge of culture and culturally competent assessment, experience conducting culturally competent assessments, graduate training in culturally competent assessment, and opinion on the concept of cultural competence. Overall, although students have been trained and prepared by their programs in various ways to conduct assessments with culturally diverse clients, they feel their training is lacking in numerous areas and they require more training before they would consider themselves able to conduct culturally competent assessments. Implications are discussed, as well as future directions for research and training.

Preface

This thesis is an original work by Alexandra Meaghan Aquilina. The research project, of which this thesis is a part, received ethics approval from the University of Alberta Research Ethics Board under the Study Title: "Exploring the Adequacy of Training in Producing Psychologists who are Culturally Competent in their Assessment of Culturally Diverse Individuals," No. Pro00106259, on March 24, 2021.

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

Overview

The purpose of this dissertation is to increase our understanding of professional child psychology graduate students' training experiences in Canada, as they pertain to culturally competent assessment practices; as well as if and how these graduate students believe their training has prepared them to conduct adequate culturally competent assessments. When discussing professional child psychology graduate students, I am referring to those who are enrolled in a Canadian Psychological Association (CPA) accredited school and/or clinical child psychology graduate program in Canada. Understanding if, and how, professional child psychology graduate students are trained in culturally competent assessment procedures will ultimately contribute to improved assessment practices with culturally diverse clients.

Background

As a nation, Canada is predominantly composed of immigrants and descendants of immigrants (Edmonston, 2016). In 2021, Indigenous people accounted for only 5% of the total population in Canada (Statistics Canada, 2022a). Conversely, the proportion of foreign-born individuals in Canada accounted for 23% of the population in 2021 (Statistics Canada, 2021), which is expected to grow at a rapid pace and projected to account for 49.8% to 54.3% of the population in 2041 (Statistics Canada, 2022b). Immigration has had a significant impact on population growth in Canada; however, immigration trends have shifted over the past two centuries. From 1880 to 1930, there was extensive immigration from Europe to Canada and in 2021, 52.5% of the population reported descending from European origins (Statistics Canada, 2022c). More recently, Asia, including the Middle East, is the continent with the highest source of recent immigrants to Canada, followed by Africa (Statistics Canada, 2017). This increasing diversity within the Canadian population has created a wonderfully unique environment, but it

can also foster potential challenges in terms of cross-cultural misunderstandings (Matsumoto & Juang, 2013). In addition, the increasing diversity within the population can present challenges to psychologists, particularly when assessing culturally diverse individuals (Flanagan et al., 2013); however, cross-cultural assessment is inevitable for psychologists due to ever-increasing global mobility.

Standardized cognitive and academic measures evaluate an individual's functioning by comparing their cognitive and academic abilities to a representative sample, which is assumed to capture the full range of individual differences for these constructs. For school-age children and adolescents, this comparison is made to students of the same age, who reside in the same country. Many psychological and educational assessments use standardized procedures for testing, which include the use of specified settings, measure elements, as well as verbal and nonverbal communications (Ortiz, 2019). Standardized assessments are often used to inform educational programming decisions and accommodations in schools to ensure students perform to the best of their ability.

The impact of culture within the assessment process has been extensively discussed and researched over the past few decades. As a result, almost all major professional ethical guidelines for psychological and educational assessment include sections dedicated to assessing culturally diverse individuals, providing recommendations and direction for how to address potential issues that may arise during the assessment due to various cultural factors. For example, ethical codes such as the Standards for Educational and Psychological Testing (AERA, APA, & NCME, 2014) highlight issues of fairness and validity, which should be maintained when conducting assessments on individuals from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds. Through research findings, professional guidelines, and the current social-political climate in North

America, psychologists have become more aware than ever of necessary cross-cultural considerations when conducting assessments. However, it is not yet clear if professional child psychology training programs in Canada have adapted to this shift in awareness to specifically target and train students to be culturally competent in their assessment practices.

Study Rationale

In North America, standardized assessments are heavily relied on for educational programming decisions and accommodations, particularly in educational contexts. In addition, culture profoundly impacts all our life experiences, including how individuals interact with testing materials (i.e., items from standardized measures). Culture is widely recognized as an important consideration psychologists must attend to when conducting assessments. Professional ethical guidelines provide information and guidance on addressing cultural factors during an assessment. For example, The Canadian Psychological Association (CPA, 2017a) requires competence for ethical practice, which includes being sensitive to and knowledgeable about culture, to discern what will benefit and not harm others. However, the extent to which this is taught in professional psychology graduate training programs in Canada is not well understood from the perspective of the learners.

The purpose of this study is to increase our understanding of professional child psychology graduate students' training experiences in Canada, as they pertain to culturally competent assessment practices; as well as if and how these graduate students believe their training has prepared them to conduct adequate culturally competent assessments. Cultural competence has been defined as an understanding, appreciation, and ability to interact appropriately with people from cultures that differ from their own (Calkins, 2020). Understanding if and how professional child psychology graduate students are prepared and

trained to assess culturally diverse individuals will help to inform whether revisions still need to be made to training models and programs. In Canada, psychologists will inevitably work with culturally diverse individuals. Guidelines exist for how psychologists should conduct their assessments to maximize their fairness and validity. Directors and administrators of professional child psychology graduate programs likely strive to ensure their graduate students are prepared to work as culturally competent clinicians; however, their perceptions of meeting training goals in this area may differ from those held by their graduate students. If students do not feel sufficiently prepared, this information could then be used to inform program modifications. In addition, students themselves may use this information to seek additional training to become culturally competent clinicians.

Guiding Questions

The overarching research questions guiding this study are:

1. How do students in CPA accredited professional child psychology graduate programs believe they have been trained in culturally competent assessment practice?; and

2. Do students in CPA accredited professional child psychology graduate programs believe they have been adequately trained to conduct culturally competent assessments?

Interview questions will focus on gaining an understanding of participants' knowledge of culture and culturally-competent assessment, if and how their graduate training and coursework has prepared them to be competent in assessing culturally diverse individuals, and what their program has done well or could do better to train them in this area.

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

This chapter outlines and describes the background, research, and theoretical foundations guiding this dissertation. Immigration has had a significant impact on population growth in Canada, which is now primarily composed of immigrants and descendants of immigrants (Edmonston, 2016). The growing diversity within the Canadian population presents unique challenges to psychologists and other professionals, particularly when assessing culturally diverse individuals (Flanagan et al., 2013). Standardized measures of intelligence estimate one's breadth of knowledge and skills by comparing their abilities to same-aged students in the same country. Culture is a necessary consideration when conducting assessments with culturally diverse individuals. While psychologists are ethically and professionally required to consider culture in their practice, how they are trained to assess culturally diverse individuals is not well understood.

Culture

Culture is an incredibly complex and encompassing concept, which has proven difficult to operationalize; therefore, there is not one accepted and agreed upon definition. In discussions among professional psychologists regarding culture, there is often reference to issues working with individuals from diverse racial or ethnic backgrounds, genders, sexual orientations, or religions (Smith, 2016). There is a tendency for individuals, including psychologists and researchers, to use unique concepts such as culture, ethnicity, race, and nationality interchangeably (Matsumoto & Juang, 2013). Due to the wide misuse of these terms, it is necessary to differentiate them and establish a clear definition of culture for use in this paper. Race is socially constructed and often based on biological phenotype or shared physical traits (e.g., Black, White, Asian; Race, n.d.). Ethnicity, on the other hand, often connects individuals to

their geographic birthplace or heritage (Ethnicity, n.d.) and is closely tied to nationality, which is represented by the country an individual or their parents come from (Nationality, n.d.). Defining culture is essential because it is possible for individuals with a shared culture to differ in terms of race, ethnicity, and/or nationality.

Sue and colleagues (2022) define culture as consisting of everything learned, believed, valued, and enjoyed by people within a society. Culture is a human-made construct, which represents a way of life transmitted generationally (Spencer-Oatey, 2012). It consists of variable systems, learned and shared by a group of people. For example, values and unconscious assumptions determine the perceptions, thoughts, and feelings of group members (Sattler et al., 2014; Spencer-Oatey, 2012). As Ardila (2005, 2007) explained, differences in culture are predominantly related to variations in environmental conditions and represent a way of adapting in a particular context. Others describe culture as having both external (e.g., artifacts, roles, activity contexts), and internal (e.g., values, beliefs, attitudes, personality style) representations, and shared meanings and behaviours within a culture are subject to modification in response to changing internal and external circumstances (Mushquash & Bova, 2007). Whaley and Davis (2007) define culture as:

> A dynamic process involving worldviews and ways of living in a physical and social environment shared by groups, which are passed from generation to generation and may be modified by contacts between cultures in a particular social, historical, and political context. (p. 564)

What is particularly noteworthy about each definition of culture is the focus on experiential background rather than one's race or ethnicity. Experiential background is influenced by internal and external environments, and it influences many aspects of one's life.

There is a tendency for people to treat culture and group membership as synonymous, automatically assuming members of a particular group share certain cultural values, beliefs, attitudes, and traits, which will influence or determine clinically relevant behaviour (Kirmayer, 2012). Unfortunately, as Kirmayer (2012) explains:

> This approach tends to reify and essentialize cultures as consisting of more or less fixed sets of characteristics that can be described independently of any individual's life history or social context… This is an old-fashioned view, now largely abandoned by anthropology. (p.155)

In reality, cultures are mixed, hybrid, and in a constant state of flux, changing in response to the ongoing process of knowledge transmission both within and between ethnocultural communities (Burke, 2009; Modood, 2007). Therefore, the influence of an individual's culture should not be assumed without clarification from the individual themself, and consideration of their life history and current context.

Assessing Intelligence

The nature of intelligence testing is high stakes, as the results have real world implications and are used to make important decisions. As a result, it is one of the most criticized assessment practices in the context of fairness. As Nisbett and colleagues (2012) explain: "The measurement of intelligence is one of psychology's greatest achievements and one of its most controversial." Psychological assessment has many positive purposes, including guiding interventions, contributing to research, and promoting access to resources; however, it has also historically contributed to systems of oppression, such as by being used to exclude ethnic minority groups from access to educational privileges (Sayegh et al., 2023). For decades, the impact of culture within assessment and the potential for cultural bias have been extensively

discussed and researched. As a result, cultural bias is at the heart of the debate concerning sources contributing to lack of fairness within the assessment of intelligence.

There are multiple definitions and understandings of intelligence. According to Wechsler (1944), "intelligence is the aggregate or global capacity of the individual to act purposefully, to think rationally and to deal effectively with [their] environment" (p. 3). There is an emphasis on how one adapts to the environment in the way intelligence is defined. An individual's cultural knowledge impacts how they will behave in a particular environment, which means the way intelligence is expressed in an assessment situation is culturally bound (Mushquash & Bova, 2007).

Foundations. Test developers did not consider the impact of culture and ethnicity in how measures of intelligence were created and used until the latter half of the twentieth century (Sattler et al., 2014). Modern assessments have been refined and developed over the span of many years. However, certain theoretical foundations, traditions, and procedures are rooted in the original tests, which emanated from European attitudes, beliefs, and values (Kamphaus, 1993; Neisser, 1998) and reflect what is valued by Western cultures (Sattler et al., 2014). The very idea of what constitutes intelligence is culturally determined and biased, with distinctive cultures subscribing to different expectations and definitions of intelligence (Sternberg & Grigorenko, 2007). In addition, forms of bias and injustice may manifest across numerous aspects of assessment, including the clinical interview, the testing process and requirements, and questionnaires (Sayegh et al., 2023). During the clinical interview, cultural factors may impact clients' attitudes and comfort with self-disclosure (Hays, 2008; Sayegh et al., 2023). The testing component of the assessment is performance-based, and numerous factors may impact the test performance of culturally diverse individuals, such as variations in English-language proficiency

and acculturation, nonrepresentative normative data, and insufficient cultural competency among providers (Benuto et al., 2018; Sayegh et al., 2023). Some additional aspects of the assessment that may result in bias and injustice include the: (a) specific environmental conditions of testing (Ardila, 2005, 2007; Sattler et al., 2014; Wechsler, 2014); (b) concept of performance speed (Suzuki & Wilton, 2016); (c) focus on individualism (Miyamoto et al., 2010); (d) verbal communication and use of vernacular (Ardila, 2005; Greenfield, 1997; Sattler et al., 2014); and (e) reliance on verbal skills and English language to communicate (van de Vijver, 2013). Finally, there are many factors that may lead to cultural group differences in response patterns to questionnaires used in the assessment (Sayegh et al., 2023). For example, language barriers and cultural influences on the way symptoms and behaviours are perceived and expressed, as well as culturally loaded content and samples (Reynolds & Suzuki, 2012; Sayegh et al., 2023)

Therefore, a student's performance partially reflects the degree to which they have acquired, are comfortable in, and identify with, the cultural-specific conditions reflected in the testing environment (Council of National Psychological Associations for the Advancement of Ethnic Minority Interests, 2016; Ortiz, 2019). Cross-cultural psychologists argue intelligence indicators are rooted in a specific culture; some cultures might emphasize cognition, while others might emphasize social intelligence (Benson, 2003a; Geva & Weiner, 2015). As Sattler (1992) explained: intelligence is embedded in, and defined by, the culture it is meant to measure. The increase in foreign-born Canadians and the cultural-specific qualities of standardized assessment procedures creates the potential for challenges and controversy when assessing culturally diverse individuals (Geva & Weiner, 2015).

Modern Assessment Practices. Modern assessment practices do not formally account for the impact of culture; measures are often selected, administered, and interpreted without

consideration of how assessment procedures might influence the performance of culturally diverse individuals (Flanagan et al., 2013). Furthermore, while the norming sample used for measures of intelligence reflect the ethnic diversity represented in the country's population, they are not specifically normed using samples to reflect cultural diversity (Benson, 2003b; Geva & Weiner, 2015). This may result in a biased sample, which cannot be used to accurately assess culturally diverse individuals (Benson, 2003b; Geva & Weiner, 2015). Walker, Batchelor, and Shores (2009) conducted a literature review and found there are no measures of intelligence that consistently result in no performance differences between cultural groups; demonstrating the impact culture has on assessment performance.

Canada is a multicultural country, and, because of this, there is a high chance psychologists in Canada will work with new immigrants and other culturally diverse individuals throughout their careers. Psychologists should be aware of how culture shapes the way culturally diverse individuals view standardized assessment practices, as well as how their performance could be impacted.

Considering Culture in Assessment

Historically, psychological assessment with culturally or ethnically diverse groups has been controversial. This was particularly because assessments were perceived to be objective and culture-free, even though they were primarily standardized, validated, and found reliable with White, middle-class, English-speaking samples (Council of National Psychological Associations for the Advancement of Ethnic Minority Interests, 2016). Culture dictates what is and is not relevant in a particular context (Irvine & Berry, 1988). Testing individuals who are not native to the culture in which they are being assessed (i.e., Canadian and of European descent) is a complicated process, which often does not progress according to standards of fairness to which

assessment is meant to be held (Ortiz, 2019). These guidelines come from professional standards, such as the *Standards for Educational and Psychological Testing* (AERA, APA, & NCME, 2014), and are meant to ensure fairness in all aspects of testing practices, for all individuals. Assessments use specific and standardized conditions for testing, which may be familiar and comfortable for some, but unfamiliar and in violation of accepted cultural norms for others. For some, these conditions may be in direct contradiction to expectations outlined by the *Standards*. For example, the *Standards* outline the need for equity in treatment and assessment, which may require an examiner be someone with whom the examinee "can communicate and feel comfortable to the extent practicable" (p. 51). In considering the conditions of testing, and unfamiliarity with the cultural norms of foundations for some individuals from non-Western cultures, they may be at a disadvantage before they even experience the content of the assessment questions.

   Norm-Referenced Measurement. In norm-referenced measurement, an individual's knowledge and skills are compared with a representative group of people, referred to as a norm group (Sattler, 2014). The norm indicates the typical or average performance of a particular group, as well as the span of scores above and below the average (Sattler, 2014). A norm group is considered representative if the characteristics of those in the norm group, such as age, grade, ethnicity, gender, geographic location, and socioeconomic status, match those of the population of interest (Sattler, 2014). This means the proportion of individuals in each group reflects the proportions in the country being represented. However, even in normative data where a particular ethnic group is proportionally represented in the sample, based on the proportion in the general population, the actual number in the sample may be too few to be meaningful (Sattler, 2014). In addition, as reviewed previously, ethnicity does not equate culture.

While researchers and test developers have worked for decades to ensure the reliability and validity of measures to assess numerous constructs related to intelligence, these measures are often used with cultural groups for which proper normative research has not been conducted (Mushquash & Bova, 2007). As Mushquash and Bova (2007) point out, "it is easy to imagine that a test designed to measure the cognitive ability in adults would not be readily usable with children." (p. 55). Similarly, while using an instrument developed with a particular culture in mind with a different culture, use of additional care and precaution is necessary to ensure the results are interpreted with concern for cross-cultural effects (Mushquash & Bova, 2007).

Cultural Competence

Epstein and Hundert (2002) define professional competence as "the habitual and judicious use of communication, knowledge, technical skills, clinical reasoning, emotions, values, and reflection in daily practice for the benefit of the individual and community being served" (p. 226). It relates to overall suitability in a profession and reflects one's knowledge, skills, and attitudes, as well as their integration (Rubin et al., 2007). Simply put, competence can be defined as being prepared and qualified to perform a task efficiently.

Cultural competence within the field of psychology has primarily been addressed within the practice of counselling and therapy (Dana et al., 2002). For example, the seminal work of Sue, Ivey, and Pedersen (1996), who developed a widely recognized conceptual framework for cultural competency in counselling psychology. However, little attention may be given to how culture impacts illness perception, illness behaviour, acceptability of specific interventions, and treatment outcomes (Bhui et al., 2007; Sue et al., 2009). In addition, most instruments measuring practitioner cultural competency are based on self-report from the perspective of the practitioner, rather than the client (Larson & Bradshaw, 2017).

Definitions. Just as culture is a difficult construct to conceptualize, so is cultural competency. Researchers have struggled to come to an agreed upon definition of what makes a psychologist culturally competent. Several definitions have been proposed, but have largely been criticized. This lack of an agreed upon definition for what constitutes cultural competence means it may be interpreted by some to mean one has better knowledge of the cultural beliefs and practices of a particular cultural group. However, cultural competency requires clinicians to not only appreciate and recognize other cultures, but to effectively work with them (Benuto et al., 2018).

A notable definition of cultural competence is that put forth by the CPA. According to the CPA (2017b), cultural competence requires a clinician to understand and respect the cultural, ethnic, and linguistic diversity of clients, and to recognize how these factors may impact not only their well-being, but also the therapeutic relationship. This definition synthesizes the importance of having a sufficiently strong knowledge and awareness of clients' culture and diversity, and how these factors may impact the client and their work with them. This definition does not address the necessity of developing relevant skills; however, the development of skills related to cultural competence is addressed in CPA's Accreditation Standards (2023.

Bhui and colleagues (2007) conducted a literature review and sought to define the meaning of cultural competence in mental health settings, synthesizing key characteristics of the definitions of cultural competence found in research:

> …a set of skills or processes that enable mental health professionals to provide services
> that are culturally appropriate for the diverse populations that they serve. This definition
> was focussed on an outcome, and included attention to obvious language differences in
> the consultation, as well as how culture influences attitudes, expressions of distress, and

help seeking practices. Consequently, it was suggested that clinical procedures and

policies should reflect these. (p. 4)

The common aim put forth by the definitions was to increase performance and capabilities of

staff when they provide services to culturally diverse individuals (Bhui et al., 2007). In addition,

engagement with various cultural groups was considered an important aspect of developing

cultural competency in all studies included in the review.

Benuto and colleagues (2018) established a definition of cultural competency from the

perspective of psychologists. Based on interviews followed by a survey, cultural competency

was defined as a 2-dimensional construct consisting of knowledge/awareness and skills.

Knowledge requires more than a simple awareness of major cultural groups, but a sophisticated

level of knowledge, as there are many cultures and sub-cultures.

A synthesis of the definitions of cultural competence suggests the most important aspects

are: (a) sophisticated knowledge and awareness of the client's particular culture, (b) engagement

with various cultural groups, and (c) relevant skills and problem solving, which are suitable to

the cultural background of the client.

Need for Cultural Competency. The demand for cultural competency came from

concern over the needs of ethnically and culturally diverse populations, which resulted in the

need to change the mental health system (Sue et al., 2009). Health status disparities between

different ethnic groups has been well documented, and studies have demonstrated the

inaccessibility or ineffectiveness of mental health services delivered to certain populations, due

to cultural bias in healthcare decision making and recommendations (Sue et al., 2009). Increasing

cultural competence in health and mental health care providers has been suggested as one way to

increase the quality of care across ethnic groups, and reduce health and mental health disparities between European-North Americans and other ethnic groups (Thom et al., 2006).

There has been some resistance to the shift in focus on culturally competent care for various reasons. Some researchers' and professionals' concern stems from the risk of appropriation or stereotyping, rather than respecting and engaging in another person's culture and life (Kirmayer, 2012). Because of this, some researchers emphasize the importance of understanding any generalizations made about groups belonging to certain cultures or ethnicities are meant as generalizations, not to be applied indiscriminately to every child or family seeming to fit within that particular group (Sattler, 2014).

Advocates of cultural competency put forth the notion of competency as a relative skill, depending on the individual's cultural orientation or expertise, and define cultural competence with the assumption expertise can differ depending on the client's ethnicity or cultural background (Sue et al., 2009). These advocates are aware of the importance of complex mechanisms related to culture and explain it is not adequate to simply export the same method from one cultural group to another (Hall, 2001). Related to this, CPA (2018) wrote a response to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada's report:

> …it is no longer sufficient for the profession to claim, "this is the best we have" even though it is not culturally appropriate. Misapplication of tests contributes to stigma, marginalization and misapplied treatment. Psychologists must have a higher ethical accountability. (p. 18)

Professional Mandates. Cultural competency was originally conceptualized as cultural sensitivity or responsiveness, but is now widely advocated for, and sometimes mandated by professional organizations (Sue et al., 2009). Many professional organizations outline ethical

principles, which strive for equity and fairness. The CPA mandates *competence* as a requirement

for ethical psychological practice within the Canadian Code of Ethics for Psychologists (CPA,

2017a). The goal of the Canadian Code of Ethics for Psychologists is to promote non-

discriminatory care and practice, which includes consideration of culture and diversity in their

work with clients (CPA, 2017a). This goal is reflected within each of the four Principles. The

principle of Respect for the Dignity of Persons and Peoples requires psychologists to actively

demonstrate that each person should be treated fairly and primarily as a person, regardless of

their culture, nationality, ethnicity, race, religion, or any other preference, characteristic,

condition, or status (CPA, 2017a). The principle of Responsible Caring requires psychologists to

actively demonstrate concern for the well-being and best interests of others, particularly those

who are vulnerable, dependent, or experience oppression and discrimination in society, and be

competent in their activities as psychologists with them (CPA, 2017a). The Integrity in

Relationships principle requires psychologists to be honest, objective, open, and accurate in all

their psychological interactions and activities, which includes avoidance of biases and an

awareness of how their own characteristics, values, and beliefs influence their interactions (CPA,

2017a). Finally, the Responsibility to Society principle requires psychologists to display concern

for the well-being and best interest for all people in society (CPA, 2017a). This includes a

responsibility for psychologists to use their knowledge and power to contribute to social change,

particularly to spur change for groups in society who are oppressed or racialized (CPA, 2017b).

More specifically, the requisites of the ethical requirement to be culturally competent are

outlined under the Competence and Self-Knowledge Standards in Principle II: Responsible

Caring, and the Objectivity/Lack of Bias Standards in Principle III: Integrity in Relationships.

Competence and Self-Knowledge require psychologists to recognize the need for competence, as

incompetence is not only unethical and unlikely to benefit others, but is also likely to be harmful (CPA, 2017a). The Objectivity and Lack of Bias Standards outline the need to understand and be open about how their own experiences, culture, attitudes, and beliefs influence their activities, and to be as objective and unbiased as possible. Psychologists are expected to:

> II.14 Be sufficiently sensitive to and knowledgeable about individual and group characteristics, culture, and vulnerabilities to discern what will benefit and not harm the individuals and groups (e.g., couples, families, organizations, communities, peoples) involved in their activities.

> II.18 Strive to provide and/or obtain the best reasonably accessible service for those seeking psychological services. This may include, but is not limited to, selecting assessment tools, methods, interventions, and communication modalities that are: (a) relevant and tailored to the needs, characteristics, and contexts of the primary client or contract examinee; and (b) based on the best available evidence in light of those needs, characteristics, and contexts.

In addition, the Responsibility to Society standards outline the expectation for psychologists to:

> IV.15 Acquire an adequate knowledge of the culture, social structure, history, customs, and laws or policies of organizations, communities, and peoples before beginning any major work there, obtaining guidance from appropriate members of the organization, community, or people as needed.

> The Guidelines for Non-Discriminatory Practice (CPA, 2017b) were developed to encourage psychologists to practice in a non-discriminatory manner, and are based on the Canadian Code of Ethics for Psychologists (CPA, 2017a). The goal of the Guidelines is to provide information and promote non-discriminatory care and ethical practice, particularly in

work with diverse clients. The guidelines include being aware of one's own cultural beliefs and how they impact interactions, recognizing power differentials, studying cultural norms to recognize individual differences, and an awareness that theories and principles developed with one culture in mind may apply differently to those from other cultures. These guidelines are relevant to psychologists and psychologists-in-training who want to ensure they are engaging in culturally competent assessment practice, which is their ethical responsibility.

Training Psychologists to be Culturally Competent

There has been an increase in the focus on addressing multicultural awareness in graduate training programs since the early 1970s (Sue et al., 1992). Professional child psychology graduate programs are tasked with preparing their students to enter the professional field as competent professionals (Stites & Warholic, 2014). According to the CPA's (2023) most recent Accreditation Standards, accredited programs are expected to meet certain training standards and foundational competencies, including those related to: (a) individual, social, and cultural diversity; (b) Indigenous interculturalism; and (c) bias evaluation and reflective practice.

For the individual, social, and cultural diversity competency, programs are required to comprehensively and systematically provide students with both didactic instruction and practical experience with human diversity (CPA, 2023). Through this training, students are expected to develop an awareness and sensitivity in their work with those who represent various cultural and personal backgrounds and characteristics (CPA, 2023). Furthermore, the range of human diversity should be highlighted across all aspects of training and the program (CPA, 2023). The Indigenous interculturalism competency outlines the need for programs to include education regarding Indigenous Peoples. The goal is to include Indigenous ways of knowing and concepts of wellness, and to include culturally appropriate and strength-based approaches into training

(CPA, 2023). Finally, the bias evaluation and reflective practice competency outlines the need for students to be taught to understand their own characteristics, biases, strengths, assumptions, beliefs, power, and privilege, as well as the impact each of these have on their professional interactions and functioning (CPA, 2023).

To train professional psychology graduate students to be culturally competent clinicians, the CPA (2023) put forth numerous recommendations, such as incorporating cultural competence training at all levels of education. This may include providing students with the opportunity to interact with diverse populations, and promoting the use of culturally sensitive evidence-based practices that are appropriate for use with diverse clients (CPA, 2023). In addition, the CPA (2017b, 2023) encourages programs to train students to train their students to recognize and address their own biases and stereotypes and develop appropriate strategies to overcome them. Finally, the CPA (2023) urges programs to teach students about the mental health and illness within the context of culture, including how culture impacts the manifestation and expression of symptoms and disorders.

While CPA has put forth detailed accreditation standards and numerous recommendations for training students regarding cultural competency, there is unfortunately not a lot of accessible information about specific teaching and learning methods within the field of clinical psychology, particularly regarding assessment, as few studies have published this information. In addition, concrete mandates on what this training should include or how it should be carried out is lacking (Benuto et al., 2019). However, the importance of training and education has been highlighted, particularly within the area of counselling psychology (Bhui et al., 2007; Suen et al., 2023). Of the accessible information about specific teaching and learning methods, there is a lot of variation in the programs, and methods of evaluating the impact of

cultural competence training is limited (Kirmayer, 2012). Because of the lack of contemporary information regarding the cultural competency training psychologists receive, Benuto and colleagues (2019) conducted a study to investigate this with psychologists in the United States. Most of their participants reported their graduate training related to cultural competency included a course on diversity, supervised clinical experience with diverse populations, didactic training about cultural competency, and the exploration of personal biases (Benuto et al., 2019). Fewer participants reported their training included experiential activities and cultural immersion (Benuto et al., 2019). Their findings also revealed clinical supervision predicted satisfaction with psychologists' training. While this study also did not provide concrete information on how training should be carried out, it provided helpful information on how psychologists in the United States have been trained in the general area of cultural competency, as well as what predicts their level of satisfaction with their training in this area.

In Canada, curriculum and training materials have been created by the Indigenous Physicians Association of Canada and the Royal College of Physicians of Canada (2009) to train psychiatry residents in culturally competent mental health care for their Indigenous patients. Some methods of teaching cultural competence include lecture style teaching, case study discussions, role-play, and video materials with feedback. Beach and colleagues (2005) conducted a literature review to evaluate interventions used to improve cultural competence of health professionals. They found evidence of cultural competence improving the knowledge, attitudes, and skills of health professionals. However, there is little to no evidence of clinician cultural competence improving patient adherence to therapy, patient health status outcomes, or equity of services across ethnic groups. Beach and colleagues (2005) suggest cultural

competence interventions focusing on avoiding bias, general concepts of culture, and patient-centeredness as promising strategies.

Academic curricula frequently require their students to meet the expectations outlined for cultural competence through their practicum placements, which is determined only by their supervisors, and to either complete a traditional lecture-style course on culture, or the topic of culture is touched upon superficially within other lecture-style courses (Arredondo & Arciniega, 2001; Stites & Warholic, 2014). Based on student reporting, numerous researchers have found learning through supervision discussions and direct feedback as having the greatest impact on their feeling of perceived cultural competence. For example, Lee and Khawaja (2020) examined the factors students attributed to their perceived competence working with clients from different cultural backgrounds. They determined exposure to traditional methods of teaching was not associated with students' perceived multicultural competence, but experiential learning and intense one-on-one discussion about multicultural learning through supervision had the biggest impact on their feeling of competence. Similarly, Dana and colleagues (2002) applied a training model emphasizing systematic feedback on the accuracy of concepts in students' assessment reports, which were prepared using data sets of culturally diverse clients, with an emphasis on the impact of culture. Using this training model, Dana and colleagues (2002) suggest combining standard and multicultural assessment training with practice in preparing multicultural reports. They propose a paradigm shift can be noted over time in the manner with which assessment data is handled. Therefore, assessors can learn to be more cautious in avoiding unnecessary pathologizing or stereotyping of individuals, particularly for whom there is not adequate norming data. With intentional practice, integrating cultural information eventually becomes automatic

because of a shift in the assessors' attitude, and they aim to rule out the cultural influence for each client (Dana et al., 2002).

Theoretical Underpinnings

Theoretical Framework for Cultural Competence. A cultural competency framework encourages a multicultural perspective and reflects the theoretical foundations of this area of study. Sue and colleagues (1992) created what they believed to be important competencies in cross-cultural counselling. These competencies were organized as a three (characteristics) by three (dimensions) matrix, under which cross-cultural skills and competencies can be developed. The three characteristics: (a) counsellor awareness of own assumptions, values, and biases; (b) understanding the worldview of the culturally different client; and (c) developing appropriate intervention strategies and techniques, are each described with three dimensions: (a) beliefs and attitudes, (b) knowledge, and (c) skills (Sue et al., 1992). While these competencies were specifically developed for application to counselling psychology, they can be applied to all areas of professional psychology. This framework was further developed into three general areas of cultural competency: cultural awareness and beliefs, cultural knowledge, and culturally responsive or multicultural skills (Sue et al., 1996; Sue et al., 2022).

Cultural awareness and beliefs. Cultural awareness and beliefs refer to one's sensitivity to their own values and biases, and how those may influence their perceptions of a client, the client's presenting concerns, and the therapeutic relationship (Sue et al., 1996). All humans have values, assumptions, and biases, which are unlikely to be eliminated. However, their influence can be minimized by increasing one's awareness and recognition of their own values, assumptions, and biases (Council of National Psychological Associations for the Advancement of Ethnic Minority Interests, 2016). If a clinician is not self-aware, they may not realize the

stereotypes they hold, which may influence their opinion and responses to their clients, which may in turn impact the therapeutic process (Sue et al., 2022). In CPA's (2023) Accreditation Standards, it is recommended that graduate students be trained to recognize their own biases and develop strategies to overcome them, as biases and stereotypes influence the assessment of diverse clients. Self-assessment is a necessary step for work with clients who differ from us, and contributes to reflection and awareness of personal biases.

Cultural knowledge. Cultural knowledge refers to one's knowledge of their client's culture, worldview, and expectations for the therapeutic relationship (Sue et al., 1996). It also involves a general awareness of different worldviews, which is crucial when working with clients from different cultures and ethnicities from oneself (Sue et al., 2022). CPA's (2023) Accreditation Standards outline the requirement for each program to provide its students with instruction and experience with human diversity, which would result in increased knowledge of culture. Similarly, the Council of National Psychological Associations for the Advancement of Ethnic Minority Interests (2016) describe the critical need for clinicians to be knowledgeable, understand, and incorporate relevant sociocultural factors when assessing culturally diverse individuals.

It is necessary to not apply cultural information rigidly and to determine the fit between cultural information described through readings and research and the individual client (Sue et al., 2022). This is not only important because of cultural differences, such as degree of assimilation, socioeconomic background, and education level, but also because of the influence of intersectionality (Sue et al., 2022); a client may be influenced by multiple identities and have been shaped through the interconnectedness of their identifications and experiences. Benuto and colleagues (2018) define cultural competence as a construct consisting of knowledge and skills.

The knowledge component of this construct applies to this area of Sue and colleague's framework. Benuto and colleagues (2018) similarly describe knowledge as requiring a sophisticated level of knowledge due to the large number of cultures, sub-cultures, and intersectionality. Therefore, it is crucial to be open to others' worldviews, and to remember each client's life story is unique.

Culturally responsive or multicultural skills. Cultural responsiveness refers to one's ability to successfully apply numerous helping skills when forming a therapeutic alliance with the client and should be incorporated throughout the whole process of assessment or intervention; it is necessary to individualize these helping skills to suit the client, rather than applying the same techniques to everyone (Sue et al., 2022). According to Sayegh and colleagues (2023), it is the responsibility of the clinician, not the client, to acquire the knowledge and skills necessary to conduct a culturally responsive assessment, appropriate for use with each particular client. For students to gain these skills, the CPA (2023) encourages programs to promote the use of evidence-based and culturally sensitive practices that are appropriate for use with diverse clients. When a clinician has cultural skills, they demonstrate an ability to act in a culturally sensitive and relevant manner (Sue et al., 1996). As Sue and colleagues (2022) explain, applying cultural awareness and knowledge in the assessment process can involve listening deeply to the client and encouraging them to collaborate in understanding the presenting concern. Benuto and colleagues (2018) also call attention to the importance of relevant skills in psychologists' work with culturally diverse clients, as it is one of two dimensions of their definition of cultural competence.

Best Practices for Culturally Competent Assessment

Additional empirical research is required to increase our understanding of how to minimize the influence of culture on standardized assessment procedures. However, practitioners can consider the potential positive impacts of the following suggestions in their practice: (a) building rapport, (b) researching their clients' cultures, and (c) gathering information about each client's culture from the client themselves. In addition, though not often possible, researchers have found culture matching between examiner and examinee is preferred whenever possible (Dudley et al., 2019; Hall et al., 2002; Sattler et al., 2014; Sotelo-Dynega & Dixon, 2014; Wong, 2000).

Building rapport with the client is a crucial step in any assessment and may be even more critical when assessing a client from another culture. The one-to-one interaction between the examinee and examiner, who are strangers to one another, is unusual in some cultures (Ardila, 2005) and the unfamiliarity may cause some discomfort (Ardila, 2007; Sattler et al., 2014; Wechsler, 2014). Building rapport creates the opportunity to develop a relationship so the examiner is no longer considered a stranger, increase the client's comfort level with the examiner, and generally learn more about the client.

Researching the culture of examinees who are culturally dissimilar to the examiner is essential for the examiner to learn about some of the procedures the examinee may not be comfortable or familiar with. For example, researching the other culture may aid in the examiner's understanding of the vernacular used within the examinee's culture, which could aid in avoiding confusion. In addition, it will allow the examiner to better understand the sociocultural context of the examinee and their experience with prejudice, racism, and stigmatization, which can impact performance (Nabors et al., 2000).

Assouad (2014) found the way the clinician approaches cultural factors and issues can significantly impact the client's perception of the clinician, relationship, and treatment. Therefore, research about the culture may be a necessary starting point, particularly to assist in the process of approaching the topic of culture with the client. However, because not everyone from each culture is the same, speaking directly with the examinee about their culture is another necessary step to understand their personal experiences and expectations. Furthermore, learning more about the examinee's culture presents the opportunity to create a culturally responsive assessment process, which has been found to result in better performance and a more positive experience (Dudley et al., 2019).

Non-verbal measures. According to Greenfield (1997), cognitive ability assessments cannot cross cultures, particularly because of the culture dependent nature of communication. In an assessment, examiners read standardized instructions and do not engage in informal conversation with the examinee, which may be an abnormal method of interaction for many individuals (Ardila, 2005). This may cause discomfort to an individual who has not experienced this form of communication, and they may not know how to respond, which could impact their performance. For example, as Sattler and colleagues (2014) explained, if a Caucasian examiner of European descendant is very direct and blunt in their questions, as examiners often are in a standardized assessment process, some culturally diverse individuals may view the examiner as being disruptive and hurtful.

Some researchers suggest using non-verbal measures of intelligence, as measures of this kind have been developed to address cultural bias in assessment, particularly those impacted by verbal communication. For example, the Kaufman Assessment Battery for Children (KABC), the Test on Nonverbal Intelligence (TONI), and the Wechsler Nonverbal Scales of Ability are all

non-verbal intelligence measures. However, as West and Schoenthaler (2017) explained, unconscious attitudes regarding ethnicity often result in behaviours that are subtle, difficult to control, and difficult to label as biased. Because of this, nonverbal displays of anxiety or discomfort, or even inflated positivity, may result from the examiner. These subtle behaviours have been found to be frequently demonstrated by non-Black practitioners toward their Black clients, resulting in the clients feeling more negatively about their interaction (West & Schoenthaler, 2017). Therefore, whether an examiner is using a verbal or non-verbal measure of intelligence, it is necessary for examiners to reflect and be aware of their own values and biases, as well as any stereotypes they may have, which is related to cultural awareness and beliefs, as outlined by Sue and colleagues (1996) as an area of cultural competence.

Professional Association Guidelines. The importance of culturally competent practice extends from counselling and therapy to psychological assessments. Psychologists must ensure they are following all guidelines outlined by their governing body, such as those in the Canadian Code of Ethics for Psychologists (CPA, 2017a), and apply them in assessment practices. This includes ensuring they have the competency to work with individuals from diverse backgrounds, engage in culturally appropriate practices, and use culturally safe, sensitive, and appropriate assessment measures (CAP, 2021). The value of, and need to, understand and respect diversity is outlined in the Canadian Code of Ethics for Psychologists (CPA, 2017a), as well as in the Canadian Psychological Association's response to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission report, which echoes the need to be particularly mindful of the role culture plays in definitions of mental health and pathology in assessments (CPA, 2018).

Most psychology colleges and associations outline recommendations and suggestions of best practices for practitioners to follow when it comes to assessing culturally diverse

individuals. The National Association of School Psychologists (NASP) outlines many recommendations for adjusting the assessment process to better suit individuals who are not part of the majority culture, such as allowing for more time, recognizing the limits of translations, gathering extensive background information, and addressing limitations in all reports (Klots & Canter, 2006).

CPA (2018) responded to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada's Report, outlining culturally grounded recommendations regarding the assessment of Indigenous Peoples in Canada, which can be applied to other cultures as well. Similarly, the College of Alberta Psychologists (CAP, 2021) outlines practical guidelines for psychological assessment and testing, which includes a section on assessment with diverse cultures and is similar to what is outlined by CPA (2018). There are many recommendations, including modifications to help the client feel more comfortable, and adjustments to the interpretation and report write up. For example, direct observation of the client in their home, school, or community to get a better understanding of their functioning outside the confines of the assessment room; interviewing extended family members, and asking what would be helpful for the client; and including others in the testing situation, such as parents, grandparents, or other family members to help the client feel comfortable and perform optimally (CPA, 2018). Recommendations for changes to the interpretation and write up of the report include avoiding framing the client within a Western diagnostic context; focusing less on diagnostics and more on their strengths; using concrete descriptions of their behaviour; and integrating a cultural holistic model of mental health (CPA, 2018).

Present Study

Ultimately, researchers and practitioners have a professional and ethical responsibility to ensure fairness and equality in the psychological evaluation of individuals from all cultural backgrounds. Due to the increasing diversity in the Canadian population, attending to the experiences and expectations of each individual client will help to ensure culturally diverse clients are not disadvantaged in the standardized assessment process compared to their Canadian-born and raised peers of European descent. This starts with understanding how psychologists are trained to assess culturally diverse individuals. As Sue (2006) explains, given how multicultural our society and world are, we can no longer be competent or effective therapists unless we are also culturally competent.

Standardized assessments are heavily relied on for decision making in educational contexts. In addition, culture profoundly impacts all experiences, including those related to assessment. Culture is now widely recognized as being an important consideration psychologists must attend to when conducting assessments with culturally diverse individuals. Professional ethical guidelines provide information and guidance on addressing cultural factors during an assessment; however, the extent to which this is taught in psychology graduate training programs is not well understood from the student perspective. The purpose of this study is to increase our understanding of professional child psychology graduate students' training experiences in Canada, as they pertain to culturally competent assessment practices; as well as if and how these graduate students believe their training has prepared them to conduct adequate culturally competent assessments. The professional child psychologists-in-training of interest include those who are attending a CPA accredited graduate program in Canada. Understanding if, and how, psychologists-in-training are prepared to conduct culturally competent assessments may

influence future training, which in turn may ensure the performance of culturally diverse individuals is not impacted by assessment procedures.

Psychologists in Canada will inevitably work with culturally diverse individuals. Guidelines exist for how psychologists should conduct their assessments to maximize their fairness and validity. In addition, the directors and administration of professional child psychology graduate programs likely strive to ensure their graduate students are prepared to work as culturally competent clinicians. However, it is necessary to discuss training experiences with Canadian graduate students in these programs to determine if they believe they have been sufficiently trained to conduct culturally competent assessments. If it is determined psychologists-in-training do not feel their graduate training has sufficiently prepared them to be culturally competent, then this information can be used by graduate school administration to inform programming, and by the students themselves to better understand the additional work they can do to prepare themselves as culturally competent clinicians. Thus, the results of this study can contribute to improving the assessment procedures used with people who are culturally diverse and would lead to well-informed educational programming and fairer assessment practices. Due to the increasing diversity in the Canadian population, this study serves to ensure future psychologists are being adequately trained, which in turn will ensure culturally diverse individuals are being assessed fairly and appropriately.

The overarching research questions guiding this study are:

"How do students in CPA accredited professional child psychology graduate programs believe they have been trained in culturally competent assessment practice?"; and

"Do students in CPA accredited professional child psychology graduate programs believe they have been adequately trained to conduct culturally competent assessments?"

Interview questions will focus on gaining an understanding of participants' knowledge of culture and culturally competent assessment, if and how their graduate training and coursework has prepared them to be competent in assessing culturally diverse individuals, and what their program has done well or could do better to train them in this area.

CHAPTER 3: METHODS

Methodological, Epistemological, and Ontological Perspective

In qualitative research, it is crucial to outline the worldviews of the researcher. A worldview can be thought of as the general philosophical orientation about the world and the nature of research, which will impact the type of approach a researcher chooses to pursue (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). Outlining one's philosophical assumptions provides a foundation in formulating research goals, problems, questions, and outcomes (Creswell & Poth, 2018). Epistemology outlines what knowledge is and how claims of knowledge are justified (Creswell & Poth, 2018). Epistemological beliefs are related to how information is collected to understand a phenomenon, and how the information is either used within the context it took place or is generalized (Hathaway, 1995). Ontology outlines beliefs around the nature of reality (Creswell & Poth, 2018). Ontological beliefs are related to what reality is and if multiple realities and experiences exist for different individuals, or if only one external reality can be determined (Hathaway, 1995). Methodology are the procedures of qualitative research used, which are shaped by the researcher's data collection and analysis experience (Creswell & Poth, 2018). A researcher's epistemology and ontology will influence their worldview, which will influence the methodology selected to investigate the topic of interest.

Considering my philosophical assumptions, I align with a social constructivist framework. In social constructivism, researchers seek to understand the world by inductively developing a theory or pattern of meaning (Creswell & Poth, 2018). Social constructivists assume reality is socially, culturally, and historically constructed (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2018). As a research approach, a social constructivism framework values the context in the cultural construction of knowledge, language, and communication (Rogoff, 1990). In practice, social

constructivist guided questions are general and broad, allowing participants to construct the meaning, which is typically created in discussions with others (Creswell & Poth, 2018). A social constructivist framework aligns well with my qualitative research orientation and methodology. Because of the importance of engaging in conversation and allowing participants to construct meaning, I have selected a qualitative instrumental case study methodology.

Researcher Positionality

As a graduate student in the School and Clinical Child Psychology program at the University of Alberta, working within a multicultural country, I have a strong interest in conducting studies that may result in improvements to the method of educating graduate students in culturally competent assessment practices. I have gained substantial practical experience working collaboratively with children and adolescents, parents/guardians, and teachers, both in clinical and school settings. Through these practical experiences, I have conducted numerous assessments, using standardized measures. Thinking back on the assessments I have conducted, there was a lack of consideration for the influence of culture in my work with children and their families. Because conducting assessments was a new skill I was learning, my focus was on maintaining standardization in my assessments, rather than considering culture and how to act in a culturally responsive manner. In addition, the concept of cultural competence, particularly in assessment, is not one I can recall learning about in my program. In retrospect, there are clients I wish I had been more culturally sensitive and competent with, but I did not have the knowledge or training to do so at that time, which I now recognize as an area of weakness.

Based on what I learned through my program and prior to conducting this research, I was lacking in all aspects of Sue and colleagues' (1996, 2022) areas of cultural competence. In terms of cultural awareness and beliefs, I was not sensitive to, or aware of, my own biases and values

because I had not taken the time to consider them. The concept of cultural knowledge includes asking about or discussing culture with clients, which was not something I was taught to do, and therefore did not come up in my work. Finally, because culture was not something I learned to discuss with clients, I did not apply culturally responsive skills with my clients and their families. For example, I conducted an assessment with an Indigenous child, and then attempted to debrief the results with her mother in the school, without any awareness of their culture or background. I was not aware they were Indigenous, did not think to ask about culture, and no one at the school informed me of their background until after I attempted to debrief the results with the client's mother. Unfortunately, the client's mother was so uncomfortable and fearful of being in the school, she had to excuse herself and leave the school within the first few minutes of the debrief. Had I been aware of her Indigenous status and her fear of being in the school, I would have acted in a more culturally responsive manner by potentially scheduling the debrief outside of the school environment, rather than in the principal's office, surrounded by school personnel.

Because of my own position as a student, and my learning and experiences regarding my area of research, I began this study by acknowledging my biases and assumptions. For example, I assumed the students who participated in this study would also lack the training and skills required to be culturally competent in their assessment practices. I also assumed they may not know how to describe cultural competence or be able to provide examples of when they have acted in a culturally competent manner. I considered my assumptions and biases prior to conducting this research. This led to an awareness, so I was less influenced by them than I otherwise would have been.

I hope my research will shed light on how professional child psychologists are trained to assess culturally diverse individuals, as reported by the students themselves, and what they feel is

sufficient or lacking from their training. This, in turn, can meaningfully inform how culturally sensitive and competent assessment practices are taught to professional child psychology graduate students.

Instrumental Case Study

According to Merriam (1998), a qualitative case study is an intensive, holistic description and analysis of a case, which is a bounded phenomenon. A qualitative case study can include programs, institutions, people, processes, or social units as the *case*, or the focus of analysis. Within this dissertation, the *case* (i.e., unit of analysis) is a group of graduate students from CPA accredited School and/or Clinical Child Psychology graduate programs, who are enrolled full-time in the PhD and have completed all required coursework.

Defining the case. Creswell (2013) describes a case study as the exploration of a bounded system, which means the case itself is separated and the boundaries are defined. According to Crowe and colleagues (2011), it is crucial to define the boundaries of a case study, which will clarify the relevant group or area of interest, the kind of evidence being collected, and what is prioritized for data collection and analysis. For this study, the case is defined as a group of graduate students from various CPA accredited School and/or Clinical Child Psychology graduate programs, who are enrolled full-time in their PhD and have completed all required coursework. This case will be investigated by conducting separate, individual interviews with each participant, which will allow me to gain an understanding of each students' experience as it pertains to my research questions, and the overall phenomenon of interest. Including a group of students to represent the case will allow me to gain different perspectives and detailed information regarding the overall phenomenon of interest (Creswell & Poth, 2018).

The purpose of conducting a case study is to illustrate a unique case of interest and describe it in detail, or to understand a specific issue, concern, or problem (Creswell & Poth, 2018). More specifically, instrumental case studies are used when the intention is to gain an understanding and insight into a specific issue or phenomenon of interest, and a particular case is selected to best understand it (Creswell & Poth, 2018; Crowe et al., 2011; Stake, 1995). I used an instrumental case study to explore the phenomenon of interest, which is if and how professional child psychology graduate students in CPA accredited programs believe their training has prepared them to conduct adequate culturally competent assessments. I selected this methodological approach because it allows for an exploratory investigation, and will result in an in-depth description, analysis, and understanding of the phenomenon of interest, from the perspective of multiple individuals. An instrumental case study aligns well with my research orientation because I will be actively involved and engaged with participants by collecting the data and striving to understand each participants' experience.

Case Study Process

Recruitment. Purposeful sampling was used to recruit ten participants. Recruitment involved posting the research information poster (Appendix A) on my personal Facebook profile for others to view and share, and to the Facebook group for the University of Alberta Graduate Student Association Students and Alumni Group. Then, I contacted the Director of Training at each CPA accredited School and/or Clinical Child Psychology program in Canada via email. The Directors of Training I contacted were from the University of Alberta, McGill University, University of Toronto - OISE, University of British Columbia, University of Guelph, Simon Fraser University, and York University. The email sent to each Director of Training included the

research information poster, and a request for them to pass the research information on to their students (Appendix B).

The research information poster included a QR code linked to the survey. Students who were interested were asked to complete a brief online questionnaire through Google Form, which included demographic questions and questions to determine their eligibility to participate in the study (Appendix C). If participants met inclusion criteria, they were emailed and invited to participate in a semi-structured virtual interview. Each interview lasted for approximately 1 hour and participants received a $20 gift card to a store of their choice as a token of appreciation for their time.

Participants. Inclusion criteria required individuals to be enrolled in a full-time, CPA accredited School and/or Clinical Child Psychology graduate program in Canada, and have completed all of their required PhD coursework. No restrictions were placed on the number of years participants had been enrolled in their program. Twenty-three students expressed an interest in participating by completing the survey. Of those 23 students, 18 met inclusion criteria and were invited to participate in this study. Of those 18 students, 10 participated in the study by completing the interview. Table 1 outlines the number of graduate students at each university who completed the survey, and those who were interviewed. Table 2 outlines additional relevant details of each participant interviewed.

While I had the option to include up to 18 students in the study, I chose to stop after the tenth interview for three reasons. The first reason is because I had reached a point of saturation. According to Guest and colleagues (2006), saturation is the gold standard of determining sample sizes. Saturation is reached when no new information is found that contributes to the understanding of a particular theme (Creswell & Poth, 2018). As the sole interviewer and

primary analyst, I found that by the eighth to tenth interviews, the information provided by

students was fitting into the existing themes, and no novel information was being observed in the

data. The second reason is because in case study research, some researchers recommend not

including more than four or five cases because that number will allow for identification of

themes within the cases, and to conduct theme analysis across the cases (Creswell & Poth, 2018;

Yin, 2014). The final reason is because some researchers suggest the inclusion of multiple cases

may reduce the amount of detail that can be provided by the researcher (Wolcott, 2008). Because

I wanted to include robust detail of the findings, and because I had reached saturation, I chose to

stop collecting data after my tenth interview.

Table 1

University Attended by Students who Completed Survey and Interview

University	Survey *n*	Interview *n*
University of Alberta	6	2
University of British Columbia	3	2
York University	5	3
McGill University	7	3
University of Guelph	2	0
TOTAL	23	10

Table 2

Interview Participants

Pseudonym	University	Program
Anna	University or Alberta	School and Clinical Child Psychology
Eliza	York University	Clinical – Developmental Psychology
Heather	York University	Clinical – Developmental Psychology
Jake	McGill University	School and Applied Child Psychology
Jess	University of British Columbia	School and Applied Child Psychology
Nora	University of British Columbia	School and Applied Child Psychology
Sara	McGill University	School and Applied Child Psychology
Savana	McGill University	School and Applied Child Psychology
Shauna	York University	Clinical – Developmental Psychology
Tammy	University of Alberta	School and Clinical Child Psychology

Data Collection

Based on the overarching research questions and inclusion criteria, appropriate

interviewees were identified, and one-on-one virtual qualitative research interviews were

selected as the best fit to collect data and answer the research questions. Qualitative research

interviews are used when the researcher intends to understand the interviewees' lived experience

of the world, from their own point of view (Brinkmann & Kvale, 2015; Creswell & Poth, 2018).

In addition, a research interview is "a conversation that has a structure and a purpose"

(Brinkmann & Kvale, 2015, p.5). Due to the social distancing requirements and restrictions

placed in response to the COVID-19 pandemic, as well as the nature of participants living in

different provinces across the country, interviews were conducted virtually through a secure and

encrypted video conferencing platform: Zoom.

An interview guide was created, consisting of introductory statements, explanations, and

queries relevant to the research question. This interview guide was reviewed and edited

numerous times before feedback from others was sought. A peer from the School and Clinical

Child Psychology program at the University of Alberta edited the preliminary interview

questions and provided feedback and suggestions. Changes were made to the interview questions

based on the feedback before conducting a pilot interview with another peer from the same

program (Creswell & Poth, 2018). According to Merriam and Tisdell (2016):

> Pilot interviews are crucial for trying out your questions. Not only do you get some
>
> practice in interviewing, but you also quickly learn which questions are confusing and
>
> need rewording, which questions yield useless data, and which questions, suggested by
>
> your respondents, you should have thought to include in the first place. (p. 117)

In addition, the pilot interview allowed me to receive more feedback from someone in the same position as potential participants, and to see how long the interview would take, if the questions were clear, and if any questions could be removed or marked as optional questions to ask only if time permitted. The pilot interview allowed me to pinpoint necessary edits to make to ensure the questions were clear before my first interview with a participant. It also resulted in changing the order of questions.

Once interviews were scheduled, each participant was emailed an information letter and a consent form (Appendix D) to read, sign, and send back before their interview, as well as a secure link they could use to open the video conference meeting. During each interview, I reviewed the information form and asked each participant if they had any questions before providing verbal consent to continue with the interview. Three terms were then defined before asking the interview questions: culturally diverse, cultural competence, and culturally competent assessment. The interview was semi-structured and guided by 11 questions, with additional probes to be used if necessary (Appendix E). Once the interview was complete, I reminded participants they would be contacted to review the summary of their interview once it was transcribed. I then asked participants what store they would like a $20 gift card to, and the gift card was emailed to them within an hour following the interview.

I conducted individual, virtual interviews with 10 participants. As Miles et al. (2014) explain, when more cases are included in a study, there will more likely be variation across cases, which will result in an increasingly compelling interpretation, as well as increased validity or generalizability of the findings. Each interview lasted for approximately 45 minutes to an hour. All interviews were video and audio recorded, stored, and preliminarily transcribed through the Zoom platform.

The interviews were preliminarily transcribed through Zoom, then carefully checked, and edited for accuracy by two research volunteers, then checked a final time by me, the primary investigator. After I transcribed the interviews, I became increasingly familiar with the data by reading each interview several times, and then went through two rounds of summarizing each interview until each interview was significantly condensed and only the key points from their responses to each question remained. Member checking was carried out by sending each participant their own interview key point summaries via email, and they were asked to confirm whether the data accurately represented what they intended to communicate (Appendix F). Participants were also given the opportunity to clarify what they said during the interview.

Thematic Analysis

Braun and Clark (2006) describe thematic analysis as a "flexible and useful research tool, which can potentially provide a rich and detailed, yet complex amount of data" (p. 78). Thematic analysis began with collecting, familiarizing, and organizing the data (Peel, 2020). Following this, the process of coding the data began, which is explained in detail below. Because the cases are intended to contribute to a better understanding and illustration of the phenomenon of interest, and because of the large number of cases included, the analysis will involve first determining the issues within each case, and then identifying common themes that transcend the cases (Yin, 2009). A theme encapsulates important information from the data in relation to the research question(s) and represents a patterned response from the data set (Braun & Clark, 2006). For something to be considered a theme, there should be several instances of it across the data set. A rich thematic description of themes transcending the cases and entire data set will be presented in the findings. Therefore, a cross-case analysis will be conducted, which involves thematic analysis and interpretation across the cases (Creswell & Poth, 2018). Braun and Clark

(2006) explain this method of analysis is particularly useful when the area of investigation is not yet well researched.

Coding. Saldaña (2016) describes a code in qualitative inquiry as:

A word or short phrase that symbolically assigns a summative, salient, essence-capturing, and/or evocative attribute for a portion of language-based or visual data… a code is a researcher-generated construct that symbolizes or "translates" data… and thus attributes interpreted meaning to each individual datum for later purposes (p. 4).

The interview transcripts were the data used for this study. I became familiar with the data by first conducting each interview, then transcribing them, and then reading and summarizing them. Once I was sufficiently familiar with the data, I conducted an inductive, open-ended, sentence-by-sentence approach to coding; then the preliminary codes were revised into a code list; and then the codes were applied to interview transcriptions (Poth et al., 2020).

I employed an open-ended approach to coding by reading through each transcript and labelling every sentence or paragraph with a word or phrase to capture the essence of what was being communicated. This stage of coding was achieved by highlighting each sentence or paragraph and using the comment function in Microsoft Word to write the code. By the end of each transcript, I had a list of codes written in the comment section of the document.

Codes were then copied into a code list, which was organized by interview topic. As codes were being organized into the codes list, they were further reviewed and revised. Then, codes representing similar concepts were grouped together to create themes, and each theme was labelled. Themes were also reviewed and revised to ensure they were each unique and representative of the codes they were meant to signify. The themes represented general concepts that transcended cases and contributed to an understanding of the phenomenon of interest. Codes

and themes were reviewed and revised again as they were reapplied to the original interview

transcriptions, and one final time as the findings chapter was written.

Establishing Rigor and Trustworthiness

In quantitative research, something being valid suggests there is one reality. However,

qualitative researchers generally believe reality to be relative to each individual based on their

understanding of the world, which is why qualitative researchers strive to demonstrate data as

trustworthy and rigorous (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). The criteria outlined by Lincoln and Guba

(1985) to establish trustworthiness were followed in this study. According to Lincoln and Guba

(1985), establishing research trustworthiness requires the researcher to demonstrate credibility,

transferability, dependability, and confirmability.

Credibility. The notion of credibility pertains to whether the findings are considered

credible, or trustworthy, based on available data. A study is considered credible if the

participants' views are represented appropriately and accurately by the researcher (Nowell et al.,

2017). As Lincoln and Guba (1985) explain, credibility can be addressed through the process of

member checking, which is a way of confirming interpretations with the participants. In fact,

Lincoln and Guba (1985) consider member checking to be the "most critical technique for

establishing credibility" (p. 314). Conducting member checks after results have been synthesized

and conceptualized across all individual participants can be problematic because individual

participants may be unable to recognize their personal experiences in the data synthesis (Morse

et al., 2002). Because this study consisted of ten participants, member checking was conducted

using summarizations of each interview so participants could verify the accuracy their own

response summary. This approach to member checking has been discussed and practiced by

qualitative researchers to ensure their understanding of interview data and summary of key

points was accurate and represented what each participant intended to communicate (Fàbregues et al, 2021).

Once data was transcribed and preliminary analysis was completed, participants were emailed and asked to check summaries for accuracy, if anything was misinterpreted, and if they wanted anything to be changed. Participants were asked to respond within two weeks, and if they did not respond, it would be assumed the summaries were accurate. Member checking allowed the opportunity for participants to read through and judge the accuracy of their interview summary, correct any inaccuracies, and provide additional information they may have omitted accidentally during the interview (Creswell & Poth, 2018). Of the ten participants, five responded saying their summaries were accurate, and the remaining participants did not reply.

Transferability. When data is transferable, it is generalizable. Those who wish to use the findings must determine transferability; therefore, providing *rich*, *thick* descriptions aid in this process (Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Nowell et al., 2017). Readers can make decisions about data transferability when the researcher uses a significant amount of detail (Creswell & Poth, 2018), which have been documented in my field journal and results. Adding details and descriptions about the interviews helps, as does the inclusion of quotes (Creswell & Poth, 2018).

Dependability and confirmability. Research is dependable when it is logical, traceable, and documented clearly (Tobin & Begley, 2004). Confirmability is concerned with how the interpreted findings result from the data (Tobin & Begley, 2004), which requires researchers to demonstrate how the interpretations were reached (Nowell et al., 2017). Both dependability and confirmability can be demonstrated through an audit trail, which outlines each step of data collection and analysis. I kept an audit trail by documenting all field notes, reflections, hunches, and impressions after each interview, and my personal thoughts and biases. Considering my

personal thoughts and biases allowed me to acknowledge and bracket them prior to conducting

any data analysis. By writing field notes at each stage of the research study, I practiced

reflexivity, which is central to the audit trail (Nowell et al., 2017). Reflexivity is a method of

building awareness of the biases, values, and experiences brought to the research study, and

contributes to trustworthiness of the researcher and results (Creswell & Poth, 2018). This was

particularly relevant for my study because I represent the population of interest and have my own

thoughts and opinions about the very research questions I am attempting to answer, based on my

personal graduate training experience. Creswell and Poth (2018) recommend the researcher write

about their own experience with the phenomenon and, as the study progresses, write reflective

comments about how these experiences may impact interpretation. An example of when it was

necessary for me to practice reflexivity was consideration of my own biases based on my

graduate training experience. This allowed me to be cognizant of my views and ensure I was

entering each interview and interpreting the data as a researcher, not as another graduate student.

I sought external checks of my data and interpretations by a peer graduate student in my

program. Peer reviewers are those who conduct an external check of the data and are familiar

with the research or phenomenon that has been explored (Creswell & Poth, 2018). The peer

reviewer debriefed the data and research process and reviewed all my codes and themes to

determine if they agreed with my interpretations. The peer reviewer assisted me in remaining

honest by questioning the methods used, as well as the interpretations (Creswell & Poth, 2018;

Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

CHAPTER 4: FINDINGS

The findings have been organized to describe students' knowledge of culture and culturally competent assessment, experience conducting culturally competent assessments, graduate training in culturally competent assessment, and opinion on the concept of cultural competence.

Knowledge of Culture and Culturally Competent Assessment

Each student was asked several questions to get a sense of their understanding of culture, relevant components of culturally competent assessment, and potential sources of bias or error in assessment.

What is Culture?

Students were asked to describe what culture is and how they would define it. All students took time to think about and consider their answer before speaking. A summary of each theme and subtheme is summarized in Table 3.

Table 3

Themes and Subthemes of Students' Knowledge of Culture

Themes	Subthemes
Identifying	- Group identity - Defines humans - Ethnicity and race - Geographic location
Shared Beliefs and Experiences	- Shared beliefs, values, mindsets - Shared experiences - Lens through which world is seen
Informs Interactions	- Behaviour - Social norms - Shared language
Implicit Features	- Broad and holistic - Inherent and implicit - Dynamic and evolving

Identifying. Students described culture as identifying or defining humans in some way. Numerous students described culture as related to one's ethnicity, race, and group identity. For example, Eliza explained: "it's like a group that we belong to, often through ethnicity, but not always…intersectionality gets into all of that as well, so I think that's where culture becomes very personal." Finally, students described culture as being related to one's geographic location.

Shared Beliefs and Experiences. Many students described culture as relating to shared beliefs, values, and mindsets among groups of people, as well as shared experiences, such as those related to food, religion, traditions, clothes, and celebrations. Multiple students also described culture as relating to the lens through which a group of people see the world. For example, Sara explained:

> I think culture is kind of like a lens through which we see the world, right? It's kind of how we interpret behaviours, it's how we eat and sleep and dress, speak to one another, interact with each other, different expectations we have about our futures and other people, and kind of how society should be like laid out.

Informs Interactions. Students described culture as influencing our behaviour and social norms. For example, Shauna explained how culture comes through social interactions:

> Characteristic patterns of being with people… ways of being with people and ways of just presenting yourself in relationships and in the world, I would say. So, I would say that differences between cultures often come from the way that you're socialized.

In addition, students noted those who have a shared culture will likely have a shared language.

Implicit Features. Finally, students described numerous implicit features related to culture. It was defined as broad, holistic, inherent, implicit, dynamic, and evolving. Savana

described the implicit features related to culture as, "an intangible thing that encompasses how a person identifies themselves… it's also quite dynamic… it evolves over time."

Culturally Competent Assessment

Students were asked to describe what it means to be culturally competent in their assessment practice. A summary of each theme and subtheme is summarized in Table 4.

Table 4

Themes and Subthemes of Students' Knowledge of Culturally Competent Assessment

Themes	Subthemes
Considering Impact of Culture on Assessment	▪ Measures as appropriate ▪ Fit of assessment ▪ Representation in norms ▪ Alignment of assessment with other cultures ▪ Meaningful consideration of appropriate assessment battery ▪ Linguistic component ▪ Fighting white supremist system
Openness to Learning and Understanding	▪ Objective lens of understanding ▪ Willingness to learn, openness ▪ Listening and learning from others ▪ Growth learning mindset
Awareness, Knowledge, and Experience	▪ Awareness of other cultures and differences in cultural norms ▪ Naïve to think culture does not matter ▪ Knowledge and experience
Centering Client and Culture	▪ Adapting assessment ▪ Recognize when diagnosis is not appropriate ▪ Client has expertise ▪ Client's context and systems ▪ Client's definition of their culture
Personal Factors	▪ Respectful ▪ Sensitivity ▪ Self-reflection

Consider Impact of Culture on Assessment. Students described aspects related to culture they would consider when conducting a culturally competent assessment. They explained

the importance of considering if the measures are appropriate and fit with their client and family, and whether their client's culture is represented within the norms. Jake explained some of his considerations:

> …may not have been represented well in the standardized tests in terms of the samples. So, being aware of that is very important and then choosing tests that would be reflective of the person's ability and including them in terms of their culture in the sample so they could be represented, would be more competent than trying to apply the standards from another culture to them.

Students also described an awareness of assessment itself not necessarily aligning with the values of other cultures, which they believe is an understanding of a culturally competent clinician. As Jess explained: "being affirming and respectful and considerate of where people are coming from, and that the work that I'm doing may not align with their values from their own culture and trying to be cognizant of that."

In addition, students expressed the importance of meaningfully considering an appropriate assessment battery to suit their client, which may not be typical practice. Nora described the lack of this practice, saying: "…in choosing an assessment battery, it's something we're all kind of like, 'Oh, I'm gonna think about it' but then I'm gonna choose the WISC… it feels like a fake consideration."

Savana, studying in Quebec, discussed the importance of considering the linguistic component of assessment with culturally diverse clients, and providing context within the interpretation and write-up. As she shared:

> A lot of the tools that we use are normed in Anglo-norm or Franco-norm in Quebec. So, there may be some discrepancies when a child comes from a community or comes from a

culture that English or French would not be the person's mother tongue, then there will be

some adjustment to the norm, which may not be accurate representation of their actual

functioning according to those norms. So, some more contextual understanding of those

scores may be needed.

Finally, the importance of fighting against white supremist systems was noted as a crucial

component of considering oneself to be capable of a culturally competent assessment. Sara

explained what this means to her:

Well, for me, it means constantly fighting the white supremist notion that we exist in,

right? Just because we're trained in academia, I'm working in the [government program],

all of which are white supremist institutions - and to not take those things for granted.

Openness to Learning and Understanding. Students described the importance of being

open to learning and understanding when conducting culturally competent assessment. Students

spoke about the need to use an objective lens of understanding during the assessment. As Shauna

expressed:

… you really have to have a good understanding of the context that that child was raised

in or that that family is existing in, the systems that they're existing in, and how they

interact with the systems that you are familiar with… awareness on your own side of

what filters you're using and what lenses you're using to take in the information, but also

just being able to take… all the information that you're receiving [and] understanding it

in the context that it's happening in… being able to kind of look at things through a more

objective lens instead of just taking it at face value.

In addition, the importance of being willing to learn and listen to others, as well as general

openness was communicated by multiple students. Anna described the importance of being open

and willing to learn from others in her description of what culturally competent assessment entails for her, citing the importance of "learning and being willing to learn and reflect on and being open and willing to work with people from different cultures." Finally, Eliza explained the need of a growth learning mindset when assessing individuals who are culturally diverse:

> I think having a growth learning mindset is much more important and helpful. I identify as a white woman from a very Eurocentric cultural background personally. I think a lot of my role is listening and learning from people with lived experience.

Awareness, Knowledge, and Experience. Having knowledge, experience, and awareness was also noted by students as contributing to culturally competent assessment. Many students expressed the importance of having a general awareness of other cultures and differences in cultural norms. As Jake put simply, "first and foremost, I think it's important to be aware of differences in culture." Similarly, students expressed the naivety of anyone thinking culture does not matter in an assessment. Heather explained, "…this whole idea of standardized testing is that they're supposed to be standardized and it doesn't matter that they're from a different culture. But I think it's a very naive lens that we can't afford to look through anymore."

Finally, students reflected on the importance of having knowledge and experience. For example, when asked what culturally competent assessment means to her, Anna said, "being aware, having the knowledge, experience, willingness to learn and reflect on your experiences working with people of different cultures". Similarly, Eliza described how she believes she can increase her cultural competence, saying: "one of the ways that I feel like I can gain cultural competency is just through experience and through learning from people with lived experience."

Centering Client and Culture. Students noted the importance of centering the client and their culture. This includes adapting all parts of the assessment to ensure they are suitable to the client, their family, and their culture. As Jess explained:

> I think part of that is really understanding that at all parts of the process of the assessment – from first contact, consent, through interviews and testing, through to the debrief, the results meetings to the report - that they're accessible, meaningful, relevant, and respectful for the person and their family and their community that they're coming from.

Part of this may include recognizing when a diagnosis is not appropriate. Sara expressed that she will "always question whether something is a disorder or is it just different than a North American viewpoint—or Eurocentric viewpoint, right? Just constantly be wrestling with that and constantly be examining it."

Students also described the importance of considering individual client factors in their client centering practices. This includes realizing the client has expertise; as Heather described:

> I have to be the expert to an extent, but I also can't ignore the expertise that this individual brings into the room… we have to take a step back here. This is not gonna be a top-down assessment where we know best.

Similarly, understanding the client's and their family's context and systems was noted to be essential. For example, Savana shared the need to, "…understand how that family teaches their kids in terms of what do you do when you don't understand something?" In addition, students highlighted the need to understand the client's own definition of their culture. Tammy explained: "for me, a cultural competent assessment would be where I try and understand the person I'm assessing based on their definition of culture, what they believe would best describe who they are."

Personal Factors. Students described personal clinician factors that are essential components of culturally competent assessment practices. For example, Heather stated, "first and foremost, you know, being respectful." Similarly, Jess described the importance of "being affirming and respectful and considerate of where people are coming from." Others explained the importance of sensitivity. Nora explained, "I think it's just having an understanding of yourself, and then sensitivity, and knowing what you don't know so that you can be humble and learn and to think." Finally, students expressed the importance of self-reflection; for example, reflecting on culture, biases, and gaps in knowledge. Shauna expressed:

> I think a big piece of it is just understanding how your culture as an assessor… impacts on the way that you interact with people. The way that you interpret and understand the information that you're getting… part of it is just being aware of all of the implicit assumptions and biases that you hold that you might not be aware of.

Opinion on the Concept of Cultural Competence

Although students were not formally asked what they thought about the concept of cultural competence during the interviews, most students brought up their thoughts and concerns regarding the term. A summary of each theme and subtheme is summarized in Table 5.

Table 5

Themes and Subthemes of Students' Understanding of Cultural Competence Concept

Themes	Subthemes
Uncertainty	▪ Hesitation ▪ Disrespectful ▪ Loaded Term ▪ Struggle with idea
Rethinking	▪ Open to interaction ▪ Cultural humility ▪ Spectrum or ongoing journey
Progression of Cultural Competence	▪ Interest in progression ▪ Continued evaluation of programs

▪ Program efforts

Uncertainty. Students expressed hesitation with the concept of cultural competency, some feeling it would be disrespectful to claim competence in someone else's culture, others believing it to be a loaded term. Some students, including Heather, shared why they struggle with uncertainty:

> I really struggle with the word 'competency'… when I think about that word, I think about if I would use it to describe myself in front of somebody from another culture. So, if I was sitting with an individual from the Middle East and I'm doing an assessment with them… and I'm describing myself as culturally competent... If someone said that to me, I'd be like "Not mine." …It would be the most bizarre thing to say to a client… and a weird thing to call yourself, and I really struggle with it… I think the word "competency" is almost disrespectful in a sense - to be competent in someone else's culture.

Rethinking. Students shared ideas regarding their understanding of cultural competence, with many calling into question the weight behind the term. Some students chose to understand cultural competence to mean they are open to interacting with individuals who differ from themselves. One student even suggested it be renamed to "cultural humility" rather than "cultural competence". Savana explained her understanding:

> If I have to be culturally competent, does that mean that I have to know everything about that culture to be competent? Versus this awareness or this openness to interact with people who are different or similar than you are will be sufficient… I also feel like it's a very loaded term to call yourself culturally competent.

Similarly, many students suggested cultural competence be considered more of a spectrum, or an ongoing journey, rather than an endpoint to be reached. For example, Eliza explained:

I always find the word 'culturally competent' to be kind of a strange word because it feels

like difficult to be competent or incompetent in culture, I think there's much more of a

spectrum, and I think like a growth learning mindset is much more important and helpful.

Progression of Cultural Competence. An interest in seeing the progression of cultural

competence within CPA and psychology programs in general was communicated. Shauna

expressed her excitement to see the progression over the next few years:

I think that there is definitely going to be a big shift in the direction of equipping health

professionals more… [with] ongoing training because I think that this is ongoing learning

that needs to happen, and so I'm interested to see what the CPA comes up with, what my

program comes up with just as a way to equip clinicians better, because I just think that

there's a lot of room to grow.

Students also articulated the importance of continuing to evaluate programs to ensure

requirements regarding cultural competence are met. As Tammy suggested, "just keep learning

and making sure that even if the program had designed something two years ago, we need to re-

evaluate and make sure we are keeping up with the times."

Finally, students shared efforts within their program regarding demonstration of cultural

competence, including the creation of relevant committees with the intention of improving

training related to culture and attracting culturally diverse students and faculty. Shauna described

the committee her university has put together for this purpose:

The focus is on first, how we can attract more culturally diverse students to the program

at York. And I think another focus of it as well is to try and strengthen the cultural related

training that we do get… I don't know a lot about it, but I know that in the last year that

committee's been put together that's composed of both students and professors that are

trying to think of some ideas for how to advance our training and the program in that area.

Sources of Bias or Error

Students were asked to describe what they think the greatest potential source of bias or error is when assessing a culturally diverse client. A summary of each theme and subtheme is summarized in Table 6.

Table 6

Themes and Subthemes of Students' Opinions of Assessment Sources of Bias or Error

Themes	Subthemes
Examiner Factors	▪ Personal biases ▪ Implicit prejudice ▪ Self as examiner ▪ Examiner assumptions
Cultural Bias	▪ Developed through Eurocentric lens ▪ Ingrained biases ▪ Culturally loaded and biased ▪ Built by and for European cultures ▪ White supremist system
Norming Data	▪ Norms ▪ Use of instruments normed with dissimilar populations
Assessment Process	▪ Standardization ▪ Questions asked and how ▪ One-size-fits-all approach ▪ Approach to assessment
Reliance on English	▪ Relying on English ▪ Inequity ▪ Difficulty translating measures ▪ Inequitable to rely on nonverbal measures
Assuming Validity	▪ Assuming results are valid

Examiner Factors. Most students referenced examiner factors as having the greatest source of bias or error within a cross-cultural assessment, and described concerns related to

examiner biases and prejudices. As Nora stated simply, "yourself as the examiner" was thought by the majority to be the greatest source of bias or error. Anna expanded on this:

> Your unconscious beliefs about people from different groups… I personally try to make efforts so that does not impact my work, but I would say that if people aren't thinking about it, it can impact whether you'll query, how much you'll query… things like that.

Like personal biases and prejudices, examiner assumptions were described by students as being a likely source of bias or error. Jake described one example of an assumption examiners may have about their client's educational background: "expecting that everyone has the same exposure to educational background as you would in Canada." Heather described the potential impact of examiner assumptions more broadly:

> Assuming you're culturally competent… The biggest mistake you can make is lumping them… Because this is how stereotypes get bred as well, even when you're not intentionally doing it. The biggest mistake we can make is taking off that learning cap with the more experience we get and viewing every single person the same. And I think as long as we start… Tabula rasa… as long as we don't fall out of treating every client in that way, I think we might be okay… [but] making assumptions from client to client because you've gained more experience - I think that's a very slippery slope.

Not only does Heather describe the impact of making assumptions, but she also makes a case for lifelong learning.

Cultural Bias. Students detailed the impact of assessments being developed through a Eurocentric lens and the resulting ingrained biases as being sources of bias or error. For example, Nora identified intelligence itself as a culturally loaded concept, saying: "IQ testing is inherently and culturally biased because intelligence is a culturally loaded construct." Students also

emphasized the history of assessments being developed through a Eurocentric lens, for and by those from European cultures. Eliza explained: "a lot of our measures that we rely on, and assessments, have been developed traditionally and currently under a very, kind of, Western European way of knowing and interpreting the world in general." Similarly, Sara began by explaining that "all of it" was a potential source of bias or error, in reference to the assessment process, but went on to provide more detail:

> …the tests were designed by white people-- for Eurocentric cultures [by] Eurocentric cultures… I read this book called 'Even the Rat was White.'…about the history of psychology and how just Eurocentric the whole thing is. And after reading that, I was like, "well, we're all doomed." Like, there's no fixing this broken white supremacist system. But operating within it - we just have to be as mindful as we can.

Norming Data. The relied upon norming data was described as a potential source of bias or error by students, particularly when instruments are normed with populations that do not share the client's cultural background. As Tammy put simply: "the norm data definitely is biased." Similarly, as an examiner, Jake indicated the importance of being "careful with the norms and the nature of the tests… and understanding that there's always some source of bias that you do have to be aware of." To explain further, Shauna said examiners are "more likely underestimate [client's] abilities if we're assessing them using instruments and tools that were not normed based on children that are similar to them."

Assessment Process. Students described the potential for bias or error based on what is involved in the assessment processes itself, particularly the need for standardization, the questions asked and how they are asked, and the one-size-fits-all approach to testing. Savana explained her rationale for why she believes the way the assessment process is done as being the

greatest potential source of bias or error by saying, "The way they have to be standardized… has its benefits, but it makes it also a bit inflexible with the norms."

Reliance on English. The need to rely on English was highlighted as a potential source of bias or error within the assessment process. Tammy described the inequity of this: "we rely on individuals knowing English, for example, to answer some of these questions. And if English isn't something that they are very competent in, they could do worse than their skills are."

Students described the difficulty faced by translating measures to a different language, or relying on nonverbal measures of intelligence if the client's English is not proficient. Savana questioned the equitability of this process:

> Even when you do try to see qualitatively how different languages can play a role and…
> you administer the questions in another language - those things don't really translate. So,
> it's kind of tough and sometimes it makes it inequitable that you have to rely more on
> nonverbal subtests, which is effective to a certain extent, but there are more things that
> can only be explained verbally.

Assuming Validity. Finally, students emphasized the risk of assuming standardized assessment results are valid. When asked what the greatest potential source of bias or error is, Jess expressed: "assuming that our results are valid on any standardized assessment." Eliza provided more details regarding the risk of taking results at face value:

> It's like basic validity - if our measure is not measuring what it's supposed to, or what we
> think it is, then it's not valid, right? And if we're then interpreting that as something that it
> isn't measuring, because of whatever issues might arise, that's a huge issue."

Impact of Cultural Differences on Ability to Complete Assessment

Students were asked to share if they could imagine a circumstance under which the cultural differences between themselves and a client would be so significant, they would be unable to complete an assessment. Students were asked to focus on culture and assume language was not a barrier. A summary of each theme and subtheme is summarized in Table 7.

Table 7

Themes and Subthemes of Impact of Cultural Differences on Assessment Completion

Themes	Subthemes
Culture Would Impact Assessment Completion	▪ Client's choice ▪ Impactful cultural influences ▪ Possibility of doing harm ▪ Personal safety concerns
Culture Would Not Impact Assessment Completion	▪ Consult as needed ▪ Adapt assessment procedures ▪ Impact on ease of assessment

Culture Would Impact Assessment Completion. Most students explained there may be aspects related to culture which could impact their ability or willingness to conduct an assessment.

Client's Choice. Most students said it would be up to the client and their family if they wanted to go through with the assessment, and they would respect their choice and help them find a preferred clinician. In addition, students noted the possibility of the client and their family feeling unsafe or uncomfortable due to the clinician's lack of experience, understanding, or shared culture. For example, Eliza shared:

> I would completely understand and encourage families if they're not comfortable and they don't think that this is going to be the most valid testing or assessment experience for them and they really value seeing someone from a certain culture. I would highly encourage that and try to facilitate that process for them.

Jake communicated a similar viewpoint:

>I don't think I'd shy away from that, unless the individuals are uncomfortable. If they
>came from a culture, for example, if they're not comfortable with a male assessing a
>female student, I'd have to respect that… You let the clients inform you of what they're
>comfortable with and if that's the case, obviously I wouldn't force them. I'd find them
>someone else to do that assessment.

>*Impactful Cultural Influences*. Some students explained their likelihood to wait to assess

a client if they had very recently moved to Canada, or if the client had not previously been

exposed to academics. Nora spoke to this point:

>If they didn't have exposure to academics… [and] if somebody had just moved here;
>unless it was really imminent and they needed services or they were aging out and really
>needed an assessment, I would likely err on the side of waiting.

Others described the impact of being faced with significant cultural differences, which would

influence the client's ability to interact in the expected manner during the assessment. Sara

shared her thoughts on this possibility:

>Even the process of having to sit and respond consistently and having a timer and stuff
>for a lot of these smaller Indigenous cultures... I think especially if a client was not used
>to this typical way of like child sits, adult gives info, they respond method – like, it
>wouldn't work.

>*Possibility of Doing Harm.* A number of students discussed the possibility of an

assessment being harmful or not helpful as a conceivable reason culture could impact their

ability and willingness to complete an assessment. Eliza explained:

If they're not comfortable with me being the person testing them … I live in a white body and that's not comfortable to certain clients to work [with] one-on-one. There's a lot of mistrust in the medical system with certain communities that is extremely well founded, and I would never want to contribute to those negative experiences, if that was going to [do] more harm than good.

Personal Safety Concerns. Multiple students mentioned safety concerns as being a barrier to their ability to complete an assessment. Students explained the impact of feeling disrespected or unsafe may result in an inability to complete an assessment. As Heather communicated, "I think where I would draw a line is if any client was disrespectful to me... if ever anything came up and I felt in danger or disrespected, that would be the end of that."

Culture Would Not Impact Assessment Completion. Few students expressed there being no cultural differences that would impact their ability or willingness to conduct an assessment, and those who did, said so with some hesitation. Those with this viewpoint referenced their ability to consult as needed or get support, such as from a supervisor, or from cultural broker who could assist in bridging any cultural gaps. Anna explained her thoughts on the matter:

I feel like, if I had a cultural broker - that's their job to kind of bridge that gap so technically if I was able to, and if the family was comfortable with someone, then I feel like I should be able to work with whoever but maybe I'm naïve.

Another student, Jess, discussed her ability to adapt the assessment to suit any client so she would not have to turn them away due to cultural differences:

I don't know that there's any circumstance that I would turn a kid away. I would probably just use different tools. I'm not gonna give them a WISC, but it might even be that the

entire report is background taking and observations and qualitative - if that's what they needed to get the supports… I don't think I would totally rule out giving an assessment to any kid. The caveat is that the assessment would look different for every single kid.

Finally, students shared culture-related considerations that may impact their ease of conducting an assessment, but not to the point that they would not conduct it. For example, Savana communicated:

If you become aware that your client or [their] family's perspective on how a person should behave or… they think that you're more similar to them than you actually are, then that could be a bit difficult. I have one instance where there was a parent who assumed things about me, like, "you know, those things, blah blah"- I was like "Tell me more about those-- I don't understand what you're talking about", then that could be a bit tricky, I think. But not to the point that we cannot do the assessment… I would talk to my supervisor about it.

Experience Conducting Culturally Competent Assessment

Students were asked a series of questions related to their experience conducting assessments with individuals from diverse cultural backgrounds. The goal was to get a sense of students' experience conducting culturally competent assessments.

Prior to Assessment

Students were asked to explain some of the considerations and steps they have taken or would take prior to conducting an assessment with a culturally diverse client. A summary of each theme and subtheme related to this section is summarized in Table 8.

Table 8

Themes and Subthemes of Students' Considerations Prior to Assessment

Themes	Subthemes
Additional Time with Client and Family	▪ Additional time and care ▪ Rapport, trust ▪ Ensure understanding of purpose and process ▪ Validation, patience, answering questions ▪ Discuss how to serve family as health professional ▪ Assess willingness to engage in assessment ▪ Increase comfort ▪ Discussions ▪ Communication methods
Increase Understanding of Culture, Background, and Language	▪ Consider referral ▪ Consider English exposure ▪ Conduct own research ▪ Speak to client about their culture
Considering the Impact of Culture	▪ Question, consider, research impact of culture on behaviour and presentation ▪ Research impact of diagnosis on certain cultures

Additional Time with Client and Family. Students described their likelihood to spend additional time and care with the client and their family before conducting an assessment, as it would contribute to building rapport, comfort, and trust. In addition, it would ensure the client and their family understands the purpose and process of the assessment. They also expressed being likely to spend extra time validating, answering questions, and being patient with the client and their family. Clinicians also conveyed taking extra time to discuss how to best serve the family as their health professional, and to assess their willingness to engage in the assessment. As Jake described:

> …communication piece with the family and really gaining their trust and helping them
>
> understand why we do assessments - because that in and of itself could be a cultural
>
> difference… so, really getting them on board with the process… really have to work a

little harder, I think, just to make sure that the rapport is established and that they

understand why it's being done.

Students shared ideas for how to they could make the client and their family feel more

comfortable, such as learning how to say "hello" in their language or bringing refreshments to

the intake appointment.

Students also described conversations and communication methods they would engage in

with the client's parents, such as discussing their impressions of the client, learning about their

parenting practices, and learning about the parent-child interactions. For example, Savana

explained:

I first kind of try to get more background information about the child or the student that I

work with, and then I usually begin with a parent interview… gives me some context to

which the environment of the child is being brought up.

Increase Understanding of Culture, Background, and Language. Students conveyed

some steps and considerations to better understand their client's culture, background, and

language. These steps include gaining information from the referral, consideration of their

exposure to English and need for a translator, conducting their own research on the client's

culture and background, and speaking to the client and family directly about their culture.

Students expressed the importance of gaining necessary information from the referral,

such as the child's age, where they are from, their cultural background, and their exposure to

English. Jake described how "the referral question is the guide so I would use that as the starting

point."

Students consider if there is a language barrier, and therefore, if a translator or interpreter

is required. For example, Anna expressed that she would be "checking-in that they are fluent

enough in English and if not, do they need anyone to kind of join us for the different parts of the assessment."

Students also reported conducting their own research regarding clients' cultural background. In so doing, they gain a better understanding of social customs, norms, and nuances, and how culture may impact the information provided. As Heather explained, "I do my research to an extent… Not to bring my own biases about that place, but, doing the bare minimum is to at least know where these people are coming from and understand that history."

Finally, students described trying to understand the client's cultural identity, acculturation, immigration history, and cultural norms by speaking directly with the client and their family. Eliza reported, "getting an understanding from the family themselves about what they identify with culturally and how they identify their culture." This allows students to gain information about culture from the client and their family themselves, rather than making assumptions based on knowledge gained elsewhere. Shauna explained her likelihood to ask questions about "what they feel might be important for me to know about their culture in order to serve them as their health professional."

Considering the Impact of Culture. Not only did students express a likelihood to speak to the client and their family about their cultural background and doing their own research about the culture, but they also described questioning, considering, and researching the impact of culture on the client's behaviours and presentation. Shauna shared: "I would probably start thinking about [and] trying to imagine some of the ways that their culture might impact on how they present to me and how I can assess." Sara described conducting research to determine the impact of a particular diagnosis on individuals from certain cultures:

I read some articles about really whether or not the diagnoses of bipolar is helpful for

Black women. And there's this huge cultural thing about the fact that it can be a quite

harmful one and another thing that tends to be over diagnosed… and I decided not to. I

decided to take that out of the recommendations because I was like, ultimately, this is

harmful or hurtful.

During an Assessment

Students described the considerations and steps they would take during an assessment

with a client from a diverse cultural background, compared to when working with a client of

European descent from North America. A summary of each theme and subtheme related to this

section is summarized in Table 9.

Table 9

Themes and Subthemes of Students' Considerations During an Assessment

Themes	Subthemes
Additional Time and Care	▪ Ensure understanding and comfort ▪ Additional time and care ▪ Rapport, trust ▪ Flexibility in interview questions ▪ Simplification of language and instruction ▪ Care in communicating findings ▪ Openness and flexibility
Adjustments Based on Culture	▪ Consider, question use of certain tests ▪ Consider impact of culture on language skills, verbal scores ▪ Adjustments to measures or testing method ▪ Use different measures ▪ Breaking standardization ▪ Greater reliance on nonverbal information ▪ Test the limits ▪ Shorter testing sessions ▪ Client centered approach ▪ Increased qualitative information in report
Maintaining Standardization	▪ Importance of standardization
Working with Others	▪ Consultation

	▪	Supervision
	▪	Gathering information from others
	▪	Input and support from other professionals
Interpretation and Formulation	▪	Norms
	▪	Culture and presenting problem
	▪	Impact of culture on interpretation
	▪	Bio-psycho-social lens
	▪	English exposure vs. SLD
Information Sharing	▪	How information is shared
	▪	Who information is shared with
	▪	Include caveats
	▪	Provide cultural context
	▪	Check in with child, use child friendly language

Additional Time and Care. Spending additional time and extra care to ensure the client and their family understand what is being communicated, and are comfortable during the assessment, was conveyed. Eliza described a tendency for "regularly checking in, are we still comfortable with this, are you still feeling good about this, are there questions along the way that come up that we didn't expect?" Students also indicated a likelihood to spend additional time and care to ensure rapport and trust are built. For example, Anna explained: "build[ing] that relationship is really important, and making sure that they feel comfortable working with me is especially important when someone is from a different culture than me." They also described being flexible in the interview questions asked, simplification of language and instructions, and extra care in communication of findings. Jake expanded on his reason for this, saying:

> …if they're, for example, a second language learner, I'm going to really try to simplify
> my instructions as much as possible. Not in a condescending way but just to make sure
> that it's very clear what I'm asking and not to overwhelm them and maybe rely a bit more
> on the nonverbal.

Related to providing additional care, students described the need to be open and flexible to ensure the client and their family feel comfortable. Nora described being, "flexible and kind of adapting to what they might need."

Adjustments Based on Culture. Numerous students expressed their tendency to consider and question the use of certain tests and tools, and to consider the impact of culture on a client's language skills and verbal scores. For example, Jess said she would be "really thinking about the tools I'm using."

Students also described adjustments they would make to the measures or testing method used, based on their considerations regarding the impact of culture. Jess specified considering "tools like the PVAT, using nonverbal assessments like the CTONI, doing the VINELAND interview with a translator." Some students identified a likelihood to select different measures from their typical battery, such as those with lower verbal demands or nonverbal assessment measures. Eliza explained:

> I've had experiences where there was a linguistic barrier, but testing can get kind of tricky if there's timed components… and it can just get really, really hard to test through a translator, so even selecting measures that have less of a linguistic component to them.

Students expressed their consideration of shifting from standardization practices, or breaking standardization. As Jake reported:

> If you're dealing with a second language student - that's where the standardization of the tests really gets kind of thrown aside if they weren't included in the sample…you'd have to accommodate, and that may break standardization, but understanding that and communicating it in the interpretation is important.

In addition, they would rely more on nonverbal information, be more likely to test the limits, have shorter testing sessions, and take a client centered approach to the assessment and breaks. In describing adjustments she would make, Nora said, "in testing, I might be more inclined to test the limits… having shorter testing sessions or having them in different times of the day." Finally, students expressed the need to allow for increased qualitative information in the report. Savana suggested one method would be to "ask them if they want to tell me, in the language that they're more comfortable in, but not necessarily scoring them. Just qualitatively have that comparison and describe that in their report."

Maintaining Standardization. Contrary to some students' suggestions to break standardization to adapt for the possible needs of culturally diverse clients, other students clearly expressed the importance of maintaining standardization during the assessment. Shauna explained how she might justify this in her report:

One thing that we're trained in at York is the importance of standardized assessment. So, I would guess that the way that I do the actual assessment wouldn't vary much. I think I would maybe have to say in the report, "I maintained standardization, but it's important to consider that this test hasn't been used specifically in this population much before."

Working with Others. The importance of working with various others when conducting assessments with culturally diverse individuals through consultation, supervision, and information gathering was described. Many of the students described consultation, particularly with their supervisor, as a necessity. For example, Jess expressed the need for "a lot of consultation, supervision around [the assessment]."

Additionally, students discussed the need to gather information from others, whether it be those who work with or know the client, the client's family, the client themselves, or other

professionals who may provide helpful input. Tammy described professionals available through her position in a school board, called "settlement workers" or "cultural liaisons… who you can get in touch with to support with the [assessment] process." Similarly, Jess described multiple professionals she contacted for support with the assessment of a culturally diverse client:

> I sent an email to the ELL [English Language Learner] teachers and the SWIS [Settlement Worker in Schools] worker, and the resource teachers and said, "I don't know this family and I don't necessarily know a lot about this culture… whatever you all advise, I will go by."

Interpretation and Formulation. Students described their considerations during the interpretation and formation of assessments conducted with culturally diverse clients. Some key considerations noted were that of the norms, the impact of culture on the presenting problem, and how culture may impact the interpretation. Students also expressed their tendency to focus on the bio-psycho-social lens in their formulation, and to consider the impact of lower English exposure. For example, Tammy described:

> We only have the Wechsler Intelligence Scale and I know it's so heavily weighted on the verbal index and given that student hasn't had a lot of English exposure, so I'm going to take into account if the verbal scores are very weak, maybe it's not because of a deficit with their verbal intelligence, but maybe could be a language deficiency.

Information Sharing. Finally, students indicated their method of how information is shared, as well as who the information is shared with, would be adjusted for culturally diverse clients. Nora described numerous areas of the assessment being impacted, such as: "how I would share the results, and with who, and in what way, and the recommendations." Students described the importance of including relevant caveats in the report and providing cultural contextual

information in all assessment results. As students explained, they would put forth effort to help the child understand what they are doing, and why. They would also be sure to check in with the child at the end of the assessment to explain the results in a child-friendly manner.

Finally, students indicated the benefit of using the family's words to help explain their feedback, as well as in the report findings. Savana expanded on this point:

> …use their own words when I'm explaining things to them in the feedback. So, I would usually make notes about some of the key phrases that they use or some of the things that they want their kids to achieve and to see how can that be achieved or reconciled through our findings.

Impact of Culture on Drawing Inferences

Students were asked to what extent they consider the impact of culture when drawing inferences from their assessment data. They shared details regarding their consideration of culture, and the extent to which they consider the impact of culture differed between students. A summary of each theme and subtheme related to this section is summarized in Table 10.

Table 10

Themes and Subthemes of Impact of Culture on Drawing Inferences

Themes	Subthemes
Sections of the Psychological Report	▪ Diagnosis ▪ Drawing inferences ▪ Consider acculturation, academic history, assessment scores ▪ Assessment formulation ▪ Summary and recommendations
Impact on Communication, Behaviours, Performance	▪ Communication approach with families ▪ Interpretating questionnaire and interview responses ▪ Explaining behaviours ▪ Impact on verbal subtest performance
Assessment Measure Selection	▪ Contemplate appropriateness of Wechsler tests

	▪ Push for culturally sensitive assessment ▪ Use of C-LIM
Addressing Validity	▪ Difficult to discuss impact of culture when maintaining validity ▪ Validity statement
Extent of Culture Consideration	▪ Significant Consideration ▪ Client Dependent ▪ Low or No Consideration

Sections of the Psychological Report. Students shared their considerations of the impact of culture on diagnoses, when drawing inferences from the assessment data, and during formulation. Many students expressed considering the impact of culture on diagnosis, explaining they would first consider the client's level of acculturation, academic history, and assessment scores. In addition, some explained they would not rush to diagnose before considering culture, but also stated they would not rule out giving a diagnosis. As Shauna stated:

> I can't think of a scenario where that would impact the diagnosis that I made, for example. Because I think we really have to consider the reason why we give diagnoses in the first place, which is to give a child access to services. And while it may be the case that some of their difficulties are explained by culture, I think that we'd have to have a good reason to believe that the accommodations that that child could receive wouldn't benefit them because of the culture piece.

In consideration of culture, students also conveyed being most willing to diagnose a disability resulting in classroom difficulties. As Jess explained, the results of the assessment may be an underestimation of the client's true ability, but it provides an estimate of how they are going to perform in their current context:

> I will state, "this child came from this place, they're not being compared to their peers." It's impossible to say what the impact of that is… It doesn't really always tell us an actual

estimate of where they're at; it tells us where they're gonna perform in comparison to where they are now in that context. And that's often how I frame it… we know this is where their ability in this area and compared to a kid in the same context - in this English context.

Students shared they are most likely to explain the impact of culture in the assessment formulation section of the report. Other students described the impact of culture as having the greatest influence on the report summary and recommendations. Some expressed not including any cultural interpretations in their reports before the summary section, due to the standardized method of writing their reports. Sara explained:

> I can't really put any cultural interpretations in until I get to that summary part… in that written component, it tends to be quite standard, it tends to be quite Eurocentric and written from the point of view of the test administrators because that's how it's supposed to be used as a tool.

Impact on Communication, Behaviours, Performance. Students consider the impact of culture in their communication approach with families, which includes providing space for the client and their family to discuss culture, and in the interpretation of questionnaire and interview responses. Students are also likely to consider the impact of culture on a client's performance on verbal subtests.

Students will also consider the impact of culture to explain certain behaviours. They expressed a likelihood to include information regarding cultural explanations for certain behaviours in the report, if relevant. Anna shared an example of how she might consider the influence of culture to explain a behaviour:

…hearing voices and in indigenous communities, you know it's common for them to speak to their ancestors and have those beliefs. And so there's things like that, where in some cultures that behavior is more normalized… So yeah, there's definitely certain behaviors where I would have to think about it and think about are there any other reasons that could explain this behaviour?

Assessment Measure Selection. Due to their considerations of the influence of culture, students expressed contemplating the appropriateness of Wechsler tests, stating they may not be suitable for use with every client. Tammy shared:

Maybe doing the Wechsler test every time is not good. Somebody was telling me that in California, I don't know if it's illegal, but you cannot be doing the WISC on a Black individual. You have to use something else.

In addition, students explained the trend they have noticed of organizations pushing for more culturally sensitive assessments. Finally, Jess reported running her results through the Culture-Language Interpretive Matrix (C-LIM).

Addressing Validity. Students expressed the difficulty faced with addressing the impact and challenges associated with culture on assessment, particularly when attempting to maintain test validity. Heather described one potential obstacle:

When you've been trained and told that these testing measures are supposed to be culturally valid, it's hard for you to challenge that and write that in a certain way when you're trying to still maintain the validity of the test and show a school board that these are valid… I'm trying to contextualize things, but I also don't want to invalidate the very tool that is gonna allow me to get that person resources.

Some students explained their tendency to write a validity statement in their report to address the cultural background of their client in comparison to the norming sample. For example, Shauna expressed:

> I would make a note in the report to say, "this should be interpreted with extreme caution due to the fact that this tool hasn't been normed in this population." …if there's any issues with validity, I would put that as a caveat 100% of the time in the report.

Extent of Culture Consideration. The following sections address the extent to which students consider the impact of culture on interpretations of assessment data.

Significant Consideration. Most students conveyed the importance of considering culture, expressing it should always be considered when interpreting assessment data. Eliza stated, "it's one of those things that should always be in the forefront of our minds." Many students heavily consider the impact of culture, with some wishing to consider it in every assessment they conduct, and others describing an increased likelihood to consider it now, compared to previously. For example, when asked about the extent to which she considers the impact of culture on her interpretation of assessment data, Jess acknowledged: "I think it's an ongoing process. I can tell you that when I was an intern in my masters - very little."

Client Dependent. Considering the impact of culture on the assessment interpretation was described by some as being dependent on the influence of the client's heritage culture on them. Some explained not pushing the impact of culture if the client does not see it as an influence. Jake explained: "it's more about giving them that space to talk about it if they feel comfortable doing it. I wouldn't impose that on them… if they bring up the topic of culture, I'm not shying away from it."

Certain students expressed contemplating the client's exposure to schooling, the English language, and amount of time they have been in Canada, as factors related to the impact culture may have on assessment results. Nora said:

> It depends… if it was a student who had just arrived with refugee status and didn't have consistent schooling versus a student who immigrated here when they were two and have been exposed to English their whole life. I think that would give me different lenses.

Low or No Consideration. Select students described not allowing the impact of culture to get in the way of a diagnosis, or to influence the assessment results. They explained diagnoses are provided to allow clients to access services. In addition, as students clarified, the DSM-V criteria rules out cultural variables, which is another reason why culture would not influence their willingness to diagnose a culturally diverse client with a disorder. As Shauna explained, "when you're making a diagnosis, you're following the DSM criteria, which involves making sure that you're making a diagnosis based on the symptoms that you're seeing and it's not better explained by cultural variables, for example."

Finally, few students conveyed not being taught how to consider the influence of culture when drawing influences in assessment. As Heather said, "I still struggle and I don't think I've been, you know, fully taught… what to do and what I can change and how."

Noteworthy Aspects of Conducting Cross Cultural Assessments

Discussions were had with students regarding the assessments they have conducted with culturally diverse clients. Students were asked to describe how those assessments went, and if there was anything particularly noteworthy about them compared to assessing clients from Canada of European descent. A summary of each theme and subtheme related to this section is summarized in Table 11.

Table 11

Themes and Subthemes of Noteworthy Differences When Conducting Cross Cultural Assessments

Themes	Subthemes
Additional Efforts, Time, and Care	▪ Increase comfort ▪ Meet needs ▪ Extra time, care to ensure understanding ▪ Consider language, communication speed ▪ Arrange translator ▪ Family-school liaison ▪ More explicit assistance ▪ Educate self ▪ Ask additional questions ▪ Consultation
Greater Consideration of Trauma	▪ Trauma-informed approach ▪ Culturally sensitive assessment
Adjustment to Approach or Measures Used	▪ Select subtests of WIAT ▪ Nonverbal cognitive batteries ▪ Use assessment batteries other than Wechsler measures ▪ Ask specific questions ▪ Rely more on qualitative data
Inclusion of Caveats and Additional Context in Report	▪ Exposure to English ▪ Cultural background ▪ Consider culture when diagnosing
Unexpected or Difficult Components to Navigate	▪ Unprepared ▪ Challenges with families ▪ Involving translator
No Changes or Adjustments	▪ Do not consider culture ▪ No change in preparation

Additional Efforts, Time, and Care. Students described examples of the additional efforts they went to in their work with culturally diverse clients and families to ensure they understood all aspects of the assessment, they were comfortable, and their needs were met. For example, Anna described her extra efforts:

I actually went to their home to go through the questionnaires with them… I don't think I've ever done that before so that was definitely very unique and I think they just needed help with the understanding of the questions.

Students also described taking extra time and care to ensure understanding, by putting effort into considering the language used, the speed of communication, or arranging a translator if necessary. For example, Eliza explained:

> …taking the time with clients… increasing comfort level, setting expectations, explaining ourselves really clearly, doing regular check-ins - I think all of that piece was probably what we did more differently. Or at least did more explicitly, I think, in those cases.

> Students also described acting as a family-school liaison and making an effort to keep

lines of communication open between the client, family, admin, and resource team. Jake explained the need to…:

> really understand what the referral question was, what they expected from the student, and then communicate with the admin team, the resource team, the student, the family and really try to keep those lines of communication as open as possible because where the student was from, this is not a common practice.

In addition, students described employing more explicit methods of assisting families of clients from diverse backgrounds. For example, one student described greater efforts to connect a family with services, while another wrote a letter to a parent who did not want to attend the assessment sessions, explaining the child's symptoms from a mental health perspective.

> Students also described their own efforts to ensure they were educated in the client's

culture and background, to ask additional questions of the teacher and family, and to engage in more consultation with others. For example, Jess described extra efforts she went to, saying, "so much thinking went into that, so much consultation. It definitely took a lot longer. You know, I gave myself way more thinking time than I normally would for an assessment."

Greater Consideration of Trauma. Greater consideration of trauma was described as a noteworthy aspect of conducting assessments with culturally diverse clients. Some students described using a trauma-informed approach to assessment, and others described conducting culturally sensitive assessment, meaning they did not stick to standardization. Heather explained her experience employing a trauma-informed assessment approach:

Everything we did had to be trauma informed. I had never thought about trauma informed care from an assessment perspective… going into it open-minded, asking questions, making changes, thinking about what types of questions on assessment measures might not make sense, might not have been learned, might be triggering in the context of intergenerational trauma… it really shook everything to the point where I walked away saying to my supervisor "I think I invalidated that whole assessment." And what she said back to me was, "No. Or maybe. But you did a culturally sensitive assessment."

Adjustment to Approach or Measures Used. Students described numerous methods employed in their approach to assessment, and various measures used with culturally diverse clients. For example, some students used select subtests of the WIAT, while others used assessment batteries other than Weschler measures, such as nonverbal cognitive batteries. For example, Jake specified his use of the Comprehensive Test of Nonverbal Intelligence (C-TONI). Jess discussed how she adjusted her approach to assessing a culturally diverse client, saying:

I met with the child maybe every two or three weeks rather than doing big chunks. So, I might have done two tests or three tests from the CTONI and then that was enough for that day. And then maybe the next time I met with her, I did a little bit more. I also did the LAYDER 3, which is another nonverbal assessment… I'm not using the same tools; I'm not giving them a WISC and a WIAT - I think that would be unethical… I think it

actually says that in the APA's response to Truth and Reconciliation. It's not good enough to say "Well, we don't have those tools so we're just gonna use the tools we have or not do it at all." Well, that's not good enough anymore for our most vulnerable populations.

Students identified their tendency to ask specific questions of culturally diverse clients and their families, such as about when they moved, the moving process, and their level of acculturation. In addition, students reported relying more on interview data and focusing their report write-up on qualitative information and recommendations.

Inclusion of Caveats and Additional Context in Report. Students outlined various caveats and contextual points they would include in their assessment reports for culturally diverse clients. Some caveats included acknowledging the lower exposure to English the client had and the cultural background of the client. For example, Jake shared:

> I did some select sub-tests of the WIAT with the caveat that obviously he didn't have the same opportunity to practice in English. But it gave us a baseline in terms of if he was in Canada, this is where we would expect them to be and where his skills were equivalent to. So, it gave us a bit of a context. But I provided that caveat in the report.

Students also expressed serious consideration of culture when diagnosing, with some students feeling hesitant to communicate certain diagnoses to clients of particular cultural backgrounds. For example, Tammy reported being hesitant to diagnose an Indigenous client with Oppositional Defiant Disorder.

Unexpected or Difficult Components to Navigate. Students experienced a few unexpected components, or aspects they found difficult to navigate during their assessment of culturally diverse clients. Some students reported feeling unprepared for the assessment. Others

described challenges they experienced working with the families of these clients; for example, families who did not consent to the assessment, or one parent being unwilling or uninterested to be involved in the assessment. Shauna described the following experience she had:

> The father wasn't interested at all in attending the appointments. It was the mom who really saw [and] believed that there was a problem, wanted to get the assessment done. The child also really wanted to get the assessment done because they were struggling in school and with their mental health. The father just didn't really see the behaviors and challenges through a mental health lens - they thought that the child was just being difficult.

Another difficult component to navigate, as conveyed by students, was the involvement of a translator in the assessment process and determining how to translate certain diagnoses. For example, Nora reported employing a translator who struggled to translate the disability being communicated. As Nora explained, "I felt so unprepared… I was with the interpreter and he's like, 'there's no word for intellectual disability that's not offensive' and I was like, 'Uhh… Okay, I don't know what to do.'"

No Changes or Adjustments. Finally, few students expressed not considering culture in their interpretation of the data or diagnosis. For example, regarding her experience working with a culturally diverse client, Tammy expressed, "I can't think of anything I did differently for that student, to be honest." Those students noted doing nothing different in their preparation for their assessment of culturally diverse clients. Anna shared, "so to prepare for the assessment... I don't think I did [anything different]… I didn't ask him any specific questions related to culture."

Graduate Training in Culturally Competent Assessment

Students were asked to share if and how their graduate training and coursework prepared them to be competent in assessing culturally diverse individuals. The goal was to get a sense of whether or not they have been sufficiently trained in culturally competent assessment, their comfort with and ability to conduct culturally competent assessments, and how students have been trained. In addition, students were asked what their programs have done particularly well to train students in culturally competent assessment, as well as what they could improve upon. Finally, students shared information about what additional training they require to contribute to their knowledge in this area.

Sufficient Training in Culturally Competent Assessment?

Students were asked to describe how their training and coursework prepared them to assess culturally diverse individuals, as well as if their training resulted in feeling sufficiently prepared to assess individuals from various cultural backgrounds. When explicitly asked if they believed they have been sufficiently prepared and trained to assess individuals from various cultural backgrounds, half of the students responded with an assertive "no". The other half of the students described feeling moderately prepared, through practical experiences and impactful lecture topics. Responses ranged and students described what contributed to their skillset in this area. A summary of each theme and subtheme related to this section is summarized in Table 12.

Table 12

Themes and Subthemes Related to Whether Students Believe They Have Been Sufficiently

Trained in Culturally Competent Assessment

Themes	Subthemes
Insufficient Training and Preparation	▪ Not taught to be culturally safe ▪ Not at the level they would like to be ▪ At the level expected of CPA ▪ Surface-level training

	▪ Lack of comprehensive focus on culturally competent assessment
	▪ Buzzword, not thoughtful teaching
	▪ Culture not discussed meaningfully
	▪ Culture rarely discussed with regard to assessment
	▪ Limited classroom knowledge
	▪ Learned basics of assessment
	▪ Lack of didactic and practical training
	▪ Lack of culturally diverse professors
Moderately-Sufficient or Comprehensive Training	▪ Comprehensive training
	▪ Moderately prepared
	▪ Possible sufficiently prepared
	▪ Striving for lifelong learning

Insufficient Training and Preparation. Many students expressed being either not at all or insufficiently prepared for culturally competent assessment, with others described not being taught about cultural safety. Students expressed not being at the level they would like to be at this point in their training, while one student described being at a level of understanding and experience that would be expected by CPA at this point in her training, but still not competent. As Heather explained:

> I think York is doing a really great job at trying to get out of that "I'm gonna check a box here", and more learn how to integrate that into the clinical practice and teaching aspects of it… I definitely have had experiences with different cultures and I think that's all CPA really wants from you at this stage, which is again I guess that box. Whether I feel competent: no.

Students cited surface-level training and a lack of comprehensive focus on culturally competent assessment as contributing to feeling unprepared and described "cultural competence" as being used more as buzzwords than as a method of thoughtful teaching. Similarly, the topic of culture was touched upon in different classes, but not meaningfully, which resulted in limited

classroom knowledge. In addition, if prompted to consider culture by professors, they expressed not being taught how to do so meaningfully nor how to be culturally competent. Others stated culture was rarely discussed with regard to assessment, and there was no consideration of, or teaching about, different culturally sensitive assessment measures available. Instead, many students expressed the focus of their assessment classes being on learning the basics of assessment, rather than more advanced topics such as how to adapt assessments to suit culturally diverse clients. For example, Tammy expressed:

> I think so much of the focus was to be trained in the measures that I had learned, and it was just becoming more comfortable doing the assessments and learning the process and less so on, "How can I change it to fit a person who didn't belong in the culture that these measures were designed for?"

> Students also expressed a lack of didactic and practical training experiences related to culture. Practical experience with culturally diverse clients was not guaranteed, and some students who did have experience assessing a culturally diverse client explained they made no changes to their assessment methods to suit the individual they were assessing. Students believe programs should be prioritizing teaching cultural competence, to the point that some want to be able to think about culture for every assessment they conduct.

Finally, students believe one aspect getting in the way of them learning how to conduct culturally competent assessments is the lack of professors in their program who are culturally diverse, and professors lacking personal experience in this area. Shauna explained:

> I think that potentially, if we had more professors who could speak to their personal experience of that, or if we are able to hear from more individuals who have experienced some of the negative impacts of being discriminated against in some ways by the ways

that we're trained and by the way that the healthcare system works, I think that would be helpful too. But I think definitely in terms of having more diverse instructors and having more of these opportunities to work specifically with culturally diverse families in the context of assessment would be two important additions to the program.

Moderately-Sufficient or Comprehensive Training. A portion of the students explained feeling either moderately prepared or sufficiently prepared, and two students described the training they received as being comprehensive. Shauna was one of the two students who said they received comprehensive training, and she described her experience learning about the potential impacts of culture through discussions in many courses and lectures:

> Within courses, when we're learning about assessment techniques or intervention techniques… when we're reviewing the research, there's always discussions on "Who isn't represented by these studies? How can we generalize this information?" It's all around providing evidence-based practice and part of the evidence-based practice is knowing what populations research has been done with. So, I think I would say that there is a strong theme of that throughout our courses; not necessarily that we would have a lecture in each course that's focused on culture, but it's more of a thread that comes out throughout.

The other student, Tammy, shared her experience of comprehensive training had to do with the topic of culture in relation to assessment measures in general; however, she did not gain a comprehensive understanding of how to adjust or adapt assessment practices to better suit a client. Tammy explained:

> From the standpoint of culture, I think it was comprehensive. From a standpoint of understanding what the measures are, and maybe understanding the limits of the measure,

but not necessarily focusing on how do we make this culturally appropriate, because I

don't think the field itself has enough information on that yet.

A larger number of students expressed feeling moderately or sufficiently prepared and

competent in assessing culturally diverse individuals. Other students felt unsure about how

prepared or competent they were in this area but explained they are striving for lifelong learning

to contribute to their feeling of competence in assessing culturally diverse individuals.

Comfort and Ability to Independently Conduct Culturally Competent Assessment

Students were asked to explain how prepared and comfortable they feel to independently

conduct a culturally competent assessment, and to explain the assessment process, results, and

recommendations to culturally diverse clients and their families. Students had varied responses

about their level of comfort, and some described methods they would use to increase their

comfort. A summary of each theme and subtheme related to this section is summarized in Table

13.

Table 13

Themes and Subthemes of Students' Comfort and Ability to Independently Conduct Culturally

Competent Assessment

Themes	Subthemes
Uncertainty	▪ Unsure
	▪ Uncertain about criteria
	▪ Unsure of alternate assessment batteries available
	▪ Less confident in culturally competent assessment
Lacking, or Moderate Comfort	▪ Not completely comfortable
	▪ Somewhat confident
	▪ Experience working with individuals from different cultures
	▪ Dependent on culture of client
	▪ Can consult with colleagues
Comfortable	▪ Comfortable

	- Confident - Confident to create culturally confident recommendations - Working independently already
Methods to Increase Comfort	- Research to prepare - Consult with others - Seek necessary support - Practical experience

Uncertainty. Many students expressed feeling uncertain about their ability to independently conduct a culturally competent assessment, with some referencing uncertainty about what the criteria would be. Others referenced being unsure of the alternative assessment batteries available for use with culturally diverse clients. Finally, numerous students feel confident in general assessment, but less so when it comes to culturally competent assessment.

Lacking, or Moderate Comfort. Few students expressed being not completely comfortable with independently conducting a culturally competent assessment. Tammy specified her lack of confidence in her ability to work with an Indigenous client, which is why she prioritized selecting a residency placement with guaranteed exposure to Indigenous clients.

Some students conveyed feeling somewhat confident, particularly when they already had some experience working with individuals from different cultures. Others explained their level of comfort was dependent on the culture of the client, and more experience with certain cultures contributes to increased comfort working with clients from that culture. Many students referenced their ability to consult with colleagues, if necessary, which increased their comfort.

Comfortable. Some students expressed feeling comfortable to independently conduct a culturally competent assessment, and to explain the assessment process, results, and recommendations in a way that is accessible. For example, Nora explained:

> We learned very fluently in our masters and we had to write it up, and then they had the readability level checked, and using appropriate language that is understandable, and providing examples was something that we were really explicitly taught in our masters and was really valued.

Students also expressed confidence in their ability to create culturally sensitive recommendations, particularly because they can consult with others if they have questions or are unsure about what to recommend. Sara explained one reason she feels comfortable already:

> I feel like I've been doing it alone… because a lot of my professors are white. I think every supervisor I've ever had has been white. So, I would say about the same alone as with somebody, because I think I've been doing it a lot myself anyway.

Methods to Increase Comfort. Many students described methods they could use or have already used to increase their comfort level. Shauna explained how she could prepare:

> I would probably do some background research on the culture and understand if there's any published papers on culturally competent assessment with these populations in North America - that would be a helpful thing… I would try to select a standardized test that… would be valid to be used with the family that I'm working with.

Numerous students expressed an increased feeling of comfort working with culturally diverse clients, due to their ability to consult with peers or supervisors, and otherwise seek necessary support. For example, Eliza said:

> I feel like a huge piece in psychology… is the consultation piece, right? So, if I had hesitations, or doubts, or I wasn't sure, I have a lot of really great colleagues to rely on. I think that's true of any clinical work in any capacity, when you come to a point where you're kind of stuck or you're not sure how to proceed, you consult with colleagues.

Finally, students described the impact experience has had on their increased feeling of comfort conducting culturally competent assessment. Students referenced their practical experience working with individuals from various cultural backgrounds as being impactful and recognize additional practical experience of this kind would benefit them.

Contributions to Students' Training in Culturally Competent Assessment

Students shared information regarding how their graduate training and coursework have prepared them for culturally competent assessment. A summary of each theme and subtheme related to this section is summarized in Table 14.

Table 14

Themes and Subthemes of Contributions to Students' Training in Culturally Competent Assessment

Themes	Subthemes
Practical and Clinical Experiences	▪ Practical, clinical experience ▪ Skills developed through practical experiences ▪ Limited practical experience, concrete examples
Learning from Others	▪ Guest lecturers ▪ Professors ▪ Supervisors ▪ Those with lived experiences ▪ Experts ▪ Didactic conversations
Systematic Discussion of Culture in Courses	▪ Systematically discussed culture in each course ▪ Surface-level ▪ Meaningful integration ▪ Beneficial when integrated throughout course ▪ Same wording in each syllabus ▪ Overall program efforts
Culturally Focused Course or Lecture	▪ Introductory course on psychoeducational assessment ▪ Lectures about culture and culturally sensitive practices in assessment

	▪ Course on culture and diversity
Impactful Lecture Topics	▪ Negative aspects of assessment
	▪ Representation, evidence-based practice
	▪ Learn from clients
	▪ Methods of finding information
	▪ General topics related to culture
	▪ Increased self-awareness
Personal Learning	▪ Personally sought training experiences
	▪ Additional learning through courses
	▪ Sought relevant practical experiences
	▪ Joined social justice committees
	▪ Reading and research
	▪ Personal reflection
	▪ Personal upbringing
	▪ Current socio-political climate

Practical and Clinical Experiences. Some students referenced their practical clinical experience as contributing to their culturally competent assessment abilities. Of those students, some explicitly identified learning more through their practical experiences than their courses, and learning from their practicum supervisors. Anna explained:

In my practicum experiences I've definitely been supported, and I can chat with my supervisor about certain clients and how to prepare for that and debrief it afterwards. There's only so much you can learn in class. I would have liked to have some more content and classroom type of knowledge.

While Anna explained her ability to discuss clients with her supervisor as contributing meaningfully to her training, other students expressed being more explicitly taught by their supervisor to treat each assessment client as the expert of their own experience, and were supported through that process in practice.

Many other students felt their practical experiences and the use of concrete examples in their training was lacking. They had limited exposure and would have benefited from working with more culturally diverse clients. Students explained that while there may have been a

theoretical focus regarding the impact of culture on assessments in the classroom, there was a lack of concrete examples to tie theory in with practice. Eliza explained:

> I think there's a lot of theoretical-level talk about a lot of this stuff… like, reading definitions, talking about issues, and what I feel is lacking a lot in the program [and] in psychology in general, honestly, is what we actually do with that and making it more concrete… So we all talk about how maybe certain norms aren't relevant to certain groups. But then that's as much as we're told, right? And so, then when you get in a position where you have to make those calls, it's not actually that helpful. I want someone to talk me through what that decision making process [would] look like. What would you do instead?... As opposed to just talking about [the] problem, but not talking about what to do with that problem.

Learning from Others. Students shared information about the influential people who taught them about culturally competent assessment, such as guest lecturers, professors, and supervisors. Multiple students expressed learning from guest lecturers and experts in culturally competent assessment practice. Students cited the benefits of learning from guest lecturers, particularly those with lived experience, as well as conversations with experts in the area. For example, Shauna shared:

> [Professor] brought in a number of Indigenous researchers that she has worked with, with lived experience of the ways that the psychology and mental health care system really fails to meet the needs of these populations. So, I think that was a really important way or aspect of our training, is just hearing from individuals who have experience or have possibly been discriminated against by the mental health system in Canada to really give us some perspective… that was just kind of helping us to understand the types of

communities that aren't represented well and just haven't traditionally been recognized in the way that we've been trained in the past.

Students referenced in-depth, didactic conversations, including those occurring during lectures with professors and peers, or with supervisors during practicum placements, as contributing to their learning in this area. Students discussed the impact of learning from their practicum supervisors who challenged norms and expectations. For example, Heather stated: "…I had a bit more room to sort of challenge the way we were doing it and had some supervisors more open-minded to challenging the status quo has helped me bring it into practice, I think, better." Having the opportunity to learn from those with experience in the area, while gaining practical experience themselves was beneficial to their learning. In addition, Nora shared:

> I remember having a lecture on using a medicine wheel to report out. And I remember thinking that that sounded really neat, but totally out of my comfort level at the time. So, I think it's something that was in didactic conversations… but I feel like it is a lot through supervision. In my program, the last year is a full year placement, so you're working in a school, so you do a lot of assessments, so it's where you get a lot of your exposure… I still have some of the books [my supervisor] recommended and where we had some more in-depth conversations because I was actually on the ground.

Systematic Discussion of Culture in Courses. Most students said their program systematically covered the topic of culture by discussing it within each of their courses, to some degree. Some discussed the surface-level nature of the coverage of culture, while others said it was sometimes meaningfully integrated in courses, but often not. It was found to be more beneficial when integrated throughout the course, rather than only discussed during one course

lecture. Interestingly, some students noted the same wording was used in each class syllabus, as related to how culture would be covered within the course. Nora explained:

> I don't know if it's mandated by CPA or if my program just decided, but each course in its syllabus said it would address it. So, I think each instructor did in some way, but it was definitely way more meaningfully integrated in some courses than others. I think depending maybe on the professor and their connection to it and their passion for it, or the ones who just had it in the syllabus... it seems a little bit like it was decided that every class should touch on it. I'd say it was sprinkled but very lightly through every class, and then some kind of dove into it more than others.

Students also expressed what they noticed at a higher level within their program. For example, students noted their program's value statement as outlining the importance of cultural competence. Others shared what they noticed from their program in general, which was an effort to explicitly address cultural diversity.

Culturally Focused Course or Lecture. Specific courses or course topics students found particularly impactful in preparing them for culturally competent assessment included introductory courses on psychoeducational assessment, specific lectures about culture and culturally sensitive practices in assessments, and specific courses on culture and diversity. Most of the students who did take a course on culture and diversity found it to be beneficial. However, Heather described the mandatory course on diversity as feeling like "the checkbox that I need to be culturally competent."

Impactful Lecture Topics. Students touched upon the impactful topics covered in lectures, which contributed to their understanding of culturally competent assessment. One area of beneficial learning was related to the negative aspects of assessments, such as biases,

misrepresentations, ways it can be harmful, as well as the negative history of assessment. As Nora explained, "in our first year, we learned about the history of IQ testing and the eugenics movement and some of that nuance layers of that, which was also, I think, an important layer." Similarly, Shauna explained how knowledge of some of the adverse aspects of assessment can influence how one decides to carry out an assessment:

> …we read a lot and we have a lot of lectures that are just understanding what standardized testing is and the biases that are inherent in standardized testing. So, the populations that have been traditionally, I guess, misrepresented by standardized testing, the ways that it's harmful, and using that information to help us decide which types of tests we're deciding to use, the way that we use them, the types of adaptations that we're making.

Additional beneficial discussions and topics learned included those related to representation and evidence-based practice. For example, making informed decisions, rather than taking results at face value, particularly when conducting an assessment on populations the measures were not normed with. In addition, Heather described her willingness to learn from clients as being reinforced through graduate school, rather than only viewing herself as the "expert." However, she also explained this as a lens through which she was brought up and gives more credit to "the way [she] was raised and [her] upbringing than anything."

Students described learning methods of finding information relevant to an assessment, such as questions to ask the clients, questions to ask oneself, questions to ensure are answered, and where to go to find any relevant information. For example, Jake described learning particularly noteworthy questions to ask and research as necessary, such as: "What is the referral

question? What do we really want to know here? What tests would be most suitable? Are there any alterations to standardization that I'd have to make or consider to accommodate?"

Students credit discussing general topics related to culture as being influential to their learning. For example, Anna referenced learning about culture and development: "we were always encouraged to… consider how culture, social factors impact development and impact certain things like that." Students also conveyed their experience of increased self-awareness from the topics learned and discussions. For example, Savana shared:

> We are trained to have this perspective to look at things as a third person - if you can step outside of your own culture to look at how other people may perceive it to your best ability, because we may not know everything about that culture.

Personal Learning. Most students referenced their own efforts put toward personal learning and training as impacting their knowledge of culturally competent assessment practices. Many students personally sought training experiences either outside of school, or through optional or elective courses, sometimes through another department. These students recognized they were lacking knowledge based on what was provided by their program and put forth the effort to gain additional training experiences. Similarly, students sought relevant practical work experiences to supplement their learning, others became involved in committees that contribute to social justice within their school and program, and some engaged in additional reading and research in this area. Jake credited his ability to engage in personal reflection of his own competence in culturally diverse assessment as his program's greatest contribution. Heather attributed her personal upbringing as having the greatest impact:

> I was raised by good people… I am part of a religion that was almost decimated in a genocide… I was raised with this underlying tone of: see what happens when people

don't care and people don't respect and people don't listen… Always raised us to be

compassionate and respectful and treat everybody equally.

Finally, Tammy reflected on the impact of the current socio-political climate on her increased

understanding and knowledge:

The Black Lives Movement becoming or being so upfront and encouraging people to

learn about the impact of Eurocentrism or our North American viewpoint… [on] Black

people… In the last year, there was so many trainings that were available to learn about

how to do culturally competent assessment… I don't try to blame the programs, but I just

feel like it was not something that we were very [focused] on - we had all these other

things to focus on that that was not… at the top of our head. Now it's like "Okay, it's a

must."

What Programs Have Done Particularly Well

Students described what their programs have done particularly well to prepare them for

culturally competent assessments. Students shared numerous aspects of their training they found

to expand their knowledge in this area. A summary of each theme and subtheme related to this

section is summarized in Table 15.

Table 15

Themes and Subthemes of What Programs Have Done Particularly Well

Themes	Subthemes
Specific Lessons and Skills	- Theoretical knowledge of assessment - Ethical decision making - Benefits of assessment - Limitations of assessment - Matching measure with client - Reflecting on impact of culture in assessment - Standardization - Operating as a practitioner

	▪ Lifelong learning
Integration of Culture	▪ Culture discussed in various courses
	▪ Separate class on multiculturalism
Practical Experiences	▪ Practical experiences
	▪ Practicum placements
Faculty Focus on Culture and Diversity	▪ Core faculty focus on culture
	▪ Culture is present and explicit focus in program
	▪ Faculty set example for working with culturally diverse communities
	▪ Program focused on gaining diversity in faculty and students
Inclusion of Students to Improve Training	▪ Including students in effort to improve training
	▪ Including students in program discussions
Supervision	▪ Strong supervision
	▪ Experts in issues related to culture

Specific Lessons and Skills. One of the emerging themes was related to the specific lessons and skills students learned through their program in terms of assessment and practicing as a psychologist. Students described theoretical learning regarding assessments, including how to make ethical decisions. They also discussed learning the benefits and limitations of assessment, such as the potential for bias and issues arising while working with those outside of the norm-referenced group. Jake expressed the importance of thorough knowledge and understanding of assessment, as it allows for adjustments to be made to accommodate those who may not fit the norm. Jake explained how it…:

> …prepared me the best [to understand] the theory of intelligence assessment, and of doing academic assessments, and understanding what we're looking for, and what is intelligence, and then from there I can kind of bend the rules if I have to make things more appropriate for the client and helping the interpretation.

Similarly, having discussions on how to appropriately match the measure with the client was highlighted, as well as the importance of reflecting on the impact of culture within an

assessment. Others expressed benefitting from an awareness of the importance of upholding standardization, as well as the skills related to conducting standardized assessments.

Students also appreciated learning how to operate as a practitioner, which included learning about the importance of listening to clients, not imposing research on others, critical thinking, and thinking through the decision-making process. Finally, students valued professors instilling the importance of lifelong learning.

Integration of Culture. Students noted the tendency for culture to be brought up and discussed in many courses throughout their degree as positive. According to some, when culture was discussed, it was not done so enough, was not explicit, or was only lightly integrated. For example, Anna shared: "I think that in most of the courses, it's at least brought up and talked about and we're asked to reflect on the impact of culture or how might culture impact certain things and development and things like that." Others expressed the benefit of having a separate class with a focus on multiculturalism.

Practical Experiences. Students credited their programs for their learning through practical experiences, which were largely through practicum placements and training clinics. Eliza explained:

> This is one of those areas where I've learned a lot by doing, and I think by having a training clinic embedded in our program that has different fee structures and different options for different families, I think just gives us a lot of experience and exposure to working with culturally diverse clients.

These experiences allowed students to practice assessing with both the norm-referenced group, as well as clinically and culturally diverse clients.

Faculty Focus on Culture and Diversity. Students appreciated when their faculty was focused on issues related to culture and diversity, and when culture felt like a present and explicit focus within their program. Students cited benefitting from being taught by faculty who are setting an example for how to work within culturally diverse communities. In addition, numerous students highlighted the importance and benefit of having faculty who are pushing to hire Indigenous and culturally diverse faculty members, as well as accepting more culturally diverse students into the program. Heather explained:

> I don't think our faculty are, in themselves, as diverse, so there's a push… for an Indigenous faculty member. And the search kept failing because the criteria was from a very Western lens. And so [professor] worked so diligently to change those requirements… We have two promising candidates to have an Indigenous faculty member in our program… But the strength of our program is that we are really trying... But I do want to see more diversity represented in the faculty and in our grad students.

Inclusion of Students to Improve Training. Students appreciate being included in their program's efforts to improve their own training. Programs include students by allowing them to be involved in program discussions and by seeking them out to provide feedback. Shauna described the benefits of her program's attempts to involve students in their efforts to improve training:

> In more recent years, there's been more of an effort to really reflect on ways that we can improve our training… we have meetings at the end of each school year within each cohort with our director of clinical training asking us for feedback on the courses, asking if... we feel that there's gaps within our training. So, there's lots of opportunities for us to… become part of the decision-making process and make improvements to the program

in a way that it will serve our training needs better and also the populations that we will eventually be working with… the program is very receptive to feedback as to how it can improve and how it can help us feel more competent and confident in our training.

Supervision. Finally, student expressed receiving strong supervision, which provided access to learning from, practicing with, and debriefing with an expert in issues related to culture. Eliza described:

I've also found that supervision around that kind of issue has been really good for the most part, which I think is also just really helpful to have an open space and supervision that allows you the space to talk about these issues and also the expertise, and the knowledge, and an openness to talk about these issues as well.

What Programs Could do Better

Students described what their programs could do better to prepare them as psychologists conducting culturally competent assessments. Students shared numerous aspects of their training they found to be lacking, as well as suggestions for improvements. A summary of each theme and subtheme related to this section is summarized in Table 16.

Table 16

Themes and Subthemes of What Programs Could do Better

Themes	Subthemes
Teaching Specific Topics Related to Culture and Assessment	▪ Culture and assessment ▪ Cultural safety ▪ Indigenous cultures ▪ Cultural competency ▪ Incorporate culture throughout more courses ▪ Consistency in teaching ▪ Mandate culturally diverse assessment ▪ Cultural competency as journey ▪ Impact of culture on diagnosis and recommendations

	▪ Cultural literacy in assessment ▪ Additional assessment measures ▪ Suggestions for additional discussion topics ▪ Culturally diverse case studies
Practical and Concrete Learning	▪ Theoretical to practical learning ▪ Templates of assessment reports ▪ Programs connect with community organizations ▪ Make school clinic more accessible ▪ Additional assessment experience with culturally diverse clients
Inviting Experts to Speak	▪ Guest lectures ▪ Culturally diverse speakers ▪ Discuss culture, experiences, language, resources ▪ Experts in cultural competency ▪ Experts teaching courses
Begin Relevant Teachings Earlier in Program	▪ Begin relevant teachings at master's level ▪ Applied training earlier in program
Diversity Within Program	▪ Increased diversity in faculty ▪ Increased diversity in student body

Teaching Specific Topics Related to Culture and Assessment. The most frequently noted suggestion for what programs could to better to prepare students to conduct culturally competent assessments was related to teaching more about culture and assessment through their courses. Students suggested numerous options for course topics they would have benefited from, such as one about culture and assessment; cultural safety; Indigenous cultures and working with these populations; and cultural competency, prior to being placed in an assessment practicum. Additionally, students suggested incorporating the topic of culture throughout more of their courses. Some students also communicated receiving inconsistent and incorrect information about culture and assessments.

Students suggested culturally diverse assessment be mandated within training programs to ensure each student gain supervised experience assessing an individual from another culture. For example, Nora articulated:

> It'd be interesting if it was a requirement… to kind of try to ensure that everybody got exposed to different cultures at some point in their cases. Because we do some cases through our private clinic, so you kind of get to pick who gets what.

Students expressed wishing they had learned about cultural competency as a journey, how culture may impact diagnoses and assessment recommendations, additional cultural literacy topics related to assessment procedures, and the various assessment measures that can be used for culturally competent assessments. Regarding additional discussion topics, students expressed wishing there had been discussion about personal cultural identity, the potential for assessment invalidity, possible outcomes and research findings related to the use of different assessment measures with various cultures. Finally, students conveyed believing they would have benefited from being presented culturally diverse case studies to practice formulation and diagnosis with.

Practical and Concrete Learning. Students suggested programs consider shifting learning and conversations from purely theoretical to practical, and to include explicit instruction and concrete examples about how to ask difficult or uncomfortable questions. Eliza suggested:

> I think… moving from theoretical to practical - and I realize… we can't make it a step-by-step guide, it's not that simple… But even just having conversations that move a little bit more towards the practical. Because I feel like… we're at the point, maybe more broadly in psychology but certainly in our program, where these are things we need to consider. And it's like, yes, but how, right? And what do we actually, practically do about some of these issues? And some of it's explained or talked about and a lot of it isn't. So, I

feel like that's an area that would be helpful to have more explicit instruction or training

around.

In addition, students suggested they be provided with templates of culturally sensitive

assessment reports, so they have an example to refer to. Jess suggested programs provide

"templates about how to approach these kinds of assessments, how to write them up [because]

that's something that is not actually something you can easily find." Suggestions were also made

for programs to connect with community organizations, and to make the school clinic more

accessible to culturally diverse communities. In that way, students would gain additional

assessment experience with culturally diverse clients, during their training.

  Inviting Experts to Speak. Inviting culturally diverse speakers to lectures to discuss

culture, their own experience, language, and resources available for their cultural group was

suggested. Savana recommended to, "perhaps invite speakers from the culture that the city is

representative of to talk to us more about like their language, and their experiences in the city,

and the amount of resources that they get..." In addition, it was suggested programs invite more

guest lecturers who are culturally diverse, and/or experts in cultural competency. Finally,

students recommended programs have experts in cultural competency teach a course on the

topic.

  Begin Relevant Teachings Earlier in Program. An overarching theme related to

improving training was to begin relevant teachings and trainings earlier in the program, at the

masters-level. Jess shared her plan to speak with her program supervisor regarding the

importance of "thinking about how we're preparing our masters-level psychologists right from

the get-go." In addition, students suggested applied training begin earlier in the program.

Diversity Within Program. Finally, students want to see increased diversity within their faculty, as well as within the student body. Heather expressed the importance of diversifying her program's faculty, and explained one way to increase diversity within the student body would be to change admission requirements:

> Get the faculty members. We need to recognize that in order for us to learn best, we need to actually include these individuals in our world… I think the efforts in getting that representation into the faculty will be helpful. I think they need to rethink admissions requirements if they really expect to diversify their student body.

Additional Training Required

Students were asked to share what additional training, if any, they felt necessary to improve their level of competence in this area. Each subtheme related to this section is summarized in Table 17.

Table 17

Subthemes of Additional Training Required

Theme	Subthemes
Additional Training Required	▪ Lifelong learning ▪ Learn about various cultures in Canada ▪ Language in assessment ▪ Practical experiences, using cultural lens

Students cited the need for additional general training, which would include learning and gaining an understanding of the various cultures within Canada. In addition, students are interested in lifelong learning, as well as training to address language in assessment. For example, students mentioned the desire for exposure to assessment in different languages.

Students would like further practical experience, with some citing a particular need to work with Indigenous communities, and those with a history of intergenerational trauma. Tammy shared:

> I would definitely need to learn more about how to work with Indigenous communities… I also want to learn more about intergenerational trauma and how do you work with individuals who've had a history of trauma and abuse and neglect, and taking that from a more cultural lens and not from a Eurocentric lens.

The most frequently mentioned training students wanted is related to conducting assessments through a cultural lens, and being trained in methods of adapting assessments to suit someone from another culture. Students also wanted more practical training pertaining to the steps to take in cross cultural assessment. Anna explained: "whether it's a course or a specific training opportunity… what are the specific steps that I should be taking before, during, and in an assessment… Then, of course, getting that experience as well in working with those people."

CHAPTER 5: DISCUSSION

The purpose of this research was to increase our understanding of professional child psychology graduate students' training experiences in Canada, as they pertain to culturally competent assessment practices; as well as if and how these graduate students believe their training has prepared them to conduct adequate culturally competent assessments. Understanding if, and how, psychologists-in-training are prepared to conduct culturally competent assessments may influence future training, which in turn may ensure the performance of culturally diverse individuals is not impacted by assessment procedures. Culture is recognized as a necessary consideration for psychologists to attend to when conducting assessments, which professional ethical guidelines make clear as well. What was not yet clear from the existing research was if clinical psychology training programs in Canada reflect this shift in awareness to specifically train students to be culturally competent in their assessment practice, particularly from the perspective of those students being trained. Measuring cultural competency is based on self-report from the perspective of the practitioner (Larson & Bradshaw, 2017), which this study was based on as well.

This dissertation contributes information about how students are trained and prepared for culturally competent assessment, by giving a voice to the students being trained. To my knowledge, this was the first qualitative case study investigating professional child psychology graduate students' experience being trained in culturally competent assessment practices in Canada. The sample included students from four out of the seven CPA accredited School and/or Clinical Psychology graduate PhD programs in Canada.

The information gathered from this dissertation can be used to adapt graduate programs and make necessary adjustments to training. Program personnel who are not regularly checking

in with their students and making efforts to improve training would have limited information to draw upon regarding whether their students are benefiting from their training, and if they feel prepared as a result.

Students' Reported Training Experiences and Preparation

Students' Knowledge of Culture and Culturally Competent Assessment

Students described culture as identifying, related to shared beliefs and experiences, informing interactions, and having implicit features. These descriptions accurately reflect existing definitions of culture (e.g., Ardila, 2005, 2007; Burke, 2009; Kirmayer, 2012; Modood, 2007; Mushquash & Bova, 2007; Sattler et al., 2014; Spencer-Oatey, 2012; Whaley and Davis, 2007). While no individual student identified every aspect defining culture, they each identified at least two relevant aspects.

When asked to describe what it means to be culturally competent in their assessment practice, students described the need to (a) consider the impact of culture on assessment; (b) be open and willing to learn and understand; (c) be aware, knowledgeable, and experienced; (d) center the client and their culture; and (e) possess certain personal factors. Although there is not one agreed upon definition of cultural competency in the field of psychology, these descriptions touch upon the aspects noted by other researchers (e.g., Benuto et al., 2018; Bhui et al., 2007; Larson & Bradshaw, 2017; Sue et al., 2009). Cultural competency is a complicated construct, and about more than simply knowing about major cultural groups. It requires a more sophisticated level of knowledge, as there are many cultures and sub-cultures.

Without prompting, most students shared their thoughts and concerns regarding the concept of cultural competence, at some point during their interviews. Students described feeling uncertain and hesitant about using the term, others wanted to reconceptualize the term, and some

expressed interest in how their programs will progress in this area. Students generally assumed cultural competence means one is required to know everything about another culture, and one should not claim cultural competence because it suggests an endpoint. Students shared a desire to "rethink" the term itself and shift from the idea of competence, to being open to interacting with those who differ from yourself. One student suggested renaming cultural competence to "cultural humility." These suggestions are in line with how researchers are beginning to reconceptualize cultural competence; for example, Sue and colleagues (2022) refer to cultural competence as cultural responsiveness. In addition, students suggested understanding it as a spectrum or growth learning mindset, rather than an endpoint. However, researchers indicate competency-based learning does require lifelong learning, and does not have an endpoint (Poth et al., 2020), suggesting students may not have a strong understanding of what cultural competence and competency-based learning are. This is expected, however, as none of the students who participated in this research reported being trained under a competency-based learning design.

Students demonstrated a knowledge of potential sources of bias or error within the standardized assessment process. The *Standards* (AERA, APA, & NASP, 2014) present bias as being a systematic error in a score, which over- or underestimates the value of what it was designed to measure. Students highlighted factors related to (a) the examiner, (b) cultural bias, (c) norming data, (d) the assessment process, (e) reliance on English, and (f) assuming validity. Their responses revealed a particular focus and consideration of how assessments may impact culturally diverse clients. As explained by Reynolds et al. (2021):

> Much the impetus for the current debate about bias in psychological testing is based on well-documented, consistent, and substantive differences between IQ scores of Whites, Hispanics, and Blacks in the U.S.A. Various explanations are offered for these

differences including the idea that IQ tests are inherently biased against Blacks,

Hispanics, and possibly other ethnics groups, or what is commonly known as the Cultural

Test Bias Hypothesis (p. 573).

The overall source of bias or error identified by students were generally related to cultural bias,

whether it be due to how the examiner behaves with the client, the fact that data has not been

normed with representative cultural groups, clients' comfort with the process of assessment, or

the requirement to rely on English.

Students considered if they could imagine circumstances under which they would be

unable to complete an assessment due to significant cultural differences between themselves and

a client. Most students expressed a belief in culture impacting assessment completion, citing

impactful cultural influences, possibility of doing harm, personal safety concerns, or allowing the

client to make the decision. Those who expressed not believing culture would impact their ability

to complete an assessment referenced their ability to consult, adapt the assessment, and

consideration of what might impact the ease of assessment. Peer consultation and supervision is

known to be a source of support for psychologists as they navigate challenges and uncertainties

in their work with clients (Miu et al., 2022).

Experience Conducting Culturally Competent Assessment

Prior to conducting an assessment with a culturally diverse client, students expressed

their likelihood to take additional time with the client and family, increase their understanding of

the client's culture, and consider the impact of culture. During an assessment with a culturally

diverse client, students expressed taking additional time and care, considering culture and

making adjustments, working with others, considering their interpretation and formulation,

considering how they share information, and some maintaining standardization.

Based on other researchers' findings, suggestions for best practices in culturally competent assessment procedures include (a) building rapport (Ardila, 2005, 2007; Sattler et al., 2014; Wechsler, 2014), (b) researching their client's cultures (Nabors et al., 2000), and (c) gathering information about each client's culture from the client themselves (Assouad, 2014; Dudley et al., 2019). Based on previously conducted research, we know cultures are typically mixed, hybrid, and in a constant state of flux, changing in response to the ongoing process of knowledge transmission both within and between ethnocultural communities (Burke, 2009; Modood, 2007). Therefore, the influence of an individual's culture should not be assumed without clarification from the individual themself, and consideration of their life history and current context. Students identified many of their own practices for culturally competent assessment as aligning with these areas. Fifty percent of students described spending additional time building rapport with their culturally diverse clients, 50% stated they would research their clients' culture, and 80% specified the importance of gathering information about the client's culture directly from the client and their family.

When making inferences based on an assessment, students described their likelihood to consider culture, which ranged from significant consideration to no consideration. Students who described a likelihood to consider it stated they would consider the impact of culture in their report write-up, on communication, behaviours, and performance, when selecting assessment measures, and when addressing validity. Students described how assessments with culturally diverse clients differ from assessments with Canadian clients who descended from European ancestors. They expressed they would put forth additional effort, time, and care; consider trauma more; adjust their approach; include caveats and context in their reports; and handle unexpected or difficult aspects; while some would make no changes.

Students' explanations for how assessments differ depending on the cultural background of the client largely reflected what researchers and professional associations have suggested for best practice; other than those students who conveyed making no changes to their methods of assessing. Researchers who advocate for cultural competency are aware of the importance of considering the complex mechanisms related to culture and explain it is not adequate to simply export the same method from one cultural group to another (Benuto et al., 2018; Hall, 2001). Related to this, CPA's (2018) response to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada's report stated psychologists cannot claim "this is the best we have" (p.18), but instead have an ethical responsibility to make appropriate changes. One student referenced this response in her explanation of why she adjusts her approach and measures used.

Graduate Training in Culturally Competent Assessment

When students were explicitly asked if they were sufficiently prepared and trained to assess culturally diverse clients, 50% of students initially responded with an emphatic "no", while the other 50% described feeling somewhat or moderately prepared. In terms of students' comfort level to independently conduct culturally competent assessment, their responses varied from uncertainty, to lacking or moderate comfort, to being very comfortable. Students made suggestions for ways to increase their level of comfort, such as research, consultation, support, and practical experience. Students shared which aspects of their training contributed to their culturally competent assessment knowledge and abilities, including practical and clinical experience, learning from others, systematic discussions of culture, courses or lectures focused on culture, impactful lecture topics, and personal learning.

What students found their programs did, which was particularly beneficial to prepare them, included teaching specific lessons and skills, integrating culture throughout different

courses, providing practical experiences, teaching by faculty who were focused on culture, and including students in attempts to improve training and supervision. These findings support what has been described by other researchers. Based on student reporting in previous studies, numerous researchers have found learning through supervision discussions and direct feedback as having the greatest impact on students' perceived cultural competence (e.g., Arredondo & Arciniega, 2001; Benuto et al., 2019; Dana et al, 2002; Lee & Khawaja, 2020; Stites & Warholic, 2014).

What students believed programs could do better to prepare them included (a) learning about specific topics related to culture and assessment, (b) more practical and concrete learning, (c) learning from experts, (d) starting relevant teachings earlier in the program, and (e) increasing diversity within the program. Finally, students described the additional training they need, which included lifelong learning, learning about various cultures, addressing language in assessment, and additional practical experiences.

Previously, researchers identified the requirement faced by students to meet cultural competence expectations through their practical placements, which was determined solely by their practicum supervisor. In addition, students would either complete a traditional lecture-style course about culture, or the topic of culture was touched upon superficially within other lecture-style courses (Arredondo & Arciniega, 2001; Stites & Warholic, 2014). Practicum placements are the only chance students have to demonstrate their competence working with culturally diverse clients; however, working with culturally diverse clients is not guaranteed and many students do not get this experience. This is likely a contributing factor for why most students expressed the need for more practical experience to increase their feeling of competence assessing culturally diverse clients.

Students suggested programs start relevant teachings earlier in the program. Related to that suggestion, Dana and colleagues (2002) suggested methods for programs to improve teaching multicultural assessment, such as exposing them to cultural issues in earlier courses, and to various qualitative clinical frameworks for examining cultural identity. Dana and colleagues (2002) recommend Euro-American students gain perspective on strengths and limitations of standard tests from personal assessment experience, which the students in this study also identified as being beneficial to their training.

Some researchers have suggested psychologists use non-verbal measures while assessing culturally diverse individuals. However, it is more influential to be aware and reflect upon their own values and biases to ensure their interactions are not impacted (Sue et al., 1996), as unconscious attitudes result in subtle behaviours and microaggressions (West & Schoenthaler, 2017). Students in the present study were interested in learning more about the measures available for use with culturally diverse clients, such as non-verbal measures, but they did not have access to them in their training. One student discussed learning about and reflecting on her own culture; however, none of the students talked about being encouraged to reflect on their own values, biases, or stereotypes in their programs.

Cultural Competency

Cultural Awareness and Beliefs

As per the formative work of Sue and colleagues (1996; 2022), cultural awareness and beliefs relate to one's sensitivity to their own values and biases, how those influence their perceptions of the client, the client's presenting concerns, and the therapeutic relationship. Whether an examiner is using a verbal or non-verbal measure of intelligence, it is necessary for examiners to reflect on and be aware of their own values and biases, as well as any stereotypes

they may hold. Interestingly, only two students, Nora and Savana, said their programs encouraged students to reflect on their own culture. Nora found this to be a beneficial aspect of her training but further discussed the need for students to be encouraged to think about their own cultural identity, what it means to them, their privilege and bias, and what they bring to an assessment earlier in the program. Savana also described this as a positive aspect of her training in preparing her for culturally competent assessment, stating they were trained to consider how others may perceive their own culture. This is particularly noteworthy because according to CPA (2023), students in accredited programs are expected to be trained by their programs to recognize their biases and develop necessary strategies to overcome them. Each participant in this study came from a CPA accredited program, so it is surprising only two students acknowledged being trained in this area. When discussing what cultural competence means to them, Nora and Shauna, shared the following aspects: acknowledging (a) one's own cultural identity, biases, preconceptions; (b) who you are; (c) what you do not know; and (d) how your culture impacts how you interact and interpret information. All students would benefit from learning about this component of cultural competency in their training, particularly because it is an expected aspect of training by the CPA.

Cultural Knowledge

Cultural knowledge is related to one's knowledge of the client's culture, worldview, and expectations for the therapeutic relationship, and a general awareness of different worldviews (Council of National Psychological Associations for the Advancement of Ethnic Minority Interests, 2016; Sue et al., 1996; Sue et al., 2022). Eighty percent of students reported speaking directly with the client and their family to learn more about what culture they identify with, and to gain general information about their culture and experiences. This reflects the cultural

knowledge aspect of cultural competency, as described by Sue and colleagues (2022). Conducting their own research about different cultures is also related to this construct, which 50% of students reported doing to learn more about their clients' culture.

Regarding having a general awareness of different worldviews, students reported learning information about different cultures through either a specific course on culture, or from professors discussing culture in relation to other lecture topics. However, students described the course-based learning to be surface-level and lacking in depth. In addition, 40% of students shared seeking out additional training opportunities or doing their own personal learning and research about different cultures and topics related to culture, particularly due to the current social climate and feeling they had not learned enough from their required courses.

As with cultural awareness and beliefs, cultural knowledge is an expected component of training that students within a CPA accredited program will receive (CPA, 2023). Students within these programs would benefit from a greater understanding of the importance of learning about a client's culture directly from the client and their family, and the importance of conducting their own research into the culture of their clients. In addition, they would benefit from more concrete, deep learning through courses and lecture topics.

Culturally Responsive or Multicultural Skills

Being culturally responsive or demonstrating multicultural skills is related to one's ability to apply numerous helping skills with clients, individualizing these skills to suit each client, and acting in a culturally sensitive manner (Sayegh et al., 2023; Sue et al., 2022). Most students described making changes to their assessment process when working with a culturally diverse client. Some examples shared were: (a) ensuring the client understands the question and process; (b) working harder to ensure rapport is established; (c) selecting measures based on the child,

perhaps with fewer linguistic demands; and (d) making accommodations that may break standardization. Only two students, Shauna and Savana, stated they maintain standardization when assessing culturally diverse clients and therefore do not individualize testing to suit each client.

This was another area students described as lacking from their course-based learning. Students suggested programs focus on teaching more concrete skills regarding how to conduct culturally competent assessments. This may include examples and discussions around how to be culturally responsive and demonstrate multicultural skills. This is also in line with how the CPA (2023) suggests programs train their students to use appropriate evidence-based and culturally sensitive practices with their culturally diverse clients.

Implications

Considering and understanding the student experience provides insight into the learning outcomes of a program. This information allows us to determine if the program design is meeting intended goals and outcomes, from the perspective of the learner, rather than from the perspective of those who design the programs or the CPA.

Based on the findings of this study, programs might consider the benefits of a competency-based training program. Many researchers suggest training should not stop once students earn their degree, which is the basis of competency-based learning. Based on their research findings, Benuto and colleagues (2018) suggest post-doctoral training and professional development is a necessary way to acquire knowledge in cultural competence, because it is an ongoing and dynamic process, not a static dichotomy. This could be achieved through competency-based training. The positive effects of a competency-based approach to teaching and learning have been well established in numerous disciplines (Poth et al., 2020). In competency-

based education, students must demonstrate the required level of competency through their knowledge and skills before advancing to the next competency. Supporters of competency-based training commit to lifelong learning, as they realize striving for competence in a particular field requires one to continue to acquire knowledge and information throughout their professional career (Rubin et al., 2007). A competency-based approach to learning would be an appropriate option for programs to consider, to ensure students are gaining the necessary skills to become competent clinicians, working with diverse clients.

Students can also use this information to pinpoint what they may be lacking from their training and gain any extra experience they feel is necessary. For example, students could seek relevant courses on culture or culture in assessment, or practical assessment experiences with culturally diverse clients, under the supervision of a psychologist who is experienced in this area.

Limitations

This study has several limitations, the first of which is the attrition rate between the interview to the member checking follow-up. Of the ten students who participated in this study, five responded to my follow up email, wherein I asked them to review the initial interview summarizations for accuracy and provide feedback. It is possible that the other five students were either too busy due to being in their residency placement or writing their own dissertation, or they had already graduated. The rate of attrition is unfortunate given the substantial benefits of member checking in a qualitative study. However, I heard back from half of the participants and each of them reported their summary was accurate and representative of what they were trying to communicate, and none of them asked for changes to be made.

Another limitation is all the data was collected, analyzed, and interpreted by one researcher. Because I am the tool with which I conducted my research and analyzed my data, my

perceptions, assumptions, and biases may have influenced each aspect of the study. I attempted to evade this limitation and acknowledged my biases throughout the research by keeping an audit trail and study diary, and by seeking external checks of my data and interpretations by a peer reviewer; however, the influence may remain.

A final limitation is the method of data collection; all data was collected through self-report during the interviews. The information shared was based on what they could recall in the moment and may not be a completely accurate reflection of their training or level of competence, but what they can remember and report. However, most instruments measuring practitioner cultural competency are based on self-report (Larson & Bradshaw, 2017). Therefore, what they remembered as influential and contributing to their own competency is what I intended to gather.

Future Directions

The field of psychology would benefit from the creation of competencies required for culturally competent assessment practice. Understanding if one is competent would be made more possible with the creation of a list of necessary competencies. The positive impacts of a competency-based approach to learning and developing relevant competence has been established in numerous disciplines (Poth et al., 2020), but they have not yet been created for culturally competent assessment practice, and as a result, they have not been assessed for use in this field.

The current study was beneficial to learn about the general experience for students in various CPA accredited professional child psychology graduate programs in Canada. In the future, researchers may consider evaluating the programs of each CPA accredited professional child psychology graduate program, regarding how they train students in culturally competent

assessment. This will provide specific information about how each program trains their students, what they are doing well, and what could be improved.

Self-Reflection

Self-reflection is a practice in honesty and authenticity with one's self, research, and audience (Tracy, 2010). In this section, I will outline my strengths, shortcomings, and influences. The COVID-19 pandemic impacted my original dissertation plan and I had to pivot to a study that was feasible, given the limitations and restrictions put in place in Canada. During the development of the present study, and during data collection, I was preparing to begin my child psychology residency year. In addition, the social, political climate of racial inequality was particularly heightened and impactful.

I had to acknowledge my own experiences and biases throughout the entire process of this dissertation, from planning the study, to analysis, to write up. Because I am in the same position as the individuals I interviewed in this study, I have my own opinions and experiences regarding each of the questions asked of participants. My own position influenced my idea to conduct this study, as I personally felt my training and preparation in culturally competent assessment was lacking, and I was interested to see how other students have been trained and prepared. My position also had some influence on my interviews, but because I was writing a diary and keeping an audit trail, in which I documented my biases, opinions, and thoughts prior to and after conducting each interview, I was aware of them and tried not to let them influence my interviews. I noticed I would sometimes identify with what a student was saying, and caught myself agreeing with them or following up with additional questions, coming from a place of interest and curiosity, rather than from a place of contributing to my research questions and study purpose. However, because of my shared experience with the students, I also found many of my

follow up questions did contribute to my research questions and study purpose. In addition, because each of my participants were informed of my status as the preliminary researcher and a PhD student in a similar position as them, I believe their comfort level and ability to honestly share information about their experiences and opinions with me was heightened.

While transcribing the interviews and during the preliminary analysis of the data, I was working as a child psychology resident, and was providing assessments and therapeutic care for children, youth, and their families. Because I was aware of my biases, I made a conscious effort to interpret and analyze the data as an impartial researcher, by keeping my own opinions and experiences out of my analysis. In addition, I discussed my biases and opinions with my peer reviewer to help ensure I was interpreting the data accurately, based on what the students expressed, rather than based on my assumptions.

Concluding Thoughts

The information gathered in this dissertation sheds light on what students appreciate from their training, what is lacking, and what they would like more training in. Whether or not students believe they were adequately trained to conduct culturally competent assessments, each student shared positive aspects regarding how their training has prepared them. In addition, training related to the main components of cultural competence outlined by Sue and colleagues (1996) have been experienced in some way by many of the students. However, all students had suggestions for what their programs could do to improve their training. This information can be used by relevant graduate programs to adjust and adapt their training methods, to better ensure their students are being adequately trained. In so doing, the assessment procedures used by practicing psychologists may be improved, which would lead to positive outcomes for culturally diverse clients.

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Appendix A: Recruitment Poster

Appendix B: Email to Directors of Training Template

Dear [name of Director of Training],

My name is Alexandra Aquilina and I am doing my PhD in School and Clinical Child Psychology at the University of Alberta. I am currently recruiting participants for my dissertation. I am contacting you to see if you would be willing and able to distribute the following information about my study to the PhD students in your [program name] program.

For my dissertation, I am conducting one-on-one virtual interviews with <u>PhD students who are currently enrolled in a CPA accredited school and/or clinical child psychology graduate program in Canada</u>. I'm hoping to gain an understanding of whether psychologists-in-training in Canada feel that their training has prepared them to conduct culturally competent assessments, according to professional ethical guidelines.

Participation in my study requires participants to complete a short, 5-minute survey through Google Forms (**https://forms.gle/QoxbppDbtPcKQrfSA**). Their responses on the survey will help me determine if they meet inclusion criteria. If they do, I will contact them and set up a one-on-one virtual interview, which will take approximately one hour. All interviewees will receive $20 compensation.

Please let me know if you have any questions and if this is possible.

Thank you very much, I look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,

Alexandra Aquilina, M.Ed.

School & Clinical Child Psychology Ph.D. Student

Department of Educational Psychology

University of Alberta

Pronouns: She/her

Ethics ID number: Pro00106259

Appendix C: Online Eligibility Questionnaire

Exploring the Adequacy of Training in Producing Psychologists who are Culturally Competent in Cross-Cultural Assessment

Email *

INFORMATION LETTER & CONSENT FORM

Study Title:

Exploring the Adequacy of Training in Producing Psychologists who are Culturally Competent in Cross-Cultural Assessment

Principal Investigators:

Alexandra Aquilina (student principal investigator): aquilina@ualberta.ca

Dr. Damien Cormier (Faculty Supervisor): dcormier@ualberta.ca

Background: This is a graduate student research study. Standardized assessments are important and relied on for academic and behavioural decision making. Also, culture is widely recognized as being an important consideration when conducting assessments. The extent to which graduate programs train psychologists to conduct cross-cultural assessments is not well understood.

Purpose: The purpose of this research is to understand whether psychologists-in-training who are attending graduate school in Canada feel that their training has prepared them to conduct cross-cultural assessments appropriately, and according to the professional ethical guidelines.

Study Procedures: Please complete a 10 minute questionnaire about your demographics and graduate training.

Based on your answers to the questionnaire, you may have the opportunity to participate in the interview portion of this study.

Possible Benefits: It is possible that participants will gain no benefits from being in this study. However, being in this study might help to improve graduate training, particularly in terms of cultural competence in assessment.

Possible Risks: There are no possible physical risks from participating in this study. All information will be kept confidential and all identifying information will be removed.

Voluntary Participation: You do not have to take part in this research. You are allowed to stop at any time. You can stop the survey by exiting it, and your answers will not be saved.

Confidentiality: All participant information will be held in confidence. Questionnaire data is being collected using Google Forms, which protects the confidentiality of users. All lists that have names and contact information will be deleted at the end of data collection and analysis. The data will be analyzed for use in presentations, research articles, and teaching. The study investigators may use this data in future research. If so, the investigators will apply for approval from the Research Ethics Board.

Study Results: This data will be used for a dissertation project, presentations, and research articles. The study investigators might use this data in future research. If so, the investigators will apply for approval from the Research Ethics Board.

Contact Name and Telephone Number:

If you have any more questions about this study, please contact:

Alexandra Aquilina   (416) 727-2770   aquilina@ualberta.ca

The plan for this study has been reviewed by a Research Ethics Board at the University of Alberta. If you have any questions, you can call (780) 492-2615. This office is independent of the researchers.

Consent Statement

Taking part in this study is completely up to you. You are allowed to not participate in this study. If you decide to participate, you can stop at any time. You do not need to give a reason to stop and there will be no negative impact. By completing and submitting the survey, you are only consenting to participate in the survey component of the study, **not** the interview and document review.

BY CLICKING "continue to the next section", I AM AGREEING TO PARTICIPATE IN THIS STUDY

Check all that apply.

☐

Demographic Questionnaire

Name *

_____

Preferred email address (will be used to schedule the virtual interview if you meet criteria) *

_____

Are you currently enrolled full-time in a child psychology (clinical and/or school) graduate program? *

Mark only one oval.

◯

◯

Have you completed all of the required coursework for your PhD degree? *

Mark only one oval.

◯

◯

Is your graduate program CPA accredited? *

Mark only one oval.

◯

◯

Which university do you attend? *

_____

What is the name of your graduate program (e.g. School and Clinical Child Psychology)? *

_____

Thank you very much for completing this survey! You will be contacted about an interview by email if you meet criteria.

Google Forms

Appendix D: Information Letter & Consent Form

INFORMATION LETTER & CONSENT FORM

Study Title:
Exploring the Adequacy of Training in Producing Psychologists who are
Culturally Competent in Cross-Cultural Assessment

*Principal Investigators***:**
Alexandra Aquilina (student principal investigator): aquilina@ualberta.ca
Dr. Damien Cormier (Faculty Supervisor): dcormier@ualberta.ca

Background: This is a graduate student research study. Standardized assessments are important and relied on for academic and behavioural decision making. Also, culture is widely recognized as being an important consideration when conducting assessments. The extent to which graduate programs train psychologists to conduct cross-cultural assessments is not well understood.

*Purpose***:** The purpose of this research is to understand whether psychologists-in-training who are attending graduate school in Canada feel that their training has prepared them to conduct cross-cultural assessments appropriately, and according to the professional ethical guidelines.

Study Procedures: Two one-on-one virtual interviews will be scheduled. The first will take 1-1.5 hours. This interview will help us understand how your training has prepared you to be a culturally competent clinician. The interviews will be conducted over Zoom, and will be recorded so that they can be transcribed. The second interview will be approximately 30 minutes to an hour long and will be used to check that my understanding of your responses to the interview questions is correct.

Will I be Paid to Participate in this Study?: To thank you for your time and help, you will receive a $20 gift card to a store of your choice.

*Possible Benefits***:** It is possible that participants will get no benefits from being in this study. Being in this study might help to improve assessment procedures, and make them fairer.

*Possible Risks***:** There are no possible physical risks from participating in this study. All information will be kept confidential and all identifying information will be removed.

*Voluntary Participation***:** You do not have to take part in this research. You can tell the researcher if you want to stop during the interview and the recording will be deleted. You are allowed to remove yourself from the research study until the end of the second interview. If you remove yourself before

then, all of your information and data will be deleted. After the second interview is complete and transcribed, the researchers will not be able to connect you to your responses.

Confidentiality: All participant information will be held in confidence. All identifying information will be removed from the interview transcripts. Recordings will be deleted within one week of transcription. Interview recordings are being collected and transcribed using Zoom. Zoom is a safe and secure platform. Once the interviews are transcribed, the interview and transcription will be stored on the student investigator's secure computer. They will be deleted from the Zoom platform. All lists that have names and contact information will be deleted at the end of data collection and analysis. De-identified data will be kept indefinitely and will be stored on a password protected, secure computer. This data will be analyzed for use in presentations, research articles, and teaching. The study investigators may use this data in future research. If so, the investigators will apply for approval from the Research Ethics Board.

Study Results: This data will be used for a dissertation project, presentations, and research articles. The study investigators might use this data in future research. If so, the investigators will apply for approval from the Research Ethics Board.

Contact Name and Telephone Number:
If you have any more questions about this study, please contact:
Alexandra Aquilina   (416) 727-2770   aquilina@ualberta.ca

The plan for this study has been reviewed by a Research Ethics Board at the University of Alberta. If you have any questions, you can call (780) 492-2615. This office is independent of the researchers.

Consent Statement
Taking part in this study is completely up to you. You are allowed to not participate in this study. If you decide to participate, you can stop at any time (before the end of the second interview). You do not need to give a reason to stop and there will be no negative impact.

I have read this form and the research study has been explained to me. I was allowed to ask questions and my questions have been answered. If I have additional questions, I have been told whom to contact. I agree to participate in the research study described above. I will receive a copy of this consent form after I sign it.

_____   _____

Participant's Name (printed) and Signature   Date

_____   _____

Name (printed) and Signature of Person Obtaining Consent   Date

Appendix E: Semi-Structured Interview Template

Introduction: Thank you very much for taking the time to be part of this interview today. My research would not be possible without you, and I am very grateful that you have volunteered to be part of this study.

I am interested in learning about your experiences as a graduate student from a CPA accredited child psychology program in Canada. I am particularly interested in gaining an understanding of if and how your training has prepared you to conduct assessments in a culturally competent manner.

I just want to define a few terms before we get started --

When I talk about someone being **culturally diverse**, I mean someone who was born and raised within a culture other than North American or European culture. If you consider yourself culturally diverse, then you can consider anyone who also meets the criteria of being culturally diverse but was not raised in the same culture that you identify as your heritage culture.

When I talk about **cultural competence**, I mean the ability to understand, appreciate, and interact with people from cultures that differ from your own (APA definition)

When I talk about **culturally competent assessment**, I mean the ability to conduct and interpret an assessment in a way that demonstrates an understanding, appreciation, and ability to interact appropriately with people from cultures that differ from your own

Questions:

1. Can you start by telling me what culture is and how you would define it?

2. What does it mean to you to be culturally competent in your assessment practice?

3. How has your graduate training/coursework prepared you to be competent in assessing culturally diverse individuals?
   - Prompt: To what extent did your program **comprehensively** (i.e. detailed; what they would teach) or **systematically** (i.e. according to a fixed plan; like where/how they would teach) provide didactic and practical experiences related to culture?

4. Do you believe that you have been sufficiently prepared and trained to assess individuals from various cultural backgrounds? Why or why not? (prompt: can speak about practicum, internship, and/or coursework)
   - How prepared do you feel to independently conduct culturally competent assessments? (explain response)
   - How comfortable do you feel explaining the assessment process and results/recommendations to children and families from diverse cultural backgrounds? (explain response) Ask only if there's extra time

5. Explain some of the considerations and steps you would take prior to conducting a cross-cultural assessment.
   - Prompt: what about during a cross-cultural assessment (e.g. administration, obtaining consent/assent from children and families)?

6. Have you conducted any assessments with individuals from diverse cultural backgrounds?
   - If so, how did it go (was there anything noteworthy about that assessment)? Did you do anything differently compared to when you have assessed a child from a Euro-Canadian cultural background?
     - Anything different in the assessment practice, way you prepared for the assessment, etc.?

7. To what extent do you consider (/give weight to) the impact of culture when drawing inferences from and interpreting assessment data?
   - Does your consideration of culture depend on the component of the assessment under deliberation? (e.g., interviewing, background information, testing, observations, etc.)

8. Is there a circumstance under which the cultural differences would be so significant that you could not complete an assessment? What would that look like?
   - (note: ensure they do not introduce language differences into their answer and stay focused on culture)

9. What do you think is the greatest potential source of bias (or error) within an assessment process, when assessing individuals from diverse cultural backgrounds?
   - [*bias* refers to systematic error in the estimation of a value. A biased test is one that systematically overestimates or underestimates the value of the variable it is intended to assess]

10. What do you think your program has done particularly well to prepare you for culturally competent assessment?
    - Prompt: Can you please provide some examples? (e.g. were there opportunities to consult with faculty members who had experience in this area? Workshops or class presentations?)

11. What could your program do better to prepare you as a future psychologist to conduct culturally competent assessments?
    - Prompt: What additional training do you think you need?

Appendix F: Member Checking Email Template

Hi [participant's name],

I have finished transcribing and summarizing the interview you did with me on [date] for my dissertation. I wanted to give you the opportunity to check my summarization of your responses before I continue with my interpretation.

I have attached a document with the interview questions and a summary of your responses. Please take a look and let me know by **[date, two weeks from today]** if there is anything that I misinterpreted, anything you would like me to change, or if it sounds accurate to what you were trying to communicate. If I don't hear from you by [date], I will assume that my summary is fine.

Thank you so much!

Alexandra