

Author Name: Jocyline Graham, M.A., CCC-SLP

Title: Disrupt the Default: A new lens on providing best practice in the assessment and intervention of bilingual and multilingual learners.

Date: October 12, 2026

Location: OSSPEAC Conference, 2026 - Quest Conference Center, Westerville, Ohio

PDH Hours: 2.0

Learner Outcomes:

Learner Outcome 1: Reflect on personal and professional unconscious biases that may impact service delivery.

Learner Outcome 2: List at least three dynamic assessment tools that can be used with little resources or time.

Learner Outcome 3: Apply dynamic assessment to distinguish language disorder from difference.

Learner Outcome 4: Modify existing intervention plans to align with cultural-linguistic expectations.

Overview:

Despite best intentions, unconscious bias continues to shape the ways clinicians assess and provide therapy to culturally and linguistically diverse children. This session highlights how understanding and disrupting unconscious bias can lead to more accurate assessments and tailored interventions for bilingual/multilingual learners. Blending research with practical tools and case studies, attendees will learn how to integrate their new found knowledge into their practice to support better health and educational outcomes.

Definitions:

1. Cultural Responsiveness - **showing an appreciation and respect** for the knowledge, attitudes, and behaviors of culturally and linguistically diverse groups **by understanding their perspectives**. (Nyantakyi & Oetting, 2023)

-Cultural responsiveness is NOT about being an expert in every culture. It's an approach that prioritizes healthy curiosity, humility, adaptability and continuous self-reflection.

2. Unconscious (implicit) Bias - **An aspect of being human** defined as - **unconscious, automatic assumptions** we make about people, places, things, ideas and ourselves. (Banaji, 2025).

-It's the automatic thoughts we think and automatic actions we take - that may counter or be in conflict with what we say or believe. It's unconscious or implicit because these thoughts and actions are done without realizing it.

KEY Take-Aways:

1. Bias is normal - unchecked bias is harmful.

2. Doing the work of providing culturally responsive care requires the clinician to self-reflect and get comfortable with discomfort - as this topic can bring with it a variety of emotions.

3. This work is on-going and not something you learn in a moment in time.

References Cited:

- 1. Blanchard, S., & Muller, C. (2015). Gatekeepers of the American dream: How teachers' perceptions shape the academic outcomes of immigrant and language-minority students. *Social Science Research*, 51, 262–275.
- 2. Charlesworth, T. E. S., & Banaji, M. R. (2022). Patterns of Implicit and Explicit Attitudes: IV. Change and Stability From 2007 to 2020. *Psychological Science*, 33(9), 095679762210842. <https://doi.org/10.1177/09567976221084257>

- 3. Morehouse, K. N., & Banaji, M. R. (2024). The Science of Implicit Race Bias: Evidence from the Implicit Association Test. *Daedalus*, 153(1), 21–50. https://doi.org/10.1162/daed_a_02047
- 4. Nelson, M., & Wilson, L. (2021). Implicit Bias and Multilingual Assessment in School-Based Speech-Language Pathologists. *Perspectives of the ASHA Special Interest Groups*, 6(6), 1–15.
https://doi.org/10.1044/2021_persp-21-00113
- 5. Payne, K. (2024). *Good Reasonable People*. Penguin.
- 6. Peña, E. D., Bedore, L. M., Lugo-Neris, M. J., & Albudoor, N. (2020). Identifying Developmental Language Disorder in School Age Bilinguals: Semantics, Grammar, and Narratives. *Language Assessment Quarterly*, 17(5), 541–558. <https://doi.org/10.1080/15434303.2020.1827258>
- 7. Peña, E. D., Gillam, R. B., & Bedore, L. M. (2014). Dynamic Assessment of Narrative Ability in English Accurately Identifies Language Impairment in English Language Learners. *Journal of Speech, Language, and Hearing Research*, 57(6), 2208–2220. https://doi.org/10.1044/2014_jslhr-l-13-0151
- 8. Pratt, A. S., Peña, E. D., & Bedore, L. M. (2020). Sentence repetition with bilinguals with and without DLD: Differential effects of memory, vocabulary, and exposure. *Bilingualism: Language and Cognition*, 1–14.
<https://doi.org/10.1017/s1366728920000498>

Selected Additional References/Resources:

- ASHA Cultural Competency Checklist:
https://www.asha.org/siteassets/uploadedfiles/multicultural/culturally-responsive-practice-checklist.pdf?srsId=AfmBQooe9fPGF9xa83umV-CSV3trNd30xa8BgUf00rMOlpX_Ga5HMoFS
- ASHA Cultural Responsiveness Video Series:
https://www.asha.org/practice/multicultural/cultural-responsiveness-series/?srsId=AfmBQooqIKSyTfOvyXbXIDf3qZ_LErwxwftfNKMCO0IBpV958nR9tfeB0
- Azelo - Documentation and Client Engagement Software for Healthcare Providers - azeloapp.com
- Harvard Implicit Association Test (IAT) - <https://implicit.harvard.edu/implicit/takeatest.html>

Strategies for clinicians as they do the work of providing culturally responsive care (Bradshaw, 2012):

1. When you notice yourself making an automatic assumption, ask yourself: **“What else can be true?”**
2. **Be open** and willing to explore the strengths, needs, and desires of the families you serve
3. **Learn and affirm** the family’s culture and what they value
4. **Acknowledge** your own cultural beliefs and values as a provider, while you seek to understand that of the family - and respect the difference. This can help
 - a. decrease miscommunication
 - b. encourage both the family and provider to be more open and make space to discuss new ideas/strategies that work best
5. **Ask** for feedback from families and colleagues after interactions to evaluate the effectiveness of the interactions/practices.
6. Continuous **self-reflection**

Strategies to disrupt Bias:

1. **Build awareness.** We have cultural and linguistic blindspots/biases not because we are bad people, but because we ARE PEOPLE. And just like when driving, we MUST be aware of blind spots in order to keep ourselves and others around us safe, we MUST be aware of cultural/linguistic blind spots in our lives in order to build an inclusive society for all.
 2. **Remember to C.U.S.S.**
 - Check your blindspots
 - Get to know yourself and learn about biases that you have
 - Ask yourself when you recognize a bias “what else could be true?”
 - Use the “power of the pause”
 - Take a second to slow down and think before you act. Taking time to slow down can give you time to ponder the potential influence of your bias.
 - Search multiple sources to guide decision making
 - Step out of your bubble
 - Be exposed to different ideas, identities, and people groups
-

Stay in Touch on Instagram!

@jwgraham_speech

@azeloapp