

Bringing Cultural Humility to Academic Advising

Blane Harding

Director of Diversity Engagement (Retired)

NACADA Consultant

blaneharding22@gmail.com

Overview

In 2007, Leigh Cunningham, NACADA's new Webinar Producer and then recent author of the NACADA Clearinghouse anchor article on [Multicultural Awareness Issues for Academic Advisors](#), discovered that she and Blane Harding, then Director of Advising for Colorado State University's College of Liberal Arts, were "kindred spirits" in their thinking regarding the topic of cultural awareness. It was a delight for them to work together in May of that year to close the association's first Webinar season with Blane's presentation of [Expanding Your Comfort Zone: Strategies for Developing Cultural Competence in Academic Advising](#). That presentation received rave reviews from the live audience, and the recording was offered in the NACADA store for five years before being posted on the association's YouTube channel, where it has garnered over 2,600 views.

Blane and Leigh have had opportunities to connect over the years and have enjoyed seeing how their perspectives have evolved through experiential learning with new situations and world events. Blane has recently retired from his position as Director of Diversity Engagement for the Virginia Tech Office of Inclusion and Diversity, and Leigh is looking forward to retirement soon as well. Thus, it was Leigh's great pleasure to have the chance to invite Blane to return to NACADA's webinar venue to share his *Cultural Humility* presentation, which she had heard him give during the 2021 NACADA Summer Institute, with the wider virtual audience.

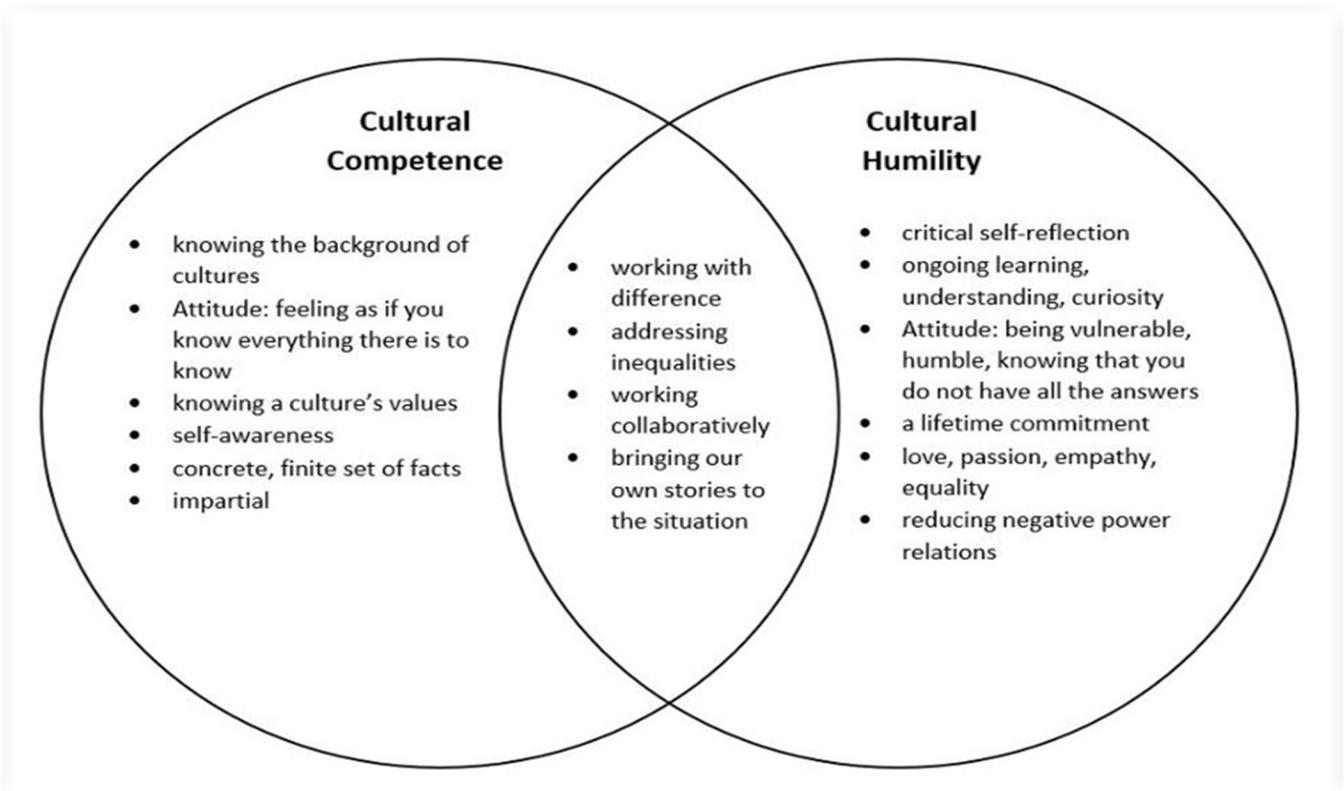
Join us to hear Blane discuss what he has learned over the years about the difference between *cultural competence* and *cultural humility*. The construct of *cultural competence* assumes that one can learn or know enough, that cultures are monolithic, and that one can reach a full understanding of a culture to which they do not belong. In contrast, *cultural humility* encourages ongoing personal reflection and growth around culture in order to increase awareness and introspection. Cultural humility encourages lifelong learning with no end goal but rather an appreciation of the journey of growth and understanding. You will learn from Blane how practicing cultural humility allows individuals to appreciate the journey of growth and provides avenues to disrupt inequitable systems in higher education.

Pre/Post-Webinar Activity Suggestions

View Blane Harding's 2007 presentation, *Expanding Your Comfort Zone: Strategies for Developing Cultural Competence in Academic Advising* (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Kt3LaHXmkvs>)

Discuss how Blane's approach to this topic has shifted in the years between these presentations. How does this shift fit (or not) with your experience?

	Cultural Competence	Cultural Humility
Goals	To build an understanding of minority cultures to better and more appropriately provide services	To encourage personal reflection and growth around culture in order to increase awareness of service providers
Values	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Knowledge • Training 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introspection • Co-learning
Shortcomings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enforces the idea that there can be 'competence' in a culture other than one's own. • Supports the myth that cultures are monolithic. • Based upon academic knowledge rather than lived experience. • Believes professionals can be "certified" in culture. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Challenging for professionals to grasp the idea of learning with and from clients. • No end result, which those in academia and medical fields can struggle with.
Strengths	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Allows for people to strive to obtain a goal. • Promotes skill building. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Encourages lifelong learning with no end goal but rather an appreciation of the journey of growth and understanding. • Puts professionals and clients in a mutually beneficial relationship and attempts to diminish damaging power dynamics.



Cultural Humility and Cultural Effectiveness Self-Survey

A number of skills contribute to the development of cultural effectiveness and cultural humility. These include the ability to:

- 1) articulate one's perspective respectfully and clearly
- 2) question one's own perspective
- 3) demonstrate awareness of one's own biases
- 4) manage personal biases and stereotypes
- 5) personalize observations and rephrase using "I" statements

Consider the fourteen personal competencies identified by Hogan (2007). *Rate yourself on a scale of 1 (low) to 5 (high) in each of these areas.* Add up the points and use the scoring below.

Scoring:

High 61-70

Moderate 51-60

Needs More Practice 0-50

SKILL	SCORE
1. Be nonjudgmental (we have a common tendency to judge those we perceive as different)	
2. Be flexible (adjust and readjust)	
3. Be resourceful (be prepared, look for alternatives)	
4. Personalize observations (recognize that one's personal perceptions, attitudes, and beliefs may not be shared)	
5. Pay attention to thoughts and feelings	
6. Listen carefully	
7. Observe attentively	
8. Assume complexity	
9. Tolerate the stress of uncertainty	
10. Have patience	
11. Manage personal biases and stereotypes	
12. Keep a sense of humor	
13. Show respect	
14. Show empathy	
	Total

Reconceptualize Mentoring

Think of five mentors that have influenced you personal and professionally. Use the chart below to note perceived social/personal identity characteristics of these mentors that you are comfortable sharing/knowing

Mentor	1	2	3	4	5
Ability Status					
Age					
Education					
Ethnicity and/or Nationality					
Family/Work life					
Gender					
Geographic Location					
Marital Status					
Race					
Religion/Spirituality					
SES/Class					
Sexual Orientation					
World View					
Other					
Other					

Resources

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Cultural humility is the result of organizational change that eliminates systemic and institutional barriers preventing full participation and success for historically minoritized students and employees. It requires providing the access, opportunity, and support needed for the advancement of all people. Its goal is equitable power, opportunities, and outcomes for all.

2

Develop values and other personal qualities that will produce a new generation of citizens who are **committed to creating a more just and equitable society** and fully understand that character development and equity are not separate issues.



3

Effective leaders can fully extend their cultural, political, social, educational, and economically installed **power, privilege, and influence** with those they lead in ways that do not disadvantage anyone.

4

Cultural Competency and Cultural Humility

Both concepts grew out of increasing recognition of the need for public health and social work to **reflect on and address our own biases** and actively seek to understand and address the cultural or social realities of the diverse individuals, groups, and communities with whom we interact.

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Why talk about bias?

Bias is central to multicultural counseling awareness, knowledge, and skill. Competent (*Humble*) counselors must know how bias affects individuals of various backgrounds and cultures, **be aware of their own bias**, and be skilled at controlling bias (Sue & Sue, 2003).

6

“The key isn’t to feel guilty about our [implicit] biases—guilt tends toward inaction. It’s to become consciously aware of them, minimize them to the greatest extent possible, and constantly check in with ourselves to ensure we are acting based on a rational assessment of the situation rather than on stereotypes and prejudice.”

Neill Franklin, in The New York Times Room for Debate series, 2014

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“It is probably not possible for us to get rid of all our biases, nor is it desirable. Our brain’s way of sorting through lots of stimuli quickly is what allows us to move through the world and survive. What we need to learn is how to slow down the biases that betray our values long enough for us to act in a way that is more aligned with what we believe.”

Vernā Myers, 2012

8

Implicit bias ≠ deliberate hiding of prejudices.



More than 85 percent of all Americans consider themselves to be unprejudiced.

Yet researchers have concluded that the majority of people in the United States hold some degree of implicit racial bias.

Consciously rejects stereotypes and supports anti-discrimination efforts but also holds negative associations in his/her mind unconsciously.

9

Cultural Competence refers to the knowledge, skills and awareness of cultural differences and similarities within, among and between groups. It is important to translate this ‘competence’ into professional practice, so that all social groups are treated with respect and in recognition of their diversity.

10

The word **competence** has been described as problematic by some individuals and communities for whom it implies a top-down approach, with one entity (often including some highly educated and privileged members of a given racial or other group) deciding what content should be included and which benchmarks or criteria should be used to assess competence for their group(s).

11

Non-awareness of difference refers to individuals that have no or limited experience with diversity. It is not that they do not recognize difference, but they place no value on difference and approach each person as an individual regardless of race, ethnicity, religion, class, sexual orientation, and so forth.

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Awareness of difference indicates that you not only recognize difference but realize that it actually holds some value to the individual and your relationship with them. However, you may lack the training, expertise, and ability to apply the knowledge you have.

13

Acceptance/acknowledgement of difference indicates that during this stage you have accepted that different does not mean deviant and you have a responsibility to become more culturally competent.

14

Understanding cultural difference indicates you have taken the necessary steps to increase your cultural knowledge through diversity training, workshops, discussions with others, and self education to better understand and relate to a wide range of diverse individuals.

15

Cultural adaptation indicates you now have the ability to apply what you have learned and adapt your approach to the needs and communication styles of those around you.

16

Intercultural skillfulness indicates you have expanded your comfort zone and have become a culturally competent. You now have the tools, knowledge, and skills to relate to a wide range of individuals and feel comfortable in doing so. These skills have been gained but keep in mind that they need to be maintained and this is an ongoing process in which we continue to learn and expand our knowledge.

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A few words
about cultural
humility

Cultural humility – Term coined by Melanie Tervalon and Jann Murray-Garcia in 1998.

- Introduced as an alternative to **cultural competence**, which has many negative connotations.
 - **Competence** assumes that one can learn or know enough, that cultures are monolithic, and that one can actually reach a full understanding of a culture to which they do not belong.
- Based on the idea of focusing on self-reflection and lifelong learning.

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Cultural humility can also be associated with cultural sensitivity, which encourages individuals to be thoughtful when considering culture.

However, sensitivity does not touch on the necessity of learning, reflection, or growth.

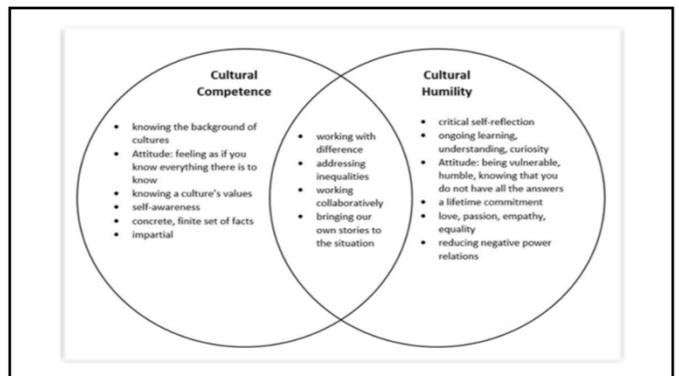
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Tervalon and Murray-Garcia defined **cultural humility** as “a lifelong commitment to self-evaluation and critique, to redressing power imbalances . . . and to developing mutually beneficial and non-paternalistic partnerships with communities on behalf of individuals and defined populations.”

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3 Things to Know: Cultural Humility

1. We move between several different cultures – often without even thinking about it.
2. Cultural humility is distinct from cultural competency and reflexivity.
3. Cultural humility requires historical awareness.

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We move between several different cultures – often without even thinking about it.

Because the overall purpose of practicing cultural humility is to be aware of one's own values and beliefs, it is important to understand that those notions come from the combination of cultures that people experience in their everyday lives. A person cannot begin to understand the makeup and context of another person's life without being aware and reflective of their own background and situation first.

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Cultural humility is distinct from cultural competency and reflexivity.

The goal of cultural competency is to learn about the other person's culture rather than reflect on one's own background. Reflexivity, calls on researchers to explore their own personal beliefs in order to be more aware of potential judgements that can occur. It is the practice of placing oneself within the experience of the participant and then **examining the participant relationship**. But even reflexivity falls short of the lifelong process of self-reflection that is synonymous with cultural humility.

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Cultural humility requires historical awareness.

It is not enough to think about one's own values, beliefs, and social position within the context of the present moment. In order to practice true cultural humility, a person must also be aware of and sensitive to historic realities and the lived experiences of others.

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