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Multicultural/Multilingual Issues in CSD Research Methods Coursework: A Neglected Topic?

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Abstract

Insufficient research training may contribute to the current shortage of researchers in the field of speech-language pathology and contribute to the dearth of multicultural and multilingual (MCML) research. There is limited information regarding how MCML issues are addressed specifically in Research Methods courses in CSD. The aim of the study was to explore the practices of instructors of CSD research courses regarding the integration of MCML issues.

Keywords: multicultural, multilingual, CSD research methods courses.

Introduction

Multicultural/multilingual (MCML) issues are crucial to SLPs which necessitates appropriate training in MCML. The importance of MCML issues are widely acknowledged, and the need for education has been identified over the years (Qualls, 2011; Hyter & Salas-Provance, 2019). Graduate SLP and AuD programs are required to meet accreditation standards which include cultural competence. It has been suggested that the paucity in MCML research in the field can be attributed to insufficient research training of SLPs (Qualls, 2011; Hyter & Salas-Provance, 2019). One of the ways in which this problem can be addressed is to integrate MCML issues into CSD research methods courses.

Currently, there is limited information available on the inclusion of MCML issues in research methods coursework in SLP training programs in the US. The purpose of this study was to identify if instructors are integrating/infusing MCML issues in CSD research methods courses, and if so, to determine what instructional strategies are being used.

Methods

Research Design: A quantitative descriptive research design was used to determine the extent and manner in which multicultural and multilingual issues are included in CSD research methods coursework. **Survey and Materials:** A survey was developed based on an in-depth review of the current literature regarding multicultural and multilingual issues within the CSD classroom. The survey was divided into three sections: program demographics, course content regarding MCML, and instructor demographics and consisted of fifteen questions and varied response types. The survey was piloted to determine the appropriateness of the questions in regard to the aim of the study, the difficulty level of the questions, the time it took to complete the survey, and improvements to be made.

Respondents: A total of 56 instructors responded to the survey. They represented all the regions of the United States. It should be noted that not all respondents answered each question within the survey, leading to differing number of responses per survey question.

Data Analysis: An item-by-item analysis was conducted and descriptive statistics were used to describe the data obtained. A thematic analysis was performed on the responses to open ended questions to explore commonalities across CSD programs all over the country.

Demographics

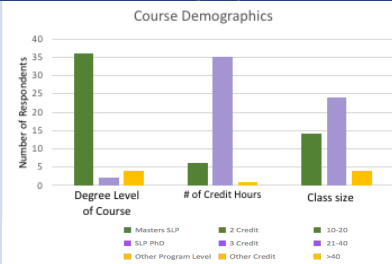


Figure 1: CSD Research Methods course demographics (n42)

Results

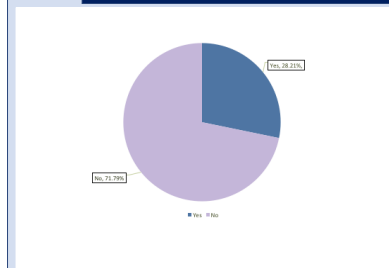


Figure 2: Inclusion of MCML in learning outcomes (n39)

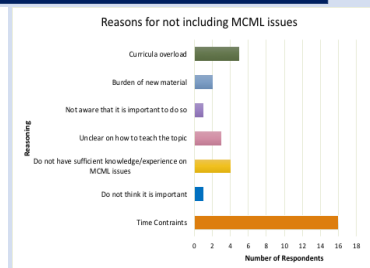


Figure 3: Reasons reported by respondents (n20)

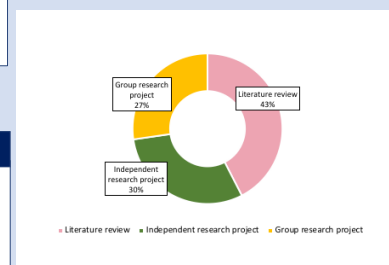


Figure 4: Inclusion of MCML in coursework (n19)

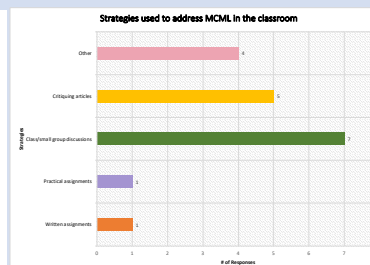


Figure 5: Strategies used to address MCML issues (n18)

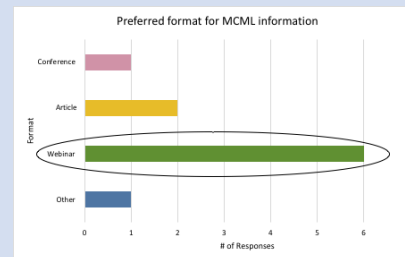


Figure 6: Preferred format for information on inclusion of MCML (n10)

Table 1: Themes identified: Inclusion of MCML in CSD Research Methods course (n22)

Number	Theme	Number of comments (44)
1	Course objectives	12
2	Incorporated in other courses	5
3	Discussed in class content	14
4	Important in all courses	4
5	Not important as separate topic	4
6	Survey construction	5

Discussion

Summary: 41.03% respondents indicated that it was very important to include MCML issues but only 28.21% included this topic in their course objectives. Time constraints, curricula overload, and specific courses on MCML were most cited as reasons for not including MCML. 44.44% used Research Ethics and 27.78% used EBP as strategies to infuse MCML into courses. 61.11% had further interest in the topic.

Limitations: The small N(56) limits the generalization of the results, but could also point to the lack of recognition of addressing MCML issues in Research Methods courses.

Future Directions: In contrast to the findings, current literature (e.g. Hyter & Salas, 2019) indicates that more is to be done to improve research training of SLPs, specifically regarding MCML populations. This challenge can be addressed in graduate courses and through CE.

Selected References

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Qualls, C.D. (2011). Multicultural and international research on communication disorders: Past, present, and future. In D. Battle (Eds.), *Communication disorders in multicultural and international populations* (296-298). Buffalo, New York: Mosby.

Disclosure Statement

Emmy Davis, B.S., Alexis Gonzalez, B.S., Kyle Wolske, B.A., and Brenda Louw, D.Phil., have no relevant financial or nonfinancial conflicts of interest to report for this study.

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