SPAU 328

Principles of Evaluation, Diagnosis, and Report Writing in ComD

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Multicultural Considerations

Chapter 2

Preparatory Considerations

- Culturally and linguistically diverse (CLD) clients present unique challenges to clinicians assessing communicative skills.

- These clients come from a wide range of socioeconomic circumstances, educational and cultural linguistic backgrounds, and personal experiences.

PREASSESSMENT KNOWLEDGE

- Know the Culture of the Client

- Know the History of the Client

- Know the Normal Communicative Patterns of the Client's Dominant Language
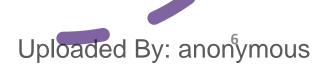
Know the Culture of the Client

Every culture has a set of pragmatic social rules that guide communicative behaviors.

Knowledge of these rules enables clinicians to exchange information with clients and their caregivers in a culturally sensitive manner.

A disregard for these rules may be offensive, could result in misunderstandings, and could lead to an inaccurate diagnosis.

Know the Culture of the Client

- Cultural groups have differing views of disability and intervention.

- Cultural groups hold diverse views of a woman's role in society.

- Cultural groups hold different views of familial authority.

- Names and titles you will use during communicative exchanges may vary among different cultures.

- Certain cultural groups may be uncomfortable with many of the case history and interview questions that are often asked in some settings.

- Certain cultural groups may be uncomfortable with some of the testing practices we traditionally use.

- Cultural groups hold differing views about a child's behavior in the company of adults.

- Cultural groups maintain different views about the use of eye contact in communication.

- Different cultural groups express disapproval in varying ways.

- Perceptions of personal space vary across cultures.

- Certain cultural groups expect varying amounts of small talk before engaging in the business at hand.

- Some cultural groups harbor generalized mistrust of other cultural groups.

Know the History of the Client

In addition to the questions asked as part of a traditional case history, there are questions particularly relevant to the assessment of CLD clients.

Answers to certain questions offer insight into a client's current and past cultural linguistic environments

Know the Normal Communicative Patterns of the Client's Dominant Language

It is important to be familiar with normal communication patterns associated with a cultural group; otherwise it will be difficult to determine whether a client is demonstrating a communicative disorder or a communicative difference.

Within any language, there may be many dialects. Dialect is not a disorder; therefore, it is important to know the characteristics of a client's dialect.

Know the Normal Communicative Patterns of the Client's Dominant Language

- Unfortunately, for many languages there are no published data that help identify what is normal versus what is delayed or disordered.

- In these situations, clinicians must do some investigating.

- This is usually accomplished by interviewing others who are very familiar with the cognitive and linguistic developmental patterns of the language.

- Sources of this information may include:
  - Other professionals, especially speech-language pathologists
  - Interpreters
  - Teachers who have taught children who are of the same cultural background and age
  - The client's family members
  - Community members from the same culture

Normal Patterns of Second-Language Acquisition

There are normal processes that occur during the acquisition of a second language. Roseberry-McKibbin (2008) identified the following six normal processes of second-language acquisition:

- Interference or transfer
- Fossilization
- Interlanguage
- Silent period
- Code-switching
- Language loss

Planning and Completion of Assessment

A good assessment incorporates all of the knowledge obtained thus far so that valid and reliable assessment data are obtained in a culturally sensitive manner. Take the following steps when planning and administering an evaluation:

1. Use culturally appropriate assessment materials.

2. Collect multiple speech-language samples. Collect samples from a variety of contexts, such as home, school, playground, neighborhood, and work.

3. Use narrative assessment. Evaluate the client's ability to construct and recall stories. Wordless storybooks may be particularly helpful.

4. Focus on the client's ability to learn rather than focusing on what the client already knows. This will help determine whether the client's current communicative patterns are due to limited experience with the language or due to an underlying language-learning disability.

5. Be prepared to modify your assessment approach as you learn more about the client's abilities. Allow the process to be dynamic and flexible.

6. Consult with other professionals, such as physicians and teachers. It is often helpful to review medical or academic records. Some teachers may have experience working with students of a similar age and background and can provide information about the client's behaviors in comparison to the client's peers.

7. Be sensitive when meeting with clients or caregivers in an interview situation. Make every effort to help them feel as comfortable as possible. Keep in mind that some clients or caregivers may not value the (re)habilitative process.

Making a Diagnosis

When evaluating the speech-language samples, the presence of these behaviors may be indicators of a disorder:

- Nonverbal aspects of language are inappropriate.

- The client does not adequately express basic needs.

- The client rarely initiates verbal interaction with peers.

- When peers initiate interactions, the client responds sporadically.

- The client replaces speech with gestures and communicates nonverbally when talking would be more appropriate.

- Peers indicate that they have difficulty understanding the client.

- The client often gives inappropriate responses.

- The client has difficulty conveying thoughts in an organized, sequential manner that is understandable to listeners.

- The client shows poor topic maintenance.

- The client has word-finding difficulties that are caused by factors other than the client's limited experience using the language.

- The client has difficulty taking turns appropriately during communicative interactions.

- The client fails to ask and answer questions appropriately.

- The client needs to have information repeated, even when that information is easy to comprehend and expressed clearly.