

2011

# Multicultural School Psychology: A Kaleidoscopic View

Melissa Laracuenta  
*Fordham University*

Maria Acevedo  
*Lenox Hill Hospital*

Follow this and additional works at: <https://fordham.bepress.com/jmer>

Part of the [Bilingual, Multilingual, and Multicultural Education Commons](#)

---

## Recommended Citation

Laracuenta, Melissa and Acevedo, Maria (2011) "Multicultural School Psychology: A Kaleidoscopic View," *Journal of Multilingual Education Research*: Vol. 2 , Article 8.  
Available at: <https://fordham.bepress.com/jmer/vol2/iss1/8>

This Book/Multimedia Review is brought to you for free and open access by DigitalResearch@Fordham. It has been accepted for inclusion in Journal of Multilingual Education Research by an authorized editor of DigitalResearch@Fordham. For more information, please contact [considine@fordham.edu](mailto:considine@fordham.edu).

Footer Logo

---

# Multicultural School Psychology: A Kaleidoscopic View

## **Cover Page Footnote**

Book Reviewed: Esquivel, G. B., López, E. C., & Nahari, S. (Eds.). (2007). Handbook of multicultural school psychology: An interdisciplinary perspective. Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.

# Multicultural School Psychology: A Kaleidoscopic View

---

**Melissa Laracuenta**

Fordham University

**Maria Acevedo**

Lenox Hill Hospital

**Book Reviewed:**

Esquivel, G. B., López, E. C., & Nahari, S. (Eds.). (2007). *Handbook of multicultural school psychology: An interdisciplinary perspective*. Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.

The *Handbook of Multicultural School Psychology: An Interdisciplinary Perspective* is the first resource of its kind to provide a comprehensive analysis of the development of multicultural school psychology, professional standards and ethics, models of training, and multicultural competencies in school psychology practice. Its unique interdisciplinary perspective makes this resource relevant to educators, school psychologists, counselors, and other professionals involved in the education of children and adolescents of diverse backgrounds.

The handbook is written in a scholarly manner. Each content area is developed on the basis of underlying theoretical concepts, critical reviews of research, and implications for evidence based practices. The contributors are educators, researchers, school psychologists, and other professionals with expertise in various interdisciplinary areas such as bilingual education, second language acquisition, bilingual assessment, cross-cultural consultation, and multicultural counseling. These authors are able to provide an integrated, dynamic, and systemic perspective on multicultural practices in a way that promotes collaboration among teachers, school psychologists, and counselors.

The content is organized into seven sections—each one addressing a very specific multicultural topic in school psychology. A scientist-practitioner approach is evident throughout the text. Each chapter is developed on the basis of theory, research, and specific implications for practice. The list of references is followed by an annotated bibliography and a list of resources, including organizations and websites, where the reader can refer for more information.

Section I presents a historical overview of the development of a multicultural perspective in school psychology (Chapter 1); ethical standards for multicultural practices (Chapter 2); and guidelines for preparing future school psychologists with multicultural competencies. This section provides a framework for understanding multiculturalism as a complex and multifaceted construct in relation to different aspects of development (e.g., cognitive, social, emotional) and relevant to specific competencies needed to provide educational services to children. Its discussion sets the stage for subsequent sections on specific areas of competence.

Section II addresses the process of multicultural consultation starting with a critical

discussion of the pertinent issues that arise when providing instructional interventions to English Language Learners (Chapter 4). It also provides guidelines and steps in the consultation process with multicultural parents (Chapter 6) and systemic consultation (Chapter 7). These chapters reflect an understanding of the importance of school-home-community collaborations from a multicultural/multilingual perspective.

Section III focuses on an interdisciplinary approach to instructional and classroom interventions. These chapters are written as collaborative endeavors between school psychologists and educators with expertise in special education, second language learning, and multicultural issues. The content includes multidimensional approaches for working with culturally and linguistically diverse students within the classroom (Chapter 8) and in the context of inclusion to general education programs (Chapter 11).

The first two sections provide an organized and comprehensive exposition. However, the content of the third section is relevant, yet incomplete. The lack of attention given to instructional strategies in academic areas such as reading, writing, and mathematics is a missed opportunity to extend and deepen the analysis of classroom-based practical implications of the interdisciplinary approach. Similarly, the absence of Response to Intervention procedures detracts from the contemporary significance of interventions discussed.

The emphasis on multicultural and bilingual assessment in Section IV is important to school psychology; there are not many texts that summarize how to conduct a comprehensive assessment of psychological and educational functioning while taking culture and language into consideration. Given the current narrow views on assessment and accountability models in education and the increasing demands to improve their use with linguistically and cultural diverse students (See Freeman Field, in this issue.), the authors are successful in delineating a sensible path towards assessment in multilingual educational environments. These chapters inform psychologists and teachers about the theoretical underpinnings of nonbiased assessment and assessment tools to be used with culturally diverse and bilingual students. Moreover, practical information is presented on how to conduct assessments in the areas of cognition (Chapter 13), personality and behaviors (Chapter 14), and neuropsychological processes (Chapter 15). Guidelines are presented for both psychologists and teachers on how to assess academic skills (Chapter 18) as well as both oral and written language (Chapter 12). Other less traditional areas, such as vocational assessment (Chapter 16) and assessment of acculturation levels (Chapter 17) are discussed as vital aspects of a comprehensive multicultural assessment process.

Section V presents a self-regulatory intervention model for teaching students skills for coping effectively with psychosocial stressors (Chapter 19). Another topic of importance addressed is vocational interventions with adolescents of low socioeconomic status living in urban areas (Chapter 20). This population is quite vulnerable to negative outcomes and often presents a challenge for school psychologists and educators. The authors also describe interventions that can be used as resources for working with these students. Despite discussing some important current counseling interventions, the authors do not present the breadth of

therapeutic interventions for this population. Providing direct counseling interventions is an important service, therefore, future editions of this volume should include a variety of both traditional and nontraditional interventions (e.g., culturally sensitive narrative therapy).

Section VI makes a valuable contribution specific to working with special populations. Topics range from how to identify (Chapter 21) and educate (Chapter 22) culturally and linguistically diverse gifted students to working with preschool students (Chapter 23) and providing services to migrant students (Chapter 25). Although there are other previous publications in these areas, these chapters are unique, because the authors synthesize the current literature regarding these populations, offering a unified analysis from which to design prospective implications for practice.

Finally, Part VII presents recommendations for future research and educational applications in multicultural school psychology. One highlight is the final chapter, where commentaries are presented from the perspective of experts from multiple disciplines, including special education, counseling psychology, clinical psychology, social psychology, and organizational psychology. This content is distinctive because it provides future directions in multicultural school psychology and exposes a final dimension on the interdisciplinary nature of this handbook.

This handbook is a wide-ranging resource for school psychologists, educators, and other professionals working with children and adolescents of diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds. The reader will benefit from its scholarly value and interdisciplinary thrust, which are major strengths that assist to augment and broaden the field of school psychology into a multicultural perspective. Future editions would be enhanced by addressing more contemporary practices in assessment, counseling, and instruction. It would also be essential to expand upon contributions from authors and extend current content focus on Latinos to include African American, Asian American, and Native American groups.

