



# ADDRESSING RACISM IN CSD EDUCATION

---

Cross-Cultural Peer Mentoring

Monica Bellon-Harn & Lekeitha R. Morris

Lamar University

August 3, 2020

Decreasing racial/ethnic disparity

Components of recruitment program  
and outcomes

Components of cross-cultural peer-  
mentor program and outcomes

Reflections and next steps

**ONE PIECE OF  
THE PUZZLE**

# MENTORS: MENTORING VERSUS CULTURAL PROCESSES

## Year 1

“the conversation [of privilege] was difficult to have but needed”

“I felt uncomfortable when talking about race.”

Role play, readings, and specific reflection prompts to increase open discussion regarding diversity were included in Year 2.

## Year 2

“We were able to open our mind to other opinions and even if we didn’t agree necessarily we accepted them and respected them.”

“The readings and discussions on our cultural awareness and responsiveness will really help me to reflect on my personal beliefs and will help me in my career field when working with others who come from a different background than me.”

# MENTEES: PROFESSIONAL BARRIERS

“To a certain extent, I think my ethnicity will be a barrier especially being new to the field. I do not see many black SLP’s. I only know one personally.”

“I did believe that race would play a lot into getting into my program in order to be in the career field. Honestly, at first I was intimidated by being one of the few African Americans in the classrooms but when I let that thought go and started to focus more on myself I learned that I am alike, if not smarter, than others in the class.”

# MENTEES: MENTORING FACILITATORS

“I also liked how she was very encouraging and reassuring; she kept reminding that I could do anything I set my mind to and if she could get through her undergrad so could I.”

“Race and ethnicities did not make a difference. They were as enthusiastic, as I was, about the field.”

“She helped me realize that this is what I truly wanted to do and I don’t want to change it.”

# GUIDING REFLECTIONS MOVING FORWARD

Cross-cultural peer-mentoring:

(1) can be a component for continual program improvement as it relates to addressing issues of recruitment and retention of a diverse student population and subsequent professional body.

(2) may increase an empathic stance and perspective shift in mentors that is critical to combating systemic racism in the profession.

(3) needs a strong relational focus that can be a viable option for focusing all players—graduate students and university faculty—toward the efforts for increasing diversity in CSD, which will increase diversity and experience in programs and be a step toward combating systemic racism in the profession.

(4) require strong structure and system support for sustainability, which must be integrated with faculty initiatives. In other words, the burden isn't on the student. Graduate students in CSD have varying levels of background knowledge in mentoring processes, and especially in cross-cultural mentoring. Strong structure may decrease anxiety and increase a safe environment for building relationship, teams, and community.

# SUMMARY

Addressing barriers requires explicit training on how to initiate difficult conversations related to systemic racism. Explicit activities can provide open discussions so that faculty and peer mentors better develop the ability to understand their biases and backgrounds.

Cross-cultural peer-mentoring can be successful through a strong integration with faculty. In its best form, this reciprocity between students and faculty can result in a cultural shift toward entrenched inclusion and equity.

# RESPONSIBILITY OF FACULTY

MUTUALLY  
BENEFICIAL

FACULTY-STUDENT  
MENTORING

ORGANIC  
MENTOR/MENTEE  
RELATIONSHIPS  
AMONG STUDENTS

# IN CONCLUSION

Faculty cannot be Barriers to Students

Accountability

Cultural Shift in Departments/Professions

# REFERENCES

Bellon-Harn, M. L., & Weinbaum, R. K. (2017). Cross-cultural peer-mentoring: Mentor outcomes and perspectives. *Teaching and Learning in Communication Sciences & Disorders, 1*(2), 3.

Bellon-Harn, M., & Weinbaum, R. K. (2017). Speech, language, and hearing careers: Recruiting students from diverse populations. *Perspectives of the ASHA Special Interest Groups, 2*(10), 4-13.

Gallien, L.B. & Peterson, M.S. (2005). *Instructing and mentoring the African American college student: Strategies for success in higher education*. Pearson.



Contact Us

Department Chair/SLP Director

Monica Harn, Ph.D., CCC-SLP

[mlharn@lamar.edu](mailto:mlharn@lamar.edu)

Phone: (409) 880-8338

Fax: (409) 880-2265

Mail: PO Box 10076

Beaumont, TX 77710

Associate Professor

Lekeitha R. Morris, Ph.D., CCC-SSLP

[lmorris6@lamar.edu](mailto:lmorris6@lamar.edu)

Phone: (409) 880-7696



**LAMAR UNIVERSITY  
SPEECH AND HEARING  
SCIENCES**