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CROSS-FERTILIZATION UPDATE

Considering Cultural Responsiveness in the Creation of the
International Competences for Undergraduate Psychology (ICUP)
Model: What Can Psychology Learn?

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continued

This article aims to describe the development of foundational competencies relevant to cultural responsiveness (CR), within the context of the *International Competences for Undergraduate Psychology (ICUP)* model (Nolan et al., 2025). The underlying premise of the *ICUP* model is that the acquisition of undergraduate-level foundational psychology competences can and should have high value in personal, work, and community contexts—regardless of graduate career destination. A targeted background on CR is given, followed by brief descriptions of the International Collaboration on Undergraduate Psychology Outcomes (ICUPO) project (which created the *ICUP* model; *International Collaboration on Undergraduate Psychology Outcomes*, n.d.) and of the CR competences themselves. Then, procedural aspects of the ICUPO project relevant to CR are described, followed by quantitative and qualitative approaches to exploring the CR of the diverse ICUPO Committee members. The findings are discussed in terms of implications for (a) psychology educators—in particular, they need to possess the capacity to be culturally responsive in order to be able to support students in acquiring or improving their own CR; (b) psychology education leaders undertaking undergraduate curricular renewal; and (c) the sustainable future of the discipline of psychology.

Keywords: cultural responsiveness, International Competences for Undergraduate Psychology, foundational psychology competences, undergraduate psychology, reflexivity

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Cultural responsiveness involves adopting an ongoing reflexive approach to understanding and addressing the psychological needs and well-being of diverse peoples, including by actively seeking knowledge about a cultural

group's histories, traditions, customs, belief systems, languages, connection to land and geographies, determinants of health, systemic influences, and unique lived experiences, strengths and challenges. (Nolan et al., 2025, p. 11)

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All authors contributed to the International Collaboration on Undergraduate Psychology Outcomes project and the processes of cultural responsiveness infusion described in this article and were involved as respondents in the quantitative and/or qualitative approaches to indexing cultural responsiveness. The first two authors (Jacquelyn Cranney, Susan A. Nolan) were the equal International Collaboration on Undergraduate Psychology Outcomes coleaders; the remainder of the authors contributed substantially to the project processes including cultural responsiveness infusion (in order of contribution), with Waikaremoana Waitoki playing a critical role in the positionality exercises. Jacquelyn Cranney wrote most of the first draft of the article, with Julie A. Hulme writing the qualitative analysis report.

Specifically, Jacquelyn Cranney played a supporting role in funding acquisition and an equal role in conceptualization, data curation, formal analysis, investigation, methodology, project administration, writing—original draft, and writing—review and editing. Susan A. Nolan played a lead role in funding acquisition and resources, a supporting role in data curation, formal analysis, investigation, methodology, writing—original draft, and writing—review and editing, and an equal role in conceptualization, project administration, and supervision. Julie A. Hulme played a supporting role in project administration and an equal role in

conceptualization, data curation, formal analysis, investigation, methodology, writing—original draft, and writing—review and editing. Luciana Karine de Souza played a supporting role in conceptualization, formal analysis, investigation, and methodology and an equal role in writing—review and editing. Waikaremoana Waitoki played an equal role in methodology and a supporting role in conceptualization, data curation, investigation, and writing—review and editing. Fanli Jia played a supporting role in conceptualization, funding acquisition, investigation, and writing—review and editing and an equal role in writing—original draft. Sonja Goedeke played a supporting role in conceptualization, investigation, methodology, and writing—review and editing. Remo Job played a supporting role in conceptualization, investigation, project administration, and writing—review and editing. Michael A. Machin played a supporting role in conceptualization, funding acquisition, investigation, and writing—review and editing. Aneesh Kumar played a supporting role in investigation and writing—review and editing. Susanne Narciss played a supporting role in investigation and writing—review and editing. Haruyuki Kojima played a supporting role in investigation and writing—review and editing. Therese Tchombe played a supporting role in investigation and writing—review and editing. Dragos Iliescu played a supporting role in investigation and writing—review and editing. Judith Gullifer played a supporting role in funding acquisition, investigation, and writing—review and editing. Xingda Ju played a supporting role in investigation and writing—review and editing.

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This article aims to describe the development of foundational competences relevant to cultural responsiveness (CR), within the context of the *International Competences for Undergraduate Psychology (ICUP)* model. In doing so, we consider the nature of CR within the context of the project that created the *ICUP* model, the International Collaboration on Undergraduate Psychology Outcomes (ICUPO); the ICUPO project and the *ICUP* CR competences; the procedures implemented to promote culturally responsive behavior among the *ICUP* Model developers; and the CR of the ICUPO committee members. It was necessary for the ICUPO committee members to be culturally responsive to work collaboratively, yielding insights into the value of supporting student acquisition of CR. We also consider implications for psychology educators, education leaders, and members of the discipline and profession of psychology as a whole.

An underlying premise in creating the *ICUP* model is that the acquisition of undergraduate-level *foundational* psychology competences can and should have high value in personal, work, and community contexts—regardless of graduate career destination (Nolan et al., 2024; Nolan et al., in press). This premise is an unfamiliar idea for educators in some nations in which the primary aim of undergraduate education is regulated as preprofessional training, and particularly where most undergraduate students proceed to professional psychology training programs. However, in nations where most graduates do not proceed to such training, stakeholders often ask: “What is the value of undergraduate psychology?” Consideration of CR provides a potential focus for answering that question; we argue that in the current globalized economy, and in the context of global issues that transcend national borders, psychology graduates must be aware of their own cultural positionality and be sensitive to and willing to learn about different cultural perspectives. We further propose that undergraduate psychology curricula are well placed to support the development of these competences, and that, as a discipline concerned with the human mind and behavior, CR should be central to student learning and outcomes. Note that although a focus on CR has been an accepted aspect of undergraduate psychology in some nations (e.g., India), in other nations, it has been the subject of debate (e.g., Australia; see next

section for more detail). Leaders need to support psychology educators in being culturally responsive themselves, so that they can be effective models of and support students in acquiring CR.

Because ICUPO is an international project, cultural differences in national social-cultural processes (e.g., communication, collaboration) and in psychology education systems and *outcomes* are clearly relevant. Thus, to negotiate such differences to facilitate project progress, it was necessary for the ICUPO committee to be supported in their enactment of CR in internal committee processes and when interacting with stakeholders. This article presents a description of these kinds of processes. Moreover, during the development of the *ICUP* Model, it became very clear to committee members that CR is a critical competence that psychology students and graduates should acquire, in order to survive and thrive while pursuing personal, academic, work, and community goals across diverse cultural contexts—and thus CR needed strong emphasis. Indeed, in many work contexts/roles, CR is now required (e.g., social workers—Bennett et al., 2018; drug and alcohol workers—Farnbach et al., 2021; psychologists—Psychology Board of Australia, 2024), and thus, as educators, we have a responsibility to provide students with opportunities to acquire CR.

Relevance of CR to the ICUPO Project

In this section, we situate the term CR within a broader conceptual context and reflect on why it is essential in both ICUPO (processes and people) and the *ICUP* model. The literature on the capacity to sensitively interact with people from different cultures, and how to build this capacity within postsecondary educational contexts, is complex (e.g., Dearthoff, 2010). Arasaratnam-Smith (2017) noted that the high acceptance of the concept of intercultural competence (i.e., “the appropriate and effective management of interaction between people who . . . represent different or divergent affective, cognitive, and behavioral orientations to the world,” Spitzberg & Changnon, 2009, p. 7) by various disciplines motivated the creation of nuanced and varied labels for the concept, leading to some confusion, possibly due to insufficient acknowledgement of each other’s disciplinary contextualizations. Moreover, the Global North concept of (inter-)cultural

competence has been critiqued on the basis of a too-narrow emphasis on ethnicity and of a lack of consideration of factors such as intersectionality and systemic/historical power differences. For example, Comeaux et al. (2023) argued that transformative CR “centers intersectionality in its conceptualization, and locates students’ experiences within a systems analysis of oppression” (p. 563). The concept of CR is more acceptable among historically oppressed cultural groups (e.g., Australian Psychology Accreditation Council, 2022). For example, P. Smith et al. (2022), in their review of the literature on CR within the context of Australian First Nations peoples (who historically have been oppressed since colonization, with evidenced physical and psychological health consequences), also described CR as being “transformative, incorporating knowledge, especially self-knowledge, behaviour, and action ... [and is] about listening more and talking less and working collaboratively with clients” (p. 2). As we describe below, CR was deemed particularly relevant to the ICUPO project processes and critical to include as a competence in the *ICUP* model.

In creating the ICUPO structures, processes, and outcomes, we increasingly prioritized CR and diversity in guiding planning and behavior—more so than originally anticipated. As we began our work on ICUPO, we were aware that working with colleagues from different cultures would require sensitivity; however, we were not aware of the extent to which some of us would learn from each other and how we would need to prioritize CR and diversity in guiding planning and behavior. The knowledge, skills, and experience in intercultural relationships, and in cultural psychology, vary widely among ICUPO Committee members ($N = 17$), 11 of whom identify as having primarily White ancestry and 10 as being female. Moreover, seven committee members would be considered members of the dominant White settler-colonial cultural group who colonized nations (Aotearoa New Zealand, Australia, Brazil, United States), three members identify as having primarily First Peoples ancestry in previous or current settler-colonial nations and in Africa (Aotearoa New Zealand, Cameroon, India), and three White members are from colonizing nations (United Kingdom, Italy, Germany). Three members are from the Global South (two additional members from the Global South have joined recently, making the new $N = 19$).

ICUPO’s global approach to CR emerges from strong traditions within cultural and cross-cultural psychology that include theory and praxis informed by, for example, various Indigenous psychologies¹ (Ciofalo et al., 2022; Dudgeon & Walker, 2015; Li et al., 2019; Waitoki et al., 2018), race/ethnicity research in the United States (Betancourt & López, 1993; Roberts & Mortenson, 2023), and consideration of traditional cultures in China and India (Bhawuk, 2011; Wang, 1993). We also acknowledge work on intercultural education (e.g., Banks, 2014; Deardorff, 2010). However, ICUPO Committee members recognize that much of what we know about psychology has been developed within a Western individualist framework, including U.S. (Thalmayer et al., 2021) and WEIRD (Western, Educated, Industrialized, Rich, and Democratic; Henrich et al., 2010) psychology. Issues include the following: (a) often limited relevance/generalizability regarding many psychological phenomena for many cultures, and (b) the associated devaluing of non-Western methodologies, knowledge, and perspectives, with a primary aspect being lack of ownership by the subjects of Western research (Abo-Zena et al., 2022; L. T. Smith et al., 2016; Tan et al., 2023). There has been a growing movement toward critically examining the mindless application of traditional Western psychological approaches, and instead developing psychological frameworks more closely aligned with local cultures and traditions (Bedford & Yeh, 2020; Dalal & Misra, 2010; Pomare et al., 2021).

ICUPO’s approach was partly influenced by ICUPO Committee members as well as members of the larger advisory group—the International Reference Group for Undergraduate Psychology Outcomes (IRGUPO)—who work in colonized nations. Regardless of national origin, considering First Nations perspectives provides an invaluable opportunity to respond to the critical importance of CR—and to *address inequities* in psychology. The production of critical cultural and Indigenous perspectives in psychology is challenging and takes time, courage, and support. Nevertheless, it is crucial to the future of psychology as a *global* discipline. Over the past decade, there has been increasing emphasis

¹ Indigenous psychologies and cultural psychology are reasonably distinct—the former is traditionally conceived of as cross-cultural, and the latter is a decolonizing project in addition to exploring the cultural aspects of the Indigenous group.

on decolonizing and Indigenizing the Western-oriented psychology curriculum in First Nations countries (see Supplemental Section 1 for further discussion). Although a primary focus of this work has been training of culturally responsive professional psychologists, some education leaders have recognized the value of developing CR in undergraduates who pursue diverse careers (e.g., Darlaston-Jones, 2015).

The definition of CR utilized in the ICUPO project, as stated at the beginning of the introduction, includes all forms of cultural diversity, not just First Nations or cultural ethnicity. That is, it is congruent with a broad understanding of culture—“(e.g., beliefs, common experiences and ways of being in the world) shared by people with characteristics in common” (Central Vancouver Island Multicultural Society [CVIMS], 2021, p. 1)—inclusive of intersecting identities related to sex, gender, sexual orientation, ethnicity, ability/disability, neurodiversity, religion, and so on. In this sense, CR is relevant to the personal, work, and community lives of all undergraduate psychology graduates, regardless of career destination. This conceptualization underlies the widely used Cultural Competence Self-Assessment Checklist (CCSA; CVIMS, 2021) utilized in this study.

Work in historically colonizing nations, such as the United Kingdom, also influenced ICUPO’s approach to CR. In the United Kingdom, historically minoritized groups are often migrants (or their descendants) who may have originated in colonized nations, where the wealth of that nation has directly benefited the United Kingdom. These groups share experiences with those who remain in their homelands and have additionally experienced displacement, racism, and stigma, which persist over generations in their “new” home nations. In the United Kingdom, there is growing awareness of the need to take a critical, antiracist, decolonial approach to the curriculum to recognize cultural diversity and appropriately include historically minoritized groups and their perspectives within the psychology curriculum (e.g., Winter et al., 2024).

Three aspects of the *ICUP* CR definition are worth noting. *First*, for the purposes of this study, the concepts of diversity and inclusivity² are adequately encompassed by the wording of the CR definition, specifically, the words “diverse populations” for diversity, and the phrases “reflexive approach” and “understanding and addressing” for inclusivity. *Second*, the phrase

“ongoing reflexive approach” directly relates to the concept of reflexivity adopted in the ICUPO project:

Reflexivity is finding strategies to question [on an ongoing basis] our own attitudes, thought processes, values, assumptions, prejudices and habitual actions, to strive to understand our complex roles in relation to others. To be reflexive is to recognize we are active in shaping our surroundings, and begin critically to take circumstances and relationships into consideration rather than merely reacting to them, and help review and revise ethical ways of being and relating to our [ever-changing] world” (from <https://learningforsustainability.net/reflective-practice>) [words in square brackets added]. (Nolan et al., 2025, p. 13)

Reflexivity is increasingly recognized as an essential professional attribute (e.g., Argyriadis et al., 2022). Although some argue that this focus on self-knowledge should be a key aspect of psychology education (Morris & Cranney, 2022; Wilson, 2009), it has rarely featured in Western psychology curricula. Furthermore, from an Indigenous perspective, knowledge about the relational-self is equally obscured or omitted in psychology curricula (Andersen & Chen, 2002). Reflexivity not only incorporates our understanding of ourselves (and the effects of our social-cultural and geopolitical contexts) and our impact on our social world but also embraces an understanding and appreciation of the perspectives of others (Dawson et al., 2022). In this way, reflexivity enables (a) an attitude of learning from diverse others, rather than presuming that our own cultural view is “superior” (Pickren & de França Sá, 2024), and (b) recognition of our own biases (Avant et al., 2018). Consequently, reflexivity is necessary for developing CR (P. Smith et al., 2022) and for decolonizing ways of working, recognizing the validity and expertise of diverse lived experience and perspectives. We provide further discussion in the Supplemental Section 1.

A key concept relevant to reflexivity and CR is “positionality,” which “refers to how differences in social position and power shape identities and access in society” (University of British Columbia, n.d.). Through engaging in reflexivity, motivated

² The American Psychological Association Guidelines for the Undergraduate Major, 3.0 (American Psychological Association, 2023) use the definition of inclusivity from the Skillful Psychology Student (Naufel et al., 2018): “Demonstrate sensitivity to cultural and individual differences and similarities by working effectively with diverse people, respecting and considering divergent opinions, and showing respect for others.” (p. 55)

members of the dominant cultural group seek to recognize their unearned power and privilege, and how this affects their orientation to their professional goals and to their relationships with others (see also Freire, 2005). Positionality as a methodology enables researchers to identify the intersections of power and privilege, including those gained through race, class, income, ability, gender, citizenship, and status, to be reflexive, in an unjust world (Duarte, 2017). Here, we describe positionality exercises undertaken by ICUPO committee members, which led to insights as to their motivations for engaging in the project.

Relatedly, we must acknowledge our own “position” with respect to this work. The coauthors have diverse personal and professional backgrounds (ranging from neuroscience to clinical, organizational, community, and Indigenous psychology). Our methodological approaches also vary, as signaled by the mixed methodologies approach in a later section of this article. What unites us is a vision to shape international foundational psychology competences to help address the needs of graduates, employers, and communities.

The *third* aspect of the CR definition worth noting is that the phrases “understanding,” “reflexive approach,” and “addressing” (as well as “actively seeking”) align respectively with the three components of Banks’s (2014) Transformative Approach to Multicultural Curriculum Reform: *Know, Care, Act*. Interestingly, Banks’s approach aligns with the Indigenous “Knowing,” “Being,” and “Doing” approach (Indigenous Allied Health Australia, 2019, p. 14; see also Deardorff, 2010). Banks argued that curricula need to be designed to not only support learners’ acquisition of *knowledge* of multiculturalism but also shift learners toward *caring* about multiculturalism, thus leading to *actions* in support of multiculturalism. The Monroe Multicultural Attitude Scale Questionnaire (MASQUE) measures learners’ capacity for knowing, caring, and acting in support of multiculturalism, particularly to assess the impact of curricular strategies (Monroe & Pearson, 2006); this scale was used in this study.

Finally, note that CR as defined here relates to the concepts of cultural safety, psychological literacy, and global citizenship. We offer additional discussion of these relationships in Supplemental Section 1. We now provide more detail regarding the ICUPO project and the *ICUP* CR competences.

The ICUPO Project and the *ICUP* CR Competences

The aims of ICUPO are to:

- (a) produce an international foundational psychology competence model for the undergraduate level, now called the International Competences for Undergraduate Psychology (*ICUP*); (b) encourage consideration of the *ICUP* Model as a reference model in the creation or revision of undergraduate psychology curricula in local, national, and regional contexts, with the model serving as guidance only; and (c) seek support for this role of the *ICUP* Model from international, regional and national psychology-relevant organizations and leaders. (Nolan et al., 2025, p. 14)

The first ICUPO committee meeting occurred in October 2022, and the Beta Version of *ICUP* was publicly released in October 2023. The current Gamma.R2 version of the *ICUP* Model has 24 competence statements grouped under seven competence categories (see Nolan et al., 2025). These include two *core* categories, psychological knowledge and psychological methodologies and methods, and five *psychology-relevant* categories: values and ethics, cultural responsiveness and diversity, critical thinking and problem-solving, communication and interpersonal skills, and personal and professional development. Next steps for the ICUPO project include further dissemination, engagement with stakeholders, and compilation and sharing of resources to support national and local adaptation.

In creating the *ICUP* model, the ICUPO committee (a) undertook a broad literature review, (b) considered over 40 educational frameworks and models (including 27 national undergraduate psychology models), (c) engaged in several analysis and synthesis tasks that involved considering both competence categories and the competence statements within those categories, and then (d) drafted two options for the model (see Cranney et al., 2024, for further detail). Robust discussion ensued regarding whether CR competences should be included within a values and ethics category, a critical thinking category, or a category by itself. There was value to each alternative, but finally, the ICUPO committee was convinced of the “separate category” option because of (a) the arguments by members of non-Western nations that CR was fundamental to living in their nations and that cultural psychology was already integrated throughout their psychology program curricula, (b) significant pressure within colonized nations

to emphasize CR (e.g., Australian Psychology Accreditation Council, 2022), and (c) the argument that a distinct CR competence grouping would emphasize its importance.

The psychology-relevant “cultural responsiveness and diversity” competence category is described by Nolan et al. (2025):

This competence category refers to the awareness, sensitivity, knowledge, and skills required to effectively communicate and interact with individuals, groups, and communities from diverse cultural and personal backgrounds in a manner that is reflexive, respectful, culturally responsive, and inclusive. Applying foundational (inter-) cultural knowledge and skills and a diversity-sensitive attitude involves ongoing reflexivity regarding one’s own and others’ historical, social-cultural, and geopolitical contexts and roots, aiming to achieve valued personal, work, and community (local to global) goals. (pp. 6–7)

The first competence reads: “4.1: Demonstrate reflexivity regarding the impact of one’s own and others’ diverse historical, social-cultural, and geopolitical contexts and roots in understanding self and others—on an ongoing basis” (Nolan et al., 2025, p. 7). It emphasizes the need for students to understand the impact of their own cultural backgrounds on their values, opinions, feelings, and behaviors, and highlights that this impact changes through time, context, and experience—hence the need for continuous reflexivity. This competence relates to Banks’s (2014) *Know* and *Care* aspects of transformative multicultural education. The second competence, “4.2: Demonstrate cultural responsiveness and humility, that is, behaviour that is respectful, compassionate, inclusive, culturally appropriate, and sensitive in relation to individuals, groups, and communities from diverse cultural and personal backgrounds” (Nolan et al., 2025, p. 7), is about behavior, and so relates to Banks’s *Act* aspect of multicultural education. The third competence, “4.3: Propose, implement and/or evaluate interventions based on psychological science to meet the needs of diverse cultural groups including marginalized groups” (Nolan et al., 2025, p. 7), challenges students to translate theory to practice for specific cultural groups. If students are asked to “implement,” then this relates more strongly to Banks’s *Act* aspect of multicultural education.

Other competences outside of the cultural responsiveness and diversity category are relevant to CR, reflecting the “fuzziness” of these seven categories. For example, both “1.1 Evaluate the fundamental concepts, theories, principles,

methodologies and methods of psychology, including acknowledgement of multiple ways of knowing (e.g., Western, Non-Western, Indigenous)” and “1.2 Critically analyse the history and current context of the discipline of psychology and its philosophical, social-cultural, historical, and geopolitical influences” (Nolan et al., 2025, p. 5) are relevant to the “WEIRD” issue (Henrich et al., 2010) raised in the Introduction. Moreover, “2.3 Evaluate the integrity of psychological research in terms of ethical considerations, the influence of personal and social-cultural factors, and the cultural and social appropriateness and impact of the research” (Nolan et al., 2025, p. 6) encompasses cultural perspectives, and requires reflexivity.

Finally, CR is a critical step toward “cultural safety” (Dawson et al., 2022), a concept which is increasingly argued to be an essential *professional* competence for psychologists (e.g., Australian Psychology Accreditation Council, 2022) and for health professionals (e.g., nursing, Cicolini et al., 2015). Thus, education providers need to ensure that their undergraduate programs can provide students with opportunities to develop this competence, and this necessitates culturally responsive educators. Moreover, as culturally responsive professionals within our various domains of psychology (education, research, professional psychology practice), it is incumbent upon us to advocate for changes in educational, research, and health systems that increase the development of CR.

CR and Procedural Aspects of the ICUPO Project

First, similar to previous international psychology projects (Gauthier, 2020; International Project on Competence in Psychology, 2016), the ICUPO coleaders sought cultural and geographic diversity in the committee by inviting members from different nations and world regions. During the main stage of the development of the *ICUP* Model, the ICUPO Committee comprised 17 members from 12 nations (some with relevant experience in additional nations): Aotearoa New Zealand, Australia, Brazil, Cameroon, China, Germany, Japan, India, Italy, Romania, the United Kingdom, and the United States. (We later added colleagues from Mexico and the Philippines, bringing the total to 19 members from 14 countries.) The ICUPO committee sought IRGUPO advisory group members of national and other forms of diversity (e.g., members of

minoritized groups such as: lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, intersex, and queer/questioning; Black psychology faculty members at Historically Black Colleges and Universities in the United States), currently with 101 members representing 45 nations.

Second, it was essential that an understanding of cultural differences among ICUPO Committee members was built as early as possible, through structured interaction. For example, in the premeeting tasks for the (first) October 2022 ICUPO meeting, members were asked to answer questions such as “Why do you think this is a worthwhile project?,” and also questions about their national/institutional curriculum, including current strengths and challenges. These responses were then summarized, presented, and discussed at the first meeting, which engendered an increased awareness of the similarities and differences among national psychology education systems.

Third, the ICUPO processes were designed to be as inclusive as possible. For example, meetings alternate between time zones, premeeting tasks allow input regardless of presence at meetings, and we rapidly deliver meeting minutes and recordings. Toward the end of each meeting, members are encouraged to provide a “30-s thesis” (verbally or typed in the Chat) on any topic they choose. During this activity, it was often the case that diverse cultural perspectives would be voiced that would prompt listeners to consider the limitations of their own cultural perspectives (i.e., stimulate ongoing development of CR). Fourth, as detailed by Cranney et al., 2024, additional processes were put into place as needed to democratically address any conflicts, whereby all diverse perspectives could be expressed and considered.

Fifth, and most importantly for this project, is the continual emphasis (e.g., explicit reminders at meetings) within the committee to be respectful and inclusive of diverse perspectives, and to be wary of tendencies among Western members to impose dominant White, Western psychology paradigms. For example, in an early meeting, some committee members asserted the centrality of empirical science within psychology, where quantitative and positivist science was positioned as essential to psychology at the undergraduate level, whereas “different ways of knowing,” even including mainstream qualitative methods (not to mention Indigenous worldviews), were viewed as less central or even irrelevant. This position was diplomatically corrected through offering

alternative perspectives and engaging in robust discussion (see example responses in Supplemental Section 4), and over time, there was a shift toward more inclusive methodologies and knowledge (see also Pickren & de França Sá, 2024). This emphasis on respect for and inclusion of diverse perspectives continued to be critical as engagements with the IRGUPO advisory group were undertaken, and later with international and national psychology organizations. Indeed, learning about cultural aspects of different national and regional undergraduate psychology systems and their regulatory organizations has been crucial to such external engagement, and has led to committee members uncovering the limitations of culturally dictated views of their discipline.

The most obvious implication for education leaders relates to forming a departmental/school-based curriculum renewal team to develop, implement, and evaluate a strategy for the teaching and assessment of CR competences across the curriculum. Recommended practices include the following: (a) Team members are representative of different cultural orientations (taking into account the broad definition of that term), (b) strategies are implemented to enhance motivation to engage with project goals, (c) team processes need to be inclusive of member needs (e.g., mix of online and face-to-face meetings), and (d) psychologically safe processes are implemented (e.g., a standard agenda item whereby everyone has the opportunity to speak on any relevant topic, with active listening and respectful responses given). See Supplemental Section 5 for further suggestions, including how mapping the *ICUP* cultural competences to the existing curriculum can help identify gaps in the teaching and assessment of CR competences.

CR of ICUPO Committee Members

Just when you think you might actually have a handle on something ... you realize you see other perspectives ... and this is the wonder that I keep experiencing in this project (ICUPO Committee Member, May 2023 ICUPO Meeting, 30-second thesis response)

As argued in the introduction, it was thought crucial to the ICUPO processes and outcomes that Committee members were provided with opportunities to examine and develop their CR. Opportunities included positionality exercises, CR scales, and reflections. Research ethics

approval was obtained from the UNSW Human Research Ethics Advisory Panel C (HC No. 3801).

Positionality Exercises

One ICUPO committee member designed (but did not respond to) two positionality exercises based on material at the Working to End Racial Oppression (n.d.) project site. We present details of both exercises in Supplemental Section 2. First, in the lead-up to the December 2022 ICUPO Meeting, committee members were asked questions relating to their social identities, and their approaches to bringing about change in their work contexts. Responses to these *positionality questions* were intended to be shared only with the other committee members (although see Supplemental Section 4 on Reflections).

The second positionality exercise was a 1-hr *positionality discussion* facilitated by two experts in CR, one ICUPO and one IRGUPO member, at the May 2023 ICUPO meeting. In the final part of this discussion, we were asked: “Why are you doing this work? Why is it important to you?” Each ICUPO member present, with the exception of the facilitators, attempted to answer these questions. In the standard “30-s thesis” agenda item of this ICUPO meeting, participants dwelled on the positionality discussion. Common ideas included: discontent with and wanting to change Western psychology, which has produced only one kind of psychological knowledge to the *exclusion* of other psychological knowledge (and other groups of people); wanting to open up the current system so that students from minoritized groups could be supported in achieving their goals; and wanting to better prepare all of our psychology graduates for their future personal, work, and community roles.

ICUPO Committee Member Responses to CR Scales

Supplemental Section 3 gives a detailed report on this quantitative approach with the ICUPO committee sample ($N = 13$; as far as we can ascertain, this sample was reasonably representative of the committee—see Supplemental Section 3). A review of the literature revealed only two scales congruent with the broad CR perspective taken in the ICUPO project: the CCSA (CVIMS, 2021) and the MASQUE (Monroe & Pearson, 2006).

With both scales, participants were asked (in late March 2024—5 months after the Beta.R1 Model was placed on a public website for external feedback) to rate their agreement with the statements (items). The 18-item MASQUE incorporated subscales of *Know* (e.g., “I realize that racism exists”), *Care* (e.g., “I am emotionally concerned about racial inequality”), and *Act* (e.g., “I actively challenge gender inequities”). It was expected that ICUPO Committee members would score highly on this scale. The modified 12-item CCSA incorporated subscales of *Awareness* (e.g., “I have a clear sense of my own cultural and diversity identity”), *Knowledge* (e.g., “I recognize that stereotypical attitudes and discriminatory actions can dehumanize and even encourage violence against individuals because of their membership in groups which are different from myself”), and *Behavior* (e.g., “I can effectively intervene when I observe others behaving in a discriminatory manner”). For each CCSA item, participants were additionally asked: “Then indicate whether, since the start of the ICUPO project, your extent of agreement with each statement has (a) decreased, (b) not changed, or (c) increased.” It was expected that ICUPO committee members would score relatively highly on this scale, and that there may be a perceived increase during the ICUPO project. Table 1 presents means and standard deviations for both scales, and “change” frequencies for the CCSA scale.

In summary, across both scales, analysis of the current sample’s data yielded: (a) high reliability; (b) as expected, an apparent tendency for higher self-ratings than those reported for other samples in which these measures have been employed (CCSA: Argyriadis et al., 2022; MASQUE: Monroe & Pearson, 2006; however, see Kalibatseva & Yang, 2024); (c) a similar pattern with the abovementioned samples in terms of tendencies for the knowledge subscales to be rated higher than the behavior subscales, indicative of the difference between awareness/knowledge and behavior; and (d) an equal tendency to indicate perceived “no change” and “increase” in agreement with CSSA CR statements across the project duration (only two respondents indicated no change on any statement). The first finding is surprising, given the small current sample. The second and fourth findings are limited in the sense that any self-rating scale is subject to social desirability and demand characteristic influences (although the third finding counters such an

Table 1*Agreement Ratings and Change Frequencies for Cultural Responsiveness Scales*

| Category/item | <i>M</i> | <i>SD</i> | No. of “decreased” | No. of “not changed” | No. of “increased” |
|----------------------|----------|-----------|--------------------|----------------------|--------------------|
| CSSA | | | | | |
| 4 Awareness items | 5.19 | 0.69 | 0 | 25 | 27 |
| 4 Knowledge items | 5.31 | 0.48 | 0 | 28 | 24 |
| 4 Behavior items | 4.69 | 0.63 | 0 | 27 | 25 |
| 12 Whole Scale items | 5.06 | 0.55 | 0 | 80 | 76 |
| MASQUE | | | | | |
| 7 “Know” items | 5.84 | 0.37 | | | |
| 6 “Care” items | 5.08 | 0.79 | | | |
| 5 “Act” items | 4.74 | 0.81 | | | |
| 18 Whole Scale items | 5.22 | 0.53 | | | |

Note. Mean (and standard deviations) agreement ratings for the Cultural Competence Self-Assessment (CSSA) and Munroe Multicultural Attitude Scale Questionnaire (MASQUE) Subscales and Whole Scale Scores, and CSSA Total Item Frequencies regarding change since the beginning of the International Collaboration on Undergraduate Psychology Outcomes Project. A 6-point rating scale was used, whereby the higher the number, the higher the agreement with the statement. $n = 13$ for all statistics. Cronbach’s α for CSSA was 0.88, and for MASQUE was 0.80.

interpretation). Otherwise, these findings may be associated with participants’ decisions to engage in the ICUPO project, and the fact that many had substantial international experience. See Supplemental Section 3 for more detail and discussion.

ICUPO Committee Member Reflections

In early 2024, members of the ICUPO Committee were invited to contribute written reflexive statements regarding development of CR through the process of working with ICUPO. Nine members responded (two were from the Global South—see Supplemental Section 4 for more detail). Prompts were used to guide the writing process, and responses were analyzed using inductive reflexive thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2021). As there is little prior research on CR *development* in psychology academic/faculty members across cultures, theme generation was atheoretical. Reflexive thematic analysis of the reflective statements generated four themes as follows. Supplemental Section 4 provides further illuminating detail on this qualitative approach to exploring the CR of the ICUPO committee members in relation to this project.

Theme 1: Challenge as a Stimulus for Growth

Development of CR was often experienced in response to challenges, which arose due to discomfort when making errors, direct challenges from colleagues, and engagement in a culturally

diverse project. For example, one colleague wrote about: “those uncomfortable and/or ‘aha’ moments ... whereby I realised that I had made an incorrect assumption about the way that they think, feel or behave, because that assumption was based on my, rather than their, cultural norms.” The fact that we were all learning together somehow made the “uncomfortable” experience of both challenging and being challenged more bearable because there was recognition that we were all imperfectly culturally responsive, that our intentions were mutually respectful, and that we were growing together as a community. Another respondent wrote that they were able to “forgive myself, as long as I learned for future interactions.” It is important to note that participants reflected that the structural design of the ICUPO processes was a strong factor in pushing group members to adopt reflexivity, self-awareness, and CR into their working practices.

Theme 2: Never-Ending Journey

Regardless of whether respondents began working with ICUPO as novices or experts in CR, they noted how there is a sense that the development of CR is never-ending and will continue beyond the project. For example, in this extract, we can see a retrospective recognition that a respondent had more to learn than they expected when they began:

I have always believed that I was culturally responsive and acted to ensure that my colleagues, students, and friends were respected and safe when interacting with

me. However, I am beginning to understand more about the dynamics of working in a very culturally diverse group ... asking myself if I have sufficient evidence to support my self-beliefs and if I am open to changing them!

Similarly, another respondent remarked that “I now know more about what I don’t know as well as what I do know ...” and described the development of CR as a “lifelong and lifewide journey.”

Theme 3: The Work of Cultural Responsiveness

The cognitive and emotional load of constantly seeking to understand multiple complex and unfamiliar diverse cultural perspectives, of learning and developing one’s own CR, of seeking to proactively design an inclusive process, of challenging each other sensitively when appropriate, and especially of communicating about all of this in another language are elements of the “work” of CR. For example, one respondent commented that “being culturally responsive does take self-motivated effort, and my energy is limited.”

Theme 4: Transformations Through Cultural Responsiveness—Personal, Curricular, and Student-Related

The ICUPO Committee members experienced personal transformation and noted that this personal change will transform our teaching, and will in turn transform our students, who will in turn value diversity, develop CR themselves, and ultimately contribute to a more inclusive and culturally safe society. Several respondents talked of increased awareness of the importance of personal humility in intercultural interactions, and this extract illustrates the ways in which personal growth induced reflection on curricula: “Teaching psychology in [nation] has many challenges, especially that the country is very multicultural. ... We largely teach [W]estern models and texts, but sometimes that limits us from taking into consideration cultural differences.” One respondent recognized that teaching about different cultural perspectives within the psychology curriculum not only demonstrated CR to students but could also facilitate the development of CR in their students: “This enlightens and sharpens capacity for how diverse cultures, especially [national] folklore, songs,

and parables, can be important in instructing cultural responsiveness.”

Thus, the qualitative analysis of the reflective statements from ICUPO Committee members gives insights into the ways in which they themselves experienced the development of their own CR, the opportunities they can see for making their teaching and curricula more culturally responsive for diverse students, and the ways in which they anticipate that students can benefit from improving their own CR.

Interim Conclusion

Although there are limitations to both of these approaches, the quantitative analysis suggested moderately high levels of CR, with some reported increase across the project. Findings with the qualitative approach suggested: (a) varying “starting” levels of CR among the diverse respondents and (b) a continued engagement with the challenging but fulfilling “work” of further developing CR, as committee members work toward the ICUPO aims.

One implication of the above findings relates to education leaders supporting the development of CR in their frontline educators, whether that be as a critical aspect of curriculum renewal teams, such as the one mentioned at the end of the “Procedural Aspects” section or of standard departmental/school operations. Educators need to possess the capacity to be culturally responsive in order to be able to support students in acquiring or improving their CR. Recommended practices include (a) continuous professional development support that includes positionality exercises and training in reflexivity, (b) regular sharing of successes and failures in program and unit innovations relating to the teaching and assessment of CR, and (c) encouragement of and support for scholarly approaches, both in making contact with relevant published literature and in evaluating strategies and sharing findings. See Supplemental Section 5 for further suggestions.

Discussion

Summary

In this article, we first argued that foundational undergraduate psychology competences should

include CR competences. We then outlined the general relevance of CR to the ICUPO project, described the ICUPO project briefly, and, most importantly, the *ICUP* Model's CR competences. The development of these competences involved procedural aspects of the ICUPO project and consideration of the CR of ICUPO Committee members. We outlined implications for psychology education leaders who seek to support frontline educators in teaching and assessing CR competences, which necessitates educator CR competence.

We argued that the ICUPO CR procedural aspects and the CR of team members were critical to the success of the *ICUP* model development. The quantitative analysis findings (fully described in Supplemental Section 3) suggest that, as expected, the self-rated CR of committee members was relatively high; moreover, most respondents displayed a retrospective perception that some aspects of their CR increased during the project. The latter signals the essence of CR—that it is ongoing; one never fully “acquires” that competence. The qualitative analysis findings (fully described in Supplemental Section 4) provide a compelling narrative of members' experience of CR development associated with working on the ICUPO project. We also discussed methodological limitations relevant to interpretation of these findings and outlined possible strategies to address these limitations in future research; more detail is given in Supplemental Sections 3 and 4.

Implications

We consider further implications of our findings for the discipline of psychology, for undergraduate psychology education, and thus for psychology educators. First, the ICUPO Committee continues to pursue the remaining two project aims: to encourage consideration of the *ICUP* model in the creation or revision of undergraduate psychology curricula in local, national, and regional contexts, and to seek support for this role of the *ICUP* model from psychology-relevant organizations and leaders. It should be noted that sometimes challenging, but always constructive conversations and feedback characterized interactions with organizations and individuals (e.g., Australian Indigenous Psychology Education Project; Selkirk et al., in press; ICUPO and IRGUPO members from

the Global South) who have identified gaps in foundational psychology competences in terms of meeting the current and future needs of the broader stakeholders of undergraduate psychology—students, graduates, parents, employers, and society. These gaps are often related to CR competences. As mentioned in the Introduction, psychological theory, research, and practice have been dominated by Western/WEIRD approaches, usually to the exclusion of non-Western approaches. Traditional Western/WEIRD approaches have had many successes but also many failures. There have been calls for more inclusive approaches in research, education, and training, particularly to help address pressing societal issues such as ill-health, systemic racism, and climate change (e.g., Prather, 2021; Thalmayer et al., 2021). Building the sustainability of the discipline of psychology will require that we all engage in reflexivity and develop our broad CR so that we are capable of listening to other perspectives and of taking action to transform the discipline to meet current and future “glocal” (global-to-local) community needs.

Second, in considering implications of this work for undergraduate psychology in general, we return to Banks's (2014) notion of *Know*, *Care*, and *Act* regarding multicultural education. In some Western nations, the focus of undergraduate psychology has been primarily on the acquisition of foundational *Knowledge*. There has been little emphasis on providing students with opportunities to acquire psychological skills to *Act*, and in particular, to utilize psychological knowledge and skills to pursue valued goals, that is, goals that students *Care* about, including community goals such as social justice. The inclusion of the CR competences in the *ICUP* model should help address that issue and make the value of the foundational psychology competences clearer to students, graduates, potential employers, and the community. To enable this to happen, psychology education leaders themselves need to be culturally responsive—and this competence is part of being a psychologically literate educator (Hulme & Winstone, 2017; Morris et al., 2021).

Third, Supplemental Sections 5 and 6 present extended recommendations for educational leaders responsible for the design and delivery of curricula for which CR is one of the intended learning outcomes, and for educational leaders

undertaking similar projects to that of ICUPO. Although it was beyond the scope of this article to review the substantial literature on evidence-based classroom strategies (e.g., Steele et al., 2023), here we provide one highly instructive recent example from a U.S. public university. Kalibatseva and Yang (2024) evaluated student pre–post psychology unit changes in multicultural attitudes on two specific scales—including the MASQUE used in the current article. In particular, they compared changes across two categories of units—mainstream Eurocentric and multiculturally integrated units (where cultural psychology and diversity materials were infused). The authors reported significant positive change for the multiculturally integrated units, compared to the mainstream Eurocentric units. Interestingly, in this study, (a) the total MASQUE positive change appeared to be carried by the “Care” subscale, and (b) student post-MASQUE scores appeared to be equivalent to that of the ICUPO committee members’ scores. Clearly more research is required, but in the meantime, the current authors agree with Kalibatseva and Yang (2024) that the “infusion” of CR and diversity teaching and assessment strategies across the entire program and indeed in any and all units therein, is possible and recommended.

Conclusion

The future success of the *ICUP* model, in terms of its use in curriculum creation/revision, is likely dependent on the growth of CR within the discipline of psychology, as instantiated by the CR of its leaders, especially its educational leaders. That development is critical to the global sustainability of the discipline and practice of psychology.

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