

F-30: Seeking Cultural Competence in Hiring: Make an Interview Question Effective

Learn how and why most diversity questions fail to provide useful information to help discriminate between culturally competent faculty and staff, and those who talk a good game but cannot join your efforts to increase equity and inclusion. Review factors that help shape effective questions on cultural competence for each level and type of position. A template that will increase the effectiveness of questions in helping search committee members learn what they most need to know from each applicant during an interview will be discussed.



What does adding more leaders, teachers and staff who are culturally competent do for your school?

- 🌍 Provides more types of expertise in planning effective and equitable programming, pedagogy and curriculum for an increasingly diverse study body
- 🌍 Increases the likelihood that problems in carrying out equitable, respectful and truly inclusive practice will be identified early, carefully dissected and understood, and addressed with appropriate, timely and effective actions.
- 🌍 Decreases the probability that the school will commit “unforced errors,” that is, mistakes that could easily have been avoided if some with some cultural competence had been in the room when such actions were suggested and discussed
- 🌍 Allows the school to evolve to meet future as well as current needs

Some Opportunities to Assess Cultural Competence during the Hiring Process

Application Processes

- Seeking evidence in the candidate's previous experience relevant to the position in question
- Using supplemental questions to gauge the candidate's knowledge, skills and experience related to the responsibilities of the position

Interviews

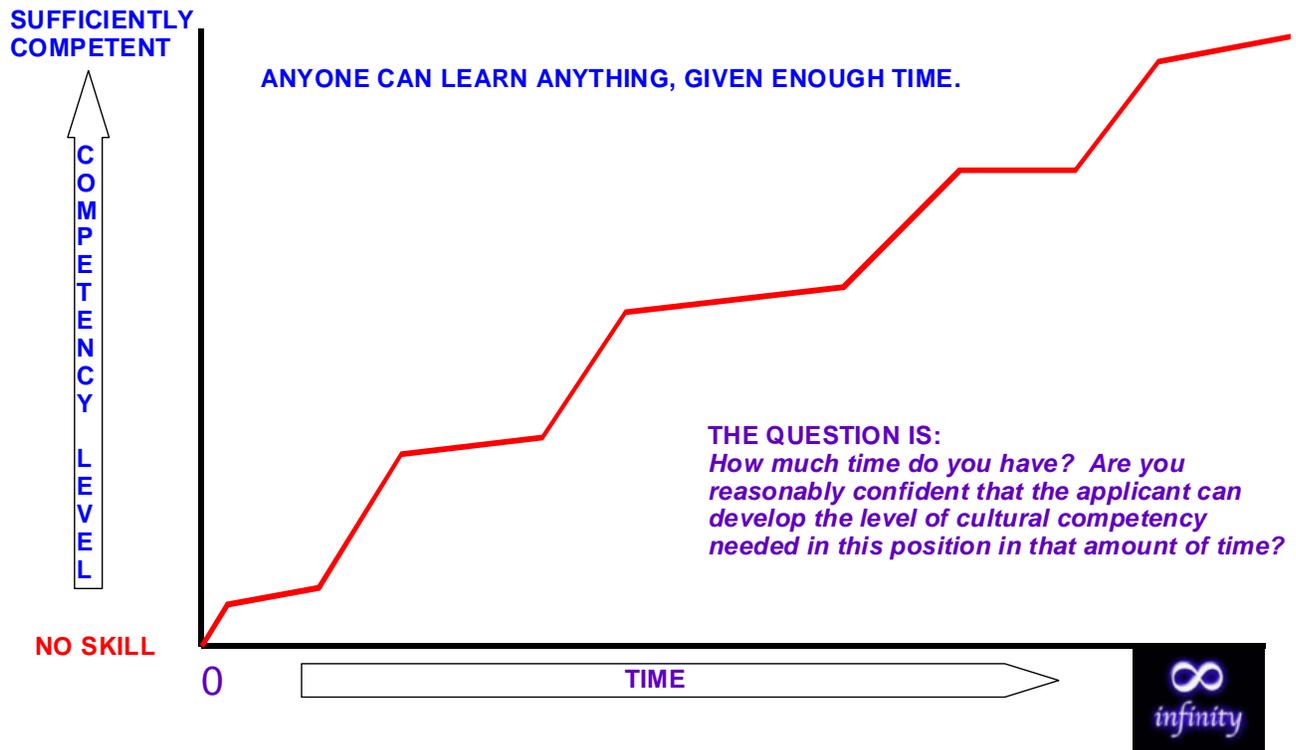
- Composing and asking questions designed to gauge the candidate's ability to apply culturally competent practices
- Making sure members of search committees understand what appropriate and effective strategies are so that they know how to evaluate responses

References

- Composing and asking questions designed to elicit descriptions of candidate's behavior that demonstrate use of appropriate knowledge, leadership and skills in working with diverse populations.
- Ensuring that responses are evaluated according to appropriate criteria

Work Samples/Demonstrations

- Providing applicants opportunities to demonstrate appropriate and effective knowledge, leadership and skills in carrying out the responsibilities of the position
- Ensuring that these are evaluated according to appropriate criteria



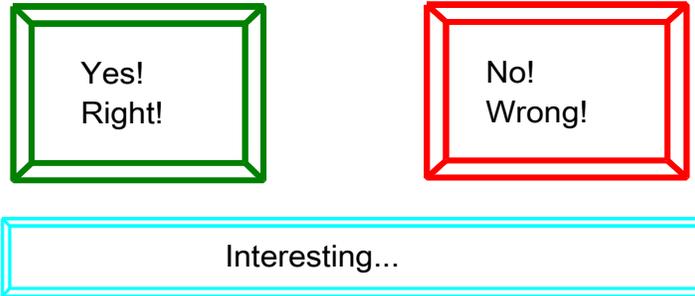
The time we take at the beginning of any hiring process to determine the knowledge and skills needed by an applicant, including needed levels of cultural competency, will help us shape a more effective and rewarding process for everyone involved.



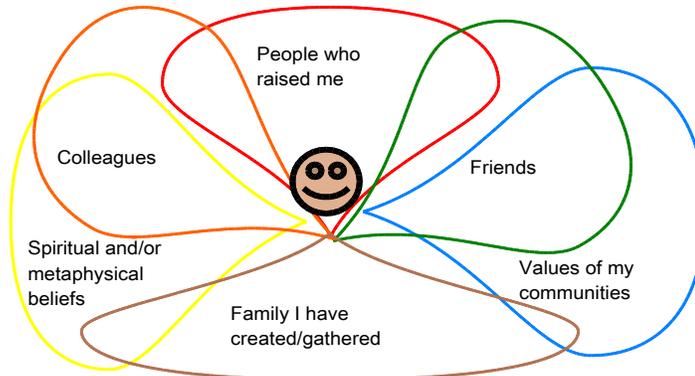
Applying the Three Domains of Learning to Hiring

A Summary by Cris Clifford Cullinan, Ph.D.

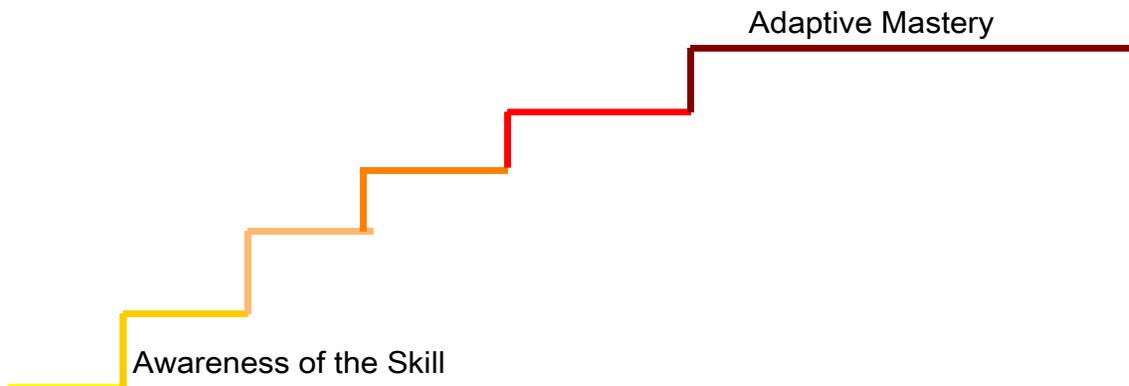
Cognitive Domain: Facts and Information



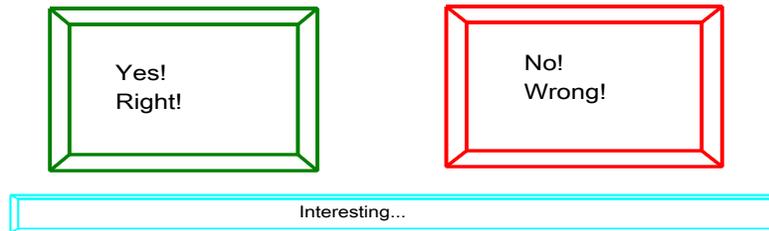
Affective Domain: Feelings, Values, and Attitudes



Skill Building Domain



Cognitive Domain: Facts and Information



Level 1: GETTING IT - The applicant has acquired knowledge, facts, theories such that he or she can read them, quote them, and refer to them when appropriate.

Level 2: UNDERSTANDING IT - The applicant understands what he or she has acquired well enough to explain in it others.

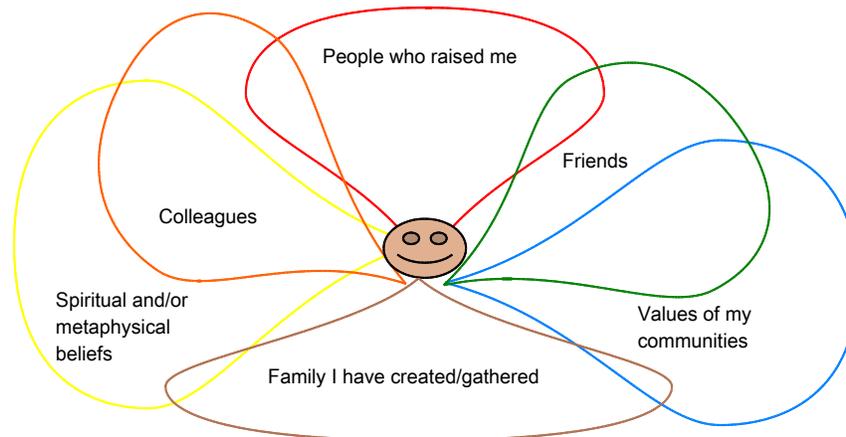
Level 3: APPLYING IT - The applicant can apply the cognitive information appropriately in answering questions.

Level 4: ANALYZING IT - The applicant can analyze the information, break it into its component parts and consider the relationship between these parts, and use this analysis to respond to scenario or role play situations.

Level 5: RECOMBINING IT - The applicant can synthesize the component parts of the information in new ways, so as to arrive at new knowledge, understandings or applications, and can demonstrate this in responding to questions or scenario situations.

Level 6: EVALUATING IT - The applicant can evaluate the knowledge, facts, theories, etc. using appropriate standards to judge their usefulness and importance.

Affective Domain: Feelings, Values, and Attitudes



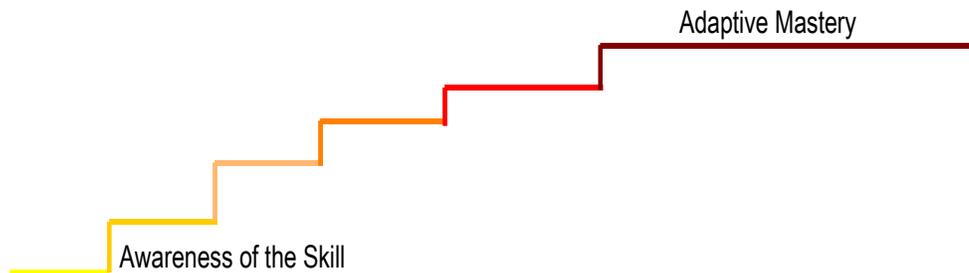
LEVEL 1: RECEIVING - The applicant can provide examples of when he or she has been willing to listen and hear about the experiences, values, beliefs or feelings of others.

LEVEL 2: RESPONDING - The applicant can provide examples of when he or she has been willing to talk about her or his own experiences, values, beliefs or feelings.

LEVEL 3: VALUING - The applicant can provide examples of when he or she has been willing to examine different ways to interpret or see the same experience, and of exploring the worth of other perspectives.

LEVEL 4: SELF-EVALUATION - The applicant can provide examples of when he or she has gained new understandings and insights from exploring these new interpretations or perspectives, and can describe how his or her behavior was or could be different as a result.

LEVEL 5: INTERNALIZATION - The applicant can provide examples of how new, different and/or reorganized beliefs and values based on new experiences, knowledge and/or understandings have changed his or her behavior.



LEVEL 1: PERCEPTION OF THE SKILL - The applicant is aware that there is a particular skill or set of skills involved in doing a particular act.

LEVEL 2: READINESS TO ATTEMPT THE SKILL - The applicant can explain what was necessary to prepare for performing the skill.

LEVEL 3: GUIDED PRACTICE - The applicant can give examples of beginning to practice the skill, getting feedback and learning to improve.

LEVEL 4: SIMPLE MASTERY - The applicant can give examples of times when he or she has used the basic skill.

LEVEL 5: COMPLEX MASTERY - The applicant can provide detailed examples of opportunities he or she has had to use the skill in difficult situations, what he or she did in those situations, and what was learned from those experiences.

LEVEL 6: ADAPTIVE MASTERY - The applicant can provide detailed examples of using the skill well outside of a controlled setting and of correcting his or her own behavior and/or taking initiative to get the needed instruction.

Position/Area of Responsibility:

Consider two hypothetical candidates, one of whom is culturally competent in carrying out this responsibility and one of whom is not. Can we describe the differences in knowledge (the cognitive domain) and skills that these two candidates would possess as they relate to this position or area?

Cognitive Domain

Skill-Building Domain

What would we expect the culturally competent candidate to know?	What would we expect the other candidate would not know?	What would we expect the culturally competent candidate be able to do?	What would we expect that the other candidate not to be able to do?

Designing Hiring Questions using the Domains of Learning

Question Analysis Charts Template

Knowledge, value or skill being evaluated: _____

Cognitive Domain	Question	Level of Learning needed?
1. Getting it – The applicant has acquired knowledge, facts, theories such that he or she can read them, quote them, or refer to them when appropriate.		
2. Understanding it – The applicant understands what he or she has acquired well enough to explain it to others.		
3. Applying it – The applicant can apply the cognitive information appropriately in answering questions.		
4. Analyzing it – The applicant can analyze the information, break it into its component parts and consider the relationship between these parts, and use this analysis to respond to scenarios or role play situations.		
5. Recombining it – The applicant can synthesize the component parts of the information in new ways, so as to arrive at new knowledge, understandings or applications, and can demonstrate this in responding to questions or scenario situations.		
6. Evaluating it – The applicant can evaluate the knowledge, facts, theories, etc, using appropriate standards to judge their usefulness and importance.		

Knowledge, value or skill being evaluated: _____

Affective Domain	Question	Level of Learning needed?
1. Receiving – The applicant can provide examples of when he or she has been willing to listen and hear about the experiences, values, beliefs or feelings of others.		
2. Responding – The applicant can provide examples of when he or she has been willing to talk about her or his own experiences, values, beliefs or feelings.		
3. Valuing – The applicant can provide examples of when he or she has been willing to examine different ways to interpret or see the same experience, and of exploring the worth of other perspectives.		
4. Self-evaluation – The applicant can provide examples of when he or she has gained new understandings and insights from exploring these new interpretations or perspectives, and can describe how his or her behavior was or could be different as a result.		
5. Internalization – The applicant can provide examples of how new, different and/or reorganized beliefs and values based on new experiences, knowledge and/or understandings have changed his or her behavior.		

Knowledge, value or skill being evaluated: _____

Skill Building Domain	Question	Level of Learning needed?
1. Perception of the skill – The applicant is aware that there is a particular skill or set of skills involved in doing a particular act.		
2. Readiness of attempt the skill – The applicant can explain what was/is necessary to prepare for performing the skill.		
3. Guided practice – The applicant can give examples of beginning to practice the skill, getting feedback and learning to improve.		
4. Simple mastery – The applicant can give examples of times when he or she has used the basic skill.		
5. Complex mastery – The applicant can provide detailed examples of opportunities he or she has had to use the skill in difficult situations, what he or she did in those situations, and what was learned from those experiences.		
6. Adaptive mastery – The applicant can provide detailed examples of using the skill well outside of a controlled setting and of correcting his or her own behavior and/or taking initiative to get the needed instruction.		

Designing Hiring Questions using the Domains of Learning

Question Analysis Charts Examples

Knowledge, value or skill being evaluated: *knowledge to work effectively and respectfully with a diverse group of faculty, staff and students*

Cognitive Domain	Question	Level of Learning needed?
1. Getting it – The applicant has acquired knowledge, facts, theories such that he or she can read them, quote them, or refer to them when appropriate.	<i>How would you define a diverse group of faculty, staff and students?</i>	
2. Understanding it – The applicant understands what he or she has acquired well enough to explain it to others.	<i>What is the importance of considering diversity as a factor for the person in this position?</i>	
3. Applying it – The applicant can apply the cognitive information appropriately in answering questions.	<i>Please give an example of when you have changed or altered your practice because of working with a diverse group?</i>	
4. Analyzing it – The applicant can analyze the information, break it into its component parts and consider the relationship between these parts, and use this analysis to respond to scenarios or role play situations.	<i>Please provide at least two examples of times when you have altered or changed your practice because of the diversity of the group with whom you were working. What changes did you make? Did they have the effects you hoped for at the time? What did you learn from each situation?</i>	
5. Recombining it – The applicant can synthesize the component parts of the information in new ways, so as to arrive at new knowledge, understandings or applications, and can demonstrate this in responding to questions or scenario situations.	<i>(same question as above with an additional question)</i> <i>How would you expect to apply what you learned from these situations to the position for which you are applying?</i>	
6. Evaluating it – The applicant can evaluate the knowledge, facts, theories, etc, using appropriate standards to judge their usefulness and importance.	Using question under #5, add: <i>How would you respond to a criticism from a student that you are just making such changes in order to be politically correct?</i> <i>What if the criticism was coming from a colleague? From a head of school?</i>	

Knowledge, value or skill being evaluated: placing a high value on equity in educational opportunity -- that all students have the support they need to be successful

Affective Domain	Question	Level of Learning needed?
1. Receiving – The applicant can provide examples of when he or she has been willing to listen and hear about the experiences, values, beliefs or feelings of others.	<i>What student experiences have helped you understand what is needed to improve educational equity?</i>	
2. Responding – The applicant can provide examples of when he or she has been willing to talk about her or his own experiences, values, beliefs or feelings.	<i>Explain how your own experiences in education have helped shape your beliefs about educational equity?</i>	
3. Valuing – The applicant can provide examples of when he or she has been willing to examine different ways to interpret or see the same experience, and of exploring the worth of other perspectives.	<i>Please provide examples of how your beliefs around educational equity have changed over time, and what factors have influenced those changes.</i>	
4. Self-evaluation – The applicant can provide examples of when he or she has gained new understandings and insights from exploring these new interpretations or perspectives, and can describe how his or her behavior was or could be different as a result.	Same question as #3 and then add: <i>What would you do differently now based on how you beliefs and values about educational equity have changed over time?</i>	
5. Internalization – The applicant can provide examples of how new, different and/or reorganized beliefs and values based on new experiences, knowledge and/or understandings have changed his or her behavior.	A combination of #3 and #4, adapted as a reference question, would likely be the best way to explore this area.	

Knowledge, value or skill being evaluated: skills at choosing pedagogy and curriculum appropriate to a diverse group of students

Skill Building Domain	Question	Level of Learning needed?
1. Perception of the skill – The applicant is aware that there is a particular skill or set of skills involved in doing a particular act.	<i>What skills do you see as necessary when choosing curriculum and learning activities for a diverse group of students?</i>	
2. Readiness of attempt the skill – The applicant can explain what was/is necessary to prepare for performing the skill.	Added to question #1: <i>What experiences in your background have led you to develop these skills?</i>	
3. Guided practice – The applicant can give examples of beginning to practice the skill, getting feedback and learning to improve.	<i>Please give us one or two examples of attempts you made in the past to modify curricula or learning activities to meet the needs of a diverse student group which did not work as planned. Explain how you discovered that these were not working, and what you learned as a result.</i>	
4. Simple mastery – The applicant can give examples of times when he or she has used the basic skill.	<i>Please give us three examples of ways you have modified curricula or learning activities to fit the needs of a diverse student group, and what you learned in each case.</i>	
5. Complex mastery – The applicant can provide detailed examples of opportunities he or she has had to use the skill in difficult situations, what he or she did in those situations, and what was learned from those experiences.	Two suggested approaches here: 1) use question #4 and add the detail about difficult situations; and/or, 2) provide the applicant with a syllabus and the description of the students in class, and ask how he/she would change the syllabus and why.	
6. Adaptive mastery – The applicant can provide detailed examples of using the skill well outside of a controlled setting and of correcting his or her own behavior and/or taking initiative to get the needed instruction.	<i>Please give us one or two examples when you were asked to work with a group of students who were different in ways in which you had little experience. What resources or other experiences did you use to gain the skills needed to work effectively with this group? How would you evaluate your success? What might you do differently now?</i>	

Some Best Practices for Designing Effective Questions to Assess Candidates' Cultural Competence

-  Focus on asking questions that explore the candidate's knowledge, experience and skills in working with diverse students, faculty and staff, rather than on the candidate's attitudes and values about this.
-  Craft questions that are position specific; that is, consider how issues of race, ethnicity, color, nationality, languages, accents, class, gender identity and gender expression, and other culturally shaped issues may affect and interface with carrying out the responsibilities for this position. Ask questions that are keyed to these responsibilities.
-  Craft questions that relate to the challenges your school is facing, now and in the future, in regard to providing an effective, respectful and truly inclusive working and learning space for all members of the school community.
-  Consider the "level of depth" needed in a question. What specifics should be included in asking the question? Asking a vague or general question is not likely to result in answers that will allow search committee members to distinguish between a candidate that can "talk a good game" and one that will have the judgement, experience and skills to respond effectively and respectfully to situations calling for cultural competence.
-  Err on the side of building questions that tell the candidate what you want to know, rather than ones that hide behind generalities in the hopes that the candidate will "guess" what you want to find out. It is far more respectful to ask for specifics (i.e. How did you make the decision how to act in that case? What stakeholders were involved in your planning process? What did you learn from doing this that you would bring to your work in our school?).
-  If you ask specific and effective questions about candidates' cultural competence, culturally competent candidates are likely to be impressed and surprised. You will likely see this reaction in the added enthusiasm and care they take to answer such questions. They are apt to conclude, just from the fact that you asked such questions, that your school may be serious in its efforts to increase equity and inclusion in the working and learning environment. These candidates can be some of your best ambassadors, even if they don't get the job.