

Scenario

Beverly Jones is a school psychology graduate student in a training program located in a suburban area. She is completing her practicum experience in a nearby district with a diverse student population. Many of the students and families speak Spanish and recently immigrated from Colombia.

In her practicum seminar class, Beverly is discussing the case of a bilingual student referred for special education evaluation. The testing, conducted in English, showed that the student demonstrated low scores on language processing and reading comprehension achievement tests.

When discussing the case, the school psychology faculty member dismisses the importance of second language acquisition and its impact on the monolingual evaluation. She also states, “It doesn’t matter, and don’t bother recommending any services. The family doesn’t contribute to our taxes and is probably going to move soon anyway.”

1. Describe the problem situation and determine whether an ethical dilemma exists.

Describe the problem situation.			
A faculty member who supervises practicum made racist comments about a K-12 student who a graduate student was working with. The faculty member expressed that the student does not deserve educational services due to their immigration status and history. A graduate student in the practicum is trying to decide what to do.			
Does an ethical dilemma truly exist? (not a misunderstanding)?			
Yes.			
Competing values or priorities	Competing views of best practice	Policy and procedure adoption/implementation	Additional factors pertinent to situation/decision
<p>Advocating for the rights of a student to be assessed for and then potentially receive special education services</p> <p>Protect students from ongoing microaggressions from a white supremacy mindset</p>	<p>A school psychologist should approach every case with their full effort</p> <p>A school psychologist should use information about a student’s history and current circumstances to make decisions that will empower that student to experience positive academic, behavioral, and social/emotional outcomes</p>	<p>This faculty member may be violating a university- or profession-wide ethical standard by communicating racist viewpoints within their classroom and integrating this racism into their teaching.</p>	

<p>Advocating for the rights of all students and their families to be treated with respect and dignity</p> <p>Succeeding in a graduate program by maintaining relationships with faculty members</p>	<p>A school psychologist should only advocate for and make an effort to support students who are not immigrants or who are linguistically diverse</p> <p>Engaging in anti-racist practices enhances system and elevates opportunities for historically marginalized persons</p> <p>Belief that best practices in assessment and intervention addresses the needs of all students, from all racial and ethnic backgrounds</p> <p>School climate that creates a safe and supportive learning environment</p>		
Identify the broad ethical and legal issues pertinent to the situation. Based on the identified concerns, topics to research include:			
Legal (federal/state)	Ethical	Local policy/procedure	Other
	<p>Ethical standards related to social justice</p> <p>Ethical standards related to effectiveness regarding personal vs professional speech</p> <p>Ethical standards related to teaching</p>	<p>School Psychology Student Handbook on procedures for students to address complaints about the conduct of a faculty member in his or her professional role.</p> <p>University Office of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion policies surrounding faculty speech.</p>	

2. Consult available ethical and legal guidelines.

<p>List the specific ethical standards that may relate to the situation.</p> <p>Standard I.3.1 Discrimination School psychologists do not engage in or condone actions or policies that discriminate against persons, including students and their families, other recipients of service, supervisees, and colleagues based on actual or perceived</p>	<p>List the specific federal statutes that may relate to the situation.</p> <p>Cannot deny education of student based on immigration status, re: Plyler v. Doe (1982) Supreme court ruling – also ruled it unconstitutional to deny enrollment in public schools “to foreign-born children who were not ‘legally admitted’ to the United States</p>
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characteristics.

Standard I.3.2 Correcting Discriminatory Practices

School psychologists strive to ensure that all children and youth have equal opportunity to participate in and benefit from school programs and that all students and families have access to and can benefit from school psychological services. They work to correct school practices that are unjustly discriminatory or that deny students or others their legal rights. School psychologists take steps to foster a school climate that is supportive, inclusive, safe, accepting, and respectful toward all persons, particularly those who have experienced marginalization in educational settings.

Standard III.2.3 Priority of Child Welfare

The school psychologist's commitment to protecting the rights and welfare of children and youth is communicated to the school administration, staff, and others as their highest priority in providing services. School psychologists are ethically obligated to speak up for the interests and rights of students and families even when it may be difficult to do so.

Standard III.5.2 Separation of Personal Beliefs

School psychologists are aware of their own values, attitudes, and beliefs and how these affect their work with clients, families, school administration, staff, and the community. School psychologists' professional decisions, recommendations, and activities are guided by the evidence base and by best practices.

Standard III.5.3 Personal Beliefs and Experiences

School psychologists recognize when their own beliefs, attitudes, or experiences pose a barrier to providing competent services to a particular client or family. In such situations, the school psychologist obtains supervision that would allow them to provide quality services, if feasible. If not feasible, they ask for reassignment of the case to a different school psychologist, or they direct the client to alternative services and facilitate the transition to those services.

Standard IV.2.2 Intersection of Law and Ethics

School psychologists respect the law and the civil and legal rights of students and other clients. The *Principles for Professional Ethics* may require a more stringent standard of conduct than law, and in those

14th Amendment "Equal Protection Clause" – says "No state shall... deny to any person within its jurisdiction the equal protection of the laws." Supervisor is contradicting the federal guidelines to education all children

P.L. 94-142/Reauthorized IDEIA requirements:

- LEAs must consider the English language proficiency of ELs with disabilities in determining appropriate assessments and other evaluation materials.
- LEAs must provide and administer special education evaluations in the child's native language, unless it is clearly not feasible to do so, to ensure that a student's language needs can be distinguished from a student's disability-related needs.
- LEAs must not identify or determine that EL students are students with disabilities because of their limited English language proficiency.
- LEAs must provide EL students with disabilities with both the language assistance and disability-related services they are entitled to under federal law.

<p>situations school psychologists are expected to adhere to the Principles.</p> <p>Standard IV.4.4 Supervision School psychologists who are faculty members at universities or who supervise graduate education field experiences apply these ethical principles in all work with school psychology graduate students. In addition, they promote the ethical practice of graduate students by providing specific and comprehensive instruction, feedback, and mentoring.</p>	
<p>List the specific state statutes that may be related to the situation.</p>	<p>List the specific local policies that may be related to the situation.</p> <p>Student Handbook: The school psychology program has procedures to address complaints about the conduct of a faculty member in his or her professional role (i.e., in the classroom or other academic role such as dissertation chair or advisor). It is not the intent of school psychology program's complaint procedures to intrude on or limit the academic freedom of faculty. However, students must be given an opportunity to express their concerns and have those concerns considered if students believe the conduct of a faculty member is incompetent, unprofessional, and/or substantially interferes with their ability to make progress in the program. (procedures described)</p>
<p>List the specific local procedures (both explicit and implicit) that may be related to the situation.</p>	

3. Consider, to the best of your ability, all factors pertinent to the decision.

Consider whether racial, ethnic, cultural, socioeconomic, and background factors are important to understanding the context and/or the individuals involved.	Pause to examine your own biases and how they could affect your perception of the situation and your professional judgment.
Yes, but no additional information needs to be gathered regarding context.	

4. Consult with supervisors, colleagues, others.

Source	Input
<p>Identify administrative supervisor(s) to be consulted or trusted alternative with the authority to assist</p> <p>School Psychology Program Director or trusted faculty member</p>	<p>May include any or all of the below based on student's evaluation of situation and comfort level with university faculty and staff:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • School Psychology Program Director • Trusted faculty member if not comfortable with Program Director • Department Chair or Dean • University ombudsperson to problem-solve and determine next steps. <p><i>NASP Graduate Preparation Standards for School Psychologists</i>, and related <i>Domains of Practice</i>: School psychologists apply their knowledge and skills by creating and maintaining safe, supportive, fair, and effective learning environments and enhancing family–school collaboration for all students.</p> <p>The Program Director is good friends with the University Supervisor and is reluctant to hear the complaint.</p>
<p>Identify clinical supervisor(s) to be consulted or trusted alternative with the authority to assist</p> <p>Field supervisor and/or Lead school psychologist</p>	<p>Field supervisor reminds graduate student that they have an ethical obligation to speak to this person directly and engage in conversation regarding how they feel and the potentially violated ethical principles.</p> <p>The field supervisor suggests resources for them to consult and/or specifically state which principles are points of concern.</p> <p>Graduate student may discuss strategies and next steps with field supervisor, again based on student's evaluation of the situation and comfort level with university staff.</p>
<p>Identify professional colleagues to be consulted</p>	<p>Most students in the practicum class are also disturbed by this behavior and feel that ethical principles are being violated, and most likely specific standards are being violated. They feel</p>

<p>Other school psychology graduate students in the practicum course</p>	<p>that you should not engage this person because these attitudes and belief systems are hard to change. They feel like you should file a complaint with the EPPB.</p> <p>A few of the practicum students believe that direct conversation with the person is the most effective way to address the issue and offer resources to assist the person in examining their own belief systems.</p> <p>One member of the practicum class believes that the university supervisor is right and also does not believe the immigrant student should receive services.</p>
<p>Identify trusted colleagues and/or others (e.g., community leaders) who may be familiar with contextual variables (e.g., historical, economic, cultural, racial) fundamental to understanding the situation.</p>	
<p>Identify professional resources to be consulted.</p>	<p>Social justice resources on NASP website Various literature available regarding implicit bias Review material posted on social media or web resources NASP standards or related fields (e.g., APA resources for graduate students (APAGS), NASW)</p>

5. Evaluate the rights, responsibilities, and welfare of all affected parties.

Party	Rights	Responsibilities	Welfare
<p>Self Grad student</p>	<p>To work in a system that protects the rights of all students and addresses injustices - learn in a respectful environment</p>	<p>Advocate for social justice and recognize and address systemic issues that perpetuate marginalization of groups of children</p>	<p>Address concerns that impact my ability to engage in professional practice Address concerns in a way that protects their training and implications of retaliation</p>
<p>Child</p>	<p>Equal treatment and absence of discriminatory, racist or unjust practices</p>		<p>Receive FAPE, to be free from racist rhetoric and systems of oppression</p>
<p>Parent</p>	<p>Indirect impact on parent, who wants child to be effectively and properly educated</p>	<p>To care for their child and advocate for appropriate educational services</p>	

Teacher	To ensure that students with disabilities should have access to appropriate education services.		
Administrator	School principal has the right to properly trained school psychology graduate students and professionals.		
Service Provider			
Other Colleague in question	Freedom of thought and speech	Advocate for social justice and recognize and address systemic issues that perpetuate marginalization of groups of children Provide equitable services to students and families without discriminatory, racist or unjust practices	
Other	Other graduate students in the practicum course, right to a safe and supportive learning environment	To support their peer in the class, and verify or confirm the events	Their training is impacted too. They may be learning inappropriate and/or illegal responses to assessment results.

6. Consider alternative solutions and the likely consequences of each.

Solution	Potential Positive Consequences	Potential Negative Consequences
1. Do nothing.	1a. Avoid difficult conversation 1b. Avoid appearance of going against recommendation of administrative supervisor	1a. Perpetuate white supremacy attitudes and structures within the system 1b. Allow children and families who experience harm when seeing this symbol that negates experiences of Black persons
2. Have discussion with university supervisor.	2a. Increase awareness of their explicit and implicit bias. 2b. Increase their understanding of ethical responsibilities related to social justice	2a. Experience uncomfortable confrontation from a person with racist beliefs 2b. Risk retribution toward vulnerable groups or yourself

<p>3. Work with Program Director/Department Chair</p> <p>4. Discuss with the Ombudsman office</p>	<p>2c. Provide resources for their personal growth.</p> <p>3a. Increase understanding of the individual in question and in other school psychologists 3b. Potentially develop plan to address specific anti-racist strategies in the context of school psychological services</p> <p>4a. maintain a confidential way to discuss the problem</p>	<p>2c. Escalate their racist behavior</p> <p>3a. Lack of participation/ engagement from the person who needs this intervention 3b. Negative reaction from other people in program if University Supervisor is removed 3c. Aligned with procedures outlines in Program Handbook 3d. Nothing would happen</p> <p>4a. Recanting the story can evoke strong emotional reactions 4b. Nothing would happen</p>
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8. Select a course of action and assume responsibility for this decision.

Decision	Next Steps
<p>Talk through the Ombudsman person and they decide to go to the Program Director to discuss events.</p>	<p>Program Director makes it clear that any responses or disciplinary steps cannot be discussed with the graduate student</p>

Note. Created by the NASP Ethics and Professional Practices Board Chair Laurie Klose and Cochair Melissa Pearrow, 2020. Adapted from *Professional ethics for school psychologists: A problem-solving model casebook (2nd ed.)* by L. Armistead, B. B. Williams, & S. Jacob, 2011, National Association of School Psychologists. And from *Principles for professional ethics*, by the National Association of School Psychologists, 2010, National Association of School Psychologists.