

*Module:* **Family-Centered Practices  
for Infants and Toddlers With Visual Impairments**

---

**Session 1: Building Reliable Alliances**

**Study Questions and Answers for Recommended Reading G:  
Kalyanpur & Harry (b)**

Kalyanpur, M., & Harry, B. (1999b). The posture of cultural reciprocity: Beth's story. In M. Kalyanpur & B. Harry (Eds.), *Culture in special education: Building reciprocal family-professional relationships* (pp. 113-131). Baltimore: Paul H. Brookes.

1. Kalyanpur and Harry use the term *technicianism* to describe why the nurses didn't see the pattern in the daughter's vomiting. What does technicianism refer to in this example?

**The nurses were diligent about recording the information (following the directions) but were not thinking about the implications (engaging in problem solving or hypothesis generation).**

2. List and describe the three levels of cultural awareness.
  - **Overt awareness—awareness of obvious differences such as language or manner of dress, external differences**
  - **Covert awareness—awareness of differences that cannot be recognized by outward signs such as parameters of status or interpersonal communicative styles or other factors that require sustained contact or observation before becoming apparent**
  - **Subtle awareness—recognition of embedded values and beliefs that underlie one's own actions and the awareness that these beliefs and values, that to this point have been taken for granted and assumed to be universal, are in fact specific to one's own culture (and may therefore not be assumed or valued by other cultures)**
3. List the five key features of the posture of cultural reciprocity that make it eminently suited to the purpose of building effective parent-professional collaboration.
  - **Goes beyond awareness of differences to self-awareness**
  - **Aims for subtle levels of awareness of differences**
  - **Has universal applicability**
  - **Avoids stereotyping**
  - **Ensures that both parents and professionals are empowered**

4. What is a reflective practitioner?

**Reflective practitioners become aware of themselves and their value systems and those of others through interactions; one does not assume that he or she has all the answers all of the time.**

5. In the story about Kou, the 7-year-old boy with two clubfeet, how did his community feel about his “disability”? How is this different from the typical American reaction?

**His family and community did not see the clubfeet as a stigmatizing disability. Rather they felt that Kou was perceived as special within their community, and that surgery might disrupt the spiritual and interpersonal balance within the community. The typical American reaction is that this condition was stigmatizing and that to enable the child to attain as “normal” a future as possible, surgery was in his best interest.**

6. In the story about Rani, the 22-year-old Native American woman with moderate developmental delay, what overt, covert, and subtle awarenesses could the professor have demonstrated?

- **Overt—that Rani lived on the reservation with her Native American parents**
- **Covert—that Rani’s parents practiced a level of interdependence that included “looking after one’s own,” that there was no stigma to Rani living at home, that grown children continued to live near their parents on the reservation after leaving home**
- **Subtle—that becoming physically independent and leaving home at some young adult age is the goal for the mainstream culture but not necessarily for all minority cultures**

7. Describe the cultural deficit model.

**Measuring development (or an outcome) by a yardstick of the mainstream culture; assuming the “alternative” culture does not offer the same opportunities as mainstream culture; further assuming that achieving at the mainstream level is a desired or necessary outcome**

8. What is probably the biggest barrier to implementation of the posture of cultural reciprocity? What should the professional do to internalize cultural reciprocity?

**Time, or lack thereof, prevents professionals from engaging in dialogue and activities which foster cultural reciprocity. The authors suggest that professionals seek to understand themselves (and their own values) in addition to the family they serve at every interaction. If professionals are engaged in a continual process of self-reflection regarding why they recommend practices, then when a family questions or disagrees with suggestions, the professional will be more likely to examine the family’s values and cultural underpinnings.**