

## The MOTIS test

**SPECIFIC ISSUE/S:** Institutional racism

**PURPOSE/OBJECTIVES:** To demonstrate how institutional racism works; to understand how practices can be unintentionally assimilationist

**LENGTH:** 15 minutes

**GROUP SIZE:** Any

**GROUP CHARACTERISTICS:** For use with members of the dominant group; not good with Māori or recent migrants (or members of the group on which the test is based if adapted to a culture other than Māori)

**FACILITATOR KNOWLEDGE AND SKILLS NEEDED:** High level of knowledge required about institutional racism and own privilege; high level facilitation skills are required as tricky challenges may arise

**RESOURCES NEEDED:** Motis test; Motis test answers

**INSTRUCTIONS:** Read this script to your group:

*Here's an activity that explores one aspect of how assimilation was built into education practices even though most people using it didn't intend it to be that way. We are going to have a small test here. It's an intelligence test but there is no need for anyone to be anxious about it because it's at the primary school level, and surely as adults you are way beyond that.*

*You may know that intelligence tests are timed — so by handing it out face down I'm making sure that everyone has a fair chance on this test. We wouldn't want the people on that side of the room to have more time than the people on this side. You do need to take it seriously because the results might affect your future employment opportunities. You can get two of the ten wrong and still pass — but you won't be eligible for promotions unless you pass. There are only ten questions, and you have a full minute. When you do turn it over you'll see a lot of writing at the top — I suggest you don't waste time reading that because here are no answers to the questions there. The questions are multiple choice, and you have four options for each. It's best to guess if you don't know because a blank is automatically wrong. When you're trying to choose the right answer, remember that there may be more than one possible right answer — you need to pick the best one to have it marked correct. Does anybody have any questions before we start?*

*You have 1 minute to answer all 10 questions (any unanswered questions are automatically wrong). The first one is an example. Some questions have two correct answers — you must pick the best one. If you are not sure of the answer to any question, make a guess.*

*Right, you can turn your paper over now and start, and I will warn you when there are twenty seconds to go. After one minute you have to stop, even if you haven't finished them all.*

[Call 20 seconds to go, and at 60 seconds, stop]

*Now, can I trust you to mark your own test? Now lets' just see what the correct answers are.*

[Go through the answers with the group]

*How many people got eight or more correct, not including the example? How many people got seven right? Okay, we can come back to you ... but the rest of you ... well I just don't know. You don't even have a child's level of intelligence and here you are in all these responsible positions in adult life.*

[Paraphrase the original article at this point]

*Now what do you think this is about? This is a real article — it really was published as you can see from the citation. The authors wrote it to show the absurdity of assuming that because Māori didn't do well on tests based on US culture, such as the real OTIS test, that they weren't intelligent.*

**FACILITATION TIPS:** This calls for a bit of role playing of the 'traditional teacher,' while creating this short disorienting dilemma (a situation that challenges previous assumptions and requires critical reflection) for participants. It is best to do in the contexts where a good relationship with participants has already been established.

**VARIATIONS:** Use only five of the questions; change the questions so that they are based in a culture other than Māori

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