Managing the Dynamics of Difference

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What's in a name?

What is the story of how you acquired your name?

How does your name reflect your culture?

How do people respond when they see or hear your name for the first time?
Questions to be answered today:

• What does cultural proficiency look like in our schools?

• How are multiple perspectives reflected in our curriculum?

• What can we do to model cultural proficiency for our children?
Why is culturally proficient instruction important?

- 27.6% of our total student population are English Language Learners
- 42.0% of the total GT student population are Hispanic
- 20.0% of the total GT student population are Bilingual/ELLs

There are 85 languages spoken at home by our student population!
- Spanish, Vietnamese, Arabic, Burmese, Korean, Mandarin Chinese
What does cultural proficiency look like in our schools?

- Cultural identity is valued and included.
- Lessons are designed to value and respect the cultural identity of the learner and her or his family and friends.
- Classroom materials are selected that reflect the teacher’s respect for the learner’s primary language.
- Assessment tools and strategies are designed to reflect the learner’s individual learning style.
What does cultural proficiency look like in our schools?

• A culturally proficient teacher is able to:
  • assess culture
  • value diversity
  • manage the dynamics of difference
  • adapt to diversity
  • institutionalize cultural knowledge
How are multiple perspectives reflected in our curriculum?

- Cultural Destructiveness
- Cultural Incapacity
- Cultural Blindness
- Cultural Pre-Competence
- Cultural Competence
- Cultural Proficiency

Continuum representing the extent to which curriculum can promote multiple perspectives

- Student Interests & Relevancy to Real Life
- Academic Achievement
- Socio-Critical Awareness
- Knowledge Construction
- Culturally Responsive Lesson Design
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Extent to which curriculum promotes multiple perspectives

CULTURAL DESTRUCTIVENESS
Language and behavior at this point disparage, negate or purge cultures that are different from your own.

“If we could only get rid of those special education students, we would make AYP. Why do we have to celebrate Jewish holidays? Let’s just celebrate the normal ones.”

CULTURAL INCAPACITY
Viewing the core program as meeting the needs of all students. Includes lowered expectations for students not assimilated into the dominant culture.

“What do you expect from those kids? They come from parents who don’t care.”

CULTURAL BLINDNESS
Acting as if differences among cultures do not exist and/or refusing to recognize any differences.

“I don’t see color, I see human beings.”

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CULTURAL PRECOMPETENCE
Seeing the difference but responding inappropriately. Providing less challenging lessons for underperforming students.

“We had a great multi-cultural festival. We do it once every year.”

CULTURAL COMPETENCE
Interacting with other cultural groups in ways that recognize and value their differences and motivates you to assess your own skills and expand your knowledge and resources.

“My new neighbors are from Mexico. I am learning Spanish as they are learning English so that we can communicate better.”

CULTURAL PROFICIENCY
Seeing diversity as a benefit. Engaging all stakeholders with other cultures to close gaps in order to achieve equitable outcomes and social justice for every cultural group.

“I have adapted my curriculum and instruction to bridge cultural gaps amongst and between students and myself.”

Source
Adapted from Culturally Proficient Inquiry: A Lens for Identifying and Examining Educational Gaps - Lindsey, Graham, Westphal and Jew 2008 and The Cultural Proficiency Journey - Moving Beyond Ethical Barriers Toward Profound School Change – Campbell Jones, Campbell Jones and Lindsey 2010
Culturally Responsive Lesson Design

Student Interests and Relevancy to Life and the "Real World"
1. Are students’ interests and identities taken into account in the lesson design?
2. Are connections made between the lesson content and relevancy to students’ lives?

Knowledge Construction
1. Does the lesson allow students to operate as “co-constructors” of knowledge?
2. From what cultural standpoint or experience does the lesson draw (e.g., dominant/traditional; non-dominant group)? Are students encouraged to consider different viewpoints and/or perspectives with regards to the topic under study?
3. Are there opportunities for students to collaborate with/learn from others?

Academic Development
1. Are students given the opportunity to engage in higher order cognitive skills (e.g., analysis, synthesis, evaluation)?
2. Does the lesson encourage students to draw on different learning styles (e.g., visual, auditory, tactile, kinesthetic)?

Cultivation of socio-critical awareness
1. Does the lesson address allow students to explore themes and/or learn to address issues related to social justice and equity?
Where does culturally responsive teaching fit?

Each student enters school **healthy** and learns about and practices a healthy lifestyle.

Each student learns in an environment that is physically and emotionally **safe** for students and adults.

Each student is actively **engaged** in learning and is connected to the school and broader community.

Each student has access to personalized learning and is **supported** by qualified, caring adults.

Each student is **challenged** academically and prepared for success in college or further study and for employment and participation in a global environment.

Differentiating for the Whole Child
What can we do to model cultural proficiency for our children?

• We must not just state the norms and expectations, we must teach them.
• We have to challenge ourselves to look on the inside first.
• We need to be aware of how we respond to those different from us.
• We must redirect negative thinking toward positive responses.
• We have to ask ourselves what it is about us that is inclusive or exclusive of others.
• We need to know that cultural proficiency cannot be mandated, but it can be nurtured.
“Culturally proficient people may not know all there is to know about others who are different from them, but they know how to take advantage of teachable moments, how to ask questions without offending, and how to create an environment that is welcoming to diversity and to change.”

*Culturally Proficient Instruction: A Guide for People Who Teach*
Nuri-Robins, Lindsey and Lindsey, Terrell
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Let’s help our children blossom into individuals that embrace cultural diversity!