

## THE TOOLS OF CULTURAL PROFICIENCY

THE ESSENTIAL ELEMENTS -- <i>Standards for Planning and Evaluating</i>					
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Assess Culture:</b> Identify the cultural groups present in the system</li> <li>• <b>Value Diversity:</b> Develop an appreciation for the differences among and between groups</li> <li>• <b>Manage the Dynamics of Difference:</b> Learn to respond appropriately and effectively to the issues that arise in a diverse environment</li> <li>• <b>Adapt to Diversity:</b> Change and adopt new policies and practices that support diversity and inclusion</li> <li>• <b>Institutionalize Cultural Knowledge:</b> Drive the changes into the systems of the organization</li> </ul>					
CULTURAL PROFICIENCY CONTINUUM					
<i>Change Mandated for Tolerance</i>			<i>Change Chosen for Transformation</i>		
DESTRUCTION	INCAPACITY	BLINDNESS	PRECOMPETENCE	COMPETENCE	PROFICIENCY
<p><i>Eliminate differences</i> The elimination of other people's cultures</p>	<p><i>Demean differences</i> Belief in the superiority of one's culture and behavior that disempowers another's culture</p>	<p><i>Dismiss differences</i> Acting as if the cultural differences you see do not matter or not recognizing that there are differences among and between cultures</p>	<p><i>Respond inadequately to the dynamics of difference</i> Awareness of the limitations of one's skills or an organization's practices when interacting with other cultural groups</p>	<p><i>Engage with differences using the essential elements as standards</i> Using the five essential elements of cultural proficiency as the standard for individual behavior and organizational practices</p>	<p><i>Esteem and learn from differences as a lifelong practice</i> Knowing how to learn about and from individual and organizational culture; interacting effectively in a variety of cultural environments. Advocating for others.</p>
<i>Reactive Behaviors, Shaped by the <b>BARRIERS</b></i>			<i>Proactive Behaviors, Shaped by the <b>PRINCIPLES</b></i>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Unawareness of the need to adapt</li> <li>• Resistance to change</li> <li>• Systems of oppression and privilege</li> <li>• A sense of entitlement</li> </ul>			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Culture is a predominant force</li> <li>• People are served in varying degrees by the dominant culture</li> <li>• There is diversity within and between cultures</li> <li>• Every group has unique culturally-defined needs</li> <li>• People have personal identities and group identities.</li> <li>• Marginalized populations have to be at least bicultural</li> <li>• Families, as defined by culture, are the primary systems of support</li> <li>• The diverse thought patterns of cultural groups influence how problems are defined and solved.</li> <li>• The absence of cultural competence anywhere is a threat to competent services everywhere</li> </ul>		

## THE CULTURALLY PROFICIENT INSTRUCTOR

*Cultural Proficiency is the set of values and behaviors in an individual, or the set of policies and practices in an organization, that create the appropriate mindset and approach to effectively responding to the issues caused by diversity. A culturally proficient organization interacts effectively with its employees, its clients and its community. 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. There are five essential elements of cultural proficiency.*

As a culturally proficient instructor, you will:

1. **Assess culture.** You'll be aware of your own culture and the effect it may have on the people in your classroom. You'll learn about the culture of the organization and the cultures of the learners, and you'll anticipate how they will interact, conflict with, and enhance one another.
2. **Value diversity.** You'll welcome a diverse group of learners into your classroom and appreciate the challenges diversity brings. You'll share this appreciation with the learners in your class, developing a community of learning with them.
3. **Manage the dynamics of difference.** You'll recognize that conflict is a normal and natural part of life. You'll develop skills to manage conflict in effective ways. You'll also help the learners to understand that what appears to be clashes in personalities may in fact be conflicts in culture.
4. **Adapt to diversity.** You'll commit to continuously learning what is necessary to deal with the issues caused by differences. You'll enhance the substance and structure of the courses you teach so that all instruction is informed by the guiding principles of cultural proficiency.
5. **Institutionalize cultural knowledge.** You'll work to influence the culture of your organization so that its policies and practices are informed by the guiding principles of cultural proficiency. You'll also take advantage of teachable moments to share cultural knowledge about the instructors, their managers, the learners, and the communities from which they come. You'll create opportunities for these groups to learn about one another and to engage in ways that honor who they are and challenge them to be better still.

From: Kikanza Nuri-Robins, Randall B. Lindsey, Delores Lindsey, Raymond Terrell. 2011  
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