Culturally Proficient Practices: Supporting English Learning Students

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Session Goals-Introduce You to:

- The Cultural Proficiency Framework as it applies to English Learning Students and their families.


- The Educators’ Rubric for Supporting English Learners and their Communities.

- Dialogue as a community on our beliefs, attitudes, challenges, and success stories in working with English Learning students.
Purpose of Our Book

• We offer the Tools of Cultural Proficiency as a means to understand our personal and institutional barriers that impede English learning students as a means for embracing values and behaviors that ensure our students’ success through our intentional acts.

• To improve our professional practice in ways that promote the academic and social well-being of English learning students in our schools.

• To help guide you, an educator in today’s complex environment, to examine you and your colleagues will and skills as resources for change. Cultural Proficiency is the lens you will use to examine the work you do and assess your cultural knowledge.
Purpose of Our Book

• To examine your beliefs, values, and assumptions about English learning students and how those beliefs, values, and assumptions impact and influence your instructional practices and leadership decisions.

This Book is Not About-

• This book is not offered as a “quick fix” for English learners.
• We do not believe English learning students need to be fixed.
• This book does not offer a series of instructional strategies to be used in English Development Programs.
Personal Thoughts About English Learning Students and Learning a Foreign Language

- As a teacher, counselor, or administrator, you are mindful of the students in your school whose proficiency in English is not what you want for them.
  - Take a moment and focus on one or two such students. The students you selected may be immigrants, they may be second-generation or third-generation residents, or they may speak a form of English considered nonstandard.
  - Describe your level of comfort in learning and using teaching/learning models or approaches in working with these students about whom you are thinking.
Reflection and Dialogue

• If you are a counselor/administrator, take a moment to describe your level of comfort in learning how to support teachers learning and using new teaching/learning models or approaches.

• Individually, write down statements of what you know about today’s “New Generation” of English Learning Students.

• What are some constraints and realities faced by English Learning Students?

• In partners or in a small a group share your thoughts?
English Learning Students Today

• Educators need to understand the particular Teaching and Learning Challenges faced by the “New Generation” of English Learning Students. This include:
  
  – Place of Birth
  – First generation immigrant students
  – 1.5 to third generation immigrant students (Long term EL’s)
  – Standard English Learning Students (Native born but also Long term EL’s-including non-immigrants.
  – Highly educated immigrants (learn English quickly (some labeled-refugees)
  – Developmental Differences
  – Language Exposure (primary and second language)
  – Parental Education
  – Community Attitudes
  – Socio-Economic Status
  – Time in the United States
  – Experience in Formal Schooling (Bailey, Heritage & Butler, in press).
Demographics

- The 2010 U.S. language census reported that English learners comprise 10.7% of the total K–12 student enrollment in U.S. schools, totaling 5,318,164 (U.S. Department of Education, 2000).

- In California alone, the English Learner enrollment for 2010 was reported at more than 1.5 million, representing 24.7% of the total student enrollment (California Department of Education, 2010).

- In Canada, about 18% of mostly first-generation immigrant, or New Canadians (6 million people), speak languages other than the official languages of English and French (Office of the Commissioner of Official Languages, 2007).
Demographics

• Since passage of the Official Language Act in 1996, there has been an increase in the percentage of bilingual Canadians (13% to more than 17%).

• The rise of bilingualism in Quebec has risen from 26% in 1951 to 40% in 2006. Bilingualism throughout Canada has risen from 12% to 17% within that same time period, largely because of the passage of the Official Language Act of 1969 (Office of the Commissioner of Official Languages, 2003).

• In 2009, Mexico passed a law requiring teaching English as a Foreign in grades –kindergarten to 9th Grade (EFL has been taught in grades 10-12th since 1921)
Constraining Realities of English Learning Students

- U.S. has a Primarily Negative Attitude towards Education in Two Languages
- Decisions Regarding Language have been Dictated on Political Moods Rather than on Sound Research.
- Additive Programs are Expensive and Difficult to Support
- Major Misconception about the Length of Time it takes to Learn a Second Language
  - 4 to 7 Years vs. 1 to 2 years
Constraining Realities

• Most English Learning Students at early stages have Basic Interpersonal Cognitive Skills and are Transitioned into English too Early

• English Learning Students Need to develop Cognitive Academic Language Proficiency Skills in Order to Compete in English Only Classrooms

• Alternate Forms of Second Language Learning Programs are Adopted (Transitional Bilingual Education, English as a Second Language Programs-ESL, and Structured Immersion Programs)
Effective Multicultural and Culturally Relevant Teaching Principles

• Believing all English learning students can learn is evidence of moving beyond negative stereotypes toward becoming Culturally Competent.

• Recognizing the particular teaching and learning challenges faced by English learning students is foundational for the use of basic multicultural education strategies.

• Incorporating the language and cultural experiences of English learning students and their families in the curriculum is vital to creating Culturally Proficient classrooms, schools, and school districts.
How to Use this Book

• **Part I—Three chapters** that provides a context for the historical and evolving place of English learning in Canadian and U.S. schools, a description of The Tools of Cultural Proficiency, and the presentation of a rubric for working with English learning students and their communities to support your assessment and planning, and the introduction of River View School District, the context for our case story.

• **Part II—Five chapters** that guide you through processes of reflection & dialogue to support your learning & apply the lens of cultural proficiency for individual educator reflection on practice & for teams of educators dialogue on institutional policies & practice through the case story of River View.

• **Part III—One chapter** devoted to supporting you and your colleagues developing personal and school action plans addressing English learning opportunities and challenges in your school. Resources for professional development that align with each of the Essential Elements are provided in the final section of the book.
Context and Tools for Educating English Learning Students

Additive English Learner Programs

• Dual-Language Schools
  – Classed are Taught in Two Languages; One language is Taught for ½ of the Day and the other Language is Taught for the other ½ of the Day.

• Two-Way Bilingual Education
  – Integrates both Minority Students and English Speakers, to help Develop Fluency, and to Develop an Appreciation of both Cultures.

• Two-Way Bilingual Education Immersion
  – Primary Language Speakers are Immersed in their own Language and English Speakers are Immersed in the Second Language, both Languages are Taught.

• Maintenance Bilingual Education
  – Maintains Student’s Primary Language and Promotes the Student’s Appreciation of their own Cultural Background
Setting the Context for Cultural Proficiency

• Amount and Availability of Information of Multicultural Education Theory makes Minimal Differences and Does Not Guarantee that Educators will work effectively with Diverse Populations.

• Learned Practices need to be Assessed and Measured to see if Differences Enhance Instruction.
The Tools of Cultural Proficiency

• Is an *inside-out* approach and the theme for our sessions
  – Is about being aware of how we - as individuals and as organizations - work with others
  – Is about being aware of how we respond to those different from us
  – Is about visible and not so visible differences
  – Is about preparing to live in a world of differences

• Is a worldview, a mindset; it is the manner in which we lead our lives

• Cannot be mandated; it can be nurtured
The Framework for Cultural Proficiency Uses Four Unique Tools

- The Barriers
  - Caveats that assist in responding effectively to resistance to change

- The Guiding Principles
  - Underlying values of the approach

- The Continuum
  - Language for describing both healthy and non-productive policies, practices and individual behaviors

- The Essential Elements
  - Five behavioral standards for measuring, and planning for, growth toward cultural proficiency
• Reflection and Dialogue are essential processes for individuals and organizations engaged in a journey toward Cultural Proficiency:

  – Reflection is the discussion we have with ourselves to understand our values and behaviors
  – Dialogue is the discussion we have with others to understand their values and behaviors

• Reflection and Dialogue are fundamental to probing and understanding organizations’ policies and practices
There are six points along the cultural proficiency continuum that indicate unique ways of perceiving and responding to differences.
Continuum Focuses on Six Unique Ways of Seeing and Responding to Difference

- **Cultural Destructiveness:** attitudes, policies, and practices destructive to cultures and individuals within a culture (See the difference, stomp it out.
  
  Seeking to eliminate references to the culture of “others” in all aspects of the school and in relationship with their communities.

- **Cultural Incapacity:** Belief on superiority of one’s culture. (See the difference, make it wrong.
  
  Trivializing other English learning communities and seeking to make them appear to be wrong.

- **Cultural Blindness:** Color and culture make no difference. (See the difference, act like you don’t.
  
  Pretending not to see or acknowledge the socioeconomic status and culture of English learning communities and choosing to ignore the experiences of such groups within the school and community.
Continuum Focuses on Six Unique ways of Seeing and Responding to Difference

– **Cultural Pre-competence:** Awareness of individual and institutional limitations. (See the difference, respond inadequately).
  - Increasingly aware of what you and the school don’t know about working with English learning communities. It is at this key level of development that you and the school can move in positive, constructive direction, or you can vacillate, stop, and possibly regress.

– **Culturally Competence:** Attend to the dynamics of difference. (See the difference, understand the difference that difference makes).
  - Manifesting your personal values and behaviors and the school’s policies and practices in a manner that is inclusive with English learning cultures and socioeconomic communities that are new or different from you and the school.

– **Culturally Proficiency:** Able to function in different cultural contexts. (See the difference, respond positively and affirmingly).
  - Advocating for life-long learning for the purpose of being increasingly effective in serving the educational needs of the socioeconomic and English learning cultural groups served by the school. Holding the vision that you and the school are instruments for creating a socially just democracy.
5 Essential Elements for Cultural Competence

• Assess Culture
• Value Diversity
• Manage the Dynamics of Difference
• Adapt to Diversity
• Institutionalize Cultural Knowledge

The Essential Elements of cultural proficiency provide the standards for individual behavior and organizational practices
• Adjectives and Verbs. The first activity is to analyze the rubric to understand and be able to use the rubric as a diagnostic and planning tool.

• 1. Turn your attention to the first essential element, Assessing Cultural Knowledge.

• 2. Study the operational definition of Assessing Cultural Knowledge in the first column. We refer to this definition as the “essence” of the essential element.

• 3. Next, read the examples for Assessing Cultural Knowledge, beginning with Cultural Destructiveness and through Cultural Proficiency. You will have read six illustrations along the Continuum.

• 4. Now, go back through the six illustrations and circle or highlight verbs and adjectives. What do you notice as you read from left to right? Record your observations and reactions. Discuss with Colleagues.
Reflection

• Record your observations and reactions to the “Adjectives and Verbs” activity.
• What did you see?
• What are you reactions?
• In what ways does the activity inform your understanding of the Essential Elements as standards for teaching English learning students?
Guiding Your Own Research that Leads to Action

Listen to the voices of fellow educators. The unique thing about the educators in the following paragraph is that each is committed to educational improvement to support English learning students. Pay attention to what each colleague believes should be the focus for change:

• Educator A—We believe that English learning students struggle to learn exists due to how entire school systems have operated for years. We have not been able to make systemic change or don’t know how to change at that level.

• Educator B—Even though we want to change many aspects of our schools in serving English learning students and their families, we’ve noticed that not much has changed over the past decades. We don’t know how to get our teachers and other educators to make necessary changes.

• Educator C—Even when the opportunity has been provided to us to allow our English learning students to take responsibility for their own learning, we don’t know how to go about it. Nobody notices the attempts we make to address student achievement. So everything ends up as failures without a celebratory event at the end of the school year.
ACTION RESEARCH: A MODEL FOR IMPROVEMENT OF PRACTICE FOR YOU, YOUR SCHOOL, AND THE COMMUNITY SERVED BY YOUR SCHOOL

• Action Research as a credible approach for designing and implementing desired change in practice has a well-reasoned rationale:

• The need for educators to have the skills for conducting research in their own classrooms, schools, communities as a way to improve instruction and enhance the academic achievement of students, with particular emphasis on English learning students, has been extensively described and discussed in educational literature (Levin & Rock 2003; Lieberman, 1995; Quezada, Lattimer, & Spencer, 2010).

• Action Research is defined as research conducted in a “field” setting and involving those actually “native” to the field, usually along with an “outsider,” embraces the notion of participant researcher and brings educator and community into ever-closer mutually beneficial relationships (Noffke & Zeichner, 1987).
Action Research Activity

• Table 9.2-In groups of 4-5 discuss some possible Action Research questions with a focus on English Learning Students:
  – Emancipatory-(School District Approach)
  – Techne-(School Site Approach)
  – Practical-)Classroom, grade level or Department Level)
Resources A-E

- Resources for professional development that align with each of the Essential Elements are provided in the final section of the book.
- Professional Learning Activity
  - Resource-A: Assessing Cultural Knowledge
  - Resource-B: Valuing Diversity
  - Resource-C: Managing the Dynamics of Difference
  - Resource-D: Adapting to Diversity
  - Resource-E: Institutionalizing Cultural Knowledge
Closing Thoughts

• The goal of developing educators who are culturally proficient practitioner researchers in linguistically and culturally diverse schools is to nurture our students to become people of good character, capable of love and work, educated in good schools that are caring, civil, and challenging.

• We believe the skills and competencies presented in this book are needed for 21st century culturally proficient Educators.

• We believe one of the primary purposes of education is to improve the lives of all students through effective teaching and learning strategies; therefore, we challenge you to reflect, and engage yourself as a culturally proficient practitioner researchers who will bridge theory into practice.