



The Cultural Proficiency Continuum

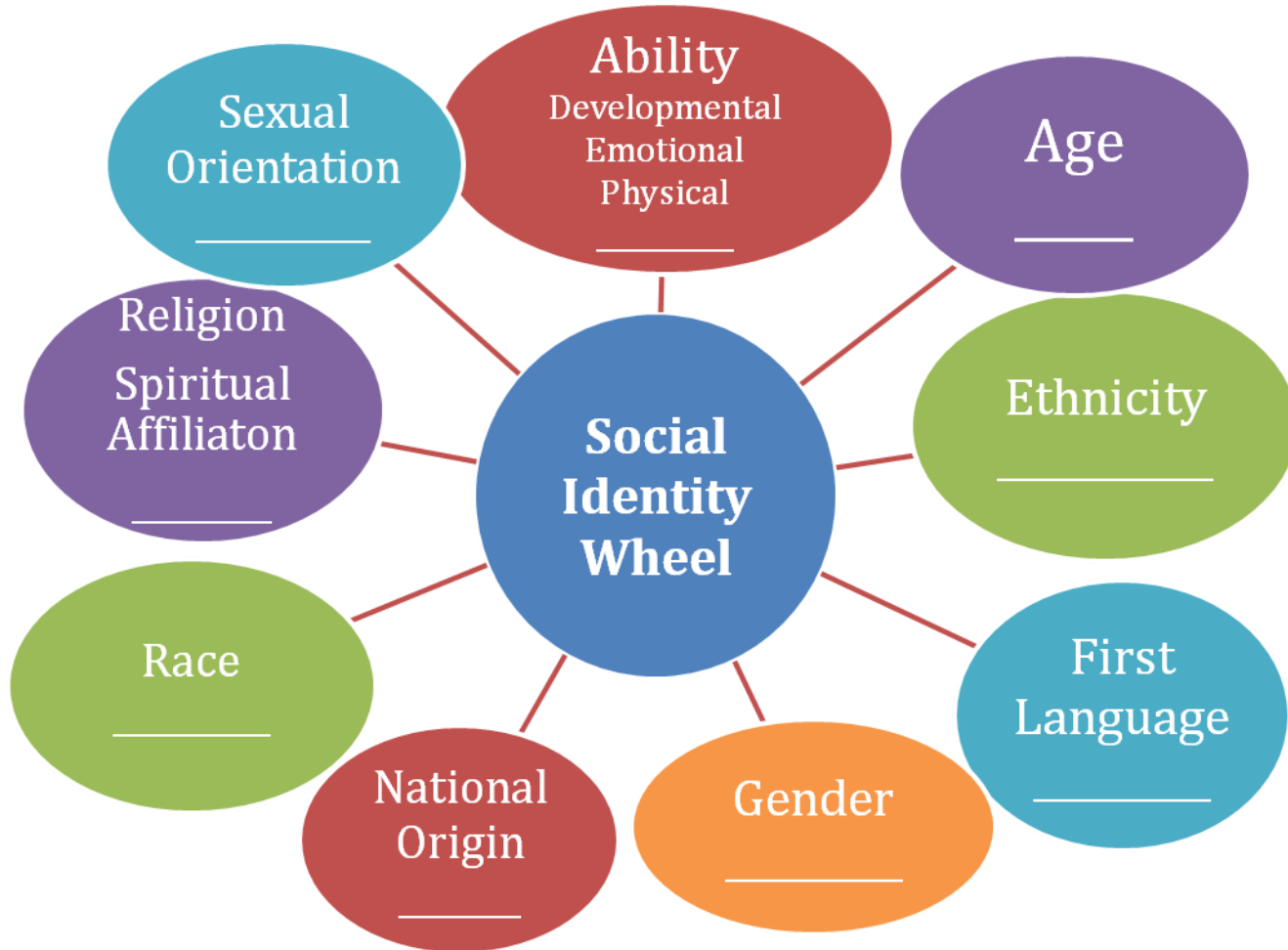
Continuum	Match Quotes	Definitions
Cultural Destructiveness <i>See the difference, stomp it out</i>		The elimination of other people's cultures. Any policy, practice or behavior that effectively eliminates all vestiges of other people's cultures.
Cultural Incapacity <i>See the difference, make it wrong</i>		Belief in the superiority of one's culture and behavior that disempowers another's culture. Treatment of members of a dominated group based on stereotypes and with the belief that the dominant group is inherently superior.
Cultural Blindness <i>See the difference, act like you don't</i>		Acting as if the cultural differences that you see do not matter, or not recognizing that there are differences among and between cultures. This is the belief that color and culture make no difference and that all people are the same.
Cultural Precompetence <i>See the difference, respond inadequately</i>		Awareness of the limitations of one's skills or an organization's practices when interacting with other cultural groups. Some changes may have been made to approaches to issues arising from diversity, but being aware that more assistance and information is needed.
Cultural Competence <i>See the difference, understand the difference that difference makes</i>		Interacting with other cultural groups using the five Essential Elements of Cultural Proficiency as the standard for individual behavior and school practices. This includes acceptance and respect for difference; continuing self-assessment regarding culture; careful attention to the dynamics of difference; continuous expansion of cultural knowledge and resources; and a variety of adaptations to belief systems, policies and practices.
Cultural Proficiency <i>See the differences and respond effectively in a variety of environments</i>		Esteeming culture, knowing how to learn and teach about individual organizational culture, and interacting effectively in a variety of cultural environments. Cultural proficiency is having the capacity to teach and learn about differences in ways that acknowledge and honor all the people and the groups they represent; holding culture in high esteem; and seeking to add to the knowledge base of culturally proficient practice by conducting research, developing new approaches based on culture, and increasing the knowledge of others about culture and the dynamics of difference.

Adapted from: *Cultural Proficiency—A Manual for School Leaders* by Lindsey, Robins and Terrell, 2009



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Stage	Examples of Commonly Heard Phrases
Cultural Destructiveness	<p>"I'm not shopping in that store anymore. Mr. Hassan won't hand me my change. He puts it on the counter. How rude!"</p> <p>"I'm not changing my class requirements for any student, even if he is homeless. We've got to maintain our standards."</p> <p>"This is America—everyone should speak English."</p>
Cultural Incapacity	<p>"Sam is a hard worker. He is certainly a credit to his race."</p> <p>"I can't believe my Japanese boys scored only in the 80th percentile!"</p> <p>"That meeting was scheduled for one o'clock sharp. I don't know where our Nigerian visitors could be!"</p> <p>"She catches well for a girl."</p>
Cultural Blindness	<p>"Good teaching is good teaching. It works for all students."</p> <p>"When I walk into a classroom, I do not see color or ability or gender—I only see children."</p> <p>"We should treat everyone the same. It's not necessary to make special arrangements."</p>
Cultural Precompetence	<p>"We need to hire more African-American teachers and put them in schools that don't have many."</p> <p>"I'd really like to learn more about our Latino students and parents. Maybe I'll take a Spanish class."</p> <p>"We need a Korean guidance counselor to help us with the Korean students."</p>
Cultural Competence	<p>"I'm noticing that our staff is becoming more diverse. Let's have a culture fair so everyone can learn about each other."</p> <p>"Let's be sure to plan our staff luncheons so they don't fall on Yom Kippur or Ramadan."</p>
Cultural Proficiency	<p>"I'm glad we have a plan to identify and address conflicts caused by cultural difference."</p> <p>"Let's put strategies into the curriculum to show teachers how to reach all student groups."</p>

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1. Take a moment to fill in your identities
2. Place a check mark next to the identities you think about most often.
3. If you were to eliminate two identities, which would they be?

4. Why did you choose to give up these identities?
5. What identities would you refuse to give up regardless of the demands on you?
6. How might this awareness impact your work with diverse families?



Deficit-based Statements (downward spiral)	Asset-based Statements (upward spiral)	Asset-based Evidence in Practice (cultural competence)
"Parents and families from diverse backgrounds:	Parents and families of diverse backgrounds:	Administrators and teachers:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✚ should learn school rules and guidelines if they expect us to help these children learn and behave" ✚ need to appreciate what we are trying to do for them. ✚ will know that their children belong here when they watch and catch on to what the good kids are doing" 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✚ have a right for their children to attend a school that provides the best possible support for their education." ✚ deserve to have a school that seeks to learn and understand what they hope for and expect from school. ✚ deserve to know that we recognize and respect they know a lot about what their children respond best to." ✚ deserve to have teachers who understand and accept that children are more likely to succeed when schools provide the support they need to do their work successfully." 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✚ make it a priority to have policies and practices in place explicitly designed to assess how well the school is responding to what their diverse students need." ✚ take ownership for creating proactive and ongoing opportunities to collaborate with parents, students and colleagues to create and develop a positive school culture and climate ." ✚ we need to offer supports that will help them interact positively with their children about success in school



UNDERSTANDING INTERSECTIONS OF PARENT AND TEACHER CULTURE

- ✚ Consider the sample reflection questions selected below to explore parent and teacher culture.
- ✚ Tap into your, prior knowledge and/or insight into the backgrounds of culturally and linguistically diverse parents and teachers that you know. What is one thing that positively impacts teacher and parent interaction?
- ✚ Begin to self-reflect on your responses in the context of the cultural proficiency continuum.
- ✚ If you were to interview your parents or family representatives using these reflection questions, how do you think their responses would compare to yours or that of teachers?

REFLECTION POINTS TO PONDER Advancing Towards an Upward Spiral Mindset

1. What are the expectations and experiences that parents/ teachers have had with school?
2. What are the factors that shape parents'/ teachers' understandings of school?
3. What do I know about our parents'/ teachers' home and community life?
4. How can I learn more about my parents'/ students' home and community life?
5. Who are the individuals that influence parents /teachers most?
6. What are the tools skills and/or practices that parents/ teachers use to navigate their homes and communities?
7. What are the contexts that motivate parents'/ teachers' to help their children learn?
8. How do parents/teachers express themselves in different settings?
9. What are the topics, issues and themes that generate high levels of parent /teacher effort and interest?
10. What is one question that you think parents would want you to ask them?