

Foreword

This remarkable work is literally a coach's guide to shifting thinking for Culturally Proficient, standards-based teaching and interacting with all students in our schools.

All children want to be competent. All students yearn for connectedness and power, irrespective of the cultural groups to which they belong. Yet classrooms and schools can be unwelcome places for many students.

Culturally competent educators are needed through all levels of school—from the earliest experiences to the latest. Even in preschool and kindergarten, children pick up teacher vibes about who is “worthy” and who is not.

Every word, facial expression, gesture, or action on the part of a parent (teacher) gives the child some message about self-worth. It is sad that so many parents (teachers) don't realize what messages they are sending. (Virginia Satir, cited by Jone Johnson Lewis, 1997–2004)

“Students who drop out of school,” says developmental psychologist Michael Thompson, “have had conscious thoughts about leaving school since second grade. Too often, the ‘needing improvement’ students, with good intention but poor consequences, are removed from interests and electives with their peers to do more and harder work of mathematics and reading” (Thompson, 2006).

Culturally Proficient Coaching is a long-awaited body of work. The authors skillfully blend their experience and research about recognized pedagogical concepts into a practical and unified whole for educators. Among the topics covered are: collaborative learning communities, Cultural Proficiency, mental states of high performance, and Cognitive Coaching.

Within the context of planned conversations about the connections between student learning and teaching practices, developing Cultural Proficiency provides a liberating focus for educators. The


authors assure us that no one is immune from lack of knowledge or misunderstanding about cultures other than our own, yet encyclopedic knowledge of other cultures is not required. The important learning is to be aware of our own assumptions about cultural groups and how our assumptions can facilitate or block a student's access to education. To complement our self-knowledge, even small amounts of knowledge about cultures other than our own liberate us from certainty as a worldview, enrich us with curiosity and the willingness to learn about others, and teach us to value our differences.

Coaching for Cultural Proficiency includes enhancing Five States of Mind known to be the wellspring of high performance. They are:

1. Efficacy—Believing that one can personally succeed and make a difference in one's endeavors (power).
2. Flexibility—The capacity to sense from varied perspectives: mine, yours, and ours; now and not now; big picture and detail.
3. Craftsmanship—The insatiable drive to perfect/improve/reach self-assigned standards (competence).
4. Interdependence—Sensitivity and skills in being and working together, realizing that “we” is always better than “me” (connectedness).
5. Consciousness—The medium through which we are aware of our thoughts, feelings, points of view, intentions, and the effect those have on others. Without consciousness, we have no choice. With awareness, we have options to choose. These are human drives and can be developed in ourselves and others irrespective of culture.

Bruce Joyce introduced coaching about 20 years ago. Today we have academic coaching, life coaching, tennis coaching, mathematics coaching, and, of course, Cognitive Coaching. This book applies the principles and tools of Cognitive Coaching for Cultural Proficiency. *Culturally Proficient Coaching* mediates thinking toward values, beliefs, and behaviors that enable effective cross-cultural interaction to ensure equitable environments for learners, parents, and all members of a community.

Possibly no other topic today is as important—the inclusion, challenge, and success for students historically underserved in our schools. It is personally important for these students and their families. It is equally as important for everyone if we are to harvest

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the rich advantages of cultural diversity in the schools, communities, and workplace. The authors provide a road map for educators and schools committed to providing learners a culturally responsive, standards-based educational journey. Educators have been waiting years for a book like this. Lindsey and her team of authors have given us a profound and practical gift.

—Robert J. Garmston