

Preface

The purpose of this book is to provide educators—coaches, teachers, counselors, administrators, and staff developers—a personal guidebook for conducting Culturally Proficient Coaching conversations that *shift thinking* in support of all students achieving at levels higher than ever before. The authors of this book ask you, the reader, to integrate the following twin goals into your professional practice:

- The use of coaching as a professional tool to improve standards-based teaching and learning;
- The use of cultural proficiency tools to guide interactions among teachers, students, parents, counselors, and administrators in ways that acknowledge, honor, and value diversity.

We use the term *educator* to be inclusive of any credentialed or certified person who has responsibility for the education of a student. For purposes of this book, we do not differentiate among teacher, counselor, staff developer, or administrator. Our experience tells us there are too many, both within and outside the education community, who focus the responsibility and blame for the successes or failures of education solely on the teacher, the counselor, the staff developers, or the administrator. Too often we hear it is the low expectations of teachers that have caused this mess. OR, well, it is the counselors who do the scheduling. If they would do the ethical thing, it would help solve these disparities. OR, there is abundant research that states that effective schools have effective principals.

In reality, all of these educator roles touch the lives of students in important ways. For this reason, throughout this book we use the term *educator* and invite you to insert the role of *educational teacher*, *counselor*, *staff developer*, or *administrator* as it fits into your school setting. Furthermore, it is important to note that delimiting the definition of *educator* is not intended to exclude policy makers, such as school board members or state/federal legislators, from their critical

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roles in the education of our children and youth. This book is written for those who are closest to the students, the educators in our schools. Our intent is to provide you, district and school site educators, a coaching frame by which you can continue to improve your craft, whether your craft is that of a teacher, coach, counselor, staff developer, administrator, or leadership coach. It is our belief that out-of-classroom roles exist only to support the teaching and learning that is to take place in our classrooms. Therefore, improving your craft as coach is one way of *shifting thinking* to positively impact student achievement.

This book is not written to inform coaches about the specific cultural characteristics of individuals or groups of people; rather, we offer you a frame for acknowledging those differences in ways that demonstrate a high value for diverse perspectives, beliefs, behaviors, languages, and cultures. This book is a *coach's guide for shifting thinking* in ways that support and foster diverse educational environments.

This book is a personal journey map

This book guides the reader on a personal learning journey to become more culturally conscious of self and others. The authors hope that reading this book may, in practice, cause a *shift* in your own thinking. The journey begins as Chapter 1 makes a case for needing Culturally Proficient Coaching in today's complex and diverse school communities. We address the importance of establishing collaborative teaching and learning environments that focus on closing and eliminating the achievement gap that exists between students being well served and those students, predominately students of color, not being well served. One way to enhance the progress and benefits of collaborative practice is through coaching. Coaching is a way to formalize the reflective practice for educators. The authors state our purposes in integrating Cognitive Coachings and Cultural Proficiency as concepts and tools. We have intentionally repeated information about these tools and concepts throughout the book as a way to reinforce your learning and practice with two concepts. With tongue-in-cheek, one of the authors refers to this repetitive process as *planned redundancy*.

Chapter 2 serves as a review of various coaching models. The models are explained within today's context for increased need for coaches who focus on improved performance. We selected Cognitive

Coaching as a model for deeper explanation and exploration because of the Five States of Mind for mediating cognitive processes. As we refer to Cognitive Coaching in the book, we cite cofounders Art Costa and Bob Garmston of the Center for Cognitive Coaching and recognize the service mark (Cognitive CoachingSM) held by Costa and Garmston and www.centerforcognitivecoaching.org. We have been granted permission to hereafter in this text refer to Cognitive Coaching without the service mark, and with capital letters. We also refer to Cultural Proficiency with capital letters because it is a significant title given to the work of The Cultural Proficiency Group (Nuri Robins, Lindsey, Terrell, and Lindsey).

Chapter 3 encourages and guides you, the reader, to look in the mirror for self-assessment and awareness of who you are as a coach. The chapter briefly reviews the Tools of Culturally Proficiency. Cultural Proficiency is the inside-out approach that the coach uses to acknowledge and value diversity. Therefore, the self-assessment instruments in this chapter help inform the reader about personal skills, capabilities, values, and behaviors.

Chapter 4 presents our integrated model as a mental model, a mindset, a way of thinking, talking, acting, and reacting. This model is designed for skillful coaches to look deeply at their own assumptions as well as guide others to surface deeply held assumptions about race, class, culture, and gender. The model also supports new, emerging coaches as they become more conscious of their skills and knowledge about coaching. The authors make the assumption that many readers of this book have a working knowledge of various models for coaching. We also wanted the book to serve as guide for those readers who are intuitive coaches and want to improve their skill level by formalizing their knowledge of coaching as a craft.

The reader's journey continues as Chapter 5 presents Maple View School District, as a *work in progress*. Community and school leaders in Maple View have been engaged in standards-based instruction and cultural proficiency for the past five years. Readers of other Cultural Proficiency books are well acquainted with the characters in this on-going saga of school transformation. For our new readers, the characters and the community of Maple View School District represent a composite of schools, communities, and districts with which the authors have worked and interacted over the past 10 years. The chapter includes their real world experiences as coaching conversation vignettes.

Readers of this book share the common need of becoming more culturally confident in a culturally diverse environment. Therefore,

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Chapters 6 through 9 examine each of the Five Essential Elements for Cultural Proficiency integrated with the Five States of Mind.

Chapter 6 guides the reader in assessing cultural knowledge for self and for others. Consciousness is the State of Mind used as a resource for being aware of how we are perceived by those different from ourselves. The coach revisits the importance of building trust and rapport in the cross-cultural relationship.

Chapter 7 builds on the resources of flexibility and efficacy. The reader moves beyond a tolerance for diversity to a value and high regard for diversity. The coach's confidence is increased in relation to the multiple perspectives included in the conversations.

Chapter 8 gets to the heart of conflict resolution as central to the dynamics of difference. Diversity is a natural part of today's complex school communities and must be viewed as an opportunity rather than a deficit. This Culturally Proficient Coach draws primarily from the internal resources of craftsmanship and interdependence to facilitate and mediate conflicts that arise out of differences. Coaches support individual growth within a diverse learning community.

Chapter 9 demonstrates the importance of consciousness as a resource for adapting to diverse and changing communities. The coach's awareness and knowledge of how to adapt to the influence of various cultures enhances cross-cultural communication skills. The reader has the opportunity to reflect on ways for adapting to diversity.

Chapter 10 explains that institutionalizing cultural knowledge is a fundamental step toward systemic change and continuous improvement. This chapter addresses the oppressive nature of stereotypes, power, bias, and discrimination in schools and communities and how to confront these barriers using effective coaching skills.

Our invitation

Chapter 11 is our invitation toward action. We offer three samples of resources that the Culturally Proficient Coach may use to institutionalize cultural knowledge. We invite you now to join us on this learning journey. The journey is an invitation for you to interact with the text as a reflective thinker. We encourage you to record your thoughts, questions, assumptions, and beliefs. Be willing to *shift your thinking* and practice your coaching skills in ways that you become more culturally confident in the day-to-day settings for human interaction and learning. Enjoy the journey.