

# Cultural Proficiency Continuum

Cecil County Public Schools  
Cultural Proficiency Professional  
Development

# What is cultural proficiency?

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- A way of being that enables both individuals and organizations to respond effectively to people who differ from them.
- Cultural proficiency is not an off-the-shelf program. It is an approach; it provides tools and help for an increasingly diverse world with an increasing number of well-intentioned and fearful people.
- The use of specific tools effectively describing, responding to, and planning for issues that emerge in diverse environments.
- *Policies and practices* at the organizational level and *values, beliefs and behaviors* at the individual level that enables effective cross cultural interactions among employees, clients, and community.

# “What Ought to Be...”

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*... listening... requires not only open eyes and ears, but open hearts and minds. We do not really see through our eyes or hear through our ears, but through our beliefs... It is not easy, but it is the only way to learn what it might feel like to be someone else and the only way to start the dialogue.*

-Lisa Delpit

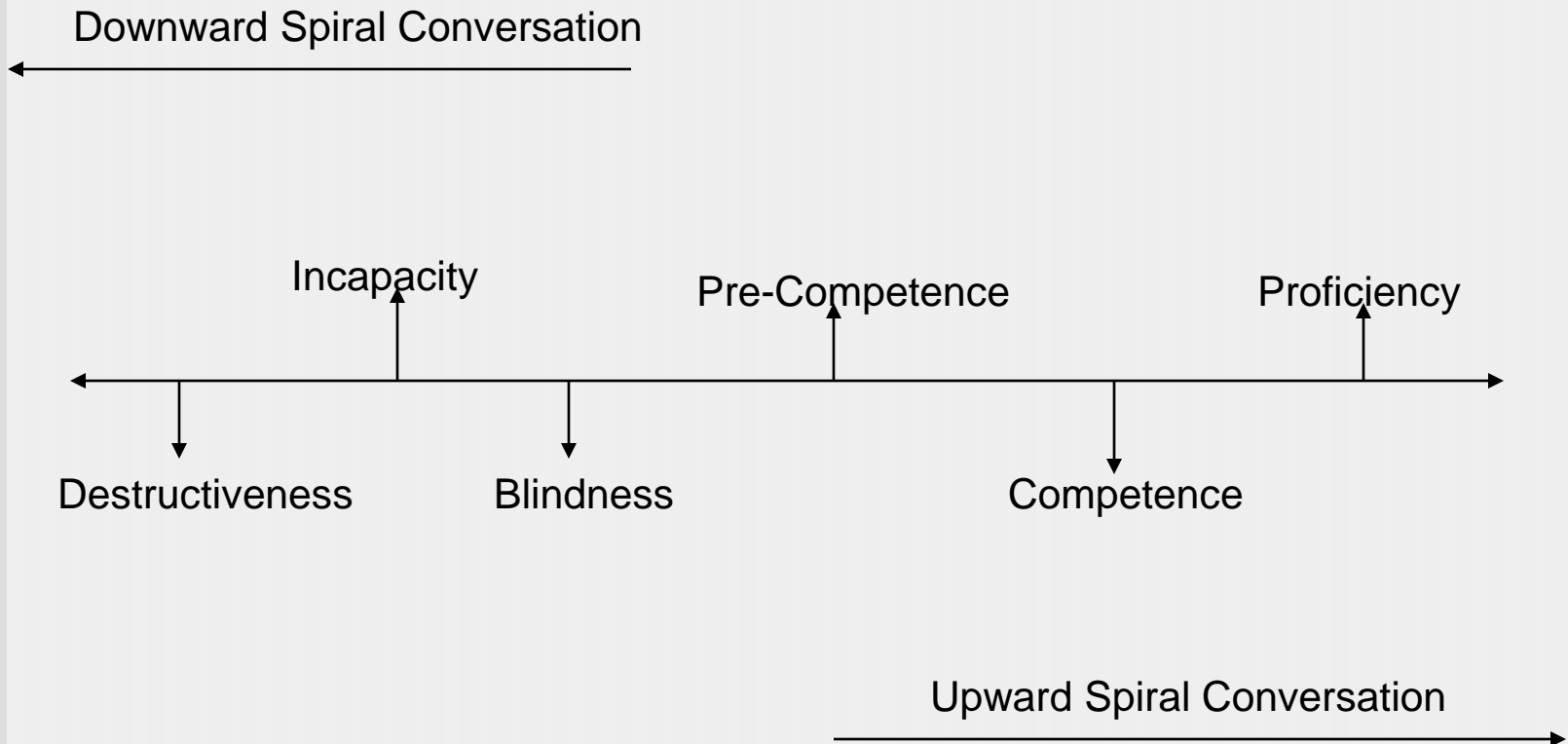
# The Continuum

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There are six points along the cultural proficiency continuum that indicate unique ways of perceiving and responding to differences.

- Cultural Destructiveness
- Cultural Incapacity
- Cultural Blindness
- Cultural Pre-Competence
- Cultural Competence
- Cultural Proficiency

# Cultural Proficiency Continuum



# Cultural Destructiveness

*“See the difference; stomp it out.”*

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*Using one’s power to eliminate the culture of another.*

## Examples

- Genocide or Ethnocide
- Exclusion Laws
- Shun/Avoid certain curriculum topics

“When we redistrict we can get rid of THAT neighborhood!”

“Why are those kids speaking Chinese at lunch?”

“There are so many problems coming from Lakeside.”

“If we could get rid of the special needs students, our scores would improve.”

# Cultural Incapacity

*“See the difference; make it wrong.”*

*Believing in the superiority of one’s own culture and behaving in ways that disempower another’s culture.*

## Examples

- Disproportionate allocation of resources to certain groups
- Lowered expectations
- Expecting “others” to change: My way or the highway.

“Another generation to never leave the trailer park.”

“His mom admitted he was special education when she went to school, so we can’t expect him to do well”

“The apple doesn’t fall far from the tree.”

Lack of an equal representation of staff/administrators that reflect diversity in our district.

# Cultural Blindness

*“See the difference; act like you don’t.”*

*Acting as if cultural differences do not matter or as if there are not differences among/between cultures.*

## Examples

- Discomfort in noting difference
- Beliefs/actions that assume world is fair and achievement is based on merit

“Our school does not need to focus on multicultural education- we have no diversity.”

“Everyone learns the same.”

“Just don’t recognize their religion. We don’t want to offend.”

“I’m not prejudiced. I don’t see color in my students.”

# Cultural Pre-Competence

*“See the difference; respond to it inappropriately.”*

*Recognizing the limitations of one’s skills or an organization's practices when interacting with other cultural groups.*

## Examples

- Delegate diversity work to others, to a committee
- Quick fix, packaged short-term programs
- Unclear rules, expectations for all diversity programs for staff

“Diversity is covered through our Language Arts curriculum.”

Cultural programs asked to be lead by those of that background.

“I’ll do my best to make the Special Education student feel part of the Honors course.”

“Make sure you do an activity for Black History month.”

# Cultural Competence

*“See the difference; understand the difference that difference makes.”*

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*Interacting with others using the five essential elements of cultural proficiency as the standard for behavior and practice.*

## Examples

- Advocacy
- On-going education of self and others
- Support, modeling, and risk-taking behaviors

“You are you. I am me. But together, we are we.”

SIT plan goals for all students.

“I think it is interesting to look at another’s perspective through another lens.”

Our county mission statement capitalizes ALL.

# Cultural Proficiency

*“See the difference; respond positively. Engage and adapt.”*

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*Esteem culture; knowing how to learn about organizational culture; interacting effectively in a variety of cultural groups.*

## Examples

- Interdependence
- Personal change and transformation
- Alliance for groups other than one's own

Differentiate to the needs of all learners.

My boys aren't doing well in reading. / need to start integrating more non-fiction.

“With the addition of \_\_\_\_\_, our classroom experience has become richer. The other students are learning from him also.

“Thank you for calling the parents and explaining in Spanish about our field trip.”

# Cultural Proficiency...

## *in our school!*

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Using the sticky notes provided at your table...

1. Record one example per sticky note of a situation, quote, scenario, or something you have heard that represents each of the six parts of the continuum.
2. Try your best to provide *at least* two examples of each:
  - Cultural Destructiveness
  - Cultural Incapacity
  - Cultural Blindness
  - Cultural Pre-Competence
  - Cultural Competence
  - Cultural Proficiency
3. When you are finished, place the sticky notes on the corresponding chart paper.