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## Educators' Rubric for Support of English Learning Students and Their Communities

*Changing the Conversation*

*This notion that all students can succeed may seem trite because it is constantly repeated in the pedagogical literature. However, it is not until you see it in action that you know it can be more than a slogan.*

—Gloria Ladson-Billings (1994, p. 44)

### GETTING CENTERED

Take a moment and think about comments you have heard colleagues make about English learning students, about programs that support English

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Material in this chapter is derived from two Cultural Proficiency books—Diana L. Stephens & Randall B. Lindsey. (2011). *Culturally Proficient Collaboration: Use and Misuse of School Counselors*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin; and Carmella S. Franco, Maria G. Ott, & Darline P. Robles. (2011). *A Culturally Proficient Society Begins in School: Leadership for Equity*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin.

language learning, or about parents/guardians of your English learning students. Listen to what they are saying. What assumptions do you hear being made about the students? In the space below, record the key words you are hearing, then discern the assumptions implied in those words.

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In Chapter 1, we were reminded that teaching students who are learning English is not a new requirement for our schools. Our task for teaching English learning students has been long and varied. Schools often have been charged with teaching English to students immigrating to our shores. Sometimes our task as educators has been to teach English to students who are native to North America. Still other times, our English learning students may be second- or third-generation immigrants. Teaching English to these students has often been roiled in issues of nativism, anti-immigrant fervor, and resistance to learning curricular and instructional strategies appropriate to English learning students. Now, at the dawn of the 21st century, recently emerged accountability movements require us to be as effective in teaching English learning students as we are with native English speakers. We have an opportunity we must seize in such a way that demonstrates our ability to provide our students the knowledge and skills to be successful in a multilingual, multicultural world community.

Chapter 2 taught us about the personal work of reflection about our professional practice and the manner in which dialogue supports our examining school-based policies and prevalent practices. In this chapter, we use a rubric to bring together three important elements—topics about English language instruction, reflection on our practices, and opportunities for dialogue.

### **Making Meaning of the Rubric**

Table 3.1 presents the Educators' Rubric for Support of English Learning Students and Their Communities. Depictions in the first column are the Essential Elements' operational descriptions of the role

of educators and their schools. The actions are to be used as leverage points for personal and school growth. This guide is suggested for reading and interpreting Table 3.1, Educators' Rubric for Support of English Learning Students and Their Communities:

- Note the rubric is comprised of rows and columns.
- Each of the rows is one of the five standards, also referred to as an *Essential Element of Cultural Competence*. The first column represents an operational definition of each Essential Element. The Essential Elements can serve as leverage points of change to be used by educators as well as formal and nonformal school leaders for their personal growth and with their schools/districts.
- There are seven columns. At the top of the first column is the title **Essential Elements**. Columns 2 through 7 are the phases of the Cultural Proficiency Continuum.
- As you read from Cultural Destructiveness to Cultural Competence for each of the five Essential Elements, you are viewing the Essential Elements as specific points of action in the progression of change for educators and their schools/districts.
- The sixth column is titled **Cultural Competence**. Each of the descriptors in that column describes one of the Essential Elements of Cultural Competence. The language is in active voice and describes actions that can be taken today in schools. It is at Cultural Competence in the Continuum where behaviors and related actions are deemed to be "at standard."
- The seventh column is titled **Cultural Proficiency**. The description is intended to be future focused and enduring.

**The Intentional Use of "Educator":** Inclusive term for policymakers, administrators, teachers, and counselors.

Effective use of the rubric involves being able to guide self and others to recognize nuances of language and embedded assumptions. The two activities that follow will support and deepen your understanding of the rubric and the role of educators when using the Essential Elements as leverage points for change. The activities are also highly effective professional development activities for your reflective use or as dialogic activities with colleagues.

It is our experience that when engaged with analyzing the rubrics, educators can "see" with new eyes.

**Table 3.1** Educators’ Rubric for Support of English Learning Students and Their Communities

<i>Essential Elements for Including and Supporting English Learning Students</i>	<i>Informed by Barriers to Cultural Proficiency</i>		
	<i>Cultural Destructiveness</i>	<i>Cultural Incapacity</i>	<i>Cultural Blindness</i>
<p><b>Assessing Cultural Knowledge</b>—Extent to which educators initiate learning about their own and others’ culture(s) as assets for making changes that benefit underserved students in schools and in the linguistically and culturally diverse communities.</p>	<p>Degrade linguistically and culturally diverse communities and uses a narrow definition of Canadian and U.S. cultures that render other cultures as unworthy.</p> <p>Repress any references to students’ home culture and language by implementing English-only policies and programs thereby becoming barriers to your own progress and the progress of others.</p>	<p>Disavow any positive influence of students’ home language and culture on student success and uses remedial programs to promote language and cultural assimilation.</p> <p>Treat students’ home and linguistically and culturally diverse communities as a detriment to their learning.</p>	<p>Deny or are incapable of viewing the school’s culturally and language diverse community as assets to student success.</p> <p>Participate in or promote a compliant, standardized culture of continuous improvement for all students; however, use standardized and English language tests as single measures of progress irrespective of students’ language and culture.</p>

<i>Informed by Guiding Principles of Cultural Proficiency</i>		
<i>Cultural Precompetence</i>	<i>Cultural Competence At Standard</i>	<i>Cultural Proficiency</i>
<p>Acknowledge disparities in one's and colleagues' information about students and community cultures as assets; and commit to you and your school's learning as a result of this analysis.</p> <p>Commit to you and your school's ongoing learning about culturally and language diverse students and communities, or risk regression to Cultural Blindness or worse.</p>	<p>Learn about and demonstrate knowledge about the culturally and language diverse community you serve in authentic ways.</p> <p>Utilizes the full complement of school and community resources to access opportunities for success.</p> <p>View the linguistically and culturally diverse community as an asset.</p> <p>Know how other educators and the school as a whole react to the linguistically and culturally diverse community you serve; and continuously learn how to be effective in serving the community.</p> <p>Learn about your linguistically and culturally diverse school and its grade levels and departments as cultural entities.</p> <p>Provide leadership by modeling and promoting culturally responsive ways to meet the educational needs of your linguistically and culturally diverse community.</p>	<p>Educate about and address sociocultural inequities in the achievement of your linguistically and culturally diverse students.</p> <p>Advocate for linguistically and culturally diverse students' academic and social success.</p> <p>Interact with families and community agencies and other resources in a manner that engages them as partners in the education of all students.</p>

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<i>Essential Elements for Including and Supporting English Learning Students</i>	<i>Informed by Barriers to Cultural Proficiency</i>		
	<i>Cultural Destructiveness</i>	<i>Cultural Incapacity</i>	<i>Cultural Blindness</i>
<p><b>Valuing Diversity</b>— Extent to which educators are inclusive of people and cultures with viewpoints and experiences different from their own for the benefit of the school and the linguistically and culturally diverse community.</p>	<p>Use no accommodation for linguistically and culturally diverse students, their cultures, or their communities and profess the purpose of school is to make students into English-only speakers.</p> <p>Deny access to core curriculum, instructional materials, academic rigor, supplemental instructional, and related resources to support linguistically and culturally diverse learners.</p>	<p>Exclude diverse perspectives and experiences for purpose of promoting an assimilationist function of school.</p> <p>Educators resist mandated language development requirements and openly regard them as an unnecessary intrusion into school that negatively impacts overall school academic achievement.</p>	<p>English learning students are assigned into classes, as are other students, with no regard for their language ability or fluency.</p> <p>Comply with state, province, or national minimal requirements for home-school, family involvement and make no further efforts to engage linguistically and culturally diverse communities.</p>

<i>Informed by Guiding Principles of Cultural Proficiency</i>		
<i>Cultural Precompetence</i>	<i>Cultural Competence At Standard</i>	<i>Cultural Proficiency</i>
<p>Recognize your limited knowledge about linguistically and culturally diverse students, their culture, and their communities and commit to expanding one's and the school's learning about the linguistically and culturally diverse communities it serves.</p> <p>Express your willingness to learn techniques and strategies that better serve linguistically and culturally diverse students to foster understanding and trust among one's students and their families.</p> <p>Strategies may be inconsistently applied among linguistically and culturally diverse students.</p>	<p>Engage one's school community in ways that linguistically and culturally diverse families and their communities are central to conversations, decision making and problem solving regarding student access to the core curriculum and engagement that results in academic achievement.</p> <p>Conduct and facilitate parent conferences and meetings using linguistically and culturally appropriate communication or translations for verbal and written communication.</p>	<p>Promote and develop mechanisms for creating a socially just school and society with particular emphasis on linguistically and culturally diverse students.</p> <p>Continuously engage all aspects of your school community to collaborate on common goals and share resources and engages in enhancing access of opportunity and eliminating achievement gaps, with particular attention paid to linguistically and culturally diverse students</p>

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<i>Essential Elements for Including and Supporting English Learning Students</i>	<i>Informed by Barriers to Cultural Proficiency</i>		
	<i>Cultural Destructiveness</i>	<i>Cultural Incapacity</i>	<i>Cultural Blindness</i>
<p><b>Managing the Dynamics of Difference</b>—Extent to which educators use problem solving and conflict resolution strategies as ways to be inclusive of multiple perspectives and to teach others about the dynamics of cultures in contact with one another.</p>	<p>Suppress diverse opinions about the educational needs of linguistically and culturally diverse students, thereby, deny, resist, or avoid developing and offering instructional or curricular programs to meet students’ unique educational needs.</p> <p>Require English learning students and their families to conform and adhere to the decision-making, problem-solving and conflict resolution style and structure of the school and district, which may not be culturally responsive to the communities served.</p>	<p>Comply with stated or implied approaches to conflict that maintain the status quo, exclude or trivializes diverse perspectives, and perpetuate a <i>one-size-fits-all</i> approach to education.</p> <p>Involves self with English learning issues only to satisfy local, state, and federal compliance requirements.</p>	<p>Seek to avoid conflict and in doing so make few attempts to solicit diverse points of view.</p> <p>Diagnose and inappropriately place linguistically and culturally diverse students by not using proper academic information or assessments.</p>



<i>Informed by Guiding Principles of Cultural Proficiency</i>		
<i>Cultural Precompetence</i>	<i>Cultural Competence At Standard</i>	<i>Cultural Proficiency</i>
<p>Engage in developing skills in problem solving and conflict resolution strategies that may work more effectively for some groups than others.</p> <p>Collect and examine academic and assessment placement information about some English learning students that may or may not be used on a consistent basis.</p> <p>Study alternative courses of action and weigh the associated benefits and risks. The consequence of which may be action toward Cultural Competence or regression to blindness and other forms of educational inertia.</p>	<p>Host and facilitate conversations that surface diverse opinions and perspectives across cultures and viewpoints as a natural and normal process within your school and the linguistically and culturally diverse community it serves.</p> <p>When hosting conversations, anticipate and confront resistance; then, take actions that may not be popular but are necessary in addressing the needs of English learning students within the linguistically and culturally diverse communities your school serves.</p>	<p>Resolve issues that occur among cultures to deepen school and community understanding about educational and societal injustices experienced by linguistically and culturally diverse students and their families.</p> <p>Collaborate across linguistically and culturally diverse communities served by the school as an active way to address and solve issues confronting English learning students.</p>

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<i>Essential Elements for Including and Supporting English Learning Students</i>	<i>Informed by Barriers to Cultural Proficiency</i>		
	<i>Cultural Destructiveness</i>	<i>Cultural Incapacity</i>	<i>Cultural Blindness</i>
<p><b>Adapting to Diversity</b>—Extent to which cultural knowledge is integrated into a moral imperative that guides educator values and school policies to achieve equitable educational and socially fair and just outcomes.</p>	<p>Believe that recognizing multilingualism and culture is a distraction to the educational process.</p> <p>Reject pluralism as being part of curricula and believe what the traditional school values and enacts policies that are in the best interest of students.</p> <p>Avoid using achievement data to understand the school’s effectiveness with linguistically and culturally diverse students or to inform conversations and decisions and is guided by predominant assumptions and biases that go unchallenged.</p>	<p>Expect students and their parents to take advantage of existing school programs and opportunities, making no linguistic or cultural accommodations, and then judging parents/guardians as lacking interest in their students’ academic success when they do not participate.</p> <p>Use achievement data to develop English learning intervention and remediation programs that limit student access to core curriculum and, therefore, limits access to higher levels of achievement.</p>	<p>Disregard the belief that school has a foremost role in closing achievement gaps, which leads to explaining academic disparities in terms of external forces such as language learning, social class, student mobility, perceptions of parental education, or ethnicity/race.</p> <p>Use achievement data with the intent of improving the image of the school and without attention to the curricular and instructional needs of linguistically and culturally diverse students.</p>

<i>Informed by Guiding Principles of Cultural Proficiency</i>		
<i>Cultural Precompetence</i>	<i>Cultural Competence At Standard</i>	<i>Cultural Proficiency</i>
<p>Cultivate a personal and schoolwide sense of responsibility for learning about each and every language and cultural groups in the community.</p> <p>Learn how to disaggregate achievement data to work with colleagues to interpret and plan for effective use of the data in ways that ensure student academic and personal/social success for all linguistically and culturally diverse students.</p> <p>Develop an initial awareness of the benefit of disaggregating and examining access and opportunity data that looks for disparities among linguistically and culturally diverse students in special education, advanced placement classes, extracurricular activities, and student discipline.</p>	<p>Function as teams to effectively use achievement and access/opportunity data and culturally relevant instructional and curricular content to facilitate classroom discussions that represent the cultural and linguistic diversity of students in an inclusive democratic environment.</p> <p>Develop students' ability to access knowledge, make decisions, solve problems, and develop dispositions that will benefit them in an interactive intercultural society.</p>	<p>Organize school and parent/guardian groups to analyze and understand opportunity/access and achievement data in a way that considers divergent and often conflicting points of view and leads to equitable and just practices and policies.</p> <p>Challenge restrictive legal mandates and catalyze effective efforts intended to meet the needs of all students, with particular attention to linguistically and culturally diverse students.</p>

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<i>Essential Elements for Including and Supporting English Learning Students</i>	<i>Informed by Barriers to Cultural Proficiency</i>		
	<i>Cultural Destructiveness</i>	<i>Cultural Incapacity</i>	<i>Cultural Blindness</i>
<p><b>Institutionalizing Cultural Knowledge</b>—Extent to which cultural knowledge is evident in educator behavior and in school policies and practices that address educational inequities and tend to close access, opportunity, and achievement gaps.</p> <p>Advocates for equitable and just policies and practices and in the use of data to inform school of all student needs.</p>	<p>Deny or resist any responsibility for exploring institutional barriers to teaching and learning linguistically and culturally diverse students.</p> <p>Marginalize or exclude students from core curriculum by holding the belief that some linguistically and culturally diverse students are not worthy or capable of higher forms of academic achievement.</p>	<p>Judge students' and their parents'/ guardians' cultures and languages, other than standard forms of English, as major impediments to their success in school and society.</p> <p>Promote the primary role of the school to remediate the linguistic and cultural "deficiencies" in language development that limit student success in school.</p>	<p>Accept narrow policies and practices that fail to benefit all students equitably.</p> <p>Fail to acknowledge that the persistence of achievement gaps is tied to schools' failure to embrace students' cultures and language.</p> <p>Develop minimal school achievement targets that are compliance-based and do not consider persistent access and achievement disparities.</p>

<i>Informed by Guiding Principles of Cultural Proficiency</i>		
<i>Cultural Precompetence</i>	<i>Cultural Competence At Standard</i>	<i>Cultural Proficiency</i>
<p>Recognize through data analyses that achievement gaps are persistent and begin to pay attention to inequities inherent in student access and opportunity that leads to inappropriate academic placement.</p> <p>Begin to question the unequal distribution of available and appropriate human, educational, and financial resources that supports professional development for appropriately serving linguistically and culturally diverse students.</p> <p>Risk being overwhelmed by the enormity of closing achievement gaps and choose to do little or nothing, and revert to counterproductive behaviors and policies.</p>	<p>Advocate and sponsor opportunities for sharing expertise among school personnel to address access opportunities for linguistically and culturally diverse students and families.</p> <p>Intentionally seek input from linguistically and culturally diverse communities, inclusive of those who do not assert their voices or perspectives, to address access and achievement issues for their children.</p> <p>Assess policies and practices and to make equitable decisions that consider all community members' input, with particular focus on linguistically and culturally diverse students.</p> <p>Implement evidenced-based programs and consistently follow student placement decisions established on multiple academic measures that include language proficiency (i.e., English and home).</p>	<p>Advocate for just and equitable policies and practices derived from the use of data to inform school of student needs, with particular emphasis on linguistically and culturally diverse students.</p> <p>Seek to use data to inform school progress in narrowing and closing achievement gaps for linguistically and culturally diverse students.</p> <p>Mentor colleagues and community members to develop and use culturally proficient communication strategies to facilitate an understanding among the larger community that meeting the needs of linguistically and culturally diverse students contributes to and supports the education of all students.</p>

*Educators of English Learning Students*, by Reyes L. Quezada, Delores B. Lindsey, and Randall B. Lindsey. site or nonprofit organization that has purchased this book.

**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. We suggest these steps:

- Turn your attention to the first essential element, **Assessing Cultural Knowledge**.
- Study the **operational definition** of Assessing Cultural Knowledge in the first column. We refer to this definition as the “essence” of the essential element.
- 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.
- 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.
- If conducting the activity with colleagues, compare and discuss your observations and reactions.
- Finally, perform the same analysis with the remaining four essential elements—Valuing Diversity, Managing the Dynamics of Difference, Adapting to Diversity, and Institutionalizing Cultural Knowledge.

Upon completing this activity, you will be equipped to use the rubric to diagnose and formatively develop your values and behaviors and your school’s policies and practices. In the section below, we describe diagnostic applications of the rubric.

### **Reflection**

Please use the space below to record your observations and reactions to the “Adjectives and Verbs” activity. What did you see? What are your reactions? In what ways does the activity inform your understanding of the Essential Elements as standards for teaching English learning students?

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**Assumptions.** This second activity engages you in analyzing the rubric by reading beneath the two vertical columns, *Informed by Barriers to Cultural*

*Proficiency and Informed by the Guiding Principles of Cultural Proficiency.* Follow these steps to guide your inquiry:

- Read the 15 cells headed by *Informed by Barriers to Cultural Proficiency* and note the assumptions embedded in the descriptions and illustrations.
- Summarize the assumptions for later reference.
- Now read the 15 cells headed by *Informed by the Guiding Principles of Cultural Proficiency* and note the assumptions embedded in the descriptions and illustrations.
- As with the previous step, summarize the assumptions.
- Examine the two sets of assumptions. In what ways do they compare and contrast? What are your observations and reactions to the assumptions you have uncovered?
- If conducting the activity with colleagues, compare and discuss your observations and reactions.

After completing these two activities, *Verbs and Adjectives and Assumptions*, you are now prepared to use the rubric in your own professional practice and with colleagues in service to your total student population, with particular emphasis on your English learning students.

**Reflection**

In the space below, please record your observations and reactions to the *Assumptions* activity. What did you see? What are your reactions? In what ways does the activity inform your understanding of the Essential Elements as standards for teaching English learning students?


**GOING DEEPER**

*Personal Reflection*—Thinking about the rubric and the two activities, *Adjectives and Verbs* and *Assumptions*, what are you learning or affirming about

your views regarding English learning students? What new insights, if any, are you seeing about pedagogy?

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*Dialogic Activity*—Now that you have studied the rubric and the two related activities, what do you view as the strengths of your current approaches to teaching English learning students? Where along the rubric would you locate your current approaches? What might be the underlying assumptions of those approaches? What might be some changes you could make to your curriculum and/or instructional approaches in order to better serve English learning students? What do you need to learn and how might that learning inform your professional development plans for the next year or two?

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These first three chapters have provided you the introduction to using this book as a guide to examine your own values, beliefs, and practice about serving English learning students. Chapters 4 through 8 use the Essential Elements of Cultural Proficiency to guide you further on your learning journey toward culturally proficient educational practices. You will meet members of the River View School District and community. These case stories represent a composite of schools and districts in which the authors have consulted in recent years. These chapters also provide you a variety of professional resources to support you in your journey toward Cultural Proficiency.