
Introduction

We invite you to explore with us these and other critical questions posed in this book.

- *In what ways might the implementation of the Common Core State Standards (CCSS) differ from the ways teachers have been teaching and students have been learning for the past 15 years?*
- *What challenges are you and fellow educators confronting as you seek to fulfill the promise of the CCSS for all learners?*
- *What leverage opportunities might the CCSS provide educators as we structure and guarantee access to college and career readiness for historically marginalized and underserved students?*

THE INTENT OF THIS BOOK

At the writing of this book, school districts throughout 43 states and the District of Columbia are engaged in various stages of implementing the CCSS (some states are instituting similarly rigorous standards). Our intention in this book is to support your desire to ensure equity outcomes of CCSS by using the lens of Cultural Proficiency to examine and manage the professional learning that supports schools' and districts' implementation plans. We do not advocate for adding Cultural Proficiency as a new initiative or program. Rather, we propose that educators work collaboratively to integrate the Tools of Cultural Proficiency with their current work in serving the academic and social needs of students. Collaboration and integration focused on equity and access for all learners will be aimed at the CCSS for all students to achieve at levels higher than ever before. These higher levels of achievement mean that all students have access to curriculum materials and instructional strategies that will prepare them for college (entrance and exit) AND prepare them for their chosen workplaces and career paths.

A SHIFT IN THINKING: THE “SILVER LINING” OF NO CHILD LEFT BEHIND AND THE OPPORTUNITY OF CCSS

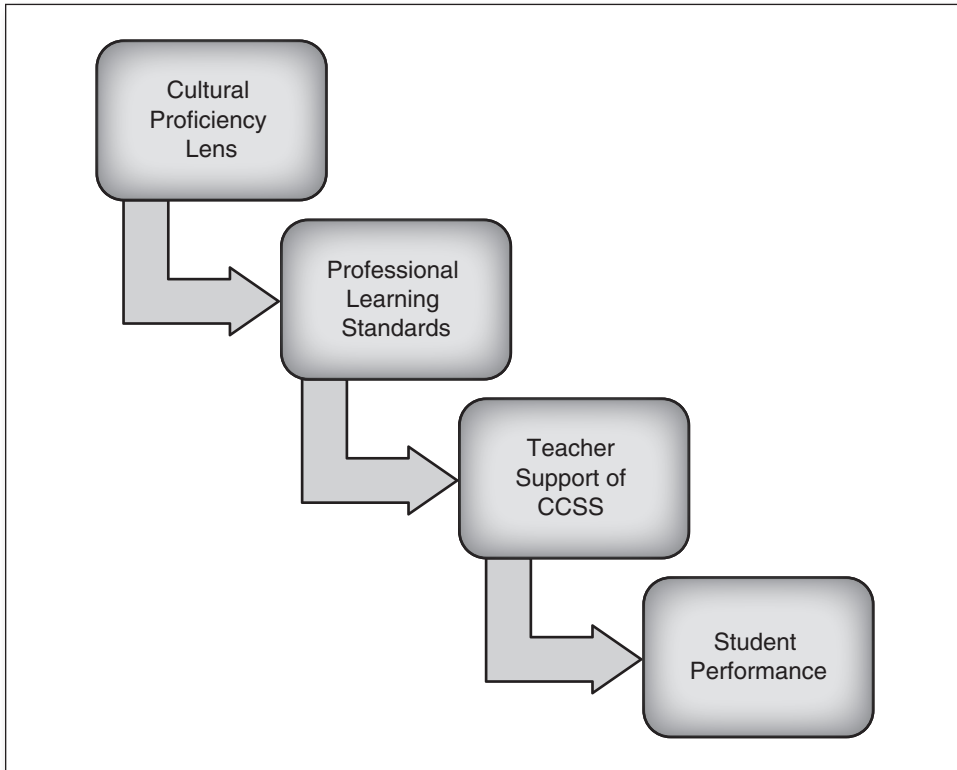
The concept and implementation of CCSS require a shift in thinking from the past 15 years, while preserving a significant achievement afforded by No Child Left Behind (NCLB). Whereas the mindset for the NCLB initiative was *satisfying high school exit criteria*, it also made our profession fully aware of the achievement gap. The use of disaggregated data is a significant opportunity provided by NCLB to be maintained as we move forward with CCSS. CCSS brings to us a focus on the thinking and performance skills necessary for *college and career readiness*. CCSS requires educators to think and plan broader than the minimum competencies mandated by NCLB. CCSS is a redesign and recalibration of the academic environment to provide access for higher order, critical thinking for all learners. In other words, CCSS can provide leverage for doing what we do best—teaching our students to think and perform.

FROM DESIGN TO DELIVERY— CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT

We invite and encourage you as educators to examine your beliefs, values, and assumptions about how students learn and what students need to learn to be college and career ready. Cultural Proficiency provides the equity lens for CCSS so that this new initiative stays focused on *college AND career readiness* rather than risk becoming *college OR career readiness*. In Chapter 12, we offer you and your colleagues the opportunity to develop your Culturally Proficient Professional Learning Action Plan as a systematic way to support implementation of the CCSS in your school and classroom. Professional learning supports implementation planning from the design stage using new or alternative curriculum to the delivery of that curriculum content (i.e., instructional strategies) and assessment of student progress for improvement of instruction. Figure 1 illustrates the interdependent relationship of quality professional learning delivered through the lens of Cultural Proficiency. The result of this design is a clearly stated plan focused on clearly stated student outcomes that embrace the diversity of learners in our schools.

As noted in Figure 1, teachers and administrators who work collaboratively to identify their quality professional learning standards can guide their Culturally Proficient Professional Learning Action Plan (CPPLAP) from the early design stage to the implementation stage using

Figure 1 Interdependent Relationship of Quality Professional Learning Delivered Through a Cultural Proficiency Lens



the continuous improvement process. Student assessment data examined through the lens of Cultural Proficiency allows for continuous monitoring of the CPPLAP's outcomes and goals. A prominent feature of this continuous process is benchmarking the formative assessments through the lens of Cultural Proficiency and thereby providing an equitable learning environment.

CULTURAL PROFICIENCY AND PROFESSIONAL LEARNING

This book integrates the *Tools of Cultural Proficiency* with quality *Standards for Professional Learning* as one approach to examining and implementing the Common Core State Standards. The authors believe the language, the tools, and the practices of Cultural Proficiency are missing from the current conversations and implementations of Common Core plans. We also believe that

topics of equity and access to curriculum and quality instruction for historically marginalized and underserved groups of students have been largely absent from professional development/learning programs for the past 15 years. Those of you who are familiar with the Cultural Proficiency books will recognize the definitions and descriptions of the Four Tools of Cultural Proficiency in Chapter 3. If you are new to the conceptual framework, you will find Chapter 3's description of the Tools of Cultural Proficiency to be helpful without needing to read other books in the series first. Each Cultural Proficiency book is an application of the Tools to a particular setting. This book integrates quality professional learning standards with the Tools of Cultural Proficiency for teams of educators to execute schoolwide and districtwide implementation plans of CCSS to support all learners.

Resources Section

The resources section of the book provides useful tools to enhance ongoing learning, a matrix of how to use other Cultural Proficiency titles, and a Book Study Guide:

- The Book Study Guide is intended for use in deepening individual understanding of the content and for use in collegial professional learning.
- The matrix lists other Cultural Proficiency books and the essential questions that guided the books' development. The guiding questions are intended to promote your deeper learning and your professional growth as well.

As you will see in the matrix, 15 books on Cultural Proficiency are now available or in production. Each of the Cultural Proficiency titles has a distinct application of the Tools of Cultural Proficiency, and the matrix is organized to inform you of which book(s) may be appropriate for your use. Figure 2, The "Apps" of Cultural Proficiency, is a pictorial representation of the Cultural Proficiency books. The original and core book, *Cultural Proficiency: A Manual for School Leaders*, now in its third edition, presents our most detailed description of the Tools of Cultural Proficiency. The books radiating from the "Manual" also present the basic "Tools" in an applied manner relating to the books' intent (e.g., instruction, coaching, etc.)

A FORESHADOWING OF WHAT'S AHEAD

Chapter 1 introduces you to the purpose of the book and to important terms and the way we use them in the context of this book. Chapter 2 provides

Figure 2 The “Apps” of Cultural Proficiency

a historical and contextual background for school change and initiatives. You will see clearly why we are at this important juncture for US education. Chapter 3 presents descriptions and definitions of the Four Tools of Cultural Proficiency. Chapters 4, 5, and 6 provide the context for the promise, the opportunities, and challenges of implementing CCSS.

Chapters 7–11 capture the work of school leaders as they use the lens of equity to implement the CCSS. The stories in these five chapters are composites of actual school leaders, teachers, staff members, districts administrators, and parents with whom we have worked over the past two years as they prepared and implemented early stages of CCSS using Cultural Proficiency. Each chapter is framed using one of the 5 Essential Elements of Cultural Proficiency integrated with one of the standards of professional learning. As you read these five chapters, remember that these elements

and standards do not stand alone; rather, they function interdependently and holistically as standards for behaviors and desired actions. For the purposes of illustration and explanation, we offer them one chapter at a time with case stories to show the impact and influence of the elements combined with the standards.

Chapter 12 is the “Now What” chapter. *Now that you know what you know, to what are you willing to commit?* We provide you with an Action Plan template for implementation of your CPPLAP. Your Action Plan is grounded in the conceptual framework of Cultural Proficiency and quality Professional Learning Standards. The Action Plan establishes clear outcomes and goals that are consistent with the Common Core Standards of preparing all students for college and career options by the end of high school graduation.

YOU AND WE

We use the pronoun “you” to personalize our relationship to the reader of this book. The pronoun “we” refers to the co-authors of the book. We have combined our years of work as educators, school administrators, and scholar practitioners to bring you our experiences, our research, and our best thinking about the importance of responding to and implementing and sustaining the Common Core Standards in ways that provide all students access to college and career opportunities unlike anytime in this nation’s history.

THE FORMAT OF THIS BOOK

This book is designed as an individual guide for reflection and action. It is also designed to be used with colleagues in small groups or in large groups as a book study or a guide for developing a school or district CPPLAP for implementation of the Common Core. Each chapter has lined spaces for you to write your individual reflections to questions integrated with the text and suggestions for reflection and action at the end of each chapter. The reflections and the dialogues with your fellow learners will enhance your learning. And your learning community will be enhanced by diversity of perspectives, experiences, and expertise. We wish you well and join you on your lifelong journey of becoming culturally proficient.

Part I

Commitment to Equity, Transformative Change, and Implementation

The goals of equitable education outcomes and the Common Core State Standards (CCSS) can be mutually supportive if approached as being inclusive and interdependent. Educational and school reforms are historical processes that have shaped, molded, and buffeted schools for well over a century. Similarly, ensuring equitable access and academic outcomes has a long, often-tortuous history in the United States and Canada.

A virtue of No Child Left Behind is that it made achievement gaps public. There is no going back. Educational inequity has been uncovered and made part of the national educational discourse. Though flight from low-performing school districts to enclaves of historically advantaged communities continues, excuses for marginalizing historically underserved students and their communities are being eroded. It is into this mix the CCSS can drive changes in instruction, curriculum alignment, and assessment in ways that focus educators' attention on equitable access to higher order learning and, thereby, ensure equitable educational opportunities and outcomes for students in ways not yet seen.

Part I contains the Introduction and six chapters, each of which is a building block to understanding equity and reform in ways that will empower you to consider the changes you will want to make in your

educational practice and the way you will want to lead in your school or district. These six chapters present information designed to deepen your learning and, also, opportunities for personal reflection and dialogic opportunities to explore professional learning occasions with colleagues. Upon completion of these chapters, you will be well equipped to delve into Part II and learn how to use the 5 Essential Elements as standards to guide your individual educational practice and to lead professional learning experiences with colleagues.

Chapter 1 is designed to guide you in examining the mindsets you and your colleagues hold for important concepts such as reform experienced as transformative change and equitable opportunity promising higher learning opportunities and outcomes for all students. Chapter 1 also supplies definitions of key terms used throughout the book. A central thesis that winds through this book, and all other Cultural Proficiency books that we have constructed, is the power of assumptions, both those held by individual educators and those that become ingrained in our school's policies and practices. It is our mindsets, or sets of assumptions, about equity and change as embodied in the CCSS that can shape successes with our students.

Chapter 2 provides you with important information that will help inform and shape your perspective on your role as an educator. The winding history of school reform and initiatives for educational equity are presented and discussed as social forces that when understood, can help form our views of the tasks that lie before us. Knowing that the achievement gap has always been with us and is now part of ongoing discussions in schools and the general public is an important perspective. Similarly, having knowledge of the slow pace of educational equity is another important perspective. Then, when these two perspectives are brought together, they equip with you with what Fullan (2003) calls a moral imperative for closing access and achievement gaps.

Equipped with knowledge of mindsets, reform as transformative change, and issues of equity, you are now prepared to make expert use of Chapter 3. This chapter presents a detailed explanation and illustrations of the Tools of Cultural Proficiency. You will read and learn about how the Barriers to Cultural Proficiency serve to limit and deny equity, the Guiding Principles as core values to overcome the Barriers, the Continuum as a range of unhealthy to healthy behavior and practices, and the Essential Elements as standards for behavior and practices that are derived from the Guiding Principles. When taken together, these four tools are powerful instruments for you and your colleagues to use in guiding powerful learning opportunities for yourselves and your students.

Chapter 4 provides an overview of the promise and main features of the CCSS. Particular attention is paid to the shifts in teaching and learning that accompany successful implementation of CCSS.

Chapter 5 pays in-depth attention to leadership requirements for the successful implementation of CCSS. Once you have completed this chapter, you will be well informed in how to lead equitable, transformative change efforts in your school.

Chapter 6 uses the unorthodox word “stuckness” in the title. Through the experiences of one principal, we crafted this chapter to describe how using the Guiding Principles of Cultural Proficiency can jump-start the journey to transformative change. Collective efficacy and academic optimism inform the beliefs that our students can learn and that we can teach them.