

# The Cultural Proficiency Continuum Self-Assessment

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Read each of the points on the continuum, *presented in italics*, and the indicators that follow. Place a mark in the column that best matches your ability to describe how culture is regarded. Please treat this instrument as a needs assessment, not a test to be passed. For the instrument to have value for you, it must provide you with a profile of what you already know and what you have yet to learn.

## The Continuum for Cultural Proficiency

The Continuum and Indicators	Yes	No	Not Sure
<p><b>Cultural Destructiveness</b> – <i>I can describe how cultures that are different from mine are negated, disparaged, or purged by:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• describing how systems of oppression (i.e., racism, sexism, homophobia) are represented in the history of our country</li> <li>• describing how historical oppression is usually invisible in our history and literature texts</li> <li>• describing how the invisibility of culture in schools leads to non-dominant groups not being viewed as legitimate</li> <li>• describing one specific example of cultural destructiveness in our school/program</li> </ul>			
<p><b>Cultural Incapacity</b> – <i>I can describe how my cultural values and beliefs can be elevated and how cultures that are different from mine can be suppressed by:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• describing how superiority and inferiority are represented in the history of our country (e.g. Jim Crow laws and the need for civil rights acts, school desegregation)</li> <li>• describing discriminatory practices present in some educational settings</li> <li>• describing instances of low expectations held by educators</li> <li>• describing examples of subtle messages to people that they are not valued</li> </ul>			

The Continuum and Indicators	Yes	No	Not Sure
<p><b>Cultural Blindness</b> – <i>I can describe how I can act to not see differences among cultures and to not recognize differences by:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• describing how the messages that people intend to send are often not what is heard by others</li> <li>• describing the value placed in this country on pretending not to see difference</li> <li>• describing how textbooks do not include the meaningful representation of non-dominant groups</li> <li>• describing how we use expressions such as you need to work a little harder and don't be so sensitive to dismiss people's struggles</li> </ul>			
<p><b>Cultural Precompetence</b> – <i>I can describe how my lack of knowledge, experience, and understanding of other cultures limits my ability to interact with people whose cultures are different from mine by:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• giving examples of the frustration of knowing that current practices are not effective and not knowing what to do</li> <li>• describing instances of jumping to easy solutions that have no sustaining effect</li> <li>• describing the paradigmatic shift that occurs when moving from talking about others as benign the problem to discussing how one changes their practices to meet the needs of people from other cultural groups</li> <li>• describing the movement at this point in the continuum as representing a tipping point</li> </ul>			
<p><b>Cultural Competence</b> – <i>I can describe my use of the essential elements as standards for adapting my behavior by:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• describing how I am aware of the impact my culture has on others</li> <li>• describing how valuing diversity is different from tolerance</li> <li>• describing how one adapts to diversity in order to be effective</li> <li>• describing how one uses the essential elements to leverage change, personally, and organizationally</li> </ul>			

The Continuum and Indicators	Yes	No	Not Sure
<p><b>Cultural Proficiency</b> – <i>I can describe my constructive experiences in a variety of cultural settings by:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• describing how learning about cultures is a life-long process</li> <li>• describing examples of advocacy as a moral construct</li> <li>• describing examples of esteeming the cultures of others</li> <li>• describing how one learns about the cultures of others, including organizational cultures</li> </ul>			

### Score Sheet

There is no score sheet in the traditional sense. The purpose of the exercise is for you to have the opportunity to reflect on what you know and value prior to coaching others. Please accept our invitation to reflect on the marks and comments you entered into the Yes, No, and Not Sure columns.

### Reflection

Take a few moments and review the six points on the Continuum, the indicators and the columns you marked for each point. What was your reaction to the first three points of the continuum? What was your reaction to the next three points of the continuum?  
 What did you learn about yourself in doing this activity?