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| 1. Culture is ever-present.
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| You cannot *not* have a culture. Your culture is an aspect of your humanity. It is an ever present factor in shaping behaviors and values. Culture affects how you interact with others, how you see the world, and how you react to things that happen in your environment. Cultural differences may sometimes be the source of behaviors in others that you might find rude. Implicit cultural biases may lead you to question behaviors that differ from yours or differs from what is accepted by the mainstream culture. Culture is ever present force in organizations as well. The norms, the climate, and the unwritten rules of your school are all a reflection of its culture. *Culturally proficient educators recognize that culture influences their behaviors, values, and beliefs. They acknowledge and appreciate the cultural differences among people in their environment.* |
| 1. There is diversity within and between cultures.
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| There is more diversity between *individuals* within groups than there is between *groups.* Because of the extensive diversity within cultures, it is important to learn about cultural groups, not as monoliths, but as the complex and diverse group of individuals that they are. Stereotypes about particular groups give the impression that all members of a group share the same needs or same circumstances. *Culturally proficient educators recognize intracultural differences and do not rely on stereotypes in learning about and building relationships with people who might be different from them.* |
| 1. People have group and individual identities.
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| It is important to treat people as individuals. It is also important to acknowledge group identities of the individuals. You cannot guarantee the dignity of a person unless you also preserve the dignity of his nor her *group.* Making negative comments or reinforcing a negative stereotype about a group is insulting to its members. Moreover, attempting to separate a person from her or his group by telling the person, “You are different; you are not like other XXXs,” may offend, and it invalidate a person’s identification with the group. For some (often those not well served by the mainstream culture), group identity is quite important and has served a valuable purpose in their lives. Dismissing or ignoring this may mean dismissing or “not seeing” that person.*Culturally proficient educators recognize that although general knowledge of the cultures represented in any classroom, school, or workplace can be useful, cultural knowledge is gained one person at a time.* |
| 1. Families, as defined by culture, are the primary systems of support.
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| There are multiple definitions of families within and across cultures. In the traditional image of European American homes, the ideal family has been identified as one mother, one father, and the children. However there are many other family configurations (for example, multigenerational, extended family, single-parent, same gender parents, foster care, …) that can provide a loving and supportive environment for children. Educators and parents may have different perceptions of the role that parents should play in their children’s education. When educators and parents are from different socio-economic, racial, or ethnic cultural groups, often they have different expectations for the essential role that parents play in providing for children’s success in school. *Effective and meaningful partnerships between families and schools require sensitive, respectful, and caring educators who are willing to learn about culture of the student, the family, and the community. Culturally proficient educators seek to incorporate cultural knowledge in authentic ways when partnering with families.*  |
| 1. People are served in varying degrees by the mainstream culture.
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| If you are well-served by the mainstream culture, you may not even notice the many ways that the culture of your group, organization, or society affects those who are not as familiar with the cultural norms. Often when those well served by the mainstream culture recognizes that differences exist, they suggest that people or groups who are different simply change and learn the new rules. This approach puts the burden for change on those who are underserved. Members of groups outside of the mainstream culture sometimes must choose whether to give up or hide aspects of their identities in order to pursue success in the mainstream culture.*A commitment to cultural proficiency is a commitment to a dynamic relationship in which all parties learn from one another and all parties are open to adapting as they manage the dynamics of differences.* |
| 1. Groups have unique cultural needs that may not always be met, but should be respected.
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| Each cultural group has unique needs that may not always be met within the boundaries of the mainstream culture. When others express their own group’s cultural identity, they may not be implying disrespect for the mainstream culture. Differences in cultural needs invite acknowledgement, respect, and understanding. For example, attitudes toward authority and deference to seniority in age or tenure, greatly affect learning, social, and work climate.*Culturally proficient educators make room in their classrooms and schools for several paths leading to the same goals. Culturally proficient teachers consider a variety of learning needs, learning styles, and learning preferences in designing lessons and creating a supportive learning environment.* |