Cultural Competency in Teaching Practices
(4 Sessions)

Objective: KDP members will interact with one another to achieve professional learning that increases educator effectiveness to benefit all students through the development of cultural competency.

Background information: Changing demographics in the United States and around the world are marked by significant increases among racially, ethnically, culturally, and linguistically diverse populations. Teachers are challenged to respond with culturally responsive teaching practices that nurture, motivate, and empower students to become knowledgeable, effective global citizens.

SESSION ONE

Essential question for guided discussion: To what degree is cultural competence relevant to teaching?

Engagement Activity #1: “Share Your Thoughts Musical Stroll” – Ask members to write two thoughts on a small piece of paper in answer to the question: What are your thoughts about culturally responsive education? While playing music, direct members to stand and then stroll with a partner while exchanging their thoughts. Each time the music stops, members change partners; when the music starts again, they share thoughts with the new partner while strolling around the room. At the end of the musical stroll, members return to their seats to evaluate the premise below.

Evaluate this premise: To design instructional lesson plans for a class of students, a teacher must be a researcher, artist, linguist, content expert, presenter, facilitator, and evaluator. Running across all of these aspects of teaching is the need for cultural competence when communicating and interacting with students, colleagues, and students’ family members.


Discuss:
What is the relevance of culturally responsive teaching to this model?
An elaboration of the P21 Learning and Innovation Skills indicates that focus should be on creativity, critical thinking, communication, and collaboration to prepare students for the future.

Discussion questions:
- How does this mandate relate to teacher interaction with diversity in the classroom?
- What does cultural competence look like?
- Do you think culturally responsive teaching is a definition for cultural competence? Explain your opinion.
- How does the P21 Learning Environment engender cultural competence among learners and teachers?

Resources:

SESSION TWO

**Essential question for guided discussion:** How can teachers help reconcile very different perspectives on White power in American society?

**Engagement Activity #2:** Divide members into groups of three to five people. Provide each group with markers and chart paper. Give the groups 10 minutes to brainstorm and write down examples of White power. After 10 minutes, groups share ideas and then engage in a whole-group discussion of the implications that these examples have on society.

**Evaluate this premise:** The effect of cultural dissonance on teaching practices for underperforming students results from a misalignment of values between school and home. Research confirms the benefit of critical and reflective thinking about race, culture, and power on teaching practices. Cultural competence helps educators improve low student achievement of cultural subgroups.

**Examine and analyze** these YouTube™ presentations. Plan whether these videos will be shown in entirety in one session or over more than one session or, ask members to watch all or some of these prior to the shared PD session.
  https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=A89xhMV63rQ
  https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yKh_qpwgh6k
  https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=u9ndyej7YUU
  https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=f3JtV5VnU-s

**Discuss:**
Tim Wise’s observation on White privilege within the context that 80% of U.S. teachers are White, whereas the students they teach are increasingly diverse: “I’ve been trying to better understand for myself and to raise awareness among others about the centrality of race and racism to the history of this country and how
dangerous and damaging it is when White people, like me, are blind to racial inequality and our own privileges.”

Discussion questions:
- What does cultural competence look like when a teacher is confronted by a Caucasian colleague who does not recognize White privilege in U.S. social intercourse?
- Which teacher behaviors are appropriate for civic education on the issue of racial and cultural inequality?

Resources:
- Teachers as Cultural Workers: Letters to Those Who Dare to Teach (Freire, P., 2005)
- Dear White America: Letter to a New Minority (Wise, T., 2012)
- The Other Wes Moore: One Name, Two Fates (Moore, W., 2010)
- White Like Me: Reflections on Race from a Privileged Son (Rev. ed.; Wise, T., 2011)
- Other People’s Children, Cultural Conflict in the Classroom (Delpit, L., 1995/2006)
- The Dreamkeepers, Successful Teachers of African American Children (Ladson-Billings, G., 1994)
- We Can’t Teach What We Don’t Know: White Teachers, Multiracial Schools (Howard, G., 2006)

SESSION THREE
Essential question for guided discussion: Why do some people have power and privilege and others do not?

Engagement Activity: Divide members into teams of three who share one laptop computer. Teams go to http://perspectives.tolerance.org and set up an account. As a team, agree on an essential question from the menu of questions under the “social justice” category. The team completes the three steps including selecting a central text and learning tasks to support a lesson that encompasses the social justice theme. This engagement activity will take at least 30 minutes. Set a time for ending the development of team lessons. After 30 minutes, stop teamwork regardless of how far along each team has gotten. Set aside another 30–40 minutes to invite teams to share their lessons with the entire chapter group.

Examine and analyze how the common theme of social justice was developed in a variety of ways across different grade levels. Discuss what you learned from this activity.

Evaluate this premise: It is important to involve students and teachers in learning that raises attention to differences of opinion and ways to move forward that build and strengthen relationships among members of a learning community.

Resources:
- Common Core Standards in Diverse Classrooms (Zwiers, J., O’Hara, S., & Pritchard, R., 2014)
SESSION FOUR

**Essential question for guided discussion:** What language are we using that is racially or culturally insensitive?

**Evaluate this premise:** As the United States is now a fast-changing, multicultural nation, citizens are challenging the long-standing cultural norm defined by White Americans.

**Examine and analyze** idioms, figures of speech, and terms used in everyday American English language that are inherently negative about people who are not Caucasian. Examples include:

- *black sheep of the family, as black as sin, calling the kettle black, black list*
- *Don’t be yellow* (afraid to do something).

**Brainstorm and discuss** pejorative terms that are part of the daily language used around you. Elaborate on outcomes derived from this kind of language.

**Discussion questions:**

- How can you engage in self-reflection to identify and eradicate your personal language usage that unconsciously denigrates another culture?
- How can teachers instill culturally responsive communication in the learning community?
- Which teacher behaviors have you observed that communicate different expectations for students according to their diverse cultural identities? What can be done to change these behaviors?

**Resources:**