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**The Perceived Impact of “Culturally Proficient School Systems” on Teachers  
Professionally, Toward That of Cultural Competence**

by

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A Thesis

Submitted to the Graduate Faculty of

St. Cloud State University

in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements

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## Abstract

This paper is a study of the perceived impact of “Culturally Proficient School Systems,” ISD 191’s professional development training, on Gideon Pond Elementary teachers professionally, toward that of cultural competence. It is my belief that it is imperative that teachers become culturally competent in order for students to have equitable access for success within schools in the United States of America. With the public school student population projected to increase in diversity, the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) predicts that % of public school students will be white students in 2024 which is a decline from 51% of student population in 2012 (U.S. Department of Education, 2016). Fifty-five percent of Burnsville, Eagan, Savage district 191’s students report minority status, according to the district’s most recent seat count data, which is an increase of 10% in the last 5 years (Johnson, 2017). At the same time the K-12 educator workforce is 82% white according to The State of Racial Diversity in the Educator Workforce 2016 statistics (U.S. Department of Education, 2016).

The basic concepts about teaching and learning a language that are embedded in the Teaching English as a Second Language program degree was the basis for the Culturally Proficient School Systems (CPSS). This is the title of the district-wide professional development training, with its basis set to ensure learning disparities between and amongst student learning groups be eliminated and all students are ready for graduation. Thus, Cultural Proficiency provides a set of tools which allow individuals and organizations to interrelate with people that have different cultural backgrounds. Lindsey et. al. (2015) has narrowed this individual transformational change down into four sets of tools in cultivating Cultural Proficiency. The first one is the *Essential Elements of Cultural Competence* with which is aligned with social emotional learning competencies. The last three tools are the *Guiding Principles of Cultural Proficiency*, *Overcoming Barriers to Cultural Proficiency*, and *The Cultural Proficiency Continuum*.

The research findings are bases on the comparison of 11 teacher’s initial “Cultural Competence Self-Assessment” (Lindsey, Nuri-Robis, & Terrell, 2009, pp. 295-296) which was taken in Fall 2016 to a current “Cultural Competence Self-Assessment,” which was taken Spring 2019 using a dependent paired t-tests to determine any statistical difference. Teacher participants were specifically evaluated for their responses to Part # 1 “Assesses Culture,” Part #2 “Values Diversity,” Part #3 “Manages the Dynamics of Difference,” Part #4 “Adapts to Diversity,” and Part #5 “Institutionalizes Cultural Knowledge.” The repeated survey over the course of time was especially critical to see the effect of how CPSS training has impacted teacher’s perception of their journey toward Cultural Competence.

In general, the results of this study indicate that Gideon Pond Elementary teachers perceived impact of CPSS professional development training toward that of cultural competence professionally, felt more confident and successful over time. These statistics shows that teacher’s recognize themselves incorporating cultural knowledge into educational practices. The concept of the “journey” one takes through the “Five Essential Elements of Cultural Competence” found to be accurate. This could be part of their alignment with social emotional learning competencies, which are based off of emotional intelligence toward a mindset of action that reflect professional practices that are culturally proficient.

Altogether, the statistics show that there was a significant statistical difference with valuing diversity, managing the dynamics of difference, and institutionalizing cultural knowledge. These essential elements of cultural proficiency are more about being on the outside looking in. They are more about making things different in the environment that are more tangible which reflect more on one's interpersonal skills. Whereas the essential elements of cultural proficiency that include assessing culture and adapting to diversity show no statistical difference. These elements are more about reflecting on one's self, they reflect more on intrapersonal skills and human change which can be uncomfortable.

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## Chapter I: Introduction

What is the perceived impact of “Culturally Proficient School Systems,” ISD 191’s professional development training, on Gideon Pond Elementary teachers professionally, toward that of cultural competence?

I enter into this arena for focus, fueled by the belief that it is imperative that teachers become culturally competent in order for students to have equitable access for success within schools in the United States of America. I currently teach Visual Arts; however, what I learned in Teaching English as a Second Language coursework throughout graduate school, about the importance of cultural competence when teaching language, is at the core of Cultural Proficient School Systems. It is a process, a mind-set that one continually reflects upon and works through in order to fulfill one’s professional onus.

After having had my first 2 years of teaching experience in Phoenix, AZ in which the entire district I was being trained in Sheltered Instruction Observational Protocol (SIOP) along with additional ways to best meet culturally and linguistically diverse students. Then having had the following 4 years working and volunteering in a variety of diverse urban settings, when I reentered the school system I was surprised by some of the outward appearances of the school culture at Gideon Pond Elementary School. For example, there was a Christmas tree displayed in the Library, a Christmas tree ornament fundraiser, letters to Santa Clause glued on a paper stocking edged with white fuzz, and replications of Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Junior portraits on display as one walked down the hallway. I looked around to see a large population of students wearing Hijabs that had made ornaments with no trees to hang them on, a letter to Santa with no expectation of receiving any gifts, let alone hanging a stocking, and seeing an iconic image

repeated with no authenticity, during February as the only hero that matched their color skin, to some extent, happened to be honored monthly.

Three years later, the music teacher and I thought that the “Christmas sing-a-long” was not inclusive to the students we serve, thus we changed the program to “Celebrations sing-a-long” in which the music teacher chose a variety of songs from a variety of cultural celebrations and I had students draw pictures of their favorite celebrations, framing their image with symbols that represented this celebration, and finished with an arm and hand that represented their skin color holding their image. We combined these efforts along with dance and instruments in the gymnasium for the entire school to participate in. Right before the event, I went into the teachers’ lounge to get a glass of water and I heard one teacher say to the other, “Let’s go see how Christmassy this sing-a-long will be,” in a negative condescending tone. These displays and instances showed me that teachers are emotionally attached to both their curriculum and the traditions the school had created over the years, which indeed helps form the culture of the school. The teachers are all good-hearted people with the best intentions for their students. They were just continuing to do what they have always done as these are deeply held beliefs that have been interwoven into the cultural fabric of Gideon Pond Elementary School over the years. Culture is shared behaviors and patterns which consist of shared knowledge about the values and beliefs of a particular group of people. It is both implicit and explicit.

These are just outward appearances that Gideon Pond was not acting in a cultural proficient manner. From an inward perspective, in relation to the entire school district, “the students, in a presentation labeled “Reimagine Minnesota Student Reflection,” told the [school] board about the problems students of color routinely face in the district. They said that non-white

students are unfairly put in lower-level classes, that they don't get equal access to student groups and they get in trouble easier because they're held accountable for actions other students aren't (Johnsen, 2017).

This shows it is necessary for educators to become culturally proficient! According to Pransky (2002/2003), "cultural norms, assumptions, and learning expectations inevitably color the learning environment" which emanate that of the dominant culture (p. 7). This creates mismatches between home and school cultures which can lead to stereotyping and seeing students' as being deficient in some way. "Students who are not members of the dominant community often are at risk when the social and cultural fabric of their classroom learning interactions are foreign, uncomfortable, or confusing" (p. 14).

The basic concepts about teaching and learning a language that are embedded in the Teaching English as a Second Language program degree was the basis for the Culturally Proficient School Systems (CPSS). This is the title of the district-wide professional development training, with its basis set to ensure learning disparities between and amongst student learning groups be eliminated and all students are ready for graduation. I saw a need for this positive change within our district; therefore, I offered to train to be a trainer.

Cultural competence refers to the ability of students to grow in understanding and respect for their culture of origin. Rather than experiencing the alienating effects of education where school-based learning detaches students from their home culture, cultural competence is a way for students to be bicultural and facile in the ability to move between school and home cultures. (Ladson-Billings, 2002, p. 111)

## **Statement of Problem**

“The public school student population is projected to increase in diversity. The National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) predicts that white students will represent 46% of public school students in 2024, a drop from 51% of student population in 2012” (U.S. Department of Education, 2016, p. 3). Fifty-five percent of Burnsville, Eagan, Savage district 191’s students report minority status, according to the district’s most recent seat count data, which is an increase of 10% in the last 5 years. (Johnson, 2017). At the same time the K-12 educator workforce is 82% white according to The State of Racial Diversity in the Educator Workforce 2016 statistics (U.S. Department of Education, 2016).

At Gideon Pond Elementary School, the NCES prediction about student population for 2024 in the United States has transpired in the year 2018. The largest population of students is Black or African-American which represent 48.4% of the school’s population with white students coming in second making up 34.8% of the population. Hispanic or Latino, two or more races, and Asian follow respectively making up 7.7%, 6.4%, and 2.5% of the total school population. While the staff’s total demographics are 93.8% White and 6.82% being black or African-American. (Minnesota Department of Education, 2018).

“Never before have there been so many children entering schools populated by teachers who reflect neither their race, language, nor the communities from which they come” (Clark & Zygmunt, 2014, p. 147). Thus, instead of minority groups having to do all of the adapting to a school system, CPSS is Independent School District 191’s professional development training. It is an inside-out approach in how employees need to look at how to address diversity positively and effectively. An inside-out approach is a cultural proficient approach to issues arising from

diversity which allows one to examine one's own identity, values, beliefs and assumptions which encourages change on the teacher's part, while still validating their self-worth, rather than a diversity program which involves just learning about other people (Lindsey et al., 2009).

## Chapter II: Literature Review

### Cultural Proficiency

Cultural Proficiency provides a set of tools which allow individuals and organizations to interrelate with people that have different cultural backgrounds. It is an approach that focuses on individual behaviors rather than on their emotions alone, which in turn help each individual person effectively respond to their environment that is formed by the differences that diversity creates (Lindsey et al., 2012). For a school district this entails teachers, support staff, administration, students, and their families. However, this change in educator's mental-model within the districts staff members is ultimately to support their main cliental which are their students, with whom deserve to be engaged in practices that provide equitable access and outcomes for all learners regardless of their race, ethnicity, social class, ability, gender, or first language. It is a proactive model for shifting the way an organization is run as it begins with individual transformation which is referred to as "a journey," which will shift into an entire organizational change as to what is the "norm" of the organizational culture. "The transformation to Cultural Proficiency requires time to think, reflect, decide, and act" (Lindsey, Lindsey, Nuri-Robins, & Terrell, 2012, p. 9).

### Framework for Culturally Proficient School Systems

Lindsey et. al. (2015) has narrowed this individual transformational change down into four sets of tools in cultivating Cultural Proficiency. The first one is the *Essential Elements of Cultural Competence* which serve as standards for both personal and professional values and behaviors along with organizational policies and practices (ISD 191 adaptation of Lindsey et al. 2015), with which Stephens, DuEst, and Jones (2016) have aligned with social emotional

learning competencies, which are based off of emotional intelligence, toward a mindset of action that reflect professional practices that are Culturally Proficient. The second tool is the *Guiding Principles of Cultural Proficiency* with which provide a moral framework for conducting one's self and organization in an ethical fashion (ISD 191 adaptation of Lindsey et al., 2015). The essential elements and the guiding principles along with the social emotional learning competencies are what this paper is framed around. The other two tools of cultural proficiency, which are *Overcoming Barriers to Cultural Proficiency* and *The Cultural Proficiency Continuum*, will be embedded within this framework (ISD 191 adaptation of Lindsey et al., 2015).

### **Emotional Intelligence**

Travis Bradberry and Jean Greaves (2009) report that emotional intelligence affects how we manage behavior, navigate social complexities, and make personal decisions. The steps one takes in learning new skills to boost one's Emotional Intelligence (EI), is the equivalence of social emotional learning competencies that align with the guiding principles of cultural proficiency. These new skills are also referred to as a "journey" in which an individual can improve their emotional intelligence which will positively affects one's life. (Bradberry & Greaves, 2009).

The brain is hard-wired to experience things emotionally within its limbic system before it reaches the rational, logical part of one's brain within its frontal lobe. However, the two areas do influence each other as "The communication between [one's] emotional and rational "brains" is the physical source of emotional intelligence" (Bradberry & Greaves, 2009, p. 7). Bradberry and Greaves (2009) state that "only 36 percent of the people with whom they tested were able to



correctly identify their emotions as they happen, which means that two thirds of people are usually controlled by [ones] emotions” (p. 17). Altogether, “Emotional Intelligence is [ones] ability to recognize and understand emotions in [themselves] and others, and [ones] ability to use this awareness to manage [ones] behavior, navigate social complexities, and make personal decisions that achieve positive results” (Bradberry & Greaves, 2009, p. 17).

### **Assessing Cultural Knowledge through Self-Awareness**

The essential elements of cultural competence begin with assessing cultural knowledge which is to “identify the differences among the people in [one’s] environment” (ISD 191 adaptation of Lindsey et al., 2015). The journey of emotional intelligence begins with that of self-awareness, which encompasses, “demonstrating the ability to accurately recognize [ones] emotions and thoughts and their influence on behavior” (Stephens et al., 2016). In order to demonstrate this ability Bradberry and Greaves (2009) advise individuals that they need to accurately recognize one’s emotions in the moment and understand ones tendencies amidst different situations. This comes about through self-reflection; by developing a straightforward and honest sense of themselves in what they do well, what motivates them, and what irritates them as emotions are ones reactions to the world around them. In doing this, one needs to tolerate feeling of discomfort, rather than ignoring this aspect of themselves, in the same way with which they embrace feelings of comfort (Bradberry & Greaves, 2009). As many times things that are different than we are accustomed to can feel uncomfortable.

### **Culture is a Predominant Force in Society**

*Culture is a predominant force in society* is the first guiding principle which is described by asking oneself: “To what extent do district 191 employees honor culture (traditions, beliefs,

and practices) as a natural and normal part of the community they serve?” (ISD 191 adaptation of Lindsey et al., 2015).

“Culture is like the air; it is everywhere, and [one doesn’t] notice it until it changes” (Lindsey et al., 2009, p. 101). Culture is deeper than race and ethnicity most people belong to several groups and identify strongly with a few (Lindsey et al., 2012). One’s identity is formed from the activities, values, beliefs, language and social construct of varying group memberships. We obtain the knowledge and skills needed to be sufficient participating members in these activities through the support and guidance of more capable members (Vygotsky, 1978). Gee (1990) uses the concept “Discourse Communities” to describe these memberships from a sociolinguistics perspective. Gee (1990) used discourse to mean a socially accepted association among ways of using language, thinking, feeling, believing, valuing, and acting that can be used to identify oneself as a member of a socially meaningful group (p. 38). These groups could be groups such as one’s family, work, social, religious, friends, school, or sports groups. Thus, in understanding culture as a predominant force in society one needs to be able to identify the differences amongst the people in one’s environment including organizational culture (Lindsey et al., 2012). This begins with demonstrating the awareness of one’s own culture.

### **Beliefs and Values**

One’s culture shapes that of which one becomes, as Ayers (2004) says whatever else teachers might teach they always teach themselves because their conduct represents their values and beliefs. As “Good teaching requires self-knowledge: it is a secret hidden in plain sight” (Palmer, 1998, p. 2). And it does seem hidden, as most teachers belong to the dominant group and don’t have to pay attention to cultural norms and cultural expectations because they are a

part of the group that makes the rules which makes them seem intuitive (Lindsey et al., 2009). This is the first step in “the journey” of cultural proficiency, as one is acknowledging and validating current values, beliefs and feelings which encourage individual growth while challenging one’s sense of entitlement (Lindsey et al., 2012). Thus, “facing the truth about who [oneself] can be at times is unsettling. Getting in touch with [ones] emotions and tendencies takes honesty and courage” (Bradberry & Greaves, 2009, p. 62). “To be effective in life, we all need to discover our own arrogance—those things we don’t bother to learn about and dismiss as unimportant” (Bradberry & Greaves, 2009, p. 69). Altogether, the in-service CPSS training through ISD 191 used activities which encouraged teachers to demonstrate awareness of their own culture. This gave teachers an opportunity to be able to reflect on their own values and beliefs that they grew-up with and then analyze how they reinforce these values in their classrooms.

### **Each Cultural Group has Unique Needs**

A second guiding principle is *each cultural group has unique needs*. Which is described by the extents to which district “employees know and respect the unique needs of cultural groups in the community they serve” (ISD 191 adaptation of Lindsey et al., 2015).

As one develops a deeper understanding of what unconsciously drives them, one will develop a deeper understanding of ways to work with all students. One needs to understand who they are, who their learners are and how the learners perceive the subject matter (Lindsey et al., 2012). The environment according to Dilts and Epstein (1995) “is going to be shaping the learning process. It may interfere with or may enhance the learning” (p. 4). “Beliefs and values issues surface in many different places. They come up in relation to the student’s own personal

history, his or her peer group, the material to be learned, the teacher, and his or her cultural background” (Dilts & Epstein, 1995, p. 6). Palmer inspires educators by reminding them that teaching comes from within one, as he states:

As I teach, I project the condition of my soul onto my students, my subject and our way of being together. The entanglements I experience in the classroom are often no more or less than the convolutions of my inner life. Viewed from this angle, teaching holds a mirror to the soul. If I am willing to look in that mirror and not run from what I see, I have a chance to gain self-knowledge—and knowing myself is crucial to good teaching as knowing my students and my subject.

In fact, knowing my students and subject depends heavily on self-knowledge. When I do not know myself, I cannot know who my students are. I will see them through a glass darkly, in the shadows of my own unexamined life—and when I cannot see them clearly, I cannot teach them well. (Palmer, 1998, p. 2)

“How one learns is culturally determined, as is what one learns” (Hall, 1977, p. 190).

One’s background and experiences do affect one’s learning, moreover researchers:

Repeatedly emphasize conflict and discontinuities in teaching and learning due to differences in style, rather than content. Stylistic differences are more diffuse and less specific than the content differences of primary cultural differences....and are oppositional in relation to White or mainstream culture. (Obgu, 1992, p. 199)

Not everybody shares the same unique needs of how to learn something. Thus, teachers need to understand their own learning style, how this impacts other people in the classroom, as well as the unique learning styles of their students.

## **Intelligence and Learning Styles**

Silver, Strong and Perini question the dictionary definition of intelligence, which states “The capacity to acquire knowledge and apply knowledge; the faculty of thought and reason; superior powers of mind” (2000, p. 6). In questioning the meaning for intelligence, they ask, “Does it explain how or why different cultures value intelligence?” (Silver et al., 2000, p. 6). Does this definition show how intelligence is defined and measured in all cultures? What makes one mind more superior than another? Is all ways of reasoning equal when each person’s way of thinking is different?

According to Howard Gardner’s theory of multiple intelligences he went beyond looking for a single concrete measurement of intelligence and extended this single concept of intelligence to multiple types of intelligences (2004). Furthermore, Gardner states that “in the end, the decision about what counts as an intelligence is a judgment call and not an algorithmic conclusion” (2004, p. xix). “Findings from biology and from anthropology stand at opposite extremes in any theory of human cognition” (Gardner, 2004, p. 299). The concept of the symbol systems, which is rooted in Psychology, Gardner (2004) found this concept as a means to link these two fields of study. He was able to expand the limitations of single forms of intelligence to include the diversity of human abilities which could include the anthropological perspective in the reasoning behind why particular knowledge is important to a culture. Gardner’s (2004) method in discovering this diversity of intelligences explores the way various cultures value individuals, create different products, or serve their particular culture’s aptitudes. Gardner (2004) divided these various types of intelligences into eight distinct categories which include: Verbal-Linguistic, Logical-Mathematical, Spatial, Musical, Bodily-Kinesthetic, Interpersonal,

Intrapersonal, and Naturalist. These are not fixed categories however, most people demonstrate a high ability in one or two intelligences they may also show weaknesses in other intelligences as well (Gardner, 2004).

Another way we can assess how individuals learn is through Silver and Hanson's Four Learning Styles. Silver et al. (2000) explain how these learning styles derived from early research in personality tests conducted by Swiss psychologist Carl Jung. The very basis of Jung's paradigm of human differences is two fundamental cognitive functions. The first being *perception*, that is how we absorb information, he concluded that humans absorb information either concretely or abstractly. The second is that of *judgment*, which is how we process the absorbed information; this can be done through the logic of thinking or the subjectivity of feeling. Altogether, a model of a quadrant was formed to identify an individual's personality with each segment being that of sensing, feeling, intuition and thinking (Silver et al., 2000). In using this model as a *basis* along with a plethora of research on personality tests that followed Jung's model, Silver and Hanson created a quadrant model of learning styles that consists of Mastery, Interpersonal, Understanding, and Self-Expressive (2000). Through these learning styles one "can talk about the way individuals learn and how their preferences for certain types of thinking processes affect their learning behaviors" (Silver et al., 2000, p. 24).

Being teachers are cultural human beings with distinct capabilities as are their students, they may teach according to their own intelligences strengths and learning styles which may not reach the aptitudes of all of their student's intelligences and learning styles. In CPSS training, teachers were asked to take a learning styles inventory test based on Silver et al. (2000) learning style model in order to identify what learning style preference they most closely align with. As

with multiple intelligences, it is best to avoid pigeon holing oneself or our students into one distinct category as everyone uses all four styles throughout life depending on the situation and context, yet overall aligns with one or two more closely. The purpose of taking this inventory test was to have a better sense how individual teachers innately project their own learning style, which can be culturally bound, onto their students. They may teach their students in the way they were taught and are familiar with, when all of their students might not learn best from this particular style of teaching. Thus, it is important for teachers to assess how students learn best and use learning styles and multiple intelligences to differentiate instruction as it creates “differences in purposes, structures, roles, and means of motivating and engaging learners” (Silver et al., 2000, p. 4).

### **Value Diversity through Social Awareness**

The second essential element is *Valuing Diversity* which is to “embrace differences as contributing to the value of the environment” (district 191’s adaption of Lindsey et al., 2015). In associating this to emotional intelligence, this element can be seen as social-awareness which is “demonstrating the ability take the perspective of and empathize with others from diverse backgrounds and cultures” (Stephens et al., 2016). Bradberry and Greaves (2009) report that social awareness is the foundational skill for social competence. It is the ability to accurately recognize emotions in other people which often means perceiving what other people are thinking and feeling even if one doesn’t feel the same way. It is when one stays focused on listening and observing in order to recognize essential information that reveals other people’s perspectives. This is where anthropology intersects with emotional Intelligence, in that one is stopping their inner monologue in which one anticipates what the other person is going to say, as well as what

one is going to say next and pauses to fully understand others' emotions in the midst of interaction.

### **Diversity *within* Cultures is Vast and Significant**

The third guiding principle of cultural proficiency is *diversity within cultures is vast and significant*, which can be described as “recognizing the extent to which teachers discern and value the differences within the cultural groups in the communities they serve” (district 191’s adaption of Lindsey et al., 2015). Howard (2003) suggests that teachers “must be careful to not allow racial classifications of students to be used as rigid and reductive cultural characteristics” (Howard, 2003, p. 201). Howard (2003) suggests as part of a critical reflection process that teachers need to avoid reductive notions of culture by recognizing the array of differences that can exist in groups. This is demonstrating the awareness of the culture of the students, fellow colleagues, as well as the organization, all which one interacts with on a daily basis.

A resource used as part of the professional development training for CPSS to help understand the concept of culture is Hall’s “Cultural Iceberg Theory.” Edward T. Hall an anthropologist, in collaboration with linguist George L. Trager, established the concept of “intercultural communication,” which began out of a need to help in communicating with other cultures within the Foreign Service Institute, as knowing a language in isolation is not enough to be able to successfully communicate between cultures. This concept was drawn particularly on the Whorf-Sapir theory of linguistic relativity and Freudian psychoanalytical theory. Hall (1959) wanted to open up the field of anthropology so all could understand it, “for anthropologists culture has long stood for the way of life of a people, for the sum of their learned behavior patterns, attitudes, and material things” that were written down with no true measure of



analyzing these accounts (Hall, 1959, p. 43). Hall's (1959) focus as an anthropologist was on the silent part of culture, the parts that were beyond conscious control. He created a systemized way of collecting information which focused on the behaviors during interaction between people of different cultures which reveals those aspects of culture that are hidden from its own participants. He "treats culture in its entirety as a form of communication" (Hall, 1959, p. 51).

A given culture cannot be understood simply in terms of contents or parts. One has to know how the whole system is put together, how the major systems and dynamisms function, and how they are interrelated. This brings [one] to a remarkable position; namely, that it is not possible to adequately describe cultures solely from the inside or from the outside without reference to the other. (Hall, 1977, p. 222)

Hall developed the Iceberg Analogy of Culture which he refers to in "Beyond Culture" (Hall, 1977). Previous to writing this book Hall (1959), organized the study of culture into two broad components, that he calls Sets. The pervasive set is that which is first noticeable. If the culture of a society was an iceberg, one would only be able to visually see the tip of the iceberg from the surface of the ocean; this would be considered the conscious or surface part of a culture which includes behaviors and some beliefs. This would include entities such as food, dress, music, visual arts, drama, dance, literature, language, celebrations, and games. The second half of Hall's Sets Theory is the illusive set, the phantom component of culture. This set is hidden just below conscious awareness or the tip of the iceberg; under the ocean's surface is a large mass of ice which is referred to as deep culture which includes unspoken and unconscious rules which can be referred to as one's beliefs, as well as values and thought patterns of a culture. The unspoken rules which could also be referred to as shallow culture, in reference to an iceberg,

include, but are not limited to: courtesy, contextual conversational patterns, concept of time, body language, eye contact, personal space, tempo of work, and patterns for handling emotion. The unconscious rules which could also be referred to as deep culture, in reference to an iceberg, examples include, but are not limited to: ideals of child rearing, social interaction rate, tone of voice, nature of friendships, concepts of past and future, definition of insanity, problem solving, and concept of “self” (Hall, 1959). Hall says, “Culture hides much more than it reveals, and strangely enough what it hides, it hides most effectively from its own participants” (Hall, 1959, p. 53). These hidden parts of culture “are usually experienced as though they were innate simply because they are not only ubiquitous but habitual as well” (Hall, 1977, p. 42). Hall (1959) indicates that the only way to learn the internal culture of others is to actively participate in their culture. Thus, only the most obvious behaviors are noticeable in cultures that differ from one’s own. Only when we spend time interacting with people do we begin to uncover the values and beliefs of that person along with the *hidden* culture that shapes who they are. One then discovers how this may differ from oneself or others which is the most effective way to learn about oneself as having culture.

### **Embrace the Differences**

Embrace the Differences as contributing to the value of the environment; this is done by looking for differences rather than similarities. As Lindsey states, “If you focus solely on similarities when [one is] teaching, [one] would be focusing only on the lowest common denominator among your learners” (Lindsey et al., 2012, p. 118). If one focuses solely on the similarities, it brings one’s thought patterns back to the concepts of assimilation which is the melting pot approach to viewing diversity within education. This is where diversity is understood

by viewing the different elements of culture as melting together into a harmonious whole to create a common culture which is an ethnocentric view point. Basically, a melting pot is for all minorities to change their culture to conform to that of the dominate culture, rather than the dominant culture changing to meet the cultural norms of the minority groups, hence a pleasant way of suggesting assimilation. Mills's book titled the "Sociological Imagination," summarized by Palmer suggests that, "[People] cannot see what is "out there" merely by looking around. Everything depends on the lenses through which [one] view[s] the world. By putting on new lenses, [one] can see things that would otherwise remian invisible" (Palmer 1998, p. 26). Therefore, only when one looks for what differences make that difference and notice these differences, can one look for the similarities. That is how diversity is valued (Lindsey et al., 2012).

### **Emotional Intelligence Strategies for Identifying the Differences**

Through the angle of emotional intelligence, to value others and notice the differences one needs to develop social-awareness. Strategies suggested by Bradberry and Greaves (2009) entail that of living in the moment. We often become anxious about both the past and the future, however doing this often throughout the day interferes with experiencing life in its present state. When one is in their present state, they are better able to perceive the subtleties of interactions and emotions of those around them. Another strategy is fully listening, which also dwells within the present state. Being completely tuned-in to the tone, speed, and volume of another person's voice, as well as what they are saying or not saying, and what messages may be hidden below the surface of the iceberg. This leads into a third strategy, that of understanding the rules of a variety of cultures, not only ethnic cultures, but also the cultures of families and organizations. In

becoming emotionally intelligent, one has to be socially aware of how these types of cultures influence what others expect from one. This can be done by identifying different rules for different cultures by looking for the differences and the similarities in situations which is done by observing before speaking. In addition, if one is unsure of their observations than simply ask, as one doesn't know what it is like walking in another's shoes, that is "put away [ones] own beliefs, emotions, thinking patterns, and tendencies—it's about experiencing" specific situations as the other person (Bradberry & Greaves, 2012 p. 170).

### **People have Both Individual and Group Identities**

A fourth guiding principle is that *people have both individual and group identities*. Which is understood "when [district] 191 employees work with a person whose culture is different from their own culture or the 191 organizational culture, to what extent does the employee see the person as both an individual and as a member of a cultural group?" (district 191's adaption of Lindsey, 2015). "When we are centered in who we truly are, we live deeply connected to ourselves and to others" (Dilts, 2017, p. 3).

This centeredness comes from understanding how identity is formed. Dilts (2014) nested logical levels of learning aid us in understanding that identification. Dilt's nested levels include (in order from highest to lowest): (1) identity, (2) beliefs and values, (3) capabilities, (4) behavior, and (5) environment (Dilts, 2014). Dilts (2014) reports that if one changes something on the higher level it will indeed change all of the levels below it. If something is changed on the lower level it may affect the upper levels, but not necessarily. By understanding these levels, one can be self-aware of their current mind-set of cultural knowledge and identify the differences among the people in one's environment. According to Dilts,

The most fundamental level of influence on our relationships and interactions is the shared environment, *when* and *where* the operations and relationships within a system or organization take place....one can also examine the influence and impact that people within an organization have upon their environment, and what products or creations they bring to the environment. (2014, p. 9)

The next level is noticing specific behaviors of a group or individual. That is *what* the person or organization does within the environment which includes their patterns, routines or job-related activities. The next level is that of capabilities. This involves how they use their cognitive strategies and skills in learning, decision making and creativity, which facilitates their communication, innovation, planning, and decision-making. These three levels of process are all shaped by the next level, that of values and beliefs (Dilts, 2014). *Why* do people do things the way they do them? Our “values and beliefs determine how events are given meaning, and the core of judgment and culture” (Dilts, 2014, p. 9). Values and beliefs then support the individual’s sense of identity; this is the *who* as it relates to the *why*. The last level is identity, which tells a person who they are within an organization. It gives them their sense of purpose, a mission, vision, or ambition (Dilts, 2014). Thus, assessing cultural knowledge through Dilt’s nested logical levels gives a teacher a better sense of how one is formed by their identity, how their identity is conveyed onto their students and coworkers, and how others identities are formed that are different from their own.

### **Valuing the Differences**

According to Hall (1977), all cultures have different ways of thinking or mental processes of arriving at what they each perceive is the “right” decision, as well as challenging the validity

of those decisions. “The reason man does not experience his true cultural self is that until he experiences another self as valid, he has little basis for validating his own self” (Hall, 1977, p. 213). Value is reflected in what one says and does. Lindsey et al. (2014) discuss that a culturally proficient instructors will treat their learners the way they want to be treated. This is slightly different from the *golden rule* that suggests “treat other the way you want to be treated.” By recognizing that each culture finds some values more important than others one may use a different gauge or standard of respect than one would for their self, in truly understanding and respecting social and ethical norms for behavior. Hence, “treat others how they want to be treated, not how you would want to be treated” (Bradberry & Greaves, 2009, p. 165).

In valuing differences this also means that one sees opportunities to learn from one’s students and colleagues. In that one demonstrates the willingness to be inclusive of people whose viewpoints and experiences are different from their own, as well as having the ability to take on the perspective of others from diverse background and cultures. Lindsey et al. (2014) says that demonstrating the knowledge that different perspectives will enrich decision-making and problem solving. One must recognize diversity is always present, value it and see it as an opportunity to enhance one’s teaching by celebrating and embracing the differences.

### **Validating verses Developing Yourself**

Lindsey et al. (2014) mentions that the choice is ours as educators; accept no excuses no blame on outside factors. Focus on the things one can control. Valuing cultures, in addition to one’s own cultural background can be looked at through Dweck’s (2006) devised concept of fixed versus growth mindset. This concept of Dweck’s (2006) research is understood in the review by Popova (2014). Popava (2014) reports that a basic fixed mindset is one that strives to

look smart and skilled. It is one that hides deficiencies, seeks out the tried and true, and needs to be validated, all in avoiding failure at all costs. On the contrary, a growth mindset flourishes on challenge. It seeks experiences that will stretch one's thinking while seeing failure as an opportunity for growth and development in extending one's abilities rather than evidence of unintelligence. Within this understanding of mindset and valuing culture, a fixed mindset can be seen as a mindset that is comfortable with understanding their classroom and community through a monolithic cultural lens because this is what one already knows. One may feel secure and look all assuming from this mindset as one does not need to put forth the effort to question themselves and their views of others. In opposition to this, a growth mindset takes effort as it may feel uncomfortable sometimes, because it is one that challenges values and beliefs that one may hold. Within this frame of mind one may see other ways of thinking, problem solving, and interacting with the world as equal as or possibly more worthy than one's present way of interacting with the world. One might also make mistakes when interacting with other cultures, however in these self-presumed failures one is able to see an opportunity to learn and grow, thus becoming more socially aware of the differences in their environment. , a teacher is open and able to learn about the differences both within and between their student's cultures and the differences between themselves and their students cultures while respecting those differences rather than that of ethnocentrism.

### **Manage the Dynamics of Difference through Self-Management**

The third essential element of cultural competence is *managing the dynamics of difference* which is to “reframe the differences, so that diversity is not perceived as a program to be solved” (district 191's adaptation of Lindsey et al., 2015). In relation to emotional intelligence

this element can be seen as self-management which is “demonstrating the ability to regulate [ones] emotions, thoughts, and behaviors effectively in different situations” (Stephens et al., 2016). According to Bradberry and Greaves (2009), self-management depends on one’s self-awareness. It is what happens when one chooses to take action or not take action. It is when one uses their awareness of their emotions to be adaptable in directing one’s behavior constructively to a variety of situations and people. Substantial results come when one puts their momentary needs on hold while persistently managing their usual tendencies in order to pursue more important personal and professional goals.

### **Cross-Cultural Interactions**

The fifth guiding principle of cultural proficiency is “inherent in cross-cultural interactions are dynamics that must be acknowledged, adjusted to and accepted” (ISD 191 adaptation of Lindsey et al, 2015). This is explained through the question, “To what extent do 191 employees recognize their role in acknowledging, adjusting to, and accepting cross-cultural interactions as necessary social and communications dynamics?” (ISD 191 adapted of Lindsey et al, 2015). “Just as you will not change anyone’s values, you will not change anyone’s culture” (Lindsey et al., 2012, p. 137). Values are strongly held beliefs that do not require facts to support them and change over time (Lindsey et al., 2012). “Often with greater understanding comes greater appreciation. It is then much easier to separate perceptions from facts” (Lindsey et al., 2012, p. 136).

In understanding of how one might shift their mind-set within the process of cultural competency, in accordance with the fifth guiding principle, can be better understood through Bennett’s (1986) Development Model of Intercultural Sensitivity (DMIS). “An individual’s



cognitive relationship with cultural difference changes as their perceptions change, and this amorphous perceptual relation is crucial to sensitivity development” (Mahon, 2009, p. 47). The DMIS represents a worldview of intercultural experiences that is aligned toward cultural differences with certain kinds of attitudes and behaviors that are associated with how an individual experiences these differences. There are three ethnocentric orientations where one’s culture is experienced as central to reality which includes denial, defense, and minimization. *Denial* with which one’s own culture is experienced as the “true or real” one and others are viewed simpler systems in their surroundings. *Defense*, is when one experiences other cultures as feasible, however feel threatened by these cultures and sees oneself as superior. *Minimization* is looking for similarities among cultures and demanding that there are universal principles among all cultures and corrects others to match their expectations of these principles. Then there are three ethnorelative orientations, where one’s culture is experienced in the perspective of other cultures that include acceptance, adaptation, and integration. *Acceptance* is where one receives their own culture as one of many equal, relative human experiences even if one does not agree with these differences. *Adaptation* is where one can take the perspective of other cultures; one is able to identify a cultural experience through a different cultural structure. Lastly, *integration* is being able to experience oneself in one or more cultures, thus being bicultural as one can identify oneself in two or more cultures (Bennett, 1986). Therefore, one must lean toward ethnorelative orientations to be intercultural sensitive. “Intercultural sensitivity,” refers to the “ability to discriminate and experience relevant cultural differences” and to be able to do so one becomes “intercultural competent” which means “the ability to think and act in intercultural appropriate ways” (Hammer, Bennett, & Wiseman, 2003, p. 422).

## **Conflicts**

In becoming culturally competent one needs to be culturally sensitive in order to be ethical and nondiscriminatory in one's professional teaching practice. Within a diverse environment, however, conflict will arise between parents, students, teachers, administration and other colleagues. It is important to respond appropriately and effectively to these issues. In order to do this one needs to accept that conflict is a natural and normal process. However, as Lindsey et al. states, "in dominant American society we are socialized to perceive conflict as something to avoid. Most of us have problems because we haven't learned how to manage the conflict that precipitated the problem. Instead, we learn to ignore the conflict and maintain superficial niceties, to be polite instead of honest, to sweep conflict under the rug and dance around the huge heap of elephant dung in the middle of the room" (2012, p. 13).

## **Managing Conflict**

As one moves through the Five Essential Elements of Cultural Competence and begins to embrace and gain value for diversity, McAllister and Irvine (2000) proposes that controlling responses to one's environment creates even more challenges. This is because one is faced with a new mind-set in their journey toward cultural proficiency; as a result, one recognizes their own conscious and unconscious awareness along with "[noticing] that the differences among people do make a difference" (Lindsey et al, 2012, p. 137). Hammer (2003-2015) found that:

there was a general consensus amongst researchers that conflict involves two elements.

First, conflict arises when [people] *disagree* with one another. Conflict is more than misperception or misunderstanding. When we have conflict with another person, we usually have substantive disagreements in what we want (goals) or what we need.

Second, conflict gives rise to affective or emotional reactions. That is when we disagree with another, we may experience heightened stress, anxiety, frustration, anger and even fear.” around what [people] want or what [people] need and that this gives rise to *emotional* reactions. (Hammer, 2003-2015, p. 6)

However, Conflict is normal and natural as it is what makes the world work, once this is understood one will seek ways to understand it and learn skills to manage it more effectively (Lindsey et al., 2012).

From an Emotional intelligence perspective using self-management strategies to assist oneself with their feelings when conflict arise can prove beneficial. One strategy suggested by Bradberry and Greaves (2009) is focusing one’s attention on their choices rather than on their constraints. When a situation doesn’t feel fair, negative feeling arise that validate one’s sense of helplessness, “[one] must take accountability for what [they] have control over, and focus [their] energy on remaining flexible and open-minded in spite of the situation” (Bradberry & Greaves, 2009, p. 124). Another strategy mentioned by Bradberry and Greaves (2009) is to think of every encounter [one has] with another person as a valuable lesson, thus instead of immediately jumping to the defense per say, embrace the opportunity as something to be valued in that they have something beneficial one can learn from. This “is the best way to remain flexible, open-minded, and *much* less stressed” (Bradberry & Greaves, 2012, p. 129).

In further developing skills to manage conflict more effectively, as part of the CPSS training all employees took Mitchell R. Hammer’s *Intercultural conflict style Inventory* (2003-2015), in order to more deeply recognize that one’s conflict style is shaped by one’s identity, with our identity be formed by one’s values and beliefs. With these values and beliefs being

rooted in the cultural community in which one was raised. Mitchell R. Hammer (2003-2015) found that when conflict arise and increase in intensity one may also feel one's sense of self-identity challenged which in turn compromises one's abilities to problem solve. Thus, "it is true that under these conditions of anxiety and stress, [one] tend[s] to respond to conflict in the ways [one] learned from [one's] own culture group. In this sense, [ones] approach to resolving conflicts is both patterned and culturally grounded" (Hammer, 2003-2015, p. 6).

Hammer (2003-2015) found that conflict style is a feature of one's interaction style as they are patterns of behavior that are linked to the way we communicate in dealing with disagreements. "A difference in conflict style is a central factor that can escalate tensions between parties" (Hammer, 2003-2015, p. 6). Hammer discovered that variations in the way people express their disagreement is the basis for describing differences in intercultural conflict styles. Accordingly, "intercultural conflict style is a cultural group's manner for dealing with disagreements and communicating emotions" (Hammer, 2003-2015, p. 7). Hammer (2003-2015) created a valid inventory about people's problem solving and conflict resolution styles. The inventory test is made up two categories in which each have direct oppositions. First, the inventory test shows a preferred approach for managing conflict, either direct or indirect with the test-taker marking their final score on a vertical axis on a matrix model with direct being at the top and indirect being in opposition at the bottom. Secondly, the test shows the preferred style for resolving conflict. This is either emotional-expressiveness or emotional-restraint with the test-taker marking their final score on a horizontal axis on the same matrix model with each of these being on opposite sides. Together, these oppositions illustrate a matrix type quadrant with each revealing variations of intercultural conflict styles which include: *Discussion style* which is

direct and emotionally restrained and is understood as being more verbally direct and is based on facts rather than emotions. *Engagement style* which is direct and emotionally expressive which is recognized as being verbally direct and shows genuineness about what one is saying by expressing one's emotions at the same time. *Accommodation style* is indirect and emotionally restrained and shows vagueness and implicitness in language use to obtain interpersonal harmony. Lastly, *dynamic style* is indirect and emotionally expressive which shows sincerity of what one is saying through their emotionally intense expressions, yet uses metaphors, stories, and repetition as indirect strategies to get one's point across. Each of these approaches to conflict resolution generally represents cultural patterns of a particular group. This is not fixed, "as we continue to grow and develop our conflict styles can be modified based on experiences we have in different cultural communities" (Hammer, 2003-2015, p. 6). Thus, "understanding cultural differences is the first step in effectively resolving conflict" (Hammer, 2003-2015, p. 14).

### **Teacher Collaboration**

In being a culturally proficient school, this is not only individual teachers and their interactions which can lead to conflicts with parents, students, other teachers, administration and other colleagues, it is how teachers are able to work with one another in a clear and productive manner in order to learn from one another as a team dedicated to student's success. The seven norms of collaboration have also been integrated into district 191's communicative methods in guiding conversations with one another. Hargreaves and Fullan (2012) suggest that groups who utilize the seven norms of collaboration in dialogue about student learning improve collective teaching expertise rather than seeing one another as opponents. This is because individual group members learn to acquire consciousness of their behaviors such as impulse control, patience,

strategic listening and strategic speaking as “all surface behaviors are driven by inner awareness of ongoing calibration of deeper values” (Hargreaves & Fullan, 2012, p. 37). These deeper values stem from experiences one has had in their life and one needs to see other experiences as valid in solving issues through collective knowledge rather than as a competition as “learning occurs through the clarification of perspectives and challenging assumptions” (Yeo, 2013, p. 7).

“High functioning groups and group members infuse their work with a spirits of inquiry. Learning at its roots is a questioning process, and successful collaborations embrace the patterns and practice of inquiry. A Singapore study found that “a target problem should be expressed as a question rather than a statement to elicit specific responses to address underlying issues” (Yeo, 2013 p. 7). Inquiry presumes an openness and investment in the idea of others” (Hargreaves & Fullan, 2012, p. 40). To do this in a nonjudgmental way, Hargreaves and Fullan (2012) advise that group members need to set aside autobiographical listening, inquisitive listening, and solution listening in order to invite other to enquire about their own specific thinking. As “generalizations, deletions, and distortions are survival patterns hardwired into the human brain.... Conversations go haywire when the various parties make different assumptions about the meaning of words and concepts and neglect to verify or correct assumptions” (Hargreaves & Fullan, 2012, p. 48). Thus, in using the seven norms of collaboration within discourse, group member are able to verify and correct assumptions that may have been distorted in immediate construal.

The seven norms of collaboration district 191 introduced as part of the CPSS training and are always visible at meetings in order to guide productive conversations are, in sequence:

*Pausing* before responding or asking questions allows time for thinking. *Paraphrasing* what has

already been said assists members of the group in openly understanding one another. *Posing questions* increases exploration, specific thinking, and invited others to inquire into the other person's thinking. *Putting ideas on the table* is the center of a meaningful dialogue and discussion, *providing data* in a variety of methods supports group members in creating shared understanding through collaborative analyses. *Paying attention to self and others* by being conscious of what oneself is saying and how others are responding to what is being said. Lastly, presuming *positive intentions* in assuming other's intentions are well-meaning (Thinking Collaborative, 2019).

### **Adapts to Diversity through Relationship Management Skills**

The fourth essential element of Cultural Competence is *Adapting to Diversity* which is to “teach and learn about differences and how to respond to them effectively” (district 191’s adaption of Lindsey, 2015). The outcome of this element depends upon how one’s abilities are developed in the first three elements of cultural competence that of assessing cultural knowledge, valuing diversity, and managing the dynamics of difference, within their professional practice. This is aligned to that of *Relationship Management Skills* within emotional intelligence which is also dependent on the skills gained from the first three components which are that of self-awareness, social awareness and self-management. Relationship Skills are “demonstrating the ability to establish and maintain healthy and rewarding relationships with diverse individuals and groups” (Stephens et al., 2016). Relationship skills directly correspond with what Bradberry and Greaves (2009) refer to as “relationship management,” and convenes that this is the ability to be aware of ones emotions, as well as the emotions of others in order to manage interactions effectively. When one does this correctly, they are able to see the advantages in connecting with

many different types of people, even those individuals that they do not care for or with whom pose a challenge. Others will be more apt to listen when one constructively makes the most out of every interaction in order to develop meaningful relationships.

### **Commitment to Change**

One's commitment to change and how one adapts to change are fundamental to becoming culturally proficient which in turn helps the organizations growth and progress. "The easiest thing to change is [one's] mind...it is much harder to change your behavior and to make that change last over time" (Lindsey et al., 2012, p. 146). Yeo (2013) suggests an inside-out approach in highlighting the power of commitment as essential for organizational development. He found that, "intrinsic learning is largely influenced by the intent and motivation of individuals rather than a top-down (outside-in) approach" (Yeo, 2013, p. 3). Commitment is different than involvement. That is commitment requires an individual to own the process and be a change agent, which in turn ensures continuous improvement in which one aligns themselves according to a set of values and guiding principles. Involvement on the other hand, is simply getting busy, which could lead to undesirable results. Commitment is developed over time and forms the way one responds to ambiguity (Yeo, 2013).

"To implement a change, you must pay attention to how you are doing things now then make a conscious decision to do things differently" (Lindsey et al., 2012, p. 146). "You must become aware of the situations that invite culturally proficient behavior and then pay attention to them so that your behavior will be different each time" (Lindsey et al., 2012, p. 147). "Facing [oneself] in [ones] teaching is not the easiest thing to do because [one] may not like what [one sees], and trying to change [oneself] can be disconcerting" (Gay, 2010, p. 52). Gay (2010)



suggests that authentic teachers are always personally present in their teaching they monitor their attributes that can be problematic, as well as use their positive qualities as resources in an effort to help them make teaching and learning more effective across race, culture, and gender.

### **Change versus Transition**

According to Bridges (2003), individuals resist change because they want to protect *their world* as change threatens the meaning, and identity they acquired from it. Psychologist Kegan (2009) calls this “immunity to change” (p. 4). Kegan and Lahey (2009) suggest that all of us have immunity to change systems that are essentially protecting one’s self. In being vulnerable in reflecting upon oneself professionally, this can lead to embarrassment by undermining how one assumes they are regarded by both colleagues and one’s self. This challenges one, as they have accepted their assumptions as reality. By questioning this personal reality, this challenges one’s self-esteem in accordance with our perception of past success and even our feelings of professional fulfillment from the onslaught of externally driven change. However, change is situational, whereas transition is the psychological “process that people go through as they internalize and come to terms with the details of the new situation that change brings about” (Bridges, 2003, p. 3). Within education these details teachers hold include “a variety of assumptions about teaching and learning that exert a powerful influence over each teacher’s instructional behaviors and decision making” (Powell & Kusuma-Powell, 2015, p. 68). Bridges (2003) suggests that the transition process comes in three phases: The first stage is letting go of an old identity, that of releasing attachments to the former way of doing things and accepting the change. This creates feelings such as loss, anger, denials, and confusion. The middle stage is the in-between time that many want to rush through or avoid due to its vagueness; it is a

psychological shift when re-patterning and creativity take place. It is where one examines what they have learned from the past, overcomes resistance to change, connects with the present, and commits to the future. The final stage is that of a new beginning which can cause emotions such as fear, excitement, and anxiety. This is when an individual develops a new identity, learns new cultural norms, and discovers a new sense of purpose.

### **Change Requires Self-Reflection**

At the very beginning and at the end of implementing the staff training individuals took a “Cultural Competence Self-Assessment” which was based off of the “Five Essential Elements of Cultural Competence” (Lindsey et al., 2009). This gave individuals a place to reflect on their individual cultural proficiency. All participants wrote a goal after they assessed themselves to consider where they might envision improvement in their professional practice. At the end of the training participants reassessed themselves and read their previously written goals to reflect upon the change within their professional practice. Anthropologist Mezirow (1990) informs us that self-reflection is the interplay of cognitive maps which forms the insight of one’s experiences. Howard (2003) says that critical reflection of the individual person and as active professionals is a challenging look at one’s identity. As how our individual values and beliefs about race, culture, and poverty are being transferred into one’s interactions with students, as well as ones teaching practices is of utmost importance. It requires teachers to put their students ahead of all other considerations as critical reflection should not be to indict teachers for what they believe; it is more about a “process of improving practice, rethinking philosophies, and becoming effective teachers for today’s ever changing student population” (Howard, 2003, p. 201).

## Barriers

In generating change and accurately reflecting on one's cultural competence one needs to overcome their unawareness of the need to adapt to diversity. This unawareness is the barrier to cultural proficiency which relates to the fifth guiding principle of cultural proficiency which is "People are served in varying degrees by the dominant culture" (191's adaptation of Lindsey et al., 2015). This is understood by questioning the extent to which "191 employees recognize and understand the differential and historical treatment accorded to those least well served in [one's] schools and programs" (191's adoption of Lindsey et al., 2015). "If we tell [oneself] that the only problem is hate, we avoid facing the reality that it is mostly nice, non-hating people who perpetuate racial inequality" (Cose, 1998, p. 20). Lindsey says that if we do not notice and accept along with committing to overcoming such barriers to cultural proficiency that it will result in a deficit worldview which "legitimizes the misuse of power; embraces privilege and inalienable; and holds that those who are not in the economic, social, and political mainstream are solely responsible for their lot in life" (Lindsey et al., 2012, p. 69).

The first barrier is the "unawareness of the need to adapt [that is] failing to recognize the need to make personal and organizational changes in response to the diversity of the people with whom one interacts" (ISD's 191 adaptation of Lindsey et al., 2015). According to Hall (1977), the natural act of thinking is done differently, in different cultures, there are many legitimate ways of thinking, however, "western man sees his system of logic as synonymous with the truth, for him it is the only road to reality" (Hall, 1977, p. 9). Consequently, many times individuals have blinders on because the only culture they know is their own. Subsequently, completely

unaware that there are other ways of thinking and problem solving. Altogether, it is when one is completely unaware that one doesn't know that they don't know.

The second barrier is “a sense of privilege and entitlement,” which is a mind-set in which one “believe[s] that they have acquired all the personal achievements and societal benefits they have solely on the basis of their own merit and character; therefore, they don't feel a need to release or reorder any societal or organizational perquisites they may have” (Lindsey et al., 2009, p. 70). However, these benefits are due to the membership of a dominant group. District 191 defines this concept by stating that a sense of privilege and entitlement gives “the dominant group the power to establish, define, and differentiate outsiders as others” (ISD 191's adaptation of Lindsey et al., 2015). Howard (2003) argues that many times education systems institute pedagogy requires students to be familiar with the dominant and mainstream culture. Thus, if one is unfamiliar with the dominant cultures way of being including their values and beliefs than there is a discrepancy between the background knowledge of school culture and that of home culture which perpetuates a system of oppression.

The third barrier is “Systems of Oppression.” These are “systems such as classism, racism, sexism, ethnocentrism and ablesim serve to create unlevel playing fields by ensuring access to society for some members and impeding access for others” (ISD 191's adaption of Lindsey et al., 2015). Therefore, Lindsey et al. (2009) informs us that inequities that exist and continue within the system are due to inequities of power. Those who benefit from this system can choose not to see it. When this happens “educators do not have buy-in, they continue using inappropriate activities with even more inappropriate literature and content. For example, the kindergarten classes at one local school, who chose to celebrate Thanksgiving with brown paper

bag headbands with feathers and pilgrim attire in 2014. Three of these teachers were taught more appropriate ways to celebrate holidays, yet they learned this way as a child so that is the way they are continuing, even when it's wrong thinking, which is recycling stereotypes" (Abington-Pitre, 2015, p. 2), with which perpetuates systems of oppression.

Deficit ideology justifies these systems of oppression. It is what is left over from imperial history. According to Gorski (2010), deficit ideology is:

a mechanism for socializing citizens to comply with a host of oppressions, from colonization to enslavement, educational inequities to unjust housing practices. In the most basic terms, deficit ideology can be understood as a sort of "blame the victim" mentality applied, not to an individual person, but systemically, to an entire group of people, often based upon a single dimension of identity. (Gorski, 2010, p. 10)

Thus, the dominant culture is asking that a community they see as a problem should be fixed. In fixing this community one is asking that the community change, to be more like the dominant culture. If they don't change then it is that community that is a problem. Once the justifying stereotype is socialized into the mainstream consciousness, the foundation for mass compliance is set, thus the systems of oppression are maintained (Gorski, 2010).

### **Assumptions and Beliefs**

In overcoming the barriers toward cultural proficiency one needs to acknowledge the assumptions and beliefs one may hold about particular groups of people. Many times this is where stereotypes of various groups are created and held. In examining the assumptions and beliefs that members of district 191 communities hold about various student groups within the school community, a group activity was designed in which participants wrote down all of the

stereotypes that they have heard about students of various groups. These groups include: those who qualify for free or reduced-price meals, English Learners, Domestic African American, Asian American, Latino, Native American, Somali students, and students served with IEPs. This was a very difficult activity for a few Gideon Pond Teachers to participate in. One teacher went so far as meeting with the director of curriculum, outraged that they were asked to do such an insensitive activity. The objective of the activity was to acknowledge that these stereotypes about various groups indeed exist.

To confirm that assumptions and beliefs do exist, a Ted Talk titled *The Danger of a Single Story*, told by novelist Chimamanda Adichie was viewed. Adichie (2009) explains how in coming to the United States people held a negative preconceived idea about Africa and about her. These stories come about from the way westerners perceive Africa through stories and images. She then explains her own negative preconceived idea of Mexicans before a trip to Mexico, while she was in Mexico observing people in a market place, she really thought of them in this negative way and she became consumed by shame. She realized that it was the influence of media that created this negative stereotype of Mexican people. Media can be very powerful in the way stories are told and what images are shown. She says, “Power is the ability not just to tell a story of another person, but make it the definitive story of that person” (Adichie, 2009, 8:30). Gorski (2010) agrees with this concept of power and states, “Once the justifying stereotype is socialized into the mainstream consciousness, the foundation for mass compliance is set” (Gorski, 2010, p. 20). Adichie (2009) told many stories of her life during her speech and finishes her presentation by telling some of the negative and sad stories that are true for her growing up in Nigeria. She finishes by expressing that:

All of these stories make me who I am but to insist on only these negative stories is to flatten my experience and to overlook the many other stories that formed me. The single story creates stereotypes. And the problem with stereotypes is not that they aren't true but that they are incomplete. They make one story become the only story. The consequence of the single story is that it robs people of dignity. (Adichie, 2009, 5:45)

Thus, instead of one story, individual's lives formed by their cultures are poised of many overlapping stories.

### **Bicultural**

The fifth guiding principle is that "School systems must recognize that marginalized populations have to be at least bicultural and this status creates a distinct set of issues to which a system must be equipped to respond." This is defined by asking oneself, "to what extent do 191 employees recognize and understand the bicultural reality for cultural groups historically not well served in our schools?" (191's adaptation of Lindsey et al., 2015).

People who may be considered as "outsiders," people who do not know the cultural norms of the dominant culture or the organization system "have to be fluent in the communication patterns of the school as well as the communication patterns that exist in their communities" (Lindsey et al., 2009, p. 106). When they are not able to code-switch well and respond differently than the expected norms set by the dominant culture and the norms of an organization, they are many times penalized for their inability to conform and can be seen as deficient (Lindsey et al., 2009).

## **Unconscious Bias**

“Though we may not always recognize it, each of us carries the weight of the history of interracial relations with us into our cross-racial interactions” (Tatum, 2008, p. 312).

In the United States, whites are most typically brought up in some version of the northern European traditions. This makes problems for everyone else, because educators, like the missionaries of the past, practice an unconscious form of cultural imperialism which they impose indiscriminately on others. (Hall, 1977, p. 206).

According to Hall (1977) the European derived white people are brought up to believe that they are superior and that their reality is truth. That other realities are inferior as they are thought to be less developed and that it is the job of those that have superior ways of thinking to free “others” from ignorance and make them more like European derived white people.

In adapting to diversity one must become aware of and acknowledge their unconscious bias and prejudices one holds. Lindsey et al. (2014) explain that when one sits down at a table not only do they bring oneself to the table, they bring with them their personal histories and past experiences. These histories and past experiences one has could be residing in the barriers of cultural proficiency and perpetuating stereotypes without even being conscious of it.

Davidio, Kawakami, and Gaertner (2002) performed a study that looked at how explicit prejudice has been correlated with deliberate acts of discrimination in that one is able to think about the cost of their course of action before acting upon it. Whereas, implicit biases have been found to be predictive of spontaneous nonverbal behaviors that one does not see as an indication of their attitudes, thus do not try to control them. This study found that “implicit and explicit attitudes can systematically influence nonverbal and verbal behaviors in interactions and how



these attitudes can lead to different perceptions by White and Black interactants” (Davidio et al., 2002, p. 5).

A different study that looked at implicit bias was conducted by Clark and Zygmunt (2014). In this study the researchers explored the reactions of practicing teachers when presented with an “encounter” experience that challenged them to examine their own bias...of race and skin tone (Clark & Zygmunt, 2014, p. 147). They used an Implicit Association Test (IAT) as one instrument and the reactions to the test results of the participant’s as the second instrument.

The IAT is a dual categorization task in which, in the critical blocks, participants alternate between two categorization tasks involving four target categories....The IAT is now the well-validated measure of implicit attitude, and Race IAT (Black vs. White people; Good vs. Bad) is the most widely used of numerous IATs that have been used in research. (Xu, Nosek, & Greenwald, 2014, para. 1).

The results of Clark and Zygmunt (2014) research in accordance with the IATs found that “nearly all of the teachers (96%) reported results that indicated preference for European American and light skin” (Clark & Zygmunt, 2014, p. 151). The second part of their study showed that the participants demonstrated a range of reactions to the results of the IAT test. This range was “from complete dismissal and denial, to devastation at the thought of possessing hidden bias, the tests never fail to elicit lively dialogue, furthering teachers’ deconstruction of race as a social construct” (Clark & Zygmunt, 2014, p. 157).

Teachers make countless quick decisions that affect student learning on an hourly basis (Fiarman, 2016). Therefore, it is important to be open to and aware of the biases one may hold. Thus, one needs to address their biases in becoming a culturally competent teacher. “The first

step to addressing biases is to acknowledge them. We know that everyone has hidden biases, but that these are the most dangerous when they are unrecognized (Clark & Zygmont, 2014, p. 157). Fiarman (2016) discusses that unconscious bias is just that “unconscious,” she believes that there are steps teachers can take such as creating awareness by eliminating stigma in talking about bias, Palmer says that “we must talk to each other about our inner lives—risky stuff for a profession that fears the personal” (Palmer, 1998, p. 12).

Fiarman (2016) also recommends that teachers need to be able to name what it is they are doing without getting defensive and simply owning it. They can do this by anticipating bias, and creating systems to reduce it. Teachers need to hold themselves accountable and know this is ongoing work. As our brains “are malleable, the biases and associations we have formed can be “unlearned” and replaced with new mental associations” (Staats, Capatosto, Tenney, & Mamo, 2017, p. 10).

### **Microaggressions**

When teachers, either intentionally or not intentionally, do not value and respect cultures other than their own and see their way of viewing the world as the right way students can feel that they are not valued (Lindsey et al., 2014). In addition, when teachers began teaching about cultures as fixed rather than always changing it might invite other people to think “they are wrong; here is how “they” should be like the teacher. These feelings of unworthiness come from judgments that may be experienced as microaggressions. “Microaggressions are the everyday verbal, nonverbal, and environmental slights, snubs, or insults, whether intentional or unintentional, that communicates hostile, derogatory, or negative messages to target personas based solely upon their marginalized group membership” (Sue et al., 2007, p. 272). According to

Sue (2010), microaggressions seem to appear in three forms: The first is microassault which is an explicit racial derogation; verbal/nonverbal. Second is microinsults which are communications that convey rudeness and insensitivity and demean a person's racial heritage or identity. The third is microinvalidation that is communications that exclude, negate, or nullify the psychological thoughts, feelings, or experiential reality of a person belonging to a particular group. Altogether, if one truly does not value culture it will be noticed by others with the actions, behaviors, and words one prevails either explicitly or implicitly.

### **Background Knowledge**

The eighth guiding principle of cultural proficiency is “the family, as defined by each culture, is the primary system of support in the education of children” (ISD 191’s adaption of Lindsey et al., 2015). This is defined by district 191 by posing a question. “To what extent do 191 employees know how cultural groups in the community define family and the manner in which family serves as the primary system of support for students?” (ISD 191’s adaptation of Lindsey et al., 2015). Aguado, Ballesteros, and Malik’s (2003) research was based on the necessity to design strategies to deal with cultural diversity in an appropriate way, in order for education to become meaningful for all students. They focused their study on the diversity as it relates to culture and how the educational system responds to these differences. In this study, they had many variables that they collected data on with school-family links being one of these variables. They found that “teachers are not generally familiar with the structure and interaction patterns of their students’ families, they mistrust the support provided at home in relation to education” (Aguado et al., 2003, p. 9). In general, all parents wanted their students to get a proper education, as well as wanting them to be able to read and write. “When [parents were]

asked about their participation in school activities and decision-making most of them felt they could not make any important contributions to school, and did not want to interfere with the teachers” (Aguado et al., 2003, p. 10).

Thus, to improve the education of student from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds teachers need to first understand the relationship between student’s home culture and school learning. After they understand the home culture they need to take that knowledge and reflect the student’s home culture and perspectives within the educational setting (Lin, Lake, & Rice 2008).

Many times education is looked as a basic transmission of knowledge. Freire and Ramos (2009) called this “banking education,” that is a simple depositing of knowledge into students who are thought to be empty receptacles. “In the banking concept of education, knowledge is a gift bestowed by those who consider themselves knowledgeable upon those whom they consider to know nothing” (Freire & Ramos, 2009, p. 164).

All children come to school as thinkers and learners, aptitudes usually recognized as important building blocks for further learning. But there seems to be a curious refusal on the part of many educators to accept as valid the *kinds* of knowledge and experiences with which some students come to school. (Nieto, 2002. p. 8)

Howard (2003) says that teachers need to recognize that teaching is not a neutral act. Teachers should monitor how their beliefs and the classroom culture which is created through both implicit and explicit acts by the teacher can contribute to resistance on the part of the student.

If teachers shift their thinking from subject based curriculum to learner centered this creates an emphasis on learning rather than teaching, as culture serves a framework for sense

making. One needs to demonstrate the ability and willingness to learn about other and use others' cultural experiences and background in educational settings (Lindsey et al., 2012). This is because "the lack of any organic connection with what the child has already seen and felt and loved makes the material purely formal and symbolic....But hits happen only when the symbol really symbolizes—when it stands for and sums up in shorthand actual experiences which the individual has already gone through" (Dewey, 1902, p. 24). Palmer (1998) suggests that good teachers "weave a complex web of connections among themselves their subjects, and their students so that students can learn to weave a world for themselves" (p. 11). Gay (2010) reports that "authentic teachers are motivated by the realization that diverse evolving students, settings, subjects, knowledge, and skills require multiple and continually changing teaching strategies" (p. 49). Altogether, the instructor will need to explore the interrelationship between what is going on in the classroom and what learners do outside the classroom (Lindsey et al., 2012), as students are not separate entities from their families and experiences with which the instruction in school needs to indicate and reflect these.

### **Institutionalize Cultural Knowledge through Responsible Decision Making**

The fifth and final essential element is *Institutionalizing Cultural Knowledge* which is defined by district 191 as "change the systems to ensure healthy and effective responses to diversity" (ISD 191 adaption of Lindsey et al., 2015). This can be viewed within the construct of emotional intelligence as "responsible decision making" which means "demonstrating the ability to make constructive and respectful choices about [ones] personal behavior and social interactions based on consideration of ethical standards" (Stephens et al., 2016). "Deep and sustained reform depends on many of us, not just the very few who are destined to be

extraordinary” (Fullan, 2001, p. 2). Acting on these deep and meaningful changes in oneself and within the system is the path which leads to social justice

### **Incorporating Cultural Knowledge**

The ninth and final guiding principle is “The best of both worlds enhances the capacity of all.” This is described by district 191 as “to what extent do 191 employees incorporate cultural knowledge into educational practices and policy-making to ensure systems-wide capacity building” (ISD 191 adaptation of Lindsey et al., 2015). In incorporating cultural knowledge one needs to constantly seek it out from ones students and members of particular communities. According to emotional intelligence, strategies for doing this suggested by Bradberry and Greaves (2009) begin with openness and curiosity. Opening up to others about oneself leaves less room for misinterpretations from others about ‘ motives or actions. Contrarily, if one is curious about others and asks questions in a nonjudgmental manner, one has a better possibility at meeting the other person’s needs and not misinterpreting them. This is a commitment to “learning and teaching about how other people experience those cultures goes much deeper than the typical heroes, holidays, and haute cuisine or fun, food, and fiesta activities...culturally proficient instructors want to know the history, the accomplishments, and the trials and tribulations of the people of a given culture” (Lindsey et al., 2012, p. 161). In truly incorporating cultural knowledge into policy-making “the follow-up steps have to include the involvement of members of the community in purposeful decision-making activities in the school for their voices to be heard” (Lindsey et al., 2009, p. 108).

## **Cultural Proficiency\_Continuum**

The Continuum of Cultural Proficiency serves as a way to identify and monitor one's behaviors. According to district 191 it "serves as a 191 personal professional and organizational tool that is useful in examining and analyzing responses to issues that arise from diverse environments" (ISD 191 adaptation of Lindsey et al., 2015). Once an individual has a commitment to initializing cultural knowledge by learning about a variety of cultural group's experiences and perspectives they are better able to include these in their everyday interactions, teaching, and lesson planning. The Cultural proficiency continuum will help them examine whether or not their practices are informed by barriers or the guiding principles of cultural proficiency.

There are several other models that focus on this process type of cross-cultural learning rather than that of just the content. McAllister and Irving (2000) conducted a study that examined three different process models Helm's Racial Identity Development, Bank's Typology of Ethnicity, and Bennett's Developmental Model of Intercultural Sensitivity. All of these models have developed from a variety of different disciplines, based on different premises, however all three describe a process as it relates to that of the Continuum of Cultural Proficiency.

McAllister and Irvine's (2000) rationale for process-oriented models in the development of cross-cultural competence are that they provide an understanding for resistance, as well as providing effective support and interventions, sequencing for applicable program interventions, and pedagogical strategies to form conducive leaning environments for students.

Within the model CPSS used, that of continuum of cultural proficiency, Lindsey et al. (2009) explains that there are six distinct stages that embody how individuals or organizations

respond to cultural differences of others in comparison to themselves. These stages begin with three unhealthy practices which are informed by the barriers of cultural proficiency and then move toward three healthy practices that are guided by the principles of cultural proficiency. The first stage of unhealthy practices is *cultural destructiveness* which eradicates another people's culture from extreme cases of genocide and macroaggressions toward the concept of acculturation to the dominant society, such as English only policies. This could include curriculum that denigrates specific perspectives. Next is, *Cultural Incapacity* which "is the belief in the superiority of one's own culture and behaviors that disempowers another's culture" (Lindesy et al., 2009, p. 116). This usually comes from ignorance and fear. This would support assimilation of diverse groups by implementing curriculum that would mirror only the dominant culture's beliefs, values, and language. At the midpoint and the last unhealthy practice is that of *cultural blindness* in which any policy, practice, or behavior overlooks cultural differences and sees them as insignificant. "Cultural blindness is the belief that color and culture make no difference and that all people are the same....The values and behaviors of the dominant culture are presumed to be universally applicable and beneficial" (Lindesy et al., 2009, p. 117). In lesson planning this would be providing incomplete cultural perspectives by "ignor[ing] aspects of culture (staff and students) that connects culture and learning" (Lindsey, Graham, Westphal, & Jew, 2008, p. 81).

The healthy practices of cultural proficiency begin with *cultural precompetence* in which one begins to see the differences, begin to identify what they don't know, and is aware of their limitations within ' intercultural interactions. One is aware that they need to unlearn embedded assumptions about cultural groups and realize that they are still teaching the same way they always have and have not adjusted their practices to new demographic groups of students.



Teachers “recognize that the curriculum does not include students’ cultural perspectives [and] incorporate...information and resources that may reflect students’ perspective” (Lindsey et al., 2008, p. 81). Next, in moving toward healthy practices is *cultural competence* “is any policy, practice or behavior that consistently uses the essential elements of cultural proficiency as the standards for interaction” (Lindsey et al., 2009, p. 120). It is when one sees diversity and recognizes the differences that differences create. In lesson planning it is when one consistently provides opportunities for students to contribute their background knowledge and perspective to various lesson topics along with providing complete and truthful perspectives of historical events and cultural groups (Lindsey et al., 2008). Lastly, *cultural proficiency* is when one “sees the differences and responds positively and affirmingly” (Lindsey et al., 2009, p. 120). The cultural proficient educator acts as a leader, they have a strong sense of social justice, and takes advantage of teachable moments. The culturally proficient instructor “is forward-looking and seeks to add to the knowledge base of culturally proficient practices by conducting research, developing new culturally appropriate approaches, and taking advantage of opportunities to increase his or her awareness and knowledge of others” (Lindsey et al., 2009, p. 121).

Gay (2010) concludes that teaching authentically takes courage in that teachers need to be critically reflective in searching for best practices that are effective in teaching as these are acts of social justice which is not always a popular undertaking. Teaching is a habit of mind, a disposition which is within itself an ethical practice, as teaching and learning are interconnected. “They are motivated by the realization that diverse evolving students, settings, subjects, knowledge, and skills require multiple and continually changing teaching strategies” (Gay, 2010, p. 49).

## **The Process Toward Social Justice**

The road to cultural proficiency is lifelong . It is a voyage because there is so much to discover. It begins however “by choosing integrity, [one] become[s] more whole, but wholeness does not mean perfection. It means becoming more real by acknowledging the whole of who [one is]” (Palmer, 1998, p. 13). Part of Howard’s (2003) suggestions within critical reflection is that it is a never ending process, that one never completely arrives at a finishing point. Even the most culturally relevant teacher makes mistakes, it is acknowledging those errors and improving one’s teaching accordingly that is most beneficial in becoming a culturally proficient teacher. Overall, “One of the hardest tasks to complete as you move toward cultural proficiency is the processing of [one’s] own issues regarding power and oppression....developing the capacity to confront [one’s] own issues with power and oppression enables [one] to recognize these issues and neutralize them in [one’s] classroom” (Lindsey et al., 2012, pp. 165-166). Hall (1977) ends his book “Beyond Culture” with these words: “Man must now embark on the difficult journey beyond culture, because the greatest separation feat of all is when one manages to gradually free oneself from the grips of unconscious culture” (Hall, 1977, p. 240). In that one is able to recognize what they implicitly hold as values, beliefs, and assumptions is not synonymous to only one truth.

## **Conclusion**

Altogether, when moving through the Essential Elements of Cultural Competence in order to change one’s professional practice, as a teacher, takes patience and courage. An analogy of this process can be understood through the backward bicycle scenario. Sandlin (2011), found that when one rides a bicycle that had been altered to steer opposite to that of the steering on a

regular bicycle with which one had learned to ride as a child was frustrating. He could not do this. “In that moment I had a really deep revelation, my thinking was in a rut. This bike revealed a very deep truth to me. I had the knowledge to operate the bike but I didn’t have the understanding, therefore knowledge is not understanding” (Sandlin, 2011, 1:20). Thus, first understanding oneself as a cultural human being, by assessing cultural knowledge; one is able to understand that their thinking and the way of going about life is not the same for all people. One might know this, however it is something distinctive in understanding this as “Once [one] has a redundant way of thinking in [their] head sometimes [one] cannot change that even if [one] wants to” (Sandlin, 2011, 3:16). Thus, it takes empathy and a willingness to truly value diversity. He was then motivated to learn to ride this backward bicycle, much like managing the dynamics of difference. It took him eight months, however one day while he was practicing it just clicked and he could ride it. Much like the motivation it takes to reach one’s goals in order to change how one regulates themselves in the face of a new way of thinking and problem solving. “It was like I could feel some kind of pathway in my brain, but if I wasn’t paying close enough attention to it, my brain would easily lose that neuro pathway and jump back onto the old road it was familiar with” (Sandlin, 2011, 3:43). Thus, when we adapt to diversity much like Sandlin (2011) adapted to a new way of riding a bike, one needs to be committed to this change in their mind-set, by continually reflecting on one’s practices in learning about others and including other’s cultural experiences into educational settings.

### **Chapter III: Methodology**

In determining the perceived impact of “Culturally Proficient School Systems,” ISD 191’s professional development training, on Gideon Pond Elementary teachers professionally, toward that of cultural competence I compared teacher’s initial “Cultural Competence Self-Assessment” (Lindsey et al., 2009, pp. 295-296) which was taken in Fall 2016 to a current “Cultural Competence Self-Assessment,” which was taken Spring 2019. In addition, each participant was given a survey that asked their gender, ethnicity, age, and prior course work, workshops, or training they may have had in relationship to understanding that of Cultural Competence along with voluntary comments about the “Cultural Competence Self- Assessment” they would like to share. This comparison of cultural competence self-assessments over time will help determine, at least in part, the overall perceived impact of CPSS training quantitatively.

#### **Introduction**

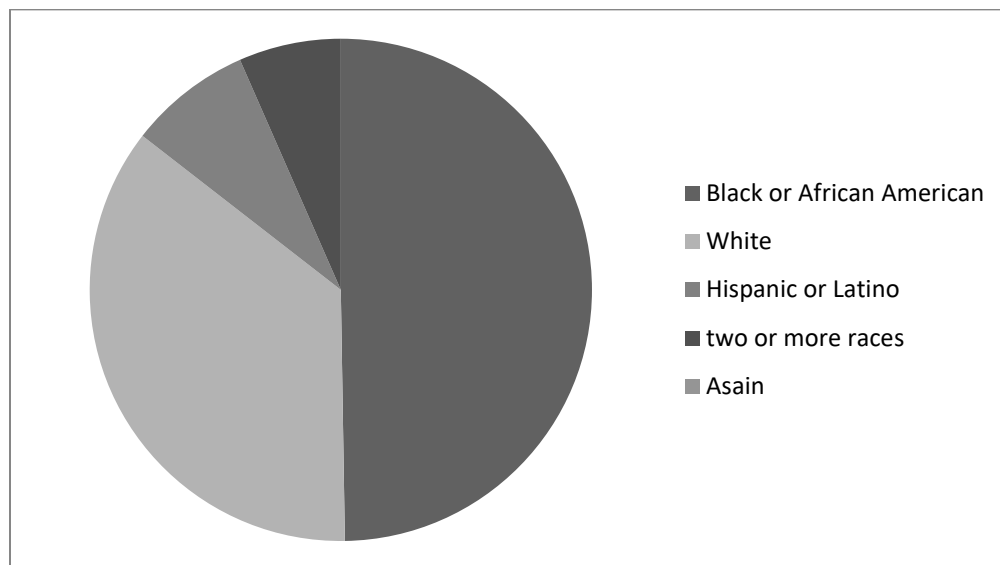
CPSS began with a systems audit to identify unconscious identity, beliefs and values of district 191 employees. The audit found differences in performance by student groups and found a low-capacity with cross-cultural relationships. The installation of CPSS began with training four teachers from each building/program and all administrators including the superintendent. This installation was called “Teacher Leadership Academy,” which included a total of 28 hours of in-service training, as well as 10+ hours of homework during the 2015-16 school year. The professional development learning experiences introduced participants to examine and utilize the tools of cultural proficiency which include: the five essential elements of cultural competence, the guiding principles of cultural proficiency, the cultural proficiency continuum, and overcoming the barriers to cultural proficiency. Within this framework participants examined

how aspects of one's identity impacted instruction, as well as ways to build relationships with linguistically, ethnically and culturally diverse students. During the 2016-17 and 2017-18 school years the initial implementation of CPSS took place. The trainers and administrators from each building continued leadership training in reviewing what they had learned during the 2015-16 Teacher Leadership Academy for CPSS in order to prepare for district-wide professional development implementation. In other words, this group of teachers led the CPSS training in each of their building in order for the entire school district to be trained in becoming more culturally proficient teachers. Three teachers and one administrator led the training at the elementary school where the data was collected. During the 2018-2019 school year and beyond, theoretically full implementation is to be presently taking place in which CPSS is being integrated into organizational, practitioner, policies, procedures, and community practices in order to be embedded within the organizational cultural norms to ensure sustainability.

### **Site**

This Elementary School serves pre-Kindergarten through fifth grade students with enrollment being approximately 500 students. It is a public school within an independent school district and is the most centrally located elementary school within the entire district. The largest population of students in this elementary school is Black or African-American which represent 48.4% of the school's population with white students coming in second making up 34.8% of the population. Hispanic or Latino, two or more races, and Asian follow respectively making up 7.7%, 6.4%, and 2.5% of the total school population. While the school's total staff demographics are 93.8% White and 6.82% Black or African-American (Minnesota Department of Education, 2018). This district is located south of Minneapolis and St. Paul, Minnesota. It is located in a

suburban community and has one high school (grades 9-12), three middle schools (grades 6-8), and ten elementary schools (grades PreK-5), with a total of around 9,000 students in the entire district (Ash, 2019, para. 1).

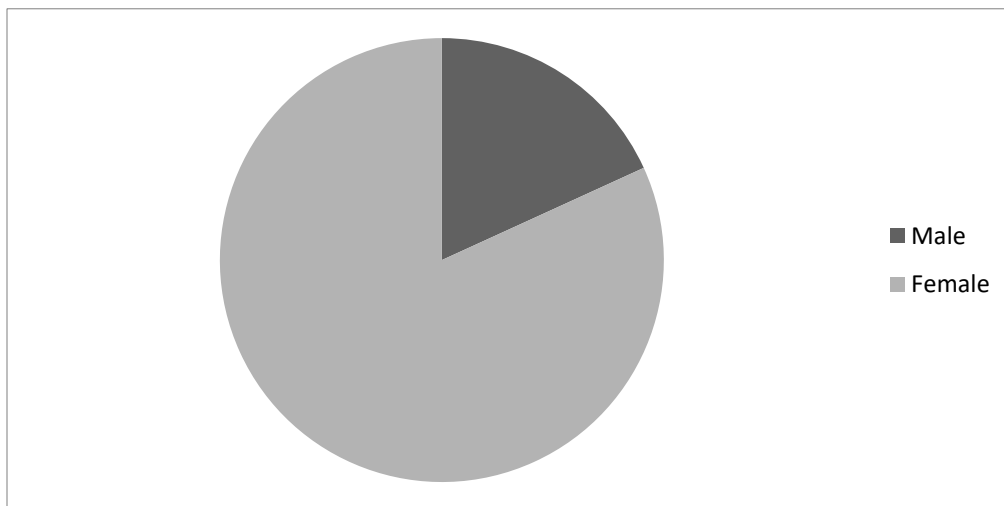


*Figure 1.* Elementary school student's ethnicity and race.

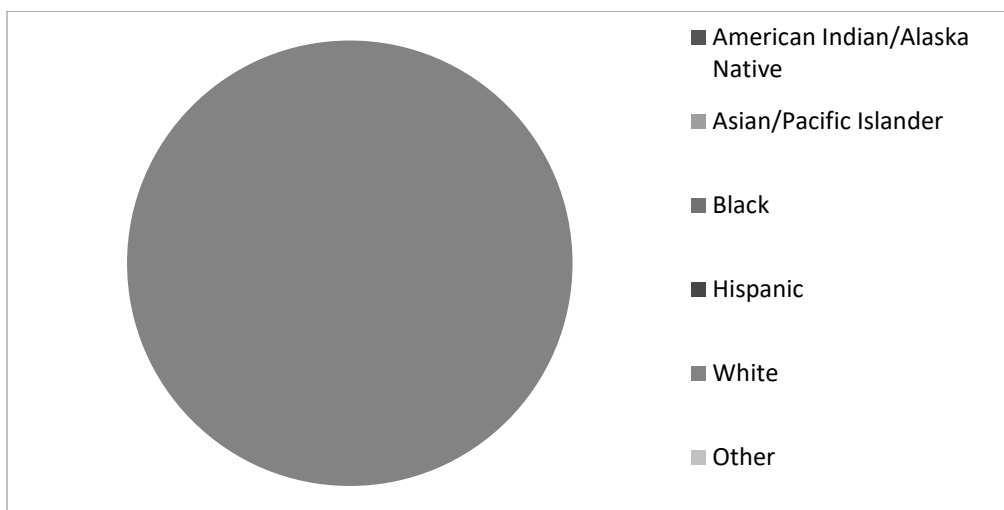
### **Participants**

Eleven licensed teachers voluntarily participated in this study. Nine of the participants are female and two are male. All 11 of the participants are white. Three participants are ages 28-35, three participants are ages 36-43, one participant is ages 44-51, three participants are ages 52-59 and one participant is age 60 plus. As far as prior course work, workshops, or training they may have had in relationship to understanding that of Cultural Competence are as follows: Two reported having had no coursework, workshops, or training; two reported having had an undergraduate multiculturalism course and some mandatory district implemented training; three reported having had an undergraduate multiculturalism course and some mandatory district implemented training, and some graduate course work; and four reported having had

undergraduate multiculturalism course and some mandatory district implemented training, some graduate course work, and workshops and training they voluntarily attended.



*Figure 2. Gender.*



*Figure 3. Ethnicity/race.*

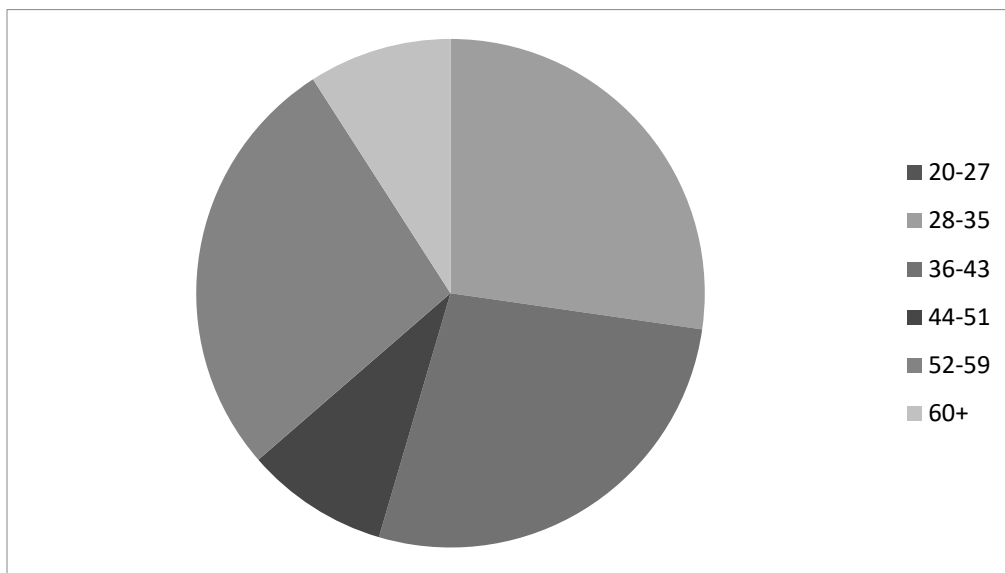


Figure 4. Age.

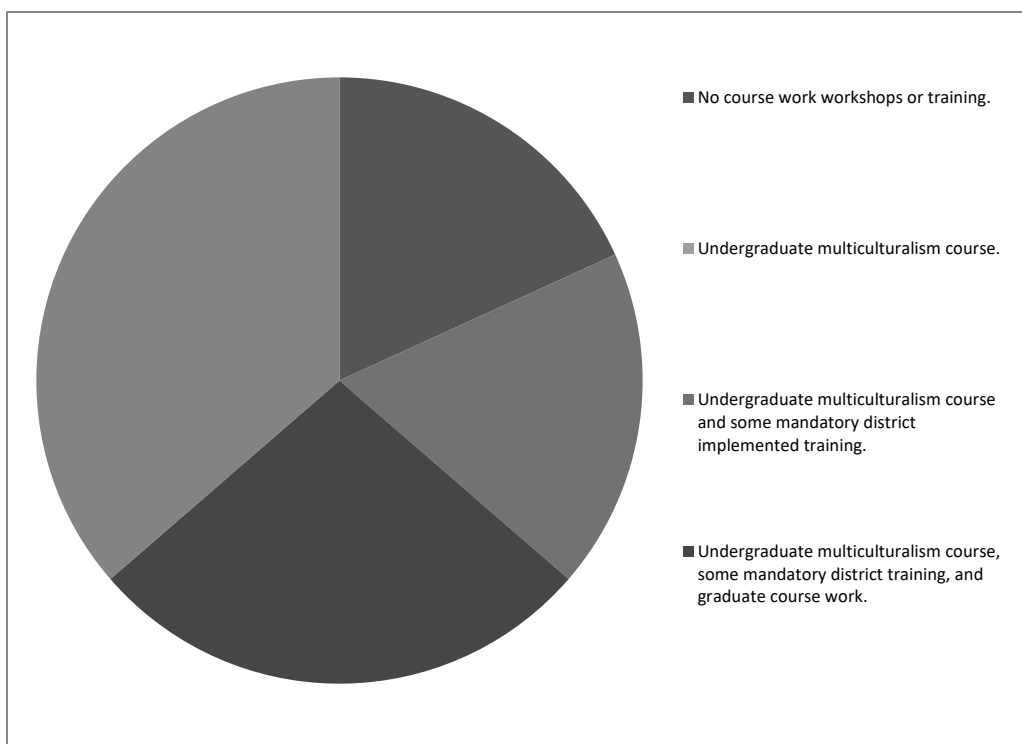


Figure 5. Prior course work, workshops, or training in relationship to understand cultural competence.



### **Cultural Competence Self-Assessment as an Instrument**

A Cultural Competence Self-Assessment was taken by each participant at Gideon Pond Elementary School in the early Fall of 2016 as a pre-assessment and reflected upon their self-evaluation at the end of Spring 2017 which was the end of the official CPSS district implemented training, to determine their individual growth. During this initial district-wide implementation every professional development day and several staff meetings were inundated with CPSS training. The “Cultural Competence Self-Assessment” was created and authorized for school use by (Lindsey et al., 2009, p. 295). It is framed around the “Five Essential Elements of Cultural Competence” which include: Assesses Culture, Values Diversity, Manages the Dynamics of Difference, Adapts to Diversity, and Institutionalizes Cultural Knowledge. It consists of 31 questions and answers are based on a 5-point Likert scale of rarely, seldom, sometimes, often, and usually. The purpose is “to provide a baseline of information and a starting point for conversation about becoming culturally proficient” (Lindsey et al., 2009, p. 293). It also helps determine any patterns found in responses, where to start as one develops their cultural competence, and what learning one needs to do next in order to improve their cultural proficiency (Lindsey et al., 2009, p. 293). In speaking with Randall and Delores Lindsey (personal communication, January 29, 2019), they informed me that no one has used the “Cultural Competence Self-Assessment” as an instrument before and that it was not intended to measure one’s cultural competence just as a tool in one’s personal journey toward that of cultural competence. This is the instrument that was used in this study to measure the perceived impact of CPSS on Gideon Pond Elementary teachers, toward that of cultural competence.

## **Data Collection and Procedures**

The procedure for this study began by recruiting Gideon Pond Elementary teachers who currently work at Gideon Pond Elementary School and were involved in the initial CPSS training in the Fall of 2016. There are approximately 29 teachers, three CPSS leads/teachers, one instructional coach, and one administrator which is a total of 33 teachers and 1 administrator currently working at Gideon Pond that have a teaching license and received this initial training.

I sent an email, with a Google Docs survey attached to the 33 teachers and one administrator to initially ask them if they would voluntarily be willing to participate in a study for the purpose of my thesis research. I explained that I would be collecting a copy of their Fall 2016 cultural competence self-assessment and that they would be filling out another cultural competence self-assessment, and a short survey. I assured them this study would be anonymous and no names would be used. When teachers answered ‘yes’ to the survey, Google Doc Surveys automatically collected these participants email addresses. After 5 days, I sent out another email to teachers that had not answered yet, to remind them to respond if they would voluntarily be willing to participate in this research study, giving them five more days to respond (which was a total of 10 days to make a decision on whether they wanted to participate or not). I initially had a total of 22 teachers and one administrator willing to participate.

For those teachers willing to participate, a copy of their initial “Cultural Competence Self-Assessment,” they took in Fall 2016 was obtained if they were able to retrieve it. They also completed the same “Cultural Competence Self-Assessment” (Lindsey et al., 2009, pp. 295-296), and labeled it Spring 2019 which they attached to their Fall 2016 cultural competence self-assessment. If they did not have their Fall 2016 cultural competence self-assessment, I still

obtained their Spring 2019 cultural competence self-assessment. In addition, they completed a demographics survey that included gender, ethnicity, and age. They were also asked what prior course work, workshops, or training that they have had previous to CPSS training along with any voluntary comments about the cultural competence self-assessment. Participants were given two weeks with one reminder after the first week, to fasten their “Cultural Competence Self-Assessment” they completed in the Fall 2016 with it labeled as such to the Spring 2019 “Cultural Competence Self-Assessment” with it labeled as such, along with the survey. They were given instructions to place it in a large mailing envelope that was in a fixed school mail box which was emptied every morning and afternoon in order to keep the data secure.

However, being it was the last month of the school year many participants who originally volunteered to participate in this study did not remember to hand-in their data. I gave all participants two extra weeks with two friendly reminders to hand in their cultural-competent self-assessments and surveys. After 4 weeks, 11 Fall 2016 and Spring 2018 “Cultural Competence Self-Assessments” were obtained from participants with an additional eight Spring 2018 “Cultural Competence Self-Assessments” being obtained. This was a total of 19 participants. Only the 11 Fall 2016 and Spring 2018 “Cultural Competence Self-Assessments” responses were analyzed for this study.

## **Chapter IV: Analysis of Results**

In this chapter, the responses obtained from the “Cultural Competence Self-Assessment” are presented (Lindsey et al., 2009, pp. 295-296). To find if an overall statistical significant difference exists within the 11 participants with whom completed “Cultural Competence Self-Assessment” from Fall 2016 and Spring 2019 a dependent paired t-tests were performed. To compare the overall difference within individual teachers who completed this self-assessment in both Fall 2016 and Spring 2019, they were specifically evaluated for their responses to Part #1 “Assesses Culture,” Part #2 “Values Diversity,” Part #3 “Manages the Dynamics of Difference,” Part #4 “Adapts to Diversity,” and Part #5 “Institutionalizes Cultural Knowledge.” The repeated survey over the course of time is especially critical to see the effect of how CPSS training has impacted teacher’s perception of their journey toward Cultural Competence.

### **t-test Results for Teachers who Completed the Survey for both Time Periods Fall 2016 and Spring 2019**

The below results are the subgroup of teachers that completed the cultural-competent self-assessment for both time periods, Fall 2016 and Spring 2019. The added factor of time is critical to determine if CPSS made an impact in determining one’s own awareness of their social emotional development in how one assesses culture, values diversity, manages the dynamics of difference, adapts to diversity and institutionalizes cultural knowledge. As this can be a stem for recognizing the need for growth and change in assessing cultural competence within the classroom with their students, with families, and with colleagues.

For Pair 1, the population used completed the cultural-competent self-assessment for both time periods, Fall 2016 and Spring 2019. A dependent paired t-test was conducted on the same population of teachers labeling the tests as follows: group 1, completed the cultural-competent

self-assessment in Fall 2016; and group 2 who completed the cultural competent self-assessment in Spring 2019. When these two groups of teachers answered the questions within Part #1 “Assesses Culture” on a 5-point Likert scale of rarely, seldom, sometimes, often, and usually, the teachers felt more successful in assessing culture in the Spring 2019 than they did previously in Fall 2016, however the P value in this t-test shows that there is an 11% chance of inaccuracy thus determining there is no statistical difference:  $t(10) = 1.7765$ ,  $P < 0.11$ . The results for **Pair 1** are summarized in Table 1.

For Pair 2, the population used completed the -competent self-assessment for both time periods, Fall 2016 and Spring 2019. A dependent paired t-test was conducted on the same population of teachers labeling the tests as follows: group 1, completed the cultural-competent self-assessment in Fall 2016; and group 2 who completed the cultural competent self-assessment in Spring 2019. When these two groups of teachers answered the questions within Part #2 “Values Diversity” on a 5-point Likert scale of rarely, seldom, sometimes, often, and usually, the teachers felt more successful in valuing diversity in Spring 2019 than they did previously in Fall 2016. The P value shows a 2% chance of inaccuracy, thus it is a statistically significant difference:  $t(10) = 2.6769$ ,  $P < 0.02$ . The results for **Pair 2** are summarized in Table 1.

For Pair 3, the population used completed the self-assessment for both time periods, Fall 2016 and Spring 2019. A dependent paired t-test was conducted on the same population of teachers labeling the tests as follows: group 1, completed the cultural-competent self-assessment in Fall 2016; and group 2 who completed the cultural competent self-assessment in Spring 2019. When these two groups of teachers answered the questions within Part #3 “Manages the Dynamic of Difference” on a 5-point Likert scale of rarely, seldom, sometimes, often, and

usually, the teachers felt more successful in managing the dynamics of difference in Spring 2019 than they did previously in Fall 2016. The P value shows a 5% chance of inaccuracy, thus it is a statistically significant difference:  $t(10) = 2.185$ ,  $P < 0.05$ . The results for **Pair 3** are summarized in Table 1.

For Pair 4, the population used completed the cultural competence self-assessment for both time periods, Fall 2016 and Spring 2019. A dependent paired t-test was conducted on the same population of teachers labeling the tests as follows: group 1, completed the cultural competent self-assessment in Fall 2016; and group 2 who completed the cultural competent self-assessment in Spring 2019. When these two groups of teachers answered the questions within Part #4 “Adapts to Diversity” on a 5-point Likert scale of rarely, seldom, sometimes, often, and usually, the teachers felt more successful in adapting to diversity in Spring 2019 than they did previously in Fall 2016 however the P value in this t-test shows that there is an 74% chance of inaccuracy thus determining there is no statistical difference:  $t(10) = 0.3421$ ,  $P < 0.74$ . The results for **Pair 4** are summarized in Table 1.

For Pair 5, the population used completed the cultural competence self-assessment for both time periods, Fall 2016 and Spring 2019. A dependent paired t-test was conducted on the same population of teachers labeling the tests as follows: group 1, completed the cultural-competent self-assessment in Fall 2016; and group 2 who completed the cultural-competent self-assessment in Spring 2019. When these two groups of teachers answered the questions within Part #5 “Institutionalizes Cultural Knowledge” on a 5-point Likert scale of rarely, seldom, sometimes, often, and usually, the teachers felt more successful in institutionalizing cultural knowledge in Spring 2019 than they did previously in Fall 2016. The P value shows a 3% chance

of inaccuracy, thus it is a statistically significant difference:  $t(10) = 2.5428$ ,  $P < 0.03$ . The results for **Pair 5** are summarized in Table 4.

Table 1

*Dependent Samples t-tests on Pairs 1-5*

Group	df	t	P Value	Group 1: Fall 2016		Group 2: Spring 2019	
				Mean	SD	Mean	SD
Pair 1	10	1.7765	0.11	3.76	0.54	4.09	0.48
Pair 2	10	2.6769*	0.02	3.50	0.724	4.18	0.565
Pair 3	10	2.185*	0.05	3.40	0.620	3.8	0.33
Pair 4	10	0.3421	0.74	3.88	0.45	3.9	0.51
Pair 5	10	2.5428*	0.03	3.17	0.70	3.68	0.32

Note: \* $P < 0.05$

Altogether, in comparing the overall difference within individual teachers who completed this self-assessment in both Fall 2016 and Spring 2019 there was statistical differences for Part #2 “Values Diversity,” Part #3 “Manages the Dynamics of Difference,” and Part #5 “Institutionalizes Cultural Knowledge.” There was no statistical difference found for #1 “Assesses Culture” and Part #4 “Adapts to Diversity.” The repeated survey over the course of time is especially critical to see the effect of how CPSS training has impacted teacher’s perception of their journey toward Cultural Competence.

## Chapter V: Conclusion and Recommendations

### Conclusion

In general, the results of this study indicate that Gideon Pond Elementary teachers perceived impact of CPSS professional development training toward that of cultural competence professionally, felt more confident and successful over time. The concept of the “journey” one takes through the “Five Essential Elements of Cultural Competence” found to be accurate. This could be part of their alignment with social emotional learning competencies, which are based off of emotional intelligence toward a mindset of action that reflect professional practices that are culturally proficient. However, only three essential elements of cultural competence showed a statistical difference where as two showed no statistical difference.

For Pair 1 when these two groups of teachers answered the questions within Part #1 “Assesses Culture” the results determined to show no statistical difference over time. The first essential element of cultural competence is assessing cultural knowledge which is to “identify the differences among the people in [one’s] environment” (ISD 191 adaptation of Lindsey at al., 2015). This may have shown no statistical difference because the journey of emotional intelligence begins with that of self-awareness, which encompasses, “demonstrating the ability to accurately recognize [ones] emotions and thoughts and their influence on behavior” (Stephens et al., 2016). This comes from developing a straightforward honest sense of oneself and being aware of one’s own tendencies in different situations. Being the group of teachers that participated in this survey are 100% white and of the dominant culture, question #3 within part #1 may reflect this on the cultural competence self-assessment which states: “I know the effect that my culture and ethnicity may have on the people in my work setting” (Lindsey et al., 2009,



pp. 295-296). This is difficult to distinguish when statistically all of the teachers belong to the dominant group and do not have to pay attention to cultural norms and cultural expectations because they are a part of the group that makes the rules which makes them seem intuitive (Lindsey et al., 2009), thus it is difficult to be able to recognize the effects that one's culture and ethnicity have on other colleagues, students and families.

For Pair 2, when these two groups of teachers answered the questions within Part #2 "Values Diversity" the results show that it is a statistically significant difference. The second essential element is *Valuing Diversity* which is to "embrace differences as contributing to the value of the environment" (district 191's adaption of Lindsey, 2015). In associating this to emotional intelligence, this element can be seen as social-awareness which is "demonstrating the ability take the perspective of and empathize with others from diverse backgrounds and cultures" (Stephens et al., 2016). It is the ability to accurately recognize emotions in other people which often means perceiving what other people are thinking and feeling even if one does not feel the same way. Teachers by nature generally like to help other people, they are care-givers with which tends to be more interpersonal and this correlates with the statistical significance of perceived growth within this essential element.

In addition, Hall's (1977) Iceberg Analogy of Culture was used in understanding culture in order for one to begin to value diversity. The visual representation of this theory was shown to be affective in having teachers begin to understand that not all aspects of culture are visual and that there are many aspects of culture that are considered deep culture which is hidden. This may not even have been considered a part of a culture, for some teachers prior to CPSS training. Lastly, the training informed teachers of Dilt's Nested Levels (2014), many teachers began

positively valuing diversity by becoming more aware of and changing the environment. They noticed the impact that others have on the environment, thus they began changing the environment in relations to what lessons, celebrations, stimulus, creations, and products they bring to their environments.

For Pair 3, When these two groups of teachers answered the questions within Part #3 “Manages the Dynamic of Difference” the results show that it is a statistically significant difference. The third essential element of cultural competence is *managing the dynamics of difference* which is to “reframe the differences, so that diversity is not perceived as a program to be solved” (district 191’s adaptation of Lindsey et al., 2015). In relation to emotional intelligence this element can be seen as self-management which is “demonstrating the ability to regulate [ones] emotions, thoughts, and behaviors effectively in different situations” (Stephens et al., 2016). Teacher’s statistical significance of perceived growth in this area could be understood through the fifth guiding principle of cultural proficiency which is “inherent in cross-cultural interactions are dynamics that must be acknowledged, adjusted to and accepted” (ISD 191 adaptation of Lindsey et al., 2015). As Mahon (2009) suggests that “an individual’s cognitive relationship with cultural difference changes as their perceptions change (p. 47). As part of the training teachers took Mitchell R. Hammer’s *Intercultural conflict style Inventory* (2003-2015), in order to become aware and understand their own conflict style, as well as learning the seven norms of collaboration when working together. This gave teachers the tools they needed in order to regulate their thoughts and behaviors. As “in dominant American society we are socialized to perceive conflict as something to avoid” (2012, p. 13), thus this may have been eye-opening in realizing that how one deals with conflict and collaboration is culturally bound.

For Pair 4, When these two groups of teachers answered the questions within Part #4 “Adapts to Diversity” it was determined that there was no statistical difference. The fourth essential element of Cultural Competence is *Adapting to Diversity* which is to “teach and learn about differences and how to respond to them effectively” (district 191’s adaption of Lindsey, 2015). There could be no statistical difference revealed because the outcome of this element depends upon how one’s abilities are developed in the first three elements of cultural competence that of assessing cultural knowledge, valuing diversity, and managing the dynamics of difference, within their professional practice. This is aligned to that of *Relationship Management/Skills* within emotional intelligence which is also dependent on the skills gained from the first three components which are that of self-awareness, social awareness and self-management. Relationship Skills are “demonstrating the ability to establish and maintain healthy and rewarding relationships with diverse individuals and groups” (Stephens et al., 2016).

Being the group of teachers that participated in this survey are 100% white and of the dominant culture, question #22 within part #4 may reflect this on the cultural competence self-assessment which states: “I realize that once I embrace the principles of cultural proficiency, I, too, must change” (Lindsey et al., 2009, pp. 295-296). Change is one of the most difficult things humans can do. According to Bridges (2003), individuals resist change because they want to protect *their world* as change threatens the meaning and identity they acquired from it. Teachers are human, they are attached to their identities and change is vulnerable and uncomfortable which threatens one’s assumptions about themselves which accordingly impacts one’s self-esteem. Since, change is difficult this could be why no statistical difference was shown over time.

Furthermore, being the group of teachers that participated in this survey are 100% white and of the dominant culture, question #25 within part #4 may reflect this on the cultural competence self-assessment which states: “I recognize the unsolicited privileges I might enjoy because of my title, gender, age, sexual orientation, physical ability, or ethnicity” (Lindsey et al., 2009, pp. 295-296). Since generating change is difficult than it can be problematic in accurately reflecting on one's cultural competence, thus not being able to realize one's unawareness of the need to adapt to diversity. This unawareness is the barrier to cultural proficiency which relates to the fifth guiding principle of cultural proficiency which is “People are served in varying degrees by the dominant culture” (191's adaptation of Lindsey et al., 2015). This is understood by questioning the extent to which “191 employees recognize and understand the differential and historical treatment accorded to those least well served in [one's] schools and programs” (191's adaption of Lindsey et al., 2015). Therefore, when one is part of the dominant culture it is hard to sense one's own privilege and entitlement.

For Pair 5, when these two groups of teachers answered the questions within Part #5 “Institutionalizes Cultural Knowledge” the results show that it is a statistically significant difference. The fifth and final essential element is *Institutionalizing Cultural Knowledge* which is defined by district 191 as “change the systems to ensure healthy and effective responses to diversity” (ISD 191 adaption of Lindsey et al., 2015). This can be viewed within the construct of emotional intelligence as “responsible decision making” which means “demonstrating the ability to make constructive and respectful choices about [ones] personal behavior and social interactions based on consideration of ethical standards” (Stephens et al., 2016).

Therefore, these statistics shows that teachers recognize themselves incorporating cultural knowledge into educational practices. Therefore, according to emotional intelligence, they are using the strategies suggested by Bradberry and Greaves (2009) in being open and curious. It was also district mandated that when teachers were collaborating with one another in lesson planning that they used The Continuum of Cultural Proficiency which according to district 191 it “serves as a 191 personal professional and organizational tool that is useful in examining and analyzing responses to issues that arise from diverse environments” (ISD 191 adaptation of Lindsey et al., 2015). Once an individual has a commitment to initializing cultural knowledge by learning about a variety of cultural group’s experiences and perspectives they are better able to include these in their everyday interactions, teaching, and lesson planning.

Altogether, the statistics show that there was a significant statistical difference with valuing diversity, managing the dynamics of difference, and institutionalizing cultural knowledge. These essential elements of cultural proficiency are more about being on the outside looking in. They are more about making things different in the environment that are more tangible which reflect more on one’s interpersonal skills. Whereas the essential elements of cultural proficiency that include assessing culture and adapting to diversity show no statistical difference. These elements are more about reflecting on one’s self, they reflect more on intrapersonal skills and human change which can be uncomfortable. This part of the study that shows no statistical difference can be summarized in how Palmer (1998) write that “we must talk to each other about our inner lives—risky stuff for a profession that fears the personal” (p. 12).

Overall, teachers perceived impact of CPSS training showed that it benefited them professionally as they move through the five essential elements of cultural competence. It shows

their mind-sets and journey toward cultural competence have transformed as they reflect on the five essential elements of: assessing culture, valuing diversity, managing the dynamics of difference, adapting to diversity, and institutionalizing cultural knowledge (Lindsey et al., 2012), within their teaching practices. This will help bridge the mismatch between home and school culture which in turn will help create equitable access for success for all students regardless of background culture, ethnicity, religion, gender, or first language at Gideon Pond Elementary School.

### **Recommendations**

To begin, this was a limited study with the number of participants, thus I would suggest this study be done on a much larger scale. I was able to create a study that included one-third of the teaching population at one school within the school district. It would be my recommendation to create a study that encompassed at least one-third of the entire school district's teaching population.

Secondly, this study was extremely subjective in nature, thus it is limited attention to issues of social appropriateness when one is reflecting on their own cultural competence, over an observed study that would incorporate teaching practices in relation to cultural proficiency.

In speaking with Randall and Delores Lindsey (personal communication, January 29, 2019), they informed me that no one has used the "Cultural Competence Self-Assessment" as an instrument before and that it was not intended to measure one's cultural competence just as a tool in one's personal journey toward that of cultural competence. They suggested if I would use this tool, I would get the most pertinent results if the study was measured quantitatively alongside be measured qualitatively. They suggested this could be done through teacher interviews with

questions that reflect on each of the five essential elements of cultural proficiency. After preparing some questions for review by Randall and Deloris Lindsey these were the final questions that were prepared as a possible secondary qualitative instrument (personal communication, January 30, 2019):

1. In what ways do you provide students opportunities to contribute their knowledge and perspectives about lesson topics (as a way for you to learn about themselves and others)?
2. In what ways do you implement a curriculum that reflects diverse perspectives, in addition to the dominant culture perspective, in order to value diversity?
3. How do you manage the dynamics of differences in the way students respond to each other and to you?
4. In adapting to diversity, in what ways have you integrated culturally relevant instruction and differentiated instruction to meet the needs of all learners? In what additional ways do you differentiate instruction to meet the needs of all students?
5. How do you view culturally proficient practices as a teacher's responsibility within your professional career?

With the changing demographics of the United States, and even more precisely the changed demographics at Gideon Pond Elementary School in the past 5 years, “never before have there been so many children entering schools populated by teachers who reflect neither their race, language, nor the communities from which they come” (Clark & Zygmunt, 2014, p. 147). Thus, it is imperative to address diversity positively and effectively. This study shows that district 191 needs to continue district mandated training in order to continue the efforts of

institutionalizing cultural knowledge within the district. Teachers need the time and tools to continue this important journey in becoming cultural proficient teachers. This study shows that teachers need to have a place where they can trust other colleagues with their inner truths which is both fearful and vulnerable.



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## Appendix

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**Cultural Competence Self-Assessment**


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Circle the numbers that best reflect your responses to the questions:

rarely = 1, seldom = 2, sometimes = 3, often = 4, usually = 5

<i>Assesses Culture</i>	
1. I am aware of my own culture and ethnicity.	1 2 3 4 5
2. I am comfortable talking about my culture and ethnicity.	1 2 3 4 5
3. I know the effect that my culture and ethnicity may have on the people in my work setting.	1 2 3 4 5
4. I seek to learn about the culture of this organization.	1 2 3 4 5
5. I seek to learn about the cultures of this organization's employees.	1 2 3 4 5
6. I seek to learn about the cultures of this organization's clients.	1 2 3 4 5
7. I anticipate how this organization's clients and employees will interact with, conflict with, and enhance one another.	1 2 3 4 5
<i>Values Diversity</i>	
8. I welcome a diverse group of clients and colleagues into the work setting.	1 2 3 4 5
9. I create opportunities at work for us to be more inclusive and more diverse.	1 2 3 4 5
10. I appreciate both the challenges and opportunities that diversity brings.	1 2 3 4 5
11. I share my appreciation of diversity with my coworkers.	1 2 3 4 5
12. I share my appreciation of diversity with other clients.	1 2 3 4 5
13. I work to develop a learning community with the clients (internal or external) I serve.	1 2 3 4 5
14. I make a conscious effort to teach the cultural expectations of my organization or department to those who are new or who may be unfamiliar with the organization's culture.	1 2 3 4 5
15. I proactively seek to interact with people from diverse backgrounds in my personal and professional life.	1 2 3 4 5
<i>Manages the Dynamics of Difference</i>	
16. I recognize that conflict is a normal part of life.	1 2 3 4 5
17. I work to develop skills to manage conflict in a positive way.	1 2 3 4 5



18. I help my colleagues to understand that what appear to be clashes in personalities may in fact be conflicts in culture.	1	2	3	4	5
19. I help the clients I serve to understand that what appear to be clashes in personalities may in fact be conflicts in personal or organizational culture.	1	2	3	4	5
20. I check myself to see if an assumption I am making about a person is based upon facts or upon stereotypes about a group.	1	2	3	4	5
21. I accept that the more diverse our group becomes, the more we will change and grow.	1	2	3	4	5
<i>Adapts to Diversity</i>					
22. I realize that once I embrace the principles of cultural proficiency, I, too, must change.	1	2	3	4	5
23. I am committed to the continuous learning that is necessary to deal with the issues caused by differences.	1	2	3	4	5
24. I seek to enhance the substance and structure of the work I do so that it is informed by the guiding principles of cultural proficiency.	1	2	3	4	5
25. I recognize the unsolicited privileges I might enjoy because of my title, gender, age, sexual orientation, physical ability, or ethnicity.	1	2	3	4	5
26. I know how to learn about people and cultures unfamiliar to me without giving offense.	1	2	3	4	5
<i>Institutionalizes Cultural Knowledge</i>					
27. I work to influence the culture of this organization so that its policies and practices are informed by the guiding principles of cultural proficiency.	1	2	3	4	5
28. I speak up if I notice that a policy or practice unintentionally discriminates against or causes an unnecessary hardship for a particular group in this organization's community.	1	2	3	4	5
29. I take advantage of teachable moments to share cultural knowledge or to learn from my colleagues.	1	2	3	4	5
30. I take advantage of teachable moments to share cultural knowledge with this organization's clients.	1	2	3	4	5
31. I seek to create opportunities for my colleagues, managers, clients, and the communities we serve to learn about one another.	1	2	3	4	5

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## Survey

For each question circle an answer that matches the answer that you most closely identify with.

1. What is your gender?
  - a. Male
  - b. Female
  
2. What is your ethnicity/race?
  - a. American Indian/Alaska Native
  - b. Asian or Pacific Islander
  - c. Black
  - d. Hispanic
  - e. White
  - f. Other \_\_\_\_\_
  
3. What is your age?
  - a. 20-27
  - b. 28-35
  - c. 36-43
  - d. 44-51
  - e. 52-59
  - f. 60+
  
4. What prior course work, workshops, or training have you taken relationship to understanding that of Cultural Competence, prior to 191's district wide implementation of Cultural Proficient School Systems?
  - a. No course work, workshops, or training
  - b. Undergraduate multiculturalism course.
  - c. Undergraduate multiculturalism course and some mandatory district implemented training.
  - d. Undergraduate multiculturalism course, some mandatory district implemented training, and graduate course work.
  - e. Undergraduate multiculturalism course, some mandatory district implemented training, graduate course work, and workshops and training I voluntarily attended.
  - f. I have a master's degree in TESL, cross-cultural relations, or a foreign language. Or my master's thesis/capstone subject matter is closely related to equity, culture, social justice, multiculturalism, cultural competence within public schools.
  
5. Voluntary Comments about the "Cultural Competence Self –Assessment" you would like to share.