

CHAPTER 2  
DEVELOPING CULTURAL  
COMPETENCE IN GIFTED AND  
ADVANCED STUDENTS USING  
COMMUNITY PROBLEM SOLVING

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**ABSTRACT**

*Teachers advocating for increased engagement by culturally and linguistically different (CLD) students in gifted and advanced programs can use Community Problem Solving (CmPS) to promote cultural competence, positive future images, a future orientation, and critical and creative thinking skills. This chapter provides an overview of standards for developing cultural competence for working with CLD students (Ford & Whiting, 2008), taking into account principles of multicultural education (Banks & Banks, 2010) and stages within the Incubation Model of Teaching (Torrance & Saftir, 1990). A guide is presented for teachers as culturally responsive coaches of CLD students in their use of CmPS*

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**Gifted Children of Color Around the World: Diverse Needs, Exemplary Practices and Directions for the Future**

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*to enhance their engagement in learning in gifted and advanced programs. In addition, the types of projects and documentation required as part of CmPS projects are discussed, including the written report sections and scoring criteria used in the evaluation.*

**Keywords:** Community problem solving program; standards for cultural competence; future problem solving program; culturally and linguistically diverse students; Incubation Model of Teaching; multicultural education

E. Paul Torrance called attention to the need for educators to discover and nurture potential among academically gifted and advanced youth who are culturally and linguistically different (CLD) (Torrance, 1977). Specifically, he recognized that many Black and Brown children failed to reach their full academic and creative potential because many educators held deficit perspectives and stifled CLD students' experiences in school. Further, Torrance argued that "differences are not deficits" (Torrance, 1974, p. 471), and he began to help educators understand that a focus on identifying and nurturing creative potential in youth, regardless of background, is an important way to inspire children to excel. In his work, he examined creativity in CLD students and found that they were just as creatively gifted as other groups of students (Torrance, 1971, 1977). Torrance noted that CLD students needed teachers who could create programs that enhanced their interests and self-development of their creative strengths and persistence in rigorous academic experiences and careers, where historically students from White and middle-class backgrounds thrived (Torrance, 1977; Torrance & Allen, 1980). Nurturing creative potential among CLD students remains an important area of research and training because it calls for educators to use creativity-based programming to address the mismatch between CLD students' needs and the services provided by many gifted and advanced education programs (Baldwin, 2011; Grantham, 2013).

Torrance's Future Problem Solving (FPS) Program is an international program, bringing together students from almost all states within the United States, Singapore, Australia, New Zealand, Korea, India, Turkey, Portugal, the United Kingdom, and new regions each year. FPS offers students a wide range of collaborative educational opportunities to develop positive future self-images, a future orientation, and critical and creative thinking skills (Fraser, Winstead, & Lee, 1997; Torrance, 1994; Torrance & Torrance, 1978, 1981, 1984; Treffinger, Solomon, and Woythal (2012)). Further, FPS provides

a solution to the persistent mismatch between CLD students' creative gifts and talents and the services provided by many gifted education programs.

Specifically, the Community Problem Solving (CmPS) component of FPS provides a framework for educators to serve as coaches<sup>1</sup> to develop cultural competence in CLD students. Torrance recognized that to motivate CLD students and promote their engagement in advanced programs, an emphasis on community and culture can accompany the development of creative problem solving skills that contribute to the development of a future orientation (Torrance, 1974). Community engagement is an important pathway for CLD students to bridge gaps between home and school culture and to develop competencies essential to enrolling and staying in academically rigorous advanced courses and programs. In essence, recruitment, retention and educational services for gifted and advanced students must include a focus on principles of culturally responsive education, empowerment, and cultural competence (Ford, 2013; Ford, Grantham & Whiting, 2008; Ford & Whiting, 2008).

The increase in racial diversity in public schools encourages educators to prepare CLD students to be competent in solving problems that emerge from the complexities and possibilities that our diverse nation presents (Grantham, 2012). Ford and Whiting (2008) advocate that educators ask of all students, particularly gifted and advanced CLD, the following:

1. Are students aware of and sensitive to cultural differences?
2. How comfortable are they in working with classmates who come from cultural backgrounds that differ from their own?
3. Are gifted students prepared to travel both internationally and globally?
4. Are gifted students sensitive to and interested in social justice and equity issues? (p. 105).

The CmPS component of Torrance's FPS Program is recognized for providing educators a framework to engage CLD students in authentic learning experiences that nurture critical, creative, and futuristic thinking skills and address student-identified real-world problems in varying contexts (Bohnenberger & Terry, 2002; Day, Threadcraft, & Romey, 2002).

The purpose of this chapter is to (a) provide an overview of standards for developing cultural competence (Ford & Whiting, 2008) in CLD students taking into account principles of multicultural education (Banks & Banks, 2010) and stages within the Incubation Model of Teaching (Torrance & Safter, 1990), and (b) guide teachers to become culturally responsive coaches of CLD students in their use of CmPS to enhance their engagement in learning in gifted and advanced programs.

## CULTURAL COMPETENCE IN GIFTED AND ADVANCED YOUTH

Ford and Whiting (2008) suggested standards for cultural competence in CLD students, based on: (a) guiding students toward competence in their own culture and (b) guiding students toward competence in one or more other cultures. Specifically, the authors present five standards that can be utilized to enable gifted and advanced CLD students to become culturally competent:

*Standard 1: Engage responsibly in the cultural heritage and traditions of their community.* Culturally competent CLD students assume responsibility for their role in sustaining the well-being of the cultural community and they demonstrate a lifelong commitment as community members and benefactors.

*Standard 2: Build on the knowledge and skills of the local cultural community as a foundation from which to achieve personal and academic success throughout life.* Culturally competent students from underrepresented populations demonstrate a capacity for and interest in learning about other cultures without diminishing personal integrity within their own culture. They make effective use of their own cultural knowledge and skills to learn about the larger world.

*Standard 3: Participate actively in various cultural environments.* Culturally competent students from underrepresented populations feel confident and comfortable in other cultural settings and with people whose cultural backgrounds differ from their own. Such CLD students wisely adapt to different environments and conscientiously see advantages in being actively engaged in diverse cultural environments.

*Standard 4: Engage effectively in learning activities that are based on traditional ways of knowing and learning.* Culturally competent CLD students can identify and use appropriate sources of cultural knowledge to find solutions to everyday problems; further, they engage in realistic self-assessment to identify strengths and needs and to make effective decisions to maximize learning.

*Standard 5: Demonstrate an awareness and appreciation of the relationships and processes of interaction of all elements in the world around them.* Culturally competent CLD students are able to view their community and the world holistically, recognizing our interdependence; they recognize how and why cultures change over time, anticipate

the challenges and changes that occur when different cultures come into contact with each other (Ford & Whiting, 2008).

These five standards for cultural competence provide a foundation that teachers can promote greater levels of engagement by CLD students in gifted and advanced programs. These standards all act as a framework for teachers to shape learning activities that can produce greater rigor and relevance. Thus, Ford and Whiting (2008) emphasized the importance of preparing all students to live and thrive in other cultural situations. With knowledge, dispositions, and skills grounded in cultural competence, CLD students who are culturally knowledgeable may move beyond the confines of one border, such as their neighborhood or community, and may be better able to travel broadly, to communicate effectively, and to collaboratively solve community problems. Developing cultural competence in students, however, requires teachers to use principles of multicultural education.

Banks and Banks' (2010) multicultural education model provides guidance for teachers to integrate multicultural content into the curriculum and learning experiences for students. In level 1, the *Contributions Approach*, educators focus on heroes, holidays, and discrete elements. Most teachers use this form of integration of multicultural content, which maintains the basic structure, goals, and traditional, ethnocentric curriculum. In the *Additive Approach*, Banks and Banks discussed integration of multicultural content, in level 2, where the content, concepts, themes, and perspectives of racially and culturally different groups are added to the curriculum without changing its basic structure. In the level 3 *Transformational Approach*, the following change is emphasized: one in which the structure of the curriculum is changed to enable students to view concepts, issues, events, and themes from the perspectives of racially and culturally different groups. In level 4 of Banks and Banks' model, the *Social Action Approach*, teachers facilitate students' problem solving and decision-making surrounding important social issues, and they take action to help solve them. Students are not socialized to accept mainstream ideologies, values, practices, and institutions. Instead, students are empowered to become proactive; they are provided with the knowledge, dispositions, values, and skills necessary to impact and/or lead social change.

To build cultural competence in students and meet standards proposed by Ford and Whiting (2008) teachers can use Banks and Banks' multicultural levels in combination with creative problem solving procedures (McCluskey, Baker, & McCluskey, 2005), as provided in the CmPS component of the FPS Program International.

## CMPS OVERVIEW

CmPS is a component of the FPS Program International (Future Problem Solving Program International [FPSPI], 2013, 2014) that assists educators in meeting the needs of CLD students in advanced programs. State affiliate directors, in each state, provide coaches with training to work with a team or individual in one of the following divisions: Junior (Grades 4–6), Middle (Grades 7–9), or Senior (Grades 10–12). Coaches may be adults knowledgeable in CmPS (i.e., training preferred, but not required), who agree to sponsor, oversee, and be the contact for the CmPS participants. A student or a team of students who have a desire to solve a problem in their community may be involved during class time or in after school programs. CmPS teams may include flexible groups, as long as students in upper grade level division do not compete with students in a lower division, but the CmPS team identifies and focuses on any community problem that may exist within the school, local community, region, state, nation, or world.

CmPS projects are often placed into one of the following categories for evaluation once entered for competition: civic/cultural issues, education, environmental concerns, health concerns, or human services. Students select and research their *Area of Concern*, and apply creative problem solving processes to identify challenges; select an *Underlying Problem*, generate alternative solution ideas; and determine the best solution(s) before developing a *Plan of Action* for implementation. The result is a project that includes authentic problem solving, documented in a written six-page report, with an addendum, highlighting main points and providing evidence of their work in a scrapbook and a multimedia presentation.

In the following sections, CmPS Steps are discussed in light of multicultural education levels (Banks & Banks, 2010) and stages of the Incubation Model of Teaching (Torrance & Safter, 1990) to illustrate ways in which they are compatible and support the development of cultural competence (see Table 1).

### *CmPS Steps*

Using Future Problem Solving Program International [FPSPI's] (2009) *CmPS: A "Real World" Experience*, students use a flexible form of the creative problem solving (CPS) process, which can be applied in any

**Table 1.** Alignment of Models that Inform Development of Cultural Competence.

Community Problem Solving (Future Problem Solving Program International, 2009)	Multicultural Education (Banks & Banks, 2010)	Incubation Model (Torrance & Safter, 1990)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Step 1: Identifying challenges</li> <li>• Step 2: Selecting an underlying problem</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Contributions level I</li> <li>• Additive level II</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Stage I: Heightening anticipation</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Step 3: Generating alternative solutions</li> <li>• Step 4: Generating and selecting criteria to evaluate solutions</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Transformational level III</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Stage II: Deepening expectations</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Step 5: Developing a plan of action</li> <li>• Step 6: Implementing the plan of action</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Social action level IV</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Stage III: Extending the learning</li> </ul>

order to create the *Plan of Action* suited to the active nature of solving present-day real community problems. Certain CmPS projects begin with a broad *Area of Concern* and work through various CPS steps, while other projects begin with a clearly defined *Area of Concern*. Some projects even have a solution idea already in mind (e.g., a recycling program). Some projects also may continue to work on a project started in previous years but are currently in any stage of the process (Future Problem Solving Program International [FPSPI], 2013) (see Table 2). Regardless of the project chosen, the students work from start to the implementation of their *Plan of Action* to make a difference in the community. One example is the champion project from 2013, "Operation TEFKIIIR," a collaborative CmPS team middle school project accomplished by students in Illinois and Jordan, TEFKIIIR means "think" in Arabic. Elm Place students partnered with middle school students in rural Jordan to launch a cross-cultural project about exchanging ideas while breaking subconscious stereotypes between each other and their communities. As stated by the students: "Together we are establishing a library of books, games and Nooks that promote thinking skills for the Sameeh Darwazeh School for girls in Shobak, Jordan."

### *CmPS Preliminaries: Exploring Areas of Concern*

In CmPS, students take ownership for the problem they plan to address in their projects as coaches support their efforts to identify *Areas of Concern*, those of importance to them and their community environment. With the culturally competent standards outlined by Ford and Whiting (2008) acting

CmPS Project Type	Curricular Projects	International Level Competitive Single-Year Project	International Level Competitive Multi-Year Project	International Level Evolving Projects
Individual or team project description	May be completed by any size group with added assistance by the teacher/coach	Projects that are entirely new ideas and not based on any previous project presented to evaluators. Projects are student selected, researched, and implemented with adult guidance. Projects are completed within one FPPSI defined school year	Completed over a period of time that extends beyond one FPPSI defined school year and has never been presented at the International Conference or Affiliate level. A minimum of 50% of the team members must remain constant	Builds upon a previously submitted project that has been evaluated at the affiliate and/or international competition. A new/modified area of concern, underlying problem, and plan of action are developed
Team or individual requirements	Project requirement may vary from affiliate programs, which may include a six-page report and a scrapbook	Written report (max. six pages)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• All single-year project requirements</li> <li>• Timeline (seventh page of addendum) that clearly delineates the accomplishments of the first year and each year thereafter of the project.</li> <li>• Complete roster for each year (team)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• All single-year project requirements</li> <li>• One to two page preface</li> <li>• Timeline (seventh page of addendum) that clearly delineates the accomplishments of the first year and those of the project</li> <li>• Complete roster for each year (team)</li> </ul>
Project requirement	Project requirement may vary from affiliate programs, which may include a six-page report and a scrapbook	Written report (max. six pages)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• All single-year project requirements</li> <li>• Timeline (seventh page of addendum) that clearly delineates the accomplishments of the first year and each year thereafter of the project.</li> <li>• Complete roster for each year (team)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• All single-year project requirements</li> <li>• One to two page preface</li> <li>• Timeline (seventh page of addendum) that clearly delineates the accomplishments of the first year and those of the project</li> <li>• Complete roster for each year (team)</li> </ul>

Source: Future Problem Solving Program International (2013).

Table 2. Summary of CmPS Project Types and Requirements.

as a guide, students typically have a heightened sense of awareness to explore areas of concern in their community. These include but not limited to:

1. What is the community situation to be addressed by the project?
2. What does the research say about the community situation in light of cultural issues?
3. How does the community feel about the community situation that students have identified?
4. In what ways has the community, schools, state, or national agencies been involved with the situation?
5. Why is the community situation significant to the community and personally important to the CmPS participants?

The aforementioned questions are typically what students addressed when engaging in CmPS, thus evaluated on the extent to which their responses are significant, complete, and clear. Because students have the autonomy to identify a situation in the community, they are free and expected to examine issues through their cultural lens. Neither teachers nor the FPS International give students the problem, but coaches should encourage the students to consider culturally relevant issues that may be unaddressed or may plagued the community. The learning experience gives students the responsibility (and affords teachers as coaches the opportunity) to learn about the cultural dynamics that may exist within their community from its members and critics. In doing so, students' cultural competence increases as they become well-grounded in the areas of concern that emerged from the cultural heritage and traditions of their community (Ford & Whiting, 2008), and their capacity to explain Areas of Concern to team members, teachers, and other community members increases.

Identifying Challenges

CmPS team members work together to identify challenges related to the community situation that may potentially impact them personally, their family, or their cultural group. CLD students need to understand how their teamwork helps them to develop cultural competence and how using culturally responsive questions empowers them to connect with their community. Questions might encompass:

1. What culturally based challenges caused the community situation?
2. What cultural factors might adversely impact the community situation?

3. What might be concerns of the community elders that result from the community situation and what are challenges that may arise while trying to address the problems associated with the community situation?

For example, students might want to explore the culture of poverty as it relates to their community. They also might think about the groups of people affected by poverty, the connections that a culture of poverty has with other key issues happening in the community, such as food deserts, economic drought or prosperity, job markets, or homelessness. They may also raise other questions, such as How are people from various cultural or ethnic groups affected by poverty?, What interventions exist to address poverty but do not work?, and Why?

Coaches can nurture CLD students' effectiveness in addressing culturally responsive questions throughout the course of a CmPS project and promote advanced levels of cultural competence. Ford and Whiting's standards for cultural competence are derived, in part, from Storti's (1999) four levels of cultural competence (see Fig. 1) that take into account different aspects of ignorance and sensitivity, including blissful ignorance, troubling ignorance, deliberate sensitivity, and spontaneous sensitivity. Keeping this in mind, coaches should monitor CLD students who are not cognizant of cultural differences and lack the ability to address differences because they may be operating in *blissful ignorance*, which is synonymous with a color-blind or culture-blind way of engaging with different people, situations, and environments (Ford & Whiting, 2008). They do not raise culturally relevant

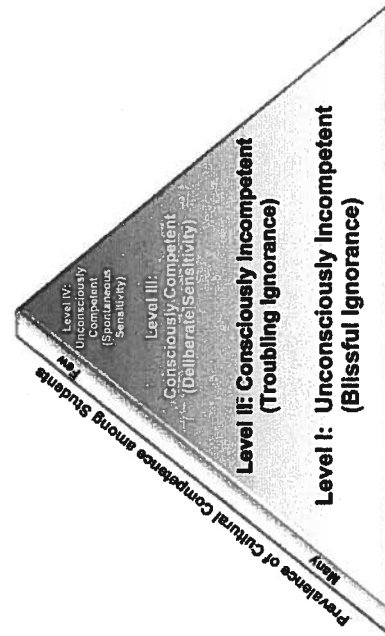


Fig. 1. Prevalence Pyramid of Cultural Competence among Students. Source: Conceptualized by Grantham and Ford (2015) from Storti's Model (1999).

questions about their community or others, nor do they tend to think about actions that address challenges specific to their culture. *Troubling ignorance* represents CLD students who are conscious of cultural difference, but a lack of competence to address differences. For example, the coach may notice CLD students that are aware of differences in how their White peers react negatively to them as minority students in predominantly White classes. Yet, these same CLD students may lack the resources or use naïve strategies to address negative reactions. *Deliberate sensitivity* is a consciousness of cultural differences and emerging confidence and competence with addressing cultural differences. Early in the CmPS process, coaches may notice CLD students who desire a higher level of cultural competence and seek a deeper understanding of the advantages to developing cultural competence. These students can be key members on the CmPS team to motivate other CLD students to sustain their engagement in the process. CLD students who are culturally competent (i.e., having an automatic sense of awareness, understanding and respect for diversity) are expressing *spontaneous sensitivity* (Storti, 1999). These students may develop culturally responsive strategies, resources, and skills to engage effectively in different settings with different people and situations. Thus, coaches should pay particular attention to CLD students who display *spontaneous sensitivity* because they are leaders who not only can offer guidance to a CmPS team in identifying challenges, but they can also serve as ambassadors to recruit other CLD students to understand and value the importance of CmPS learning experience and their impact on individuals and their community. Many CLD students are disengaged in school because of mainstream culture-blind curriculum and color-blind activities that fail to encourage students to raise critical questions or to identify and address culturally relevant problems in the community (Ford, 2011). Hence, CmPS helps teachers as coaches to overcome these shortcomings.

Torrance and Saftir (1990) suggested, in Stage I: Heightening Anticipation of their Incubation Model of Teaching, that "thinking about and responding to these critical questions from different vantage points can motivate students in creative ways to make connections with what they are expected to learn and something meaningful in their lives" (p. 7). When CLD students identify meaningful challenges in the CmPS process, they often legitimize and eventually gain deeper insight into what might have formerly been a problem invisible to the mainstream culture. Students may analyze the community situation from a wide variety of cultural perspectives, including local, state, national, and international issues, which enhances their development of cultural competence. In CmPS, the challenges should be clearly written, giving students the opportunity to assert culturally

relevant ideas in critical and creative ways. This step leads to the *Underlying Problem* that may serve as the basis from which the *Plan of Action* will be designed and implemented by students. Evaluation of challenges identified by a CmPS team may focus on the extent to which the information represents high levels of flexibility, insight, and clarity, which are important because embedded within standards for cultural competence are tenets of creativity. For example, CLD students whose thinking may not be flexible, who are narrow minded, and unclear about the need to respect differences in values, norms, or beliefs that exist within different communities are not likely to demonstrate advanced levels of cultural competence.

#### *Selecting an Underlying Problem*

CmPS participants may select the Underlying Problem (UP), showing its relevance to the *Areas of Concern* and the challenges identified. At this critical stage of the process, team members have narrowed the community situation, rather than focusing on all aspects of the *Areas of Concern*. The UP should articulate the reasons for focusing on a particular aspect of the *Areas of Concern* and should clearly communicate desired outcomes that are culturally relevant to the community, ultimately demonstrating a strong sense of awareness and appreciation of the world around them (Ford & Whiting's Standard 5). CLD students may have the opportunity to interview self-selected community experts who are cultural insiders, visit culturally relevant locations for data collection, and tease apart different angles of the UP surrounding the *Areas of Concern*. In essence, CmPS participants will select UPs in more holistic ways that are informed by individuals and institutions embedded within and outside of their cultural environment. To develop culturally responsive UPs and meet components of Ford and Whiting's Standard 4, coaches can encourage and provide support for CLD students' use of Banks and Banks' (2010) four levels of multicultural content (contributions, additive, transformational, and social action) to narrow CmPS team's decision-making regarding which UP to address.

#### *Contributions Level*

Coaches can recommend multicultural content into the CmPS process by focusing extensively or exclusively on contributions of diverse groups to American society (e.g., focus on holidays, heroes, and cultural elements when teaching about culturally diverse groups in the community). CmPS can delve into research to understand values, beliefs, and history that inform cultural practices in the community.

#### *Additive Level*

At this level, multicultural concepts, themes, issues, and perspectives are added to the CmPS process. For example, CLD students can begin to discuss "tough" issues like racism in the community and focus on other forms of discrimination, like classism and sexism, which may seem safer and less complicated to discuss. Coaches can encourage attention to controversial heroes and role models in the community and critique of individuals who are safe and more socially accepted by the mainstream community. In doing so, coaches empower CLD students to tackle issues, themes, and concepts that are typically presented in an appendage-like fashion in a traditional curriculum or learning experience (e.g., like Black History Month, Hispanic Heritage Month). By infusing multicultural content through a contributions and additive approach, coaches empower CLD students to identify key issues that help them to narrow the *Areas of Concern* and select a culturally responsive UP. In addition, infusion of multicultural content can enhance the quality of CLD students content and articulation of UP wording, which requires traditional structures and formatting.

CmPS gives team members the opportunity to meet cultural competence Standard 4 (Ford & Whiting, 2008), which emphasizes effective decision-making. The UP is one of the most critical decisions that CLD students will make. Evaluation of the UP will take into account traditional forms of problem articulation, including relevance to *Areas of Concern*, focus, and clarity of desired outcomes. Using these required criteria, CLD students can demonstrate cultural competence by engaging effectively in learning activities that are based on traditional ways of writing in English. Meeting Standard 4 of cultural competence means that CLD students can engage in effective communication within and outside of his/her own culture. Using cultural knowledge to find solutions is another component that is central to Standard 4, as discussed below. Coaches encourage teams of CLD students through the CmPS process to generate alternative solution ideas, select criteria to evaluate solutions, and then take action to bring about positive change within their community.

#### *Generating Alternative Solution Ideas*

The team is expected to generate a variety of solution ideas to the UP and clearly explain them. If a project is based on an established solution idea, these ideas should help to focus, develop, refine, and implement the *Plan of Action*. The ideas in this part should include a thorough investigation of

various approaches to the UP or Plan of Action and demonstrate flexible and insightful thinking concerning the possibilities for action. This step represents a great opportunity for creative solution ideas based on different cultural values, norms, and beliefs. CLD students bring with them the expertise of their culture, race, gender, age, and experiences. By applying Torrance and Saftner's (1990) categories and descriptors in Stage II, Deepening Expectations, their Incubation Model of Teaching, students are able to think critically and creatively by "digging deeper," "cutting holes to see through" (getting to the essence of an idea), "cutting corners" (discarding irrelevant information), or "getting in deep water" (deal with taboo topics). This type of thinking encourages coaches to promote cultural competence at a transformational level of engagement with and about different people, places, and situations.

#### *Transformational Level*

CmPS represents Banks and Banks (2010) and the transformational level by asking CmPSers to incorporate perspective, issues, themes, and concepts in substantive ways, where in all multicultural activities, efforts, and materials (e.g., literature, displays, music, media representing the community locally and beyond, etc.). In other words, the CmPS coaching process should be culturally responsive, allowing CmPSers to be transformed and view all topics and events from more than one point of view. Coaches encourage and teach CmPSers to be critical thinkers and to generate solutions to culturally relevant community issues such as social justice, cooperation, peace, harmony, equity, and fairness.

Ford and Whiting's (2008) suggestions for transformational activities can be adapted for coaches to promote an environment that supports CmPSers' capacity to generate alternative solution ideas and to satisfy the fifth standard for cultural competence that might include:

1. Encourage CmPSers to see how their lived experiences are impacted by culturally relevant community issues, focusing on everyday encounters that directly and indirectly emphasize themes, such as privilege, power, and injustice.
2. Incorporate multicultural literature and other media (e.g., music and videos) into the CmPS process to diversify perspectives. Expose CmPSers to content that is authentic and free of bias.
3. Invite CmPSers to examine social issues and problems from multiple cultural perspectives and generate solutions reflecting these perspectives. Encourage CmPSers to question, challenge, and have a sense of healthy

skepticism when reading and engaging with others in their cultural community and beyond.

4. Expect CmPSers to challenge culturally based stereotypes that appear in curricula and other media (e.g., books, videos, newspapers, etc.) and guide them in examining their origins and in correcting misperceptions.
5. Analyze historical events from multiple world views to highlight how CmPSers must learn from the past and move toward positive change and solutions.

As coaches take steps to encourage activities at the transformational level, they empower their CmPSers to generate culturally relevant solutions that illustrate cultural competence while meeting the demands of the Future Problem Solving CmPS process. The *CmPS Guidelines* help coaches understand that evaluation of the alternative solution ideas is based on relevance to the UP, flexibility, and clarity. Although the FPS process is not delineated in the *CmPS Guidelines*, nor is it part of the scoring guidelines, within the Plan of Action students must provide a rationale for the selected solution ideas. CmPS coaches who know the FPS process and apply transformational level activities can be effective in guiding their CmPSers to generate culturally relevant criteria and apply them to the solutions.

#### *Generating and Selecting Criteria to Evaluate Solutions*

Students can generate culturally relevant criteria that may be used to determine the best solution. These criteria serve as yardsticks to determine the creative potential and importance of solution ideas. More specifically, the criteria measure the comparative quality (relevance and/or validity) of solution ideas and of importance to CLD students. Further, the criteria may take into account culturally relevant solutions that support the community, and the students use only one concern/dimension to frame each criterion, addressing questions in a culturally sensitive manner: (a) What you are measuring?, (b) What is the cost to the community?, (c) Will there be cultural acceptance by the elders, business leaders?, and (d) What is the likelihood of resistance from power brokers in the community? By developing criteria, CmPSers learn principles of measurement and evaluation that help them to engage in self-appraisal of cultural norms, values, and beliefs and to understand perspectives of other group members' in how they may interpret and/or judge the validity or worthiness of criteria (Future Problem Solving Program International [FPSPI], 2013).



Students should select the most promising solution(s) – either a single solution or a combination, which will create a focused and effective Plan of Action. Applying the criteria to solution ideas is an important focusing step. A variety of creative problem solving tools (e.g., a grid or matrix) are useful when determining solution ideas that have the greatest impact (Future Problem Solving Program [FPS], 1993). Although CmpS does not require a specific format for the development of criteria and a specific grid for evaluation, these steps are essential for the efficiency of the process.

#### *Developing a Plan of Action*

The Plan of Action is the core of the CmpS process, where students create a plan for implementing the solution idea(s) in culturally relevant ways. CLD students may use humor, fantasy, apply personal meaning, and think futuristically to develop plans of action for their engagement in critical and creative thinking and productivity. The Plan of Action should address the following questions:

1. What do CmpSers expect to accomplish and what are the culturally responsive steps they plan to take?
2. What is the working timeline framing major goals and deadlines?
3. How is the Plan of Action relevant to the UP?
4. How will the Plan of Action impact the Area of Concern and why is it the best approach to solving the problem?

The Plan of Action should be detailed, describing culturally relevant activities to be engaged and evaluation of progress. Coaches should prepare CmpSers to understand that *The CmpS Guidelines* includes an evaluation of the Plan of Action, focusing on relevance to the UP, potential impact on the Area of Concern, and completeness.

#### *Implementing the Plan of Action*

CmpS is different from all other components of the FPS Program because students will actually implement the Plan of Action they develop. Inferring from Ford and Whiting (2008), CLD students who implement plans of action to address community needs are also students who represent the social action level (Banks & Banks, 2010) of cultural competence. Learning that moves students from generating ideas to taking action promotes empowerment.

#### *Social Action*

“At the social action level, [community problem solving students] use and apply their knowledge and their newfound attitudes to address issues and problems. Social justice is at the core of this level, as students seek to improve the quality of life for all by addressing barriers and inequities” (Ford & Whiting, 2008, p. 108). During this part of the problem solving process, coaches usually find that CLD students will contribute in different ways. Implementing the Action Plan requires that CLD students follow their carefully crafted plan, identify growth, and document their efforts, which directly aligns with the culturally competent standards (Standard 4). Coaches should encourage students to understand that engagement in the creative problem solving framework and the Plan of Action is not a linear process. Furthermore, students should use the creative problem solving process in a flexible manner as they work to overcome obstacles, make decisions, and implement the Plan of Action. In doing so, students are “Plugging in the Sun,” according to Stage III Extending the Learning of the Incubation Model (Torrance & Safter, 1990), where they work hard, find and use resources. Students work collaboratively to demonstrate good organization and in-depth planning and to document results consistent with the Plan of Action in a report.

Since implementation is the “meat” of the project, teams can and should use the FPS process in the planning stages as well as during the implementation of the Plan of Action. Participants are required to explain the scope of the project and CmpS team members can demonstrate cultural competence during this phase by:

1. documenting the culturally relevant positive impact the project has on the identified community;
2. providing culturally relevant evidence of growth in community awareness;
3. showing student(s) taking action in the community resulting in a culturally relevant positive impact on the project goals;
4. presenting culturally relevant evidence of the student(s) seeking community involvement;
5. delivering culturally relevant presentations to community groups;
6. showing positive support from community for the project; and
7. explaining how overall achievements resolve the challenges, as defined in Area of Concern and UP.

The Scope of the Project is part of the scoring process where evaluators use both the written report and the supporting documentation in making

the impact of the project on the community, focusing on community impact, community involvement, and resolution of Area of Concern/UP. Community impact refers to the positive impact on the community. Community involvement refers to the ability of the student(s) to involve the community in the identified goals. Resolution of Area of Concern/UP reflects the overall achievements of the students in resolving the challenges.

## SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

The foundation supporting the use of CmPS with CLD students was built on Torrance's understanding that "culturally different gifted children far more than other groups of gifted children are likely to be concerned about their group identity than about individual accomplishment" (Torrance, 1974, p. 481). Gifted CLD students participating in CmPS are able to sustain high levels of motivation and success because they are engaged with their community and care about what happens. They identify with and understand the culturally relevant problems affecting the persons, places, and events in their lives and the lives of their family members, friends, and neighbors. Teachers as coaches usually discover that gifted CLD students will soar when implementing their action plans and that they emerge with a broad and better understanding of and comfort with diverse community cultures, including their own. CmPS is aligned with levels in Banks and Banks' multicultural model and stages within Torrance incubation model. CmPS offers a culturally relevant pathway for nurturing the development of cultural competencies in gifted CLD students, as suggested by Ford and Whiting (2008), and for promoting critical and creative thinking, and proactive engagement that makes a culturally relevant positive impact on their community.

## NOTE

1. A coach is a person responsible for supporting an individual or team of students in their development of knowledge and skills related to the creative problem solving process and FPS program.

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## CHAPTER 3

# SI SE PUEDE/YES WE CAN: RAMPING UP EFFORTS FOR COLLABORATING WITH HISPANIC PARENTS AND FAMILIES

Jaime A. Castellano

### ABSTRACT

*This chapter promotes the call for more research and practice in promoting comprehensive parent involvement policies, practices, and procedures that honors and respects racially, culturally, and linguistically diverse parents and families, in particular those of Hispanic descent. Furthermore, this chapter serves as a guide not only for Hispanic parents and families but also for those schools, districts, and other providers that work directly with them and their children. A primary emphasis is placed on information useful for Hispanic parents and families with a child identified as gifted, advanced, or high ability.*

**Keywords:** Hispanic; parents; families; advocacy; intra-ethnic diversity; parent bill of rights

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