Equity and Culture: Advocating for English Language Learners

Unite, Inspire, Lead
Our Students, Our Union, Our Future

Equity and Culture: Advocating for English Language Learners

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Indicate the NEA Strategic Goal and NEA Organizational Priority your session addresses:

• **NEA Strategic Goal**
  – Strategic Goal 2: Empowered Educators for Successful Students

• **NEA Organizational Priority**
  – Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA)
  – Institutional Racism/Racial Justice in Education
NEA Leadership Competency: Leading Our Professions

- NEA Leadership Competency progression level(s):
  - Level 1: Foundational
  - Level 2: Mobilizing & Power Building
  - Level 3: Agenda Driving

- NEA Leadership Competency themes
  - Shows educational leadership and understands union’s role in student learning and leading our profession
  - Advocates for policies and strategies that positively impact our profession and student learning
Session Outcomes

1. Define culture and the characteristics of culture
2. Overview of culturally responsive lessons
3. Develop an action plan to strengthen cross-cultural communication and connections between ELL families and educators
4. Learn advocacy strategies to respond to educational inequities impacting ELLs from diverse cultural backgrounds
Session Norms

• Actively listen
• Speak from your own experience
• Participate fully
• Respect others

(Adapted from Gorski, 2015)
The Danger of a Single Story

1. What does Adichie say is the danger of a single story?

2. What role does she say that power plays in the development of a single story?

3. How can a single story impact our perception of the students that we teach?
DEFINING CULTURE AND CHARACTERISTICS OF CULTURE

WHAT IS CULTURE?

at pppst.com
Culture Defined

• A system of shared beliefs, values, customs, behaviors, and artifacts that the members of society use to interact with their world and with one another,” (Zion & Kozleski, 2005, p. 3).

• Macro-culture and micro-cultures (Banks & Banks, 2007)
Circles of My Multicultural Self
Cultural Identity

• Everyone belongs to cultural groups
• Cultural identity can change
• Influenced by our interactions with others
• Shaped by socio-cultural and historical perspectives
• Cultural identity exists along a continuum

(Zion & Kozleski, 2005)
Levels of Culture

• Surface – visible elements of culture
• Shallow – rules regarding communication and behavior
• Deep – the unspoken knowledge and assumptions that form our worldview

Hammond, 2015
Why Does Culture Matter for Education?

• Culture impacts:
  – Students’ beliefs about education and learning, classroom behavior, and communication patterns (Zion & Kozleski, 2005)
  – Educators’ beliefs about teaching and learning, expectations for classroom behavior, communication patterns, and classroom management
Implications for Differences Between Home and School Culture

• May be taught to act and think differently at home and at school (Ogbu, 2003)

• Patterns of language use may be different (Heath, 2003)

• Need support to learn to function within and across cultures (Banks & Banks, 2007)
How do you strengthen connections between ELL families and educators?
First Steps

Learn more about ELL families and their home culture.
- Opportunities for ELLs to share their stories
- Opportunities for ELLs and families to share culture
- Language
- Home visits
- Community events
- Independent research

(Colorín Colorado, 2014; Staehr Fenner, 2014)
Building Trust and Communication with ELL Families

- Recognize that ELL families want to be involved
- Provide support services that are culturally relevant and appropriate
- Engage members of the community as parent liaisons
- Use multiple ways of communicating with families
- Address potential challenges to parent participation

(Colorín Colorado, 2014; Staehr Fenner, 2014)
ELL Family Involvement Action Plan
DEFINING AND WORKING FOR EQUITY FOR ELLS
Action Thermometer

Educational equity means that all students receive the same education regardless of their cultural background, ethnicity, socio-economic status, or any other variable.
Defining Educational Equity

Educational equity means that all students, regardless of culture, race, economic-status, background, or other personal circumstances should have flexible and equitable access to resources that support their diverse learning needs.

(OECD, 2012; U.S. Department of Education, (n.d); NYSED)
Equity vs Equality
Educational Equity Debrief

How does your understanding of educational equity apply to the work that you do with ELLs?
5 Steps to ELL Advocacy

Advocacy
The act of pleading or arguing in favor of something, such as a cause, policy, or interests or active support of an idea or concept.
Issues of Equity Scenarios Debrief

• How will you apply what you learned during the Equity Issues Scenario activity to your own context?

• What will the challenges be, and how might you work to overcome them?
Session Outcomes

1. Defined culture and the characteristics of culture
2. Developed an action plan to strengthen cross-cultural communication and connections between ELL families and educators
3. Learned advocacy strategies to respond to educational inequities impacting ELLs from diverse cultural backgrounds
Session Outcomes

• The content from this session can be used in the following ways in your current position/role:
  – Help you plan and develop ways to increase parental involvement across cultures
  – Help you identify issues of inequity and develop a plan to advocate for equity
  – Bring awareness of the need for cultural competency
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- Please complete the evaluation for this breakout session!
- Please visit the Leadership Development Resources website at
  www.nea.org/leadershipdevelopment