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STEINHARDT

Metropolitan Center for Research
on Equity and the Transformation of Schools



Culturally Responsive Curriculum Scorecard Toolkit

Education Justice Research & Organizing Collaborative

NYU Metropolitan Center for Research on Equity and the Transformation of Schools

726 Broadway, 5th Floor

New York, NY 10003

Toolkit Overview

Congratulations on scoring your curriculum! This toolkit provides resources and guidance for students, parents, communities, educators, and administrators on next steps to make your classrooms and schools more culturally responsive, *after* you have used the [Culturally Responsive Curriculum Scorecard](#).

Making your classroom and school more culturally responsive is not a quick fix; it is ongoing, lifelong work. There are many steps along the way that will make a positive impact on creating and sustaining culturally responsive classrooms, but it is important to embark on this work with the understanding that it is a long-term, intentional commitment.

Curriculum is only as culturally responsive as the educators using it. Diversifying texts and revamping lesson plans is an important step, but will not have the desired impact unless teachers and school leaders engage in the essential work of examining and understanding their own identities and biases, and changing their instructional practices. In fact, educators and school administrators can do more damage than good if they begin teaching curriculum about their students' cultures and identities, without a consciousness of how *who they are* impacts *how they teach*.

In order to move your curriculum from culturally destructive toward culturally responsive, it is critical to start with deep, ongoing professional development on (a) anti-bias/ anti-racist mindsets and culturally responsive sustaining pedagogy and (b) creating equitable policies, school structures, and accountability. Refer to the [Resource List for Culturally Responsive Education](#) for resources and providers in your area who can assist with professional development.

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Guiding Questions for Debrief

This tool provides key questions that Scorecard facilitators (and those accountable for moving classrooms and schools toward cultural responsiveness) should address as they prepare for their next steps. The questions are designed to encourage a critical reflection on the process of scoring, identifying systemic barriers, opportunities, and supports for CRE curriculum, considerations for getting to CRE curriculum, and planning next steps.

Process of Scoring

1. What was the scoring process like for our community?
 - a. Who was invited and who was not? Why? Who attended and what made it possible for them to attend? Did the attendees reflect the students we teach? Should we move forward with the scores determined by the attendees or do we need to plan a second Scoring that is meaningfully inclusive (addresses barriers that might otherwise prevent attendance such as on-site babysitter, food, evening or weekend hours, etc)?
 - b. What did the scoring process reveal about our communities' thoughts, opinions, or attitudes toward CRE curriculum? Were there particular sections or statements of the Scorecard that people struggled with?
 - c. Which parts of the scoring process was really easy to do? Which parts were really challenging? Why?
 - d. Were there any obvious or underlying tensions during the scoring process?
 - e. What did you find that surprised you or was a new insight?
2. How did our community score our curriculum?
 - a. Were there differences in how different people scored the same curriculum? What were those differences based on and what perspectives do they illuminate?
 - b. Were we aware of some of the qualities revealed by the scorecard before? If so, why not? If so, why haven't we taken action?
3. What do our scores say about our curriculum?
 - a. Based on the scorecard results, which voices and perspectives are underrepresented in the curriculum? Which are over-represented?
 - b. Based on the scorecard results, what messages or perspectives are communicated in the curriculum that you would like to change?

Identifying Barriers, Opportunities and Supports

4. Why does our school have the curriculum that we have? What was the decision-making process that led to us using this curriculum and these books?
 - a. How can the decision-making process ensure that culturally responsive curriculum is acquired and used in classrooms and schools?
5. Who is responsible for ensuring that students have culturally responsive curriculum? What roles do people in the school community have to ensure that students have culturally responsive curriculum?
 - a. Who are key allies in the school community that will support culturally responsive curriculum? How do we know?
 - b. Who in the school community might be an obstacle to culturally responsive curriculum? How do we know?
6. What structural challenges (policies, unspoken rules, etc) might make achieving culturally responsive curriculum more difficult?
7. What structural strengths might make achieving more culturally responsive curriculum possible? What resources are currently available to prioritize culturally responsive curriculum?

Considerations for Getting to CRE Curriculum

8. What needs to happen in order for our school community to effectively use culturally responsive curriculum?
 - a. What do schools/educators need to learn more about in order to move toward more culturally responsive curriculum instruction?
 - b. What skills do we as a school/educators need to work on developing in order to move toward more culturally responsive curriculum and instruction?
 - c. How are the relationships between students, families & communities and schools/educators in our school community?
 - d. How is our school community going to be accountable to this work without inflicting harm on students?
9. What experience has our school had with Culturally Responsive Education, multicultural education, anti-bias training, or equity-based trainings?
 - a. Who had that exposure (all teachers, certain grades, what years?)
 - b. Is there a foundation that we're building upon?
10. Who in our district is already doing work around culturally responsive education? How can we work together?

Determining Next Steps

11. What is our big audacious goal in regards to moving toward culturally responsive curriculum? Who will do what?
12. What steps could be taken to achieve our big uninhibited goal? Which steps will we act on or implement? Who will do what?
 - a. Immediately?
 - b. In the next year?
 - c. 3 years? 5 years?
13. What are the steps we decided not to act on or implement? Why did we decide not to act on these steps? What does our rationale indicate about how we contribute, maintain, or disrupt educational inequities?
14. How will we make sure that we are actively progressing toward the goals we decided to act on? How will we make sure we come back to steps that we've decided not to act on?
15. How will we make sure that our commitment to culturally responsive curriculum is institutionalized and not just a hot topic for right now?

How We Are Doing It

This section includes testimonies and case studies from schools that revamped their curriculum to be more culturally responsive. We will add additional schools as we collect information.

STAR Academy/PS 63

The S.T.A.R. Academy, P.S. 63, is a pre-kindergarten through fifth grade elementary school located in the Lower East Side serving 200 students. Through the strong leadership of Darlene Cameron (principal) and Jody Friedman (teacher and assistant principal), S.T.A.R. Academy implement culturally responsive practices school-wide, including revamping their curriculum. S.T.A.R. Academy shares their detailed resources on how they got to culturally responsive curriculum.

[S.T.A.R Academy's Equity Journal](#): How four classrooms (Kindergarten-5th grade) began the ongoing work of advancing racial equity and culturally responsive curriculum

[Curriculum: A Culturally Responsive Unit](#) from STAR Academy

[Practical Equity Timeline](#): A list of professional development workshops, curriculum, hiring policies, and more that explains how STAR Academy is changing their practices

Web Resources for Children's Booklists

Social Justice Books

socialjusticebooks.org/booklists

Identifies and promotes the best multicultural and social justice children's books and materials for educators.

American Indians in Children's Literature

[Americanindianchildrensliterature.blogspot.com](https://americanindianchildrensliterature.blogspot.com)

Provides booklists, reviews, and analysis of indigenous people in children's books and curriculum.

1000 Black Girl Books

grassrootscommunityfounation.org/1000-black-girl-books-resource-guide

A databased and resource list compiled by 13 year old Marley Dias that highlights stories with Black girls as protagonists.

We Need Diverse Books

diversebooks.org/resources/where-to-find-diverse-books

An organization that promotes diverse children's books and offers a categorized list of diverse booklists by theme.

Lee and Low

[Leeandlow.com](https://leeandlow.com)

The largest multicultural children's book publisher in the U.S., which offers collections of books by grade level and interest.

Jump Into a Book

https://www.jumpintoabook.com/2019/01/lets-get-linky-the-2019-multicultural-childrens-book-day-link-up/?doing_wp_cron=1562598811.8937580585479736328125

Co-Founders of *Multicultural Children's Book Day*, an organization committed to providing updated multicultural book lists every year. They work to put more diverse children's books into classrooms and libraries.

Multicultural Children's Book Day

<https://multiculturalchildrensbookday.com/multicultural-reading-resources/diversity-book-lists-for-kids/>

Multicultural Children's Book Day celebrates and promotes diverse children's books and offers categorized lists such as countries, world religions, and experiences of refugee children.

Queer Books for Teens

<http://queerbooksforteens.com/best-of-lists/>

A comprehensive database of LGBTQIAP+ young adult literature that focuses on the intersectionalities of racial and sexual identities.

The Brown Bookshelf

<https://thebrownbookshelf.com/>

Each day of Black History Month, this organization blogs about African American authors, illustrators, and children's books. Each year, it seeks to discover and celebrate new black authors and literature.

Blog Roll Call: Diversity in YA Literature

<http://www.teenlibrariantoolbox.com/2018/10/blog-roll-call-diversity-in-ya-literature-a-list-of-resources-to-help-librarians-diversify-their-shelves/>

A blog that provides a list of resources to help librarians diversify their bookshelves. Noteworthy book lists include YA pride and Latinos in Kidlit.

National Education Association

<http://www.nea.org/tools/resources-addressing-multicultural-diversity-issues-in-your-classroom.htm>

Offers a categorized list of book lists by theme. Noteworthy lists include the Asian-American List and the Bilingual List.

Children's Book Council Diversity

<https://www.cbcdiversity.com/>

The CBC Diversity Initiative is part of the Children's Book Council. This is a blog that promotes diverse voices in children's literature.

Anti-Defamation League

<https://www.adl.org/education-and-resources/resources-for-educators-parents-families/childrens-literature>

The Anti Defamation League is a leader in delivering anti-bias education. It offers a categorized children's book list by themes such as sexism, religious bigotry, social justice, and genocide.

Teaching Tolerance

<https://www.tolerance.org/classroom-resources/texts>

Offers a multigenre, multimedia collection of diverse short texts. Texts include political cartoons, nonfiction, photographs, and literature.

Jane Addams Children's Book Award

<http://www.janeaddamschildrensbookaward.org/jacba/#jacbaDatabase>

The Jane Addams Award annually recognizes books that engage children in thinking about peace, social justice, global community, and equity for all people. Book lists can be searched by time period, historical character, social issues addressed, and identity.

Baltimore County Public Schools Library Information Services

<https://bcpslis.pbworks.com/w/page/129831582/Diverse%20and%20Multicultural%20Book%20Lists#Hispanic/Latino/LatinX>

Offers diverse lists of prestigious book awards. Book lists include the Arab American Book Award and the Asian/Pacific American Award for Literature.

Writability

<http://avajae.blogspot.com/2015/11/diverse-books-resource-list.html>

Blog that provides a diverse books resource list that emphasizes characters with disabilities and explores the intersectionality of identities that include disability.

28 Black Picture Books that Aren't about Boycotts, Buses or Basketball

<https://scottwoodsmakeslists.wordpress.com/2018/02/07/28-more-black-picture-books-that-arent-about-boycotts-buses-or-basketball-2018/>

Scott Woods creates lists of children's books that shine light on positive depictions of black children. Books listed are gender diverse as well and are current works of literature.

47 Children's Books on Black Activists, Innovators and Scholars Who Changed History

<https://medium.com/@katieishizukastephens/the-black-power-book-list-17-childrens-books-on-black-activists-innovators-and-scholars-who-f3e2b478c1ea>

This book list of Black historical figures was created by [The Conscious Kid](#), a critical literacy organization, in partnership with [LINE4LINE](#), a Baton Rouge-based barbershop program that promotes reading for young men of color.

Resource List: People, Events & Tools

Professional Development Providers for Hire

- [Center for Strategic Solutions](#)
- [Innovations in Equity and Systemic Change](#)
- [DEEP](#)
- [Courageous Conversations](#)
- [Perception Institute](#)
- [Great Lakes Equity Center](#)
- [Center for Racial Justice in Education](#)
- [People's Institute for Survival and Beyond](#)

Individual Consultants

- [Yolanda Sealy-Ruiz](#)
- [Zaretta Hammond](#)
- [Marcelle Haddix](#)
- [Eddie Fergus](#)
- [Gholdy Muhammad](#)

Professional Development Conferences

- [Decolonizing Education Conference](#)
- [Free Minds Free People](#)
- [Facing Race](#)
- [New York Collective of Radical Educators Conference](#)
- [Center for Culturally Responsive Evaluation and Assessment \(CREA\) Conference](#)
- [Reimagining Education Conference](#)

Listserves and Organizations to Join

- [EduColor](#)
- [Teaching for Change](#)
- [Zinn Education Project](#)
- [Black Lives Matter at School](#)
- [New York Collective of Radical Educators](#)
- [Teaching Tolerance](#)
- [Race Forward](#)
- [Colorlines](#)
- [Clear the Air](#)

Frameworks for Culturally Responsive Education

- [New York State Education Department Framework for Culturally Responsive-Sustaining Education](#)
- [Culturally Responsive Education: A Primer for Policy and Practice](#)
- [NYC Department of Education's Definition of Culturally Responsive-Sustaining Education](#)

Foundational Books

- *The Dreamkeepers: Successful Teachers of African American Children* by Gloria Ladson-Billings
- *Culturally Sustaining Pedagogies* by Django Paris
- *Culturally Responsive Teaching: Theory, Research, and Practice* by Geneva Gay

Videos

- [Culturally Responsive Education CRE Stories](#)
- [Getting Serious about Education: Culturally Relevant Teaching for New Century Students](#)
- [Thoughts: Culturally Responsive Teaching aka Non-Black Teachers in Black Classrooms](#)
- [Our Culture Our Schools Culturally Responsive Education in New York City](#)

Personal Narratives & Stories

This section features short newspaper articles, blog posts, and other pieces that describe key or fundamental elements of cultural responsiveness.

- [What Happened When One NYC Decided to Really Talk About Race](#) by Jodi Friedman
- [I Was a Racist Teacher and I Didn't Even Know It](#) by Laurie Calver
- [Letter to My Son](#) by Ta-Nehisi Coates
- [Empowering Young People to Be Critical Thinkers: The Mexican American Studies Program in Tucson](#) by Curtis Acosta and Asiya Mir
- [Reflections on Becoming an Ethnic Studies Educator](#) by UCLA Teacher Education Program students
- [I Never Talked about Race in my Seven Years in the Classroom. Now I Work to Make Sure Future Teachers Do](#) by Susan Gonzowitz
- ["Truth: Remarks on the Removal of Confederate Monuments in New Orleans"](#) by Mayor Mitch Landrieu

Resource List: CRE Resources by Level (Center for Strategic Solutions)

Level	Literature Resources	Video Resources
<p>Foundations <i>Introduction of concepts and appropriate vocabulary</i></p>	<p>Everyday Antiracism: Getting Real About Race in School <i>Mica Pollock</i></p> <p>Why Are All the Black Kids Sitting Together in the Cafeteria? <i>Beverly Daniel Tatum</i></p> <p>The New Jim Crow: Mass Incarceration in the Age of Colorblindness <i>Michelle Alexander</i></p> <p>Waking Up White: And Finding Myself in the Story of Race <i>Debby Irving</i></p> <p>Blind Spot: Hidden Biases of Good People <i>Mahzarin R. Banaji, Anthony G. Greenwald</i></p> <p>Between the World and Me <i>Ta-Nehisi Coates</i></p>	<p>WNYC - "Because I'm Latino, I can't have money?" Kids on Race</p> <p>A Conversation About Growing Up Black Op-Docs The New York Times</p> <p>A Conversation With Native Americans on Race Op-Docs The New York Times</p> <p>The Unequal Opportunity Race</p> <p>Kids Meet A Gay Conversion Therapy Survivor Kids Meet HiHo Kids</p> <p>A Conversation With Asian-Americans on Race</p> <p>LGBTQ How You See Me</p>
<p>Intermediate <i>Engagement with issues of equity related to specific demographics</i></p>	<p>Does Compliance Matter in Special Education? IDEA and the Hidden Inequities of Practice <i>Catherine Kramarczuk Voulgarides</i></p> <p>Whistling Vivaldi: How Stereotypes Affect Us and What We Can Do <i>Claude Steele</i></p> <p>White Fragility: Why It's So Hard for White People to Talk About Racism <i>Robin Diangelo</i></p> <p>Pushout: The Criminalization of Black Girls in Schools <i>Monique W. Morris</i></p> <p>For White Folks Who Teach in the Hood... and the Rest of Y'all Too: Reality Pedagogy and Urban Education <i>Christopher Emdin</i></p>	<p>The 13th Official Trailer #1 [HD] Netflix, Ava DuVernay</p> <p>A Conversation With Latinos on Race Op-Docs The New York Times</p> <p>U.S.: Young and Mixed in America The New York Times</p> <p>Kids Meet a Gender Non-Conforming Person Kids Meet HiHo Kids</p> <p>Kids Meet a Transgender Soldier Kids Meet HiHo Kids</p> <p>Kids Talk About Segregation</p>

	<p>Race Talk and the Conspiracy of Silence: Understanding and Facilitating Difficult Dialogues on Race <i>Derald Wing Sue</i></p> <p>How Does It Feel to Be a Problem?: Being Young and Arab in America <i>Moustafa Bayoumi</i></p> <p>Black Appetite. White Food. <i>Jamila Lyiscott</i></p>	
Advanced	<p>Feeling White: Whiteness, Emotionality, and Education <i>Cheryl E. Matias</i></p> <p>Stamped from the Beginning: The Definitive History of Racist Ideas in America <i>Ibram X. Kendi</i></p> <p>Pedagogy of the Oppressed <i>Paulo Freire</i></p> <p>We Want to Do More Than Survive: Abolitionist Teaching and the Pursuit of Educational Freedom <i>Bettina L. Love</i></p> <p>I'm Still Here: Black Dignity in a World Made for Whiteness <i>Austin Channing Brown</i></p>	

Resource List: Readings

Recreational Reading

The following reading list features over 50 fiction and non-fiction books that center the lives of Black, Indigenous, People of Color, and other cultural identities.

- [raceAhead Summer Reading List 2017](#)
- [Rich in Color Diverse Reads for Adults](#)
- [Goodreads- Popular Cultural Diversity Books](#)
- [Goodreads- Popular Multicultural Fiction Books](#)

Personal Development

The following readings focus on the personal development work that's required for us to engage culturally responsive education. It includes books that guide us through critical reflections, understanding the world through multiple lenses, practicing empathy, and seeing the humanity and relatedness to others.

- *White Fragility: Why It's so Hard for White People to Talk About Race* by Robin DiAngelo
- *So You Want to Talk about Race* by Ijeoma Oluo
- [White Supremacy Culture](#) by Tema Okun

Restorative Practices and Classroom Culture

The following list of readings define, discuss, and illustrate the history, context, and practical uses of restorative practices and creating classroom culture.

- [Culturally Responsive Teaching Matters!](#) by Equity Alliance
- *The Morning Meeting Book* by Roxann Kriete
- *Troublemakers: Lessons in Freedom from Young Children at School* by Carla Shalaby
- *Rethinking Disability: A Disability Studies Approach to Inclusive Practices (A Practical Guide)* by Jan Valle
- *Other People's Children: Cultural Conflict in the Classroom* by Lisa Delpit
- *Choice Words: How Our Language Affects Children's Learning* by Peter H. Johnston
 - [Chapter 1: The Language of Influence in Teaching](#)
 - [Chapter 8: Who Do You Think You're Talking To?](#)

Pedagogy & Delivering Instructional Content

The following resources collectively present various thoughts on culturally responsive and sustaining teaching, pedagogy, and leadership applicable across educational settings.

Articles

- [Yes, But How Do We Do It: Practicing Culturally Relevant Pedagogy](#) by Gloria Ladson-Billings
- [15 Culturally-Responsive Teaching Strategies and Examples and Downloadable List](#)
- [Culturally Relevant Teaching by UCLA Center X: Transforming Public Schools](#)
 - [Culturally Responsive Pedagogy](#)
 - [Culturally Relevant Pedagogy: Ingredients for Critical Teacher Reflection](#)
 - [Critical Pedagogy in an Urban High School English Classroom](#)
 - [Urban Schools: Teacher preparation for diversity](#)
 - [Culturally responsive pedagogy for African American students: Promising programs and practices for enhanced academic performance](#)
 - [Hearing Footsteps in the Dark: African American Students' Descriptions of Effective Teachers](#)
 - [They Don't Show Nothing I Didn't Know: Emergent Tensions Between Culturally Relevant Pedagogy and Mathematics Pedagogy.](#)
 - [INSIDE VOICES: A look at Culturally Responsive Pedagogy through the lens of students](#)
 - [Critical Media Education and Radical Democracy](#)

Books

- *Rethinking Ethnic Studies* by Rethinking Schools
- *Culturally Responsive Teaching and the Brain* by Zaretta Hammond
- *Teaching to Transgress: Education as the Practice of Freedom* by bell hooks
- *For White Folks Who Teach in the Hood... and the Rest of Y'all Too: Reality Pedagogy and Urban Education* by Christopher Emdin
- *We Got This: Equity, Access, and the Quest to Be Who Our Students Need Us to Be* by Cornelius Minor
- *Anti-Bias Education for Young Children and Ourselves* by Louise Derman-Sparks & Julie Olsen Edwards
- *Make Just One Change: Teach Students to Ask Their Own Questions* by Dan Rothstein, Luz Santana, Wendy D. Puriefoy
- *Teaching and Learning in a Diverse World: Multicultural Education for Young Children* by Patricia Ramsey
- *Un-Standardizing Curriculum (Part 1)- Multicultural Teaching in the Standards-Based Classroom* by Christine Sleeter; Chapter 5: Transforming Intellectual Knowledge and Curriculum by James Banks

History

Coming soon: have materials or articles to share? Email us at nyu-ejroc@nyu.edu.

Arts

- [Conference on Culturally Responsive Pedagogy and the Arts](#)
- [Culturally & Linguistically Responsive Arts Teaching and Learning in Action: Strategies that Increase Student Engagement and Achievement](#)
- *Culturally Relevant Arts Education for Social Justice: A Way Out of No Way*, edited by Mary Stone Hanley, George W. Noblit, Gilda L. Sheppard, and Tom Barone

English Language Arts

Coming soon: have materials or articles to share? Email us at nyu-ejroc@nyu.edu.

Curriculum Content

The following reading list is curated around illustrative culturally responsive curriculum content across disciplines and subjects. Also, see [Teaching for Change](#) and [Zinn Education Project](#).

History

- *A Young People's History of the United States: Columbus to the War on Terror (For Young People Series)* by Howard Zinn
- *An Indigenous Peoples' History of the United States for Young People (ReVisioning American History for Young People)* by Jean Mendoza
- *An African American and Latinx History of the United States (ReVisioning American History)* by Paul Ortiz
- *Lies My Teacher Told Me: Everything your American History Textbook Got Wrong* by James Loewen
- *Stamped from the Beginning* by Ibram X. Kendi

Arts

Coming soon: have a lesson plan or materials to share? Email us at nyu-ejroc@nyu.edu.

English Language Arts

Coming soon: have a lesson plan or materials to share? Email us at nyu-ejroc@nyu.edu.

Research

These readings present recent and relevant findings on culturally responsive education in classrooms, schools, and communities.

- Aronson, B. & Laughter, J. (2016). The theory and practice of culturally relevant education: A synthesis of research across content areas. *Review of Educational Research*, 86(1), 163-206. <https://doi.org/10.3102/0034654315582066>
- Bonner, E. P. (2014). Investigating practices of highly successful mathematics teachers of traditionally underserved students. *Educational Studies in Mathematics*, 86(3), 377–399. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10649-014-9533-7>
- Davis, D. M., & McCarther, S. M. (2015). Following the drinking gourd: Culturally relevant pedagogy and curriculum development through the arts. *Educational Forum*, 79(1), 68–80. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00131725.2014.971991>
- Duncan-Andrade, J., & Morrell, E. (2008). *The art of critical pedagogy*. Peter Lang Publishing: New York. <https://www.semanticscholar.org/paper/The-Art-of-Critical-Pedagogy%3A-Possibilities-for-to-Duncan-Andrade-Morrell/8d422623cfd5d93daa2b09684e2f1b8e3c54c4f4>
- Ekiaka Nzai, V., Gómez, P., Reyna, C., & Kang-Fan, J. (2012). Non-native english speaking elementary ELL teachers' culturally responsive leadership profile in an ESL context / Perfil de liderazgo y sensibilidad cultural de maestros no nativos de ingles de primaria en un contexto de inglés como segunda lengua. *Colombian Applied Linguistics Journal*, 14(2), 88-108. Retrieved from <http://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=edssci&AN=edssci.S0123.46412012000200007&site=eds-live>
- Henderson, D., Carjuzaa, J., & Ruff, W. G. (2015). Reconciling Leadership Paradigms: Authenticity as Practiced by American Indian School Leaders. *International Journal of Multicultural Education*, 17(1), 211–231. Retrieved from <http://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=eric&AN=EJ1104939&site=eds-live>
- Hubert, T. (2014). Learners of mathematics: High school students' perspectives of culturally relevant mathematics pedagogy. *Journal of African American Studies*, 18(3), 324–336. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s12111-013-9273-2>
- Johnson, C. C. & Bolshakova, V. L. J. (2015). Moving beyond “Those Kids”: Addressing teacher beliefs regarding the role of culture within effective science pedagogy for diverse learners. *School Science & Mathematics*, 115(4), 179–185. <https://doi.org/10.1111/ssm.12120>
- Ladson-Billings, G. (2014). Culturally relevant pedagogy 2.0: a.k.a. the remix. *Harvard Educational Review*, 84(1). <http://her.hepg.org/content/p2rj131485484751/fulltext.pdf>
- Martell, C. C. (2013). Race and histories: Examining culturally relevant teaching in the U.S. History classroom. *Theory and Research in Social Education*, 41(1), 65–88. Retrieved from <http://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=eric&AN=EJ994945&site=eds-live>

[ds-live](#)

Do you have a resource to share around creating or purchasing Culturally Responsive curriculum? Share it with us at nyu-ejroc@nyu.edu.

FAQs for Everyone to Think About

Questions

1. *90% of our students are African-American. How much should the curriculum reflect Black authors and characters, and how much should we expose students to Latinx, Asian, Native, Middle Eastern stories?*
2. *Are we just tokenizing kids by trying to represent everybody?*
3. *If we're trying to build empathy and understanding across cultures then don't they need to see different cultures, not just their own?*
4. *I only teach 4 books in a semester, how can I represent all the identities you mention with such a small number of books? Do I go deep on one topic or identity or try to cover multiple identities? Use a wide array of experiences or go deep into one experience?*
5. *What does it look like to connect my curriculum with social change? Should the connections to the community/social change be something that happens in my classroom, or that the school as a whole takes on?*
6. *If teachers are teaching diverse literature because they feel like they have to, even though they don't like that literature, couldn't that be more harmful than helpful?*
7. *If we don't have funding now to order hundreds of new books for our kids, is it better to change the ways our current books are taught, or change just 1 or 2 of the books that we can afford to order?*
8. *What support do our teachers need to be able to make this shift?*
9. *Aren't there fewer authors/characters of color taught because there just aren't that many books by/about people of color?*
10. *What if my school requires me to teach certain books that are offensive or only from a white perspective?*
11. *There is so much we have to do to make our culturally destructive curriculum culturally responsive. Where would we even start?*
12. *But our school is mostly white children so technically our curriculum is already culturally responsive to them. What does this have to do with us?*

13. *How do we do all of this on top of our regular work teaching kids to read and write? How do we do this and also prepare students to pass the tests and meet state standards?*
14. *Is diversifying our curriculum and booklists enough to make our school culturally responsive?*
15. *How can I use our results from the Scorecard to advocate for/obtain culturally responsive curriculum?*
16. *As a parent, family member, or community member how do I know that my school is taking appropriate steps toward culturally responsive curriculum?*

Questions & Answers

1. 90% of our students are African American. How much should the curriculum reflect Black authors and characters, and how much should we expose students to Latinx, Asian, Native, Middle Eastern stories?

Adopting culturally responsive curriculum is not just about characters and authors of color, it's also about connecting materials to students lived experiences and their cultural backgrounds. There is great diversity amongst African Americans, Black students, and the Black Diaspora. For instance, students may be Afro-Latinx, Caribbean, from the continent of Africa, or Black with multigenerational roots in the American south or east coast.

There is no threshold or exact science that can tell you the appropriate proportion of representation in curriculum compared to students in your classroom. This is why it is fundamental that we learn to be lifelong culturally responsive educators and develop critical judgement. However, if you have a predominantly Black classroom, at least half of the curriculum should represent Black authors, characters and texts related to students' lived experiences and imaginations. Over the course of students' academic careers at your school, students should engage with multiple texts by and about people of other ethnicities and lived experiences. Depending on the grade and curriculum structure, it may not be possible for every grade to include readings on every culture, but students should graduate having had that exposure over the course of their time in your school. Students at your school should graduate with an understanding of the world through their own cultural identities and others.

If you're still unsure about how to ensure that your curriculum is culturally responsive, ask your school for support from culturally responsive curriculum experts, consultants, and coaches.

2. Are we just tokenizing kids by trying to represent everybody?

No. Tokenizing is when a superficial or symbolic effort is made to represent people of color, women, immigrants, LGBTQ people, etc. in order to give the appearance of diversity, without seriously engaging their diversity of perspectives or experiences. Full, accurate and intentional representation of diverse identities, together with culturally responsive instructional practices, is not tokenizing, and is essential for children's development as people and as learners.

3. If we're trying to build empathy and understanding across cultures then don't they need to see different cultures, not just their own?

Students need both windows into other cultures and worlds, as well as mirrors that reflect their own identities and experiences. In very diverse schools, students may have some years when they get more windows and others when they get more mirrors. But over the course of their time in any school, they should be able to get plenty of both. [Rudine Sims Bishop](#) reminds us, "When children cannot find themselves reflected in the books they read, or when the images they see are distorted, negative, or laughable, they learn a powerful lesson about how they are devalued in the society of which they are a part."

4. I only teach 4 books in a semester, how can I represent all the identities you mention with such a small number of books? Do I go deep on one topic or identity or try to cover multiple identities? Use a wide array of experiences or go deep into one experience?

Over the course of a child's experience in your school - not necessarily in every single year - students should frequently see their identity represented. Teachers should discuss the question of breadth vs. depth for each year and decide what makes most sense for your student body and the arc of your curriculum. It is worth reflecting on why particular books have been selected, who makes those selections, and if that process should be changed to include students and others in the school community.

The goal is not to get every single identity represented every semester or every year. The goal is to teach thinking and reading skills through texts that represent a range of experiences and perspectives that students can identify with, even if it is not their exact identity - for example, extended family structures, immigration, colonization, multi-language learning are all experiences that students from multiple backgrounds can connect with. Students should be introduced to these experiences across classes and school years; exposure should not be contained to a singular "diversity" course.

5. What does it look like to connect my curriculum with social change? Should the connections to the community/social change be something that happens in my classroom, or that the school as a whole takes on?

There should not be an assumed association between "connections to community" and "social change" because it assumes that "community" requires or needs social change. Second, in order to connect your curriculum with various communities, you need to define, know, and have authentic personal experiences with communities; you cannot just be culturally responsive during the hours of the school day. Look for natural, overlapping, or parallel themes between the curriculum and social change. To ensure the curriculum is connected to communities, spend time within communities, build relationships, and consider co-creating with students who are experts on their own communities.

Every curriculum can be connected to contemporary issues, inequities, innovations and debates, and thus to the people and communities that are engaged with those issues. Those connections are important for students to link classroom learning with real life, and answer the age-old question “what does this have to do with me anyway?” It is great if the school as a whole makes an effort to involve students in social change through curriculum connections across all subjects, school-wide projects and enrichment programs, but you don’t have to wait for that. Organizations like [Teaching for Change](#) can provide guidance in this area.

6. If teachers are teaching diverse literature because they feel like they have to, even though they don’t like that literature, couldn’t that be more harmful than helpful?

A desire to connect classroom learning with students’ experiences and identities, and thus to teach texts that students relate to, is a baseline responsibility for teachers. Teachers must also be [reading diverse authors and texts themselves](#), so that they will be equipped to teach students about experiences outside their own. There are thousands of texts that teachers can choose from, and there are plenty of resources that will help them find the ones that resonate. Teachers who are unable to overcome biases should be removed from the classroom.

7. If we don’t have funding now to order hundreds of new books for our kids, is it better to change the ways our current books are taught, or change just 1 or 2 of the books that we can afford to order?

Because revamping curriculum is not a quick undertaking even in the best of circumstances, it is beneficial to have both a [short-term and long-term plan](#). In the short term, identify a few new books the school can order, and develop culturally responsive units to accompany them. This will spur discussion and engagement with culturally responsive curriculum that can be a step toward the longer term goals. For the long term, determine the process and timeline for ordering or writing new curriculum, and pursue the committed team and resources to make that happen.

8. What support do our teachers need to be able to make this shift?

There is no one way to make instruction more culturally responsive, but teachers will need support from school leadership to a) shift the mindset and practices they’ve been trained in and accustomed to, and b) develop more culturally responsive lessons. Schools approach this work in a variety of ways. Some have created [weekly discussion groups](#), book groups or affinity groups to discuss race, class, gender and other identities among the staff. Some have participated in [monthly training series](#) offered by outside institutions, or hired trainers to come in during professional development days. No matter what the method is, these kinds of discussions must be an ongoing commitment and expectation of educators,

not a one-off. To develop new curriculum or revamp existing ones, schools and districts have hired teachers to serve as curriculum developers, paid teachers to [develop curriculum over the summer](#), and brought [parents and teachers together](#) to co-design curriculum. Support from school and/or district leadership goes a long way in allowing teachers to take risks and stretch outside of their comfort zone and outside of the status quo. To determine the way forward for your school will require analyzing the school's goals, strengths, opportunities and challenges. These [probing questions](#) may help.

9. Aren't there fewer authors/characters of color taught because there just aren't that many books by/about people of color?

While the [children's book publishing industry](#) is still dominated by white authors and characters (21% of children's books published in 2018 were by authors of color), there are more than enough children's books by and about authors of color to populate school system curricula and booklists. Each curriculum typically contains 10-15 books per grade, and there have been almost 3,000 children's books published by authors of color in the last decade—780 books in 2018 alone. Our [Book List](#) contains multiple websites, blog posts, and curated booklists with excellent books by and about a wide diversity of identities.

10. What if my school requires me to teach certain books that are offensive or only from a white perspective?

Just about any book can be taught in a culturally responsive way, by teaching students to think critically about texts and ask questions such as: Which voices are present? Which are absent? Why are they absent? What would they say if they were centered? You can also pair the required text with passages or books that present other perspectives and voices, and contrast the texts. By naming, and encouraging students to name and discuss the offenses, omissions or aggressions present in the text, any book can be a teaching tool. We encourage you to advocate with your school administration to choose books by and about diverse communities, but in the short term you can still make your current lessons more culturally responsive.

11. There is so much we have to do to make our culturally destructive curriculum culturally responsive. Where would we even start?

Developing culturally responsive curriculum and pedagogy is a long-term process, not a quick fix - but even the first steps can make a meaningful difference for students. Use our [Next Steps](#) document to help you figure out where to start.

12. Our school is mostly white children so technically our curriculum is already culturally responsive to them. What does this have to do with us?

Culturally responsive education is not just for children of color. When white children learn distorted histories and contexts of cultures and identities, they maintain and perpetuate systems of oppression. Culturally destructive textbooks that describe [enslaved people as happy](#) or [colonization as an agreement between indigenous people and colonizers](#), etc. create a false lens of the world for white children. Scholar Rudine Sims Bishop said 30 years ago, “Children from dominant social groups have always found their mirrors in books, but they, too, have suffered from the lack of availability about others. They need the books as windows onto reality, not just on imaginary worlds. They need books that will help them understand the multicultural nature of the world they live in, and their place as a member of just one group, as well as their connections to all other humans...If they see only reflections of themselves, they will grow up with an exaggerated sense of their own importance and value in the world—a dangerous ethnocentrism.” The availability of windows and mirrors is critical to the healthy development of all children.

13. How do we do all of this on top of our regular work teaching kids to read and write? How do we do this and also prepare students to pass the tests and meet state standards?

Culturally responsive curriculum and instruction is not a supplement to core instruction, it is the most effective way to teach literacy and comprehension skills. Common Core Learning Standards and other common ELA standards are completely consistent with culturally responsive education practices, and there are many standards, like CCRA.R.6, “Assess how point of view or purpose shapes the content and style of a text”, that would be significantly enhanced by the use of culturally responsive texts and instruction. There is substantial research showing that culturally responsive teaching increases student engagement, motivation, persistence, and thus academic achievement. There is an investment of time required to change curriculum and practices to become more culturally responsive, and schools that have done this have used professional development funds to pay teachers afterschool, on weekends or vacations to attend trainings and write curriculum.

14. Is diversifying our curriculum and booklists enough to make our school culturally responsive?

Absolutely not. Culturally responsive education extends to your pedagogy, school leadership, school climate, school structure and policies, and more. Culturally responsive pedagogy and instructional techniques are critical to appropriately implement or use culturally responsive curriculum. A text that reflects students’ identity and background, but is taught in a way that communicates negativity and microaggressions can cause substantial damage, similar to not teaching culturally responsive texts at all. It is imperative that schools adopt culturally responsive curriculum *and* that teachers and school leaders engage culturally responsive training and the deep ongoing work of examining our own identities, mindsets, biases, and practices. We must all develop a strong analysis of how *who we are* shapes *how we teach*, in order to truly teach in culturally responsive ways.

15. How can I use our results from the Scorecard to advocate for/obtain culturally responsive curriculum?

Evaluating your school's curriculum with the Scorecard is one of the beginning steps you can take to work toward culturally responsive curriculum, and education more broadly. Your scores on the Scorecard provide data that can be presented to curriculum gatekeepers in your school. If those scores are not enough to prompt both immediate and long term changes, consider hosting a scoring event with your school's curriculum gatekeepers so that they can evaluate the curriculum for themselves. Convene a diverse core group (families, students, teachers, administrators) to examine your school's policies and procedures for purchasing curriculum and the options available to you. If there are no culturally responsive curriculum available within your school's purchasing system, advocate for new procedures that allow you to either purchase, develop, or hire for the development of culturally responsive curriculum.

16. As a parent or family member, how do I know that my school is taking appropriate steps toward culturally responsive curriculum?

A good indicator that your school is moving toward culturally responsive curriculum is that you're invited to be part of the process and your school is asking you for feedback on their next steps moving forward. Another good indicator is that you see increasingly see your student using curriculum materials that reflect student identities and experiences, and align with statements on the Scorecard. One last way to determine if your school is actively taking steps forward is to ask to see changes or updates to the curriculum that were made in an effort to be more culturally responsive - you can use the Scorecard to determine if they're moving in the right direction.

If you have more questions and concerns about advancing culturally responsive education in your school district, contact us: nyu-ejroc@nyu.edu.