



## **Culturally Responsive-Sustaining Education:**

# **Culturally Responsive Curriculum and Assessment**

Culturally responsive-sustaining curriculum draws from and responds to the multiple identities of students in the classroom, allows students to see themselves reflected and connected to their learning, and strengthens student-teacher relationships. Culturally responsive-sustaining assessments are rooted in the school's and community's values and ask students to apply and make meaning of their learning. Together, these approaches can transform students' relationship to academic learning and growth.

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## Curriculum Evaluation

The process of developing culturally responsive curriculum begins with analyzing the curriculum currently in use to identify strengths, gaps, needs and priorities.

- Evaluate the cultural responsiveness of your curriculum using the [Culturally Responsive Curriculum Scorecard](#) (available for [English Language Arts](#) [250KB PDF] and [STEAM](#) [3.3MB PDF] subjects). Conduct this process together with parents/family, community members and potentially students in your school community. Their perspective and experience of the curriculum is essential to determine cultural responsiveness.
- After scoring, use this [Toolkit](#) [307KB PDF] to guide you in next steps toward making your curriculum more culturally responsive-sustaining. The toolkit includes examples of culturally responsive lessons, a case study of a school that has been developing culturally responsive curriculum for several years, and resources to find children's books that include many student demographics.
- Audit the diversity of your school or classroom library using this [Classroom Library Questionnaire](#) [279KB PDF] from Lee and Low publishers.



## Curriculum Development

Culturally responsive-sustaining curriculum development requires examining and revamping standards and frameworks, content, materials and pedagogy. These resources can help get you started.

### CR-S Curriculum Development

- Use Dr. Gholdy Muhammad's framework of [Historically Responsive Literacy](#) in curriculum development.
- Incorporate student's background knowledge and funds of knowledge from home, cultivating cognitive routines and word games into curriculum, as explained [in this article](#) by Zaretta Hammond.
- Revise current curriculum or develop new curriculum using this [Rubric for Culturally Responsive Lessons/Assignments](#) [62K PDF] as a guide.
- Watch the [CRE Stories](#) videos, (especially Practicing Culturally Responsive Education) to learn more about developing CR-S curriculum.
- Convene teachers and community members to develop culturally responsive curriculum together through a [curriculum summer camp](#).
- Use counter-stereotypic examples to help students see themselves and others represented in non-mainstream manners.

- Ensure that posters, books, and other digital resources are available in multiple languages and that they reflect the racial and cultural demographics of the classroom.

### Curriculum Co-Creation

- Co-create curriculum with families. This [Chalkbeat article](#) profiles an example from the Highbridge Green School in the Bronx, where teachers co-developed a unit on immigration with immigrant parents.
- Co-create curriculum with students. This [brief](#) [3.2MB PDF] outlines some principles for curriculum co-creation with students, and this [blog piece](#) walks through a play-by-play strategy.

### Connecting to Issues Students Care About

- Conduct a survey of students regarding their interests and passions, and use the results to ground the learning of new academic content.
- Incorporate current events into your weekly lessons. You can use these [general tips](#), this [EdWeek blog](#) piece on ways to incorporate current events into the classroom, and this [teacher checklist](#) [140KB PDF] from Facing History for guidance.
- Develop lessons by linking skills to topics that your students are interested and passionate about. This [article](#) describes developing a culturally responsive math lesson based on students' interest in police brutality.
- Link mathematics and other subjects to social justice issues that your students care about. This [guide](#) [894KB PDF] from Radical Math gives some tips and examples of how to do that.

### COVID-19 Pandemic

- Engage with the pandemic as a class topic and legitimize its effects. Give students space to process and understand their own experiences during the pandemic; create curriculum that respond to students' experiences in the pandemic, job loss, and other impacts on their communities.
- Acknowledge how COVID-19 has been racialized and surfaced racist attacks on Asian Americans; systematically communicate that all forms of racial intolerance is unacceptable.
- Center the learning and experiences of students and families most directly impacted by racism and other forms of bias. Connect students' lived experiences to the class content.
- Use the flexibility around curriculum and assessment that the pandemic has brought, as an opportunity to focus on culturally responsive remote [project-based learning](#) that is grounded in students' cultures, lives and communities
- Invite students to share books, websites, or other materials that are valued in or representative of their communities.
- Implement Ethnic Studies content and courses that focus specifically on the histories of diverse culture. Scroll down on the homepage of [CREHub.org](#) to find a map of Ethnic Studies, CRSE and LGBTQ+ curriculum initiatives nationally.



## Culturally Responsive Remote Assessment

Culturally responsive-sustaining assessments go beyond demonstrating content mastery to incorporate and reflect values—who we want students to be—and meaning—the impact students’ knowledge and skills can have on their lives and community. Performance assessments and other types of culturally responsive assessments can be adapted to be conducted remotely.

- During pandemic learning, there may have been less content mastery, but plenty of learning and growth. Design assessments that incorporate opportunities for students to reflect on and demonstrate the various types of learning and growth they have experienced during this unique year.
  - Allow students to visualize their learning through programs like Google Slides and Prezi, or by creating exhibits, artistic performances, story boards, posters, photo collages, etc.
  - Allow students to demonstrate their learning through the spoken word: narratives, storytelling, oral presentations, performances.
  - Create assessments that apply learning to students’ social contexts, for example a capstone project which students come up with a solution to a real-world problem, or create something that will be used, displayed or otherwise shared with community members. See these [examples of capstone projects](#) from the American Federation of Teachers website.
- The remote setting requires additional flexibility with assessments to accommodate interruptions at home and the likelihood of technology disruptions. Let students complete the assessment at multiple times; and pause, save their work and complete later in case of interruptions or disruptions.
- For students who may be learning on a phone or a tablet without a keyboard, typing long responses will be difficult; allow students to hand write responses and take photos to turn them in, or send voice memos with responses.
- Engage families, students and community in determining what knowledge and skills should be assessed and how evidence of successful learning should be measured. In this [NCTE article](#), a teacher describes creating culturally responsive assessment in collaboration with families.
- Design assessments that allow students to show themselves as full people. This article on [culturally relevant performance assessments](#) by educators from the Hawaiian-Focused Charter Schools explains, “At the core of performance assessments is an understanding that students matter as whole beings in the classroom: Their personal histories directly inform their identities as students and reflect their personal educational trajectory that is foundational to becoming college, career, and community-ready graduates.”



## Additional Curriculum Resources

Here are additional resources with examples of culturally responsive curriculum. Note that all lessons will need to be adapted to your classroom, school and district. Culturally responsive curriculum is, by definition, responsive to the identities and interests of the students in front of you, and cannot simply be adopted without customization.

- [Teaching for Change](#) provides resources for parents and teachers to create schools where students learn to read, write, and change the world
- The [Zinn Education Project](#) provides teaching materials that promote and support the teaching of people's history in classrooms across the country
  - [People's History Podcasts for Young People](#) describes and links to podcasts that may be of interest to high school students
- The [Ida B. Wells Education Project](#) website is a compilation of anti-racist and Black-centered education resources
- [Anti-Racist Teaching and Learning Collective](#) brings together lessons and resources from anti-racist educators in Connecticut
- [Langston League](#) is a consultant firm that teaches educators how to create culturally responsive-sustaining curriculum
- [Equitable Math](#) provides resources and guidance to support Black, Latinx, and multilingual students to thrive in grades 6-8
- [All This Math](#) merges history and mathematics for children of African descent
- Multicultural publisher Lee & Low provides this [youtube channel](#) of author-led read alouds and Spanish read alouds
- Lee and Low also provides this [list of authors who are able to do virtual visits](#) organized by age group, language, and preferred internet platform
- [Sankofa Science Solutions](#) provides African-based agricultural science activities
- [My Reflection Matters](#) is a parent-teacher warehouse of resources to support the healthy development and positive racial identity development of Black, indigenous and children of color
- These [LGBTQ+-inclusive lessons and resources](#) were compiled by Garden State Equality for New Jersey schools
- These [Indigenous Wisdom Curriculum](#) PDF documents are written by, and focused on, the Pueblo Indian Nations of New Mexico