

Culturally Responsive Teaching and Leading Standards

A. Self-Awareness and Relationships to Others – Culturally Responsive Teachers and Leaders are reflective and gain a deeper understanding of themselves and how they impact others, leading to more cohesive and productive student development as it relates to academic and social-emotional development for all students. The culturally responsive teacher and leader will:

1. Understand and value the notion that multiple lived experiences exist, that there is often not one “correct” way of doing or understanding something, and that what is seen as “correct” is most often based on our lived experiences.
2. Approach their work and students with an asset-based mindset, affirming the validity of students’ backgrounds and identities.
3. Know about their students and their lives outside of school, using this knowledge to build instruction that leverages prior knowledge and skills.
4. Include representative, familiar content in the curriculum to legitimize students’ backgrounds, while also exposing them to new ideas and worldviews different from their own.
5. Engage in self-reflection about their own actions and interactions and what ideas and biases motivated those actions.
6. Explore their own intersecting identities, how they were developed, and how they impact daily experience of the world.
7. Recognize how their identity (race/ethnicity, national origin, language, sex and gender, gender identity, sexual orientation, physical/developmental/emotional ability, socioeconomic class, religion, etc.) affects their perspectives and beliefs about pedagogy and students.
8. Educate themselves about students’ communities, cultures, and histories.
9. Critically think about the institutions in which they find themselves, working to reform these institutions whenever and wherever necessary.
10. Assess how their biases and perceptions affect their teaching practice and how they access tools to mitigate their own behavior (racism, sexism, homophobia, unearned privilege, Eurocentrism, etc.).

B. Systems of Oppression – Culturally responsive teachers and leaders understand that there are systems in our society, especially, but not limited to, our school system that create and reinforce inequities, thereby creating oppressive conditions. Educators work actively against these systems in their everyday roles in educational institutions. The culturally responsive teacher and leader will:

1. Understand the difference between prejudice, discrimination, racism, and how to operate at the interpersonal, intergroup, and institutional levels.

2. Collaborate with colleagues to determine how students from different backgrounds experience the classroom, school, or district.
3. Understand how the system of inequity has impacted them as an educator.
4. Understand how current curriculum and approaches to teaching impact students who are not a part of the dominant culture.
5. Is aware of the effects of power and privilege and the need for social advocacy and social action to better empower diverse students and communities.
6. Understand how a system of inequity creates rules regarding student punishment that negatively impact students of color.
7. Understand how a system of inequity reinforces certain suppositions as the norm.

C. Students as Individuals – Culturally responsive teachers and leaders view and value their students as individuals within the context of their families and communities. The culturally responsive teacher and leader will:

1. Learn from and about their students' culture, language, and learning styles to make instruction more meaningful and relevant to their students' lives.
2. Engage with students' families and community members outside of the classroom to develop a more holistic understanding of the students' lived experiences.
3. Develop positive, strength-based partnerships with students and their families by learning about them, soliciting their opinions, and valuing their expectations, especially with those marginalized by schools in the past.
4. Provide parents with information about what their child is expected to learn, know, and do at his or her grade level and ways to reinforce concepts at home.
5. Share the classroom systems and policies (expectations, agreements, recognition and incentive practices, etc.) used in the classroom with students' families and align them to the values and cultural norms of those families.
6. Provide multiple opportunities for parents to communicate in their language and method of preference, to the greatest extent possible.
7. Set holistic goals for students that accommodate multiple ways of demonstrating strengths and success (e.g., alternate academic achievement metrics, growth indicators, leadership, character development, social emotional learning competencies, and school values).

D. Students as Co-Creators – Culturally responsive teachers and leaders (who fundamentally believe all students are capable) center learning around students' experiences and position them as co-creators, with emphasis on prioritizing historically marginalized students. The culturally responsive teacher and leader will:

1. Encourage and affirm the personal experiences (family, community, culture, etc.) students share in the classroom.
2. Make authentic connections between academic learning and students' prior knowledge, native language, culture, and values.
3. Consistently solicit students' input on the curriculum (e.g., interests, people, or concepts).
4. Co-create, with students, the collective expectations and agreements regarding the physical space and social-emotional culture of the classroom and school.
5. Create and embed student leadership opportunities into the student experience (e.g., peer-led discussion, student-led workshops, and student-run school-wide initiatives).
6. Persistently solicit student feedback, value that feedback (resist defensiveness), and adjust based on that feedback.

E. Leveraging Student Advocacy – Culturally responsive teachers and leaders will support and create opportunities for student advocacy and representation in the content and classroom. The culturally responsive teacher and leader will:

1. Emphasize and connect with students about their identities, advocacies, and self-interest.
2. Offer guidance to students on how to develop a self-advocacy plan to inform decisions and choices.
3. Include students in the creation of an inclusive learning community with more opportunities for student expression.
4. Help students identify actions that can be taken to apply learning to develop opportunities and relationships for alliances.
5. Create a risk-taking space that promotes student advocacy.
6. Research and offer student advocacy content with real world implications.
7. Communicate high expectations to which all students can be held and urge students to lead as student advocates appropriate to the students' age and development
8. Give students space to solve their own problems, negotiate their advocacy needs, and present their perspectives.

F. Family and Community Collaboration – Culturally responsive teachers and leaders will partner with families and communities to build rapport, form collaborative and mutual relationships, and engage in effective cross-cultural communication. The culturally responsive teacher and leader will:

1. Regularly interact with students, families, and communities in both English and home language through methods of their preference.

2. Actively seek multiple perspectives and contributions from families and the community and invite them to actively share their opinions, feedback, and concerns that impact the school community.
3. Forge ongoing participation with families and community members to meet the diverse needs and interests of students.
4. Continuously learn and build cultural knowledge that families and the community bring to the school community to nurture and foster relationships and inform student learning experiences.
5. Use best practices that are culturally responsive to value students and their families' cultural traditions when recognizing, motivating, encouraging, and supporting student success and growth.
6. Develop relationships with families and the community outside of the classroom setting.
7. Foster students' cultural understanding and connection to the surrounding community.
8. Invite family and community members to teach about topics that are culturally specific and aligned to the classroom curriculum or content area.
9. Welcome communication from parents and reply in a timely manner.
10. Communicate and provide appropriate techniques and materials to support and enrich student learning at home.
11. Collaborate effectively over time with the local community and community agencies, when and where appropriate, to promote a positive environment for student learning.

G. Content Selections in All Curricula – Culturally responsive teachers and leaders intentionally embrace student identities and prioritize representation in the curriculum. In turn, students are not only given a chance to identify with the curriculum, they become exposed to other cultures within their schools and both their local and global communities. The culturally responsive teacher and leader will:

1. Curate the curriculum.
2. Identify and articulate the purposeful ways in which marginalized communities are represented in curriculum, including print, digital media, and other classroom resources.
3. Employ authentic and modern technology usage inspiring digital literacy through an equity lens.
4. Ensure assessments reflect the enriched curriculum that has embedded student identities.
5. Embrace and encourage a balance of viewpoints and perspectives that leverage asset thinking toward traditionally marginalized populations.

6. Assess one's story through multiple vantage points to gain a whole narrative that includes all sides of parties involved.
7. Implement and integrate the wide spectrum and fluidity of identities in the curriculum.
8. Ensure text selections reflect students' classroom, community, and family culture.
9. Ensure teachers and students co-create content that encourages critical thinking about culture and includes counter-narratives to dominant culture.
10. Use a resource tool to assess the curriculum and assessments for biases.
11. Promote robust discussion with the intent of raising consciousness that reflects modern society and the ways in which cultures and communities intersect.
12. Consider a broader modality of student assessments such as performance portfolios, essays, multiple choice, state exams, oral examination, community assessments, workplace experiences, social justice work, action research projects, and recognition beyond academia.

H. Student Representation in the Learning Environment – Culturally responsive teachers and leaders ensure the diversity of their student population is equally represented within the learning environment. In turn, all members of the student population feel seen, heard, and affirmed. Exceptionally well-versed culturally responsive teachers and leaders provide exposure to under or misrepresented minority groups even when they are not present within the population of their school and community at large. The culturally responsive teacher and leader will:

1. Uphold systems of support that create, promote, and sustain a welcoming and inclusive community.
2. Ensure linguistic diversity is represented throughout the building and seek ways to reflect representation of world languages.
3. Verify that course materials are representative of all students, including materials for centers, stations, labs, classroom libraries, etc.
4. Ensure classroom and building decorations are inclusive of all students throughout the building or within the community or city at large.