

## Culturally Responsive Teaching and Leading Standards and Reflection Questions



Use this guide to better understand the Culturally Responsive Teaching and Leading Standards. Each standard you see offers reflection questions to consider. This is a good place to begin, as you create a plan to build and sustain culturally responsive classrooms.

- A. Standard: 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.**

Action for this Standard Might Include:

- Journaling
- Self-evaluating or asking a colleague or your students to evaluate you
- Working through a positionality exercise or reflecting about your positionality.
- Enroll in a professional development course related to an area you need more information about. This might be a webinar, asynchronous learning module, in-person activity, or school-sponsored professional development opportunity.
- Assessing, modifying, or creating curricula or assessments that are culturally responsive and inclusive.

Reflection Questions:

1. How does my identity and intersectionality shape my thinking and how I relate to others? What impact does it have on how I arrive as a teacher?

2. What areas of information do you need to know more about regarding academic or social-emotional growth for students?
3. What misinformation or bias do I need to consider? How can I learn more about gaps in my own knowledge?
4. What effective communication tools for listening and dialogue can I learn and then implement in the classroom?
5. What curricula and/or classroom activities do I have that truly support culturally responsive teaching and learning?

**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.**

Action for this Standard Might Include:

- Examining and assessing school policies and practices. Working with administration or school board members to make these policies and practices more equitable for all students.
- Partnering with community members or local organizations to expand learning opportunities.
- Teaching your students about local history or global history.
- Expanding your learning about history, systems, and historic inequities that impact education and historically marginalized people or communities. This might include researching, attending a webinar (e.g. Facing History offers free and online learning sessions), visiting a local historical archive site, etc.

Reflection Questions:

1. How does local history impact your school district and school building? Consider how boundaries are drawn, segregated neighborhoods within your city, and how access or lack thereof impacts all the above.
2. How can you move your students beyond textbook history to better understand the role of systemic inequities? What aspect of history might be missing from the textbooks that your students need information about?

3. Create or modify your curricula to include aspects related to systems.
4. How can your awareness of power, privilege, and positionality improve your connection to students? What action steps might you create to begin empowering your diverse learners?

**C. Standard: Students as Individuals – Culturally responsive teachers and leaders view and value their students as individuals within the context of their families and communities.**

Action for this Standard Might Include:

- Asking your students to co-create a lesson or activity
- Attending a student extracurricular event or community event
- Meeting with your students and their families for a meeting to connect and learn more (this should be in addition to regularly scheduled school conferences)
- Schedule time for 1-1 touch base meetings with students during class.
- Invite family and/or community members into the classroom to present, participate, and share knowledge.

Reflection Questions:

1. How do you work to develop meaningful connections and relationships with students and families?
2. How does the curricula you design consider different learning modalities and readiness and consider the holistic education of students? How does pedagogy connect to real-world learning and have high expectations and a strength-based focus?
3. How do you work to communicate with students and families, so that everyone is aware of what goals your classroom is focused on, and feels connected to our classroom community?
4. In what ways can you work to learn from your students and leverage their knowledge to enhance pedagogy and the overall classroom culture?
- 5.

**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.**

Action for this Standard Might Include:

- Collaborating with student(s) to create curriculum, lessons, or classroom activities.
- Offering choice in demonstrating that objectives and standards were learned (e.g. a menu of options for a final project, choice in texts, etc.).
- Engage in professional development or personal research that extends your knowledge.
- Collaborate with a colleague to plan a student-centered event at your school (e.g. poetry slam, exhibit, etc.).
- Create or support a student-led club that is connected to a topic that students are interested in having at the school.

Reflection Questions:

1. How can you learn more about historically marginalized populations and/or history, to better understand your students?
2. How can you incorporate stories and histories into curricula to engage and connect students to content?
3. How will you center student voice and foster student leadership in your classroom?
4. How can you incorporate student feedback evaluation into the classroom, so that their input allows you to enhance curricula and teaching?
5. How can you use your role as a teacher/leaders to illuminate the histories of all students and families?

**E. Leveraging Student Advocacy – Culturally responsive teachers and leaders will support and create opportunities for student advocacy and representation in the content and classroom.**

Actions for this Standard Might Include:

- Ensuring that texts include representation of a wide variety of groups and cultures.
- Use the un/HUSH framework to assess existing lessons, create new lessons, and evaluate text choices.
- Invite a group of students to a department and/or curricular meeting to share their insights and perspectives.
- Take students on a field trip related to learning content so that they see connections that expand beyond the classroom.

#### Reflection Questions:

1. Can students see themselves represented in your classroom? Consider the physical environment, text choices, curriculum, etc. Consider how you can specifically improve representation in these areas of curricular content.
2. Can you provide students with a space to self-reflect (e.g. bellwork, exit ticket, etc.)? If so, how will you do so? This provides autonomy and supports self-advocacy.
3. How will you genuinely affirm and encourage students to reach their highest potential?
4. How do you work to understand and incorporate your students' interests into the curriculum?
5. How do you uphold high expectations for students and avoid deficit thinking?

**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.**

#### Actions for this Standard Might Include:

- Send out a regular newsletter to parents and families to share updates and good news or as a way to connect.
- Use self-reflection as a way to assess and improve your communication with students and families.
- How will you build relationships with your students? List 2-3 things you can consistently do to ensure you are forming relationships with all students.
- Create procedures and classroom expectations that will foster an environment of respect and open-mindedness.

Reflection Questions:

1. How will you collaborate with families and community members?
2. What do you need to improve your cross-cultural communication? Where can you access tools to help support that improvement?
3. What misinformation might hinder your ability to connect with students and build meaningful relationships? How can you work to remedy this?
4. How can you work to foster positive interactions and relationships among your students?
5. How can you partner with families through intentional ways that will benefit students, your classroom, and your 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.**

Actions for this Standard Might Include:

Reflection Questions:

1. How will you expose students to other cultures through curricula?
2. How will you check that your curricula are inclusive? Can you utilize a framework (e.g. the un/HUSH framework) to guide this task?
3. How will your curricula extend to local and global communities, offering representation of both areas?
4. How can you demonstrate to students that you value and embrace their identities?

**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 underrepresented or misrepresented minority groups, even when they are not present within the population of their school and community at large.**

Actions for this Standard Might Include:

- Hold a Socratic seminar or fishbowl in your classroom to allow dialogue and inquiry about a topic or unit of study.
- Create a lesson that allows students to engage with oral histories, as a way to expand their knowledge of others.
- Collaborate with another teacher to create a lesson that celebrates an underrepresented group.
- Provide visibility and representation by ensuring that your classroom has images from various backgrounds, to expose students to populations overlooked. Visual representation is as important as content representation.
- Remember the both/and rule—nothing should be done in isolation. Content AND teaching strategies should both be culturally responsive. What are some ways to ensure your teaching adheres to this?

Reflection Questions:

1. How will you broaden your knowledge to expand your lessons and topics to include a vast array of perspectives, histories, and cultures?
2. How will you sustain culturally responsive teaching and leading to ensure it is ongoing and threaded throughout your pedagogical practices?
3. What teaching strategies might you use to listen to students, ensuring their voices are heard and elevated?
4. How will you incorporate storytelling as a means to build bridges and allow for the appreciation of other perspectives?