

# Culturally Responsive Curriculum Scorecard



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The Metropolitan Center for Research on Equity and the Transformation of Schools (NYU Metro Center) promotes equity and opportunity in education through engaged sciences—research, program evaluation, policy analysis, and professional assistance to educational, governmental, and community agencies serving vulnerable communities and populations. NYU Metro Center is nationally and internationally renowned for its work on educational equity and school improvement, bringing together scholars, educators, and innovators from diverse backgrounds to collaborate on a range of projects to strengthen and improve access, opportunity, and educational quality across varied settings, but particularly in striving communities.

For nearly four decades, NYU Metro Center has been a partner and resource for schools and school districts throughout the U.S. and beyond, including Detroit, Denver, Houston, New York City, Pittsburgh, San Juan, Washington, D.C., and Wilmington. Its research and community engagement programs help prepare teachers, school leaders and staff, and parents to improve school culture and climate, reduce referrals to special education, and better support the unique needs of youth across a range of abilities and backgrounds. Its research initiatives inform the policy and intervention communities on how best to serve vulnerable populations in and beyond our school systems.

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The Education Justice Research and Organizing Collaborative (EJ-ROC) brings together researchers and community organizers to provide critical research, data, policy and strategic support for the education justice movement. EJ-ROC aims to democratize education data, research and policy; maximize the synergy between research and community organizing; magnify the voices of grassroots communities of color; and advance the capacity of organizing efforts to design solutions, make demands, and sustain policy wins.

**Authors** | Jahque Bryan-Gooden, Megan Hester, and Leah Q. Peoples

**Graphic Design** | Romina Barrera

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## Contact Info

**For more information, please contact:**

[nyu-ejroc@nyu.edu](mailto:nyu-ejroc@nyu.edu)

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## Purpose Of This Scorecard

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NYU Metro Center designed this tool to help parents, teachers, students, and community members determine the extent to which their schools' English Language Arts curricula are (or are not) culturally responsive. We hope that this process will provoke thinking about how students should learn, what they should learn, and how curriculum can be transformed to engage students effectively. To create this tool, we drew upon a wide variety of existing resources, including multicultural rubrics, anti-bias rubrics, textbook rubrics, and rubrics aimed at creating cultural standards for educators, determining bias in children books and examining lesson plans (ADEED, 2012; Aguilar-Valdez, 2015; Grant & Sleeter, 2003; Lindsey et al, 2008; NCCRES, 2006; Rudman, 1984; World View, 2013). We supplemented those with additional questions to provide a more comprehensive tool (see Scorecard Development at [bit.ly/CRCScorecard](http://bit.ly/CRCScorecard) for full details).

## What Is Culturally Responsive Education (CRE)?

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Culturally responsive education (closely related to the terms “culturally relevant” and “culturally sustaining” education) refers to the combination of teaching, pedagogy, curriculum, theories, attitudes, practices, and instructional materials that center students’ culture, identities, and contexts throughout educational systems. Gloria Ladson-Billings and Geneva Gay’s scholarship is foundational to culturally responsive education. Some key principles of culturally responsive education (CRE) include (1) validating students’ experiences and values, (2) disrupting power dynamics that privilege dominant groups, and (3) empowering students, NYU Metro Center’s report [“Culturally Responsive Education: A Primer for Policy and Practice”](#) more fully details the origins, significance, and impact of CRE in schools.

## Significance of CRE

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Across the country, rigorous evaluations and studies have shown that culturally responsive curricula increase student academic engagement, attendance, grade point averages, graduation rates, civic engagement, positive racial self-images, and self-definition (Browman, 2011; Butler-Barnes, 2017; Cabrera, 2012; Carter, 2008; Dee & Penner 2016; Morell, 2013). CRE is essential for students of color, and also has a positive impact on White students and their ability to think critically (Laird, 2005). Not only does CRE impact students’ academic experiences, but it can also have significant influence on racial attitudes and biases, and provide the cognitive tools needed to critique institutional racism (Garth-McCullough, 2008).

## CRE and Curricula

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When public schools talk about curriculum, they often mean the whole package of learning goals and standards; units and lessons that lay out what teachers teach each day and week; assignments, activities and projects given to students; and books, materials, videos, presentations, and readings used in the class. Some examples of curricula materials include textbooks and the accompanying teacher’s manual, a notebook of handout a textbook or a book list with matching activities. Curriculum is a key component of culturally responsive teaching, as it is filled with stories, activities, assignments, and illustrations that influence how young people understand the world, and contribute to centering and normalizing people, cultures, and values. Curricula that only reflect the lives of dominant populations - for example, White people and culture, nuclear families, or able-bodied people - reinforce ideas that sideline students of color, linguistically diverse students, single parent/multi-generation/ LGBTQ+ led families, and differently-abled students.

While textbooks are largely static and not responsive to students in ways that teachers can be, textbooks can provide opportunities and resources for teachers to utilize culturally responsive practices. This tool provides a way for parents, teachers, students, and communities to assess the extent to which their curriculum provides these opportunities.

# How To Use This Scorecard

We have designed this scorecard so that it can be customized to the context and conditions of your school district and campaign. Completing the entire document will give you the most comprehensive analysis of how culturally responsive your curriculum is. If you don't have the time or capacity to do that, you can complete an individual section and get a more limited evaluation. We designed this tool with K through eighth grade English Language Arts curricula in mind, but feel free to try it with other grades and subjects as well. If your school doesn't have a set curriculum, you can also use this tool to evaluate the diversity of the school or classroom library.

## The Seven Steps To Complete Your Curriculum Scorecard

### 1 Get your child's/school's curriculum

Go to your teacher, principal, or district office, and ask to see your child's or school's English Language Arts curriculum. In many districts, there is a Parent Bill of Rights that gives parents the right to access their child's curriculum. If the school is using a commercial curriculum, ask for a copy or the name and publisher so you can look it up online. (If you need to purchase it, NYU Metro Center can help). If the school is using a home-made curriculum, ask for a copy, or at least a sample of a few months of lesson materials. If they refuse to give you the curriculum, take your request to a higher level in the district, or discuss with your team to decide next steps.

### 2 Select your curriculum evaluation team

The curriculum scorecard will work best if you have a team of at least 3 people with diverse identities (race, gender, age, sexuality, class, national origin) and roles (parent, student, teacher, administrator, community member) who work together to evaluate the curriculum. These people do not have to be education professionals or have prior experience with evaluation. The more people, the better!

### 3 Choose the grades, units, and lessons to analyze

Curricula can be thousands of pages, so you will need to select one or a few grades, units, and lessons to focus on (a sample of the larger curricula). The units you choose should not focus specifically on diversity and multiculturalism; they should be typical units. If you are able to cover more than one grade, select at least one lower and one upper grade.

### 4 Pull out keywords

Once you have your curriculum and the scorecard in hand, review the statements for the scorecard you will begin with (Representation, Social Justice or Teachers Materials). Make sure the team understands each statement, and refer to the Glossary and Explanations with any questions. Chart key words, ideas and qualities from the statements that you will be looking for as you read the curriculum. This will help ensure that as you read, you are focused on the information you'll need in order to effectively score.

### 5 Conduct the evaluation

The scorecard asks for your level of satisfaction with the curriculum on various measures. There is no right answer; this is just your opinion as someone who cares about culturally responsive education. As you answer each statement, use the *Scoring Guidelines* to help you decide your ratings.

### 6 Score the evaluation

Tally your score for each section of the scorecard. A curriculum may excel in one area and fall short in another, and it is important to record those differences. You should come out with one score for each of the following sections:

- + Character Tally
- + Author Tally
- + Representation
- + Social Justice
- + Teachers Materials

### 7 Discuss with your team

Discuss the process with your team: Did anything new come up? What was easy and what was hard? Did some items seem more important than others? This is also an opportunity to strategize about next steps: Do you think this evaluation provides an accurate picture of the curriculum? Does additional information need to be collected? Is there anyone you want to meet with to discuss the results?

### 8 Share the results

Let other people know how culturally responsive your curriculum is! Please share the results of your scorecard through this link: [bit.ly/scorecardresults](https://bit.ly/scorecardresults).

# Explanation of Scorecard

## **Representation**

The *Representation* section helps you determine the extent to which students in your school are reflected in their curriculum, and the extent to which they are being exposed to a group of diverse of authors, characters, identities, and cultures. Representation can sometimes be just a token gesture - putting non-White or female characters in the place of White male characters. This numerical representation coupled with deeper indicators of representation provides the first layer of CRE analysis.

### **Character And Author Tally**

This section of the scorecard captures the representation of characters from specific cultures. Use the tally to count the symbolic representation of characters and authors by race, gender, and ability. Refer to this tally to help you determine your level of satisfaction in the Representation section of the scorecard we will use tally the types of people in each image by race, gender, and ability to assess for frequency of representation..

### **Diversity of Characters**

This section looks at how diverse people and cultures are portrayed in the curriculum - specifically the extent to which people of different cultures, skin tones, abilities, etcetera are central to a story.

### **Accurate Portrayals**

This section looks at the extent to which characters accurately reflect the histories and experiences of their cultures. Culturally responsive curriculum will position characters as multi-dimensional and portray characters in non-stereotypical ways.

## **Social Justice**

The *Social Justice* section is divided into three categories, each of which contribute to understanding the opportunities that curricula provide for cultural responsiveness.

### **Decolonization, Power, & Privilege**

This section focuses on understanding relationships among people, worldviews, resources, ideas, and power dynamics. Historically, public school curricula reflected Eurocentric ideas and culture, while the contributions and philosophies of other groups were excluded, minimized, misrepresented, or relegated to a small portion of the curricula. A culturally responsive curriculum centers sources of knowledge, experiences, and stories of diverse groups of people.

### **Centering Multiple Perspectives**

Centering multiple perspectives means affirming, valuing, and sustaining the worldviews of historically underrepresented peoples as the central focus in educational materials or curricula.

### **Connect Learning to Real Life & Action**

One of the most essential components of CRE is connecting or relating learning to students' real life experiences, communities, and cultures. Culturally responsive curricula should encourage students to connect to experiences beyond their own, examine their own perspective and privilege, and develop a critical consciousness about systems of oppression in order to take action against them.

## Teacher's Materials

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For this section, review all the teacher's materials for the curriculum you selected. This means that you may have more than one section to review – a Teacher's Manual for the curriculum overall as well as any teacher guidance within the individual units or lesson plans. Since many teachers do not receive training on culturally responsive teaching strategies, curricula should provide teachers with guidance on how to approach, enhance, and customize lessons for their student populations.

## Scoring Guidelines

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After reading the explanation for the scorecard provided in the previous section, please use the following categories to indicate how satisfied you are with the curriculum. If the statements on the scorecard are not clear to you, look in the Appendix for additional explanations.

### **Very Satisfied (+2)**

If you are *very satisfied*, you should be able to provide an abundance of specific examples (stories, passages, illustrations, quotes, assignments, etc) from the curriculum to show how and why the statement is accurate. It is clear that the text was designed to be culturally responsive. Score this with two points.

### **Satisfied (+1)**

If you are *satisfied*, you should be able to provide some evidence from the curriculum that the statement is accurate. The text may not have been designed to be culturally responsive, but elements of CRE are apparent in most of the text. Score this with one point.

### **Unclear (-1)**

If you are *unclear*, it is not evident to you whether there is evidence from the curriculum that the statement is accurate. Score this with -1 points.

### **Not Satisfied (-2)**

If you are *not satisfied*, you feel that there is little or no evidence in the curriculum that the statement is accurate. There is little or no evidence of cultural responsiveness. Score this with negative 2 points.

# Culturally Responsive Curriculum Scorecard

## Representation

### Diversity of Characters Tally

	Girl/Woman	Boy/Man	Non Binary	Total
Middle Eastern				
Asian/ Pacific Islander				
Black/ African				
Latinx				
Native American				
White				
Racially Ambiguous				
Mixed Race				
Differently Abled				
Animals				

Total # of characters depicted : \_\_\_\_\_

### Diversity of Authors Tally

	Girl/Woman	Boy/Man	Non Binary	Total
Middle Eastern				
Asian/ Pacific Islander				
Black/ African				
Latinx				
Native American				
White				
Racially Ambiguous				
Mixed Race				
Differently Abled				

Total # of authors: \_\_\_\_\_

# Representation

Statements		Very Satisfied (+2)	Satisfied (+1)	Unclear (-1)	Not Satisfied (-2)	Average Score (if you are working with a team)
Diversity of Characters	1. The curriculum features visually diverse characters, and the characters of color do not all look alike.					
	2. There are references to different ethnic and cultural traditions, languages, religions, names and clothing.					
	3. Diverse ethnicities and nationalities are portrayed – not all Asian families are Chinese, not all Latinx families are Mexican, etc.					
	4. Diverse family structures (ie. single parents, adopted or foster children, same-sex parents, other relatives living with the family, etc.) are represented.					
	5. Differently-abled characters or characters with disabilities are represented.					
	6. Characters of color are main characters and not just sidekicks.					
	7. If there is conflict in the storyline, the characters of color are not mostly considered the problem.					
Accurate Portrayals	8. Characters of color are not assumed to have low family wealth, low educational attainment and/or low income.					
	9. Gender is not central to the storyline. Female characters are in a variety of roles that could also be filled by a male character.					
	10. Social situations and problems are not seen as individual problems but are situated within a societal context.					
	11. Characters of diverse cultural backgrounds are not represented stereotypically, or presented as foreign or exotic.					
	12. Problems faced by people of color or females are not resolved through the benevolent intervention of a white person or a male.					
	13. Diverse characters are rooted in their own cultures and are not ambiguous.					
<b>Total</b>						

## Total Representation Score

**Comments:** Please write any observations about representation that are not captured by the questions.

## Social Justice Orientation

Statements		Very Satisfied (+2)	Satisfied (+1)	Unclear (-1)	Not Satisfied (-2)	Average Score (if you are working with a team)
Decolonization/Power and Privilege	<b>14.</b> Curriculum highlights non-dominant populations and their strengths and assets, so that students of diverse race, class, gender, ability, and sexual orientation can relate and participate fully.					
	<b>15.</b> The curriculum communicates an asset-based perspective by representing people of diverse races, classes, genders, abilities and sexual orientations through their strengths, talents and knowledge rather than their perceived flaws or deficiencies.					
	<b>16.</b> The curriculum does not communicate negativity or hostility toward people of marginalized backgrounds through verbal or nonverbal insults, slights or snubs.					
	<b>17.</b> Curriculum and instructional activities promote or provoke critical questions about the societal status quo. They present alternative points of view as equally worth considering.					
Centering Multiple Perspectives	<b>18.</b> The curriculum recognizes the validity and integrity of knowledge systems based in communities of color, collectivist cultures, matriarchal societies, and non-Christian religions.					
	<b>19.</b> The curriculum presents different points of view on the same event or experience, especially points of view from marginalized people/communities.					
Connect Learning to Real Life & Action	<b>20.</b> The curriculum provides avenues for students to connect learning to social, political, or environmental concerns that affect them and their lives and contribute to change.					
	<b>21.</b> The curriculum encourages students to take actions that combat inequity or promote equity within the school or local community.					
<b>Total</b>						

### Total Social Justice Score

**Comments:** Please write any observations about social justice that are not captured by the questions.

## Teachers' Materials

Statements	Very Satisfied (+2)	Satisfied (+1)	Unclear (-1)	Not Satisfied (-2)	Average Score (if you are working with a team)
22. The authors of the teachers' materials are people of diverse identities (race/ethnicity, gender, other identities if possible).					
23. Guidance is provided on being aware of one's biases and the gaps between one's own culture and students' cultures.					
24. Diverse student identities are seen as assets and strengths that can advance individual and group learning, rather than seen as challenges or difficulties to be overcome.					
25. Guidance is provided on making real-life connections between academic content and the local neighborhood, culture, environment and resources.					
26. Guidance is provided on giving students opportunities to contribute their prior knowledge and experience with a topic, not just respond to the text and information presented in class.					
27. Guidance is provided on engaging students in culturally sensitive experiential learning activities.					
28. Guidance is provided on opportunities to engage students' families to enhance lessons.					
29. Guidance includes, for specific lessons, a range of possible student responses that could all be valid, given the range of student experiences and perspectives.					
30. Guidance is provided on customizing and supplementing the curriculum to reflect the cultures, traditions, backgrounds and interests of the student population.					
<b>Total</b>					

### Total Teachers' Materials Score

**Comments:** Please write any observations about teacher's materials that are not captured by the questions.

## Scorecard Calculations

There are two ways to understand the results of your team’s scorecard calculations: (1) interpret the total score for each section of the scorecard, and (2) interpret the distribution of scores within each section. These two approaches in combination will help you understand the extent to which your school’s curriculum is culturally responsive. If you are working with a team and used average scores for each statement, round each average score up or down to the nearest whole number. Add all the scores in each column in the “Total” row at the bottom of each section. Next, add all the total scores for each column to calculate a total section score. The following example shows calculations for the Representation section of the Scorecard. The total for the Very Satisfied column is 8, the total for the Satisfied column is 1, the total for the Unclear column is -4, and the total for the Not Satisfied column is -8. The total section score for Representation is -3 because  $8 + 1 + -4 + -8 = -3$ .

### Example

Total Score for Each Column				
Total	8	1	-4	-8
Total Representation Score	<b>-3</b>			

↑  
Total Section Score

### Interpreting Total Scores for Each Section

Use the Total Section Score and the corresponding interpretation guide to determine how your curriculum measures up on a spectrum from Culturally Destructive to Culturally Responsive. In the example above, the Total Section Score for Representation is -3, which categorizes the curriculum’s Representation as Culturally Insufficient.

### Interpreting the Distribution of Scores for Each Section

The distribution of scores refers to your pattern of satisfaction with each statement. The distribution of scores will help you evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of a curriculum within particular areas. For example, it is possible that you are Very Satisfied with Diversity of Characters (statements 1-7) in the Representation section, but Not Satisfied with character’s Accurate Portrayals (statements 8-13).

To interpret the distribution of your scores, first determine how consistent your level of satisfaction is for each section of the scorecard. Generally speaking, do you rank most of the statements as Very Satisfied or Satisfied? Do you rank most statements as Unclear? Do you rank most statements as Not Satisfied? Are there any statements that depart from the trend of how you rank most statements? If your level of satisfaction is not consistent, determine whether or not there is a pattern and note these differences by writing out the strengths of the curriculum (where you were satisfied) or the weaknesses of the curriculum (where the curriculum was unclear or where you were not satisfied). Interpreting the distribution of scores can help you develop targeted next steps for getting better curriculum or supplementing existing curriculum in the short term.

## Interpreting Your Scores

### Representation

Culturally Destructive	Culturally Insufficient	Emerging Awareness	Culturally Aware	Culturally Responsive
-26 to -11	-10 to 0	1 to 11	12 to 19	20 to 26
The curriculum likely reinforces stereotypes and portrays people of color in inferior and destructive ways. There is little to no diversity in illustrations, and the curriculum provides zero opportunities for teachers to engage cultural responsiveness. There is little to no diversity among curriculum contributors and illustrators.	The curriculum likely has culturally and racially ambiguous characters. Few characters and stories are portrayed in a culturally and historically accurate way. There is likely little to no diversity among curriculum contributors and illustrators.	The curriculum likely represents some groups in diverse and dynamic ways but not all. Some characters are portrayed in culturally and historically accurate ways, while others are still depicted as stereotypes. There is likely little diversity among curriculum contributors.	The curriculum likely captures a decent representation of diverse characters, who are generally portrayed in accurate and dynamic ways. There is likely some diversity among the curriculum contributors and illustrators.	The curriculum likely captures a wide representation of dynamic characters that are reflected in accurate and appropriate cultural and historical contexts. This curriculum was likely co-authored and illustrated by a diverse group of contributors.

## Interpreting Your Scores

### Social Justice

Culturally Destructive	Culturally Insufficient	Emerging Awareness	Culturally Aware	Culturally Responsive
-16 to -7	-6 to 0	1 to 7	8 to 12	13 to 16
<p>The curriculum likely centers White or Eurocentric ideas and culture throughout the majority of the text. Microaggressions, biases, and deficit perspectives are prevalent. The curriculum is likely disconnected from students' lives and provides zero to very few opportunities for teachers to practice cultural responsiveness.</p>	<p>The curriculum predominantly centers White or Eurocentric ideas and culture in most of its components. For the most part students are not encouraged to think critically, or take action to combat inequity. The curriculum provides weak connections to students' lived experiences. There is hardly any opportunity for teachers to engage cultural responsiveness.</p>	<p>The curriculum occasionally centers multiple perspectives. Some critical questions are posed to students. Non-dominant knowledge systems are acknowledged and mentioned a few times throughout the curriculum. There are a few opportunities for teachers to practice cultural responsiveness.</p>	<p>The curriculum likely centers people of color, marginalized populations, and multiple perspectives. The curriculum provides multiple opportunities for students to think critically. There are several opportunities for teachers to connect students' learning to real life issues and action.</p>	<p>The curriculum is likely humanizing, liberatory, and equity oriented. Instances of centering multiple perspectives are abundant throughout the curriculum. There are clear prompts, activities, and content that connect students' learning to real life issues and actions. There are many opportunities for teachers to engage cultural responsiveness.</p>

## Interpreting Your Scores

### Teachers' Materials

Culturally Destructive	Culturally Insufficient	Emerging Awareness	Culturally Aware	Culturally Responsive
-18 to -8	-7 to -1	0 to 6	7 to 12	13 to 18
<p>There is no guidance on engaging diverse learners or culturally responsive teaching in the teachers' materials. Teachers are not encouraged to reflect on their worldviews or their practice. There is no guidance about connecting the curriculum to students' lives. There is no opportunity for cultural responsiveness.</p>	<p>There is a little guidance on engaging diverse learners or culturally responsive teaching in the teachers' materials, but it is mostly on a superficial or symbolic level. It is seen as additive, rather than central to the curriculum and teaching.</p>	<p>There is a little guidance on engaging diverse learners in meaningful culturally responsive ways. The teachers' materials provide guidance on at least one of the following: supplementing curriculum, engaging students in culturally sensitive experiential learning, and making real life connections between the curriculum and students' lives.</p>	<p>There is a lot of guidance on engaging cultural responsiveness. Teachers are presented with activities to reflect on their worldviews and how they see and teach students. There is some guidance on several of the following: supplementing curriculum, engaging students in culturally sensitive experiential learning, and making real life connections between the curriculum and students' lives.</p>	<p>There is an abundance of guidance on engaging cultural responsiveness meaningfully throughout the teaching approach, homework, lesson plans, etc. Culturally responsive guidance is clearly marked and presented as essential to effective teaching. Teachers are encouraged to consistently check their own biases and reflect on their practice.</p>

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## Appendix: Glossary and Explanations

### Representation

#### Stereotypes

Characters are portrayed in one-dimensional, simplistic ways based on one aspect of their culture. For example, African American men are repeatedly portrayed playing basketball; Asian characters are portrayed as really good at math; Latinx characters are repeatedly portrayed wearing sombreros. While some of these foods and outfits may be part of the culture, they are not customs for every Latinx, Asian, or African American person.

#### **Explanation of scorecard questions**

*If there is conflict in the storyline the characters of color are not mostly considered the problem. When conflicts arise people of color are not demonized and seen as a threat or the problem.*

*Social situations and problems are not seen as individual problems but situated within a societal context. This question is intended to identify if the text embeds the White American value/perspective of “pull yourself up by your bootstraps” and thus often portrays events as isolated and the responsibility of individuals, without accounting for systemic inequities such as poverty, war, unemployment, and discrimination.*

### Social Justice

#### **Dominant Discourses:**

Conversations guided by the beliefs and/or perceptions of those in power. (Ex. A dominant discourse in history is that Christopher Columbus “discovered” America; there is also dominant discourse about kneeling for the anthem as unpatriotic).

#### **Deficit Perspectives:**

Characterizing people, groups of people, or communities by perceived flaws or deficiencies, rather than by their strengths, talents and knowledge. (Ex. Some students don’t do well in school because the student’s community does not value education).

#### **Microaggressions:**

The everyday verbal, nonverbal, and environmental slights, snubs, or insults, whether intentional or unintentional, that communicate hostile, derogatory, or negative messages to persons based solely upon their marginalized group membership. (Ex. Stating that someone is articulate for being an immigrant).

#### **Status Quo:**

The way things currently are (Ex. Despite living in one of the richest countries in the world, the large numbers of people who are food insecure or unemployed is the status quo; to raise the minimum wage to at least \$15 so that most people can afford food and rent would be disrupting the status quo).

#### **People of Color:**

A term used to capture a widely diverse group of people. (Ex. Latinx, Black/ African American, Asian American, Indigenous/Native, Middle Eastern, etc).

## **Patriarchal:**

Systems, communities, or narratives that center male experiences, privilege, authority, perspectives, and power. (Ex. Most historical figures taught in school are men).

## **Marginalized:**

Pushed to the sidelines, oppressed, deemed less significant. (Ex. When people organize protests they do not always consider the accessibility of events so that differently-abled people can also voice their concerns, experiences, or demands; therefore whether intentional or unintentional, differently-abled people are silenced and marginalized).

## **Connect Learning to Real Life & Action:**

One of the most essential components of CRE is connecting or relating learning to students' real life experiences, communities, and cultures. Another essential component of CRE is that students develop a critical consciousness - the ability to perceive systems of oppression and take action against them and the status quo. These systems of oppression can take the form of social concerns such as homelessness and affordable housing; political concerns such as citizenship and voting rights; and environmental concerns such as logging rainforests for profit.

## **Teachers' Materials**

### ***Explanation of scorecard questions***

***Guidance is provided on teaching children of diverse identities in culturally responsive ways - including but not limited to English Language Learners.*** This question is intended to acknowledge the need for teachers materials to connect with and honor the unique cultural backgrounds of a wide range of students, rather than just trying to get them to meet standards.

***Guidance is provided on being aware of biases and gaps between one's own culture and the culture of their students.*** For example, teacher guidance could pose questions that encourage teachers to reflect on their own cultural upbringing, examine the assumptions and judgments they may make about other cultures, and pursue information and understanding of their students' cultures.

***Guidance is provided on engaging students in culturally sensitive experiential learning activities.*** Experiential learning - also referred to as "hands-on learning" - is learning by *doing*, and then reflecting on it, rather than passively absorbing information. This could include organizing or taking leadership in a community event, devising a solution to a real community problem, building a physical structure, creating a resource for use by the community, and countless other projects. Teacher guidance should include encouragement and opportunities for this type of learning.

***Guidance includes, for specific lessons, a range of possible student responses that could all be valid.*** Culturally responsive teaching means that teachers value different ways of being, as well as different ways of knowing. Students from diverse cultures and backgrounds bring perspectives and experiences that enrich the classroom -- but not if the curriculum focuses on getting students to produce the one "right" answer. Teacher guidance should point out where student responses and perspectives may vary.

***Guidance is provided on customizing and supplementing the curriculum to reflect the cultures, traditions, backgrounds and interests of the student population.*** Culturally responsive teaching must be continuously *responsive* to who is in the classroom and what they care about, as well as to the neighborhood, current events, media, and youth culture. Teacher guidance should point out where lessons offer opportunities to connect with these influences on students' minds and lives.