High-Quality Curriculum Selection & Implementation:   
Understanding Culturally Responsive & Sustaining Education (CRSE)

English Language Arts (ELA) Curriculum Review Tool

**Adopting a High-Quality Curriculum is an overall strategy for having high expectations for all students.**

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| **Category** | **Guiding Questions** | **Evidence Collected from Curriculum** |
| **Diverse Identities** | How do the teacher's materials provide guidance on opportunities to engage student and families’ funds of knowledge (i.e linguistic, cultural, academic) to enhance lessons? Does the curriculum suggest activities to engage families to share topics of expertise? |  |
| Do both teachers’ materials and students’ materials have authors who are people of diverse identities? |  |
| How does the curriculum portray diverse ethnicities and nationalities, family structures (e.g. single parents, adopted or foster children, same-sex parents, other relatives living with the family), and differently-abled characters?   * How are diverse individuals included as main characters and not just secondary characters? * If there is conflict in the storyline, how do they represent the diverse characters so that they are not considered the problem? * Are characters of diverse cultural backgrounds not represented stereotypically, or presented as foreign or exotic?   How are diverse characters rooted in their own cultures and not ambiguous? |  |
| How does the curriculum avoid minimizing unpleasant facts and events in history or ignore prejudice, racism, discrimination, exploitation, oppression, sexism, privilege, ableism, and inter-group conflict (Sadker, n.d., Unreality section, para. 1)? |  |
| **Implementation Implications** |  | |

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| **Category** | **Guiding Questions** | **Evidence Collected from Curriculum** |
| **Cultural Awareness** | How does the curriculum present different points of view on the same event or experience, especially points of view from marginalized people/communities? |  |
| How does the curriculum include the narratives and histories of racial, ethnic, and gender-based groups as part of the dominant discourse? Is it only separate from or featured in a specialized unit or curriculum, such as a study of black culture all year long vs. just in February? |  |
| How does the curriculum support students to understand, investigate, and determine how the implicit cultural assumptions, frames of references, perspectives, and biases within a discipline influence the ways in which knowledge is constructed within it (Banks, 1997)? |  |
| How do the teacher's materials provide guidance on customizing and  supplementing the curriculum to reflect the cultures, traditions, backgrounds and interests of the student population? Does the curriculum lend itself to thinking about race/ethnicity while leaving out a wide variety of experiences? Does the curriculum prompt the teacher to augment lessons to reflect the student population? |  |
| How do the teacher's materials provide guidance on being aware of one’s biases and the gaps between one’s own culture and students’ cultures? Does the curriculum prompt the teacher to reflect on one’s biases and the gaps between one’s own culture and students’ cultures? |  |
| How does the curriculum support students’ engagement in ongoing self-examination to raise awareness of how one’s identities inform their understandings of and experiences with complex social problems (Mitchell, 2015)? |  |
| How does the curriculum highlight 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? |  |
| **Implementation Implications** |  | |

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| **Category** | **Guiding Questions** | **Evidence Collected from Curriculum** |
| **Instructional Engagement** | How do the teacher's materials provide guidance on engaging students in culturally sensitive experiential learning activities? Does implementation take into consideration students’ lived experiences? |  |
| How do the teacher's materials provide guidance 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? Does the curriculum acknowledge and value children and family’s experiential knowledge? |  |
| How do the teacher's materials provide guidance on seeing diverse student identities as assets and strengths that can advance individual and group learning, rather than seen as challenges or difficulties to be overcome? Does the curriculum prompt the teacher to embrace and value diversity as positive? |  |
| How does the curriculum provide avenues for students to connect learning to social, political, or environmental concerns that affect them and their lives and contribute to change? |  |
| How does the curriculum support students to express emotions, desires and opinions constructively (Duncan-Andrade, 2007; Ladson-Billings, 1994)? |  |
| Do the teacher materials offer suggestions to use social-emotional learning (SEL) approaches to draw out and build upon students’ assets to facilitate learning? |  |
| **Implementation Implications** |  | |

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| **Critical Consciousness** | How do curriculum and instructional activities promote or provoke critical questions about the societal status quo? How do the texts and activities present alternative points of view as equally worth considering? (situating the context historical events from various groups’ perspectives) [i.e. Thanksgiving] |  |
| How do the materials avoid stereotypic depictions in terms of race, gender, sexuality, language, or ability? |  |
| How do the curricular materials avoid using language such as “roaming,” “wandering,” or “roving” to describe the travel of the indigenous people of the world? Do the texts avoid using language that suggests groups of people were order-less or uncivilized than the dominant culture? |  |
| How does the curriculum avoid centering one group’s cultural practices as the standard to which all others are compared (i.e. Euro-centric, male-centric etc.)? |  |
| How does the curriculum encourage students to take actions that combat inequity or promote equity within the school or local community? (i.e. service learning or community action projects) |  |
| **Implementation Implications** |  | |

Adapted From:

Coomer, M. N., Skelton, S. M., Kyser, T. S., Warren, C., & Thorius, K. A. K. (2017). Assessing bias In standards and curricular materials. Equity Tool. Indianapolis, IN: Great Lakes Equity Center.

J. Bryan-Gooden, M. Hester, & L. Q. Peoples (2019). Culturally Responsive Curriculum Scorecard. New York: Metropolitan Center for Research on Equity and the Transformation of Schools, New York University.

Social Emotional Learning and Equity Pitfalls and Recommendations. (n.d.). Retrieved March 3, 2020, from   
<https://nationalequityproject.org/about/social-emotional-learning-equity>

References:

Banks, J. A. (1997). Educating citizens in a multicultural society. Multicultural education series. New York, NY: Teaches College Press

Duncan-Andrade, J. (2007). Gangstas, wankstas, and ridas: Defining, developing, and supporting effective teachers in urban schools. International Journal of Qualitative Studies in Education, 20(6), 617-638.http://doi.org/10.1080/09518390701630767

Ladson-Billings, G. (1995). Toward a theory of culturally relevant pedagogy. American Educational Research Journal, 32, 465-491. <http://doi.org/10.2307/1163320>

Mitchell, T. (2015). Identity and social action: The role of self-examination in systemic change. In Association of American Colleges & Universities Online. Retrieved from https://www.aacu.org/ diversitydemocracy/2015/fall/mitchell

Sadker, D. (n.d.) Seven forms of bias in instructional materials. Retrieved from http://www.sadker.org/curricularbias.html