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**Culturally Responsive Teaching Rubric: Rubric Overview**

This rubric was created through the collaborative efforts of DESE, The Teachers’ Lounge Inc., and The Teacher Collaborative. In many ways this rubric was inspired by the research of Dr. Zaretta Hammond, and particularly her publication, Culturally Responsive Teaching & The Brain. Other dependable and recognizable sources played a significant role in the compilation of this rubric: TNTP Core Teaching Rubric, Cultural Responsiveness Continuum, and the Massachusetts Curriculum Frameworks are amongst the artifacts that this working group referenced. The spirit of this rubric is to center equity in the classroom, elevate teacher practice, and to develop just and critical thinkers who excel in a variety of contexts.

This tool is not only intended to raise the floor on instruction, but also to provide a mechanism by which the teacher can conduct a self-assessment, so that they can reflect on and improve their own practice. This necessary and difficult work rests at the very foundation of culturally responsive teaching. In order for culturally responsive teaching to effectively take root in the classroom and affect teacher practice and student learning, the teacher themself must continuously and earnestly engage with a personal reflection, assessment, and interrogation of their own assumptions and biases. This ongoing process will help the teacher to become more aware and mindful of these influences and the potential negative effects they may have on their instruction and ultimately the children they are responsible for nurturing.

The rubric consists of four (4) categories: content, instruction, culture, and interpersonal, and for each of these, there are indicators that provide more context regarding their significance. Each of these indicators are qualified by a set of *‘look fors’* that the observer would expect to see in a classroom that centers culturally responsive teaching (CRT). No category or indicator is greater than the other; each has equal value and impact. However, depending on the purpose of the observation, the observer may choose to focus on a specific component of the rubric. For example, the observer may elect to place the attention of the observation on instruction, and look specifically for high ratio moves, those that are deemed rigorous, and promote student thinking for the greater share of the lesson.

Regarding the ‘look fors’ that are included in this rubric, it is important to understand that they are not an exhaustive list of culturally responsive habits or practices, though this menu does provide examples of actions that an observer should see at any given time in a classroom that centers CRT. This is intentional, as CRT is in fact responsive, evolving, and inclusive of a variety and innumerable amount of practices that promote equity and justice within the classroom. This rubric was developed to support the review of videos from the [DESE Video Calibration Library](https://www.doe.mass.edu/edeval/resources/calibration/videos.html) through a culturally responsive lens, but could be used in many contexts, ranging from and not limited to classroom observations, instructional rounds, intellectual preparation, team calibration, educator evaluation, etc.

The rubric is meant to be accessible and applicable in all content areas. It is constructed in a manner that allows for both the veteran and novice observer to see and appraise effective CRT. The rubric contains an implementation gradient that records the frequency of occurrence of a practice, as well as a corresponding field for the observer to record relative notes, so a sufficient and coherent amount of observational data may be collected, which can later be used to inform outcomes and next steps. We hope that you find this rubric helpful, and more importantly, it is our desire that this tool be used to enhance teacher practice and improve student performance.

  

**Culturally Responsive Teaching Rubric: Application within Context**

The Culturally Responsive Teaching Rubric may be applied in a variety of contexts. The table below outlines a few of the ways how this tool can be used to support instruction, develop teacher practice, and drive student learning.

| **Application** | **Context** |
| --- | --- |
| Video-based Calibration Training | Educators, evaluators, coaches, and mentors can use this tool to calibrate around observable practices of culturally responsive teaching. Teams can watch videos of classroom instruction from the [Video Calibration Library](https://www.doe.mass.edu/edeval/resources/calibration/videos.html) and come together to discuss perceptions of practice, and build a shared understanding of culturally responsive teaching. |
| Classroom Observations | Observers can use this tool to track the presence and frequency of highly effective instructional practices and the subsequent student actions that would suggest that student learning is occurring. Observers can also use this tool to audit the efficacy of teacher input and the impact it has on student outcomes.  |
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| Instructional Rounds | Observers can use this tool to assess teacher practice and student engagement throughout the school building to gauge the quality of instruction. If the school’s instructional leadership team has identified a specific strategic action or instructional focus, this tool can be used to assess the efficacy of its implementation, and ultimately determine trends and interventions. |
| Intellectual Preparation & Team Calibration | Teacher teams can use this tool to align on lesson plans and materials, and to ensure that students across the grade band are receiving the same quality of rigorous instruction. Teachers can use this tool to ensure that they are implementing the same strategies vertically and horizontally to promote student engagement and learning. |
| Educator Evaluation & Professional Learning | Evaluators can use this tool to support formative and summative feedback to educators. Strengths and areas for growth identified through the use of this tool can support self-assessment, goal-setting, feedback, and professional learning supports throughout the educator evaluation cycle. |

**Culturally Responsive Teaching Rubric**

| **Category** | **Indicator** | **(5)** **Always**  | **(4)** **Often**  | **(3)** **Sometimes**  | **(2) Occasionally**  | **(1)****Rarely** | **(0)****No Evidence** | **Notes** |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| ContentThe subject matter that students are engaging with, and the substance of the materials that students are analyzing and discussing | Students engage with relevant content that centers issues of equity, power, race, and identity |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Lesson is aligned to Massachusetts Curriculum Frameworks and includes rigorous tasks that are cognitively demanding |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| The content itself is reflective of and affirming to students' identities, brings awareness to global diversity, and it allows for students to interrogate the presented information |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| InstructionThe teacher's practice and the observable strategies they employ to facilitate learning and push and extend student thinking  | The teacher demonstrates depth and breadth of the lesson and is able to contextualize it in students’ identities, experiences, and abilities |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Students have opportunities to demonstrate their learning in a variety of ways |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Students have opportunities to engage in discourse |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| CultureThe classroom's climate and environment, observable artifacts, rituals and routines, and structures | The classroom environment is culturally and socially affirming to students' identities and brings awareness to global diversity  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Rituals and routines are affirming, purposeful, and promote both community and independence |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Expectations are co-constructed with a diverse group of stakeholders; they are ambitious, asset based, clear, and widely practiced in classroom |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |

**Culturally Responsive Teaching Rubric: cont.**

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| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Category** | **Indicator** | **(5)** **Always**  | **(4)** **Often**  | **(3)** **Sometimes**  | **(2) Occasionally**  | **(1)****Rarely** | **(0)****No Evidence** | **Notes** |
| InterpersonalThe observable relationships and social dynamics that exist between the teacher and their students, as well as the relationships that exist between the students and their peers | Teachers and students are attuned to their strengths, gaps, and biases, and respond to them in constructive ways |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Mutual respect and healthy boundaries are established amongst and across all students |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Mutual respect and healthy boundaries are established between the teacher and all students |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |

**Culturally Responsive Teaching Rubric: Look Fors - Content**

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Category** | **Indicator** | **Teacher Actions to Look For** | **Student Actions to Look For** |
| ContentThe subject matter that students are engaging with, and the substance of the materials that students are analyzing and discussing | Students engage with relevant content that centers issues of equity, power, race, and identity | * The teacher refers to relevant, real world, and community-based context and occurrences
* The teacher encourages students to examine and discuss examples and occurrences of stereotypes and biases
* Students are encouraged to challenge the ideas in a text and to think at high levels
 | * Students are discussing global and communal issues of (in)equity and social justice and exploring different viewpoints
* Students use critical, content specific vocabulary accurately and within the context to articulate their learning
* Students respectfully disagree with one another and provide evidence to support their views
 |
| Lesson is aligned to common core state standards and includes rigorous tasks that are cognitively demanding | * The teacher communicates and routinely refers to the lesson's objectives and essential questions
* Teacher develops and/or uses appropriately demanding instructional materials, such as texts, questions, problems, exercises and assessments
* Teacher delivers lesson content clearly, accurately, and with coherence; no inaccurate information is conveyed
 | * Students spend majority of the lesson/observation thinking, i.e. reading, writing, or talking about the lesson's objectives
* Students convey understanding of key concepts and themes in the discipline
* Students independently connect lesson content to real world situations
 |
| The content itself is reflective of and affirming to students' identities, brings awareness to global diversity, and it allows for students to interrogate the presented information | * The teacher creates and/or selects fact and opinion-based materials that invite students to offer counter perspectives
* The teacher creates and/or selects materials that involve and value diverse student identities
* The teacher creates and/or selects materials that showcase sensitive/difficult content in justice-oriented ways
 | * Students are asking thoughtful questions, appear to feel safe, and are confidently sharing their opinions and perspectives
* Students are actively engaged with the content and not visibly distracted or appearing to lack motivation
* Students engage with difficult and sensitive content in constructive and non-offensive ways; their discourse honors the experiences and identities of their peers
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**Culturally Responsive Teaching Rubric: Look Fors - Instruction**

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| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Category** | **Indicator** | **Teacher Actions to Look For** | **Student Actions to Look For** |
| InstructionThe teacher's practice and the observable strategies they employ to facilitate learning and push and extend student thinking  | The teacher demonstrates depth and breadth of the lesson and is able to contextualize it in students’ identities, experiences, and abilities | * The teacher makes the lesson accessible by including relevant and current media, phenomena, geographic and community reference points that are familiar and known by students
* The teacher views students’ life experiences as assets and builds on students’ cultural and linguistic knowledge
* Teacher anticipates common student misunderstandings and ensures strategies are in place to overcome those misconceptions
 | * Students regularly share input and feedback using personalized experiences, which provide windows into their worlds
* Students are able to establish connections between historical context and their current lives, as well as across disciplines
* Students are engaged with the content and motivated to share their pieces of their identity with their peers
 |
| Students have opportunities to demonstrate their learning in a variety of ways | * The teacher uses a variety of instructional techniques to scaffold, accommodate, and modify the lesson to meet the needs of a diverse learning community
* The teacher conducts frequent checks for student understanding and adjusts instruction accordingly
* The teacher has planned a variety of standards and objective aligned assignments for their students
 | * Students make academic choices and are seen selecting assignment of their preference
* Students are observed engaged in uninterrupted work for a significant portion of the lesson
* Students are engaged with a variety of materials, manipulatives and/or media
 |
| Students have opportunities to engage in discourse | * Teacher employs a variety of high ratio moves to push and extend student thinking and deepen their understanding
* The teacher facilitated or created the structure(s) for discussion to occur and for students to share and respond to each other's diverse perspectives
* The teacher constantly seeks input/feedback from students
 | * Students challenge the ideas in a text and explore and share alternative viewpoints
* Students respectfully disagree with each other and defend their arguments with evidence
* Students have opportunities to contribute, inform, or persuade their peers on a topic
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**Culturally Responsive Teaching Rubric: Look Fors - Culture**

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Category** | **Indicator** | **Teacher Actions to Look For** | **Student Actions to Look For** |
| CultureThe classroom's climate and environment include observable artifacts, rituals and routines, and structures that promote inclusion and safety | The classroom environment is culturally and socially affirming to students' identities and brings awareness to global diversity  | * The teacher visibly and prominently displays artifacts that are reflective of and affirming to students' identities
* The teacher has arranged their classroom in a manner that promotes collaboration and cooperation, e.g. desks are in groups or pods
* The teacher has arranged the classroom in a manner that allows for materials and resources to be equitably accessible to all students
 | * Student desks and work spaces are free of distractions and arranged in ways that aid learning and maximize attention and focus
* Students can be heard interacting with the displayed artifacts and student work
* Students demonstrate a sense of ownership and pride over the classroom space
 |
| Rituals and routines are affirming, purposeful, and promote both community and independence | * Teachers use language that is affirming to all students and positively reinforces their belief in them
* The teacher articulates the purpose of the ritual and routine and its role in driving learning forward
* The rituals and routines are equitable and accessible to all students
 | * Students have internalized routines and they are efficiently and seamlessly executed
* Students can be seen enthusiastically leading rituals and routines
* Students engage with the classroom's rituals and routines pridefully and purposefully
 |
| Expectations are co-constructed with a diverse group of stakeholders; they are ambitious, asset based, clear, and widely practiced in classroom | * Teacher uses positive and reinforcing language to encourage students
* Teacher directs students to give their classmates complete attention when they are sharing
* Teacher affirms and adjusts behaviors that meets or fall short of the classroom expectations
 | * Majority of the students have internalized the expectations and consistently demonstrate and uphold them
* Students operate with a sentence of shared purpose and agency
* There are minimal to no distractions and time on task is sustained over long periods of time
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**Culturally Responsive Teaching Rubric: Look Fors - Interpersonal**

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| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Category** | **Indicator** | **Teacher Actions to Look For** | **Student Actions to Look For** |
| InterpersonalThe observable relationships and social dynamics that exist between the teacher and their students, as well as the relationships that exist between the students and their peers | Teachers and students are attuned to their strengths, gaps, and biases, and respond to them in constructive ways | * Teachers admit when they made a mistake and/or need help
* The teacher challenges students to confront and deconstruct their own assumptions and biases
* The teacher encourages students to explore alternative or divergent perspectives and points of view
 | * Students admit when they made a mistake and/or, need help
* Students cooperate with each other and leverage each other's strengths
* Students constructively challenge their own, each other's, and the teacher’s assumptions and biases
 |
| Mutual respect and healthy boundaries are established amongst and across all students | * Teacher encourages students to work with each other and to partner with a variety of students
* Teachers calls attention to and affirms healthy demonstrations of teamwork and collaboration
* The teacher models and can be seen as an exemplar of having healthy relationships with students and even their own colleagues, e.g. observations of co-teacher relationships
 | * Students are collaborative and engage with each other in respectful and productive ways
* Students intently listen to their classmates, do not interrupt them while speaking, respond to and build on their classmates contributions
* Students are supportive of one another and affirm the contributions of their teammates
 |
| Mutual respect and healthy boundaries are established between the teacher and all students | * Teacher's demeanor is warm; the teacher can be seen smiling and expressing a range of verbal and nonverbal signs of endearment
* There are signs of healthy bonds and equitable relationships between the teacher and the students, and the teacher creates opportunities for the students to feel safe and positively express themselves
* Teachers use language that is empowering and affirming to all identities and members of the classroom community
 | * Students use language that is empowering and affirming to all identities and members of the classroom community
* Students share their gratitude with their teacher and their peers; they articulate the things or moments that they appreciate about the lesson and their experience
* Students appear to be safe and can be seen fully and positively expressing themselves to their teacher
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