

Characteristics of a *Meaningfully Multicultural Curriculum*

1. Delivery

Delivery reflects high expectations through higher-order pedagogies and purposefully shifts power dynamics in the classroom.

- Vary instructional techniques, including:
 - Cooperative and collaborative learning
 - Dialogic pedagogy
 - Peer teaching
 - Deep inquiry
- Understand and respond to power dynamics to challenge privilege and oppression. Consider, for example,
 - How can power in the room be redistributed?
 - Who is seen as the expert in the room?
- Challenge the notion of Teaching as Mastery.
 - Ask students what they already know about a topic.
 - Ask students what they want to learn about a topic.
 - Ask students to participate in the teaching.

2. Content

Content should be holistic and accurate, not only acknowledging contributions from various but groups, but reshaping the master narrative.

- Ensure that content is as complete and accurate. In some cases this will require looking outside mainstream sources.
 - "Christopher Columbus discovered America" is neither complete nor accurate.
- Avoid tokenism. Weave content about people of color, economically marginalized people, transgender people, and other people historically under-represented in the curriculum seamlessly rather than (or in addition to) teaching about them separately.
 - Do you present under-represented groups as "the other"?
 - Do you address these groups only through special units and lesson plans ("African American Scientists"; "Poetry by Women") or within the context of the larger curriculum?
 - Do you "celebrate" difference or study, explore, and acknowledge difference *and its power and privilege implications* as part of the overall curriculum?
- Study the history of oppression in curricula and ensure you are not unintentionally reproducing it.
 - Are supporting stereotypes (learning about Native Americans by making headdresses and tomahawks) or challenging them (learning about Native Americans through resources by Native Americans)?
 - Are you supporting or challenging the assumption that our society is *inherently* Eurocentric, male-centric, Christian-centric, heterosexual-centric, and upper-middle-class centric?

3. Teaching and Learning Materials

Teaching and learning materials must be critically examined for bias.

- Examine all materials for bias and oppressive content.
 - Does the history book show stereotypical or inaccurate images of people from certain groups or eras?
 - Do science materials use male-centric language or imagery?
 - Do reading or literature materials have racist language or stereotypical images?
 - Does the language you use and the language your materials use assume heterosexuality, a 2-biological-parent household, or a gender binary?

4. Perspective

Content should be presented from a variety of perspectives in order to be accurate and complete.

- Present content from a variety of perspectives, not only the dominant perspective.
 - How do we define “classic literature” or “great books” or “the classics,” and from whose perspective?
 - From whose perspective do we tell history? When is “westward expansion” the same as “genocide”? When are champions of “liberty” the same as slave owners?
- Present content through a variety of lenses, not just those of a few heroic characters. In the case of U.S. history, for example, you might use:
 - Slave narratives to teach about slavery.
 - Slave narratives to teach about colonial Virginia.
 - Native American narratives to teach about westward expansion.

5. Critical Inclusivity

Students must be engaged in the teaching and learning process. Transcend the banking method and facilitate experiences in which students learn from one another’s experiences and perspectives.

- Bring the perspectives and experiences of the students to the fore in the learning experience.
- Encourage students to ask critical questions about information they receive from you and curricular materials, and model this type of critical thinking for them.
 - Who wrote or edited that textbook?
 - Who created that website?
 - Whose voice am I hearing and whose voice am I not hearing?
- Make content and delivery relevant for the students. Facilitate experiences in which they connect it with their everyday lives.
- Recognize your students as your most important multicultural resources.

6. Social and Civic Responsibility

If we hope to prepare students to be active participants in creating an equitable society, we must educate them about social justice issues and model a sense of civic responsibility within the curriculum.



The Equity Literacy Institute is an EdChange initiative.

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- Starting with the youngest students, incorporate discussions about equity and inequity into lessons. This can be done across all subject areas.
 - How has misapplied science been used to justify racism?
- Look for ways in which recognized names in various disciplines used their work and stature to fight social injustices.
- When an opportunity arises to address racism, sexism, heterosexism, economic injustice, transphobia, or other forms of oppression, facilitate it.
- Have honest discussion with students about the history of privilege and oppression in your subject area, school, and society at large.
- Connect teaching and learning to local community and larger global justice issues.

7. Assessment

Curriculum should be assessed for completeness, accuracy, and bias.

- Work with a cohort of teachers to examine and provide feedback one another's curricular units, lesson plans, and frameworks.
- Request and openly accept feedback from students.