

Culturally Responsive Teaching and Leading Standards Reflection Questions

Standard A: Self-Awareness and Relationships to Others

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: Educators and leaders reflect and leverage collaboration for personal growth. Actions that support this might include journaling, self-evaluating, or enrolling in a quality professional development course.

Reflection Questions:

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

Standard B: Systems of Oppression

Standard: *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: Educators and leaders understand systems in our society and systemic barriers. Actions for this standard might include examining school policies and practices, teaching students about local or global history, and expanding your learning about historic inequities that impact education.

Reflection Questions:

- 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.
- How can you help your students better understand the role of systemic inequities? What aspect of history might be missing from the textbooks that your students need more information about?
- Create or modify your curricula to include aspects related to systems and/or systemic barriers.
- How can your awareness of positionality improve your connection to students? What action steps might you create to begin empowering your diverse learners?

Standard C: Family and Community Engagement

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: Educators and leaders collaborate with families and communities. Actions for this standard might look like asking students to co-create, scheduling 1-1 time to connect with students, or inviting families/caregivers into the classroom.

Reflection Questions:

- How do you work to develop meaningful connections and relationships with students and families/caregivers?
- How does the curriculum you design consider different learning modalities, readiness, and the holistic education of students? How does pedagogy connect to real-world learning, and have high expectations and a strength-based focus?
- 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?
- In what ways can you work to learn from your students and leverage their knowledge to enhance pedagogy and the overall classroom culture?

Standard D: Students as Co-Creators

Standard: *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: Educators and leaders center students' voices, align learning with their needs, and partner with students as co-creators. Actions that support this standard might include collaborating with students, creating a student led club connected to a topic students care about, and asking for student feedback.

Reflection Questions:

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

Standard E: Leveraging Student Advocacy

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

Action: Educators and leaders support opportunities for student advocacy in the classroom, school, and community. Actions that support this standard might include using the un/HUSH framework to assess existing lessons and texts, inviting a group of students to a department meeting to share perspectives, or taking students on a field trip related to learning content so that they see connections beyond the classroom.

Reflection Questions:

- 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.
- Can you provide students with a space to self-reflect (e.g., bell work, exit ticket, etc.)? If so, how will you do so? This provides autonomy and supports self-advocacy.
- How will you genuinely affirm and encourage students to reach their highest potential?
- How do you work to understand and incorporate your students' interests into the curriculum?
- How do you uphold high expectations for students and avoid deficit thinking?

Standard F: Family and Community Collaboration

Standard: 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.

Action: Educators and leaders will partner with families and community members to engage in effective communication and collaboration. Actions for this standard might include sending a regular newsletter to families, using self-reflection to assess and improve communication with students and families, and creating procedures and classroom expectations that foster an environment of respect.

Reflection Questions:

- How will you collaborate with families and community members?
- What do you need to improve your cross-cultural communication? Where can you access tools to help support that improvement?
- What misinformation might hinder your ability to connect with students and build meaningful relationships? How can you work to remedy this?
- How can you work to foster positive interactions and relationships amongst your students?
- How can you partner with families through intentional ways that will benefit students, your classroom, and your development as a teacher/leader?

Standard G: Content Selection in all Curricula

Standard: 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.

Action: Educators and leaders commit to creating and sustaining curricula and practices that are inclusive. Actions for this standard might include revising curricula, professional development related to culturally responsive teaching and leading, and using tools and resources to guide and implement culturally responsive practices.

Reflection Questions:

- 1. How will you expose students to other cultures through curriculum and text choices?
- 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?

Standard H: Representation

Standard: 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.

Action: Educators and leaders ensure the diversity of their students population is represented, helping all students see themselves in the learning space and the perspectives of others. Actions for this standard might include holding a Socratic seminar to allow dialogue and inquiry, creating a lesson that allows students to engage with oral histories or primary sources to expand their knowledge, collaborating with another teacher to create a lesson that celebrates an underrepresented group, and ensuring that your classroom has visual representation of diversity (visual representation is as important as content representation).

Reflection Questions:

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

Summary

This document provided reflection questions for each Illinois State Board of Education Culturally Responsive Teaching and Leading Standard. Reflecting on these questions allows educators and leaders to consider their practices and improve their effectiveness.