

# KPS [Multicultural Education](#) Best Practices: A Self-Assessment <sup>1</sup>

**Consider:** What are your strengths? Growth areas and goals? Whose feedback should you seek out?

## I. ENVIRONMENT & DELIVERY: The environment sets the tone for all learning so that critical thinking can happen in a supportive space. Delivery must acknowledge and address a diversity of learning styles while challenging dynamics of power and [privilege](#) in the classroom so as to not perpetuate [inequity](#).

- ☐ What are the **agreements** we have in place for listening to and learning from everyone in our learning community?
  - ☐ Do I collaborate with my students to co-construct these norms and agreements?
  - ☐ Do my students feel empowered to reference and hold each other and me accountable to these norms, classroom rules, procedures and instructional aids to ensure learning efficiency?
- ☐ Do I communicate and clarify the **expectations** for the learning environment (e.g. classroom management plan and grading system) with students' parents and school administrators?
- ☐ Do I vary my **instructional techniques** to include: *Lecture, Cooperative Learning, Dialog, Individual, Student Teaching, etc?*
  - ☐ Which instructional techniques do I use most often? Which ones don't I use?
  - ☐ Have I included a range of tasks to engage the realities of lived experiences in the room?
  - ☐ Do I use official information about my students' backgrounds and cultural experiences to inform my teaching?
- ☐ Do I acknowledge the different **power dynamics** in the room?
  - ☐ Who do I call on? Who does not participate in my class? What groups do they represent?
  - ☐ Is there a pattern among those students who are talking and among those who appear to be listening? (Proximity to me, their relationship to the topic, their race, language, etc.)?
  - ☐ Who do I encourage to work through a problem and to whom do I provide the answer?
  - ☐ How can I use student behavior to understand what power dynamics are taking place and to redirect attention?
- ☐ Do my behaviors challenge the notion that teachers are the sole **holders of knowledge**, of "the sage on the stage?"
  - ☐ Have I asked students what they already know and want to learn about a topic?
  - ☐ Have I asked students to participate in the teaching of a topic?
  - ☐ Have students' stories/experiences been highlighted so as to invite additional "[windows and mirrors](#)?"

## II. CONTENT & PERSPECTIVE: Content must be complete and accurate, acknowledging the contributions and perspectives of ALL groups. Content must be presented from a variety of perspectives and angles in order to be accurate and complete.

- ☐ Do I weave **content about under-represented groups** (People of Color, Women, LGBTQIA+ People, People with Disabilities, etc.) seamlessly with content about traditionally over-represented groups, thereby avoiding [tokenism](#)?
  - ☐ Do I study, explore, and acknowledge difference and underrepresented groups as part of the overall curriculum or only as "the other" or when "celebrating" difference? How organically multicultural is my curriculum?
  - ☐ Do I address these groups within the context of the larger curriculum or only through special units/ lesson plans ("African American Scientists"; "Poetry by Women")?
- ☐ Do I study the **history of [discrimination](#)** in curriculum and work to ensure that I am not replicating it?
  - ☐ Am I challenging [stereotypes](#) and interrupting a "[single story](#)" of a people or a region or perpetuating them?
  - ☐ Do I challenge the assumption that our society is inherently Eurocentric, male-centric, Christian-centric, heterosexual-centric, and upper-middle-class centric?
  - ☐ Do I present content from a variety of perspectives, not only that of majority groups? *E.g.: How do we define "classic literature" or "the canon" and from whose perspective? From whose perspective do we tell history? When does "westward expansion" = "genocide"? When are champions of "liberty" the same as slave owners?*
  - ☐ Do I include stories of [liberation](#) and empowerment so that underrepresented groups are seen as complex characters with agency and strength, not disempowered victims needing saving/help/charity?
- ☐ Do I present content through a **variety of lenses**, not just those of a few heroic characters (e.g. slave narratives to teach about slavery AND colonial VA. Native American texts to teach about westward expansion)?
  - ☐ Do I teach about groups and regions using resources [from](#) those groups and regions?

## III. TEACHING & LEARNING MATERIALS: Materials must be diverse and critically examined for [bias and prejudice](#).

- ☐ Do I **vary instructional materials**: Texts, Newspapers, Videos/Movies, Games, Workbooks?

<sup>1</sup> Adapted from "[Seven Key Characteristics of a Multicultural Education Curriculum](#)" by Paul C. Gorski for EdChange and the Multicultural Pavilion, "[Checking My Systems for Equity](#)" by Enid Lee, and [The TELL Project Framework](#).

- ☐ Do I know the sources of these materials? What are the identities of the “experts” I choose to highlight?
- ☐ Do I highlight the contributions of traditionally underrepresented scientists, mathematicians, historians, artists?
- ☐ Do I **diversify images** and content on bulletin boards and other constantly-visible materials?
  - ☐ Which students in terms of gender, culture, race, immigration status, socioeconomic background, etc. relate to these activities and materials? Whose identities are most reflected; i.e. who has the most “**mirrors**” in my class?
  - ☐ Who experiences the most “**windows**,” i.e. the most chances to experience different/new perspectives?
  - ☐ How can I connect activities to students’ experiences, prior knowledge, and goals?
  - ☐ What examples/illustrations and historical information can I use to connect the key concepts to students' lives?
  - ☐ Do I ALWAYS diversify, or only during special months or celebrations?
- ☐ Do I **examine all materials for bias** and oppressive content? For example:
  - ☐ Does my history book show stereotypical or inaccurate images of people from certain groups or eras (e.g. railroad workers)? If so, how do I address or challenge this?
  - ☐ Are my science and math materials male-centric? If so, how do I challenge this?
  - ☐ Do my reading materials have racist language or images (e.g. the Huck Finn debate)? If so, how do I address this?
  - ☐ Does the language I use and the language my materials use assume heterosexuality, a 2-biological-parent household, American citizenship, etc...? If so, how can I interrupt or challenge this?

#### IV. CRITICAL INCLUSIVITY: Students must be engaged in the teaching and learning process. We must facilitate experiences in which students learn from each other’s experiences and perspectives. Recognize your students as your most important multicultural resources.

- ☐ Do I bring the perspectives and experiences of the **students to the center** of learning?
- ☐ Do I facilitate experiences in which students **connect content with their** everyday lives?
- ☐ Do I **encourage students to ask critical questions** about all information they receive from me and curricular materials, and model this type of critical thinking for them? E.g. *Who wrote or edited this textbook/website, etc.? Whose voice am I hearing and not hearing? What systems of power are at play? How does the intended audience influence the message?*

#### V. SOCIAL & CIVIC RESPONSIBILITY: If we hope to prepare students to be active participants in an [equitable](#) democracy, we must educate them about social justice issues and model civic responsibility in the curriculum.

- ☐ Do I **incorporate discussions about difference** and inequality into my lessons? (e.g.: How has misapplied science and/or statistics been used to justify racism and anti-Semitism?)
- ☐ When opportunities to address racism, sexism, homophobia, classism, or other oppressions arise, do I facilitate them?
- ☐ Do I have honest **discussion with my students about the history of privilege and [oppression](#)** in my subject area, school, education, and society at large? How about the **history of resistance and liberation** in these arenas?
- ☐ Do I look for and share with students the ways in which recognized names in various disciplines used their work and stature to fight social injustices? (Include people from majority groups who fought certain types of oppression: Twain, Einstein, E. Roosevelt, etc. and people from underrepresented groups who resisted despite their own discrimination).
- ☐ Do I connect teaching and learning to **local community and larger global issues**? How?
- ☐ Do I encourage students to think critically even about **traditionally untouchable subjects of critique** like the United States, capitalism, the two-party system, and others?

#### VI. ASSESSMENT: Curriculum must be constantly self-assessed for completeness, accuracy and bias, including colleague and student perspectives that would help illuminate any [blindspots](#) you have.

- ☐ Do I **work with a group of teachers to examine and critique our curricular** units, lesson plans, and entire frameworks?
  - ☐ Who should I include in this group? Whose perspectives would help illuminate any blindspots I have?
- ☐ Do I request and openly accept **feedback from my students**? Through what methods? How do I respond to this feedback?
- ☐ How can we use feedback from different sections and teachers to overall strengthen our curriculum?
- ☐ How often will I return to this model to make sure I haven’t reverted to former practices?