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Report

Tools and Guidance for Evaluating Bias in Instructional Materials

A Region 8 Comprehensive Center Report

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Introduction

Students' perceptions of their world, their understanding of and attitudes toward others, and their view of self are greatly influenced daily by an educator's selection of instructional materials. Classroom curricular resources often reflect stereotypes and biases about diverse groups of students, personal identities, and nontraditional family structures perpetuated in our society. Students are expected to accept the information presented as accurate and valid. "Therefore, it is very important that teachers [and other educators] select instructional materials that do not promote existing stereotypes, create new ones, or prevent students from acquiring accurate and valid information" (Ferguson, 2015, p.1).

By ensuring young people access learning materials that expose them to diverse images and narratives, school teams will support students of varying backgrounds in developing a healthier self-concept and greater self-esteem. This has the potential to create a balanced learning environment that addresses or corrects pervasive misconceptions. Additionally, promoting instructional materials that value or prioritize diversity allows students to see themselves as a part of the learning cycle and contributes to creating an inclusive community, a critical step in promoting social justice and equity in a school setting. To accomplish this goal, educators need the tools and guidance to select materials that provide both a balanced and accurate perspective of diversity among individuals and communities, as well as correct or reduce misconceptions about others.

Many approaches are being used to reduce implicit and explicit bias, yet little is still known about their relative effectiveness. Studies of both children and adults reveal that proximity and the exposure to more positive, counter-stereotypical images of people from different racial and ethnic groups can have some effect on decreasing implicit negative associations. According to Gonzalez (2016), youth as young as 10 can internalize positive associations to counteract the stereotypical associations they may already have. In this study, researchers were most concerned with racial bias and used counter-stereotypical vignettes and images as an intervention, measuring Implicit Association Test (IAT) scores before and after exposure. Allowing young people to engage individuals who contrast with usual stereotypes promoted an understanding of the range of types and subtypes within a specific racial group and decreased implicit preferences. Additionally, the National Equity Project (Osta & Vasquez, 2019) suggests that attempts to dismantle bias alone are not sufficient and emphasize the importance of also exposing structural inequalities that perpetuate implicit bias. Therefore, a windows and mirrors approach is vital to ensure curricular materials are equitable.

Students seeing their identities mirrored in their instructional materials has been shown to promote positive social identity development by increasing their pride, confidence, and healthy self-esteem. In addition, a mirrors approach supports their recognition of the distinctions in the traits of the dominant culture, their home culture, and other cultures (Scharf, 2018). Through a windows approach, students are exposed to the lived experiences of others, expanding their understanding and empathy while exploring diverse social, cultural, political, and historical contexts.

Purpose and Overview

The purpose of this report is to support the Michigan Department of Education (MDE) in building the capacity of local educational agencies and schools in the identification of resources and tools that can be used by instructional teams to evaluate and assess bias in curricular materials. The materials reviewed provide insights into critical questions or approaches that ensure students will encounter materials that include and reflect a diversity of perspectives, narratives, and histories while elevating the contributions of non-White, non-male, non-dis/abled, or non-cisgender individuals. This report unpacks selected findings from a scan of available resources. A sub-focus on distinguishing between the different types of evaluation structures provides insight into whether the available resource is a tool (can be used as it stands) or supportive resource (is instructional and informative to the evaluation process). For each resource, we also provide an overview of major highlights to support the MDE team in understanding high-level features and notable factors that might inform usability. Finally, we offer considerations for the MDE based on an analysis of these resources.

Methodology

To complete this scan, we worked closely with the MDE to identify the following focus: to find tools or resources for evaluating bias in instructional materials. After identifying the focus, we explored a variety of resources, research, and other publicly available materials focused on evaluating bias. To guide and focus our review, we developed an inquiry framework, looking specifically to answer the following questions:

- How can the resource be categorized?
- What is its origin/major characteristics?
- How can it be used?
- What are the key considerations of usage?
- What is the depth and breadth of bias presented in the resource?

We entered information into a data collection template, reviewing and screening a total of 27 potential resources. Additionally, we validated our evaluation of each resource using team reads and consensus-building to determine highlights, strengths, and usefulness. This report synthesizes the reviews, focusing on the 14 resources that are most compelling or appear best aligned to the focus of this scan.

Summary of Tools

The following tools can support instructional teams in evaluating bias in instructional materials.

Tool Name: Culturally Responsive Curriculum Scorecard
Overview: This tool was designed to support parents, teachers, students, and community members in assessing whether the English Language Arts curriculum for their schools is culturally responsive. The scorecard begins by clarifying the definition and significance of Culturally Responsive Education (CRE). The authors provide tips for completing the analysis in *The Seven Steps to Complete Your Curriculum Scorecard*. There are three sections of the scorecard: representation, social justice, and teachers' materials. The *Representation* section focuses on diversity of characters and authors, and accurate portrayals. The *Social Justice* section focuses on decolonization, power and privilege, centering multiple perspectives, and connecting learning to real life. The *Teachers' Materials* section assesses the guidance provided by the teacher on nine essential categories including, but not limited to bias awareness; engaging students in culturally sensitive activities; and customizing and supplementing the curriculum as needed to reflect the interests, backgrounds, and diverse perspectives of the student population, among other items. A scale follows, which outlines ratings from Not Satisfied to Very Satisfied. There is detailed guidance provided on how to interpret the score. There is a partner toolkit which provides guidance and resources to support educators, administrators, communities, students, and parents on the next steps to building culturally responsive classrooms and schools.
Considerations: The scorecard has clear guidance and uses most current language. The scorecard also includes a partner toolkit to support local implementation. The scorecard is designed so it can be customized to the context of a district. The tool does not define teaching materials and requires a level of critical consciousness and an understanding of issues related to educational equity, such as culture, diversity, and inclusion. Pairing this with professional learning and utilizing the partner toolkit would be an important component to support fidelity of implementation.
Tool Release Date: 2019
Citation: Bryan-Gooden, J., Hester, M., & Peoples, L. Q. (2019). *Culturally responsive curriculum scorecard*. New York: Metropolitan Center for Research on Equity and the Transformation of Schools, New York University.

Tool Name: Assessing Bias in Standards and Curricular Materials
Overview: The tool enables users to consider equity-oriented domains, articulated through a set of rubrics and indicators, to surface biases within both standard development and interpretations, as well as curricular material creation, selection, and application. The tool assesses a wide range of biases, such as linguistic, invisibility, tokenism, and representation, and each is well-defined. A set of directions on how to use the rubrics, along with a scoring and analysis guide are provided to assist in the evaluation process. Users of the tool are encouraged to engage in critical reflection and dialogue around a set of questions about the purpose of the curriculum and the nature of students prior to beginning the review process.
Considerations: The set of rubrics and indicators organized around a set of equity-centered domains and the supporting scoring and analysis guide are this tool's major strengths. However, the tool assumes the user possesses a sophisticated understanding of critical consciousness and issues related to educational equity. This tool would require technical assistance and conversations regarding topics and terminology to ensure understanding and appropriate use of the tool.
Tool Release Date: 2017
Citation: Coomer, M. N., Skelton, S. M., Kyser, T. S., Thorius, K. A. K., & Warren, C. (2017). *Assessing bias in standards and curricular materials*. Equity Tool. Indianapolis, IN: Great Lakes Equity Center.

Tool Name: [Washington Models for the Evaluation of Bias Content in Instructional Materials](#)
Overview: The resource seems to include three different tools or guidelines that can be used to consider bias when selecting instructional materials. The first tool, titled *Ten Quick Ways to Analyze Children's Books for Racism and Sexism,* was adapted from the Council on Interracial Books for Children's Guidelines for Selecting Bias-Free Textbooks and Storybooks, first published in 1980. The original tool was described as one of the first used to evaluate books for bias but has been out of date for several years. The tool lists 10 categories (e.g., illustrations, loaded language) and includes questions to ask for each category when reviewing children's books. The second tool is a one-page table that lists six examples and non-examples to consider when reviewing for bias. The third tool is titled *General Criteria for Evaluating Instructional Materials.* This four-paged tool includes Likert-scaled items to be evaluated based on the following categories: Gender/Sex, Multicultural, Persons with Disabilities, and Socio-Economic Status. Items are to be rated on a scale from 3 to N/A; however, the scaling is difficult to follow, and directions are not included. An example item is: Stereotyping language is avoided. The user would rate the item as, 3=Standard is clearly articulated or inferred; 2=Standard is present, but limited; 1=Limited presentation of standard; or, N/A. It is not clear how one would rate this and if a low or high score is ideal for each category.
Considerations: The introduction encourages district users to include parents on the committee when evaluating curricular material for bias and requires Washington State school districts to have a process when there are complaints about the curriculum (cites specific Washington state law). It seems that the author found or created three different tools and put them into one document with minimal explanation or guidance for the users. One tool includes a reference, but two of the tools are not cited. The document references laws specific to Washington state and includes them in the appendix. At times, the document uses the term "minority" to lump marginalized groups together.
Tool Release Date: 2009
Citation: Washington Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction. (2009). *Washington models for the evaluation of bias content in instructional materials.* Olympia, WA.

Tool Name: [Evaluating American Indian Materials and Resources for the Classroom](#)
Overview: This tool assists teachers, librarians, and curriculum directors in the analysis and evaluation of a wide variety of written and visual instructional materials and resources (including textbooks and literature; author/illustrator; accompanying and supplementary materials; illustrations, visual data, and maps; DVDs and film; and web sites and online content) for anti-Indian biases. To ensure American Indian topics are treated fairly, objectively, and accurately, educators are guided to use non-biased terms when referring to indigenous inhabitants, and to weed out instructional materials that distort the history and/or distort the culture and identities of the American Indians. The user is provided information about the significance of some terms historically used to refer to American Indians. Several forms of bias are introduced and defined, such as tokenism, selectivity, omission, and biased language. Along with each form of bias are descriptions of how specific forms of bias show up in the different types of instructional materials listed above. A separate section is devoted to assessing bias in historical and primary documents as these are believed to reflect the social, cultural, political, and historical context in which they were created and can be effectively used to examine how such biases have or could influence policies, people's lives, and institutions. In addition to a series of guiding questions, there are two assessment tools to assist educators in assessing instructional materials for the biases. A list of resources to aid in the evaluation and identification of anti-bias materials is also provided.
Considerations: The tools and guiding questions provided assist educators in proactively addressing two historically common broad anti-Indian biases: distortions of history, and distortions of culture and identity.

Another is the comprehensive discussion of how anti-Indian bias cuts across different types of instructional materials and resources. The description of how anti-Indian biases show up in a wide variety of written and visual instructional materials and resources is quite informative even for those assessing for stereotypes and biases toward other cultural groups or identities. However, this document focuses solely on the American Indian. One section of the resource refers specifically to the Montana Indians.

Tool Release Date: Original 1992, Revised 2015
Citation: Ferguson, L. (2015). *Evaluating American Indian materials and resources for the classroom.* Helena, MT: Montana Office of Public Instruction.

Tool Name: [Edgenuity: Curriculum Development Guidelines on Bias and Sensitivity](#)
Overview: This tool assists educators in determining whether instructional materials provide all students equal opportunity to demonstrate their abilities and knowledge. One underlying premise of this tool is that "instructional material may be biased if the language or content is differentially familiar to subgroups of students or if document structure or format is differentially difficult for subgroups of students" (p. 3). A second premise is that instructional materials may include stereotypes and inadequate or unfavorable representations of specific groups of students, making it more difficult for some students to process the content leading to lower academic performance. Educators are provided with a brief definition and a few examples of biases and stereotypes to give them some understanding of the underlying purpose of the two checklists of questions to determine if the instructional materials and assessments include stereotypes and/or specific biases. The list of questions for reviewing for bias is much more extensive than the list for stereotypes.
Considerations: The strongest aspect of this resource is the list of questions provided for determining if the instructional material contains forms of bias that will disadvantage some students' academic performance. However, this tool depends on a sophisticated understanding, by the user, of the cultural backgrounds of the students engaging in the curriculum, and the terms commonly used in the locale in which the curriculum is situated. It focuses the user's attention only on the subgroups who will engage with the materials. The reviewer could unintentionally overlook and thus perpetuate a stereotype or bias of a group of diverse cultures or identities not within the user's immediate context.
Tool Release Date: n.d.
Citation: Edgenuity, Inc. (n.d.). *Curriculum Development Guidelines on Bias and Sensitivity.* Scottsdale, AZ.

Tool Name: [Bias Evaluation Instrument](#)
Overview: The Bias Evaluation instrument was developed by the Novia Scotia Department of Education. It is based on Ontario Curriculum Centre's tool *The Bias Assessor* (1998). It is based on the premise that every individual has bias and, therefore, must evaluate selected materials to ensure that they are inclusive of broader diversity and not solely influenced by the personal and social identities, values, and experiences of the selector. The document includes a tool with items to rate bias in curriculum regarding the following seven categories: Appearance, Belief System, Ability/Disability, Family Structure, Gender, Race and Ethnocultural, and Socioeconomic Status. The document starts with a Preamble and includes Principles of Learning that outline what teachers and administrators should consider when establishing learning environments and designing instructional activities. The learning principles are based on Social Constructivist theory and Culturally Responsive instructional practices. The document includes directions on how to use the tool and important tips to consider when assessing resources for bias. Each of the seven categories are defined and provide specific examples of what learning materials should include regarding that category. The rating scale includes questions, and the rater can check yes, no, or n/a. The rater would then determine if it is recommended, needs revision, or is unacceptable for each category. The tool also provides a brief set of considerations to help the reviewer understand what a good review process looks

like and what posture they should take during review. These include reading (a) the instructional material in entirety; (b) looking for both subtle and overt biases, fragmented representations, or tokenism; and (c) working in collaboration to review materials specifically where the reviewer might have limited familiarity with particular areas of diversity.

Considerations: The tool is succinct but also covers a wide range of diversity categories. Additionally, the document is specific to the Canadian context and uses the British spelling of terms such as "behaviour" and "colour."

Tool Release Date: 2001

Citation: Nova Scotia Department of Education. (2001). *Bias evaluation instrument.* Halifax, NS, Canada.

Summary of Supportive Guidance

The following resources can support instructional teams in preparing their educators for the process of evaluating bias in instructional materials. These supplementary materials can support professional development to aid the process of eliminating bias from instructional materials.

Tool Name: [Fairness, Bias, and Cultural-Responsiveness Checklist for Assessments](#)
Overview: The checklist is used to evaluate assessments or other performance tasks for bias, fairness, and cultural responsiveness. The evaluation tool is organized into five categories: Bias, Stereotyping, Fairness, Cultural Responsiveness, and Controversial Topics. The first two categories contain checklist items used to eliminate bias and stereotyping from an assessment. The last three categories contain checklist items used to expand one's thinking regarding fairness and cultural responsiveness in curriculum and instructional practices as they connect to performance tasks. Raters evaluate each criteria item with a Yes or No, but also have space to include qualitative explanations for their ratings, as well as recommended revisions. The document includes a student-centered perspective, considers Universal Design for Learning (UDL), and culturally responsive practices. The resources used to create the document include literature on bias in assessments and culturally responsive education.

Considerations: This resource can be a stand-alone document to evaluate assessments for bias, or it can be used in conjunction with another tool, the [Assessment Validation Checklist](#), for a comprehensive evaluation of student assessments. It is short, user-friendly, and could be used to engage a group in dialogue about bias in assessments. However, the checklist is not a comprehensive evaluation tool for curriculum but is for assessments only. Various diversity categories are mentioned but not expanded upon.

Tool Release Date: 2017

Citation: Center for Collaborative Education. (2017). *Fairness, bias, and cultural-responsiveness checklist for assessments.* Boston, MA.

Tool Name: [Critical Practices for Anti-bias Education](#)
Overview: The document is not a tool but a framework and thorough description of the essential features of anti-bias education. The first four sections of the document are organized into the following categories: Instruction, Classroom Culture, Family and Community Engagement, and Teacher Leadership. The fifth section is the Anti-bias Framework, which informs the first four sections. The first four sections include recommended practices, connections to anti-bias education, and strategies. The critical practices are based on the values exemplified in the *Teaching Tolerance Anti-bias Framework* (section 5). The Framework is a roadmap for anti-bias education at every grade level and is organized into four domains: Identity, Diversity, Justice, and Action. The domains represent a continuum of engagement in anti-bias, multicultural, and social justice education. The Framework includes a set of anchor standards, corresponding grade-level

outcomes, and school-based scenarios to show what anti-bias attitudes and behavior may look like in the classroom.

Considerations: Authored by a reputable and well-known organization that provides free technical assistance resources that can be reproduced. The Framework is based on critical theory, transformative education, culturally responsive and anti-racist education, and social justice educational practices. Although it is thorough, the 36-page document may be long and cumbersome for someone looking for a tool to evaluate the curriculum. However, the document may be best supported with technical assistance, so it is broken up in smaller portions and discussed. The document utilized Common Core State Standards when it was created, which may have political implications that could be positive or negative.

Tool Release Date: 2018

Citation: Scharf, A. (2018). *Critical practices for anti-bias education.* Teaching Tolerance.

Tool Name: [Guidelines for Identifying Bias in Curriculum and Materials](#)

Overview: The document is a set of guidelines, not a tool, that juxtapositions a non-example to an example when considering bias and stereotyping that may exist in the curriculum. It includes three categories of examples: (1) Stereotypes; (2) Language; (3) Omission, Exclusion, and Perspective.

Considerations: The guidelines provide good examples and alternative considerations that may be used to help identity bias. The document expands beyond traditional diversity categories to include family structure, occupation, and body shape/size. The authors state that the examples are not meant to be exhaustive but are a starting point to begin conversations. The short introduction describes the importance of cultural pluralism in our schools/society and gives a rationale for the need to review the curriculum for bias and stereotypes. However, the layout is difficult to read, the print is very small, and is not visually accessible.

Tool Release Date: 2003, but adapted from another resource published in 1992

Citation: The Safe School Coalition. (2003). *Guidelines for identifying bias in curriculum and materials.* Seattle, WA.

Tool Name: [Guide for Selecting Anti-Bias Children's Books](#)

Overview: This guide assists teachers and families in the evaluation of books for accurate and respectful messages about diversity, power relationships among different people, and various social identities (e.g., racial, ethnic, gender, economic class, sexual orientation, and dis/ability). Though the primary focus is on identifying the biases, stereotypes, omissions, and misrepresentations in the visual (illustrations) and verbal messages embedded in books, there are some guidelines for taking quality into account. This is to ensure the books engage the child's attention. A range of forms of bias are explored in the guide to avoid "undermining children's sense of self, positive attitudes toward others, and motivations to act fairly" (Derman-Sparks, 2016). A definition for each form of bias is provided and its potential impact on the child is described. In some instances, examples are provided to illustrate the different ways in which the bias may show up, along with questions to guide the reviewer's assessment of the book. In recognition that everyone has been unconsciously acculturated into prejudicial and stereotypical thinking, the user is provided with a series of guiding questions that should surface recognition of biases embedded within a book.

Considerations: The different forms of bias identified reflect many of the attitudes held in modern society about diversity, power relationships among different groups of people and various identities. This resource addresses bias against a wide range of children's identities. The forms of bias described in this resource are quite inclusive of those often overlooked. This resource provides an easy-to-follow list of questions to quickly guide one in the selection of anti-bias children's books in a manner that should help users recognize

their own-held stereotypes. However, the guide is specific to young children's books. Although the guide provides examples and some discussion of each form of bias, it does seem to assume that the user has some sensitivity to the stereotypes of and biases towards diverse populations.

Tool Release Date: 2013

Citation: Derman-Sparks, L. (2016, April 14). *Guide for selecting anti-bias children's books.* Washington, DC: Teaching for Change. https://www.teachingforchange.org/selecting-anti-bias-books

Tool Name: Creating an Anti-Bias Learning Environment

Overview: Provides a checklist and prompts for assessing how effective an educator or school is in promoting a bias-free environment. This resource provides 11 tips for teachers preparing to raise issues of diversity and bias in the classroom to consider prior to utilizing the checklist to evaluate their classroom or school's multicultural efficacy. There are two parts to the checklist, one for teachers to utilize to assess their classroom and instructional materials and another for educators to assess how effective the school is in creating a bias-free learning environment. There are three possible ratings for each item in the checklist: *I/We haven't thought about this, I/We need to do this better,* or *I/We do this well.* Once completed, educators have a clear view of the areas in which they need to improve or need to consider incorporating into their learning environment.

Considerations: This resource can be used as a self-assessment for educators to determine the effectiveness of their classroom as it relates to diversity, equity, and inclusion. This could also serve as a resource for school leadership teams to assess instructional materials more broadly. While this resource does provide general tips to consider when addressing bias and diversity in the classroom, it would require additional training to be of greater use to educators.

Tool Release Date: 2012

Citation: Anti-Defamation League. (2012). *Creating an anti-bias learning environment.* New York.

Tool Name: Minimizing Bias in Assessing Student Work

Overview: This resource provides guidance on ensuring practitioners are aware of how bias affects scoring in assessments that require a qualitative response. The resource focuses mostly on perspective and how a scorer perspective and positionality can impact how they might engage written responses. It contends that assessment responses are a reflection of how an individual identifies and to which communities they belong. As schools serve more and more diverse populations, scorers need tools to counteract potential bias. The text suggests that scorers use two key cognitive development strategies: (1) assessing depth of argument and ability of a student to discuss an issue from a variety of viewpoints, and (2) assessing the degree to which the response considers systemic factors and moves beyond personal and individualized opinions. Additionally, it calls out strategies related to knowledge and argument structure. Scorers can focus on an argument's structural coherence or evaluate the quality and complexity of the argument itself.

Considerations: The resource provides clear guidance that is situated within theoretical frameworks. This guidance includes very practical examples. However, this resource is guidance only and does not include any corresponding tools. The guidance is also focused on the scoring of the assessment but not on the ways in which assessments can be biased.

Tool Release Date: 2017

Citation: Steinke, P., & Fitch, P. (2017). Minimizing bias when assessing student work. *Research & Practice in Assessment, 12,* 87-95.

Tool Name: [Standards for Evaluating Instructional Materials for Social Content](#)
Overview: The standards were published in California per state law requiring that instructional material accurately and equitably portray diversity within the United States. They were designed to provide evaluators and practitioners with a standards-based framework to ensure that instructional materials contribute to a positive learning experience for all students. The resource focuses on depicting individuals related to race, ethnicity, gender, age, ability, and religion. Each standard includes a section on purpose, method, and applicability. Method provides a high-level overview of what is expected to be measured for each standard. Applicability sections break out guidance on portrayals within identity categories in areas such as culture, practices, achievement, references or labels, or activities. Some diversity categories are presented with an intersectional focus (i.e., the pervasive interchangeability of minority and low income). In addition to common categories, the standards also address labor functions, environmental issues, substances, humane treatment of animals and people, the constitution, preventing unnecessary brand advertisements, and promoting nutrition and physical activity.
Considerations: This resource is comprehensive and tackles the complexity of intersectionality in addition to key categories. It provides both depth in each category and a high-level overview of how and why the standard exists. The language used is slightly outdated and could be adjusted with race and gender identity categories. The resource is also heavy on guidance and would require some support to apply. This could include professional learning, creating an auxiliary instrument, and modeling the application of standards to an instructional resource.
Tool Release Date: 2013
Citation: California Department of Education. (2013). *Standards for evaluating instructional materials for social content.*

Tool Name: [See, Hear, and Speak No Evil: A Content Approach to Evaluating Multicultural Multimedia Materials](#)
Overview: This resource uses a conceptual approach to the evaluation of multimedia materials. It identifies four (4) evaluation components: content objectivity, language use, subject mastery, and resources. The guidance shares what characteristics should be considered in the selection of materials. Across each criterion, the resource notes which types of medium are to be reviewed (i.e., text, graphics, sound, etc.) and essential evaluation principles. While this information is presented in a chart, the resource also contains deeper narrative to help the user understand how to evaluate against the criteria. All criteria are defined and summarized with a focus on the depth and nuance contained therein. For instance, content objectivity breaks out bias across race, culture, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, and age as well as provides five additional sub-criteria to review within objectivity. These include imbalance and selectivity, unrealistic and misrepresentation, invisibility, fragmentation and isolation, and stereotyping.
Considerations: This resource is grounded in research and provides a depth of guidance across criteria. This depth considers diversity across several different elements. It is purposefully conceptual in a way that makes it potentially ideal for professional development but not necessarily useful to pick up and apply in an evaluative process. It could help individuals learn and understand how to evaluate materials for bias, but more work would need to be done to make it accessible as an evaluative instrument. It could also be used to inform the creation of a concise instrument.
Tool Release Date: 2000
Citation: Chu, C. (2000, Spring). Hear, and speak no evil: A content approach to evaluating multicultural multimedia materials. *RUSQ: Reference and User Services Quarterly, 39*(3), 255-64.

Table 1. Highlights from Tools and Resources

Tool Name	Highlights:		Type of Resource:	
			Tool	Supportive Guidance
Culturally Responsive Curriculum Scorecard	☒Wide range of forms of bias ☒In-depth coverage of identities/intersectionalities ☒Different dimensions or domains to assess ☒Definition of instructional materials provided	☒Includes examples/ broad explanations with criteria ☒Requires deep professional learning to support use ☐Contextualized to a particular region	☒	☒
Assessing Bias in Standards and Curricular Materials	☒Wide range of forms of bias ☐In-depth coverage of identities/intersectionalities ☒Different dimensions or domains to assess ☐Definition of instructional materials provided	☒Includes examples/ broad explanations with criteria ☒Requires deep professional learning to support use ☐Contextualized to a particular region	☒	☒
Washington Models for the Evaluation of Bias Content in Instructional Materials	☐Wide range of forms of bias ☐In-depth coverage of identities/intersectionalities ☐Different dimensions or domains to assess ☐Definition of instructional materials provided	☐Includes examples/ broad explanations with criteria ☒Requires deep professional learning to support use ☒Contextualized to a particular region	☒	☐
Evaluating American Indian Materials and Resources for the Classroom	☒Wide range of forms of bias ☐In-depth coverage of identities/intersectionalities ☒Different dimensions or domains to assess ☒Definition of instructional materials provided	☐Includes examples/ broad explanations with criteria ☐Requires deep professional learning to support use ☒Contextualized to a particular region	☐	☒
Edgenuity: Curriculum Development Guidelines on Bias and Sensitivity	☐Wide range of forms of bias ☐In-depth coverage of identities/intersectionalities ☐Different dimensions or domains to assess ☐Definition of instructional materials provided	☐Includes examples/ broad explanations with criteria ☒Requires deep professional learning to support use ☐Contextualized to a particular region	☐	☒
Bias Evaluation Instrument	☒Wide range of forms of bias ☒In-depth coverage of identities/intersectionalities ☒Different dimensions or domains to assess ☐Definition of instructional materials provided	☒Includes examples/ broad explanations with criteria ☐Requires deep professional learning to support use ☒Contextualized to a particular region	☒	☒
Fairness, Bias, and Cultural-Responsiveness Checklist for Assessments	☐Wide range of forms of bias ☐In-depth coverage of identities/intersectionalities ☒Different dimensions or domains to assess ☐Definition of instructional materials provided	☒Includes examples/ broad explanations with criteria ☐Requires deep professional learning to support use ☐Contextualized to a particular region	☒	☒

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Tool Name	Highlights:		Type of Resource:	
			Tool	Supportive Guidance
[Critical Practices for Anti-bias Education](#)	☒Wide range of forms of bias ☒In-depth coverage of identities/intersectionalities ☐Different dimensions or domains to assess ☐Definition of instructional materials provided	☒Includes examples/ broad explanations with criteria ☒Requires deep professional learning to support use ☐Contextualized to a particular region	☐	☒
[Guidelines for Identifying Bias in Curriculum and Materials](#)	☒Wide range of forms of bias ☐In-depth coverage of identities/intersectionalities ☒Different dimensions or domains to assess ☐Definition of instructional materials provided	☒Includes examples/ broad explanations with criteria ☐Requires deep professional learning to support use ☐Contextualized to a particular region	☐	☒
[Guide for Selecting Anti-Bias Children's Books](#)	☒Wide range of forms of bias ☒In-depth coverage of identities/intersectionalities ☒Different dimensions or domains to assess ☐Definition of instructional materials provided	☐Includes examples/ broad explanations with criteria ☐Requires deep professional learning to support use ☐Contextualized to a particular region	☐	☒
[Creating an Anti-Bias Learning Environment](#)	☐Wide range of forms of bias ☐In-depth coverage of identities/intersectionalities ☒Different dimensions or domains to assess ☐Definition of instructional materials provided	☐Includes examples/ broad explanations with criteria ☐Requires deep professional learning to support use ☐Contextualized to a particular region	☒	☐
[Minimizing Bias When Assessing Student Work](#)	☐Wide range of forms of bias ☐In-depth coverage of identities/intersectionalities ☒Different dimensions or domains to assess ☐Definition of instructional materials provided	☒Includes examples/ broad explanations with criteria ☒Requires deep professional learning to support use ☐Contextualized to a particular region	☐	☒
[Standards for Evaluating Instructional Materials for Social Content](#)	☒Wide range of forms of bias ☒In-depth coverage of identities/intersectionalities ☒Different dimensions or domains to assess ☐Definition of instructional materials provided	☒Includes examples/ broad explanations with criteria ☒Requires deep professional learning to support use ☒Contextualized to a particular region	☐	☒
[See, Hear, and Speak No Evil: A Content Approach to Evaluating Multicultural Multimedia Materials](#)	☒Wide range of forms of bias ☒In-depth coverage of identities/intersectionalities ☐Different dimensions or domains to assess ☐Definition of instructional materials provided	☒Includes examples/ broad explanations with criteria ☒Requires deep professional learning to support use ☐Contextualized to a particular region	☐	☒

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Conclusion: Key Considerations

As local education agencies and schools consider engaging in the process of evaluating tools for assessing bias in instructional materials, it is recommended that the following considerations be taken into account. These themes provide insight into not just the evaluation process but also can guide professional learning for educators seeking to eliminate bias in instructional materials.

Wide range of forms of bias: Bias exists in forms of invisibility, tokenism, participation, privilege, representation, and outcomes. Initial reviews of curriculum and instructional materials should not only consider federally protected classes of immutable traits including race, color, national origin, religion, sex/gender, age, and dis/ability but also extend to include other forms. Bias can be present in content regarding language & linguistics, socioeconomic status, familial status, sexuality, citizenship, indigeneity, body size, content formatting, careers, geographic region, and other social and cultural perspectives (e.g., collectivism; individualism) and can also exist when considerations are not made regarding the impact of intersecting identities that make experiences unique (e.g., a Black female immigrant's experiences taking STEM courses in a rural setting). Finally, omission of or perspectives regarding the impact of history (e.g., genocide, colonization, perspectives of war) contributes to the pervasiveness of institutional and cultural systems of power. Supporting instructional teams to understand the complexity of bias is critical to the use of tools and guidance and to the review of curriculum materials and teacher resources.

In-depth coverage of identities/intersectionalities: Besides considering the range of various forms of bias, curriculum evaluation tools were reviewed for how in-depth the tool covered multiple and intersecting identities. As outlined above, intersectionality considers how specific identities combine to create unique experiences and influence the complexity of oppression and privilege one may face. Some resources were more thorough in the details or depths of bias present in curriculum.

Different dimensions or domains to assess: Resources were reviewed to determine if they included dimensions to be evaluated or quantified using a rubric or scale measuring various constructs of equity or bias.

Definition of instructional materials provided: The evaluation resources may have included directions on how they use the instrument, while also including definitions of the variety of instructional materials considered.

Includes examples/broad explanations with criteria: In addition to a wide range of forms of bias and in-depth coverage of identities/intersectionalities, tools and resources were reviewed for their inclusion of examples of how instructional materials could be enhanced to eliminate bias. Several of the tools and resources shared provide before and after examples of language used in curriculum.

Requires deep professional learning to support use: While resources may have included guidance on how to use them, some were also extensive in length, depth, or sophistication, therefore requiring the need for additional professional learning or assistance to support evaluation of curriculum with fidelity.

Contextualized to a particular region: The review found that specific tools may have been made for a particular audience or based on regional details; however, those tools included were still useful for generalizing to broad aspects of bias in curriculum.

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