



Space Science Institute
Culturally Relevant, Revitalizing, Responsible, & Responsive (4R) Programs
May 15, 2025 Handout

Culturally Relevant programs connect lessons to learners' identities, culture, values, and daily lives.

Culturally Revitalizing/Sustaining programs support learners in sustaining the cultural and linguistic competence of their communities. With respect to Indigenous peoples, they address legacies of settler colonialism, affirms tribal sovereignty, recognizes the need to reclaim and revitalize what has been disrupted and displaced by colonization, and ensures community-based accountability

Culturally Responsible programs mitigate biases (e.g., stereotypes, obsolescence, imbalance, etc.) and consistently present multiple perspectives

Culturally Responsive curriculum is taught employing instructional methods that reach all learners (e.g., inquiry based, project-based, community learning)

Cultural relevance

Culturally Relevant programs connect lessons to learners' identities, culture, values, and daily lives.

Guiding questions:

- 1) What are the learner demographics (age, race, nationality, gender, class, faith & education)?
- 2) What are learners' day-to-day experiences? How do their experiences relate to the lesson objectives?
- 3) What are aspects of the learners' values and culture (school culture, familial culture, community culture)?
- 4) For intact groups, what existing cultural norms do the learners have that you can integrate into your program culture and curriculum?

Culturally Revitalizing/Sustaining programs go beyond relevance to support learners in sustaining the cultural and linguistic competence of their communities. With respect to Indigenous peoples, they address legacies of settler colonialism, affirms tribal sovereignty, recognizes the need to reclaim and revitalize what has been disrupted and displaced by colonization, and ensures community-based accountability



Guiding questions:

- Does it center learners' language, knowledge, culture, and ways?
- Does it center learners' worldviews?
- Does it see the learner as a source of knowledge (instead of seeking to address a learner's deficit)?
- Does it connect learning to histories of learners' communities (and marginalized communities generally)?
- Does it address legacies of settler colonialism, affirm tribal sovereignty, and recognize the need to reclaim and revitalize what has been disrupted and displaced by colonization?

Cultural responsibility

Culturally Responsible programs mitigate biases (e.g., stereotypes, obsolescence, imbalance, etc.) and consistently present multiple perspectives

Erasure & Marginalization <ul style="list-style-type: none"><input type="checkbox"/> Who are the heroes?<input type="checkbox"/> Who are the tokens (e.g., "ten great women scientists")?<input type="checkbox"/> Who isn't represented? (e.g., women, POC)?<input type="checkbox"/> Who is in the side bars, and who is in the main text?<input type="checkbox"/> How are place names references (Western or Indigenous? Both?)<input type="checkbox"/> If you teach science, who are the scientists you rely on (Western only?)<input type="checkbox"/> Are Indigenous people being referenced in the past tense?	Stereotypes, Appropriation, & Unreality <ul style="list-style-type: none"><input type="checkbox"/> Is there stereotyping (e.g., Black folk don't code)?<input type="checkbox"/> Is there essentialization (e.g., all Latino learners speak Spanish)?<input type="checkbox"/> Is there exoticization (e.g., cultures portrayed through food, folklore, fables, festivals, heroes, and holidays)?<input type="checkbox"/> Are communities of people caricatured (e.g., with cartoon images)?<input type="checkbox"/> Is there cultural appropriation?<input type="checkbox"/> Are there statements that are false and unreal (e.g., "our wilderness is pristine and untrammelled")?
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Imbalance, Obsolescence & Selectivity <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Is there a one-sided story (e.g., John Muir is a hero)? <input type="checkbox"/> Are there statements that reflect judgment and/or opinion and not facts? <input type="checkbox"/> What assumptions does the author make, and are they true? <input type="checkbox"/> What's the author/illustrator/photographer's culture or identity? <input type="checkbox"/> When was it published? 	Language & Image Bias <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Is there exclusionary language (e.g., "noble Indians", "pristine" wilderness, "grit"?) <input type="checkbox"/> Who is portrayed in the images, and who is not?
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Resources

- [Django Paris, Culturally Sustaining Pedagogy: A Needed Change in Stance, Terminology, and Practice](#)
- [Multiculturalism in the Modern World: Jen Holladay at TEDxDenverTeachers](#)
- [Lee & McCarty, Critical Culturally Sustaining/Revitalizing Pedagogy and Indigenous Education Sovereignty](#)
- [Land Education Dreambook](#)
- [Just Language in Ecology Education](#)
- [Racism in Taxonomy: What's in a Name?](#)