

Online Course Curricular Relevance and Responsivity Protocol

This tool was used as part of the “Digital Tools” study (www.my.vanderbilt.edu/digitaled) at Vanderbilt University and University of Wisconsin-Madison, which looks at the integration of digital or online instructional tools in K-12 classrooms. The purpose of this tool is to assess the level of cultural relevance and responsiveness in online or digital courses. A couple of notes on the tool are below, followed by the tool itself on pages 2-3, and a glossary of terms on page 4.

- *Where did it come from?* Due to the lack of existing research tools to meet the specific need of assessing digital or online course modules for cultural relevance or responsiveness, the research team developed the attached drawing on existing assessments of culturally responsive classroom practices in traditional classrooms, instruction in online and digital learning spaces, and authentic intellectual work.
 - *Existing protocols used in development:* Fiedler, Chiang, Van Haren, Jorgensen, Halberg, & Boeson, 2008; Frye, Button, Kelly, & Button, 2010; Griner & Stewart, 2013; Hsiao, 2015; Siwatu, 2007
 - *Development process:* We removed all items specific to teaching or classroom environment versus curricular content, structure, and instructional strategies. Next, we divided the remaining items into three categories: elements that could never be facilitated by the online course structure, elements that were always facilitated by the online course structure, and elements that varied by lesson.
 - *Expert reviewers:* Next, we distributed the protocol to a group of 8 reviewers from research and practitioner backgrounds in online learning and culturally responsive practices in K12 schools, and made a number of revisions based upon their recommendations.
- *How does it work?* Research teams will go through an entire online course and rate each module with a separate form, based on the rubric below, and write in depth descriptive notes using the prompts below. The ratings and descriptions will be entered into a secure, online Qualtrics form. We suggest jotting notes while watching the module lecture and reviewing associated content such as assessment questions and activities. Then, respond to the Likert-type scale questions holistically, aggregating across the whole module.
- *What will we do with it?* The data from these “observations” will then be coded and analyzed along with other data collected about the integration of the online or digital course into classrooms (e.g. observations of students using the course material, focus groups with students, interviews with instructors, aggregated administrative data on course enrollment and completion, etc.). Analysis will become part of our larger evaluation of the implementation and effectiveness of these digital instructional tools.
- *How do I cite this protocol?* Please use the following citation for research employing this protocol: Darling-Aduana, J., Good, A., & Geraghty, E. (2020). The culture of power online: An analysis of cultural responsiveness and relevance in online high school courses. *Urban Education*.

Please contact us through the following website with questions and for additional information.
<https://my.vanderbilt.edu/digitaled/outreach/>

Online Course Curricular Relevance and Responsivity Protocol

Rate each item, where “rarely” indicates the item occurred once or twice during the module and “often” indicates that the item occurred regularly during the module. An N/A option is only provided in the assessment strategies sections, as an N/A rating of curricular content and instructional tasks suggest that there are neutral content and tasks. Ratings should be made with that knowledge that choices are always made (i.e., defaulting to the norm is in and of itself a choice.) Refer to the attached glossary for definitions and examples of select terms.

When rating curricular content, consider information transmitted through skill introduction, assessments, and other assignments.

CURRICULAR CONTENT	Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Often
The module uses content examples from multiple cultural backgrounds (i.e., literature, history, images).	1	2	3	4
The module teaches students about contributions by individuals or societies that belong to minoritized groups.	1	2	3	4
The module explains new concepts using examples that are taken from a diverse representation of everyday life (i.e., financial, political, social).	1	2	3	4
The module provides opportunities for students to use prior knowledge to help them make sense of new information (i.e., by scaffolding new content on prior experiences).	1	2	3	4
The module provides students with the academic knowledge and skills needed to function in the culture of power. (Simply teaching within that framework is insufficient to prepare students.)	1	2	3	4
The culture of power is made explicit.	1	2	3	4
The module counters the dominant narrative of White, male authority and power (e.g., shows women or minoritized populations in positions of power).	1	2	3	4
The module acknowledges current sociopolitical realities (of minoritized and/or dominant groups) versus essentializing a culture or group of people.	1	2	3	4

INSTRUCTIONAL TASKS	Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Often
The module uses a variety of teaching methods (i.e., visual and auditory elements of a lecture, guided practice, student-directed investigation) to help meet the needs of all students.	1	2	3	4
The module uses the interests of students to make the learning process meaningful for them (i.e., choice involved in generating an open-ended response).	1	2	3	4
The module prioritizes depth over breadth, by engaging students in increasingly complex activities around a particular topic or learning goal (i.e., requires analysis, synthesis, or application).	1	2	3	4
The module incorporates tasks that require students to apply their learning to an issue, context or problem beyond school.	1	2	3	4

Below, select N/A only if the module never assessed student learning.

ASSESSMENT STRATEGIES	Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Often	N/A
The module assesses student learning using various types of assessments, such as self-assessment and portfolios, to evaluate students' performance.	1	2	3	4	N/A
The module assesses students' readiness, strengths and weaknesses, and development needs.	1	2	3	4	N/A
The module integrates assessment items or strategies that considers and incorporates linguistically or culturally diverse content.	1	2	3	4	N/A
The module integrates assessment items or strategies that adapt to students' level of understanding.	1	2	3	4	N/A

Provide a detailed description of the module to expand on the above items, including but not limited to:

- Content
- Instructional tasks
- Assessments
- Implicit (or explicit) values, expectations, norms, or beliefs expressed by the instructor or course content.

Glossary

Beliefs – something one accepts as true or real; a firmly held opinion or conviction (i.e., that capitalism meets consumers' needs by encouraging competition and providing choice).

Culture – the customary beliefs, social forms, and material traits of a racial, religious, or social group (i.e., Chinese, Hispanic, Muslim, Southern); a given individual may belong to various cultures based on intersecting identities

Culture of power – the ideas, attitudes, or activities that are regarded as normal or conventional, often aligned with dominant culture norms and practices.

Minoritized culture – cultural beliefs, social forms, and material traits not practiced by the elite political, social or economic entity that set social norms. It achieves dominance by being perceived as pertaining to a majority of the population and having a significant presence in institutions relating to communication, education, artistic expression, law, government and business. In the United States, this term is often used in contrast to White, middle/upper-class, heteronormative, Christian norms and practices.

Norms – a standard or pattern, especially of social behavior, that is typical or expected of a group (i.e., in White, middle class, American, corporate culture you are expected to greet someone by shaking hands).

Sociopolitical – involving both social and political factors (i.e., social safety net programs are influenced both by social perceptions and stigma surrounding public aid as well as related governmental policy and program administration).

Values – principles or standards of behavior, one's judgment of what is important in life (i.e., individualism, material success, and democracy within White, middle class, American culture).