Culturally Centered Education:

A Primer

June 2021

Executive Summary

EdReports commissioned Education First (EF) to identify and define the key terms being used to describe culturally centered theories and models of instruction (CCTM), a catch-all term Education First is using to describe a wide set of culturally centered philosophies. EdReports aims to better understand the current state of the discussion around CCTM, needs of the field, and implications for instructional materials.

In conducting research through literature review, interviews, focus groups, and a scan of Twitter and other online mediums, EF reached the following conclusions:

1. The field uses three terms most widely when describing *culturally-centered instructional approaches: culturally relevant pedagogy, culturally responsive teaching,* and *culturally sustaining pedagogy*. These terms have precise academic definitions, but most stakeholders use them interchangeably when discussing this topic in everyday conversations. A subset of the field—generally academics, researchers and/or practitioners with special expertise—understand the nuances between these terms and use them with precision to denote different concepts.
2. Another subset of the field uses a second set of terms that speak to a broader theory of education and social transformation rather than classroom-specific content or practice exclusively: *abolitionist teaching, liberatory pedagogy,* and *emancipatory education*.
3. Educators are applying the term *antiracism* or *antiracist* to education and instruction and using it in mainstream dialogue, but the term antiracist teaching does not yet have a widely used definition.
4. The terms all had implications for instructional materials, pedagogy, standards, and more. The implications for instructional materials remained the same regardless of the specific terminology being used, in large part because most stakeholders use terms interchangeably. There are limitations of curricula today and opportunities to improve the quality of curricula from a CCTM lens.
5. As noted above, most stakeholders use these terms interchangeably. In addition, educators use these terms with similar goals in mind; namely, they are looking for ways and opportunities to recenter instruction around historically marginalized individuals and voices.
6. We interviewed several experts and practitioners, who consistently said that they are getting more requests from teachers for support, more questions about CCTM, and more interest in the topics described here.

Throughout the primer, we expand upon these high-level findings.

Background

Since 2015, EdReports has helped set the standard for what high-quality K-12 English Language Arts (ELA), math, and science instructional materials look like. EdReports convenes teams of expert educators to review instructional materials for alignment to college and career-ready standards, rigor, usability and other characteristics of high-quality curricula. One area that has become increasingly important to EdReports and its primary stakeholders (states, districts, educators, and publishers) is to understand the role of materials in supporting *culturally-centered theories and models of instruction* (CCTM), an umbrella term that we use in this primer to refer collectively to terms such as cultural responsiveness, cultural relevance, anti-racist teaching, abolitionist teaching, and so forth. EdReports retained Education First to draft a primer that: (I) defines key CCTM terms, noting the nuances and differences among them, and whether certain terms are used by different audiences; (II) explains the implications these terms have for curriculum and instructional materials; and (III) assesses the state of the CCTM field.

This primer is organized into the following sections:

- **Methodology:** In this section, we describe the methods we use to research various CCTM terms. We also outline the criteria we considered when selecting the terms included in the primer.
- **Defining the Terms:** In this section, we define key CCTM terms, including similarities and nuances between terms.
- **Implications for Instructional Materials:** In this section, we describe the implications of CCTM for instructional materials.
- **State of the Discussion in the Field:** In this section, we note high-level themes that emerged from our desk research, including who is talking about CCTM, and factors driving those conversations about CCTM.
- **Existing Tools:** Here, we share some of the existing tools and resources that we believe will be most useful to EdReports as it decides its next steps.
- **Appendix:** In the appendix, we include a glossary of terms, references and tools.

Methodology

Education First conducted interviews with state education agency leaders, school district and charter school leaders, researchers, and classroom educators; facilitated focus groups with district and charter school leaders and classroom educators; scanned social media and online forums for relevant real-time discussions of the topics explored in this primer; and reviewed literature and online resources related to CCTM.

The universe of CCTM-related terminology is dynamic and fluid, with new terminology surfacing in recent months and other terms becoming obsolete. When deciding which terms to include in this primer, we considered these criteria:

- The term or concept embodies an objective to make instruction more inclusive and/or responsive to a more diverse population of students and better suited to prepare all students to live and work in more diverse communities;
- The term or concept is being used widely or increasingly by educators in the field;
- The term or concept has implications for instruction, teacher preparation and development, and/or how educators review, select, and use curricula; and
- The term or concept seeks to respond to a need being expressed by educators, students, and/or society on the whole.

We applied these criteria holistically, which narrowed the focus of our research to the most relevant terms: *abolitionist teaching, culturally relevant pedagogy, culturally responsive teaching, culturally sustaining pedagogy, emancipatory education, and liberatory education.*

We sought to define CCTM terms widely used by practitioners and academics—giving both the formal definitions, where they exist and also examining how the terms are used everyday in schools across the country. We organized terms into two groups, grouping terms together that were most synonymous. In the next section, we outline definitions for each term.

Key Definitions

In this section, we outline the ways people use terms related to CCTM. We explore academic or formal definitions and nuances of the terms, and we describe the ways these terms are being used in mainstream discourse. We've organized these terms into two groups, based on their similarities and common origins.
- The first set of terms—*culturally relevant, culturally responsive, and culturally sustaining*—grew out of a response to cultural deprivation and deficit paradigms from the mid-20th century, which argued that people from low-income and non-white racial and ethnic groups achieved at lower levels because of "limited cultural capital in the home and communities of these students."[1] In response to these baseless and damaging theories, academics developed the cultural difference paradigm, which emphasized the cultural capital, strengths, and resilience of students from diverse racial, ethnic, and linguistic groups. Terms like culturally responsive teaching, culturally relevant pedagogy, and culturally sustaining pedagogy build on the cultural difference theory that challenged the earlier theories about cultural deficits. Researchers refer to these culturally-centered philosophies as asset-based pedagogies, also a counter to the earlier language about deficits.
- The second set of terms discussed below—*abolitionist teaching, liberatory pedagogy, and emancipatory education*—have become increasingly mainstream in recent years and are often used alongside the first set of terms. This set of terms speaks more to recentering

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[1] Ladson-Billings, G. *But That's Just Good Teaching! The Case for Culturally Relevant Pedagogy* (1995).

the entire institution of schooling around the needs of the most marginalized and rooting out racism, anti-Blackness, and oppression system-wide rather than speaking almost exclusively to instructional strategy.

■ Lastly, there are some terms that elude precise or common definitions, or are subtle variations of the terms we define. First, the term *antiracist* and its application to education is rapidly evolving. We have examined the state of discussion around anti-racism and education and share insights below. There are also instances where some people are using hybrids of the terms defined in this primer. The clearest example is *culturally responsive-sustaining teaching* used by New York State and New York City. This is a term seen throughout New York State, but we did not see it outside of New York State; therefore, we did not define this term separately.

We excluded from this primer some terms that have been used historically to talk about some of the concepts below, but they are not widely used today, such as culturally proficient, culturally appropriate, cultural competency, culturally congruent, culturally compatible, and multicultural.[2] Based on our interviews, focus groups, and literature review, these terms do not reflect contemporary conversations about CCTM, so we have not included them in this primer.

Defining Culturally Responsive Pedagogy, Culturally Relevant Teaching, and Culturally Sustaining Pedagogy

Culturally relevant pedagogy, culturally responsive teaching, and culturally sustaining pedagogy are the CCTM terms used most frequently by the teachers and district administrators we spoke to during our research. All of these terms value cultural attributes that students bring to the classroom as assets rather than deficits. Each term has a unique, widely accepted formal definition, but educators and practitioners often use them interchangeably. For example, although not a representative sample of all educators, teachers in our focus group used the terms "culturally responsive" and "culturally relevant" interchangeably throughout our 60 minute conversation.

That said, when the terms are used with precision, they do have a logical relationship to each other. For example, the term *culturally sustaining* was developed after *culturally responsive* and *culturally relevant*, and is the most aspirational of the three terms—aiming to preserve and sustain students' identity, language and/or traditions in ways that culturally relevant or responsive practices might not. Culturally sustaining pedagogies encompass many characteristics of culturally relevant or responsive pedagogies, but the converse is not necessarily true.

■ **Culturally Relevant Pedagogy** focuses on "academic and personal success of students as individuals and as a collective," and provides students with access to academically rigorous curriculum, affirmation of their identities and experiences, and helps develop the knowledge and skills needed to develop critical perspectives of others and the world.[3] Dr. Gloria Ladson-Billings, who coined the term

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[2] Ladson-Billings, G, (1995).
[3] Escudero, B., *How to Practice Culturally Relevant Pedagogy* (January 6, 2019).

and developed a related pedagogical framework, identified three pillars of culturally relevant pedagogy: (1) Culturally relevant teachers hold high expectations for students and tailor their instruction to meet students where they are; (2) Culturally relevant teachers have basic cultural competence; i.e. they understand the role culture has on education, and interrogate their identity, privilege, and biases to strengthen their practice; and (3) Culturally relevant teachers seek to develop students' sociopolitical consciousness and empower students to see themselves as agents of social change.[4]

- ➤ Associated Thought Leader: Gloria Ladson-Billings: Toward a Theory of Culturally Relevant Pedagogy
- ➤ Use in the Field: Educators and practitioners use this term often, but without much precision or fidelity. In interviews, it was used as a catch-all to describe a generally culturally-based enlightened approach to teaching students.
- ➤ Unique Characteristics: Chronologically speaking, culturally relevant pedagogy was the first term in this primer to be coined. It was one of the initial responses to a historically deficit-based mindset when it comes to cultural attributes. However, later academics critique it as not going far enough to disrupt the conventional instructional paradigms with regard to identity and culture.

- ■ **Culturally Responsive Teaching** is an approach that leverages the strengths that students of color bring to the classroom to make learning more relevant and effective. A major goal of culturally responsive teaching is to reverse patterns of underachievement for students of color. Culturally responsive teaching recognizes the cultural capital and tools that students of color bring to the classroom and to utilize students' cultural learning tools throughout instruction. In Geneva Gay's seminal text on culturally responsive teaching, she describes the term as having these specific characteristics: "validating, comprehensive and inclusive, multidimensional, empowering, transformative, emancipatory, humanistic, and normative and ethical."[5]

- ➤ Associated Thought Leader: Geneva Gay: Culturally Responsive Teaching, Theory, Research, and Practice
- ➤ Use in the Field: The educators and practitioners we spoke with often used this term and cultural relevance interchangeably, suggesting that for many people in the field, these terms are synonymous. Like cultural relevance, the term cultural responsiveness is used as a catch-all for culturally-centered approaches to teaching and learning.
- ➤ Unique Characteristics: Cultural responsiveness was an extension of culturally relevant pedagogy with a "a stronger focus on teachers' strategies and practices—that is, the *doing* of teaching," in contrast with cultural relevance, which some people describe as an *understanding* of the role that culture has on student learning.[6]

- ■ **Culturally Sustaining Pedagogy (CSP)** seeks to perpetuate and foster—in other words, to sustain—linguistic, literary, and cultural pluralism as part of schooling for positive social transformation and revitalization. Culturally sustaining pedagogy positions dynamic

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[4] Ladson-Billings, Gloria, Toward a Theory of Culturally Relevant Pedagogy (1995).
[5] Gay, Geneva, Culturally Responsive Teaching, Theory, Research, and Practice (2018).
[6] New America, *Culturally Responsive Teaching: Understanding Culturally Responsive Teaching* (2020).

cultural dexterity as a necessary good, and sees the outcome of learning as additive, rather than subtractive, as remaining whole rather than framed as broken, as critically enriching strengths rather than replacing deficits. In a 2017 interview, Djano Paris and H. Samy Alim, describe CSP as having these features:

➢ "A critical centering on dynamic community languages, valued practices, and knowledges
➢ Student and community agency and input (community accountability)
➢ Historicized content and instruction
➢ A capacity to contend with internalized oppressions
➢ An ability to curricularize these four features in learning settings"[7]

Culturally sustaining pedagogy exists wherever education sustains the lifeways of communities who have been and continue to be damaged and erased through schooling. As such, CSP explicitly calls for schooling to be a site for sustaining—rather than eradicating—the cultural ways of being of communities of color.[8]

➢ <u>Associated Thought Leader</u>: <u>Django Paris and H. Samy Alim: Culturally Sustaining Pedagogies</u>
➢ <u>Use in the Field</u>:
  ● Certain districts and states have developed their own definition for this term. New York State and New York City, for example, define *culturally responsive-sustaining education* as " a cultural view of learning and human development in which multiple expressions of diversity (e.g., race, social class, gender, language, sexual orientation, nationality, religion, ability) are recognized and regarded as assets for teaching and learning. The New York State Department of Education developed a culturally responsive-sustaining framework "to help education stakeholders create student-centered learning environments that affirm cultural identities; foster positive academic outcomes; develop students' abilities to connect across lines of difference; elevate historically marginalized voices; empower students as agents of social change; and contribute to individual student engagement, learning, growth and achievement through the cultivation of critical thinking."[9]
  ● We heard this term used by educators and practitioners across the country, but it is used with most precision by communities that serve Indigenous and multilingual students. Some researchers use the term *culturally sustaining and revitalizing pedagogy* to affirm "Indigenous peoples' desires for tribal sovereignty, tribal autonomy, self-determination and self-identification," and address Western schooling's legacy of colonization, ethnocide and linguicide on Native

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[7] Ferlazzo, L., *Author Interview: 'Culturally Sustaining Pedagogies'*, Education Week (July 6, 2017).
[8] Ferlazzo, L., *Author Interview: 'Culturally Sustaining Pedagogies'*, Education Week (July 6, 2017).
[9] New York State Education Department, Culturally Responsive-Sustaining Education Framework (2018).

American students.[10] Culturally sustaining and revitalizing pedagogy has three components: (1) tribal educational sovereignty as a means of addressing asymmetrical power dynamics and other legacies of colonization; (2) centering languages, traditions and ways of knowing that were disrupted or displaced by colonization; and (3) community-based accountability for schools, based on respect and relationships.[11]

➢ Unique Characteristics: This term takes the asset-based approaches further to promote the idea that educators and schools need to sustain rather than just affirm. Paris says in a 2017 interview, "Ladson-Billings wrote...in the 'Harvard Educational Review' that 'culturally sustaining pedagogy uses culturally relevant pedagogy as the place where the beat drops'; it does 'not imply that the original was deficient' but rather speaks 'to the changing and evolving needs of dynamic systems'." Paris describes culturally sustaining pedagogy as an extension of culturally relevant teaching, developed to respond to the evolving needs of a dynamic system.[12]

Defining Abolitionist Teaching, Liberatory Pedagogy and Emancipatory Education

Abolitionist teaching, liberatory pedagogy, and emancipatory education are more recent additions to the CCTM lexicon. These approaches suggest that terms such as culturally responsive, culturally relevant and culturally sustaining do not go far enough to describe how we should educate all students. These terms more explicitly call out social and racial justice as an intended outcome and seek to resist and root out oppression in American classrooms. Abolitionist, liberatory, and emancipatory approaches are used school-wide to create culture, engender antiracist practices in all aspects of school design and management, and support instruction.

Teachers who ascribe to these approaches rely on instructional materials that are considered culturally relevant, responsive, or sustaining—often supplementing the core curriculum they use. They look for curricula that are not just representative, but that speak to many different aspects of their students' cultural identity and history. For example, Bettina Love—an educator, researcher, author and co-founder of the Abolitionist Teaching Network (ATN)—routinely relies on hip hop in her classroom to teach a variety of concepts. Materials are just one small part of these overarching approaches to educating students in antiracist ways with more equitable outcomes.

■ **Abolitionist Teaching** disrupts existing education structures with the goal of designing schools and classrooms that are grounded in love, affirmation of Black and Brown children, and centered around Black joy and genius such that Black students are able to thrive, not just

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[10] Lee, Tiffany and Teresa McCarty, *Critical Culturally Sustaining/Revitalizing Pedagogy and Indigenous Education Sovereignty*, Harvard Educational Review (April 2014).
[11] Id.
[12] Ferlazzo, L., (July 7, 2017).

survive. This term is rooted in the abolitionist movement throughout history, which has sought an end to slavery, legalized segragation, the school-to-prison pipeline, criminal justice, and other systems of oppression. Abolitionist teaching is not so much an extension of terms such as culturally relevant and culturally responsive, but does promote many similar instructional practices.

➢ Associated Thought Leader: Dr. Bettina Love: We Want to Do More Than Survive: Abolitionist Teaching and the Pursuit of Educational Freedom

➢ Use in the Field:

- As noted above, abolitionist teaching is a newer concept; Dr. Love published her book on abolitionist teaching and launched (with co-founder Brandelyn Tosolt) the Abolitionist Teaching Network (ATN) in 2019. Based on our research, the term is still used by a small, niche set of educators. ATN supports abolitionist educators through grant funding, promoting activism, curating resources and publishing practice guides. Perhaps because abolitionist teaching is such a new concept, these practice guides offer high-level guidance, arguing that "Abolitionist Teaching cannot be distilled to a list of 'best practices' because it is a way of life."[13]

- Interviewees and focus group participants did not use the term abolitionist teaching or know much about it in our discussions. You do not encounter the term used often in mainstream discussion of CCTM. To the extent that educators are using terms in this category, we heard more from educators about liberatory pedagogy.

➢ Unique Characteristics:

- Proponents of abolitionism believe that systems—including public education—cannot be reformed, but rather that meaningful change requires more significant disruption, i.e., the abolition of the status quo. When it comes to curriculum, Dr. Love says abolitionist teaching is about "reimagining and rewriting curriculums with local and national activists to provide students with not only examples of resistance but also strategies of resistance."[14]

- Abolitionist teaching explicitly centers *intersectionality*, an analytical lens through which we can understand how an individual's different identities (i.e., one's race, gender identity, sexual orientation, socioeconomic status, immigration status, education level, and so forth) can reproduce privilege or exacerbate inequities.[15] Dr. Love has critiqued mainstream school-based LGBT policies and programs for not speaking to the experiences of LGBT youth who are not white, cisgender, middle class, suburban, gay males.[16]

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[13] Abolitionist Teaching Network, *Guide for Racial Justice and Abolitionist Social and Emotional Learning* (August 2020).
[14] Love, B., *We Want To Do More Than Survive*, p. 10 (2020).
[15] Columbia Law School, *Kimberle Crenshaw on Intersectionality, More Than Two Decades Later* (June 8, 2017).
[16] Love, B., *A Queer Black Educator on the Shortcomings of 'It Gets Better,'* published in *The Advocate* (February 15, 2019).

- **Liberatory or Liberation Pedagogy** is an anti-oppressive educational approach designed to liberate minds and level the playing fields between teachers and students.[17]
  - Associated Thought Leader: Paulo Friere: Pedagogy of the Oppressed
  - Use in the Field: Amongst this grouping of terms, educators seem to embrace the term liberatory pedagogy most frequently. For example, KIPP Philadelphia uses a liberatory framework for their network of schools, but they refer to their curricula as culturally-centered.
  - Unique Characteristics: Schools seem able to embrace this framework as a reform strategy rather than as a means to disrupt the system writ large.
- **Emancipatory Education**, which is often used interchangeably with liberatory pedagogy, involves methods of teaching and learning that encourage students to become aware of their individual reality by investigating their daily life. The results of their investigation will expectedly stimulate their questioning of "reality" and propose changes to the status quo.[18] In a 2014 study of emancipatory education, author Ali Nouri defined emancipatory pedagogy as, "founded on the notion that education should play a fundamental role in creating a just and democratic society." And Nouri said, "The main educational aims of this approach are manifestation of humanization, critical conscientization, and a problem-posing education system. Emancipatory pedagogy accordingly seeks to invite both students and teachers to critically analyze the political and social issues as well as the consequences of social inequity. This requires a negotiated curriculum based on true dialogue that values social interaction, collaboration, authentic democracy, and self-actualization."[19]
  - Associated Thought Leader: Like liberatory pedagogy, emancipatory education appears to be derived from the writings of Paolo Friere in Pedagogy of the Oppressed.
  - Use in the Field: While there is some information published about emancipatory education historically, this term was not one used at all in our discussions with educators. Educators appear to be gravitating more toward abolitionist teaching and liberatory pedagogy.
  - Unique Characteristics: We did not find a clear distinction between liberatory pedagogy and emancipatory education in our research. The stakeholders we spoke with used this term less frequently than other terms in this primer, and often used it interchangeably with the term liberatory pedagogy, which is unsurprising, given they are both inspired by the writings of Paolo Friere.

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[17] Fischer, F., *Leading Liberated: Why liberation pedagogy is the heart and foundation of TAF's Network for Edwork* (November 2, 2020).
[18] Winarti, E., *Emancipatory education and the preparation of future teachers* (June 4, 2018).
[19] Nouri, Ali, *Emancipatory Pedagogy in Practice* (2014).

Defining Antiracist Teaching

- **Antiracist teaching** is a concept based on the scholarship and writings of Ibram X. Kendi, who defines antiracism as "a collection of antiracist policies that lead to racial equity." An antiracist, he argues, is "one who supports an antiracist policy by their actions or expressing an antiracist idea." Being an antiracist "requires persistent self-awareness, constant self-criticism, and regular self-examination."[20] We were unable to find a precise definition of *antiracist teaching*, but various thought leaders have extrapolated basic principles from Kendi's writings. An antiracist teacher "understands that their positions as teachers, leaders, policymakers, and social workers are positions of great privilege and power," and use their voice to call out racism and promote antiracism.[21] Antiracist teachers deepen their critical consciousness through reading, studying, and engaging with others, and by understanding how individuals, institutions and systems perpetuate racism. Antiracist teachers create learning environments that help heal from harms caused by racism, sexism, classism, and homophobia. Antiracist teachers encourage students' critical thinking and help students understand that inequality between groups of people is the result of policies and mindsets.[22]
  - Associated Thought Leader: Ibram X. Kendi, How to be an Antiracist
  - Mainstream Use: As Kendi's writings have become more popular, educators have become more interested in antiracist teaching.
    - Right now, many educators believe that antiracist teaching is similar to some of the other concepts defined in this primer. *EdWeek* recently asked educators describe what an antiracist curriculum looks like, with 53% of respondents saying, "it's a curriculum promoting diversity and equality,"[23] a definition that is similar to *cultural relevance* or *cultural responsiveness*.
    - Education organizations and school districts are using the term *antiracist teaching* to describe their work as well. Stand for Children just launched the Center for Antiracist Education which supports educators implementing antiracist instructional practices. One school district located in the Mid-Atlantic region of the U.S. has explicitly named antiracism as an objective of the district's academic strategy. According to their chief academic officer, "the most antiracist thing we can do is make content relevant to all students," which the district accomplishes by, as one example, incorporating lessons on the disparate impact of COVID-19 and police brutality on communities of color into the math curriculum. They described this approach as culturally-relevant teaching with antiracist aims, a description that is consistent with the rest of our research which showed a strong connection between CCTM and antiracist efforts.

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[20] Kendi, Ibram X., *How to be an Antiracist* (2019).

[21] Pitts, J., *What Antiracism Really Means for Educators*, Learning for Justice (September 11, 2020).

[22] Koenig, R., *How to Be an Antiracist Educator: An Interview With Ibram X. Kendi*, EdSurge (December 1, 2020).

[23] *Anti-Racist Teaching: What Educators Really Think*, Education Week (September 25, 2020).

➢ <u>Unique Characteristics:</u> Unlike some of the other terms in this primer, we did not find an antiracist teaching framework or practice guide, but given the strong interest in the field, this is likely to change soon.

Implications for Instructional Materials

A culturally-centered education lives at the nexus of standards, materials, pedagogy, and assessment. As one interviewee said, "a great educator can take the least culturally-responsive curriculum and still manage to create a culturally-responsive learning environment with the right type of preparation and pedagogy, while a less skillful educator can take the most culturally-responsive curriculum and still fail to create a culturally-responsive instructional experience." In this section, we identify common shortcomings found within most existing curricula, and then describe the implications CCTM principles have for curriculum and other aspects of public education, including pedagogy, policy, and school design.

Importantly, we found that the first set of terms described above—culturally relevant teaching, culturally responsive pedagogy, and culturally sustaining pedagogy—have clearer, more codified and common implications for curriculum and instructional materials. In other words, the implications for culturally relevant teaching are similar to those for culturally responsive and culturally sustaining pedagogies. The second set of terms—abolitionist teaching, liberatory pedagogy and emancipatory education—along with anti-racist teaching, have less codified and researched implications for instructional materials. Accordingly, in this section we summarize implications for instructional materials which are largely based on the definitions and common use of the terms culturally relevant teaching, culturally responsive pedagogy, and culturally sustaining pedagogy. However, we recommend that readers of this primer continue to monitor conversations about abolitionist teaching, liberatory pedagogy, and emancipatory education because these terms have potentially broad implications for curriculum and the entire institution of education that will become more codified over time.

Limitations of Typical Curriculum and Instructional Materials

Despite efforts by publishers in recent years, we heard from interviews and focus groups that many curricula fall short of meeting the needs of diverse populations. In our research, we found several clear examples of the ways in which instructional materials are culturally limited, if not inherently biased or racist. Some of the specific concerns we found include:

■ **Erasure** is the act of erasing the cultural characteristics and histories from the classroom. An American Civil Liberties Union report published in October 2020 highlighted the ways in which erasure has occurred in Humboldt County, California to the detriment of Indigenous populations. The report discusses how schools in Humboldt County have stripped the classrooms of any markers of

Indigenous culture, saying of Indigenous cultures locally, "those cultures are here and vibrant, and all you have to do is ask and you can get that information to share with your students. I feel like the curriculum is a big deal. It's visibility—seeing posters and pictures in the classroom that reflect your heritage, seeing the contributions of your heritage. But instead, there's just been a complete erasure."[24]

- **Distortions** occur when publishers present a distorted view of history or "mystify" the causes of events. A recent article in *The Atlantic*, says, "[a] National Clearinghouse on History Education research brief on four popular elementary and middle-school textbooks concluded that the materials 'left out or misordered the cause and consequence of historical events and frequently failed to highlight main ideas.' And the flaws can be much more egregious than isolated errors, disorganization, or a lack of clarity - sometimes textbooks fundamentally distort the contexts leading up to many of today's most dire social ills."[25] The author uses the causes of the Civil War as an example, explaining that "textbook publishers tend to "mystify" the reasons for the South's secession... Some of the most widely used history textbooks today even insinuate that the South's motivation for secession was simply to protect states' rights—not to preserve slavery."[26] The author links this to current data that shows over 40% of American adults in a recent national poll indicated slavery was not the cause of the Civil War, illustrating the consequences of these distortions on society wholly.
- Several interviewees raised concerns with **superficial representation**, where Black, Brown, LGBTQIA identities are reflected in materials in only cursory ways and pop in and out of the text.

There were many potential reasons about why publishers are struggling with incorporating CCTM principles into instructional materials. One of our interviewees expressed doubts that publishers have the fluidity to be responsive to the plurality of racial and ethnic groups that our education system is trying to serve. She pointed to the vast diversity across regions and within regions as a barrier to ever creating truly flexible and fluid curricula. This was echoed in other interviews. Other interviewees pointed to the standards and said that any effort to make classrooms more culturally responsive starts with adjustments to the standards which will then force changes to the curricula.

CCTM Implications for Instructional Materials

In this section, we describe the implications CCTM has for instructional materials. First, we identify characteristics of high-quality instructional materials that incorporate elements of CCTM. Then, we outline the conditions that need to be in place to help promote CCTM materials in schools and classrooms. As noted previously in this primer, these implications are largely based on the definitions of culturally relevant teaching, culturally responsive pedagogy, and culturally sustaining pedagogy because these terms have more codified and researched implications for instructional materials. Also note, this list is not exhaustive as there is not a clear gold standard for what CCTM materials should look like.

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[24] American Civil Liberties Union Northern California, *Failing Grade: The Status of Native American Education in Humboldt County* (October 2020).

[25] Wong, A., *Lessons From McGraw Hill: The Eurocentric Influence on History Textbooks and Classrooms*, The Atlantic (October 21, 2015).

[26] Id.

Based on our research, the characteristics of instructional materials and curriculum that reflect CCTM principles are as follows:

- **_Connections to students' lives and interests:_** CCTM curriculum and materials connect rigorous content to students' lives, interests, and experiences.
    - ➢ For example, earlier in this primer, we explained how a school district in the Mid-Atlantic has made lessons and curriculum more responsive and anti-racist by incorporating content related to COVID-19 (specifically the pandemic's disparate impact on communities of color) and police brutality.
    - ➢ A math teacher from Memphis who participated in our focus group shared this example: "I look for opportunities where the curriculum brings my students' community into the lesson. Their community is an asset to their learning...When I showed a picture of the Golden Gate Bridge during a lesson, my students shrugged. But when I showed them a picture of the Hernando de Soto Bridge that crosses the Mississippi River and connects Memphis to western Arkansas, that made a difference."
- **_Centering multiple perspectives, especially those from non-dominant cultures:_** CCTM curriculum and materials decenter white, European, cisgendered identities and recenter content around a more diverse set of identities, disrupting biased and often racist, sexist, xenophobic, and homophobic narratives.
- **_Demystifying (LGBTQ, Blackness, etc.):_** "Demystifying" typically refers to familiarizing students with concepts, topics, and characteristics across lines of difference in order to normalize different aspects of identity which historically have been viewed with bias or may be unfamiliar to certain students. This concept came up in the interview we had with a leader at a large, urban district. The district seeks to demystify LGBTQ identity for all students by exposing all students to more LGBTQ-inclusive materials. Another example of demystifying involves distortions around causes of the Civil War, discussed elsewhere in this primer. _The Atlantic_ describes intentional efforts to "mystify" the causes of the Civil War, when instead what the publisher could have done is sought to illuminate the causes of the Civil War for students.[27]
- **_Diverse perspectives and narratives:_** Throughout interviews, focus groups and desk research, we heard how important it is for instructional materials to include diverse perspectives and narratives. CCTM curricula incorporate diverse perspectives and ensure that multiple narratives are shared. New York's culturally sustaining framework says that "inclusive curricula and assessment elevates historically marginalized voices. It includes opportunities to learn about power and privilege in the context of various communities."[28]
    - ➢ Dr. Tanji Marshall of the Education Trust expressed this sentiment in a recent meeting with state education agency leaders: "I bristle when I hear 'take out a text and replace it.' I love _Romeo and Juliet_ and I will teach it and I will get in there and do some

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[27] Id.

[28] New York State Education Department (2018).

real work with *To Kill a Mockingbird* because it is beautifully written. But I'm also going to get in there and talk with students about why Calpurnia code-switched; is she harboring some anti-Blackness? If you can't do the text justice at a deep level, you need training. I read the other day that a district in California is taking *Huck Finn*, *To Kill a Mockingbird* and *Roll of Thunder, Hear My Cry* out of the curriculum. I would fight that until I die. As a leader, I do not allow any measure of censorship. In our quest to be culturally responsive, we are duty-bound—it is our responsibility—to ensure that students are deeply reading, widely, as many voices as possible. That being said, how we treat texts is the biggest question. Why this text, why this time, why in front of these children? That's how you get to cultural responsiveness."

- **Representation:** Representation is reflected in CCTM-aligned materials through the inclusion of diverse authors and characters and by depicting diverse characters in ways that accurately portray their experiences and rebut stereotypes.[29]
    - Interviewees described the importance of representation when it is done well. Two of the education thought leaders that were interviewed expressed the importance of deeply embedding stories into instruction. One college of education faculty member said to us, "representation is one thing, but a sense of belonging is another," and explained diverse characters and storytelling should be consistently represented throughout the curriculum.
    - Schools that serve the Yup'ik Eskimo community in Alaska show why representation is important. These schools have built a culturally relevant curriculum that includes stories and experiences of native people and teach mathematics concepts with references to a local island that students would know.[30]
    - CCTM curriculum also avoids ""study[ing] the catastrophic" and includes literature and narratives from middle- and upper-class people of color, and material where "the marginalized are also the empowered, the strong, and the victorious."[31]
- **Development of critical consciousness**: Instructional material that reflects CCTM principles will also develop students' critical consciousness. Paolo Friere, in *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, described developing critical consciousness as "we read the word to read the world." In other words, the development of critical consciousness involves learning how to recognize systems of oppression in our world, and then taking steps to dismantle them. Instructional materials can develop critical consciousness by: focusing on worldviews, ideas, and power dynamics, especially those from non-Eurocentric cultures; introducing students to new experiences that help them understand their own privilege and power (and the privileges and power of others); and taking action against forms of oppression that come up in students' lives.

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[29] J. Bryan-Gooden, M. Hester, & L. Q. Peoples, *Culturally Responsive Curriculum Scorecard*, Metropolitan Center for Research on Equity and the Transformation of Schools, New York University (2019).

[30] Eliason Kisker, E., et al., *The Potential of a Culturally Based Supplemental Mathematics Curriculum to Improve Mathematics Performance of Alaska Native and Other Students*," Journal for Research in Mathematics Education, p. 11 (January 2012).

[31] The Sheridan Center for Teaching and Learning at Brown University, *Effective Teaching is Anti-Racist Teaching*, (undated, accessed March 26, 2021).

- **Guidance to teachers:** Most teachers do not receive training on CCTM during their preparation, and instructional materials can help by providing guidance on ways to adapt lessons to meet students' needs. The NYU Metro Center's CRE Scorecard assesses the extent to which instructional materials provide guidance to classroom teachers on the following criteria:
  - ➢ Being aware of one's biases and the gaps between one's own culture and students' cultures;
  - ➢ Making real-life connections between academic content and students' neighborhoods, communities, culture, and environment;
  - ➢ Engaging students in culturally sensitive experiential learning activities;
  - ➢ Accounting for a range of possible student responses, given different student experiences and perspectives; and
  - ➢ Customizing and supplementing the curriculum to reflect the cultures, backgrounds, and interests of students.[32]

CCTM Implications Beyond Curriculum

CCTM also has implications for pedagogy, teaching standards, and school design. Many of the discussions we have had on these topics emphasized the importance of having strong curricula *but also* ensuring educators know how to use those materials effectively. Without adequate preparation and guidance for teachers, a high-quality, antiracist, and culturally responsive curriculum may not end up creating antiracist and culturally responsive classrooms.

- **Teaching Standards:** CCTM shows up to varying degrees in state teaching standards. In September 2020, New America released a report that analyzed all states' teaching standards and the degree to which those standards include elements of "culturally responsive teaching" or CRT for short. The report showed wide variation across states: while a significant majority of states included references to certain CRT competencies, such as "engaging families in setting goals for students, using family contacts to learn more about students' cultural background, confronting cultural barriers to family and community engagement" and "exhibit[ing] high expectations for all students" only about half of state standards ask educators to "reflect on their own cultural lens and potential biases" and only three states ask teachers to "become abreast of institutional biases."[33] Note, the field is changing quickly: during the time we wrote this primer, Illinois adopted Teacher and Leader standards that include greater alignment with cultural approaches.[34]
- **Pedagogy and teacher training:** Teacher training and pedagogy are essential to ensure educators know how to use culturally-based instructional materials. Several interviewees spoke about the need to better prepare teachers to teach in culturally-based ways. An example of how materials could support this preparation is through better teacher notes to help prompt teachers to incorporate CCTM

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[32] J. Bryan-Gooden, M. Hester; & L. Q. Peoples (2019).
[33] New America (2020).
[34] Hancock, P., *"Legislative panel approves 'culturally responsive' teaching standards,"* The State Journal-Register (February 17, 2021).

instructional strategies. New America published a practice guide that lists 8 competencies for culturally responsive teaching that illustrate the extent to which CCTM is really about pedagogy and teaching.[35]

■ **School design and management:** Geneva Gay talks about the extent to which CCTM is about whole-school design as well. "Conceptually, cultural responsiveness is no longer limited to pedagogy in a literal sense. Instead, virtually all aspects of the educational enterprise are being targeted, including leadership, counseling, classroom management, performance assessment, policy, research, and personnel recruitment, and retention."[36]

Summarizing the State of the CCTM Field

In this section, we summarize other key CCTM themes that emerged from desk research, interviews, and focus groups. We've organized this section around four central questions:

1. What do people want when they ask about CCTM? What overlap and nuance exists in their needs and interests?
2. Who is talking about CCTM? What kinds of conversations are they having?
3. What is driving conversations about CCTM?
4. How widespread are efforts to adopt CCTM?

What do people want when they ask about CCTM? What overlap and nuance exists in their needs and interests?

■ Regardless of the specific term(s) different stakeholders (e.g., academics, system leaders, classroom teachers) use to describe efforts toward achieving more culturally-centered work, people are often largely trying to achieve similar objectives. Generally, they are expressing a will to recenter the academic experience and instructional materials around historically marginalized, minoritized populations rather than white, European, and cisgendered populations. Historically, education and materials have been centered around the latter.[37]

■ Some people—often researchers, but in some cases district and school leaders who have thought deeply about CCTM—use the terms in this primer with fidelity and precision, but most stakeholders do not draw clear distinctions between these terms.
  ➢ A leader of a large, urban district told us that they have not considered the differences between culturally relevant or responsive and sustaining, for example, but a more culturally-centered approach is a priority to the district.

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[35] Muniz, J., _Culturally Responsive Teaching: A Practice Guide_, New America (September 2020).

[36] Gay, Geneva, _Culturally Responsive Teaching, Theory, Research and Practice_, (2018).

[37] Wright, B., _Black Boys Matter: Cultivating Their Identity, Agency, and Voice_, Teaching Young Children (February/March 2019).

- ➢ New America recently conducted a scan of the field to develop a set of CCTM teacher competencies, and included in its analysis competencies that were labeled culturally responsive, culturally relevant, and culturally sustaining, showing how interchangeably these terms are used by most stakeholders.[38]
    - ➢ Conversely, a charter network intentionally chose the term *liberatory* to describe their approach to educating students.
- ■ Efforts at CCTM are more often overlapping with efforts to dismantle systemic racism. In the large urban district, for example, the district uses the term *antiracist* to ensure curriculum is more culturally-relevant. According to the leader, the district has historically not named their curricula as antiracist, but in the last year they have begun to be more explicit about marrying efforts to make instruction and curriculum culturally-based instructional approaches with our nation's long-overdue reckoning with racial inequity.
- ■ In addition to dismantling racism, however, there were some other objectives educators indicated they were trying to achieve through different culturally-based approaches, including:
    - ➢ **Equity:** As Geneva Gay writes in her book, *Culturally Responsive Teaching, Theory, Research, and Practice*, "Students of color from ethnic, racial, cultural, and socioeconomic backgrounds different from the dominant Eurocentric, middle-class group still are not receiving proportional, equitable, high-quality educational opportunities and performance outcomes. U.S. society continues to be plagued by resource inequities and human indignities toward diverse populations and communities."[39]
    - ➢ **Cultural and critical competence:** Geneva Gay goes on to say, "while improved academic performance is imperative, school achievement must be even more inclusive. It also includes cultural competence of self and others."
    - ➢ Some other objectives included **increased engagement** from students, **preservation and celebration of unique cultural and linguistic traditions**; and **dismantling anti-Blackness.**[40]
- ■ We speculated that more nuanced objectives might drive a discussion toward one term or another, but generally we did not observe that to be the case. This was really only true when experts (often academics but sometimes system leaders or practitioners who have prioritized CCTM in their district, state, school, or classroom) were using the most literal academic form of the definitions. This was not the type of nuance everyday practitioners or system leaders were bringing to the discussion for the most part.
- ■ When talking about the need for CCTM, interview and focus group participants largely focused on the needs of racial, ethnic, and linguistic diversity and less about other aspects of identity, such as ability, sex, socioeconomic status, religion, gender identity or sexual orientation.
- ■ System leaders and educators consistently described a need for *more* high-quality and culturally responsive materials, indicating publishers are falling short of developing materials that are truly responsive. System leaders and educators spoke less frequently about needing an arbiter of existing curricula (similar to EdReports) although it seemed more so that this did not really occur to them simply

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[38] Muniz, J. (September 2020).
[39] Gay, p. 31 (2018).
[40] Pearman, F., *Anti-Blackness and the way forward for K-12 schooling*, Brookings Institute (July 1, 2020).

because they have not previously seen a good arbiter of quality around this topic. In some cases it appears districts have stepped in as an arbiter of quality and resource around CCTM, but not consistently.

■ Across the board, where educators are trying to embrace CCTM, they are spending a lot of time trying to adapt existing curricula themselves or using materials that vary in quality. While some school systems support all educators to develop culturally-based curriculum in partnership with their communities, we heard in other interviews and focus groups that teachers are spending a lot of time identifying culturally-based materials and supplementing existing materials.

Who is talking about CCTM? What conversations are they having?

■ There are many different voices contributing to the dialogue about CCTM. We heard from academics and researchers, philanthropy staff, system leaders, charter schools leaders, and classroom teachers. Generally, these seemed to be the voices shaping the discussion around this topic. In terms of the role each of these groups play in driving the discussion, this is what we discerned:

➢ **Academics/Researchers:** Generally, academics and researchers used the terminology in this primer with precision and understood the nuances between, say, culturally relevant teaching and abolitionist teaching. However, their precision was not consistently used by others outside of academia.

➢ **Philanthropy:** One interviewee, a program officer at an education foundation, spoke to us about how the philanthropic community is engaging with CCTM topics, indicating there is a robust appetite to discuss anti-racism, anti-bias, and equity in different contexts, including potential implications for instructional materials.

➢ **System leaders:** We observed a wide range of engagement from system leaders on these topics. Typically district administrators (e.g., staff in the Academics or Equity offices) were better positioned to engage in the discussion than state and district chiefs, given their responsibility for teaching and learning and/or equity within the school system.

➢ **Charter school leaders:** We spoke with two charter school leaders who are heavily steeped in the culturally-based approaches to education, and accordingly, they shared nuanced views on the issues we explore in this primer. What we saw suggested that where charter operators are interested in these topics, they have greater latitude and leverage to make changes within their organizations or orient their mission and vision largely around CCTM.

➢ **Teachers:** The teachers in our focus group were familiar with many of the terms in this primer, but generally do not use them with the same technical precision that academics and researchers employ. Generally, we found that educators use terms interchangeably to describe a common set of needs, summarized in the section above about Implications for Instructional Materials. As one focus group participant said, "I've heard of all those terms in workshops I've attended...and I bring them to my teaching by applying a social justice lens. I introduce topics to our students that are happening in our world and explain what they can do to change the world. For example, we talk about police shootings of unarmed black men and John Lewis's writings about voting and civil rights. I ask students what voting means to them—even though they're only in 8th grade. How does voting

affect you? What's the difference between this administration and the last one? It's my responsibility to get students to think critically. I don't want to indoctrinate, but I do hope they develop empathy for others. If my students grow up and vote because their 8th grade teacher told them it's important, that's a win."

■ It is important to recognize that support for CCTM is not universal. For example, in Illinois, legislators adopted culturally responsive teaching standards and were met with opposition that described these efforts as attempts to require teachers to adhere to specific ideologies and push politically progressive viewpoints on students.[41] This year, several governors have backed legislation that prohibits teaching "critical race theory."[42]

What is driving this discussion right now?

■ Based on our research and the responses we heard during interviews and focus groups, two trends appear to be driving the interest in CCTM, as it relates to instructional materials.

  ➢ First, the last several years have seen the most robust efforts around reforming standards and curriculum the United States has seen in decades. These efforts brought discussions of standards and curriculum into the mainstream, leading more educators to engage in deeper discussion about the quality of their instructional materials and deficiencies, including cultural deficiencies.

  ➢ Second, a growing movement around racial and social justice that has been particularly active over the past six months, triggered by the murder of unarmed Black men and women by police officers.

■ That said, interviewees reminded us that these discussions are not new. They may be more mainstream, but people have been having variations of these discussions for decades. This discussion has taken different forms over the years and flared up at times in response to different events.

How widespread are efforts to adopt CCTM?

■ Several interviewees described a growing appetite around the discussion of CCTM. As one academic said, "there's an awareness that exists, a willingness that exists that wasn't there a few years ago" among pre-service teaching students.. Some evidence of a growing discussion include this:

  ➢ Organizations are collecting and curating CCTM materials, including:

    ● The 1619 Project
    ● Abolitionist Teaching Network
    ● Learning for Justice (formerly known as Teaching Tolerance)

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[41] Hancock, (2021).

[42] Schnell, M., *DeSantis: Civics curriculum proposal will 'expressly exclude' critical race theory*, The Hill (March 17, 2021).

- Village of Wisdom
- Stand for Children's new Center for Antiracist Education
- Reconstruction
➢ A recent survey by EdWeek found that 84% of educators indicated their willingness to support the implementation of anti-racist curriculum, but only 14% said they have the professional development and resources to do so.[43]
➢ Efforts by states, districts, and schools to name CCTM as a priority in recent years
- New York State has developed a CCTM framework.
- Illinois just incorporated CCTM-principles into their teaching standards.
- KIPP Philadelphia has named CCTM as a priority and deeply engaged its community to unpack what that means and should look like in their schools.

Existing Tools

Although there are not clear standards for CCTM, there are some tools in the field that states, districts, and educators use to assess the curriculum for cultural responsiveness (but notably, not the other terms included in this primer).

One example, based on our research, comes from the Metropolitan Center for Research on Equity and the Transformation of Schools at New York University, which developed the Culturally Responsive Curriculum Scorecard that allows educators, administrators, and others to "determine the extent to which their schools'...curricula are (or are not) culturally responsive."[44] The scorecard assesses cultural responsiveness by considering criteria such as the diversity of characters, diversity of authors, depth of character portrayals, whether materials communicate asset-based perspectives, and whether materials encourage students to take action to combat inequity.[45] State efforts to assess the cultural responsiveness of instructional materials are illustrative but less robust; the New Mexico Public Education Department, for example, provides superintendents and school leaders with a set guiding questions they can consider when creating culturally and linguistically responsive classrooms, such as:

> "How might you ensure that the curriculum helps your students develop accurate self-identities, self-understanding and/or positive self-concepts? How might you ensure that the curriculum holds high expectations for all students but specifically for [culturally and

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[43] EdWeek Research Center, *Anti-Racist Teaching: What Educators Really Think*, Education Week (September 25, 2020).
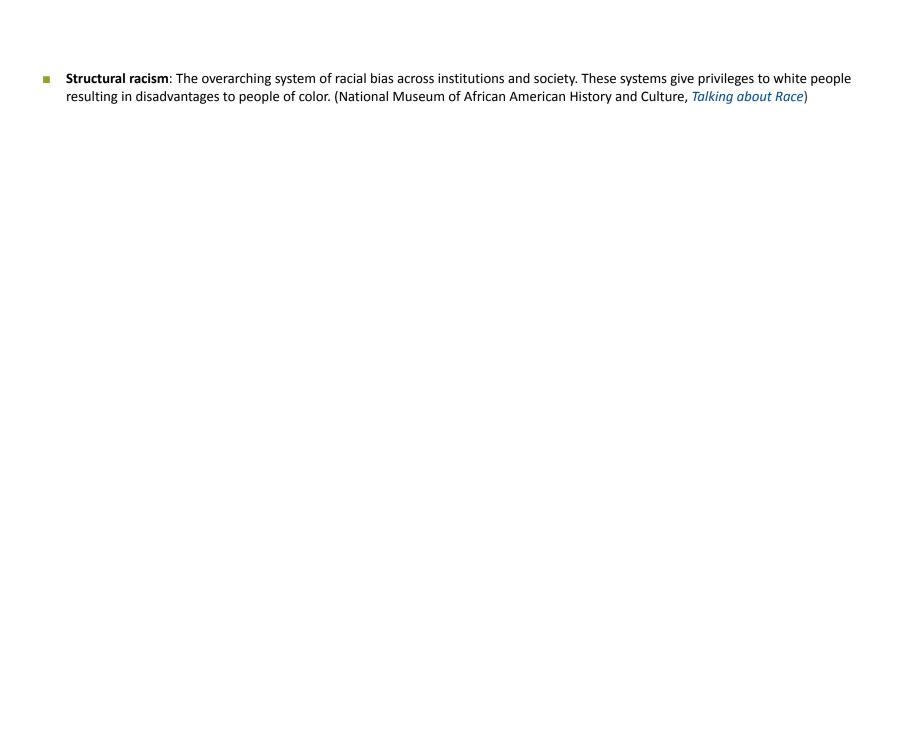[44] J. Bryan-Gooden, M. Hester; & L. Q. Peoples (2019).
[45] Id.

linguistically diverse] students? How might you ensure that the curriculum is inclusive and has a focus on empowering culturally and linguistically diverse students in your classroom?"[46]

In our research, we did not find tools, rubrics, or criteria to assess instructional materials for anti-racist teaching, abolitionist teaching, liberatory pedagogy, or emancipatory education besides the Culturally Responsive Curriculum Scorecard.

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[46] New Mexico Public Education Department, *Culturally and Linguistically Responsive Guidance Handbook* (2020).

Appendix A: Glossary

- **Anti-Blackness**: Behaviors, attitudes and practices of people and institutions that work to dehumanize black people in order to maintain white supremacy. Anti-blackness can also be internalized and might show up in black people or black communities in the form of colorism, an elevation of white culture or attempts to separate oneself from black cultural norms. (Amherst College, Multicultural Resource Center)
- **Anti-racism**: A conscious decision to make frequent, consistent, equitable choices daily. These choices require ongoing self-awareness and self-reflection as we move through life. In the absence of making antiracist choices, we (un)consciously uphold aspects of white supremacy, white-dominant culture, and unequal institutions and society. Being racist or antiracist is not about who you are; it is about what you do. (National Museum of African American History and Culture, *Talking about Race*)
- **Critical Pedagogy**: A philosophy of education and social movement that developed and applied concepts from critical theory and related traditions to the field of education and the study of culture. It insists that issues of social justice and democracy are not distinct from acts of teaching and learning. (Kincheloe, Joe; Steinburg, Shirley (1997). *Changing Multiculturalism*. Bristol, PA: Open University Press. p. 24 and Giroux, H., 2007. Utopian thinking in dangerous times: Critical pedagogy and the project of educated hope. p 22)
- **Eurocentric**: Denotes a world-view which, implicitly or explicitly, posits European history and values as "normal" and superior to others, thereby helping to produce and justify Europe's dominant position within the global capitalist world system. (Universität Bielefeld Center for InterAmerican Studies, InterAmerican Wiki)
- **Equity**: Each child receives what they need to develop to their full academic and social potential. (National Equity Project)
- **Individual racism**: Refers to the beliefs, attitudes, and actions of individuals that support or perpetuate racism in conscious and unconscious ways. The U.S. cultural narrative about racism typically focuses on individual racism and fails to recognize systemic racism. (National Museum of African American History and Culture, *Talking about Race*)
- **Interpersonal racism**: Occurring between individuals, these are public expressions of racism, often involving slurs, biases, or hateful words or actions. (National Museum of African American History and Culture, *Talking about Race*)
- **Institutional racism**: Occurring in an organization, these are discriminatory treatments, unfair policies, or biased practices based on race that result in inequitable outcomes for whites over people of color and extend considerably beyond prejudice. These institutional policies often never mention any racial group, but the intent is to create advantages. (National Museum of African American History and Culture, *Talking about Race*)
- **Racial justice**: Systematic fair treatment of people of all races that results in equitable opportunities and outcomes for everyone. All people are able to achieve their full potential in life, regardless of race, ethnicity or the community in which they live. A racial justice framework can move us from a reactie posture to a more powerful, proactive and even preventive approach. (Annie E. Casey Foundation, Equity vs. Equality and Other Racial Justice Definitions)
- **Social justice**: A process which (1) seeks fair (re)distribution of resources, opportunities, and responsibilities; (2) challenges the roots of oppression and injustice; (3) empowers all people to exercise self-determination and realize their full potential; (4) and builds social solidarity and community capacity for collaborative action. (Center for the Study of Social Policy, Key Equity Terms & Concepts)

- **Structural racism**: The overarching system of racial bias across institutions and society. These systems give privileges to white people resulting in disadvantages to people of color. (National Museum of African American History and Culture, *Talking about Race*)

Appendix B: References and Tools

Key Texts

- Geneva Gay: Culturally Responsive Teaching, Theory, Research, and Practice
- Paulo Friere: Pedagogy of the Oppressed
- Ibram X. Kendi: How to be an Antiracist
- Gloria Ladson-Billings: Toward a Theory of Culturally Relevant Pedagogy
- Dr. Bettina Love: We Want to Do More Than Survive: Abolitionist Teaching and the Pursuit of Educational Freedom
- Django Paris and H. Samy Alim: Culturally Sustaining Pedagogies

Key Tools

- New Mexico's Public Education Department's Culturally and Linguistically Responsive Guidance
- NYU Culturally Responsive Curriculum Scorecard
- Rhode Island Department of Education Rubric for Selecting Culturally Responsive and Sustaining ELA and Math Instructional Materials

Social Media Discussions

In trying to understand the real-time state of the discussion around culturally-centering curriculum, we found these hashtags being used on Twitter:

- #AbolitionistTeaching
- #AntiracistTeaching
- #BlackEduTwitter
- #CulturallyRelevant
- #CulturallyResponsive
- #CulturallyResponsiveTeaching
- #DecolonizeTheCurriculum
- #EduColor