Measuring the Use of Culturally Responsive Practices

Culturally responsive practices in teaching are intended to engage learners whose experiences and cultures are traditionally excluded from educational settings. States across the country implement culturally responsive practices to help teachers and school administrators create an inclusive environment for culturally and linguistically diverse learners and improve outcomes for students, specifically ＿＿＿ ＿＿＿＿

Culturally responsive practices include:

yes! Validating and affirming students

Understanding students' cultural beliefs and practices

Believing that all students can learn

Having high expectations for students

Helping students set goals for themselves

Culturally responsive practices are related to improvements in:

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＿＿＿＿＿＿ achievement

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Measuring the changes to implementing culturally responsive practices helps:

Schools build evidence on the influence of these practices on desired outcomes.

Educators strengthen instruction to improve student outcomes

Policymakers make informed choices about how to best reach and support students.

Common challenges to measuring the implementation of culturally responsive practices include:*

Uncertainty about how to define culturally responsive practices.

A lack of valid and reliable tools that measure changes in educators' practices and beliefs.

Insufficient time, capacity, and expertise to collect data.

* Learn more about how to overcome these challenges through our blog on best practices for culturally responsive instruction. Click here.

Regional Educational Laboratory (REL) Midwest, in partnership with the Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction and the Wisconsin Response to Intervention Center, studied a professional development program on culturally responsive practices. The study examined the program's reach across the state and the characteristics of schools that participated in the program compared with those that did not. The study found:

- The professional development program did not reach many of the districts that most need it.
- Data for measuring the use of culturally responsive practices at the teacher level need to be collected.
- The schools that participated in the professional development program were less likely than the schools that did not participate in the program to report implementing culturally responsive practices in reading instruction.
- Program participation was not meaningfully related to school outcomes (such as measures of academic achievement) after accounting for other factors.

Limitations of the study included missing data and the surveys that were available may not have accurately captured changes in the implementation of culturally responsive practices.

Planning for continuous improvement in culturally responsive practice

Measurement lays a foundation for quick insights, accelerated improvements, and a continuous learning culture. Yet often, and particularly in the context of culturally responsive practices, this can be a challenging endeavor.

As schools and districts implement culturally responsive practices, there are several considerations for how to collect and analyze data and use what is learned to inform continuous improvement. The following information can help you reflect on how measuring changes in culturally responsive practices can align with your school's or district's continuous improvement process.

For more resources on continuous improvement, click here
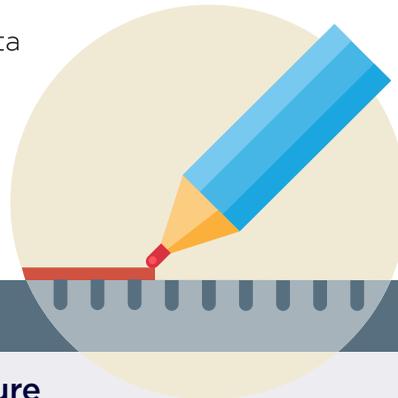
Considerations for evaluating a professional development program on culturally responsive practices

- **Collect data** on who participated in the professional development program to ensure the program is getting to those most in need.

- **Measure implementation** of professional development to understand whether it was implemented as designed.

- **Measure outcomes** of interest (e.g., teacher knowledge, beliefs, teacher practices, student achievement) before and after implementation of the professional development program when possible and appropriate.
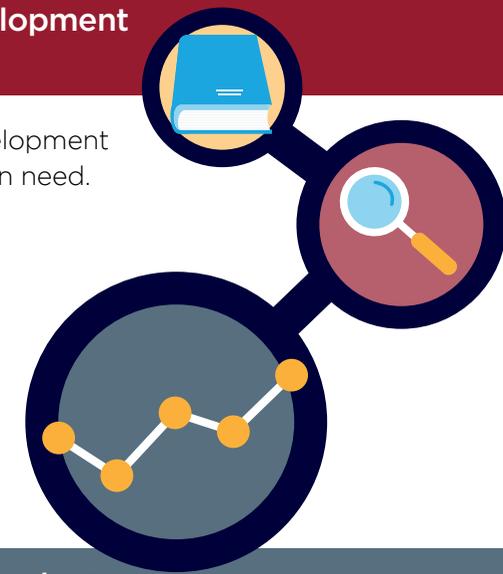
Measuring culturally responsive practices

What to measure

Measures should provide indications of changes in practice as well as progress toward the desired outcome.
Measures should help educators understand whether there is improvement — and provide some indication of changes needed to continually improve.

- Identify the **short-, medium-, and long-term outcomes** you want to study.

- Ensure that the **timeframe makes sense for each outcome chosen.** Examine how long you would expect it to take to see a change in the outcome (e.g., week, month, semester, school year).

- Ensure that for each outcome, there is some **measurable indicator of change** in knowledge, beliefs, practices, or student outcomes.

How to measure

Measurement should be practical.
For each short-, medium-, and long-term outcome, the data collection measures should not be burdensome or difficult to complete for respondents. Whenever possible, data collection should correspond to typical practices.

- Ensure **data collection measures** align to the given short-, medium-, and long-term outcome.

- Consider the **best form of data collection** (e.g., survey, interviews, walk-throughs, exit tickets) for each measure, and whether it can correspond with ongoing practices.

- Make sure **roles and responsibilities tied to data collection, analysis, and reflection are clear** and individuals have the time and resources to complete each task.

- Consider the **timing of data collection, analysis, and reflection** to align with the expected length of time to be able to see changes in outcomes.

Example practice: Having high expectations for students

The following example shows what and how to measure short-, medium-, and long-term outcomes before and after culturally responsive practice professional development.

Short-term outcomes:	Data collection measures:
Teachers can identify practices that maintain high expectations of students.	Teacher self-assessment
Teachers can recognize the differences in practices that maintain high expectations and low expectations.	Teacher self-assessment
Teachers are confident in their ability to implement practices that maintain high expectations for students.	Teacher survey
Medium-term outcomes:	**Data collection measures:**
Teachers increase the frequency at which they implement practices that maintain high expectations.	Observation checklist
Students perceive that teachers have high expectations of them.	Student interviews, focus groups, or surveys
Long-term outcomes:	**Data collection measures:**
Students are more engaged in class.	Observations and walk-throughs
Students feel more confident in class.	Student climate survey