Culturally Responsive Assessment of Indigenous Schooling (CRAIS) Tool

About This Tool
The purpose of this tool is to provide a resource for educators and researchers to assess the degree to which the core principles of culturally responsive schooling are present in schools serving high numbers of Indigenous students. While there are a number of tools that serve similar purposes for other student populations, cultural responsiveness has unique and specific elements within the context of Native American communities. Schools that serve a majority of Indigenous students are generally located on or bordering federally recognized sovereign Native Nations with a government-to-government relationship to the federal government, so the more generic diversity, equity, and inclusion tools that currently exist are insufficient for the unique contexts of schools in Indian Country. Thus, we offer a tool that can be used to identify and strengthen the integration of culturally responsive principles specifically for, with, and in Indigenous-serving schools. Users are encouraged to use the CRAIS Tool for documents and activities including: teacher observations, lesson plans, curriculum planning and development, and broader school-wide initiatives.

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For Additional Information
Inquiries should be directed to Northern Arizona University's Institute for Native-serving Educators at https://nau.edu/ine, or to Dr. Angelina E. Castagno at angelina.castagno@nau.edu

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Use this form to analyze and document evidence of culturally responsive principles in a particular unit of analysis. Be sure to note the date, who is completing the form, and the type of data being assessed. For statistical consistency, use whole numbers (i.e., avoid 1.5 or 2 ½). Provide qualitative descriptions to substantiate your numeric assessment when possible.

Date: _____ Location: _____ Observer's Name: _____

Note what is being observed and/or analyzed (i.e., teaching, a particular text, a specific curriculum unit, etc.):

_____

_____

	-3 High degree of opposite	-2 Medium degree of opposite	-1 Low degree of opposite	0 Zero	1 Low	2 Medium	3 High	N/A	Notes
1. *Stereotypes of Indigenous people and or/communities are addressed*									
2. *Indigenous people are represented as contemporary (not only historical)*									

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	-3 High degree of opposite	-2 Medium degree of opposite	-1 Low degree of opposite	0 Zero	1 Low	2 Medium	3 High	N/A	Notes
3. Indigenous people are represented as diverse (not a monolithic "they")									
4. Traditional and/or cultural knowledge is included									
5. Recognition of Native Nations as governmental agencies									
6. Recognition of treaty rights and/or federal Indian law									
7. Students are encouraged to exercise self-determination and agency									
8. Communities are encouraged to exercise self-determination and agency									

	-3 High degree of opposite	-2 Medium degree of opposite	-1 Low degree of opposite	0 Zero	1 Low	2 Medium	3 High	N/A	Notes
9. Models critical thinking about historical narratives and contemporary status quo									
10. Encourages asking critically-oriented questions about historical narratives and contemporary status quo									
11. Diverse narratives and perspectives are integrated									
12. Local/regional Indigenous community is reflected									
13. Norms, values, traditions, interests of local/regional Indigenous community are leveraged for learning opportunities									

	-3 High degree of opposite	-2 Medium degree of opposite	-1 Low degree of opposite	0 Zero	1 Low	2 Medium	3 High	N/A	Notes
14. Encourages students to understand themselves within broader communities									
15. Relationships within and among local/regional Indigenous communities are understood and/or reflected									
16. Encourages students to build and sustain relationships									
17. Relationships within the classroom are strong									
18. Clear reference and/or integration of local/regional Indigenous context									
19. Local/regional context is leveraged for learning opportunities									

	-3 High degree of opposite	-2 Medium degree of opposite	-1 Low degree of opposite	0 Zero	1 Low	2 Medium	3 High	N/A	Notes
20. Recognition that local/regional Indigenous context is specific and unique, as are other contexts									
21. Local Indigenous language(s) is valued									
22. Local Indigenous language(s) is integrated									
23. Academic language is built, but not at the expense of local Indigenous language(s)									

Scoring and Analysis of the CRAIS Tool

The rating system in the CRAIS Tool deviates from typical practice in that it includes both positive and negative numeric values. Each item can be rated positively on a three-point scale of low (+1), medium (+2), and high (+3), indicating the level of inclusion of the principle in the review of the lesson plan or teacher observation. Additionally, because of the nature of cultural discontinuity that exists between schooling (very often aligned with Western standards) and localized Indigenous communities, the tool intentionally includes negative numeric values to indicate when the opposite of a principle is evident. Thus, the scale includes a low degree of opposite (-1), a medium degree of opposite (-2), and a high degree of opposite (-3) to capture when the unit of analysis (i.e., the curriculum unit, the teaching practice, etc.) is actually doing the opposite of what culturally responsive principles suggest is best practice. The zero (0) on the scale is for indicating when the principle is neither present nor opposed; instead, it is neutrally absent although it is still relevant and could theoretically be observed in the unit of analysis. Users of the CRAIS Tool will note that there is an option for the observer to check "not applicable" for any of the 23 CRS principles; not applicable is meant to suggest that this principle is not expected to be observed because it has no relevance to the unit of analysis. And finally, the Tool includes a "Notes" section for the observer to enter narrative explanations related to their numeric selection for each principle.

Drawing from the rich body of literature on Culturally Responsive Schooling (CRS) with and in Indigenous communities, the 23 principles in the CRAIS Tool can be grouped under five broad categories. Users of the CRAIS Tool may find these five categories useful for thinking about the implications and recommendations for improved practice. The categories are identified below, with their corresponding statements on the tool:

- Relationality, relationships, and communities (n=4)
    - 14. Encourages students to understand themselves within broader communities
    - 15. Relationships within and among local/regional Indigenous community are understood and/or reflected
    - 16. Encourages students to build and sustain relationships
    - 17. Relationships within the classroom are strong
- Indigenous knowledge systems and language (n=6)
    - 4. Traditional and/or cultural knowledge is included
    - 13. Norms, values, traditions, interests of local/regional Indigenous community are leveraged for learning opportunities
    - 19. Local/regional context is leveraged for learning opportunities
    - 21. Local Indigenous language(s) is valued
    - 22. Local Indigenous language(s) is integrated
    - 23. Academic language is built, but not at the expense of local Indigenous language(s)
- Sociopolitical context and concepts, and specifically sovereignty, self-determination, and nationhood (n=4)
    - 5. Recognition of Native Nations as governmental agencies
    - 6. Recognition of treaty rights and/or federal Indian law
    - 7. Students are encouraged to exercise self-determination and agency
    - 8. Communities are encouraged to exercise self-determination and agency
- Representation of Indigenous peoples (n=5)
    - 2. Indigenous people are represented as contemporary (not only historical)
    - 3. Indigenous people are represented as diverse (not a monolithic "they")
    - 12. Local/regional Indigenous community is reflected
    - 18. Clear reference and/or integration of local/regional Indigenous context
    - 20. Recognition that local/regional Indigenous context is specific and unique, as are other contexts
- Critical understandings of diversity, and specifically race (n=4)
    - 1. Stereotypes of Indigenous people and or/communities are addressed
    - 9. Models critical thinking about historical narratives and contemporary status quo
    - 10. Encourages asking critically-oriented questions about historical narratives and contemporary status quo
    - 11. Diverse narratives and perspectives are integrated

The tool itself does not cluster the statements under these categories, but the categories are important for the purposes of analysis and making broad meaning of the ways culturally responsive principles are evidenced. For example, users of the tool may notice higher scores in certain categories and lower scores in other categories, and therefore decide to focus improvement efforts in the categories with lower scores.

For additional information about the development and rationale of this CRAIS Tool, we invite you to read a related peer-reviewed article here:
http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/15595692.2021.1956455