



Fairness, Bias, and Cultural-Responsiveness Checklist

Name of Task: _____

Discipline & Grade: _____

Name of Reviewer: _____

Review Date: _____

Purpose

To ensure assessments have technical quality, focusing in on fairness, bias, and cultural-responsiveness. This is best used as a standalone tool but can also be used in partnership with QPA Tool I: Assessment Validation Checklist as an expansion of Section 5: Fairness.

What is Bias?

Bias is the presence of some characteristic of a performance task that results in differential performance for two individuals of the same skill and achievement level but from different racial, ethnic, culture, gender, sexual orientation, language, disability, religion, or regional backgrounds. A performance task is biased if equally proficient individuals from different groups do not have equal probabilities of attaining proficiency in completing the task. In other words, the ability to complete a performance assessment successfully should reflect a student's learning opportunities, not cultural opportunities or life experiences. Additionally, no student should be disadvantaged by performance task content that is insensitive or disrespectful to the student's race, ethnicity, culture, gender, sexual orientation, language, disability, religion, or regional background.

Notes to keep in mind:

- Any reference to subgroups includes all of the following: race/ethnicity, gender, native language, income, disability, sexual orientation, religion, and region.
- Comments that are descriptive, specific, and based in evidence provide the most concrete feedback.
- This protocol can help identify growth areas as you develop culturally-responsive practices.

Recommended Protocol

When used in conjunction with Tool I, an additional 15 minutes can be added to Section 5: Fairness discussion. If using the tool alone, a modified Assessment Validation protocol can be used:

- Norms (2-5 minutes)
- Presentation (3-5 minutes)
- Examination (7-10 minutes)
- Clarifying Questions (2-7 minutes)
- Validation Checklist (20-40 minutes)
- Feedback and Reflection (20-30 minutes)
- Debrief (4 minutes)

Use checklists I and II to eliminate any evidence of bias and stereotyping from your assessment.

I. Checklist for Bias

Overarching question: Might any element of the task content or language unfairly disadvantage a subgroup?	
Y/N	Criteria: Does the task contain....
	a. Content, situations, or scenarios that may be different or unfamiliar to some subgroups?
	b. Characteristics or features that might lead certain subgroups to complete the task correctly or incorrectly for the wrong reason?
	c. Words that may have different or unfamiliar meaning for different subgroups?
	d. Group-specific language, vocabulary, or reference pronouns? Specialized words that only certain subgroups might know?
	e. A format or structure (including student directions and rubric) that may present greater problems for students from some backgrounds than for others?
	f. Unnecessarily difficult language and vocabulary?
Comments:	

II. Checklist for Stereotyping

Overarching question: Are there any elements of the task that could be considered to reflect a stereotypical view of, or offensive to, a subgroup?	
Y/N	Criteria: Does the task....
	a. Contain material that might be considered inflammatory, controversial, demeaning, offensive or emotionally charged for particular subgroups?
	b. Depict members of particular subgroups in stereotypical portrayals, occupations, or situations?
	c. Portray any subgroup as uniformly having certain aptitudes, interests, occupations, or personality traits?
Comments:	



While not all assessments provide an opportunity to meet all the criteria in checklists III through V, the checklists can be used to expand your thinking. Use these to further integrate culturally-responsive teaching into your assessments and practice.

III. Checklist for Fairness

Overarching question: Is the task fair for all students regardless of subgroup?	
Y/N	Criteria: Does the task....
	a. Include material that is equally familiar to all subgroups?
	b. Portray each subgroup in a range of traditional and nontraditional roles?
	c. Represent subgroups in proportion to their incidence in the general population?
	d. Include topics of interest to all subgroups?
	e. Include a balance of gender-specific and ethnic names? Ethnic groups? Roles for each gender and ethnicity?
Comments:	

IV. Checklist for Cultural-Responsiveness

Overarching question: Is adequate attention paid to cultural responsiveness of the performance task?	
Y/N	Criteria: Does the task....
	a. Build students' cultural competence through learning about and developing pride in their own culture?
	b. Build students' cultural competence through learning about and developing pride in others' cultures?
	c. Assist students to engage in critique of systems of power?
	d. Develop bridges to connect students' cultural references to academic skills and concepts?
	e. Engage students in critical reflection about their own lives and societies?
Comments:	



V. Checklist for Controversial Topics

_____ (Y/N) Is the task focused on a potentially controversial topic? *If no, skip this section.*

Overarching question: Is adequate attention paid to ensuring proper scaffolding of controversial topics prior to completing the performance task?	
Y/N	Criteria: Is the task....
	a. Embedded within a curriculum that allows for ample exploration of and learning about varying viewpoints prior to having to complete the performance task?
	b. Embedded within a curriculum, as evidenced in teacher task directions, that ensures ample discussion and expression of varying viewpoints, including from atypical viewpoints, prior to completing the performance task?
	c. Designed to enable students to be deemed proficient in completing the task even if expressing an atypical viewpoint?
Comments:	

Overall Recommendation

_____ The task is fair, free of stereotypes and bias, culturally-responsive, and addresses controversial topics appropriately.

_____ The task needs the following revisions in order to be fair, free of stereotypes and bias, culturally-responsive, and address controversial topics appropriately:

Recommended Revisions:

This document was adapted from the following resources:

- Aronson, B. and Laughter, J. (2015). *The theory and practice of culturally relevant education: a synthesis of research across content areas*. Review of Educational Research, Vol. XX, No. X, pp. 1-44. DOI: 10.3102/0034654315582066. Downloaded from <http://rer.aera.net>.
- Educational Testing Service, (2009). *ETS Guidelines for Fairness Review of Assessments*. New York.
- Hambleton, R.K. & Rodgers, H.J., (1999) Developing an item bias review form. Clearinghouse on Assessment and Evaluation.
- Measured Progress (undated). Bias and Sensitivity Review. Adapted from Developing an item bias review form by Hambleton and Rodgers.
- Measured Progress, (2006). *PowerPoint: Grades 3-8 & 11, Bias Sensitivity Review-Part 2, March 26 and 27, 2006*. Quechee, VT.
- Orr, M.T., Pecheone, R., Nayfeld, I., Shear, B., Hollingworth, L, Karatoprak, R., Beaudin, B., (2016) *Technical Report of the Massachusetts Performance Assessment for Leaders: Summary of Validity and Reliability Studies for 2014-15 Field Trial, January 2016*. Bank Street College of Education: New York.
- Popham, James, (2012). *Assessment bias: How to banish it*. Pearson.
- Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium, (2015). SBAC 20

