

EDUC 8545A: Language Teaching for Social Justice

This handout includes detailed instructions about this project, some guiding questions and a rubric at the end. Those who are not doing a materials evaluation project are not required to annotate this handout. But the guiding questions at the end will be really helpful to checkout since they provide insights into what elements we need to pay attention to while evaluating and adapting our classroom materials. Those working on materials evaluation are required to annotate this task with questions and comments. In case you have no comments/questions, please simply add "I have read this and I don't have any questions at this point."

Material evaluation and adaptation project (25% = first draft 15%, final draft 10%)

For this assignment, you will select a section/chapter/unit from an instructional material/textbook designed for a specific language course. Your unit should provide a point of entry for you to evaluate it in relation to social justice issues and/or to adapt it to make it more inclusive and egalitarian. Sections with cultural elements including people, practices, products and perspectives would provide a good start. You will bring your first draft of this assignment to the class where we will have a workshop to give feedback on it. Your final version of the material will be posted on the course website within two weeks of your workshop.

- Choose maximum two pages to evaluate from the larger unit to make things more manageable.
- Below are some guiding questions to help you evaluate and adapt your materials. Please note that you don't have to answer/address all but just pick the relevant ones to your topic.
- Once you are done evaluating, select the two most problematic sections/activities in the unit and adapt those two only.
- You will share a soft copy of your materials as a Google doc so that we can make comments on it. We will use the same procedure we do for the lesson plan workshops.

This project will consist of the following sections:

- Cover page
- The unit/material itself and the context and learners it is designed for
- Evaluation of the material
 - Evaluating the material from the teacher's perspective

- Evaluating the material from students' perspectives
- Evaluating the material in terms of praxis
- Adaptation of the material
- The adapted material

Part I: Describe the material, the context and learners

Which book? Which unit? Which material?

What are the learning goals?

What is the target population (e.g., age, gender, educational level, language proficiency, first language background, particular educational or career goals, and so on)? Who is this material designed for? Are the two in line?

PART II: Evaluation of the material

In this step, you will evaluate your material by considering any of the critical issues or theoretical frameworks we discuss in the class. So if your theme is Race, you are expected to evaluate and adapt your material in relation to Race.

2.1. Evaluating the material from the teacher's perspective

- What is my opinion of the way the characters in this book act, dress, and speak to each other?
- How do I react to this topic as the teacher?
- Is the way I think about this topic different from the author's?
- How would people in my (ideal/current) culture/teaching context/classroom react to this text?
- Do I understand why the author wrote this?
- What does this text tell me about the author? (if any)
- What do I know about my students' lives that I can bring to the conversation while teaching this material?
- Is there truth both in my interpretation of the material and in the author's?
- What do I need to do to prepare my students to engage with this text?

2.2. Evaluating the material from students' perspectives

- Is the topic
 - appropriate for my student population,
 - relevant,
 - culturally relevant,
 - reflective of the learners' realities,
 - not offensive? If so, why/in what ways?
- Does this material/unit address a topic that might be perceived differently by people coming from different socioeconomic status/class, race, ethnicity, immigration status, etc?
 - How will my learners relate to this book/material?

2.3. Evaluating the material in terms of praxis (i.e., Strengths, weaknesses, deficits, opportunities)

- What biases does this text bring to the conversation, if any?
- Does this text privilege or exclude my learners?
- Does the author assume stereotypical stances as the norm?
- Are there any biased statements?
- Is there anything in this text that is culturally inappropriate?
- Is the author privileging what is familiar to his/her culture group?
- Whose reality is being emphasized?
- What view of the world is being presented and promoted?
- Whose voice is missing from the text? (deficit)
- What do the words and images suggest?
- Are all voices heard in this author's words? Which voices are silenced?
- What modes of communication (interpersonal, interpretive, presentational?) are encouraged?
- Which components of culture are presented/discussed?
- What kind of language is used and why?

Part III: Adaptation (discuss how you adapted the material)

- What kind of social justice objectives can I add to the learning goals of this unit/material?
- How can I supplement content with any relevant and necessary information and additional perspectives?
- How can I adapt the material in a way to provoke meaningful and provocative conversations?
- How can I encourage a critical analysis of the written and oral texts as well as images?
- How can I integrate authentic materials?
- How can I present my students the big picture by encouraging them to investigate and gain a sense of social, economic, and political contexts of issues?
- How can I use the material in a way to examine author's and my learners' own world?
- What kind of problem posing questions should I ask?
- How will I provide a forum for reflective dialogue?
- If students don't ask crucial, thought-provoking questions, how can I facilitate the conversation?
- How can I adapt the material in a way to represent various cultures, groups, and multiple perspectives?
- How can I use/adapt the text to challenge the status quo?
- How can I add variety in terms of the components of culture (Practices, products, and perspectives)?
- How can I add variety in terms of the modes of communication (Interpretive, interpersonal, presentational)?
- How can I encourage more real-life connections with content which learners can transfer to future work/study opportunities?
- How can the material include a more balanced and equitable perspective as regards gender, race, culture and power?
- How can the material provide more accommodation for multimodality and multiliteracies (e.g., visual, audio, spatial, gestural, digital, oral and dramatic)?

PART IV: The adapted material

Present the adapted material here.

**Rubric for materials evaluation and adaptation project
(only for the 1st draft)**

Cover page (not graded)		
The description of unit/material itself and the context and learners it is designed for (2pts)		
Evaluation of the material	Evaluating the material from the teacher's perspective (2)	
	Evaluating the material from students' perspectives (2)	
	Evaluating the material in terms of praxis (2)	
Adaptation of the material (4pts)		
The adapted material (3pts)		
Total out of 15		

References

- Allen, L. A. (2006). The moral life of schools revisited: Preparing educational leaders to “build a new social order” for social justice and democratic community. *International Journal of Urban Educational Leadership, 1*, 1-13.
- Daniel, M. C. (2017). Critical pedagogy's power in English language teaching. In C. Hastings & L. Jacobs (Eds.), *Social justice in English language teaching*. Virginia: TESOL Press.