# Four Degrees of Critical Pedagogy

Instructions: Reflect on the instructional and program practices in your own program. Mark where you believe your program rates on the chart. Then find someone to share your findings and explain why you rated your program as you did. Remember, the purpose is to determine where the program currently falls, allowing you to consider ways for making the program more critical.

| | **Highly Critical** | **Somewhat Critical** | **Somewhat Noncritical** | **Highly Noncritical** |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Philosophy, Presuppositions, and Goals** | ● Education should be used for personal growth and empowerment.<br><br>● Learning is a meaning-making process that takes place within specific contexts.<br><br>● Education is political in nature and important for enhancing students' abilities to advocate for change in their lives. | ● Education should be used for personal growth and empowerment.<br><br>● Learning is a meaning-making process that takes place within a specific context. | ● Literacy and other basic skill development is the answer to the social and economic problems of marginalized groups.<br><br>● Students bring with them to the classroom some basic knowledge and experiences that programs build from. | ● Literacy and other basic skill development is the answer to the social and economic problems of marginalized groups.<br><br>● So many students fail because they or their families (or both) do not value education. |
| **Program Structure** | ● Student input is sought continually.<br><br>● Students are involved in deciding when classes meet.<br><br>● Community members have a partnership role in programming planning. | ● Student input is sought before the program begins; class agendas are organized around student needs and interests.<br><br>● Students are involved in deciding when and where classes will meet. | ● Students are included in program initiation and are asked for input.<br><br>● Students are involved in supplementary decision making. | ● Students are not included in any part of the program planning. |
| **Curriculum and Materials** | ● Emphasis is placed on reading, writing, and other activities that help students deal with personal needs and concerns, at home and within the community.<br><br>● Writing, reading, and other skills are seen as tools to help students deal with life issues and political action. | ● There is no pre-set curriculum.<br><br>● Literacy and other basic skills are taught in the context of socially or culturally relevant activities.<br><br>● Students are given choices as to which materials and activities will be used in class. | ● The curriculum is generally planned, but attempts are made to link the curriculum to students' everyday experiences.<br><br>● The curriculum is modified to match students' interests or needs.<br><br>● Students participate in discussions that help them relate the reading material to their own lives. | ● Curricula are preset and unchanging, no matter what students' cultural or language needs.<br><br>● The curriculum does not reflect students' interests or crucial life issues; it may reflect student skill levels. |

| | Highly Critical | Somewhat Critical | Somewhat Noncritical | Highly Noncritical |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Teacher Development** | • Teachers are tuned into the types of literacy materials and practices that students use outside school.<br><br>• Teachers learn about issues of importance to individual students as well as community issues. | • Teachers' belief systems are considered integral to program success, as are the curriculum or materials being used.<br><br>• Training focuses on multicultural learning styles and different literacy environments. | • Teachers modify materials and curricula to meet student needs.<br><br>• Training emphasizes the importance of understanding the community in which one teaches.<br><br>• Training exposes teachers to theories on learning so that they have a theoretical framework on which to base their instruction. | • Emphasis is placed on learning to plan class time and using time wisely.<br><br>• Teachers learn specific methodologies and must have a good understanding of basic skills. |
| **Teacher-Student Relationship** | • Students are seen as teachers, teachers as learners. Teachers actively demonstrate their willingness to learn from students.<br><br>• Dialogue between students and teachers helps students to discover their voices.<br><br>• Teachers and students share control of and responsibility for the program.<br><br>• Teachers guide students toward taking action to solve problems. | • Students are seen as teachers, teachers as learners.<br><br>• Dialogue between students and teachers helps students to discover their voices. | • Classes are teacher directed, but teachers make an effort to tune into the life needs of students.<br><br>• Open communication between students and teachers is seen as very important.<br><br>• Teachers ask students for input on the topics covered in class. | • Classes are teacher directed.<br><br>• Teachers make no effort to learn about students or to modify instruction to meet student needs or interests. |
| **Evaluation** | • Greatest emphasis is placed on whether students meet goals they have set for themselves.<br><br>• Students are active partners in evaluation; conferences with students take place throughout the term.<br><br>• Standardized test are not used. Program success is measured by how well students use the skills they have acquired to negotiate change in their world. | • Portfolios may be used as part of the evaluation process; students decide on its content.<br><br>• Students play a large role in their assessment, including setting and evaluating goals.<br><br>• Students' ability to negotiate with social institutions outside the program is seen as an indicator of success.<br><br>• Standardized tests may be used. | • Heavy emphasis is placed on academic progress, measured by standardized tests. Program success is partially measured by the extent to which students meet their own goals.<br><br>• Students provide feedback throughout the term.<br><br>• Evaluation may be based on interviews with students and their self-reported success. | • Heavy emphasis is placed on academic progress, measured by standardized tests.<br><br>• Evaluation is based on program goals and expectations, not students' goals.<br><br>• Evaluation takes place only at the end of the term. |