Equity Tool #2

Co-creating a Student-Centered Culturally Responsive Elementary Classroom

Estimated completion time: 3 hours

Objectives:

Learners who engage with this tool will be able to:

1. Understand how difference shapes their interactions as educators in schools.
2. Use children's picture books to actively engage in critical self-reflection on their role as an adult supporting the social, emotional, and academic development of students in their schools and classrooms.
3. Align their understanding of **equity** and **cultural responsiveness** to personal action plans to co-create identity-affirming schools and classrooms.
4. Reflect on their current state of being and how their interactions in schools support the development of identity-affirming learning environments for students, regardless of students' social or cultural identity or background.
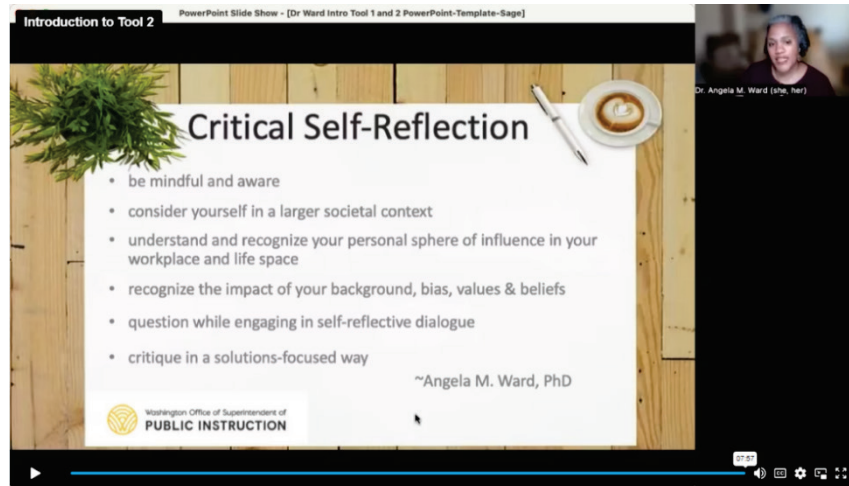
Washington Office of Superintendent of
PUBLIC INSTRUCTION

Table of Contents

This tool uses linked videos to engage you and provide context to what you'll learn and your reflections.

*Select the image or the link below for the video **Introduction to Tool #2**.*

Source: https://vimeo.com/817009962/56d4aa0476

Defining Key Terms
Culture: "Everything you believe and everything you do that identifies you as a member of a group and distinguishes you from members of other groups. You may belong to more than one cultural group. Cultures reflect the belief systems and behaviors informed by ethnicity, as well as by other sociological factors, such as gender, age, sexual orientation, and physical ability. Both individuals and organizations are defined by their cultures."[1]

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[1] Nuri-Robins et al., 2012

Setting the "Container" for Integration

This tool is an extension of Module 1, which focuses on **equity**-centered social emotional learning (SEL).

> **Note:** Language matters. To ensure we have a shared understanding of key terms, we have provided a glossary of bolded terms and sidebar notes about definitions to support your reflection.

Equity-centered SEL prioritizes students' needs in the development of an identity-affirming classroom space. As an elementary school educator, you can support students' social, emotional, and academic development as they advance from the primary to the intermediate grade levels.

This tool is a self-paced professional learning resource to:

- Encourage critical self-reflection,

- highlight equity in educational practice, and

- consider the needs of marginalized students so that all students can thrive in Washington schools.

INTRODUCTION

Time estimate: 60–90 minutes

To be **culturally responsive** and focus explicitly on equity, it's essential to recognize your personal **social identities** and how they might intersect with—and, at times, conflict with—the social identities of your students.

INVITING STUDENTS INTO THE CLASSROOM

You can use social emotional competencies to facilitate the success of students in academics, regardless of students' social identities. Remember that your own social emotional development is just as important as the skill development of your students.

To add to your ideas about new ways to invite students into the classroom, this section provides space for you to reflect on yourself and how you co-create- a culturally responsive classroom with your students. We introduce the idea of difference and highlight the assets that difference brings to the classroom to offer perspectives that may differ from your own.

This tool uses videos of two children's books read aloud to share familiar instructional tools. The use of children's books in this tool is intended to share a familiar instructional tool to engage you in critical self-reflection on your ways of being and ways of interacting with your students.

Consider the **Essential Question**: *What does equity-centered social, emotional, and academic learning look like, sound like, and feel like in the elementary classroom?*
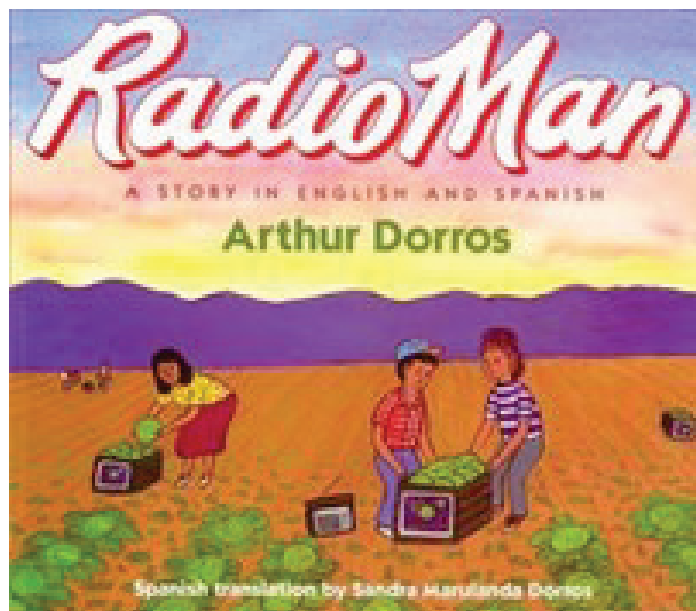
Book: *Radio Man* by Arthur Dorros

Preparing to Read

During the Video: Questions for Reflection

Keep these reflections in mind as you engage with the video.

- Consider the Essential Question.

- Notice how you interact with the text.

- Ask yourself what is familiar and what is new or different to you in the text.

- What personal connection do you make to the text? Why?

- What do you wonder about?

- What troubles you?

- How might you and other adults use this book to talk about difference or how to support students who are different in your school?

Select the image or the links below for a video of the book Radio Man *read aloud.*[2]

Sources: Video 1 https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ohyDdcOkEcw
Yakima School District YouTube (YouTube content creator)
Video 2 https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9EwJ1RyFDWM
Moriah T (YouTube content creator)

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[2] Dorros, 1993

After the Video

Take a moment to review the questions for reflection below.

> ▶ Respond to at least one of the Additional Questions below. Reflect on your answers as you add or enhance your daily planning and academic instruction.

Additional Questions for Reflection

- How do you welcome students into your classroom at the beginning of the school year? How about when they enter/join the class after classroom guidelines and expectations have already been established for the school year?

- How might you co-create- a sense of belonging with students when new students join the class? When students are absent often? When students return from an alternate learning setting?

- How might your welcoming routines invite or exclude students who, like Diego, move around often and may not make friends easily?

- How might you and other adults support Diego or David in your school?

WASHINGTON SEL STANDARDS

Time estimate: 30–45 minutes

The word "co-create" alludes to a shift in control. As the educator, you make the decisions that enable students to interact in the classroom.

In this tool, you will reflect on your current state of being and interacting to support the development of an identity-affirming learning environment. During your reflection, consider your students' contributions to the classroom **culture**, regardless of their background or their cultural or social identity.

Select the image or the link below for a video on the **Washington State SEL Standards**:

Source: https://vimeo.com/manage/videos/816990516/af01e6705d

Adult SEL Standards

- Note your own personal indicators of growth.

- Take 2-3 minutes to jot down a few thoughts as you note areas of personal strength and needed growth from the indicators and benchmarks below. What comes up for you as you note these areas of strength and growth?

Standard 1: Self-Awareness
Indicator: Benchmark 1C
Adult

> *I can assess the effectiveness of different forms of assistance in relation to personal boundaries, assets, and needs.*

Indicator: Benchmark 2A

> *I can gauge the feelings and emotions of others and adapt my behavior by using multiple strategies to deal with my feelings and emotions.*

Indicator: Benchmark 2B

> *I can identify and analyze challenges, consider external perspectives (e.g., gender, culture), employ cultural storytelling to understand context, and determine potential solutions.*

Indicator: Benchmark 3C

> *I can analyze the components of a caring relationship and compare the qualities of a caring relationship to a relationship that may be harmful.*

Indicator: Benchmark 4A

> *I can evaluate how my response to a situation might affect others and can make adaptations that are influenced by understanding the cultural stories and backgrounds of others.*

Dr. Ward's Connections

Select the image or the link below for a video about **Dr. Ward's Connections**:

Source: https://vimeo.com/manage/videos/816990546/b125116156

Critical Self-Reflection

Equity-centered SEL provides a strong foundation for a successful multi-tiered system of supports (MTSS). MTSS is a space for adults to engage in reflective and solutions-focused dialogue to collaboratively support the needs of students.

When social emotional competencies are underdeveloped or not modeled by the teacher, students experience conflict that causes them to feel disconnected, or pushes them out of the classroom environment. The academic integration of equity-centered SEL is a process, a journey with many steps. Engaging with these modules and tools can be a first step in your journey.

Let's return to the Essential Question. What does equity-centered social, emotional, and academic

learning look like, sound like, and feel like in the elementary classroom?

- Review your first answer to the Essential Question.

- Now consider:

    o how the classroom **culture** you create each day looks, sounds, and feels to your students;

    o your personal indicators for growth (Washington SEL Standards section above); and

    o the common terms defined in the tool.

- How would you answer this question now? What would you add or remove from your first answer? Take 5–7 minutes for your review.

As you reflect on the Essential Question for this tool, and as you progress through the lessons offered through the children's books, use this tool to support your own social emotional competency development and the equity-focused ways in which you implement the competencies in your academic instruction.

EDUCATOR EVALUATION

Time estimate: 60–90 minutes

As you engage in instructional design for the academic integration of equity-centered SEL, it is important to consider the common teaching practices in the [Teacher/Principal Evaluation Program (TPEP) instructional frameworks](#).

Each framework asks you to:

- consider the context within which you teach, and

- select the strategy for that context while reflecting on, monitoring, and adjusting your instruction as you receive authentic feedback from students.

As you engage with this tool, consider the framework used in your local school. Add to your reflection how your daily work and the decisions you make support students' social, emotional, and academic growth. In the table that follows, we highlight entry points for each framework that is specific to the content in this tool.

Marzano's Teacher Evaluation Model
Domain 1: Observable Classroom Strategies and Behaviors **Criterion 1**: High Expectations for Student Achievement 1.3 Understanding students' background and interests 1.4 Demonstrating value and respect for reluctant learners and students systematically underserved **Criterion 5**: Safe, Positive Learning Environment ***Domain 2: Planning and Preparing*** **Criterion 3**: Differentiation 3.2 Planning and preparing for the needs of all students ***Domain 4: Collegiality and Professionalism*** **Criterion 7**: Families and Community 7.2 Engaging in timely and professional interactions with parents and the school community

CEL 5D+ Teacher Evaluation Rubric 3.0

Criterion 3: Recognizing individual student learning needs and developing strategies to address those needs

Student Engagement
SE3: Capitalizing on students' strengths

CP4: Differentiated instruction for students

Criterion 4: Providing clear and intentional focus on subject matter content and curriculum

Criterion 5: Fostering and managing a safe, positive learning environment

Criterion 7: Communicating and collaborating with parents and the school community

Criterion 8: Exhibiting collaborative and collegial practices focused on improving instructional practice and student learning.

Charlotte Danielson's Framework for Teaching (2011)

Criterion 1: Centering instruction on high expectations for student achievement

Domain 2: The Classroom Environment
2b: Establishing a culture for learning

Criterion 2: Demonstrating effective teaching practices

Domain 4: Professional Responsibilities
4a: Reflecting on teaching

Criterion 3: Recognizing individual student learning needs and developing strategies to address those needs

Domain 1: Planning and Preparation
1b: Demonstrating knowledge of students

Domain 3: Instruction
3e. Demonstrating flexibility and responsiveness

Criterion 5: Fostering and managing a safe, positive learning environment

Domain 2: The Classroom Environment

2a: Creating an environment of respect and rapport

Criterion 7: Communicating with parents and collaborating with parents and the school community

Domain 4: Professional Responsibilities
4c: Communicating with families

Criterion 8: Exhibiting collaborative and collegial practices focused on improving instructional practice and student learning

Domain 4: Professional Responsibilities
4d: Participating in a professional community
4e: Growing and developing professionally

INVITING STUDENTS INTO THE CLASSROOM

Let's "read" one more book. Remember to critically self-reflect on your ways of being and ways of interacting with students. What themes and concepts emerge? What connections do you make to the first book?

Book: *Marisol McDonald Doesn't Match/Marisol McDonald no combina* by Monica Brown

Preparing to Read

During the Video: Questions for Reflection

Keep these reflections in mind as you engage with the video.

- Consider the Essential Question: What does equity-centered social, emotional, and academic learning look like, sound like, and feel like in the elementary classroom?

- Notice how you interact with the text.

- Ask yourself what is familiar and what is new or different to you in the text.

- What personal connection do you make to the text? Why?

- What do you wonder about?

- What troubles you?

- How might you and other adults use this book to talk about difference or how to support students who are different in your school?

Select the image or the link below for a video of the read-aloud of *Marisol McDonald Doesn't Match/Marisol McDonald no combina*.[3]
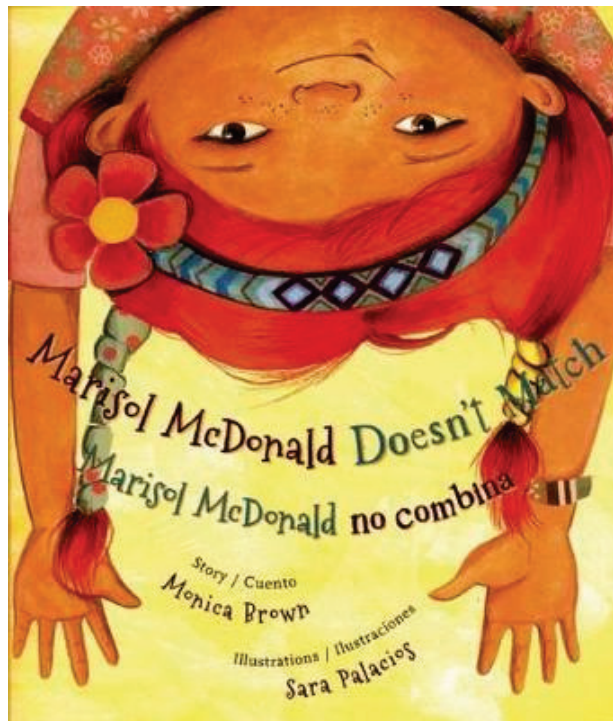
Source: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fzI_ynrAglQ
Lee & Low Books (YouTube content creator)
Read in English and Spanish: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pTGUoGI5F6k
Art with Mrs. F.(YouTube content creator)

After the Video

Below are additional questions that are in keeping with the requirement for critical self-reflection for the academic integration of equity-centered SEL. You may want to return to this section later.

Take a moment to review the questions for reflection below.

➤ Respond to at least one of the questions below. Reflect on your answers as you add or enhance your daily planning and academic instruction.

Additional Questions for Reflection

Note: *The author shares how this story is inspired by her life. She grew up speaking two languages because her mother was born in South America and her father was born in the United States.*

As you reviewed the book some themes that you may have noticed are pride in difference, uniqueness (clothes, skin, hair), belonging, and perspective.

- Ms. Apple writes Marisol a note. What do you notice about the note? Where does your

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[3] Brown, 2013

mind want to linger as you read it? Why?

- How does Ms. Apple's letter support Marisol? How might receiving this letter feel to a student who is like Marisol? How might you encourage Marisol to be the best student she can be? What words might you use? Why?

- How might a student feel when someone asks them, "What are you?" How might this question make them feel like they don't belong, or that their uniqueness is not "simply marvelous"?

- For an additional connection to the book and for further reflection, there is a video linked below. The video, called "Soy Yo"[4], is about another young person who, like Marisol McDonald, navigates the world differently than those around her.

Source: https://www.npr.org/2016/09/18/494382862/in-soy-yo-video-bomba-est-reo-pays-tribute-to-whats-inside-of-you
(NPR.org)

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[4] "In 'Soy Yo' Video, Bomba Estéreo Pays Tribute to 'What's inside of You,'" 2016

TAXONOMY APPROACH

Ways of Being

The books shared in this tool invite you to consider perspectives that might differ from your own. They also can enhance your understanding of how to interact with students in ways that affirm their ways of being and that make them feel connected to you and their peers in the classroom.

As you consider your ways of being, reflect on the following:

- Who are you? (identity: race, gender, national origin, culture, education …)

- Where are you from? (place: corner of the world/state/region/city)? Where are you most comfortable? Where do you feel the most included?

- Take an inventory of your classroom. Notice who, and whose cultural ways of being, the classroom design responds to (e.g., content, context, student choice). How often are students invited to engage with text or instructional activities that offer windows (gaze at a present/future self) and mirrors (view their culture and ways of being reflected back to them) into their lived experience?

Ways of Interacting

As you consider your ways of being, think about how you interact with students and families daily.

- As you interact, do you share a little information about yourself? Students often think teachers live at school, and they are surprised when they see their teachers shopping at the grocery store or a shopping mall.

- As an educator, you have the power to encourage students to reach their highest potential, or to hinder their growth by diminishing the childlike curiosity and spirit inherent in many elementary school students. Consider your personal **sphere of influence** as a teacher of record to make a difference in a child's social, emotional, and academic future.

  o What does interacting with you daily feel like to your students? How do you know?

  o What might students observe when they see you teaching? Do you think they connect you to their lived experiences outside the school space?

  o Think about yourself when you were your students' age. How did your teacher interact with you and your peers? Did this interaction style encourage or discourage you? Why? What lessons from your years as a K–6 student might you draw upon to better support your students?

Critical Self-Reflection

Let's return to the ***Essential Question:*** *What does equity-centered social, emotional, and academic learning look like, sound like, and feel like in the elementary classroom?*

- Review your answers to the Essential Question.

- How would you answer this question now? What would you add or remove from your first answer? Take 5–7 minutes for your review.

RESOURCES

- [Assessing Yourself & Your School Checklist](#) (Anti-Defamation League)

- [No Place for Hate](#) (ADL Education)

- [Speak Up at School](#) (Learning for Justice)

- [Title VI](#) and [Title IX](#)

  - As an educator, your role is to ensure these requirements are met by creating and nurturing a classroom environment in which all students feel safe, welcomed, and included.

  - How does your district policy protect individuals under Title VI and Title IX?

  - Given your reflections on the Essential Question throughout this tool, how might the look, feel, and sound of equity-centered social, emotional and academic learning contribute to supporting Title VI and Title IX requirements in your classroom?

REFERENCES

Brown, M., Palacios, S., & Dominguez, A. (2013). *Marisol McDonald doesn't match = Marisol McDonald no combina*. Children's Book Press.

Dorros, A. (1993). *Radio Man: a Story in English and Spanish*. HarperCollins Publishers.

In "Soy Yo" Video, Bomba Estéreo Pays Tribute To "What's Inside Of You." (2016, September 8). *NPR.org*. https://www.npr.org/2016/09/18/494382862/in-soy-yo-video-bomba-est-reo-pays-tribute-to-whats-inside-of-you

Nuri-Robins, K., Lindsey, D. B., Lindsey, R. B., & Terrell, R. D. (2012). *Culturally proficient instruction: A guide for people who teach*. Corwin Press.

LEGAL NOTICE