

# Planning with Equity in Mind from Culturally Responsive Education in the Classroom: An Equity Framework for Pedagogy by Dr. Adeyemi Stemberge

## Question One: What do I want learners to understand?<sup>1</sup>

What is a deep and meaningful conceptual understanding about your content that matters tremendously for students so that they are able to think like practitioners in your field?

What do you remember about your own early emerging understandings of this concept?

What did you figure out?

How did you figure it out?

How did it feel when you first understood?

Vocabulary: Persevere

I remember when my mom read to me the Little Engine that Could. She explained that the Little Engine kept saying, "I think I can. I think I can," even when it was really hard for him to get to the top of the hill. She explained that when you keep trying even when it's hard, it means you are persevering. I remember trying to tie my shoes was really hard and I couldn't do it. I whispered, "I think I can, I think I can," and said to my mom, "I'm persevering." Each time I tried to tie my shoe you could hear me say, "I think I can. I think I can." I vividly remember the day I felt the joy of tying my own shoe. I persevered. It was exhilarating!!! I was so excited!

Responding to the text: *The Little Engine That Could*, Watty Piper (1930).

## Question Two: What do I want learners to feel?<sup>2</sup>

The asking of this question in the design of units and lessons requires us to recognize our students' humanity, particularly as social and cultural beings who bring a wealth of experiences and understandings with them to the classroom - even if these differ culturally and qualitatively from our own. Though the anticipation of what our students will feel is inexact, we should make an effort to place ourselves in their skin and imagine their affect without rejecting their values or projecting our own onto them.

I want my Kindergarteners to feel what it is like to accomplish something that is difficult. I want them to feel the joy of persevering.

## Question Three: What are the targets for rigor?<sup>3</sup>

How can students perform their rigorous understandings of a concept?

When we consider the question, *What are the targets for rigor?* we are planning for those moments when students will demonstrate cognitive engagement to the point that they own the learning experience so profound that we, the teachers, are no longer in control - and that is, of course, a wonderful thing. We as teachers lose control whenever our students are leveraging their own assets and capital in building their own unique conceptual connections in their developing understandings.

SIOP Vocabulary Word- persevere

<sup>1</sup> Stemberge, Adeyemi Culturally Responsive Education In the Classroom: An Equity Framework for Pedagogy (p. 121-123)

<sup>2</sup> Stemberge (p. 125-127)

<sup>3</sup> Stemberge (p. 130-131)

## Planning with Equity in Mind from Culturally Responsive Education in the Classroom: An Equity Framework for Pedagogy by Dr. Adeyemi Stenbridge

I will post the word persevere so it is visible to all adults and children in the classroom. Adults will verbally notice and take pictures of children persevering in daily activities. Ex. "I notice you persevered when you..... You kept trying even when it was hard." During our dialogic small group read alouds, children will identify moments where the character perseveres. I will give children opportunities to use their expressive language to identify persevering through open ended questions and feedback loops in free play. During the closing circle children will be given an opportunity to share when they persevered, or saw a peer persevere throughout the day. The teacher will record what was shared on poster paper. This record of perseverance is created into a class book.

### Question Four: What are the indicators of engagement?<sup>4</sup>

When we ask the question, *What are the indicators of engagement?* We are making predictions as to what engagement may look like in the learning experience, and we are prioritizing when and how we might yield some expectations for engagement in favor of others. We are essentially seeking the pathway to *Flow* - the perfect intersection of challenge and skill that will sustain students' self-driven investment in the learning. The key for teachers is to anticipate what those indicators for engagement might be so that we can authentically coach students along to even greater investment in the learning experience.

Indicators of engagement might include moments where children are saying "I think I can, I think I can during an activity." During small groups I will be listening for children that are able to identify characters that exhibited perseverance. I will observe during play children that are noticing and using the word persevere.

### Question Five: What are the opportunities to be responsive?<sup>5</sup>

In considering the question, *What are the opportunities to be responsive?* We should focus on our most vulnerable learners. Here is where we are deliberate about how we will incorporate meaningful protective factors into the fabric of the learning experience.

This question provides a rich opportunity to consider the ways in which my identity in the role of teacher as a cultural being may be limiting the expression of my students' competencies. We should be deliberate in our thinking about how we imagine our students to be capable and creative thinkers.

Consider how you will confirm that your students are perceiving the experience as responsive. When planning, I like to predict specific moments when I can be positioned to listen and respond to my students' thinking... these moments of responsiveness support students in developing greater agency and a detailed sense of what they are feeling - which are the essential ingredients of emotional intelligence. It is a powerful thing for a student to give a learning experience their serious attention and have a teacher, the more experienced thinker, acknowledge, support, and validate that effort.

The most opportune time to be responsive would be during actual moments of perseverance. This could be during transitions, outside on the playground, during interest areas, when children are in the block area building towers. Ex. When the tower falls and they have to build it back again, we can talk about persevering.

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<sup>4</sup> Stenbridge (133-135)

<sup>5</sup> (p. 120)