

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

## 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?

RL 5: Describe how a narrator's or speaker's point of view influences how events are described.

Be yourself. Feeling like an outsider or feeling left out is a common experience for children in elementary school. Kids are developing skills at different rates, there are new kids to learn to be friends with, new teachers and new experiences. Navigating building friendships can be challenging.

Kids are learning about their own identity and may compare experiences with others. It is important for children to build a strong sense of their own strengths, identity and areas to grow and learn. Children begin to see that they are both different and alike to their peers. Kids can find their own voice and share their stories.

Responding to the text: *The Day You Begin*, Jacqueline Woodson (2018)

## 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 students to feel curious and reflective. When was a time they felt like they belonged? When was a time they felt they did not belong? What are the stories they have about themselves? What have they done to build relationships with others?

## 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.

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

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

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

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Evaluate, L3: What conclusion can you draw about how the main character feels and what she learns throughout the book?

I want them to think deeply about their own experiences at school and reflect on the stories they tell about themselves. I want them to reflect on strengths and that those might be different from others. I want them to reflect on areas for growth?

Craft & Structure/figurative language. "A boy named Jonathan holds out a jar filled with tiny shells so fragile, they look like they'll turn to dust in your own untraveled hands". Why might the author use this imagery to describe how Angelina feels? What story is Angelina telling about herself in that statement?

"The game isn't one you can ever really play. *I don't want him on our team. You can watch. Maybe you can have a turn later*". Is paired with a sequence of pictures of this boy and his reflection. Why did the author show two versions of this boy through the reflection? What stories might this boy be hearing from others? What story might he be telling himself?

Woodson, Jacqueline *The Day You Begin* (2018).

### 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.

Kids are identifying with the characters' experiences in the book. They are talking to each other and sharing stories of similar feelings and experiences. They are drawing pictures that show their own stories.

### 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

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

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

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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.

Reflecting like this might be new and difficult. Providing sentence stems and opportunities to draw their experiences might be a place to start before building their own stories.

Some students' experiences may be traumatic and it is critical to know your students before exploring connections between the characters and themselves. Using additional examples and pairing this book with images and stories of identity and belonging can build a greater understanding of the concepts.