

End Lee

CHECKING MY EQUITY SYSTEMS

"I check my equity systems every time I enter my classroom "
Grade 2 teacher reflecting on her practice in an equity workshop.
What does this teacher actually do in order to check her equity systems?

She frequently checks the assumptions she is making of students and their families on the basis of their culture, language, race, and class; and how those assumptions are shaped by her own, class, language, race and class among other aspects of her identity. at stages of preparation, teaching and reflection stages. Those assumptions are reflected in at least these seven areas:

1. ACTIVITIES SELECTED FOR INSTRUCTION.

She asks herself at the preparation stage:

- A. Which students in terms of gender, culture, immigration status, socioeconomic status can relate to these activities?
- B. How can I relate these activities to the experiences and prior knowledge of all of the students?

2. NATURE OF THE LEARNING TASKS

- A. What do I want students to learn from these tasks?
- B. Have I included a range of tasks to engage the realities of experiences in the room?
- C. Is the purpose of the task clear and challenging to all students?
- D. If students are not on task, what are they doing instead?
- E. Is there a pattern in terms of gender, Culture, language background, race, seating arrangements, status in the classroom among those who are on-task and those who are not?

3. STUDENT TALK

- A. Which students are talking while I am teaching?
- B. Is there a pattern among those who are talking and among those who appear to be listening? Proximity to me, Their relationship to the topic I am teaching about? Girls? Boys? Language background, Students' levels of performance?
Times when these same students seem very engaged?
- C. What are the agreements we have in place for listening to and learning from everyone in the room who is part of our learning community?

To: Marty
I found these to be useful questions for reflection
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D. How can I use these to understand what is taking place and to redirect the students' attention to the subject at hand.

4. STUDENT PARTICIPATION

- A. Which individual students are not participating?
- B. Which groups of students are not participating?
- C. What is the nature of the participation I am expecting?
- D. What have I put in place to encourage whole class discussion for example?
- E. Is there opportunity for students who speak English as a second language to rehearse their answer in pairs for example?
- F. How far is the climate one in which "mistakes" are partially correct answers acceptable and opportunities for learning?
- G. Am I giving appropriate wait time for different students depending on their need and strength?
- H. How much am I talking?
- J. What opportunities and support have I created for students to lead the discussion and ask some of the questions ?

5. TEACHER ATTENTION

- A. Where do I seem to direct my questions?
- B. Do I seem to get the answers from the same students most of the time?
- C. What is my proximity to those students who seem to be engaged and those who do not seem to be engaged.
- D. Do I move around the room and make contact with different group of students in terms of their seating arrangements, their familiarity with the language of instruction, racial backgrounds?
- E. Do I address my questions or attention to the students who are not raising their hands?

6. TEACHER TONE

- A. What words and tone of voice do I use to express my expectations of the class?
- B. Do I begin by threatening, highlighting the negative consequences that will ensue if they don't comply with my expectations?
- C. Do I stress the positive outcomes that they will be experienced through their participation?
- D. Do I express high expectations of all students in terms of my knowledge of them as individuals who are capable of demonstrating their best effort?
- E. Do I redirect students to the tasks at hand by finding out what has taken them away from the task at hand?

F. Do I redirect their attention by reminding them of an instance when they did good work and made a sincere effort ?

7. TEACHER DIRECTIONS

A. Which individual students and which groups are following my directions?

B. Which ones are not?

C. Is there a pattern with either group?

D. What strategies have I used to ensure that my directions are heard and understood?

E. Did I attract the attention of the whole class before I began giving the directions?

F. Do I give directions in both spoken and written form?

G. Do I give a chance for questions and clarifications after the directions have been given?

H. Do I sometimes build in an opportunity for a student to review the directions with the class so that I can see if they are understood and whether they reflect my intentions?

I. Do we have agreements in the class which encourage students to help each other in the spirit of a learning community to work on the activities at hand?

J. What are the students doing when they are not following directions?

K. How can I use this information to change the situation?

When I reflect on what I have learned from answering these questions with my class, how can I fine tune my equity systems tomorrow?