"DOING IT RIGHT"

ADDRESSING CLASSROOM MANAGEMENT FROM A CULTURALLY RESPONSIVE PERSPECTIVE
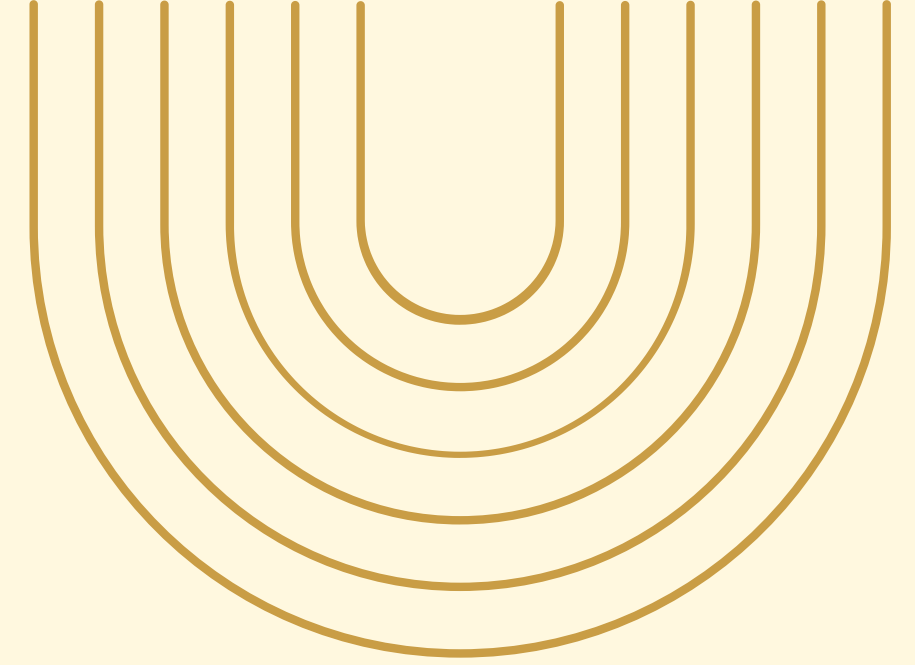
Wellysanè Minyangadou Ngokobi
For REEAL Webinar

January 16th, 2025

LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

"We respectfully acknowledge that we are currently on the traditional lands of numerous Indigenous, Metis, and Inuit communities. We recognize that this land we call Turtle Island, also known as North America, has been cared for by these Indigenous communities since before the arrival of settler peoples until today. We recognize that this presentation, although delivered online, is contextually offered on the traditional territory of the Kanien'kehà:ka and the Abenaki. Always remaining critical of our positionality, we offer our gratitude to Indigenous peoples for their care and teachings about Mother Earth and the territory we reside in today."

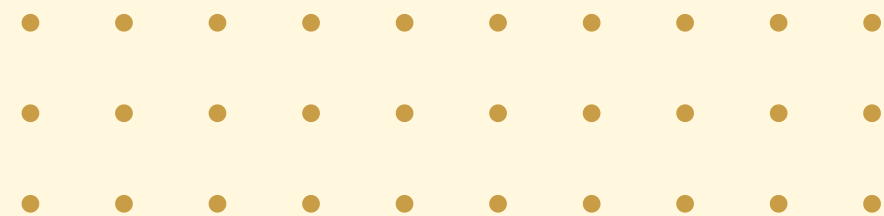**Watsenniiostha Nelson,**
Director of Education, Kanesatake

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- *Name*: Wellysanè (she/her/hers)

- *Profession*: I am an educator who specializes in culturally responsive ESL teaching and learning. I am also a Doctoral student at McGill University, in the Department of Integrated Studies in Education (DISE).

- *Research focus:* I look into the successful teaching and learning practices in culturally grounded schools in Indigenous communities in West Africa, Kanesatake (QC), and South America, to find how these could be used to better our teacher education programs here in Quebec.

- *Academic and research background*: I hold a Bachelor's Degree in Specialized translation (FR-EN) from Concordia University and a Masters' Degree in Teaching and Learning with a focus on ESL from McGill University.

- **Cultural background, knowledge and experiences***: I am French-West African, and have lived in Anglophone countries across the African continent. Having only attended French schools in these spaces, I bring in the perspective of a person with marginalized identity markers who has gone through French imperialist curriculums in expatriate contexts.*

02.

WHAT IS CLASSROOM MANAGEMENT?

Wellysanè Minyangadou Ngokobi

Classroom management can be defined as "**the actions teachers take to create an environment that supports and facilitates both academic and social-emotional learning**" (Evertson & Weinstein, 2006, p.4).

Classroom management, from a research perspective

When focusing on research-informed perspectives of classroom management (as opposed to public perceptions), we realize that there exists multiple avenues/schools of thought to choose from. Martin et al. (2016) propose five:

1. **Teacher Emotions and Classroom Management: Managing the Self**
   a. Teacher actions are rooted in emotional management
2. **A Relational Perspective of Classroom Management**
   a. Constructing an image of caring and authority, through which a significantly high degree of teacher authority and care are demonstrated
3. **Temperament-Based Classroom Management**
   a. Knowledge and management of student temperament
4. **Developmental, Culturally Responsive Classroom Management**
   a. Managing behaviour and instruction in a culturally responsive, developmentally appropriate manner. This is done based in a belief system regarding child development and cultural responsiveness
5. **Classroom Management as Defined from a Participation Centred Perspective**
   a. Rooted in ritualizing routines and practices that define classroom community; helping children achieve membership

Developmental, Culturally Responsive Classroom Management

Martin et al. (2016) affirm that **teachers' perceptions of their students**—including their personality, developmental stages, and cultural backgrounds—**shape instructional approaches and classroom management decisions**. In this way, a high-quality learning environment emerges **when teachers adjust their behaviour in response to students' individual characteristics**.

Whether consciously recognized or not, these beliefs significantly influence how teachers engage with their students. They raise important questions, mainly:

- What learning and behavioural **expectations** are appropriate for a child of X age?

- **To what degree** should I, as an educator, **take into account** students' individual characteristics (cultural backgrounds, socioeconomic status, exceptionalities, etc.) when planning instruction or managing behaviour? --Strategies that are effective for one age group or cultural background may be unsuitable or even demeaning for another!

Developmental, Culturally Responsive Classroom Management

Let's discuss Martin et al. (2016)'s suggested crucial components of classroom management;

Classroom management
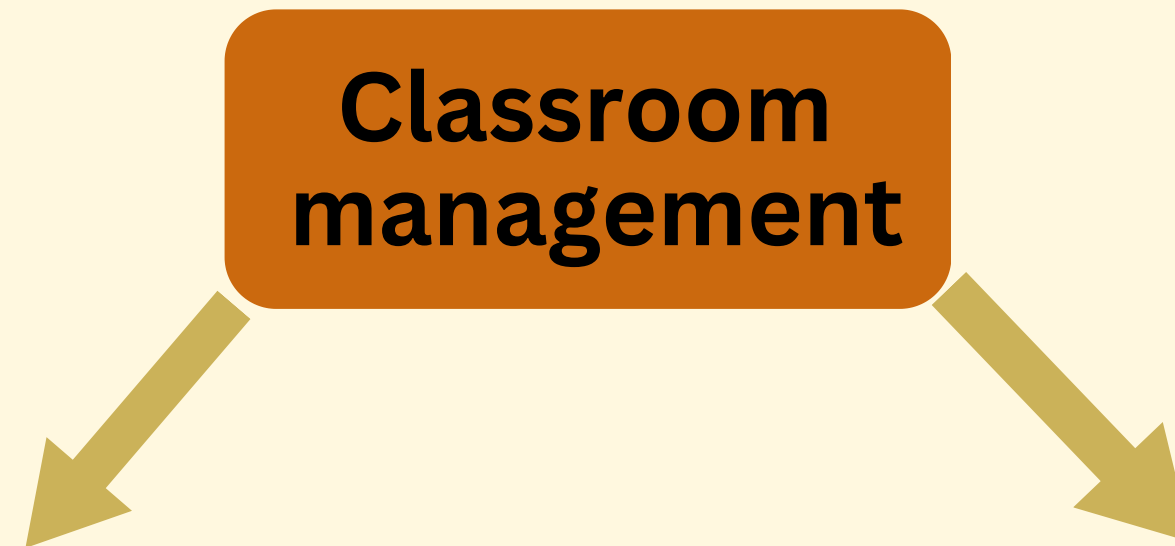
Behaviour management (BM)

Behaviour management (BM) is similar to our understanding of "discipline" but differs form it in that it **involves proactive strategies to prevent misbehaviour _in addition to_ the teacher's response to it.** This aspect includes setting clear rules, implementing a reward system, and incorporating student input. Overall, the understanding of BM is that **creating an effective reward system and encouraging student participation can help minimize misbehaviour and sustain a well-ordered classroom environment.**

Instruction management (IM)

Instructional management (IM) relates to **teachers' educational goals and teaching strategies.** This includes overseeing independent work, organizing daily routines, and using different instructional methods, such as lectures, interactive approaches, etc. **The way teachers structure their lessons influences both the overall classroom atmosphere and their approach to classroom management** (Kounin, 1970; Reeve & Jang, 2006). Kounin (1970) particularly highlighted the importance of smoothness and momentum—two key features of well-structured lessons that help prevent student disengagement. More recently, Reeve and Jang (2006) found that certain instructional behaviours, such as dominating classroom resources and using overly directive questioning, were negatively associated with student autonomy. In contrast, allowing students time for self-directed learning, encouraging discussion, and **acknowledging their perspectives and backgrounds were linked to greater teacher support for student independence and overall success.**

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WHY DOES PROACTIVELY ACKNOWLEDGING AND UNDERSTANDING *STUDENT PERSPECTIVES AND BACKGROUNDS* MATTER IN CREATING A SUCCESSFUL LEARNING ENVIRONMENT?
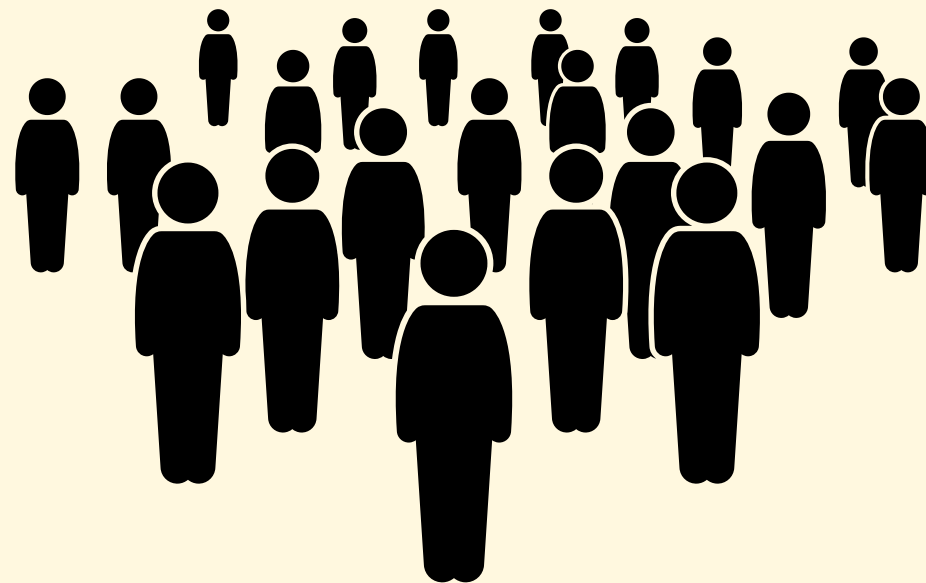
LET'S GO BACK IN TIME
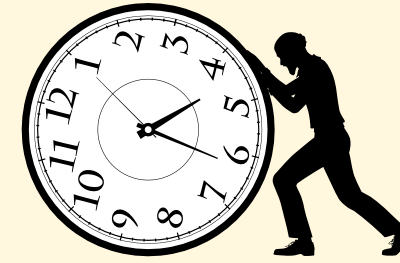
- **Education as a means of oppression (colonial agenda).**
  - Diffusionism, Infantilisation, epistemicide, genocide
    - Installation of White, Eurocentric, Western knowledge systems, understandings and behaviours as the standard and the exclusive.

- **The historical repercussions of this phenomena have been devastating**
  - Colonial schools
  - Residential schools
  - Perpetuation of inequities, despite "efforts"

- **The repercussions of the maintenance of these diffusionist and imperial ideologies are still seen today**
  - Marginalization of minoritized students in the classroom through curriculum design, instruction and classroom management (schools as cites of violence)

LET'S LOOK INTO THEORY

What are the leading theories that prompt us to change course?

- *Critical Race Theory*
  - *Clear dynamics between race, class, and power*
  - *In education: these identity markers inform educator's teaching strategies and behaviours towards students, and are thus avenues for discrimination towards students with marginalized identities.*

- *Black Feminist Thought*
  - *Intersectionality: race, class, gender, ability, sexual orientation, etc. all inform a person and people's experiences.*
  - *In Education: Student success can be explained by teachers and institutions' responsiveness to student identities as a whole*

- *Critical Pedagogy*
  - Paolo Freire
  - Teaching paradigms: Radical, Engaging, **Culturally responsive**, relevant, sustainable pedagogies

03.

CULTURALLY RESPONSIVE PEDAGOGY

A teaching paradigm by Dr. Geneva Gay
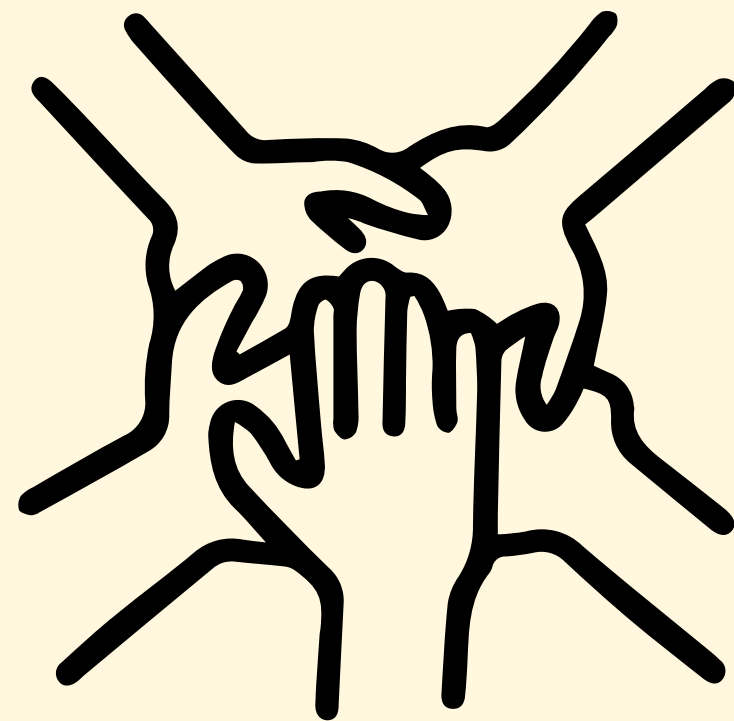
CULTURALLY RESPONSIVE PEDAGOGY

*Culturally Responsive Pedagogy emphasizes the importance of integrating **students' cultural backgrounds, knowledge, performance styles, and experiences into the learning process to make it more relevant and effective**. It is an approach to teaching and learning that **promotes cultural competence, self-worth, and an ethic of care** (Gay, 2018).*

*As part of the critical pedagogy paradigm, a culturally responsive approach to pedagogy involves **not only respecting cultural differences but also operates from a desire-based framework to design instruction that taps into students' existing knowledge and strengths, and challenges them to grow academically** (Villegas & Lucas, 2002, p. 23-27; Gay, 2013).*

*Gay (2018) argues that culturally responsive teaching is also a **<u>transformational and developmental process</u>, <u>requiring teachers to address their own beliefs about culture and difference before implementing instructional strategies</u>**.*

Who is a culturally responsive educator?

WHO IS A CULTURALLY RESPONSIVE EDUCATOR?
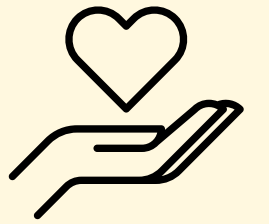
Villegas & Lucas (2002) define culturally responsive teachers as educators who...

- *Are socioculturally conscious individuals who **affirm students' diverse backgrounds and see themselves as agents of change, working to make schools more equitable**.*

- *Understand that **students' identities and experiences, including race, class, gender, ability, and cultural heritage, profoundly influence their learning, and thus, critically examine how learning environments perpetuate social inequalities***

- *Recognize that learning is **a constructivist process, meaning that students generate knowledge by building on their prior experiences***

- *Examine **how schools perpetuate social inequalities**, and by fostering inquiry, addressing relevant topics, and encouraging students to critique the curriculum, **promote critical thinking and broaden students' perspectives***

Culturally Responsive practices:
What does it mean to *see* our students?
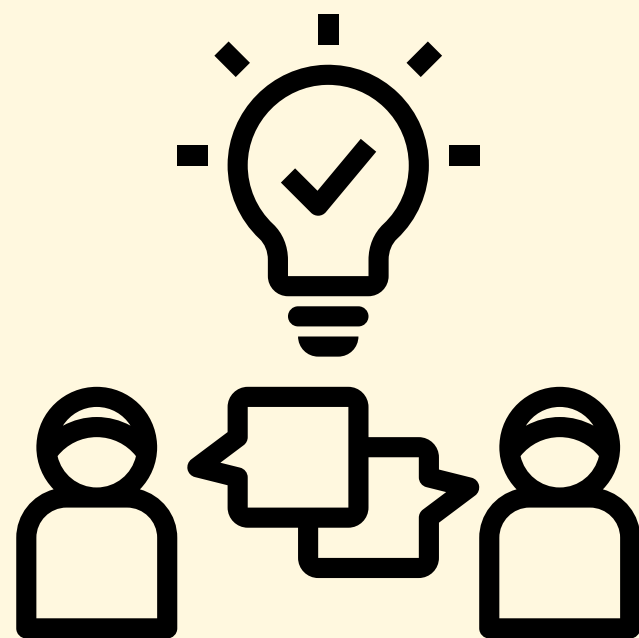
WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO SEE OUR STUDENTS?
*LET'S NOT BE COLOUR BLIND!*

Being an educator and interacting with our students is one thing. But *seeing* them and interacting with them accordingly is an entirely different approach/framework. Seeing our students can look like;

- **Not just knowing their names** (and pronouns!), but greeting them with it every day

- **Knowing** the different intersecting facets of their identities <u>***and***</u>
    - **How** these intersections influence their experience **in school** academically and socially
    - **How** these intersections influence their experience in **broader society**
    - **Making a conscious effort to ensure representation and empowered agency** for each of their intersecting identities **in the classroom and in the curriculum**

- **Understanding** that although they may belong to a certain broader social and cultural community, their own existence **within them** and their experience of them is singular, and committing to always hearing more about it and learning from it.
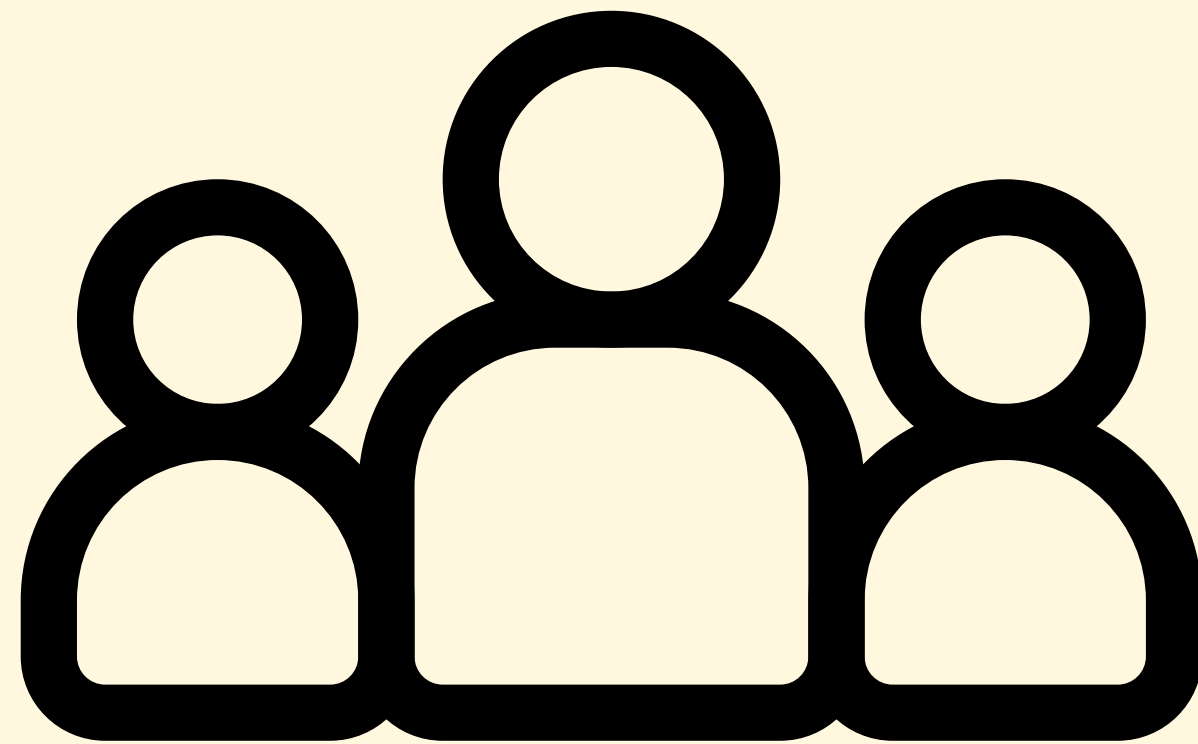
So what does this all mean for our classroom management practices?
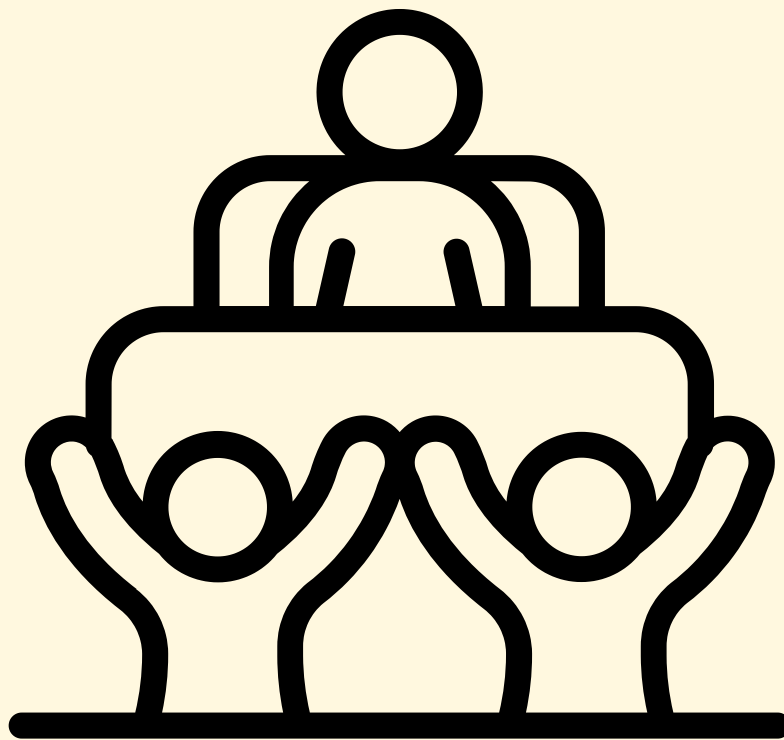
This means that our classroom management will need to shift from (purely/) disciplinary to contextualized, meaningful *realignment*
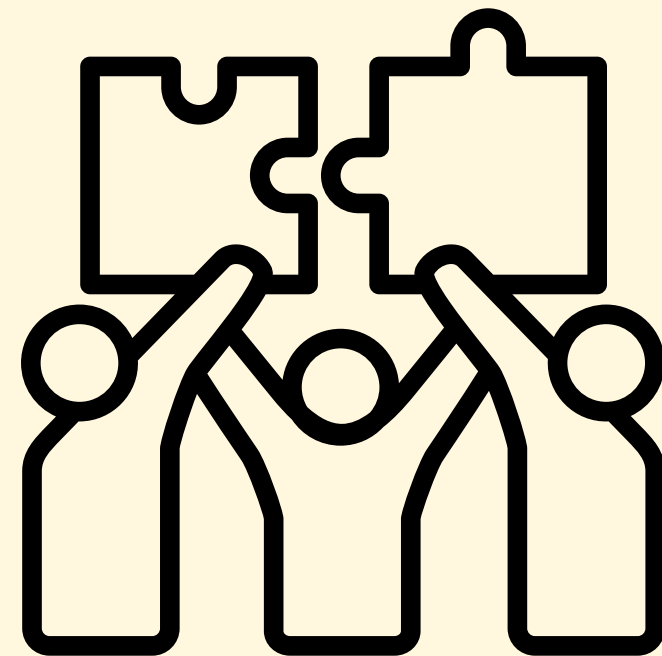
It all begins with committing to get to know your students thoughtfully, and intersectionally.

Before you teach,...

- **Check your biases and assumptions**
  - *What belief systems operate within you as it is?*

- **Be critical about the curriculum/course material you were given**
  - *What is the hidden curriculum operating within?*

- **Be proactive and intentional about getting to know your students from day 1**
  - *Create a student profile document*
  - *Create a community contract with your students*
  - *Create a community agenda/calendar with your students*

- **Incorporate the information you gain into your curriculum.**
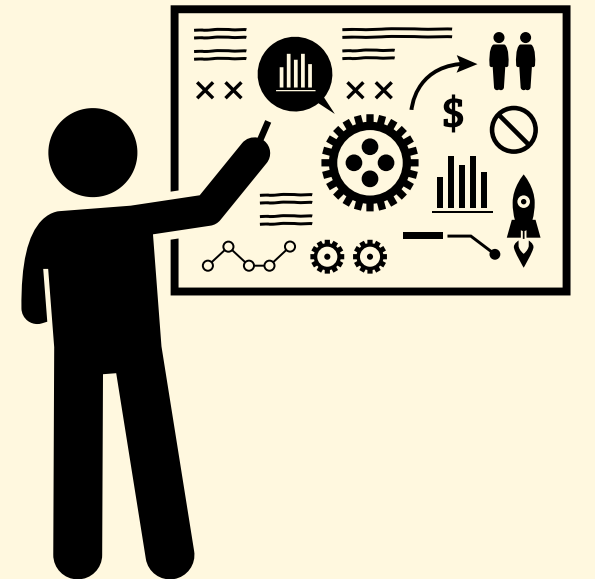
As you teach...

- **Check your biases, assumptions, and practices**
  - *What belief systems operate within you?*
  - *What hidden curriculum are you feeding in your classroom?*

- **Be intentional about up keeping your classroom as a space of reciprocity, mutual exchange, discourse, and transformation**
  - *Funds of knowledge, funds of Identity*
  - *Project-based learning*
 - *Teacher talk length*

As you manage the classroom...

- **Check your biases, assumptions, and practices**
  - What belief systems operate within you?
    - *What role/status do you believe you have in this space, in this moment?*
    - *How do you perceive your students in this moment?*
  - What hidden curriculum are you feeding in your classroom?

- **Be intentional about the decisions you make in your classroom**
  - *How do you understand the situation at hand?*
  - *What is the most fruitful, meaningful approach to resolving this situation for everyone involved?*
  - *What do you want students to take from this moment?*
  - ***How does your intended resolution reflect the classroom/community contract you have built with your students? The commitment you have made to one another? The ethic of care you have committed to implement?***
  - *Is your intended resolution informed by an intersectional acknowledgement and understanding of your students?*

And the process repeats itself every day, every semester, every year.
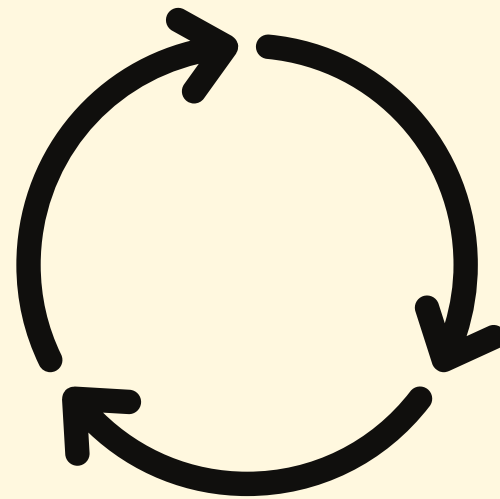
So this is amazing for the students, but what's in it for you?

What's in it for you?

- Develop a **fruitful** skill at reflexivity
  - Develop a reflexive practice

- Constantly **hone** your teaching practices

- Constantly **create and refine** an organic learning environment that is **intentional and** conducive for overall student success

- Develop **better relationships** with your students

- Develop a **better understanding of social structures and broader discourses**, especially as they **affect your students**

- Develop a more **holistic understanding and view** of what it means to teach, and to learn

QUESTIONS?

Wellysanè Minyangadou Ngokobi

Resources:

Pedagogy through a critical lens

- **THE classics that all critical educators must read:**
  - Freire (2005). Pedagogy of the oppressed (excerpt)
  - hooks (1995). Teaching to Transgress.
  - Tuck & Yang (2012). Deconolization is not a metaphore
- **The importance of facing differences head-on:**
  - Dei (n.d). "We Cannot be Colour-blind" Race, antiracism, and the subversion of Dominant Thinking
  - James (n.d). Chapter 8: Multiculturalism, Diversity, and Education in the Canadian Context: The Search for an Inclusive Pedagogy

Critical, equity-based pedagogies and practices

- **Culturally Responsive Pedagogy:**
  - <u>Culturally Responsive Teaching: A guide to Evidence-Based Practices for Teaching All Students Equitably</u>
  - Gay (2002). Preparing for Culturally Responsive Teaching.
  - Gay (2018). Practice possibilities (Tips you can apply TODAY).
- **Culturally Relevant Pedagogy:**
  - Ladson-Billings (1995). But that's just good teaching! The Case for Culturally Relevant Pedagogy.
- **Funds of knowledge, Funds of ID:**
  - Moll (2019). Elaborating funds of knowledge: Community-oriented practices in international contexts.
  - Subero et al. (2017). Mobilizing funds of identity in and out of school.

Research on classroom management

- Martin, N. et al. (2016). Expanding the Definition of Classroom Management: Recurring Themes and New Conceptualizations.
- Marzano, R. Marzano, J. (2003). The Key to Classroom Management
- Dustova & Cotton (n.d). Classroom Management Strategies
- Beaty-O'Ferrall, et al. (2015). Classroom Management Strategies for Difficult Students: Promoting Change through Relationships

Find it all _here_