

LIBERATORY QUESTIONS FOR EDUCATORS

generated by a Creative Advantage workshop

South End Stories distributes these questions to community partners as an expectation for how our students' voices must be valued, nurtured, and incorporated during programs, field trips, and projects both inside and outside of the school building.

October:

1. Does this allow space for student voice (to create curriculum)?
2. Does it allow creative response from youth?
3. Is there opportunity for revision?
4. Does it spark thought?
5. Can students see themselves in this? Are they (and their experiences) centered?
6. Is it collaborative?
7. What are my real or perceived limitations, and how might I get around them?

November:

1. Who is the author?
2. How does this support my own cultural worldview? (or detract from it?)
3. Is this cultural appropriation?
4. Am I willing to not be the expert? (to empower / inspire my students?)
5. Am I willing to ask questions?
6. Am I willing to be vulnerable? (as vulnerable as I'm asking my students to be?)
7. Am I willing to give up power? (power with, not power over)

December:

1. Does this push assumptions?
2. Does this broaden the narrative created by the dominant culture?
3. What stereotypes does this perpetuate? How will I address them if it does?
4. Does this engage + encourage joy?
5. How is this relevant to youth culture now?

January:

1. Are the student's voices in the content planning?
2. Are there multiple entry points?
3. Am I making space for students to show up in all their identities?
4. Does this support shared goals of our community?
5. How is the material dialectical thinking?
6. How can I examine my hidden biases while planning?

February:

1. Does this reflect the diversity in the classroom?
2. Is there a multi-modality approach to teaching it?
3. Am I valuing my students' knowledge and experience?
4. Does the work provoke serious questions and encourage examination?
5. Am I creating a non-hierarchical setting?
6. How am I encouraging students to "dare greatly"?

March:

1. How do I stay open to creativity?
2. Is this content or exploration unveiling oppression?
3. Is this complex and nuanced enough for students to be challenged?
4. Is this content empowering / inspiring action?
5. Does this material speak to me, but exclude others?
6. Am I bringing in this material because I want my students to think about me in a certain way, or because they will learn from it?

April:

1. What biases do I bring into my classroom?
2. Do I understand my own authentic relationship to this content?
3. What perspectives am I already including?
4. Am I remaining open to emergent strategies and ideas?
5. Why are we doing this? What's the real point?
6. How is the focus being framed or synthesized?
7. Am I open to critique?

May:

1. Is the content critique-able?
2. Does this content have multiple interpretations?
3. Does my timeline allow students to grapple and ask questions?
4. Can the students own this content, as "experts"?
5. Is this in my student's vernacular / language?
6. Is this "High Quality"? (and how can we define that for ourselves?)

June:

1. Does this promote [uncensored] self-expression?
2. Am I asking more questions than I'm answering?
3. Is my intention to open minds and leave them open?
4. What kind of response reaction might this inspire?
5. Is our institution ready to support us?
6. Are students ready to be liberated? Are WE?