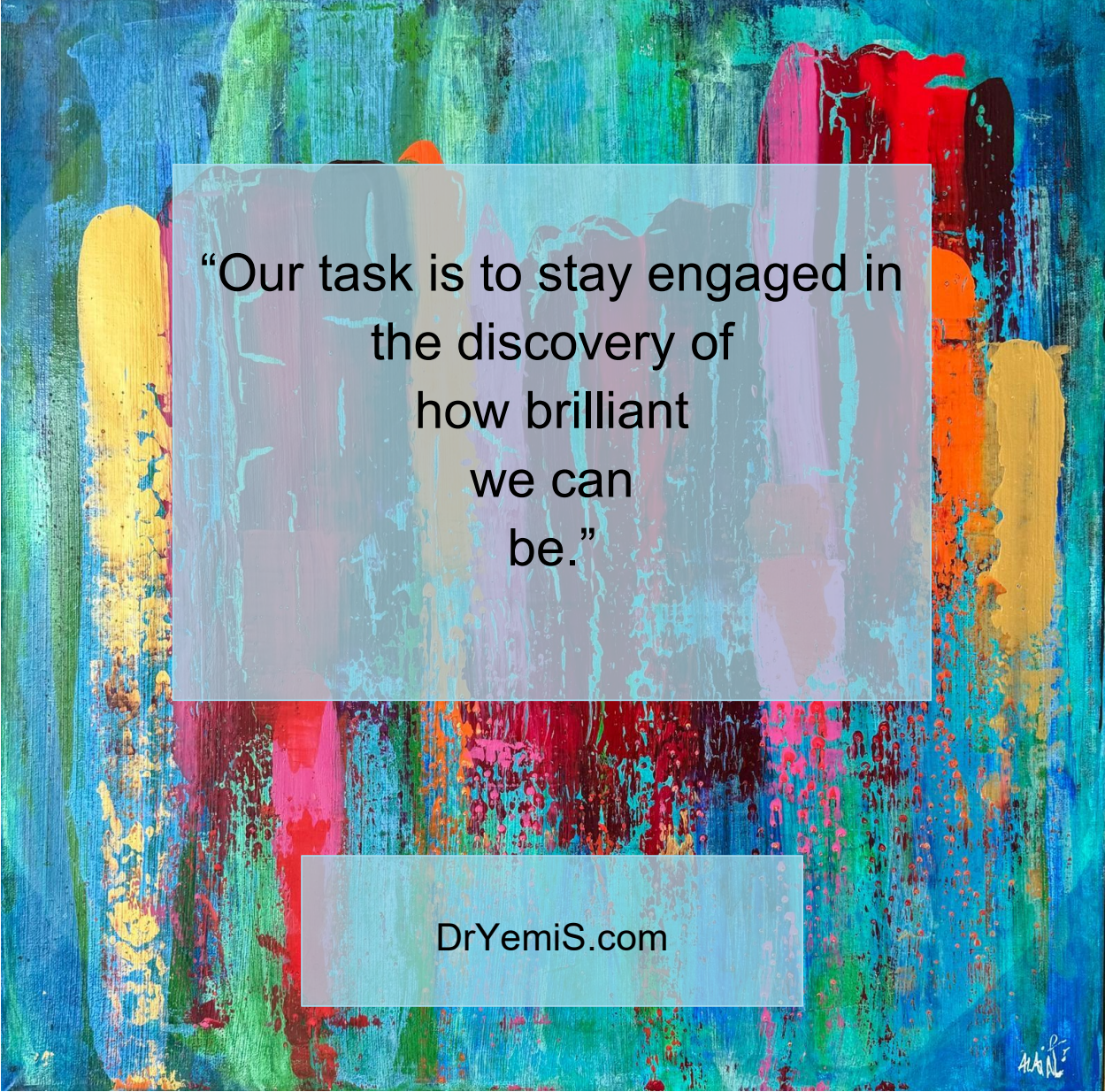


The Brilliant Teaching Reflective Thinking Workbook



“Our task is to stay engaged in
the discovery of
how brilliant
we can
be.”

DrYemiS.com

Welcome to the Brilliant Teaching Reflective Thinking Workbook.

This workbook is built around the six themes of Culturally Responsive Education (CRE) and concludes with a reflection on responsiveness. Together, the six themes of CRE and the definition of responsiveness provide a set of lenses through which we can reflect on our practice as educators. They are not a checklist of teaching strategies.

I often describe the six themes as the background music playing in a teacher's mind while designing learning experiences. When we actively incorporate these ideas into our thinking, they quietly influence the questions we ask, the decisions we make, and ultimately the experiences our students have in our classrooms.



Each section begins with a short passage from **Culturally Responsive Education in the Classroom: An Equity Framework for Pedagogy** (2020). These excerpts are intended to introduce an important idea, not to provide a comprehensive treatment of the topic. If you would like to explore these ideas more deeply, I encourage you to read Chapter 3, which is available here: [The Six Themes of Culturally Responsive Education](#)

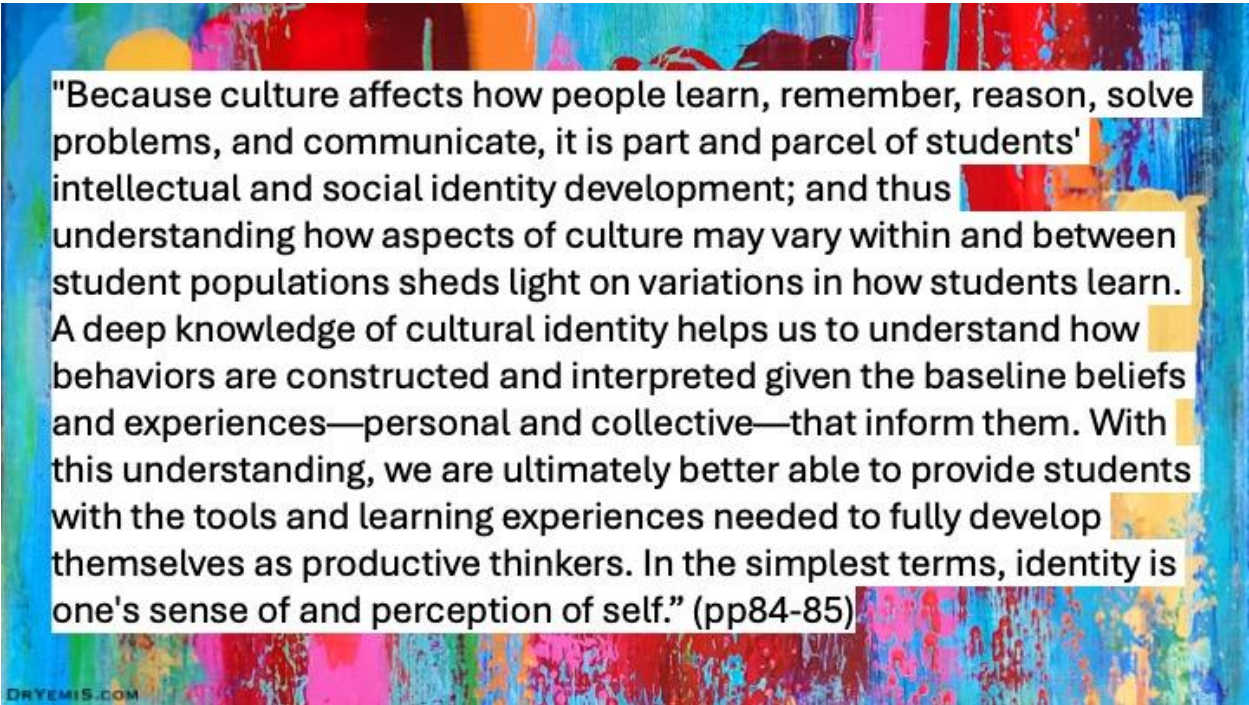
You'll find two reflection prompts after each reading. They're not meant to be a test of your knowledge or lead you toward a predetermined answer. Their purpose is to help you clarify your own thinking. You may answer one prompt or both. You may complete the workbook from beginning to end or move among the themes in whatever order best supports your own mood and/or reflective process, but I encourage you to spend time reflecting on each of the seven lenses over time.

The goal of this workbook is to support your intentional thinking about the big ideas that inform CRE. My hope is that these reflections help you clarify your beliefs, sharpen your professional judgment, and reveal new possibilities for your practice.

All the best,

Dr. Yemi

Cultural Identity

An abstract background composed of various colors including red, blue, yellow, and green, with a textured, painterly appearance. A white rectangular text box is centered on the image, containing a quote. The quote is: "Because culture affects how people learn, remember, reason, solve problems, and communicate, it is part and parcel of students' intellectual and social identity development; and thus understanding how aspects of culture may vary within and between student populations sheds light on variations in how students learn. A deep knowledge of cultural identity helps us to understand how behaviors are constructed and interpreted given the baseline beliefs and experiences—personal and collective—that inform them. With this understanding, we are ultimately better able to provide students with the tools and learning experiences needed to fully develop themselves as productive thinkers. In the simplest terms, identity is one's sense of and perception of self." (pp84-85). The text is in a black, sans-serif font. In the bottom left corner of the image, the text "DRYEMIS.COM" is visible in a small, white font.

"Because culture affects how people learn, remember, reason, solve problems, and communicate, it is part and parcel of students' intellectual and social identity development; and thus understanding how aspects of culture may vary within and between student populations sheds light on variations in how students learn. A deep knowledge of cultural identity helps us to understand how behaviors are constructed and interpreted given the baseline beliefs and experiences—personal and collective—that inform them. With this understanding, we are ultimately better able to provide students with the tools and learning experiences needed to fully develop themselves as productive thinkers. In the simplest terms, identity is one's sense of and perception of self." (pp84-85)

Prompt 1: How has your own cultural identity shaped the way you think, learn, communicate, and make sense of the world? Which parts of your identity have had the greatest influence on the person and educator you have become?

Answer:

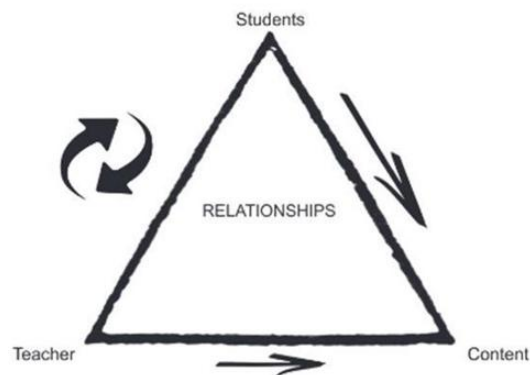
Prompt 2: How might differences in cultural identity influence the ways students think, learn, communicate, and demonstrate understanding? What might become possible when a teacher understands cultural identity as a resource for learning rather than simply a characteristic of students?

Answer:

Relationships

"When I think of Relationships, I envision a triangle (see Figure 3.9). More often than not, we think of the two points representing students and teachers as of paramount importance. The lines between these points represent the reciprocal and interpersonal relationships between students and teachers, the two bound together as part of a larger teaching and learning community. Similarly, we also think of the relationships among students, the sense of shared identity as part of a group engaged in learning facilitated by the teacher. The third point to the relationship triangle also deserves attention – the element of content – or that which we want students to learn. Every credible educator I know would prefer that their students develop deep understandings and mastery over content rather than mere rote memorization for the purpose of immediate recall. This depth of learning requires that students enter into a meaningful relationship with the content itself." (pp88-89)

DRYEMIS.COM



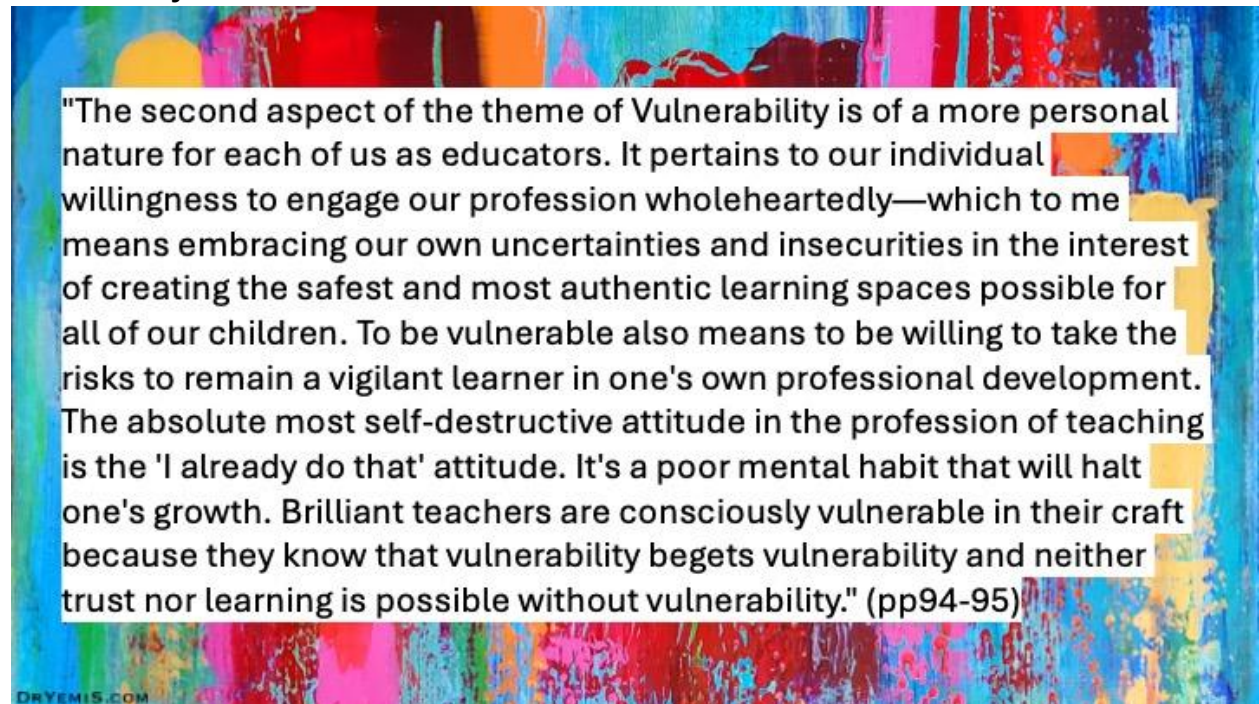
Prompt 1: Consider the relationships between you and your students, among your students, and between your students and the content they are learning. Which of these relationships receives the greatest attention in your teaching, and which deserves more intentional focus?

Answer:

Prompt 2: What does it mean for a student to have a meaningful relationship with academic content? How is that relationship similar to, or different from, the relationships students develop with teachers and classmates?

Answer:

Vulnerability



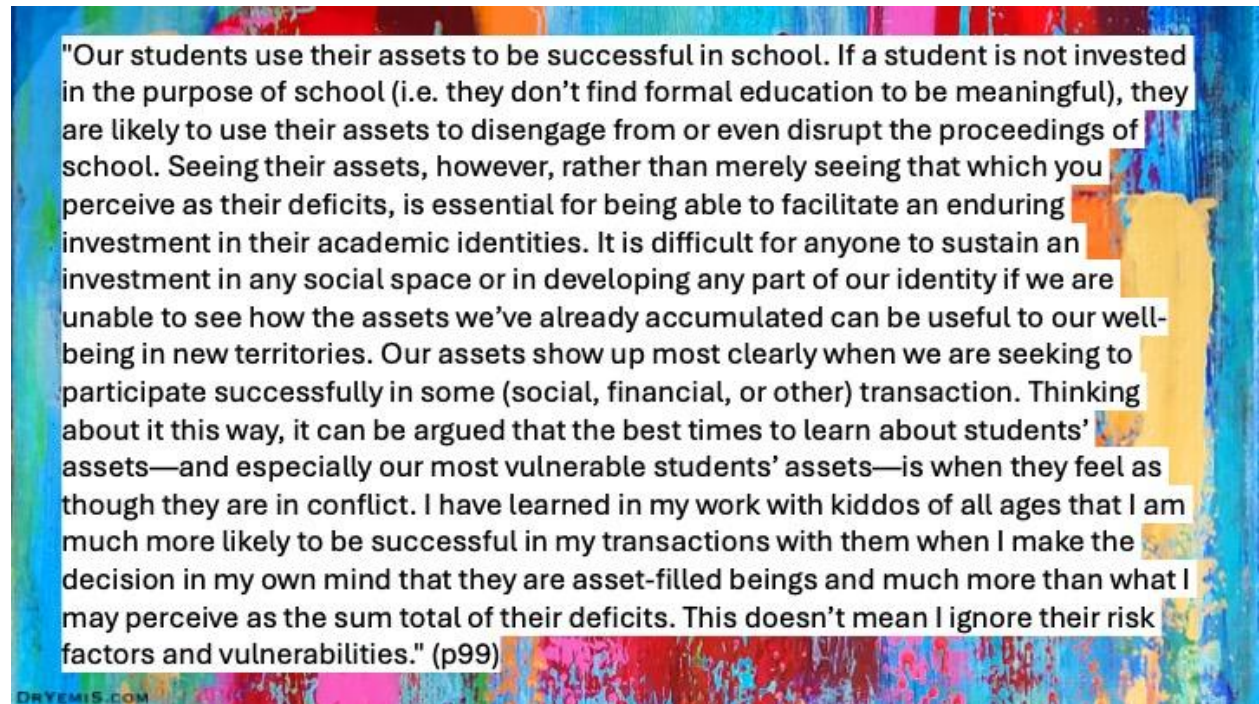
Prompt 1: The reading argues that "vulnerability begets vulnerability." What do you think this means? How might a teacher's willingness to embrace uncertainty influence students' willingness to take the intellectual risks that meaningful learning requires?

Answer:

Prompt 2: The author describes the "I already do that" attitude as a barrier to growth. Reflect on a time when your thinking about teaching changed in a meaningful way. What made that change possible?

Answer:

Assets



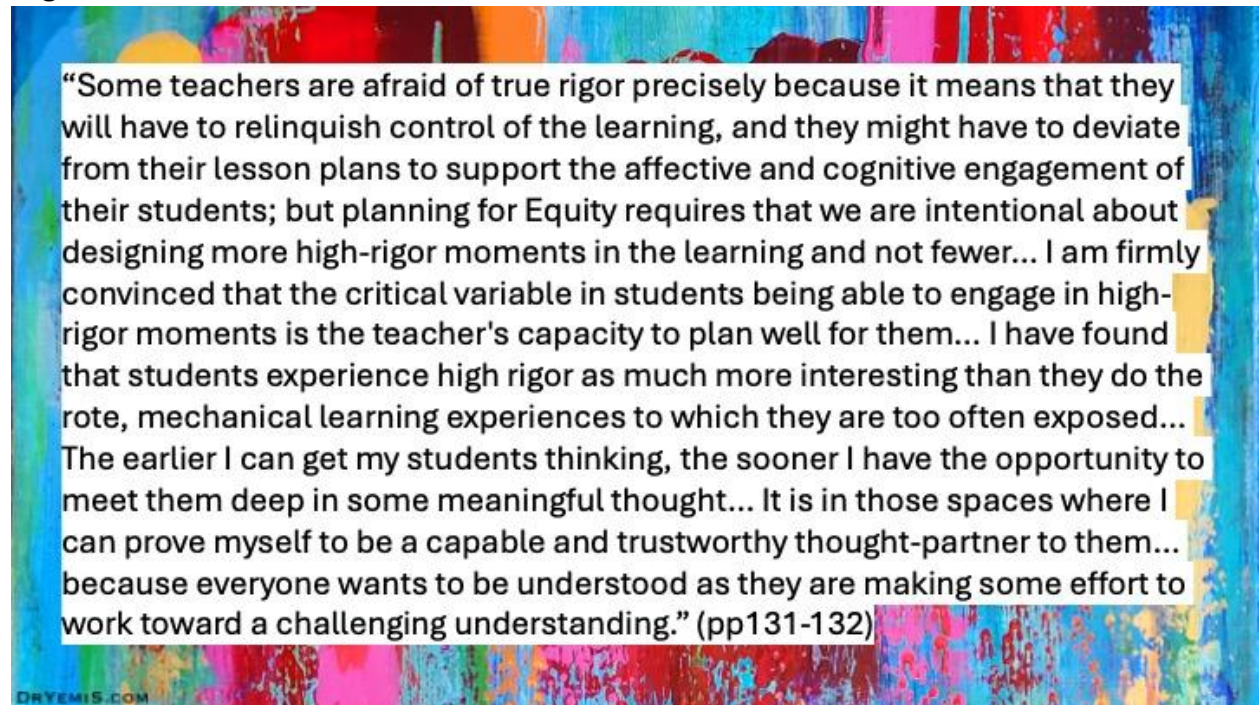
Prompt 1: The reading suggests that recognizing students' assets begins with a decision the teacher makes before any instructional strategy is chosen. What beliefs or assumptions most influence the way you notice the strengths, abilities, and potential of the people around you? How has your own life shaped the way you recognize assets in others?

Answer:

Prompt 2: The passage argues that students use their assets whether they are engaging with school or disengaging from it. How does this idea challenge or deepen your understanding of what it means to teach from an asset-based perspective? What might change in your thinking or practice if you consistently viewed every student as "asset-filled" before considering their deficits?

Answer:

Rigor



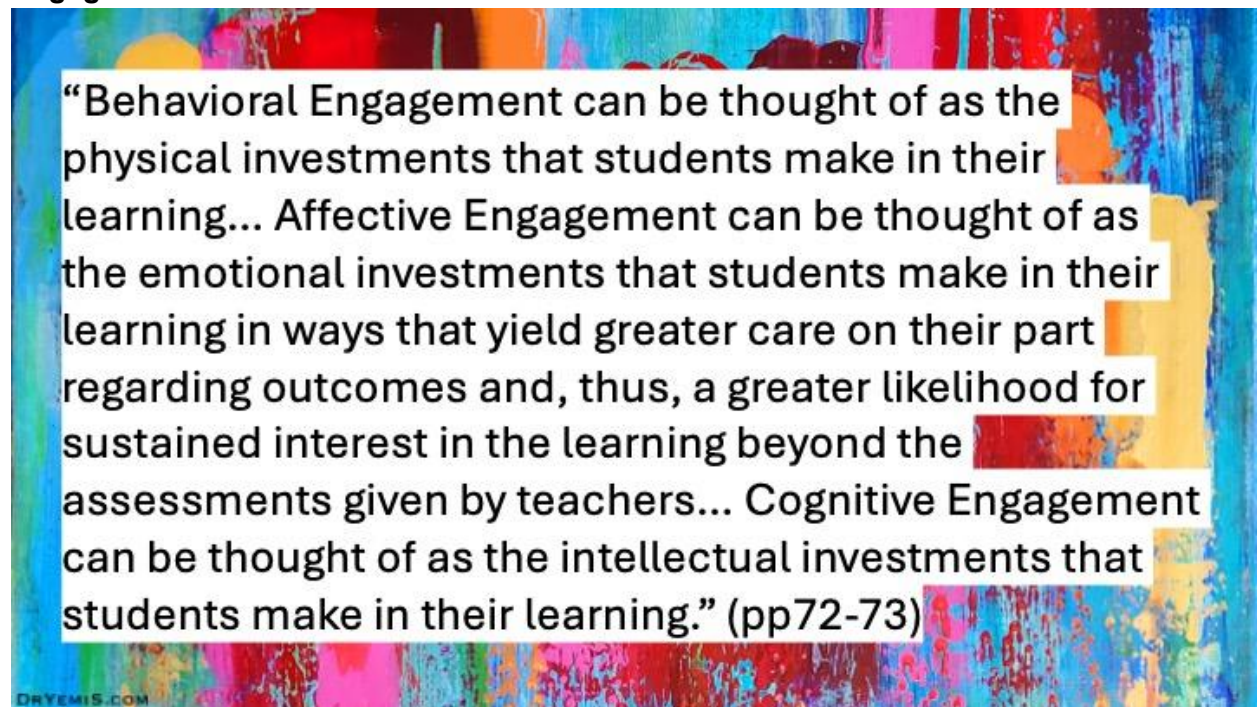
Prompt 1: The passage challenges a common misconception about rigor. What does rigorous thinking mean to you? How have your own experiences as a learner and educator shaped your understanding of the difference between working harder and thinking more deeply?

Answer:

Prompt 2: The passage suggests that rigor is something students experience through the quality of their thinking. What kinds of learning experiences do you believe are most likely to cultivate deep thinking? What responsibilities does this place on the teacher as a designer of learning?

Answer:

Engagement



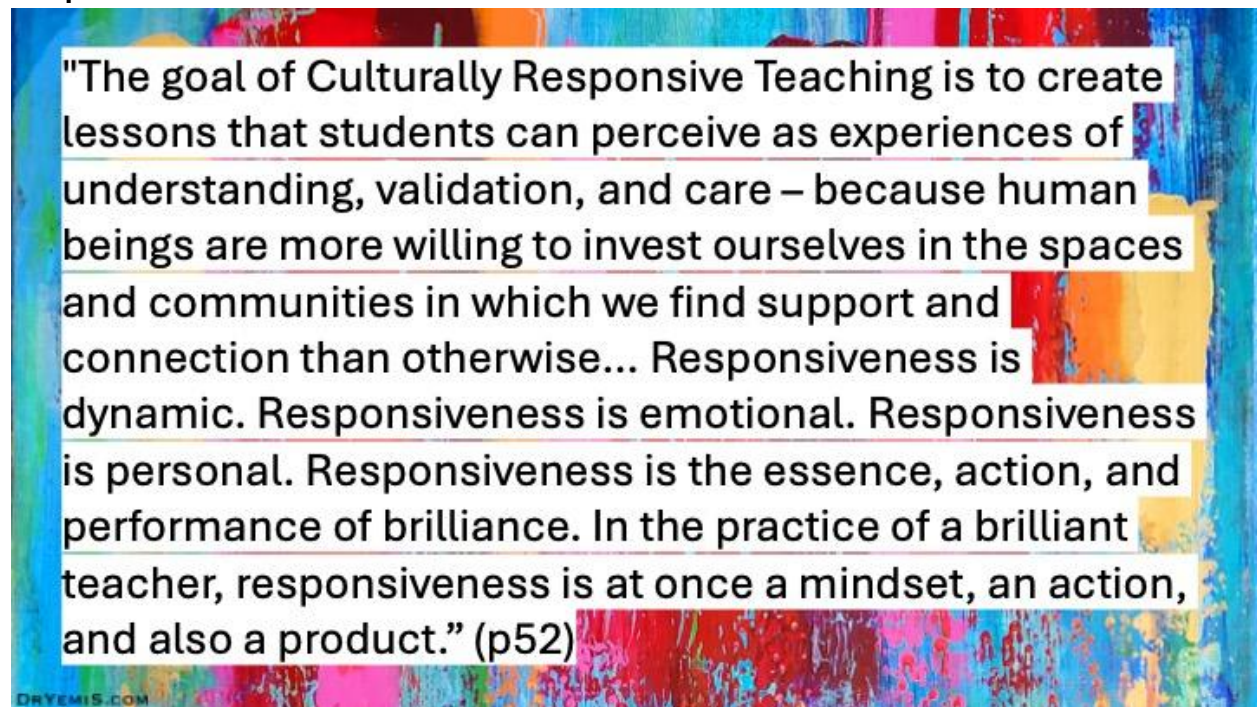
Prompt 1: The passage describes engagement as behavioral, affective, and cognitive. Which of these three dimensions has most influenced your understanding of effective teaching? How has your own experience as a learner shaped the way you define engagement?

Answer:

Prompt 2: The reading suggests that participation alone is not sufficient evidence of engagement. What evidence convinces you that students are emotionally invested and intellectually engaged in learning? How might this broader understanding of engagement influence the way you think about quality and effective teaching?

Answer:

Responsiveness



Prompt 1: Think about an educator who profoundly influenced your life. What made that person responsive to your needs? What did they understand, notice, or do that left a lasting impression? How has that experience shaped your own philosophy of responsiveness? In what ways do you hope your students experience you as a responsive educator?

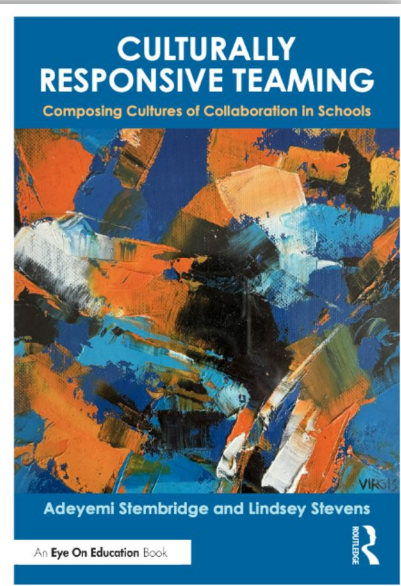
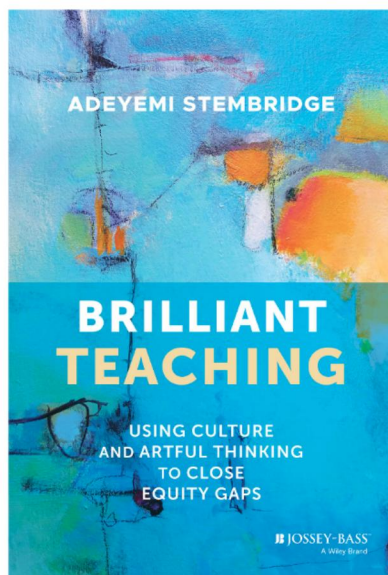
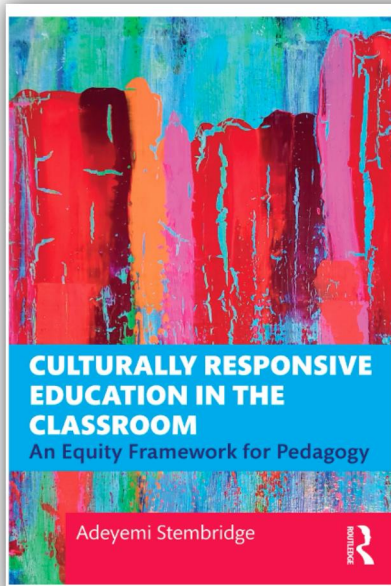
Answer:

Prompt 2: The reading suggests that students experience responsiveness through understanding, validation, and care. What do you think it means for responsiveness to be something students experience rather than something teachers intend? What does this idea suggest to you about the relationship between responsiveness and professional judgment?

Answer:

Reflection is where brilliant teaching begins. [The Brilliant Teaching app](#) helps you carry the same reflective thinking into the intentional design of learning experiences by guiding you through the five planning questions of the CRE mental model. **Scan the QR code or click the image below to explore the app.**

Stay Connected. [Join my newsletter to stay connected](#) and receive occasional updates from the Brilliant Teaching community.



Brilliant
Teaching

