CEIEC Professional Learning and Resource Notes are designed to support early childhood professionals to extend and enrich their professional knowledges and practices. They supplement the CEIEC's Professional Development & Projects On-line Resources that can be accessed via the CEIEC website.

**Asking critical questions**
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**Practicing critical reflection**
Here are some questions to prompt critical thinking on your teaching and learning for equity in early childhood.

- How do I currently attend to gender, ‘race’, cultural and socio-economic equity in my program or current workplace?
- Who benefits from my current practices and understandings? Do all children, parents and staff benefit equally?
- What knowledge do I have currently about gender, ‘race’, cultural and socio-economic equity in my program or current workplace?
- What assumptions am I making about gender, ‘race’, cultural and socio-economic equity in my program or current workplace?
- How do others in my current workplace understand and respond to the issues of gender, ‘race’, cultural and socio-economic equity in their daily work?
- How have I taken account of children’s perspectives and experiences on this issue? Do I know what the children understand about gender, ‘race’, culture and class?
- How have I taken account of parent’s perspectives and experiences on this issue? Do I know what the parents understand about gender, ‘race’, culture and class?
- What are the differences between how I understand the issues of gender, ‘race’, cultural and socio-economic equity and how others I work with understand them?
- Whose interests are served by how I currently understand and practice gender, ‘race’, cultural and socio-economic equity?
- How might I challenge my current understandings and practices and bring new insights to them?
- What in current understandings and practices might restrict the possibilities I have for working more equitably?
- What would I risk by working on a daily basis to promote gender, ‘race’, cultural and socio-economic equity in my program or current workplace?

**The theory behind the practice**
Critical reflection derives from a process known as practical or hermeneutical reasoning. Practical reasoning leads to morally wise judgements about what to do. It involves “making meaning through an act of interpretation, and thus providing a basis for making decision about action” (Grundy, 1987, p. 69). For example, questioning ‘How can we interpret this action, this behaviour?’ and ‘How can we interpret the meaning and significance of this action or behaviour?’.

It involves questioning norms of about how, why and in what way we should be involved in children’s learning.
Critical reflection involves doing this on a constant basis and always striving for increasingly wise judgement in the process of interpretation. It is assumed that the more you think and reflect on an issue, and understand the options involved and their consequences, the more likely that it is you can make a wise judgement. Searching for meaning and wisdom is an ongoing, daily process.

Practical reasoning generally involves exploring:
- What are the usual rules that guide action in this situation?
- Where do those rules come from? Are they the best rules for this situation?
- How relevant are they to this situation?
- What are the different ways in which I could act?
- Which is the most morally wise way in which to act?
- Who will benefit?
- Who should benefit?

The aim in practical reasoning is wisdom-in-action.

In the early childhood curriculum, this means that emphasis is placed on the process of deliberation rather than on a product at the end of the educational process. It is about how we make sense of our world. It is also about learning to evaluate competing ways of understanding our world and wise actions.

Practical reasoning becomes critical reflection when our evaluation of competing ways of understanding our world is placed in a historical and social context. A reminder about critical reflection:

Critical reflection involves more than knowledge of one’s values and understanding of one’s practice. It involves a dialectical criticism of one’s own values in a social and historical context in which the values of others are also crucial.


Learn more about how to practice critical reflection and its underlying theory by deepening your knowledge. You can do this by visiting the following web-sites

Useful reading


