Education is power. This is an empowering statement about education that I have seen affirmed throughout my college career and experiences. It implies that education has the power to break down the barriers that keep us from certain opportunities in life. As an educator, I hope for my students to see education as power which they will use to help break down the barriers in their lives while becoming life-long learners and growing as individuals.

The way I will inspire this transition of thinking is by encouraging authentic learning. I will make learning meaningful by using culturally responsive teaching, collaborative learning, and student-center lessons. In my classroom, I want my students to succeed in life, feel accepted, and persevere.

Culturally responsive teaching is an essential part of building relationships with my students and creating a classroom community. I am a role model to my students; a safe and welcoming classroom environment is essential. The different identities, religions, and cultural practices students bring will be loved and appreciated. Showing appreciation and love go beyond sticking posters on the wall for inclusion. It shows students their reflection and impact in our community. Our differences are what, strengthen our community and create unique relationships.

Furthering community in the classroom requires peer-to-peer interaction to reinforce collaborative learning. When using peer-to-peer interactions, correctly, students can learn vicariously through one another. In math, there is a misconception that you cannot make mistakes in front of others. A meaningful experience is when the classroom community encourages and supports mistakes. The interactions between students builds their identities as well as their peers. Rather than seeing mistakes as failures, students see unsuccessful attempts as part of the solution process. Students begin to reflect on their journey in growing their math self-esteem and identity. The mistakes and reflections made on the journey become more valuable.

Lastly, many students feel uninvolved and question what they are learning in math. Incorporating student-centered lessons allows students to take control of their learning. It promotes self-motivation and determination for learning. Encouraging praise and constructive feedback helps build students’ confidence and motivation to learn. I will implement differentiated instruction and clear learning objectives to give students access to their own learning and setting their goals for the day's lesson. I want students to feel confident in their learning and reflect on their growth in math. In math, the belief that getting the right answer is the “goal” is much more than that. It is about the journey.

Allowing my students to take control of their learning shows them the power of their education. Students can break barriers to opportunities previously unknown to them. Through culturally responsive teaching with collaborative learning and student-centered lessons, students will have the opportunity to build perseverance and acceptance through their learning.