Changing the Narrative: Teaching and learning through an equity lens

Session One

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Agenda

Review the collaborative work between Great Lakes Equity Center and Paramount School of Excellence

Discuss the meaning of equity in education

Examine the cultural nature of learning

Overview considerations for culturally responsive teaching
Our work together:

Survey staff dispositions, awareness and comfort with equity related practices

Engage staff in professional learning related to foundational equity principles and practices

Connect current school improvement work to equity

Facilitate the development of recommendations for the board for supporting equity-driven work
As demographics have changed within school communities and as the differences between the backgrounds of teaching staff and the students and families they serve continue to increase, educators have struggled with addressing the behavioral and learning needs of diverse student population for a variety of individual and systemic reasons.
Our “problem” in a nutshell

What we think
- Conscious and unconscious bias
- Solution: Provide a counter narrative

What we do
- Policies and practices
- Solution: Identify and change inequitable policies and practices
• when educational practices, policies, curricula, resources, and school cultures are representative of all students, such that each student has access to, participate and make progress in high quality learning experiences, regardless of her or his race, ses, gender, ability, religion affiliation, national origin, linguistic diversity, or other characteristics.
Time for a quiz!
1. Who are these people?

- Bill Gates
- Donald Trump
- Susanne Collins
- John Grisham
- Jackson Pollock
- Andy Warhol
- John W. Thompson
- Robert L. Johnson
- Octavia E. Butler
- Walter Mosley
- Jean – Michel Basquiat
- Diego Rivera
Time for a quiz!

1. Name 2 HBCUs
2. Name 2 Ivy League Institutions
3. Finish the line of this song: “Oh say can you see…”
4. Finish the line of this song: “Lift every voice and sing …”
What does the current narrative tell us about:

• Who contributes to society in:
  ▫ Science/technology
  ▫ Economic Growth
  ▫ Literature
  ▫ Arts

• Who collects the greatest share of public assistance dollars/resources?
• Who are the heroes and who are the villains?
• What is good and what is bad?
Teaching does not occur in a vacuum

Cultural Practices, Patterns and Histories

Racism and Discrimination

Economic Constraints

Past and Current Political Climate
Understanding the cultural nature of learning
The Cultural Nature of Learning

Cultural Histories

What people bring with them

What’s already there

The work people do together

Institutional Culture

The Culture We Create

Adapted From The Equity Alliance at ASU, 2011
• Children of color are bombarded with negative or limiting messages and perceptions about who they are and what they can do. The impact of these messages are significant and long lasting for both adults and students.
Internalized Negative Messages about Race and Behavior

Video Clips from “What would you do” & “A Girl Like Me!”
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Session Two

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Differences in referring behaviors by classroom teachers

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>White students are referred more for:</th>
<th>Black and Latino Students color referred more for:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>▪ Smoking</td>
<td>▪ Disrespect</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>▪ Vandalism</td>
<td>▪ Excessive Noise</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>▪ Leaving w/o permission</td>
<td>▪ Threat</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>▪ Obscene Language</td>
<td>▪ Loitering</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Skiba, 2008 Indiana University
Our Self Identities

Personal Identity – How we are shaped by our personal and social experiences, ethnicity, culture, gender, ability, social class, spiritual beliefs, sexual orientation etc. and how do we communicate our personal identity to others.

Social Identities – How we are defined by our group membership. We desire our identity to be both distinct from and positively compared with other groups.
Contributing to Student Under Performance: A Function of Stereotype Threat

In 1995, Claude Steele a social psychologist found that when a student’s social identity is attached to a negative stereotype, that student will tend to underperform in a manner consistent with the stereotype. He attributes the underperformance to the student’s anxiety that he or she will conform to the negative stereotype. The anxiety manifests itself in various ways, including distraction and increased body temperature, all of which diminish performance level.
How does this relate to students in schools?
What people bring with them

What’s already there

Cultural Histories

Institutional Culture

Adapted From The Equity Alliance at ASU, 2011
Cultural Practices related to authority and compliance

- **Home Culture**
  - Positive Regard and Trust
  - Authority
  - Compliance

- **School Culture**
  - Authority
  - Compliance
  - Positive Regard and Trust
Approach to Work Cultural Practices

**Home Culture**
- Improvisation
- Multi-tasking
- Relationship

**School Culture**
- Standardization
- Single-task activity
- Task completion
Communication Cultural Practices

Home Culture
- Story Telling
- Direct commands
- Authentic questioning
- High context
- Home language
- Casual register
- Simultaneous Conversation

School Culture
- Print Literacy
- Indirect commands
- Inauthentic questioning
- Low context
- English only
- Formal register
- Turn Taking

Home Culture vs. School Culture
The Culture We Create

The work people do together

Adapted From The Equity Alliance at ASU, 2011
Socio-Cultural Perspective

Interactions

- Social Context
- Environmental Cues
- Social Pressures
- Cultural Influences
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Session Three
Changing the narrative by creating a culture of equity through culturally responsive educational practices
Culturally Responsive Education is...

the overall **approach** one takes to delivering instruction, using curricular materials, making educational decisions, including student discipline; and interacting with students and their families.

the **lens** through which teachers see their students and their students' learning.

the **filter** through which teachers **listen** to how students express their needs and desires.
Create opportunities to learn

Reframe deficit thinking

Demonstrate a valuing of cultural and racial diversity

Negotiate agreements for cultural practices that create inclusive, respectful, supportive and responsive learning environments.
Considerations

Curriculum

- Multicultural perspectives
- Diverse cultural referents across content areas
- Relevant to students’ lived experiences
- Multiple means of presenting content
Considerations

Instruction

- Multiple ways students can express what they know
- Multiple ways of engaging students
- Build on students’ prior knowledge and lived experiences
- Differentiated based on student learning needs, interests and preferences
- Teacher use of realia and other “real life” culturally relevant examples
Considerations

Environment

- Culturally relevant and respectful environmental cues
- Supportive, affirming and responsive interactions
- Rigorous and highly engaging for all students
- Predictable but not rigid
- Highly communicative
Culturally Responsive Teaching

Awareness

Knowledge

Skills

Dispositions

Culturally Responsive Teaching

Practice
Equity-driven work requires processing and reflection

Thinking and talking are REQUIRED - A lot of the “work” in moving towards equity involves discussion and reflection.

Time and space is required for educators to engage in frank and open dialogue about race, culture, teaching and learning.

Achieving equity is a process, requiring ongoing work.
Welcome to the Great Lakes Equity Center, one of ten regional Equity Assistance Centers (EACs) funded by the U.S. Department of Education. We provide technical assistance resources and professional learning opportunities related to equity, civil rights, and systemic school reform throughout our six-state region of Illinois, Indiana, Michigan, Minnesota, Ohio, and Wisconsin. Please explore our website to learn more about what we do and how we may serve as a resource for you. We look forward to hearing from you!
Thank you for your participation!

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