Critical Self-Assessments of Educational Equity

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Goals for Today

• Explore the relationship between our theories about students and our behaviors

• Gain exposure to tools that can help us engage in designing and enacting equity (in classrooms and beyond)

Writing Prompt

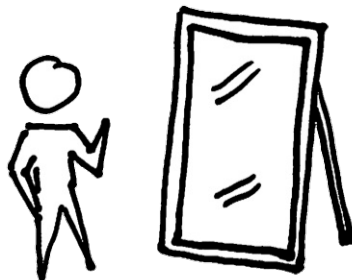# What does equity mean to you?

Introductions

• Name

• Department

• What does equity mean to you?

Framework for Moment-to-Moment Equity

• Equity is not only about access. Equity is about:

• Creating space and activities that leverage the strengths, expertise, stories and experiences that students bring from their homes and families.

• Looking out for our own biases (which are inevitable) and having a willingness to shift our behaviors in the moment.

• Paying attention to how our own behaviors co-construct classroom phenomena.

• Recognizing that students are brilliant! We are responsible for noticing and deepening that brilliance (Vossoughi, Escudé, Kong, and Hooper, 2013).

Framework for Assessment

• Surprise! You conduct assessment every single day.

• Think of assessment as the process of collecting information to make decisions.

• Let's shift the focus from assessing students to assessing ourselves, or reflecting on ourselves and our practices through intrapersonal awareness.
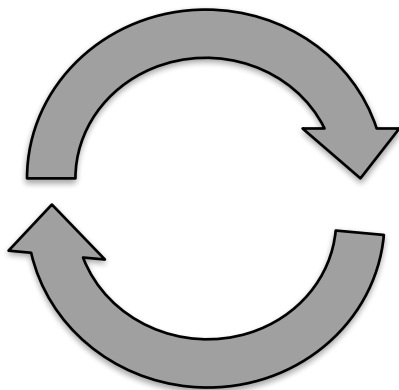
Who Cares about Theory?

Educators "have developed implicit theories about students: why they succeed, why they fail, and what, if anything, they can do to reverse failure" (Bensimon, 2007, p. 446).

Racial Projects (Omi and Winant, 1994)

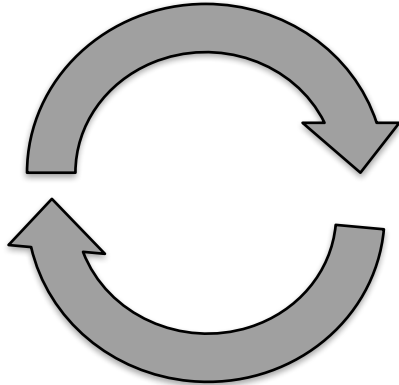How meaning is assigned to race (theories and assumptions about race)

This is also applicable to notions of diversity, inclusion, and learning (Gutiérrez, Paguyo, & Mendoza, 2012).

How meaning of race manifests in programs, policies, and behaviors

Theories about Learning

What kinds of meanings do you assign to learning?

How do your meanings about learning get manifested in your classroom?

Theories about Learning

Theories about Learning

#1: What kind of language do I use?

• This goes *beyond* being politically correct: language shapes how we perceive and interact with the world.

• Equity-oriented language can help us frame problems and solutions through systemic lenses.

• Deficit-oriented language position students as problems and pathologies that need to be fixed.

(Bensimon, 2007)

#1: What kind of language do I use?

Achievement gap versus "education debt"

(Ladson-Billings, 2006)

#2: What assumptions and biases do I have?

• Change starts within ourselves. These questions kindle intrapersonal awareness:

• What do I know about my ancestry, or the ancestry of my childhood/adolescent caregivers?

• Were racism, sexism, ableism, xenophobia, ageism, homophobia, classism, and/or other types of discrimination talked about in my home? Think about particular incidents when it was. What was the general tone? Was there tension around these discussions? Who initiated these discussions and who resisted?

• What is the gendered, raced, and classed composition in my classroom?

Adapted from Morrison and Wiley (2012)

#3: How do my theories, biases, and beliefs influence what I do?

• Our theories, biases, and beliefs impact and shape our actions.

• What am I doing in my classroom practice and why?

• How do I perceive my students? How do my students perceive my practice?

• How does the way in which I organize activities privilege certain students (or student characteristics) over others?

Adapted from Morrison and Wiley (2012)

#3: How do my theories, biases, and beliefs influence what I do?

• How do my biases come through in my practice?

• Who is resisting my practice? Why might they be resisting my practice?

• Who am I resisting? Why might I be resisting them?

Adapted from Morrison and Wiley (2012)

#4: How do I approach issues about race, ethnicity, and culture?

Essentialism   Cultural Practices

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Stereotypes and Overgeneralizations   Similarities and Variances

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Example of Essentialism

All Latinos and Latinas (Latinx) bring piñatas to parties.

Example of Cultural Practices

- Some Latinx bring piñatas to some parties.

- Some Latinx never bring piñatas to parties.

- Some Latinx bring piñatas to every party.

- And people who do not identify as Latino or Latina use piñatas to varying degrees.

Cultural Practices

"By focusing on the varied ways people participate in their community's activities, we can move away from the tendency to conflate ethnicity with culture"

(Gutiérrez and Rogoff, 2003, p. 21).

#5: What is my plan for enacting equity in my classroom (and beyond)? Summary of our Dialogues

• Find allies who can brainstorm how to change practices

• Make time to journal about the questions from previous slides

• Make explicit my teaching/learning philosophy and what types of resources/support I will provide to create robust educational spaces

• Give students options to pick the types of assignments they want to do (paper, youtube video, write a song, etc.)

• Create space for students to complete reflections immediately after or during a set period of time to allow for processing

• Use Socrative (free app) to poll students and incorporate their feedback

• Position our students as experts and learners while positioning ourselves as experts and learners, too

• Learn how to provide feedback productively based upon the audience

#5: What is my plan for enacting equity in my classroom (and beyond)? Summary of our Dialogues

• Brainstorm how to raise IE awareness across the university

• Consider providing mandatory IE training (like we do for active shooter training)

• Find people within our spheres of influence and strategize how we can find overlaps in our work and our values to help people look at IE through a research lens

• Work through Faculty Senate to identify how course evaluations can be updated to reflect IE questions

• Require IE training for all faculty

• Find academic units that are successfully infusing IE in their practices (leadership, promotion plans, etc)

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