

ALL GOOD PEOPLE:
PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT SESSIONS FOR EDUCATIONAL EQUITY
AT THE HIGH SCHOOL LEVEL

by

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This project is a series of materials for five professional development sessions. It is slated for use at the secondary level, with teachers in a district that has yet to create an equity framework or district-wide equity training. The project was created for two primary reasons: to address a gap in equity education among educators in a district that is growing in diversity; and to create a grassroots network of knowledgeable teachers who could support and sustain a district-wide equity initiative.

The project is contained in a Google Slides deck. Speaker notes are provided to assist in the delivery of materials and the leadership of each session. An appendix of supplementary materials is available. The five, hour-long sessions address building relationships, our changing district demographics, personal culture, "colorblindness," white privilege and windows/mirrors in curriculum and products. In each session, there are opportunities for relationship building among the team members, as well as discussion points and interactive features (video, student photography, mini webquests, gallery walks and school tours). After each session, group members complete an assignment related to the the monthly theme. Time is allotted at the following session to present work and reflect in pairs or as a group.

Each session builds on the extensive work that district teachers have already done with personalized learning. At each meeting, teachers are asked to approach personalization through an equity lens. They learn to see that the cultural experiences, family traits, values and languages our students bring to school are assets to learning. Equity work is personalization: it asks us to know our students, their strengths and challenges. It compels us to see their race and their culture, and to understand how those parts of their identity inform their learning. Equity work

asks us to examine our own perspectives for evidence of privilege and bias. It challenges us to really hear people who are different from us, and to adjust what we do as educators to meet their needs.

This project is heavily influenced by the work of Geneva Gay, Gloria Ladson-Billings and Sharroky Hollie; experts and pioneers in the culturally responsive teaching (CRT) movement. Culturally responsive teaching engages educators in the work of building bridges between their students' experiences, values, perspectives, cultures; the school community, and their content. The work of CRT helps educators to see beyond the colorblind instructional methods of the past, and move towards educational equity for all of the colors present in modern classrooms. Districts must carefully guide educators' work in this area by creating with them a purposeful, collaborative dialogue around the ideas of teaching in culturally responsive ways. Purposeful exploration of the key features of CRT, as well as opportunities for reflection and the development of one's cultural competence play significant roles in this project, and the development of culturally competent educators.

In the initial user group, teachers work together to coordinate commonly taught courses, and to explore issues pertinent to the school. These small-group professional development sessions will engage educators in the work of advancing their skills and knowledge through study, the exchanges of ideas and expertise, and dialogue. A small group is an appropriate place to begin this work, as it will challenge teachers to move out of their comfort zones. The limited size of the group will facilitate the building of relationships and will foster openness and vulnerability. Such work might be unsuccessful in a large-group setting, where it is harder to make personal connections. The work of enhancing their own skills leads educators to address

questions or issues that impact student achievement and school climate. The result is a stronger school community, one where the educators on staff continually hone their craft and model lifelong learning for their students.

Reflection and self-awareness are also key components of this project, supported by the work of Hole and McEntee, Costa and Kallick. Reflection occurs when we consider, think and wonder. It allows us to puzzle through an event, make connections and organize our thoughts. It also provides an opportunity to question our actions and determine what we could have done differently. At times, reflection can also act as a catalyst, encouraging us to turn the results of our pondering into action. As such, reflection can provide clarity and bring about much-needed change. In education, whether reflection happens independently or among colleagues, it has the power to impact instruction and effect positive change for students.

The immediate impact of this project will be felt in my district, as the materials and meeting outlines are used to educate staff. I am hopeful that, with the careful crafting of the messages in the materials, staff will take the work to heart. Each session was created not to make teachers feel badly about themselves or their work, but to raise awareness and to encourage people to think differently about personalizing with equity.

My hope is that the initial group will include educators from each department, so they can testify to the transformative power of undertaking equity work when they return to their colleagues. If we can already have knowledgeable, supportive staff in place when the district initiative rolls out, we have a much better chance of seeing positive change. In creating these sessions and accompanying materials, I want to develop a network of staff who become passionate about the work of addressing equity in our school. I envision this project also being a

model for others who need materials for similar groups. Especially as schools in less diverse areas find themselves facing greater numbers of students of color, the materials in this project could provide a starting point for their staff.

Project link to slide presentation:

<https://docs.google.com/presentation/d/e/2PACX-1vQKmiGKvQONDmDFIqNRqoLhDF6N7-ZuZOP6BU2SESHEQ92h6sE-A8VNKvmwYeeDc9IoCcr13OTY4Vdp/pub?start=false&loop=false&delayms=3000>

PDF link to slides, speaker notes and supplementary materials:

https://drive.google.com/file/d/1hjgIbziI0OtpvgcAHULwgCyDb2RG_HZRJ/view?usp=sharing

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