

Why We Need High Impact Teams (HITs)

By Barb Pitchford

Maximize the power of the collective expertise in your school through High Impact Teams.

HITs aren't just about planning and then planning some more, or about analyzing multiple on-going sets of data. HITs have a singular purpose, that is, building student ownership of learning.

So, every school has 'em, *teams*, that is. The question is are the teams collaborating purposefully? Effectively? Efficiently? Around those influences that have a direct and significant impact on student learning? Focusing each and every team meeting on strategically innovating around strengthening student efficacy and agency reaps big rewards for both the students and the teachers. Take a look:

- **Collective Teacher Efficacy (CTE)** has a *1.44 effect size. CTE is one of the few things that has the potential to mitigate the effects of poverty.
- **Assessment Capable Learners (ACL)** has a *1.33 effect size. When students can self-assess, that is, they know where they're going, where they are in the process of getting there and know their next learning step(s), they OWN their learning.

Teams are a very big deal. '*We are definitely smarter than me*' and not just in education. Google studied teaming and found, not surprisingly, that working effectively together can reap powerful results.

Effective teams

- innovate faster
- see mistakes quickly
- find better solutions
- get better results

- have higher job satisfaction

Schools don't improve one teacher at a time nor one principal at a time. Teams are the unit of change in a school. Schools improve from within through highly effective learning teams. When teachers and leaders collaborate around high impact practices, e.g., student to student feedback (peer review), teacher clarity, the formative process, etc., the collective expertise within the school strengthens. When teachers strengthen their practices together, students are always the winners.

Schools that have created and nurtured a collaborative culture know the immense value of effective teaming. And savvy leaders know it takes committed leadership to strengthen and sustain healthy teams.

Two things to remember:

1. **Collaboration is a skill** and because of that, it takes practice, feedback, and facilitation. In other words, you don't go to a workshop and come away being 'good' at collaboration. There's sweat equity in collaboration.
2. Without **relational trust**, robust collaboration cannot exist. Period.

What does it take? We have identified five critical components of "Rockstar Teams"

- **TRUST** – first and foremost, psychological safety to share challenges, innovations, failures, and wins.
- **PURPOSE** – Clear goals and worthwhile purpose. This is not a top-down model of agendas and notes. High Impact Teams share a common belief in all students and an unrelenting focus on strengthening student efficacy and agency.
- **SUPPORT** – administrative support and attention, protected time provides the setting for collaborative inquiry.
- **TRAINED PEER FACILITATOR** – collaboration is a developed skill over time and requires a skilled peer facilitator to ensure that strategic protocols are followed for depth and efficiency.
- **COLLECTIVE ACTION** – highly effective teams are doers, not just talkers. They are not 'collaborators'. They are risk-takers and innovators. They design strategies in response to students' learning needs. They walk out the door ready to roll.

- <https://www.thecorecollaborative.com/post/why-we-need-high-impact-teams-hits-1>

Speaking Up Without Tearing Down

A veteran human rights educator explains the value of teaching students to call each other in rather than out.

<https://www.tolerance.org/magazine/spring-2019>

Guiding Instead of Dragging

In conversations and debates about social justice issues, insisting someone take responsibility when they say or do something hurtful—regardless of their intent—is a common way to protect vulnerable communities and individuals. It's often necessary, but not every correction allows both parties to move forward. Calling out happens when we point out a mistake, not to address or rectify the damage, but instead to publicly shame the offender. In calling out, a person or group uses tactics like humiliation, shunning, scapegoating or gossip to dominate others.

In our society, call-outs have become a way of life. They are generally done publicly, either in person or online. Extreme calling out is when a person or a group expresses their disagreement cruelly, sometimes grandstanding. Fearing they may be considered politically backward if they don't prove their "wokeness" on trending social justice issues, witnesses to the conflict may pile on while bystanders silently withdraw.

Calling in is a technique that *does* allow all parties to move forward. It's a concept created by human-rights practitioners to challenge the toxicity of call-out culture. Calling in is speaking up without tearing down. Instead of shaming someone who's made a mistake, we can patiently ask questions to explore what was going on and why the speaker chose their harmful language.

Call-ins are agreements between people who work together to consciously help each other expand their perspectives. They encourage us to recognize our requirements for growth, to admit our mistakes and to commit to doing better. Calling in cannot minimize harm and trauma already inflicted, but it can get to the root of why the injury occurred, and it can stop it from happening again.

Calling in is not for everyone or every circumstance. It's not fair, for example, to insist that people hurt by cruel or careless language or actions be responsible for the personal growth of those who have injured them; calling in should not demand involuntary emotional labor.

Calling in is also not a useful response to those who intentionally violate standards of civil conversation. When powerful people use bigotry, fear and lies to attack others, calling out can be a valuable tool, either for the individuals they seek to oppress or for bystanders who choose to interrupt the encounter. When people knowingly use stereotypes or dehumanizing metaphors to

describe human beings, their actions victimize targets and potentially set them up for violence. Calling out may be the best response to those who refuse to accept responsibility for the harm they encourage or who pretend they are only innocently using their right to free speech.

But, if call-ins can occur without demanding undue emotional labor or allowing space for hateful behavior, this approach offers a way forward that increases the potential for learning—particularly in activist and academic spaces. This practice works especially well when allies call one another in or when leaders, such as teachers, use it to model speaking up without losing the opportunity for learning. By teaching our students how to call one another in, we're providing them the tools and skills they need to gather up those who share their privileges, to offer patience and grace when they can, and to facilitate growth—so others won't have to.

How to Start a Call-in Conversation

"I need to stop you there because something you just said is not accurate."

"I'm having a reaction to that comment. Let's go back for a minute."

"Do you think you would say that if someone from that group was with us in the room?"

"There's some history behind that expression you just used that you might not know about."

"In this class, we hold each other accountable. So we need to talk about why that joke isn't funny."

In a classroom with a call-in culture, for example, a white student denying white privilege by pointing out how hard his parents worked is regarded first as a classmate who's not understanding, not as a member of a privileged class refusing to acknowledge his advantages. The student's statement offers an opportunity for peers to teach one another, for example, by asking if he has ever had the experience of being stopped by the police for no reason while walking down the street. This question—a form of calling in—encourages the student to rethink his position. It highlights the experience of the student rather than labeling him with an identity he's not open to. Most importantly, it helps clarify a key misunderstanding by helping show the student that privilege doesn't necessarily mean a lavish lifestyle, and that privilege and hard work aren't mutually exclusive. Calling in is not a guarantee that everyone will joyfully work together. It is simply the extension of grace, the opportunity to grow and to share learning and responsibility for each other.

Building a Call-In Culture

Calling someone in effectively requires preparation. The first step for educators is a self-assessment to prepare ourselves for effective engagements. This inventory might include writing and practicing some sentence starters, taking stock of which students tend to trigger or irritate us, and checking in with ourselves daily to assess the status of our emotional bandwidth. While class discussions offer ample opportunities for calling students in, the technique shouldn't just be reactive. There are many

ways that educators can create a space where calling in is the norm, where students feel comfortable calling one another in and where they don't shut down when they themselves are called in by their peers.

PRACTICE CALLING IN

When someone is called in, they may still have the same reactions as if they were called out. They may feel panicked, ashamed, combative, upset or attacked. But letting students practice calling their peers in—and being called in—helps them see that mistakes can be an opportunity to learn something new and get a fresh perspective. When we let students practice calling in, we teach them how to distinguish between people who are intentionally hurtful and those who are trying to figure out how to understand or talk about differences.

DISCUSS CALL-OUT CULTURE

One way to help students distinguish calling in from calling out is to ask what call-out culture looks like for them. You can also ask them to list and define specialized terms commonly used to justify call-outs like “trigger” or “microaggression.” Take time to discuss these terms. For example, you can explain that—despite how the word is casually used today—being “triggered” means being trapped in the memory of a past trauma, not just feeling uncomfortable. Ask students to consider the difference between aggressive behavior and a microaggression—both in terms of intent and impact. Explain that, if no one calls in an offender about a microaggression, they only have their own intentions to rely on going forward and will likely offend others. Talking about call-out culture before anyone is called in or out can help students understand why calling in is part of your classroom expectations.

You can continue this conversation by asking students to compare the effects of call-outs and call-ins. Calling out is intended to shame, encouraging others to exclude the person called out without any discussion of details that may shed light on what the conflict may actually be. Calling people out shuts down listening and escalates the conflict. Calling in prevents differences in understanding from escalating into conflict. It means exploring the underlying issues precipitating a situation. Given the difference in results, you may ask students to contemplate why so many people choose to participate in call-out culture.

Learning about the ways in which they are privileged doesn't need to be an exercise in guilt and shame for students. Learning to call one another in—and to respond to being called in with a sincere desire to do and be better—can help students feel good about committing themselves to a more just world and gives them another tool to build it.

Stop Saying “That’s So Gay!”: 6 Types of Microaggressions That Harm LGBTQ People

[HTTPS://PSYCHOLOGYBENEFITS.ORG/2014/02/07/ANTI-LGBT-MICROAGGRESSIONS/](https://psychologybenefits.org/2014/02/07/anti-lgbt-microaggressions/)

By **Kevin L. Nadal**, PhD (**Associate Professor of Psychology**, John Jay College of Criminal Justice – City University of New York)

When I was a little kid, I used to hear my brothers, cousins, and friends say things like “That’s so gay!” on a pretty regular basis. I would usually laugh along, hoping with all my might that they didn’t know my secret. My parents and other adults in my life would tell me things like “Boys don’t cry” or “Be a man!” which essentially was their way of telling me that being emotional was forbidden or a sign of weakness.

When I was a teenager, there were a few boys at my high school who ridiculed me, almost everyday. When I walked by them in the halls, they called me a “faggot” or screamed my name in a flamboyant tone. I learned to walk by without showing any reaction; I could not let them know that it bothered me, or else I would be proving to them that I was indeed gay. I didn’t tell anyone about the bullying (not my parents, teachers, or anyone) because admitting that I was being teased for being gay would mean that I was admitting to being gay. I had never felt so alone in my life.

In college, it got a little better. While I was no longer harassed about my closeted sexual orientation, I didn’t have any friends that were openly gay and most of my friends didn’t have any either. Some of my friends and family members still made occasional homophobic jokes in front of me. While many loved ones later told me that they suspected that I was gay, no one gave me any reason to believe that they were gay-friendly. So I just remained in the closet a few more years until I couldn’t take it any more.

In retrospect, I had a very difficult time accepting my gay identity, because of the microaggressions that I experienced throughout my life. **Microaggressions are the everyday encounters of subtle discrimination that people of various marginalized groups experience throughout their lives** (Sue et al., 2007). Some microaggressions are unconscious (i.e., the perpetrator doesn’t even know they did something) while some microaggressions may be unintentional (i.e., the perpetrator may be aware of their actions, but may not realize the negative impact they may have on people).

One of the reasons why it was important for me to study microaggressions against lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer and questioning (LGBTQ) people was because I knew that this type of discrimination existed and because I hypothesized that

they had a significant impact on the lives of LGBTQ people, particularly on their mental health and identity development. I collaborated with two fellow psychologist colleagues, Dr. David Rivera and Dr. Melissa Corpus, and we theorized the various types of microaggressions that affect LGBTQ people (see Nadal et al., 2010). For the past several years, my research team and I interviewed all kinds of LGBTQ people and they all reported that microaggressions are very common in their lives.

Here are a few examples:

1) Use of heterosexist or transphobic terminology:

These types of microaggressions occur when someone uses disparaging heterosexist or transphobic language towards, or about, LGBTQ persons. For me, it is anytime someone says "That's so gay" and "No homo" in my presence; for my transgender friends, it could be anytime someone says "tranny", "she-male", or other derogatory terms. In hip hop, it is common for rappers to unapologetically use the word "faggot", which then gives permission for kids to use the term unapologetically in everyday life. Maybe this is why 9 out of 10 LGBTQ high school students report experiencing harassment at school and why 2/3 of them say they feel unsafe (Gay, Lesbian, and Straight Education Network, 2010).

2) Endorsement of heteronormative culture and behaviors:

These kinds of microaggressions take place when an LGBTQ person is assumed to be heterosexual, or when they are encouraged to act in gender-conforming ways. I know that I've been told that I shouldn't be so flamboyant or that I should act "more masculine". As a child, my family forced me to play sports, yet sighed when I played with Barbie. As a young adult, when someone asked me "if I had a girlfriend" or "a wife or kids", they were essentially telling me that they expected me to be heterosexual. Heterosexuals don't realize that it is common for them to assume someone is straight, unless proven otherwise.

3) Assumption of universal LGBTQ experience:

These sorts of microaggressions transpire when heterosexual people assume that all LGBTQ persons are the same. For instance, sometimes, people tell me I'm not "a typical gay guy" because of some stereotype I don't fulfill; other times, people assume that I would automatically get along with another gay guy simply because we are attracted to the same gender. Lesbian women have reported that people presume that they should all be masculine, while bisexual people have reported that they are often stereotyped as being "confused" (Nadal, Issa, et al., 2011). Many transgender women have reported being arrested and falsely accused of being sex workers (Nadal et al.,

2012), demonstrating that these biases and microaggressions could even have legal implications.

4) Discomfort or disapproval of LGBTQ experience:

These types of microaggressions include instances when LGBTQ people are treated with awkwardness, condemnation, or both. This takes place any time a couple looks at my fiancée and me in disgust as we hold hands in public. It also occurs when people proclaim that my sexual orientation is “an abomination” or that a transgender person’s gender identity is “unnatural.” One recent example of this in the media is the story of a transgender scientist who was outed and ridiculed for her gender identity by a journalist. While the article was supposed to focus on one of her inventions, the writer chose to instead focus the article on her gender identity. While instances like this may occur for many LGBTQ people, this story is especially tragic because the transgender woman who was targeted eventually committed suicide.

5) Assumption of sexual pathology or abnormality:

These microaggressions come about when heterosexual people consider LGBTQ people to be sexual deviants or overly sexual. One example of this on a systemic level is the federal ban for any man who has had sex with another man to donate blood. So even if a man is HIV-negative and has been in a monogamous relationship all of his life, he is considered to be at risk and therefore an ineligible donor. In the media, an example includes one time when Paris Hilton said that gay men are “disgusting” and “probably have AIDS” or recently when The Bachelor said that gay people were “more ‘pervert’ in a sense.” In everyday life, a common occurrence is when people assume that LGBTQ people would be child molesters and are wary about LGBTQ teachers or babysitters. Anytime that any straight man assumes that I would hit on them, not only are they mistakenly flattering themselves, they are communicating that they think that all gay men can’t keep their hands to themselves.

6) Denial of bodily privacy:

These kinds of microaggressions occur toward transgender people primarily and include interactions in which others feel entitled or comfortable to objectify transgender bodies. For instance, when Katie Couric recently asked Carmen Carrera about her genitals, she inappropriately and invasively asked a question that would never been asked toward a cisgender person (i.e., a person whose gender identity matches their birth sex). How would you feel if someone asked you about your genitalia on national television?

Why does this matter?

All of these microaggressions have a significant impact on people's lives. While some of these experiences may seem brief and harmless, **many studies have found that the more that people experience microaggressions, the more likely they are to report symptoms of depression, psychological distress, and even physical health issues.** For instance, I recently published a study that found that the more racial microaggressions that people of color experience, the more likely they are to also report depressive symptoms and a negative view of the world (Nadal et al., 2014). In another study, LGBTQ participants described that when they experienced microaggressions, they felt depressed, anxious, and even traumatized (Nadal, Wong, et al., 2011). Furthermore, given that LGBTQ youth are known to have a higher prevalence of substance abuse, homelessness, and suicide (see Nadal, 2013 for a review), it is even more important for us to try to minimize microaggressions and make the world a better place for them.

So what can you do?

Well, first of all, let's get everyone to stop saying things like "That's so gay!" or "That's so queer!" If something is weird, say it's "weird"! Why do you have to bring LGBTQ people into it? Correct others when they use homophobic/ transphobic language or endorse LGBTQ stereotypes. Let's teach our kids to love people, instead of hating them. We have the power to transform this next generation of young people to be open-minded and awesome. Let's do this together.

Second, let's admit when we commit microaggressions, learn from the wrongdoing, and apologize. We all make mistakes, consciously and not, and we need to own up to them when we do. Listen to what they are trying to tell you and try not to be defensive. The worst thing that we can do is to deny that someone is hurt or offended by something we said or did; in fact, invalidating their experience could be considered a microaggression itself.

For example, when [Piers Morgan](#) interviewed transgender author Janet Mock on his show this past week, an onscreen description of Ms. Mock read "was a boy until age 18." Meanwhile, during the show, his Twitter account read: "How would you feel if you found out the woman you are dating was formerly a man?" Ms. Mock, along with many transgender supporters and cisgender allies, replied to Mr. Morgan via Twitter, calling him out on his bias. Instead of recognizing that he may have offended people, Mr. Morgan reacted with tweets like:

While I don't believe that Mr. Morgan was intentionally trying to be hurtful (in fact, he likely views himself as a transgender ally), his focus on Ms. Mock's birth sex and the sensationalizing of her transition is a common microaggression that transgender people experience. Perhaps if he could fully empathize with transgender people and the dehumanization they experience daily, he would have not gotten so defensive. In fact,

he might have been able to apologize and have demonstrated a true teachable moment.

And, finally, for my LGBTQ brothers and sisters, I leave you with a couple of things. First, the next time you experience a microaggression, know that you are not alone. Sadly, these are common experiences of our lives, but I hope you find some comfort in knowing there are millions of people who can relate to you. Second, let's try not to commit microaggressions against each other either. Our community has been through a lot and we really need to work together.

Biography:

Dr. Kevin Nadal is an Associate Professor of Psychology at John Jay College of Criminal Justice – City University of New York, the Vice President of the Asian American Psychological Association, and the author of *“That’s So Gay!” Microaggressions and the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender Community*. He also has a new talk show – “Out Talk with Kevin Nadal”.

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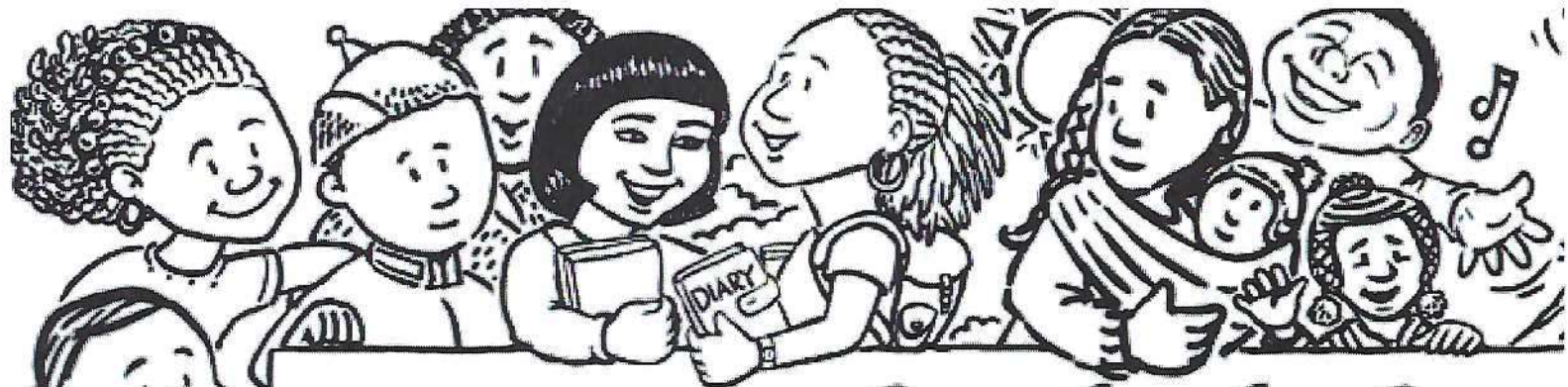
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Virtues: The Gifts of Character

Assertiveness

Caring

Cleanliness

Commitment

Compassion

Confidence

Consideration

Cooperation

Courage

Courtesy

Creativity

Detachment

Determination

Diligence

Enthusiasm

Excellence

Flexibility

Forgiveness

Friendliness

Generosity

Integrity

Joyfulness

Justice

Kindness

Love

Loyalty

Moderation

Modesty

Orderliness

Patience

Peacefulness

Perseverance

Purposefulness

Reliability

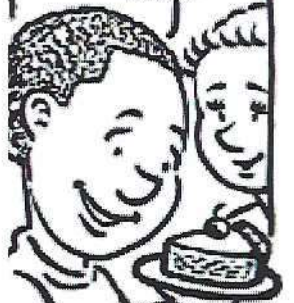
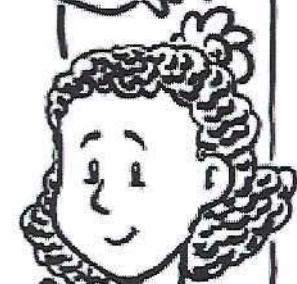
Respect

Responsibility

Self-Discipline

Service

Tact



Head, Heart & Hands: Three Conversations about Equity Education

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Abstract

This article outlines three key conversations about equity education that foster the perspective transformation of university pre-service teachers. The first conversation is about the head and relates to how we make sense of the world and how we have been socialized. The head conversation encourages us to learn differently and to question how we know what we know. The second conversation is about the heart. This conversation asks us to critique power and privilege in our classrooms. The third conversation is about the hands. This conversation provides a way for teachers to be inclusive by providing education for and about those who may be marginalized in our classrooms.

Introduction

I teach inclusive education in a small faculty in Southwestern Manitoba, Canada where I teach about how to support students who are outside of the mythical norm. These conversations are necessary and important, given the growing disparity between the “haves” and “have nots” in Canada (Wilkinson & Pickett, 2009). During all of my courses, I try to have three conversations with my students about equity that are based upon the metaphor of head, heart, and hands. The head conversation encourages us to learn differently and to question how we know what we know. The second conversation is about the heart. This conversation asks us to critique power and privilege in our classrooms. The third conversation is about the hands. This conversation provides a way for teachers to be inclusive by providing education for and about those who may be marginalized in our classrooms. All three conversations about creating equity in the classroom require that students understand how oppression functions. The purpose of this paper is to discuss three conversations about equity education that are important for educators to hear so that they will have more insight into how oppression operates and how to lessen it. It is my hope that these new insights will assist teachers to generate effective strategies for creating equity in classrooms, schools and society.

Oppression may be understood to be the “unquestioned norms, habits, and symbols, in the assumptions underlying institutional rules and the collective consequences of following those rules” (Young, 1990, p. 41). Equity education may be understood to be a broad collection of pedagogies constructed from a wide array of critical influences including critical race theory, feminism (poststructural and psychoanalytic strands), cultural and multicultural studies, post-colonial theories, and queer theories (Kumashiro, 2001, 2006). There is not just one type of inequity and, therefore, there is not just one type of equity education that serves to dismantle it. In this paper I speak from my own understanding of equity education and draw extensively from Kevin Kumashiro’s (1999, 2000a, 2000b, 2001, 2002a, 2002b, 2004, 2006, 2007, 2008, 2009, 2010, 2012) work. Through equity education, different research orientations and pedagogical approaches are brought together by the borrowing of parts for the purpose of understanding oppression and eliminating hegemonic injustice by committing to “social change through education” (Schick, 2010b, p. 47). That being said, careful attention is paid not to group all marginalized groups under one banner; the key is to provide a way to understand oppression that honours each marginalized identification and critique.

Equity education is not about a belief in identifying and changing the defective character of advantaged students, but rather about challenging “hegemonic meaning-making and socialization processes” that are problematic (Montgomery, 2013, p. 15). In this way, equity educators emphasize an “inside-out” approach. This approach works first through interpersonal change, how we regard others and make sense of the world, and then through systemic change, changing the social structures, rules and procedures, all the while being aware that societal change also fosters interpersonal change. Ultimately, the goal of equity education is to change “the taken-for-granted manner of unequal power relations that organize and are organized through large and small discourses of social, material and ideological exchange” (Schick, 2010b, p. 48).

However, lessening oppression is a very difficult, if not impossible task to achieve, given the complexity of oppression and our very implication in its functioning. Kumashiro (2004) wrote:

The reason we fail to do more to challenge oppression is not merely that we do not know enough about oppression, but also that we often do not *want* to know more about oppression. It is not our lack of knowledge but our resistance to knowledge and our desire for ignorance that often prevent us from changing the oppressive status quo. (p. 25)

Understanding and challenging our resistance to knowing offers a space to trouble taken-for-granted knowledge and to critique unearned power and privilege. Equity education that seeks to create social change thus has the potential to be transformative for those involved in learning about it.

Conversation One: Our Head

The conversation that focuses on our head is about understanding how we make sense of the world and how we have been socialized. Understanding the social construction of knowledge and difference, as well as identity and power are important components that lay the epistemological framework for equity education. Although some practitioners are reluctant to value theoretical frameworks, it is vital for educators to understand that equity education is not about simply acquiring more knowledge, but about “troubling” taken-for-granted knowledge that we already that keep inequity in play. Thus, this conversation encourages educators to examine knowledge in a more critical fashion. This conversation is based on a poststructural philosophy and provides a means to understand oppression as situated, dynamic, and evolving; and to understand power as relational; and knowledge as local, partial and historical. It also moves from understanding the individual as a Subject that “exhibits agency as it constructs itself by taking up available discourses and cultural practices and [is] a subject that, at the same time, is subjected, forced into subjectivity by those same discourses and practices” (St. Pierre, 2000, p. 500-2). There are a number of concepts that I discuss in some detail because they are important concepts in equity education. These concepts are ‘Othering and interlocking oppressions,’ ‘troubling knowledge,’ ‘power relations, contested knowledge and the social construction of identity,’ ‘creating tension,’ and ‘working through resistance.’

Othering and Interlocking Oppressions

Those who teach equity education use the term “Other” to collectively identify those who have historically and are currently denied power and privilege and to signify their common connection to oppression. It is the identification of oppression as an “interlocking system of intersecting hierarchies based on race, ethnicity, class, age, gender, sexual orientation, ability status, nationality,” and not as isolated concepts, that is key to the success of equity education (Schmidt, 2005, p. 117). Equity education aims to bring people together to recognize Othering that is troubling for us all; to examine Othering that one may have been unfamiliar with or that may be hidden within our own subconscious (Carlson Berg, 2012; Trepagnier, 2006).

Equity education also insists in honouring each of the socially and historically constructed marginalized identifications while recognizing the interlocking/intersecting complexities of social oppression. In order to ensure that no one loses their “place at the table,” separate time and effort is still needed to teach about race, class, gender, sexuality, and other currently marginalized identifications so that equity education does not fold back into the same hegemonic processes that it seeks to dismantle by amalgamating those who are marginalized into one “essentialized” group.

Troubling Knowledge

Youdell (2006) wrote, “serious attention is increasingly being paid to the problematic relationship between the ‘knowing’ subjects implicit to empirical research and the ‘troubled’ subjects of post-structural (sic) writing” (p. 514). Troubling knowledge involves a poststructural turn which has us “examine any commonplace situation, any ordinary event or process, in order to think differently about that occurrence – to open up what seems ‘natural’ and ‘normal’ to other possibilities” (St. Pierre, 2000, p. 479). Equity education provides students with opportunities to trouble knowledge they already have in ways that disrupt, discomfort and problematize what they take for granted (Kumashiro, 2009). Students are challenged to learn about how they may “resist those discourses that erase difference and naturalize disadvantage” (Parkes, Gore, & Ellsworth, 2010, p. 178).

A familiar thread in equity education is questioning and challenging common sense (accepted) knowledge, and the identifications that are constructed from it.

Kumashiro (2000b) states, "Changing oppression requires disruptive knowledge, not simply more knowledge" (p.34). It is also necessary for people to examine their own self-interests and to acknowledge bias that can be introduced into the classroom in order to engage in "pedagogy about the unequal social, political and economic realities that shape their lives" (Schick, 2010b, p. 51). This is a difficult task, given dominant discourses of meritocracy and the sacrosanct belief in individual autonomy that are a part of students' social experience, including school, and that keep unearned privilege in place (Schick, 2010b). Troubling knowledge may be accomplished by a "pedagogy of positionality that engages both students and teachers in recognizing and critiquing how one is positioned and how one positions others in social structures" (Kumashiro, 2000b, p. 45).

For Kumashiro (2009), troubling knowledge means "to work paradoxically with knowledge, to simultaneously see what different insights, identities, practices, and changes it makes possible while critically examining that knowledge (and how it came to be known) to see what insights and the like it closes off" (p. 127). Kumashiro (2004) acknowledges that students need to be vigilant when learning: "How does this reading challenge stereotypes? How does it reinforce it? What does it leave unchallenged? What does it raise critical questions about? Whom does it leave invisible? Whom does it call on to contest their own privileges?" (p. 113). From this perspective, knowledge needs to be contested and continually interrogated. Equity education attempts to challenge our "passion for ignorance" and to facilitate 'unlearning' common sense social constructions that continue to do harm (Britzman, 1998, p. 57). This type of education does not require students to 'think like this' but instead to 'think differently' (Kumashiro, 2009).

Understanding Power Relations, Contested Knowledge and the Social Construction of Identity

Understanding power relations and truth regimes is an important aspect of equity education (Schick, 2010a). The concept of power relations, in some form or another, informs much of the way that Othering and oppression can be understood to operate, as it can "account for systematic asymmetry between groups of people" (McLaren, 2002, p. 36). The concept of power relations is based on the scholarship of Foucault who understood power relations to be a productive force in creating who we are (Dreyfus & Rabinow, 1982). Foucault saw power as largely relational (St. Pierre, 2000). Foucault also moves away from seeing power as top-down, repressive, limiting and controlling. According to McLaren (2002), Foucault contends that power "cannot be possessed because it is relational, shifting, mobile, and unstable.... Individuals do not *have* power, rather they participate in it" (p. 38).

Foucault (1980) wrote:

Power must be understood in the first instance as the multiplicity of force relations immanent in the sphere in which they operate and which constitute their own organization; as the process which, through ceaseless struggles and confrontations, transforms, strengthens, or reverses them; as the support which these force relations find in one another, thus forming a chain or system, or on the contrary, the disjunctions and contradictions which isolate them from one another; and lastly, as the strategies in which they take effect, whose general design or institutional crystallization is embodied in the state apparatus, in the formulation of the law, in the various social hegemonies. (p. 92)

From the perspective of equity education, power is re-conceived to be ubiquitous, discursive, positive and productive (McLaren, 2002). Of interest to equity educators are asymmetrical relations of power that lead to domination. Domination occurs when "relations of power ossify, lock together and become fixed" (McLaren, 2002, p. 166). Equity education seeks to make these fixed unequal relations of power visible and address them.

Foucault destabilizes our modern structural understandings of power as he connects power and knowledge together. Power/knowledge is used "to signify that power is constituted through accepted forms of knowledge, scientific understanding and 'truth'" (Gaventa, 2003, para. 3). Ideas taken-for-granted as truth (truth regimes) are understood to be socially and historically constructed through the interaction of power/knowledge (McLaren, 2002). From this perspective, power becomes implicated in the production of knowledge and what constitutes knowledge we take-for-granted: "power produces knowledge, and in turn, knowledge produces power" (McLaren, 2002, p. 39). As well, "power is tolerable only on condition that it mask a substantial part of itself. Its success is proportional to its ability to hide its own mechanisms" (Foucault, 1980, p. 86).

One's identity is constituted and constructed in resistance to power relations (Foucault, 1980). We exist together through a multitude of complementing and competing relational contexts, and if relational power is truly effective, then we are likely unaware of its very existence.

We advocate for certain perspectives that serve our desires. However, there are a number of other competing individual, institutional, discursive, practices and objects, which may also become ‘crystallized’ together over time, that are involved in relations of power, which impede or complement our social life. So, although we can act within our own will, we are still subject to the destabilizing effects of power relations. Understanding power relations in this way may lead to disrupting the “taken-for-granted assumptions of students and teacher self-making and self-determinism [where] the problem of inequality is reduced to the bad choices of individuals and groups compared to the good choices and talent of others” (Schick, 2010b, p. 51). The modern notion of individual autonomy is challenged and complicated in equity education in order to understand the social and historical creation of the “subject.”

Foucault’s ideas about the analytics of power, including disciplinary power, form the basis for understanding the social construction of identity. From this perspective, knowledge is constructed through discourse and social practices, and that what is taken as truth is contestable because it is a social and historical creation. This theory explains how “each person perceives the world differently and actively creates their own meanings from events” (Burr, 2003, p. 19). Our identities are always “becoming.” As Burr (2003) wrote, although the person, the subject, is constituted by discourse, this subject is yet capable of critical historical reflection and is able to exercise some choice with respect to the discourses and practices that it takes up for its own use. Within this view, change is possible because human agents, given the right circumstances, are capable of critically analysing the discourses which frame their lives, and to claim or resist them according to the effects they wish to bring about. (p. 121)

The social construction of identity is an important aspect of equity education because its focus is on identity being constructed through discourse represented by texts, images and pictures.

Learning to “trouble normal” may free teachers from their blind adherence to pedagogical dogma based on their underlying beliefs, values and assumptions. Understanding what constitutes and constructs us is important to educators and provides a way forward in the practice of freedom (Parkes, Gore & Ellsworth, 2010).

Creating Tension

Kumashiro (2009) speaks to the notion of creating tension by troubling common sense learning, as well as understanding knowledge as both partial (biased and incomplete) and political. Students are taught to question what they may have unconditionally accepted as common sense knowledge so that they can question how common sense knowledge makes certain ways of knowing possible and impossible. Equity education seeks to find hybrid zones where “our multiple strands of Self and Other rub up against each other in unexpected ways” (Scholl, 2001, p. 144). Bhabha calls this the “interstitial or in-between perspective” where learning takes place in more discomfoting ways (Scholl, 2001, p. 144). It is about challenging people to “construct disruptive, different ‘knowledges’” (Kumashiro, 2000b, p. 43). Teaching in this way serves to create uncertainty, difference, and the possibility of finding that change is constant. However, learning that there is this tension can be an arduous journey for the student and teacher.

Educators should expect their students to enter crisis. And, since this crisis can lead in one of many directions--such as toward liberating change, or toward more entrenched resistance, etc.--educators need to provide a space in the curriculum for students to work through their crisis in a way that changes oppression.” (Kumashiro, 2000a, para. 5)

This tension is created because it is generally about breaking people loose from the “natural” and “normal” world to which they are anchored. Equity education may, for some, be a “difficult, stressful, uncomfortable, unpleasant, and perhaps coercive” journey (Pedersen, Walker, & Fine, 2005, p. 23). For this reason it is crucial for equity educators to compassionately monitor the level of emotional discomfort of students because of the potential for emotional trauma as they seek to “establish an equilibrium between the emotional and cognitive components of the learning process” (Adams, 2007, p. 15). Equity educators teach through tension, but must also be supportive through students’ learning crises (Kumashiro, 2000a, 2009). Although these crises may be discomfoting for the learner, resulting in disorienting dilemmas or provoking resistance in the learner, they may also serve an important role in transforming learners.

Creating tension is difficult because modern education is based upon a rational and humanistic context.

There is not much opportunity for other kinds of knowing to be expressed in classrooms, or to place affective learning before rational learning (Britzman, 1998). For example, it is difficult for teachers to leave their role as knowledge transmitters (Freire, 2003). Kumashiro explains that in order to move beyond the rationality expected in classes, he encourages people to be given the place and space to step outside of their comfort zone in addressing what is taken as common sense: “the desire to teach students outside the mythical norm, cannot revolve around solely the desire to reason; it must also involve a desire to attach and touch, a desire to enter stuck and uncontrollable places, and a desire for crisis” (Kumashiro, 2000a, para. 12).

Working through Resistance

According to many who work within equity education (Brookfield, 2005; Butin, 2002, 2005; Kumashiro, 2000b, 2002, 2009; Schick & St. Denis, 2003, 2005), students can resist learning about the complex and emotionally laden topics relating to social justice. The reasons students resist learning about “socially complex, culturally saturated, and politically volatile content knowledge” are complicated (Butin, 2005, p. 1). For example, the socially constructed beliefs of individualism (DiAngelo, 2011) and meritocracy (McNamee & Miller, 2004) that posit success or failure in society is an individually determined and equitable process, are examples of the underlying belief that “our race, class, or gender, are not important to our opportunities” (DiAngelo, 2010, p. 4). Troubling these and other discourses that many take-for-granted as true, can lead to resistance that may trigger the “outward display of emotions such as anger, fear, and guilt, and behaviors such as argumentation, silence, and leaving the stress-inducing situation” (DiAngelo, 2011, p. 54).

One of the concerns of those who do equity education is how rationality can be privileged above affectivity (Kumashiro, 2000a). Therefore, a strong emphasis is placed on the affective domain during learning. Weedon (1997) writes that one’s identity (the subject) is constituted by “the conscious and unconscious thoughts and emotions of the individual, her sense of herself and her ways of understanding her relation to her world (p. 32). To ignore the affective experience would be to perpetuate enlightenment thinking historically privileging rational thought and masculinity above all else (Tisdell, 1998).

Kumashiro (2000b) wrote, “we often desire the silencing of Others, and we desire the continuation of normalized teaching and learning practices” (p. 4). Hegemonic practices in classrooms and society silence the voices and practices of the marginalized and/or amplify the voices of the empowered/privileged. These institutionalized practices work to give voice to and favour those who are already are privileged (Giroux, 1997) and make it more difficult to discuss racism and other forms of systemic inequality (Schmidt, 2005). As well, those in positions of authority, who also hold institutional power, may construct discourses that are academically and emotionally incapacitating for the Other.

The conversation about our head encourages us to examine our own resistance to thinking about our own implication in maintaining inequity that may stem from our unconscious desire to continue to be advantaged. This desire remains hidden from our awareness by the unconscious process of personal subjectivity (Berlak, 2005, 2008). Assisting students to become aware of their unconscious desire to maintain the status quo is a significant aspect of equity education (Kumashiro, 2007).

Conversation Two: Our Heart

Because we feel inequity through the heart, this conversation frames the ongoing questioning of social and historical factors that keep oppression intact so that we can lessen oppression. This conversation examines power and privilege in classrooms, schools, and society in order that educators may become aware of how difference has been used to advantage some and disadvantage others, and to interrupt its operating. A focus of this conversation is about learning that in order to move our students forward we cannot see them as deficient, flawed, or bad. Rather, we must always want to encourage the investigation of hegemonic meaning-making and socialization processes. As well, the heart conversation creates the impetus for individual critical reflection that may lead to transformative learning.

The heart conversation seeks to make clear and undo inequity and ultimately, generate more activism that leads to less oppression (Freire, 2003). The heart conversation focuses on understanding the structures that support varied hierarchical systems of oppression and how they work to create identities and inequity. Critical theory seeks to “illuminate the ways in which people accept as normal a world characterized by massive inequities and the systemic exploitation of the many by the few” (Brookfield, 2005, p. 2).

The Marxist critique historically involved removing the ideological illusions that created a ‘false consciousness’ that made it possible for people to willingly suffer unequal treatment. It is still about learning to recognize the “couching and masking of privilege, and teaching critically involves unmasking or making visible the privilege of certain identities and the invisibility of this privilege” (Kumashiro, 2000b, p. 37).

More recent work has focused on critical conscientization, which emphasizes creating personal and collective awareness and seeks to change social and political contradictions that maintain social inequity (Freire, 2003, 2005; Kincheloe, 2008; Kincheloe & McLaren, 2008). It is the explicit desire to make students aware of hegemonic forces and make “explicit the power dynamics of mainstream society” (Morrison, Robbins, and Rose, 2008, P. 442) so that they can “critique current social inequities” (Ladson-Billings, 1995, p. 476).

One of the most influential notions of how modern power operates comes from critical theory through the concept of hegemony (Kincheloe & McLaren, 2008). Hegemony explains how dominant groups maintain power without having to resort to coercion or violence and subjugates in such a way that those socialized in this way view the dominant perspective as common sense, natural and taken for granted as true. Some pedagogical tools may have hegemonic effects. As Montgomery (2008) wrote, things like “school history textbooks...are also violent in their effects insofar as they disseminate and legitimize hegemonic knowledge about racism, for example, as simply what bad people or bad countries do” (pg.86). Kumashiro (2001) wrote, “history textbooks.... collude in the privileging of hegemonic versions of history” (p. 4).

Some of the most notable examples of critical theory come from those who critique this hidden curriculum (Anyon, 1980; Apple, 2004; Freire, 2003; Giroux, 1997; hooks, 1994, Kumashiro, 2009; McLaren, 1997). As long as teachers are blind to the knowledge that they are transmitters of both the prescribed and the hidden curriculum, the latter based largely upon a model of inculcation and hegemonic social transmission, they will be incapable of effectively engaging in equity education (Ladson-Billings, 2004). Those involved in this pursuit challenge curricula found in schools in order to critique how teachers and students current educational systems perpetuate oppressive ideologies and practices (Apple, 2004; Freire, 2003; Giroux, 1997; Kumashiro, 2009; McLaren, 1997). This kind of critique helps initiate thinking, in both staff and students, about whose identities and interests are being represented and valued in school.

Conversations of the heart may create awareness of hegemonic ideologies and resistance toward inequitable social structures (Kumashiro, 2000b). Critique from a modern perspective also identifies taken-for-granted knowledge and challenges people to reflect on their own ways of thinking and being, and to take action towards change (Brookfield, 2000, 2005). Thus, there is potential for transformative learning through the heart conversation as individuals critically reflect upon inequities and become active participants who work to change dominant ideologies and support marginalized students (Brookfield, 2005). The heart conversation works from the realization that what is considered to be ‘normal’ is actually contested knowledge. It is this act of raising peoples’ consciousness to taken-for-granted knowledge and the relativity of normal, which is at the centre of the heart conversation in equity education. The heart conversation is also at the heart of personal transformation and social change; it is through people critiquing their power and privilege and recognizing that they are implicated in oppression, that transformative learning may occur.

One of the most challenging aspects of equity education is the facilitation of critical reflection by teachers on their own practice. Hidden in plain sight is the political and social implication of power relations on dismantling inequity. In many ways, peoples’ conscious and unconscious thoughts, feelings and attitudes maintain inequitable systems of domination and create resistance to thinking deeply through the heart conversation (Kumashiro, 2009).

Conversation Three: Our Hands

Equity education also manifests itself through inclusive pedagogical approaches as education for and about the Other (Kumashiro, 2000b). Conversation three, our hands, is about doing inclusive education that makes a difference for students who are marginalized. This conversation is used to understand difference and oppression, as well as address issues of safety for the Other, interpersonal interactions, and the school curriculum. This conversation examines our treatment of, and knowledge about, students who may be marginalized. The focus of the hands conversation is on teaching about the situated and dynamic nature of difference, and advocating for those who are marginalized by fostering pedagogy, content, and interpersonal relationships that support student diversity. Here, I teach how meanings that are ascribed to socially constructed difference, both real and imagined, are best-conceived using anti-essentialist approaches.

Teachers are both ethically and legally obliged to teach in ways that support different ways of learning and being in the classroom, regardless of race, gender, social economic status, sexual preference or disability (Ware, 2001). The hands conversation emphasizes traditional inclusive education, which means different things to different people. In this instance it is used to refer to teaching about and advocating for setting suitable learning challenges, responding to students diverse needs, and overcoming potential barriers to learning and assessment for individuals and groups of children based upon student difference (Jordan, 2007).

A common strategy used in Equity education is to provide teachers with opportunities to teach in ways that support those who are disadvantaged. The goal here is to create ways that include dialogue and honest discussions about difference, so that teachers can provide safe and emotionally nurturing classrooms and schools for students who are the Other. Inclusive strategies such as this provide a means for educators to discuss whom the Other is and how they are being disadvantaged, as well as what teachers can do differently (Pedersen, Walker, & Wise, 2005).

As Kumashiro (2000b) reminds us, “lessons about the Other need to include learning to resist one’s desire to know, to essentialize, and to close off further learning. The goal is not final knowledge (and satisfaction), but disruption, dissatisfaction, and the desire for more knowledge” (p. 34). Otherwise, inclusive approaches will lead to more of the same, with the difference being that the oppression may just be more compassionate. As Schick points out, there is a political agenda found in modern versions of inclusive education that seeks to create equitable and accessible schooling for marginalized individuals, all the while ignoring entrenched relations of power that maintain insidious disparity (Schick, 2010b).

There is a strong recognition by those who provide education for the marginalized of how oppressive treatment and attitudes are internalized. Oppressive treatment may manifest itself maliciously to create trauma and illness for marginalized students (Ponterotto, 2006; Young, 1990). For example, students who are marginalized are more likely to be anxious and miss school due to illness (Ponterotto, 2006). This happens when Othering defines and secures the identity of the dominant group through stigmatizing the Other. What is worth noting from this perspective is how being the Other is still seen as maladaptive and not of the norm (Jordan, 2007; Ware, 2001). Othering by those who have power and privilege can, from this perspective, be seen as a symptom of the pathology inherent in the creation and maintenance of inequity (Wilkinson & Pickett, 2009; Taylor & Cranton, 2012). Even when there is empathy for the Other, the binary that separates and maintains difference, because it is not critically inspected, is left intact (Kumashiro, 2000b). Simply providing more knowledge about the Other does not lessen inequity (Britzman, 1998). Therefore, the most significant weakness of relying on an inclusive approach alone is that Otherness may become the object of inspection, where little attention is placed on how power and privilege operates within those who have unearned power and privilege (Kumashiro, 2000b; Brookfield, 2012). Without critical self-examination, the self-observed desire for those who are privileged to remain privileged remains unchallenged.

There are nonetheless a number of positive aspects of the hands conversation. One of the most beneficial outcomes of the hands conversation is that it is intended to make schools helpful places for marginalized students. This means having a school environment where all students can feel that they belong (Jordan, 2007; Ware, 2001). Talking about the Other’s context may make things better and can lead to more inclusive and supportive classrooms. For example, providing information about various sexualities in health class, as natural and normal, is an inclusive act.

Inclusive and supportive practices in education are strongly endorsed by the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO, 2005). The hands conversation labours to develop the ‘contact hypothesis’ whereby the goal is to have disparate and potentially conflicting groups in close proximity to one another in order to develop stronger intergroup understanding through dialogue and proximity (Kerssen-Griep & Eifler, 2008). Although existing stereotypes may be reinforced and further entrenched if inequity is not critiqued and challenged (Troyna & Edwards, 1993), the contact hypothesis aims to “reduce prevailing intergroup tension” through learning about the perspectives of the Other in hopes of creating greater equity (Pedersen, Walker & Wise, 2005, p. 23).

The hands conversation attempts to provide places and spaces where harmful actions and inactions occur less often against the marginalized.

These strategies focus on educating students and teachers about who marginalized students are, and what their experiences have been, with the intention of bringing awareness and making things better for those students. Inclusive teachers “acknowledge the diversity among their students, and also embrace these differences and treat their students as raced, gendered, sexualized, and classed individuals” (Kumashiro, 2000b, p. 28).

The hands conversation works toward the creation of safe spaces within the school and classroom, by using pedagogy and curricula in supportive ways (Kumashiro, 2000b, 2009). Equity education that teaches directly about diversity, and does not pretend it doesn't exist, are also examples of this perspective (Kumashiro, 2000b). The goal is to have explicit conversations with teachers about how they can encourage diversity and support student learning. Providing awareness to teachers to support students who identify as gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgendered youth in school would be examples of inclusive strategies (Sexuality Education Resource Centre, 2011; Walton, 2005). Teaching about how to provide culturally relevant pedagogy (Ladson-Billings, 1995) and differentiated instruction (Tomlinson & Imbeau, 2010) are also examples of these approaches. Providing a safe place is also an important aspect of inclusive approaches and may be specific areas where marginalized students can go and feel secure and ‘normal’. Examples of these spaces could include “anti-bullying initiatives to create a safe school place, [and] gay-straight alliances that create an affirming space” (Carlson Berg, 2012, p. 15).

One objective of the hands conversation is to build empathy for the marginalized because “invoking empathy can reduce racism levels” (Pedersen, Walker, & Wise, 2005, p. 23). However, “oppression does not reside solely in how individuals think about, feel towards, and treat one another, and thus, empathy cannot be the panacea. It is necessary, but not sufficient” (Kumashiro, 2000b, p. 35).

Practitioners also try to correct harmful, distorted, and misleading stereotypes and myths about marginalized students in order to reduce prejudice (Kumashiro, 2000b; Pedersen, Walker & Wise, 2005). Providing education about those who are marginalized can counter debilitating negative stereotypes and beliefs in assimilation and dysfunction (Freire, 2003; Ponterroto, 2006). Concepts of assimilation and dysfunction are two common concerns in equity education because they refer to the manner in which those who represent the dominant ideology exercise their power over those who are marginalized. In assimilation, dominant ideology exists at a cultural level through ethnocentric beliefs. In dysfunction, dominant ideology is exercised through the medical model as pathologies in abnormal psychology. For example, while the American Psychiatric Association now recognizes homosexuality (as well as lesbian, gay, and bisexual identities) as being “normal” expressions of human sexuality, prior to the 1970s homosexuality was identified and treated as a mental disorder (Eichler, 2010). Any attempt to broaden what is considered ‘normal’ is helpful in supporting the inclusion of students who are marginalized.

Conclusion

Equity education has been divided into three conversations related to the head, heart, and hands. Creating these artificial distinctions has limitations because conversations about equity education cannot simply be encapsulated into the three discrete categories I describe. However, the goal was to provide a simple way to discuss equity education. The first conversation, the head, is about understanding how we make sense of the world and how we have been socialized. This conversation involves examining issues related to the social construction of difference, identity, and power. The second conversation, the heart, has us question the social and historical factors that keep oppression intact so that we can lessen oppression. The third conversation, the hands, is about understanding and implementing inclusive pedagogical approaches that work to provide education for and about the Other (Kumashiro, 2000b). This conversation examines our treatment of, and knowledge about, students who may be marginalized. Having these three conversations in our role as university educators can help create transformative action, which will foster growth and equity acumen for all learners in the classroom, including us.

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How Can I Believe in White Privilege When I'm So Poor?

Your Other Dad says one kind of privilege doesn't guarantee another



David Valdes

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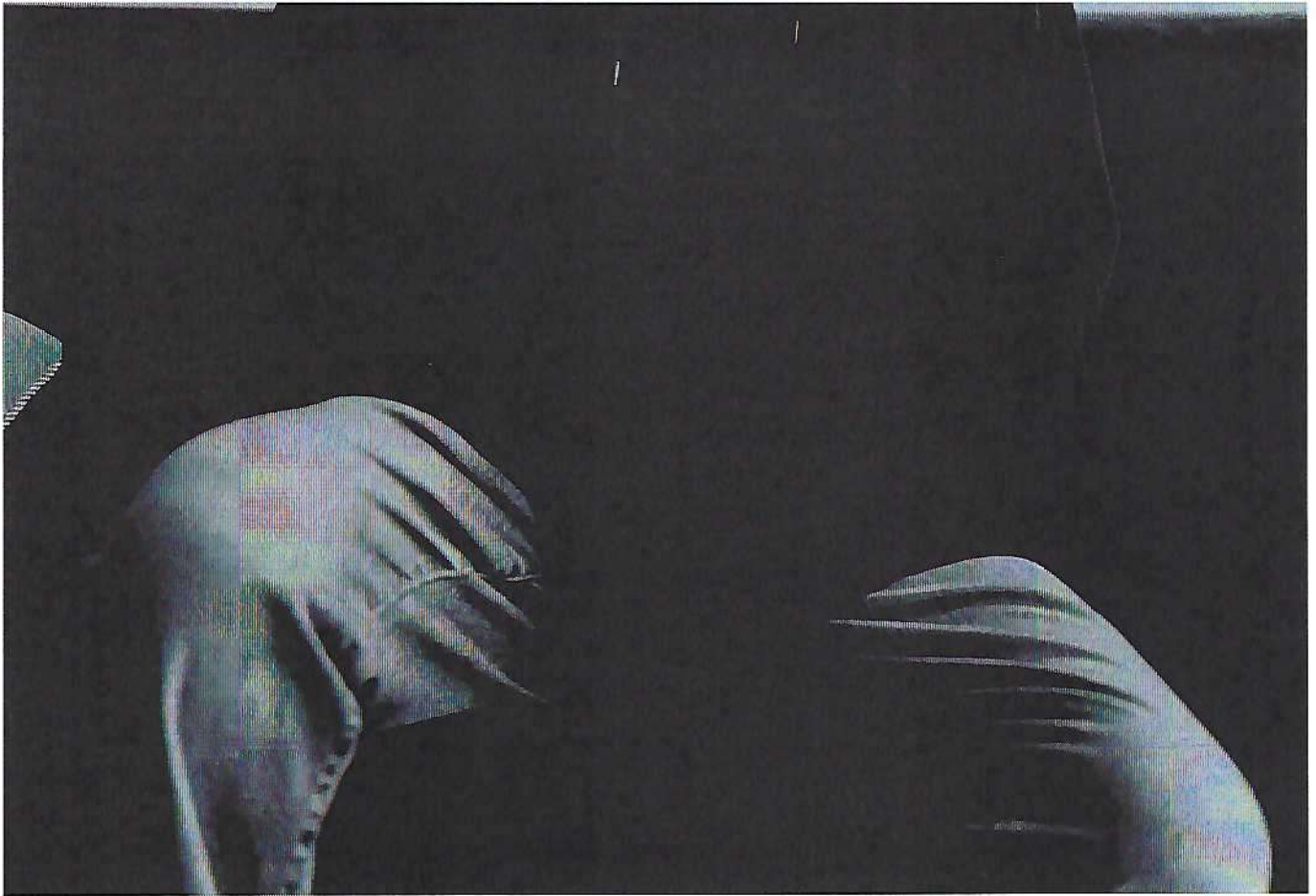


Photo: Cottonbro for Pexels.

“Dear Other Dad —

I grew up on welfare — still am. My parents have been out of work for a year. I don’t even know if I’ll go to college and if I don’t then I’m in this town forever. So I hate hearing about white privilege. How am I supposed to feel about that? Everyone I know is white and I don’t see much privilege.

— Teddy”

Hi Teddy —

I hear your frustration and anxiety clearly — and I can relate to it from my own youth. I was raised on welfare; when my mom, brother, and I were not living with my retired factory-worker grandparents, we lived in HUD housing. We wore almost entirely second-hand clothes and got by on Food Stamps. College was not remotely a given and, even when I did get there, there was pressure to come back home and work to support the family as soon as I was done.

When I was your age, I would have laughed you out of town if you had told me that I was privileged, despite the whiteness of my skin. (I am white Cuban-American.) But that's because I didn't yet understand what privilege actually means.

Some say the word “privilege” with a tone of judgment, implying undeserved good fortune, something that you're not experiencing. But that isn't what the word means. As a noun, “privilege” simply describes a benefit that comes from a certain set of conditions; as a verb, to privilege something means to treat it favorably. There is no inherent goodness or badness in the term, despite what you might think.

And there are different *kinds* of privilege, not always interchangeable. Having one kind of privilege doesn't guarantee having another and having access to any kind doesn't always translate into a life that looks like what you imagined “privileged” should.

Your question combines two different things: racial privilege and economic (class) privilege. In America, there can be real overlap between the two, but also wide gaps, which you're experiencing firsthand. When you say you don't see much privilege in your life, you mean you don't see the economic version. When you're just scraping by and your future feels hamstrung, it's fair to resist being labeled as privileged — at least, it's fair to resist the idea of having *class* privilege.

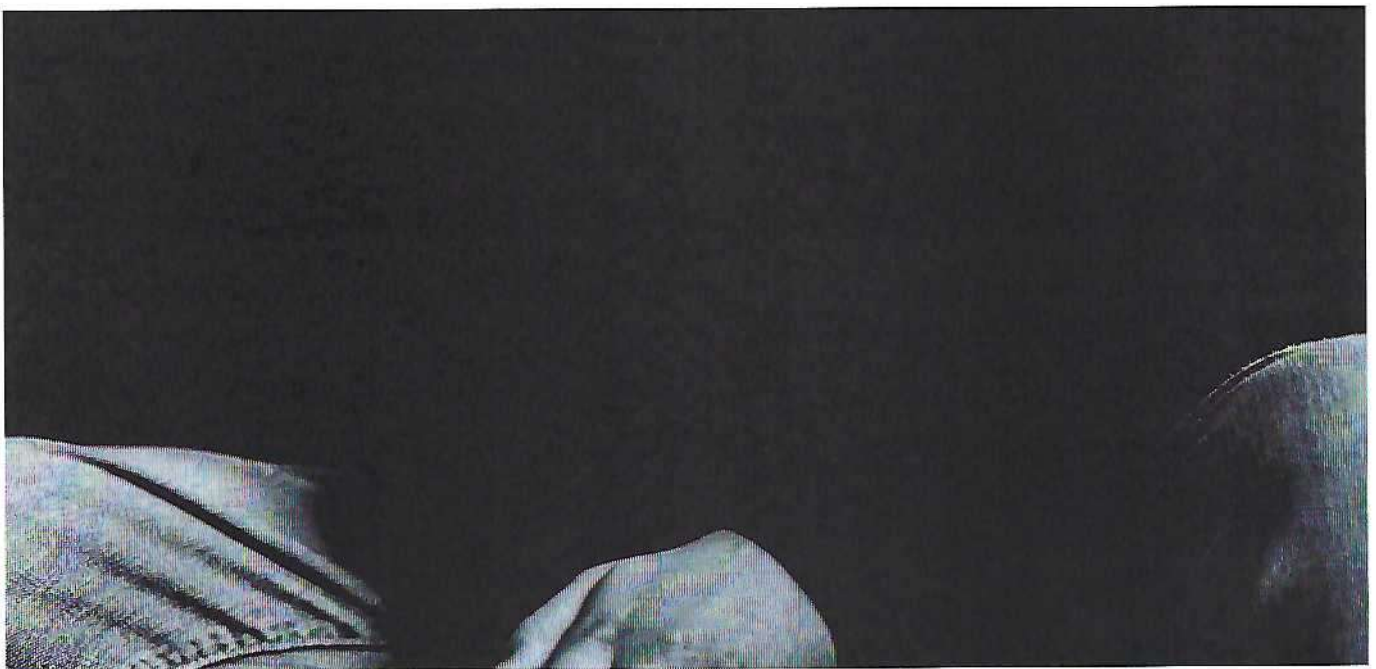
But white privilege isn't primarily class-based. At its root, white privilege only means that, as part of the majority populace, you are statistically less likely to experience hardship or danger simply *because* of the color of your skin. The privilege here is a lower risk of harm. That means that your racial identity is measurably less likely to be a detrimental factor in a traffic stop, a doctor's office, or a classroom, than if you were Black or brown. That is white privilege in its passive form: you don't have to do anything to earn it and you may go about your day not thinking about your race in any of those settings.

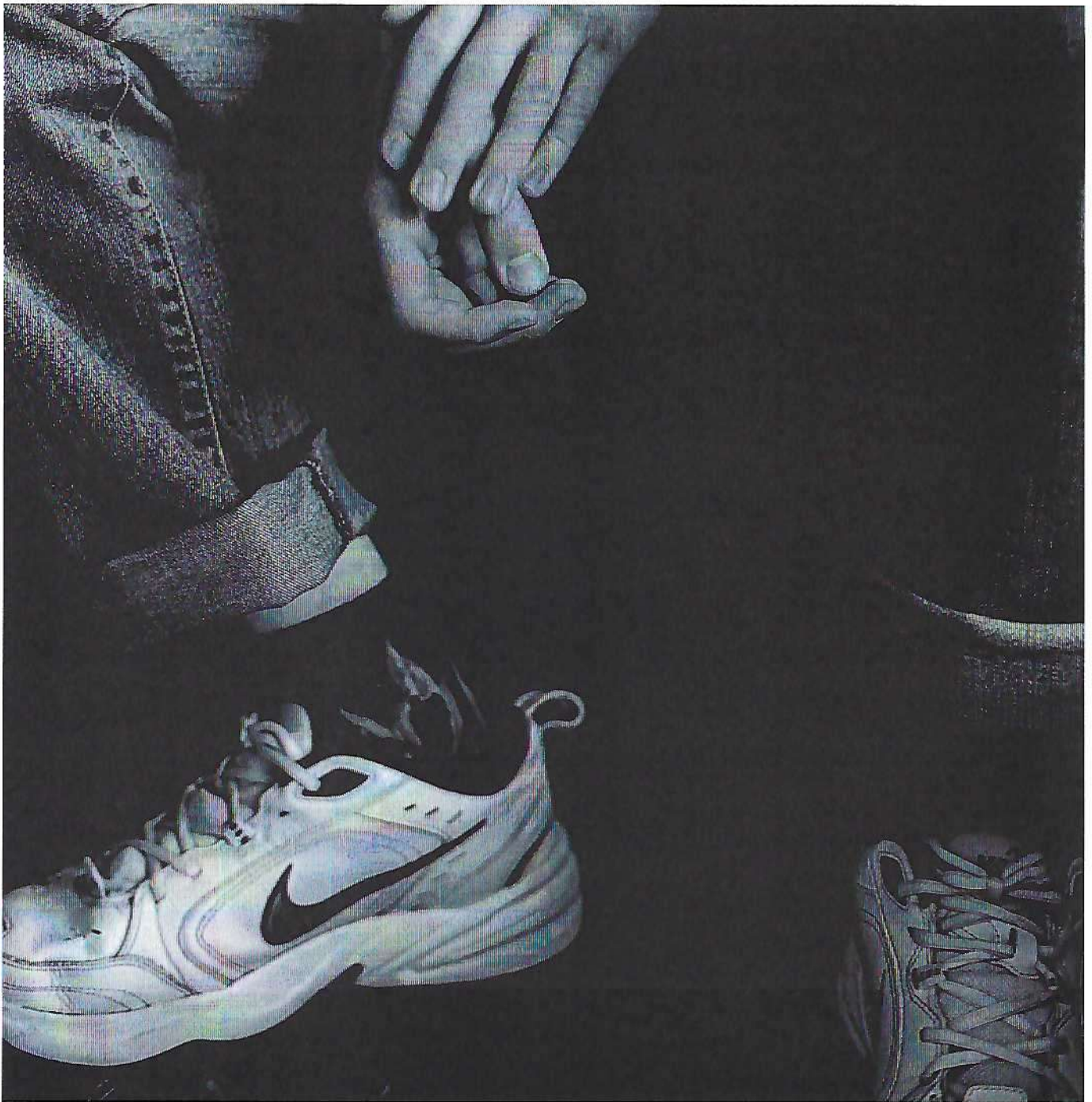
Do a passive privilege check: Look back across your life to see how many times whiteness has imperiled you in some way. If you cannot think of many incidences, then you have experienced white privilege in its most basic form, even without realizing it. (*Not realizing is part of what makes it a privilege.*)

The active version of white privilege is when whiteness yields specific advantages and opportunities (such as in the corporate world, for instance). Sometimes the passive and active versions of privilege go hand in hand, and sometimes they do not; when they don't, class is almost always the culprit. Your personal lack of economic privilege might well mean you never experience the active advantages of whiteness firsthand.

Moreover, because everyone else around you — prosperous and poor alike — is also white, you see no evidence that race makes a difference. But not having seen a pattern yourself doesn't mean it's a myth; it means only that it hasn't applied to you yet.

When anyone assumes that all white people are enjoying active economic privilege, it only further obscures how many people in America are struggling financially. Politicians love to trumpet the needs of the middle class, but speak less often of poverty, as if recognizing the existence of poor people is too off-brand for people selling the American dream. The wealth gap is exacerbated by the way our culture mythologizes people who “make it big.” We treat their successes as personal triumphs, even as the government affords them protections and favors that aren't available to everyone living “small.” And that only keeps the cycle going.





Understanding this doesn't change the fact that things are hard for you; you can't eat knowledge or pay for college with it. I feel for you; there is nothing to do but keep leaning forward, looking for opportunities and new ways to take care of yourself and your family.

Having started my life in your situation, I am writing to you now from a time when two things have changed: I am financially more stable and I have enough experience to recognize the ways being white-skinned did contribute to that fact over time. My color allowed me better treatment from certain teachers, opened doors to conversations in

certain professional settings, and got me taken seriously more quickly than some of my peers. Yes, I still have student loan debt and work multiple jobs, so it's not effortless, but my path continues to be made easier because how I *look* is never going to get me followed in a store, denied a loan, or doubted by a medical professional.

Like me, I hope you will come to understand the kind of white privilege you have, without feeling defensive; it's a fact, not a personal failing. The best you (or anyone) can do is to make sure you don't exploit this privilege in ways which harm others who don't share it. At the same time, I hope your family will find ways to reach more economic security and that, if you do, you'll always advocate for your others who have not.

We don't need to be divided by the privileges we have and the ones we lack; we need to be united in trying to level the playing field for all of us.

Send your questions to yurotherdadsays@gmail.com

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Kutztown Area School District
Educational Equity For All
Shauna F. King, Ed.S
Facilitator

1

Outcomes

Participants will:

- ★ Review last session and evaluate progress made.
- ★ Identify the essential elements of dignity.
- ★ Enhance their capabilities to make cultural responsiveness and equity actionable.

2

Spirit Animals Artistry Lujanes ©

Bear Strong, confident, patient, leader, teacher, protector	Wolf Powerful, cunning, intelligent, loyal, competitive, intuitive, team player, teacher, social
Lion Pierce leader, powerful, courageous, cooperative, understanding, emotional, loyal	Eagle Innovative, balanced, patient, caring, thoughtful, peaceful, problem solver, wise
Tiger Persistent, determined, strong willed, balanced, decision maker, adaptive, passionate, brave	Butterfly Transformative, embraces change, graceful, sensitive, joyful, adaptive
Fox Clever, patient, persistent, problem solver, adaptive, discreet, mischievous	Horse Wise, understanding, free, powerful, respectful, beautiful, strong

3

Head, Heart, Hand
What's Your Leadership Style?

4

Listening Circle

1. The quality of your attention is in direct proportion to the degree of your concentration.
2. Offer receptive silence only when each person is sharing.
3. Be mindful to keep the focus on yourself, sharing from your own perspective without crosstalk and advice giving.
4. We need to promise each other absolute confidentiality with trustworthiness. "What we say here stays here."
5. Each person in the circle gives acknowledgments after a participant has shared. Give no hidden advice.


www.virtusproject.com

5

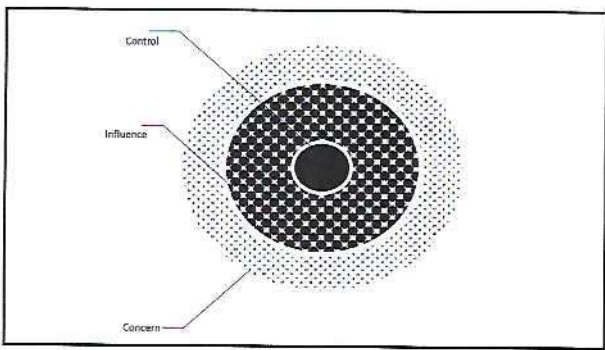
To be better equipped to talk about issues of equity with their staff and students and concrete steps to take to make each building a more inclusive, welcoming, supportive environment that supports all students.

6

Shifting current practices and perspectives to promote equal learning outcomes for students of all racial, cultural, linguistic and socioeconomic groups.



7



8

KASD Equity Policy

To facilitate educational equity for all, the district shall be committed to:


1. Promptly identifying and addressing barriers that cultivate achievement and/or opportunity gaps for students.
2. Ensuring that a student's educational achievement is neither predicted nor predetermined by explicit or implicit biases.
3. Establishing and sustaining a school community that shares the collective responsibility to address, eliminate, and prevent actions, decisions, and outcomes that result from and perpetuate racism.

9

Fairness not Sameness

"The notion of equity as sameness only makes sense when all students are exactly the same."


Lesson 10: Equity, the Overlooked. Successful Teachers of African American Children, 2nd Ed. John Wiley & Sons pg 36.



10

Equity Audit

- Service: providing shoes.
- Equality: everyone gets a pair of shoes.
- Equity: everyone gets shoes that fit.
- Equity Audit: determining (1) who "everyone" is, (2) what constitutes "shoes," and (3) creating decision-making processes for how "fit" is identified and evaluated



11


3Q's / 3M's

- ✓ **Mark:** "Where am I at right now?"
- ✓ **Map:** "Where am I going?"
- ✓ **Method:** "What do I do next to reach my goal?"



Whelan, D. & Thompson, M. (2007). Integrating Assessment into Instruction: What will it take to Make it Work? In: The Future of Assessment: Shaping the Next Generation of Educators, CA, Dorset, MA: Corwin Press.

12




Reviewing the Goal

1. *What are the next steps?(personal, school, district)*
2. *What do we need from our (students, CR team, administration, staff, parents, community)*
3. *What resources are we missing?*
4. *What do we need to stop, start or continue doing?*

13

Dignity

- Dignity is our common heritage and birthright as human beings. Even though we are born with it, we aren't born with an understanding of how to recognize, reclaim, and extend it to others. That is our ongoing work, especially when it comes to equity.



14



Dispositions for Dignity

- **Patience:** Slow Down to prepare to go far.
- **Listening:** Listen to understand not to respond.
- **Empathy:** Try on new perspectives. Stories shared here stay here.
- **Openness:** Take some risks and practice vulnerability. Keep an open mind.

Kousser, J. (2018). Guiding teams to excellence with equity: Culturally proficient facilitation. Corwin Press.

15

The Dignity Framework



<https://www.thecorecollaborative.com/included>

16

- RACIAL & SOCIAL JUSTICE
- MULTICULTURAL EDUCATION
- EQUITY
- CELEBRATING DIVERSITY
- CULTURALLY RESPONSIVE TEACHING

17



Windows, Mirrors, Sliding Glass Doors

18

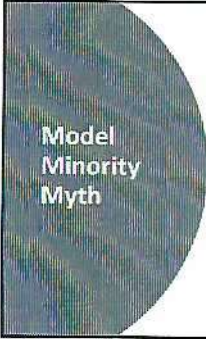


Listening to Another's Perspective

- What comments in this clip stood out for you?
- Were there any surprises? Anything that challenged what you know — or thought you knew?
- What messages, emotions or ideas will you take away from this clip?
- What questions do you still have?



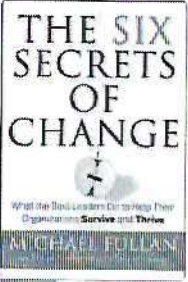
19



Model Minority Myth

- The myth of the model minority is based in stereotypes. This myth characterizes Asian Americans as a polite, law-abiding group who have achieved a higher level of success than the general population through some combination of innate talent and pull-yourself-up-by-your-bootstraps immigrant striving.
- Like all stereotypes, the model minority myth erases the differences among individuals.

20



How Does Growth Happen?

"The heart of any school is the people and the relationships between the people. These relationships determine what gets done and what does not."
Michael Fullan

21