

Kutztown Area School District

Leadership Team

March 10, 2021

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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.

Learning Space Conditions

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.

Listening Circle (Head, Heart, Hand)

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.

Kutztown Area School District

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.

3Q's/3M's

✓ **Mark:**

“Where are we right now?”

✓ **Map:**

“Where are we going?”

✓ **Method:**

“What do we do next to reach the goal?”

Dignity is our common heritage and birthright as human beings. Even though we are born with it, we are not 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.



Ten Essential Elements of Dignity

The Dignity Model consists of *Ten Essential Elements of Dignity*

1. Acceptance of Identity

Approach people as being neither inferior nor superior to you; give others the freedom to express their authentic selves without fear of being negatively judged; interact without prejudice or bias, accepting that characteristics such as race, religion, gender, class, sexual orientation, age, and disability are at the core of their identities.

2. Recognition

Validate others for their talents, hard work, thoughtfulness, and help; be generous with praise; give credit to others for their contributions, ideas, and experiences.

3. Acknowledgment

Give people your full attention by listening, hearing, validating, and responding to their concerns and what they have been through.

4. Inclusion

Make others feel that they belong, at all levels of relationship (family, community, organization, and nation).

5. Safety

Put people at ease at two levels: physically, so they feel free from the possibility of bodily harm, and psychologically, so they feel free from concern about being shamed or humiliated and free to speak without fear of retribution.

6. Fairness

Treat people justly, with equality, and in an evenhanded way according to agreed-on laws and rules.

7. Independence

¹ Copyright© 2008 by Donna Hicks. All rights reserved.

Encourage people to act on their own behalf so that they feel in control of their lives and experience a sense of hope and possibility.

8. Understanding

Believe that what others think matters; give them the chance to explain their perspectives and express their points of view; actively listen in order to understand them.

9. Benefit of the Doubt

Treat people as if they are trustworthy; start with the premise that others have good motives and are acting with integrity.

10. Accountability

Take responsibility for your actions; apologize if you have violated another person's dignity; make a commitment to change hurtful behaviors

Hicks, D. (2011). *Dignity: The essential role it plays in resolving conflict*. Yale University Press.

Sa Ac PI:

| | DESIRED FUTURE STATE | CURRENT STATE | BRIDGING THE GAP- Action Items | Timeline |
|-----------------|----------------------|---------------|-----------------------------------|----------|
| GOAL AREA #1 | | | | |
| GOAL AREA #2 | | | | |
| GOAL AREA #3 | | | | |

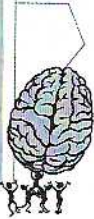
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 Kutztown Area School District



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Today's Itinerary

1. INTRODUCTION
2. GOAL OF SESSION
3. LISTENING CIRCLE
4. FACILITATED CONVERSATIONS
5. NEXT STEPS/DISCUSSION



2





Goal-Facilitated Equity Team Meeting

- Review Mission/Goal of Equity Team
- Identify Identifier of "Rockstar Teams"
- Experience Listening Circle
- Facilitate Anchor Article Conversation
- Answer Questions/Support

3

Kutztown Area School District Equity Team

- To initiate and support diversity, equity and inclusive practices and programming throughout the district.

4

Excellence with Equity

- **PHASE 1: AWARENESS** The journey to excellence with equity begins with increased awareness of the issues that emerge from diversity and – most importantly – the incredible power we have as educators to influence the lives of students through our mindset.
- **PHASE 2: COLLECTIVE ACTION** As school teams progress on the journey to excellence with equity, they turn their commitment into action using tools and protocols to transform practices and policies to be more inclusive and equitable.
- **PHASE 3: SUSTAINABILITY** Ensuring schools collective action is sustainable, requires teams to develop internal coaches equipped with facilitation knowledge, skills, and dispositions to effectively lead equity-focused professional learning in a manner consistent with inclusion and equity.

Kovachek, J. (2016). *Guiding teams in excellence with equity: Culture/procedure/practice*. Denver: Pross.

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Listening Circle

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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 virtues acknowledgments after a participant has shared. Give no hidden advice. Give only one or two virtues you see in the person related to their share.

www.virtuesproject.com


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Virtues: The Gifts of Character



| | | |
|---|---|--|
| Assurance Calm Cleanliness Compassion Confidence Consideration Cooperation Courage Courtesy Creativity Detachment Determination Diligence Empathy Enthusiasm Excellence Flexibility | Forgiveness Generosity Gratitude Humility Honesty Integrity Joyfulness Justice Kindness Love Loyalty Modestly Modesty | Obedience Patience Peacefulness Perseverance Responsibility Reliability Respect Reconciliation Service Tact Trustworthiness Tolerance Trust Unselfishness Understanding Unity |
|---|---|--|

7




Your Choice: Listening Circle Questions

- Talk about a time when you surprised yourself with your own ability. (Self Efficacy)
- Talk about a time you were able to wait for a strong emotion to pass before responding/acting. (Self Management)
- Talk about a time when you felt like an outsider or different from most of the people around you. (Appreciating Diversity)

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| Facilitating Conversations About Equity/Race/Racism | |
|---|----------------------------|
| Assess | Assess Your Comfort Level |
| Find | Find Comfort in Discomfort |
| Be | Be Vulnerable |
| Address | Address Strong Emotions |

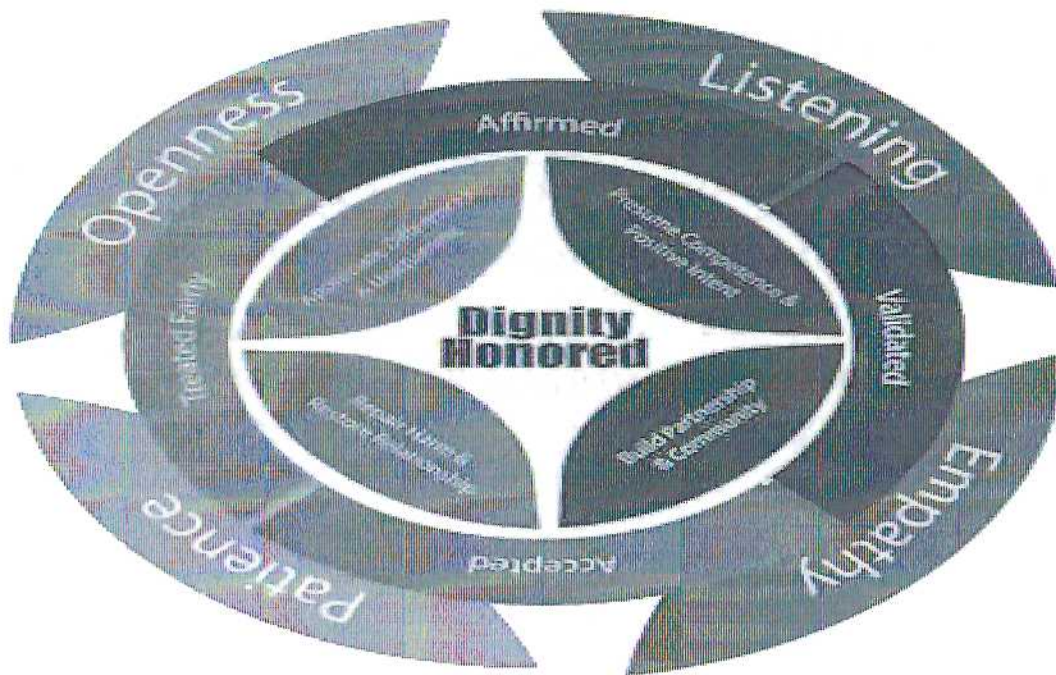
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Sample Guiding Questions for Homework Partners

1. *What resonated with you?*
2. *With what ideas do you need more information?*
3. *What ways are you connecting with the ideas within the article?*
4. *What kind of emotional reaction did you have to the ideas presented in this article?*
5. *Which information within this article do you find most useful? How will you use it?*

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Key Assumptions and Questions

Inquiry – Evidence and data are critical to making informed decisions. *“What do we think is the problem? What evidence or data do we have?”*

Compassion- Compassion is the ability to act on a feeling of empathy for another person. *“How are others experiencing this situation? What are things like from their perspective?”*

Strengths Based- Adults must feel safe to learn. *“What is going well? What are the gaps in ability, skill, will or knowledge?”*

Implementation- Conditions must be present for successful implementation (leadership, vision, skill, resources) *“What are the conditions for change?”*

A Conversation With...

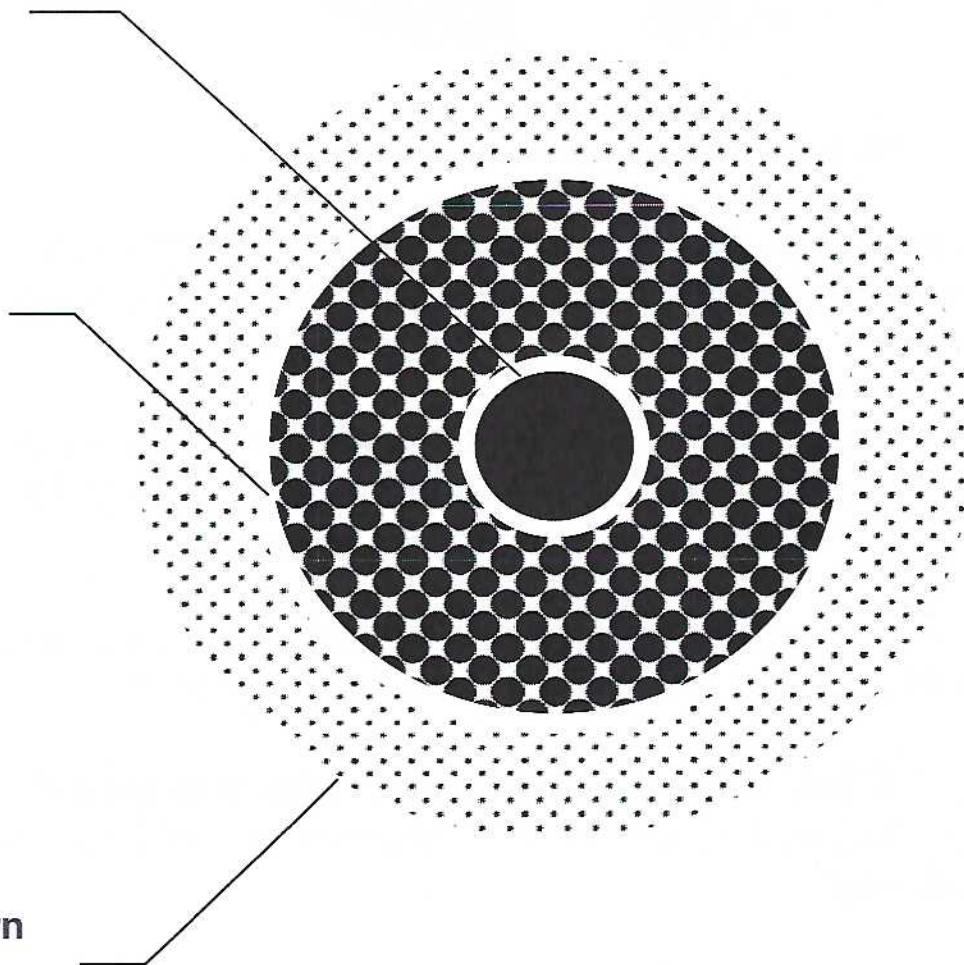
<https://nyti.ms/2jZSnZo>

- What moments 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?

CONTROL

INFLUENCE


Concern



Classrooms Of
HOPE


Kutztown Area
School District

Shauna F. King
Educator, Author & Speaker
Twitter@shaunafking
August 19, 2020



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About Your Presenter



Shauna King is an educator, author and speaker from Maryland. Shauna has worked in various roles in public and non-public school settings, including board member, principal, PPS district coordinator and middle school teacher.

She is adjunct faculty for LaSalle University and a school climate coach for The University of Maryland Positive Schools Center. Her passions and areas of expertise are in boosting student engagement, fostering equitable learning environments and promoting positive student behavior.

Her first book *School Smart: It's More Than Just Reading and Writing* and her new eBook *fearLESS: A 21-day Devotional* are available on Amazon.

Shauna is a proud wife and mother of two elementary/middle age children, who are the joy of her life.

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*Follow Me on
Twitter!*

@shaunafking

3

*GLP
Grateful?
Learned?
Promise?*


4

(Truth or Myth)

1. Humans are hard wired to connect with each other.
2. **Stress** impacts memory.
3. The brain's main purpose is to get smarter at surviving and thriving in life.
4. Positive relationships are important to high quality teaching and learning.
5. Culturally responsive teaching means highlighting the heroes and holidays of all races.

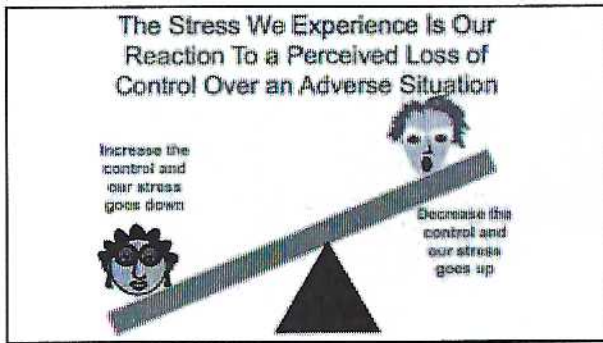
Hammond, Zaretta. (2015). *Culturally Responsive Teaching and the Brain*

5



Stress is the physiological response to a PERCEPTION of a lack of control over an adverse situation or person.

6



7



8

Example

Catherine is a single mother who spends 90% of her time at work. She eats mostly quick meals, which are usually highly processed and full of sugar. Over time, her diet combined with stress turns into diabetes. Now she is worried about her long-term health and her child on top of the stress she already has.

Stress is deeply personal. It includes not only work but personal health and safety.

9

Unconscious bias/Implicit Bias

Most people don't want to believe that an unconscious bias could influence their actions or behavior.

Social conditioning
Belief systems
Exposure (or lack of exposure)

10

Trauma often impacts one's:


- Ability to trust others
- Sense of personal safety
- Effectiveness in navigating life changes
- Perception of self, others, the world, and the future.

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The FOUR "R'S":
IN A TRAUMA-INFORMED APPROACH

- Realize
- Recognize
- Respond
- Resist re-traumatization

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Breakout Room Discussion

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What is "Mental Health?"


A person's overall emotional and psychological well-being.

- Thinks
- Feels
- Behaves




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Equality



Equity



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Brief Quiz

___% % of ELL students put into the Gifted & Talented Programs (3, 9, 11, 22, 74)


800,000 Black, Latino, and American Indian or Alaska Native students are more likely to attend schools where (2, 7, 18, 20%) of the teachers are uncertified or have unmet license requirements.

___X Black K-12 students are more likely than white students to get out-of-school suspensions by 2X, 3X, 3.8X, or 5.5X?

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

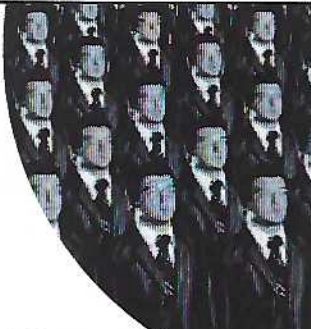
EQUITY



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Fairness not Sameness

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



Ladson-Billings, G. (2009). *The Dreamkeepers: Successful Teachers of African American Children*, 2nd Ed. John Wiley & Sons pg 36.

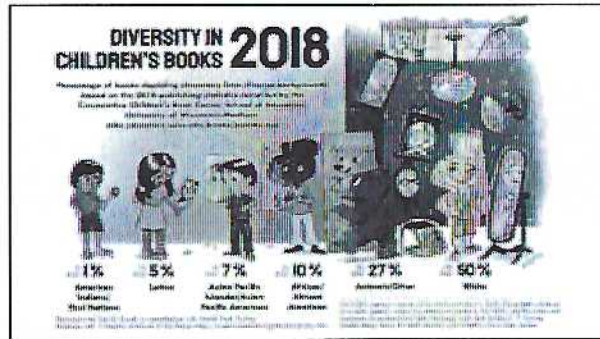
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**Teachers and Students:
Demographic Differences**

- **Teachers:** Approximately 84% are White
- **Students:** 51% are American Indian/Alaska Native, Asian American, Black, or Hispanic

Implications: *There may exist wide cultural gaps between educators and their students*

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Culturally Responsive Teaching is About Improving Instruction

- SOCIAL JUSTICE
- MULTICULTURAL EDUCATION
- INTERNATIONAL NIGHT
- DIVERSITY
- INCLUSION

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A Mental Health Pandemic



<https://youtu.be/Wy6xtIRAVAY>

YouTube.com
Is Mental Health Pandemic Coming

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HOPE DEFINED



Hope is the belief that your future can be brighter and better than your past and that you actually have a role to play in making it better.

JANUARY 6, 2018. HOPE DEFINED. COURTESY OF THE HOPE CENTER.

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Classrooms of H.O.P.E.

High Expectations

Optimistic Mindsets and Attitudes

Positive Identities and Relationships

Emotional Social Skills

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E

Emotional-Social Skills

Understand the brain science on emotions and provide explicit instruction in SEL.

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Emotions play a HUGE role in modulating both our behaviors and our cognition.



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MEET THE LITTLE VOICES INSIDE YOUR HEAD.




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Emotional-Social Skills

What are Your TOP Ideas?

1. Role Model
2. Student Skits
3. Correction & "Re-do"
4. Notice the Good and Praise It
5. Show Video Clips of Role Models



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P

Positive Relationships

Students must know that adults care about them as a person.

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9 out of 10 kids prefer a teacher who cares about them.
The tenth kid had earbuds in and didn't hear the question.



Build Positive Relationships

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Culture of Trust


- **Selective Vulnerability**-- Show your humanness by sharing your personal challenges as a young learner or your current progress learning a new skill.
- **Familiarity**-- When students see you often in a setting (such as crossing paths at lunch or at community events) a sense of familiarity can develop.
- **Similarity of Interests**-- Plant the seeds of connection by sharing your hobbies, favorite sports team or a social cause you are passionate about.
- **Concern**-- Demonstrate genuine concern for important events in a student's life by asking follow-up questions or even providing a platform to share.
- **Competence**-- Teachers who make learning less confusing and more exciting build trust with students. Demonstrated skill and knowledge give a sense of expertise.

• Hammett, Sarah. *Culturally Responsive Teaching and the Brain: Promoting Academic Engagement and Rigor among Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Students*. Corwin, a SAGE Company, 2015.

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"Good Morning Shauna! It's Good to See you Today"

Building Positive Relationships It Really is about the Little Things

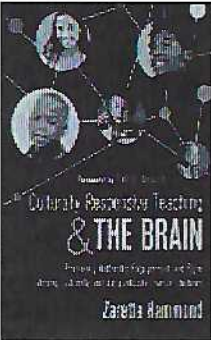


In a study conducted with secondary students, two main areas correlated with Positive Teacher-Student relationships from the student's point of view.

- **Noticing** - Teachers who acknowledged and responded to student's presence and needs inside and outside of the classroom.
- **Investment** - Teachers who demonstrated their investment in a child's education, beyond their presence in the classroom.

Yu, M. Y. S., Johnson, R. F., Deutsch, N. L., & Vargas, C. M. (2016). "She Calls Me by My Last Name" Exploring Adolescent Perceptions of Positive Teacher-Student Relationships. *Journal of Adolescent Research*, 0143538/16684958.

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Thoughts to Consider...

- We can't be responsive if we don't know our students in terms of their academic record and their attitudes about reading, writing and learning.
- We can't build relationships if we don't know who our students are in terms of their ability, capacity, and aspirations.
- We can't create curriculum that meets their needs—much less their cultural needs if we don't first identify their academic needs and implement literacy-based scaffolds to support them.
- Cultural Responsive Teaching: edCommunities
<http://www.nea.org/home/edcommunities.html>
- NEA Cultural Toolkit
<http://www.nea.org/tools/30402.htm>

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KUTZTOWN AREA SCHOOL DISTRICT
Maximize potential, embrace change, create the future

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Can I Be A Culturally Responsive Educator?

- Be willing to reexamine your teaching pedagogy and make it relevant to your students.
- Be someone who deeply cares about your students.
- Be a student-centered teacher, which means taking an interest in your students' community and making positive connections with their parents.
- Be willing to learn about cultures other than your own.



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Grow You

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Small vertical text on the left side of the slide.

O

Optimism, Gratitude & Growth Mindsets

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1. Gratitude:
What am I most grateful for in my life?




2. Optimism:
What am I most looking forward to?



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Key Point

Why focus on gratitude and optimism?

- Releases serotonin and dopamine
- Empowers during times of stress
- Increases a sense of control

Yeager et al 2014; Dwork, 2009

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H

High Expectations for All

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"Set your goals ridiculously high and *you will fail* above everyone else's success."




James Cameron (director of two of the highest grossing movies of all time; *Avatar* and *Titanic*)

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How is This for Gutsy Goals?

"Anything you want on Earth, you're going to get from us."



That's a real quote from the guy on the right (in 1998). Would you buy his stock?

Who said it?

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Oprah

Born into poverty in rural Mississippi to a teenage single mother, she was later raised in an inner-city Milwaukee neighborhood. Later, The Oprah Winfrey Show became the highest-rated television program of its kind in history. She has been ranked the richest African-American and the greatest black philanthropist in American history.

"Create the highest, grandest vision possible for your life, because you become what you believe."

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Today, Alonzo Clemons is still learning delayed. But he is a wealthy world renowned sculptor. He has performed in the Special Olympics, appeared on 60 Minutes, the Discovery channel and currently does community work.

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Classrooms of H.O.P.E.

- High Expectations
- Optimistic Mindsets and Attitudes
- Positive Identities and Relationships
- Emotional Social Skills

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GLP
Grateful?
Learned?
Promise?

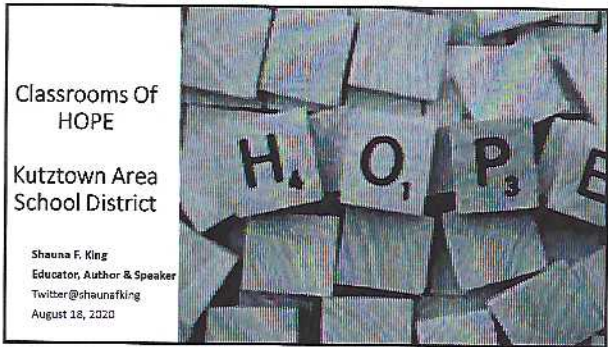
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Leading the Way

"There are many persons ready to do what is right because in their hearts they know it is right. But they hesitate, waiting for the other [one] to make the first move – and [the other], in turn, waits for you."

Marlan Anderson, 1956

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Understanding the Continuum of Youth Involvement



| | PARTICIPATION | VOICE | LEADERSHIP | ENGAGEMENT |
|-----------------|--|---|--|---|
| YOUTH ROLES | Youth are involved in the "doing" of the activity but not in the planning, development or reflection. | Youth are part of conversations regarding planning and implementing an idea. Their input is considered, but they may or may not have an official "vote". | Youth are involved at all levels of idea or project development and have formal and informal leadership roles in the process. | Youth are the primary drivers of the work from conceptualization to implementation and reflection. Youth "own" and understand the work deeply. |
| ADULT ROLES | Adults develop the idea, plan and organize all aspects of the activity or event which a cadre of young people will actually carry out. | Adults develop and set the agenda and facilitate the process. Adults include the input of youth in this process. This can be through consideration of youth input via focus group or meeting or through youth being involved in and having a formal vote. | Adults are involved in the full process and support the development of individual youth and the flow of the process, but in a way that balances power and leadership with youth. Adults allow youth to struggle and make mistakes in a safe environment. | Adults provide a support role and share ownership and commitment but with some deference to the youth. Adults hold one "vote" on the team. |
| DECISION-MAKING | Adults make all decisions. | Adults ultimately make the decision with the consideration of youth input. If youth have a vote, they are typically outnumbered or adults have ultimate veto power. | Youth and adults share decision-making power often requiring a specific and mutually agreed upon decision-making process. | Youth ultimately make the decisions with the inclusion of adult input and "vote". |
| ACCOUNTABILITY | Adults are accountable for all aspects of the process and/or activity including whether or not young people are present. Youth have some secondary accountability to participate in the activity. | Adults maintain accountability for decision-making and actions. Youth may have specific accountability for smaller roles and activities that involve youth specifically. | Youth and adults share accountability at all levels of the work. | Youth have primary accountability at all levels of the work. Adults have secondary accountability for ensuring that youth are prepared and supported in a way that they can achieve success. |
| EXAMPLE | School leadership is holding a student assembly to raise awareness about how the school engages students with disabilities. A group of students is asked to pass out flyers and to serve as hosts and to introduce the special speaker for the assembly. | School leadership wants to improve how they engage students with disabilities in the classroom and broader school activities. They have invited two youth to <u>participate</u> on a task force of faculty and staff to develop a list of ideas for action. | Students want to raise awareness about challenges for students with disabilities in their school. They get an adult sponsor who gets the OK for them to have school assembly on the issue and have an expert speaker come. Youth <u>participate and have voice</u> in the planning and development of the assembly by serving on committees, as a committee chair, introducing the speaker, promoting the event etc. | Youth plan, organize all aspects of, and host a student assembly focused on more equitable schools for students with disabilities. They ask a supportive teacher to serve as an advisor. They know the issue deeply and have talked with their peers including students with disabilities to garner insight. They have developed ideas for school improvement that they message to their peers and to school leadership directly. |

Building a
Community of

DIGNITY & RESPECT

UMassAmherst

PROMOTING RESPECT IN THE CLASSROOM

UMass Amherst conducted a Campus Climate Survey in November 2016 to better understand the challenges of creating an environment that is respectful and inclusive for all. The classroom climate emerged as an area in need of additional support. This resource is intended to identify challenges and provide strategies for promoting dignity and respect in the classroom.

ENSURE ACADEMIC FREEDOM

The University of Massachusetts Amherst strives to create an environment of academic freedom that fosters the personal and intellectual development of all community members. In order to do this, the University protects the rights of all students, faculty and staff to explore new ideas and to express their views. A necessary condition for these pursuits is an acceptance of the spirit of inquiry and a respect for diverse ideas and viewpoints. For true academic freedom to exist, this acceptance and respect must exist in both the overall campus environment and in the classroom.

Excerpted from UMass Amherst Guidelines for Classroom Civility and Respect Campus Policy

MAKE YOUR EXPECTATIONS OF STUDENTS CLEAR FROM THE OUTSET

- Treat each other with dignity and respect.
- Listen to each other's point of view, recognizing that there may be disagreement.
- Keep discussion and comments on the topic, and off the people.
- Do not use inflammatory or offensive language, sarcasm or raised voices.
- Remind students that if they have a disability or impairment that might affect participation you can support them better if they let you know.

Adapted from Dignity and Respect in the Classroom, Mossman (2017)

CREATE A POSITIVE CLASSROOM CLIMATE

Whether you're a seasoned instructor or a new teaching assistant, the tips outlined below are best practices to promote a positive classroom environment. Dignity and respect are established and maintained through the simple things.

- Arrive, start and end on time.
- Ensure that everyone can hear and see what's happening.
- Make eye contact with all students.
- Use students' names and personal pronouns when you speak to them.
- Invite students with disabilities to discuss their accommodations with you.
- Demonstrate respect for authors and researchers with whom you disagree.
- Provide opportunities for questions, and respond to them seriously and thoughtfully.
- Communicate your expectations and criteria for assessment (especially your standards for academic honesty).
- Turn up for advertised office hours.
- Provide course and session outlines (and stick to them as much as is reasonable).

"When students and faculty come together, the expectation is always that mutual respect and civility will prevail to ensure that every student has the optimum opportunity to learn and that each faculty member has the best opportunity to teach."

Excerpted from UMass Amherst Guidelines for Classroom Civility and Respect Campus Policy

Behaviors that Undermine Dignity and Respect in the Classroom

Insensitive remarks

Examples:

"You're pretty good at math for a woman."

"Your English is so good!"

"You're so articulate!"

"That's so ghetto."

From the Campus Climate Survey:

"When I hear, 'I'm not trying to sound racist but...,' I usually know that what they are about to say is probably going to be offensive...I do not feel comfortable sharing my opposing thoughts."

Belittling jokes

Jokes that poke fun at individuals on the basis of an aspect of their social identity erode a community of respect, whether the jokes are meant maliciously or not. Upholding the dignity of others is important regardless of whether a person from that identity group is present in the classroom.

Non-inclusive language

Examples:

Using "he" or "she" when an individual has asked you to use "they" or "ze."

Using "men" or "you guys" when the classroom contains a diverse group.

Stereotyping

An over-generalization about a group.

From the Campus Climate Survey:

"People think I'm an international student and can't speak English."

"Instructors and peers don't take me seriously as a student because I am older."

Hostility

From the Campus Climate Survey:

"Because I am white and because I tend to have more conservative viewpoints (fiscally at least), I find that at UMass my words are immediately discounted."

"I'm made to feel like using my UMass approved accommodations is cheating by teachers."

Silencing and humiliation

From the Campus Climate Survey:

"I was explaining sexism in my class and a group of three young men actually laughed at me and attempted to humiliate me in front of my class."
"When expressing my feelings in class, my professor cut me off. It's happened a few more times. Now I don't want to participate in class because I don't feel my opinions are valid."

Targeting

Singling out groups or individuals for their *perceived* background or identity.

From the Campus Climate Survey:

"Now let's hear from the CHINESE group!"

"I've been singled out in a class during a discussion about minimum wage and while nodding in agreement at a particular point made in the lecture, was asked by the lecturer if I wanted to share any personal experiences, which was mortifying."

"My professor confronts Black athletes when they're late, but not late students from other racial groups."

Othering & name-calling

Derogatory terms used to insult individuals or groups. Including terms used in the past that are now considered derogatory (e.g. colored). As well as statements that broadly marginalize groups.

From the Campus Climate Survey:

"Instructors and students make many remarks about 'the poor' under the assumption that no one in the class falls under that category."

Favoritism

From the Campus Climate Survey:

"Often in lab settings I've noticed male students getting more attention and more opportunities for learning while female students often don't speak up."

"Male students get credit for ideas that female students raised first."

Behaviors that Foster Dignity and Respect in the Classroom

Set expectations

Clarify what is expected from everyone in the classroom.

- Develop rules for effective discussion, including turn-taking.
- Include these expectations in your syllabus and reinforce orally.

Examples:

“Respect is the cornerstone of classroom culture.”

“Differences of opinions or concerns related to the class are welcomed if presented in a mutually respectful manner.”

“In class discussion, the goal is to understand other people’s reasons for their points of view and to articulate the reasons for your own.”

Model respect

The instructor sets the classroom tone.

- Develop and maintain a feeling of safety in expressing ideas in the classroom.
- Validate students who demonstrate mutual respect when engaging in classroom discussions, particularly when these discussions are fraught.

Encourage self-awareness

Know yourself. Ask students to think reflexively about their positions on issues. As the instructor you can model reflexivity as well. Controversy will be less likely if students and the instructor are aware of their sensitivities. Differentiate between personal beliefs and course content to ensure the focus remains on the goals of the learning environment.

Model critical thinking

Be thoughtful in your response to controversial or offensive statements. Help students to see that it is possible to disagree respectfully and articulate views in a way that problematizes the ideas not the person.

Examples:

“Can you tell us more about this?”

“Can you elaborate on that?”

“Did you mean to...?”

Encourage active listening

Ask students to acknowledge the previous viewpoint before presenting their own by:

- Restating the point made by the previous speaker.
- Picking up on a question that was raised.
- Asking a related question that was prompted by what they heard.

Distinguish between evidence and speculation

There is an important difference between opinion and evidence in the classroom. Encourage students to use “I” statements when expressing opinions and to point clearly to the course readings or other source material for evidence.

Ensure fair and equal treatment

Make sure the rules are applied to everyone. Make room for diverse voices and perspectives.

Create teachable moments

When class discussions go awry, embrace it as an opportunity for honest dialogue. Ask students to reflect on the discussion thus far:

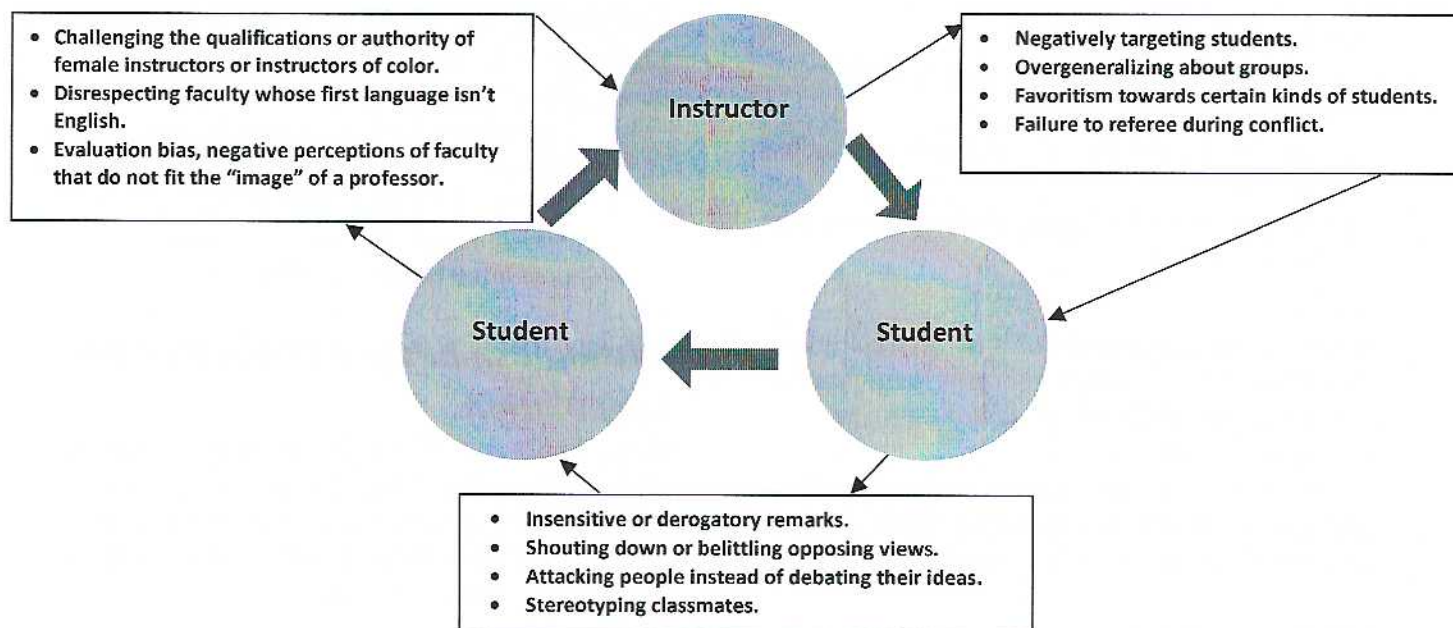
- What do they want to change?
- What do they want to continue?
- How can they re-enter the conversation with the goal of understanding the position or perspective of someone else even if they disagree?

Assess and improve

Reflect on your course and teaching methods. Consider the following questions:

- What content am I teaching? Why?
- How do I engage with my students?
- Am I aware of my own biases?
- Can I incorporate new teaching strategies to effectively engage with students?
- Do I need additional support to manage the classroom?

Understanding Interpersonal Dynamics in the Classroom: Potential Pitfalls



UNDERSTAND THE ROLE OF INSTRUCTOR IDENTITY IN THE CLASSROOM

Recognize that instructors from some social identity groups (e.g. racial minorities and women) are more likely to be challenged by students in the classroom. Whether you are a graduate student, lecturer, or professor, take advantage of support resources. Your department chair is always a great place to start.

INTERRUPT NEGATIVE DYNAMICS IN THE CLASSROOM; REFEREE EFFECTIVELY

Keep calm and maintain a productive dialogue.

- Remind students of the goals of the course and the behavior expected from each individual in the classroom.
- Stop the discussion when it gets heated.
- Ask students to reflect on the discussion and take time to write down their thoughts before restarting the conversation.
- Make room for divergent perspectives; invite students who have been silent into the conversation.
- Discourage disrespectful behaviors such as cutting people off, shouting, broad negative characterizations of groups, and slurs.
- Help students to acknowledge and respect others' experiences and positions even when they differ from their own.

DEAL WITH PERSISTENT DISRUPTIVE STUDENT BEHAVIOR

Per the [Guidelines for Classroom Civility and Respect campus policy](#), student behavior or speech that disrupts the instructional setting or is clearly disrespectful of the instructor or fellow students will not be tolerated. Disruptive conduct may include, but is not limited to:

1. rude or disrespectful behavior,
2. unwarranted interruptions,
3. failure to adhere to instructor's directions,
4. vulgar or obscene language, slurs or other forms of intimidation,
5. physically or verbally abusive behavior.

Course instructors at the University of Massachusetts have the professional responsibility and authority to maintain order in instructional settings. If issues persist after attempts to moderate, the instructor should inform their department chair or supervising faculty and the Dean of Students Office of any such incidents and provide written documentation, if requested.