EDUCATION COMMITTEE LEARNING SESSION: Equity by Design Book Review

Dr. Kymberly Cruz, Executive Director, Office of Equity
“The truth and power of [Equity by Design] is that social justice in our world is literally in our hands as educators.”

-Mirko Chardin and Dr. Katie Novak
Mirko Chardin is the Founding Head of School of the Putnam Avenue Upper School in Cambridge, MA. Mirko's work has involved all areas of school management and student support. His greatest experience and passion revolves around culturally connected teaching and learning, recruiting and retaining educators of color, restorative practice, and school culture.

Katie Novak, Ed.D. is an internationally renowned education consultant as well as a practicing leader in education in Massachusetts. With over 20 years of experience in teaching and administration, an earned doctorate in curriculum and teaching, and 12 published books, Katie designs and presents workshops both nationally and internationally focusing on the implementation of Universal Design for Learning (UDL), inclusive practices, multi-tiered systems, and universally designed leadership.
Equity by Design is intended to serve as a blueprint for teachers to alter the all-too-predictable outcomes for our historically under-served students. A first-of-its-kind resource, the book makes the critical link between social justice and Universal Design for Learning (UDL) so that we can equip students (and teachers, too) with the will, skill, and collective capacity to enact positive change.
UDL is Universal Design for Learning, an education framework based on decades of research in neuroscience and endorsed by the Every Student Succeeds Act. UDL is considered best practice for teaching all students in an inclusive learning environment.

The goal of UDL is to create learners who are

- Purposeful & Motivated
- Resourceful & Knowledgeable
- Strategic & Goal-directed

With UDL, teachers transition their role to facilitator, removing barriers to learning by giving students options and choices that empower them to take control of their own learning and reach rigorous standards. To universally design lessons, teachers must provide:

- Multiple means of ENGAGEMENT
- Multiple means of REPRESENTATION
- Multiple means of ACTION & EXPRESSION

The “why” of learning
The “what” of learning
The “how” of learning
## Universal Design for Learning

- UDL asks us to design flexible goals, methods, materials, and assessments by keeping in view **diverse learner needs** from the very beginning.
- UDL is more focused on **student-centered learning** where the learning experiences are proactively designed so there are options that are accessible for every learner.
- The goal of UDL is to **remove the barriers** to learning so students can achieve optimum knowledge and become expert learners.

## Social Justice

- Social Justice creates conditions that enhance **student motivation**, learning outcomes, and overall success.
- Social Justice fosters an **inclusive learning environment** where every student feels valued, respected, and supported.
- Social Justice **empowers marginalized students** by providing them with tools, knowledge, and skills to challenge and overcome systemic inequalities.
- Social Justice encourages students to advocate for themselves and others, fostering a sense of **agency and self-advocacy**.
5-Step Model Explained

1. CONCEPT STABILIZATION
   Stakeholders critically build a shared understanding of what social justice is and/or why it’s important.

2. CONCEPT CALIBRATION
   Stakeholders build agreement and define what socially just, universally designed practice looks like in practice.

3. IDENTITY DEVELOPMENT
   Opportunities for all teachers to embrace their own identity and recognize bias.

4. EQUITY AUDITS
   Provides the evidence on the differences in student experience as a result of race, class, gender, sexuality and gender identity, ability, language, and/or religion.

5. TAKING ACTION
   Stakeholders take action against inequity, oppression, and discrimination.
Learning Activity

What’s Social Justice

1. CONCEPT STABILIZATION
Stakeholders critically build a shared understanding of what social justice is and/or why it’s important.

2. CONCEPT CALIBRATION
Stakeholders build agreement and define what socially just, universally designed practice looks like in practice.

ENGAGE AS A BOARD IN STEPS ONE AND TWO:
- Share your definition of Social Justice.
- Calibrate your definitions. *(What’s similar? What can we agree on?)*
- Discuss what these definitions look like in action, in our schools. *(What does it look like to be accountable? What can students hold you accountable to and how?)*
Possible Next Steps regarding Social Justice

1. CONCEPT STABILIZATION
   What is our collective definition of Social Justice?
   Develop a commitment statement for Social Justice for the district.

2. CONCEPT CALIBRATION
   Assume responsibility for holding ourselves accountable to the Standards of Social Justice.
   Ask questions about the implications of data and the conclusions drawn from different data sets.

3. IDENTITY DEVELOPMENT
   As a Board, participate in equity training to embrace own identity and recognize bias.

4. EQUITY AUDITS
   Evaluate existing programs, practices and policies and any new policy proposal with an equity lens.

5. TAKING ACTION
   Pass budgets with equity at the forefront, adhering to the equity action plan and/or policy.
Where are we? What evidence do you have?

Equity as a misunderstanding

Equity as a topic

Equity as the foundation

SOURCE: Pennsylvania School Boards Association
The equity lens approach addresses key questions districts and school boards should ask to better recognize and mitigate inequities within their policies and practices, with a cyclical process.

SOURCE: Pennsylvania School Boards Association
# Equity Lens Approach

## For Decision Making

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<tr>
<th>Main Question</th>
<th>Questions to Consider</th>
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<tr>
<td>What</td>
<td><strong>WHAT</strong> is the decision (i.e., action, practice, and/or policy) in question?</td>
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<td>Data</td>
<td>What does the <strong>DATA</strong> show regarding the impact of the decision (i.e., action, practice, and/or policy) on student achievement, opportunity and school climate?</td>
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<td>Why</td>
<td>If there are disparity gaps between groups, <strong>WHY</strong> do these disparities exist?</td>
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<tr>
<td>Who</td>
<td><strong>WHO</strong> (individuals, groups) is missing in the discussion to address disparities?</td>
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<td>How</td>
<td><strong>HOW</strong> will you mitigate the disparities?</td>
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Implications of a Social Justice Classroom

EQUITY BY DESIGN

- Supports transformative initiatives of cultural responsiveness coupled with a commitment accountability.
- Utilizes an equity lens of access, support, and services inclusive of metrics and evaluation.

AUTHORITY

It is the right of every student to have an equitable educational experience within the School District of Pittsburgh. This policy will ensure that, in accordance with District policy and state and federal laws, the District is focused on closing the opportunity gap by providing historically underserved students with equitable access to programming and support resources and eliminating policies, practices, attitudes, and cultural messages that reinforce individual and institutional bias and create disparate outcomes. This policy emphasizes the most historically persistent achievement gap, that between white students and students of color such that race must cease to be a predictor of student achievement and success.[1][2][3][4][5][6][7][8][9][10]
What are you thinking?

**Ideals:** What ideals does the Board agree on regarding Social Justice and/or equity?

**Values:** What values does the Board agree on regarding Social Justice and/or equity?

**Interests:** What practical interests (e.g., eliminating the racial achievement disparities; utilizing an equity lens of access, support, and services; cultural responsiveness & commitment; social justice conditions; effective professional learning & development, etc.) does the Board share?

**Practices:** What transformative practices (i.e., general actions to take) does the Board agree on?
Thank You