

Plenary Presentations:2018.02.23.0900

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Speaker's Name:

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Talk Title:

Plenary Presentations with Moderated Discussion

Date:	02/23/2018	Time:	9:00 - 10:30	am
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Materials:

- Center for Urban Education, <https://cue.usc.edu/>
- Math for America, <https://www.mathforamerica.org/>
- Detailed notes from notetaker (pdf)

List 6-12 key words for the talk:

Equity, Action, Tools, Vision, Rehumanizing mathematics education

Please summarize the lecture in 5 or fewer sentences:

Dr. Estela Bensimon discussed the tools and actions that she's developed with the Center for Urban Education at USC (CUE)'s. The tools have been useful in developing an approach to creating race-conscious practice and practitioners Mr. Jose Vilson discussed the Racially Relevant Pedagogy Professional Learning Team that he created and facilitated within the Math For America program.

Act 3: Taking Action and Sustaining It

Taking action: It is everyone's responsibility to take action that leads to positive change. We want participants to leave the workshop with concrete actions they can take at their own institutions and beyond to create and sustain open, enriching, and anti-oppressive spaces for mathematics where students can thrive.

1. What efforts have been successful and for which students? What are challenges and lessons learned from these efforts? Are these efforts reproducible in other educational levels or in other populations? At the k-12 level, are there classroom-based, school-based or other local efforts that can be adapted to reach larger populations? How can we design and implement models (e.g., enrichment, bridge, co-requisite or stretch) that effectively counteract practices of placement, sorting, tracking and weeding?
2. What can we learn from historical and contemporary activist movements to facilitate systemic change in mathematics education across k-12, undergraduate and graduate institutions? What are systematic efforts that have produced positive and sustained change? What are the details of these efforts with respect to the mathematics, instruction, and relationships with students? How do we use this information to establish a just system?
3. What is the role of collaboration among mathematicians and mathematics educators in generating systemic change and holding ourselves accountable?

Today's sessions are systems and practices. These are things that all of us can be a part of. How can we revise them in such a way that open more doors.

Discussion Guidelines:

- Listen carefully and deeply
- Share time and space *be reflective of time you are giving to the group and if folks are quieter they get a chance to share.*
- Be mindful and INTENT and IMPACT
- Work hard to understand different views
- Challenges ideas not people
- Expect/accept discomfort and joy as part of the learning process - we are all here to learn from one another
- Engage from a place of compassion (open heart)
- Replace judgement with curiosity (open mind)

Today's session is about taking action - working within institutions and pushing institutions. It is everyone's responsibility to take action that leads to positive change. We want the participants to leave the workshop with concrete actions that they can take at their own institutions and beyond to create and sustain open, enriching, anti-oppressive spaces for mathematics where students can thrive. These two speakers will discuss their actions.

Center for Urban Education at USC (CUE)'s Approach to Race-Conscious Practice and Practitioners

Estela Bensimon (University of Southern California), Center for Urban Education at USC, <https://cue.usc.edu/>



Friday, February 23rd, 2018

CUE's Approach to Race-Conscious Practice and Practitioners

Critical Issues in Mathematics Education 2018:

Access To Mathematics By Opening Doors For Students Currently Excluded From Mathematics

USC Rossier
School of Education

 @Center4UrbanEd

The Center was founded by Dr. Bensimon nearly 20 years because of her concern that the diversity agenda in higher education was leaving behind the racial equity agenda of the civil rights movement. So she started a Center that would bring about change in racial equity and outcomes. At the Center, instead of doing research to describe change, they do research to prescribe change.

The Center for Urban Education (CUE)

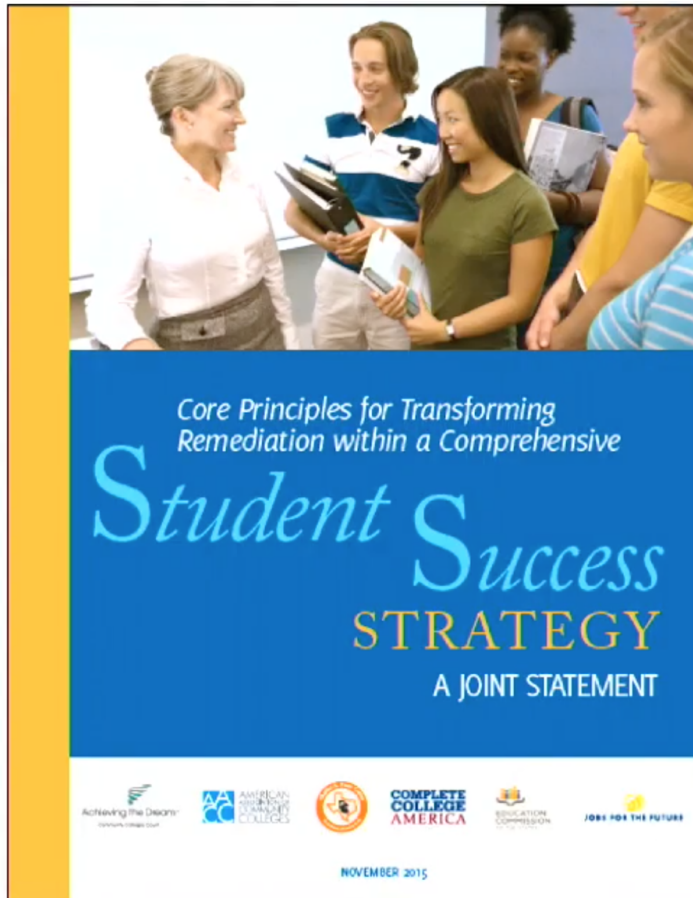


conducts socially conscious research and develops tools institutions of higher education need to produce equity in student outcomes.



Looking at tools for change:

To start out with, look at the juxtaposition between what we do another initiatives. Much of the movement is structural changes - emphasis is on structures which must be changed to bring about reform. But also need to think about just and humane mathematics education plan for action.



STRUCTURAL REFORMS

These are the actions for Just and Humane Mathematics Education that Dr. Bensimon have put together based on what they do at the Center with different institutions (4-year colleges, community colleges, state systems).

A Just & Humane Mathematics Education:

Essential Actions

- Learn new language and concepts
- Learn a different mental schema: Anti-deficit
- Learn how racialization happens
- Learn to view the culture & practice of math through critical race conscious lenses
- Learn how to take action as an empowerment agent



You have already heard some of these topics addressed at other sessions over the workshop. We're going to discuss what we do at the Center to bring about change:

CUE Tools

A collage of various educational tools and documents. The title "CUE Tools" is at the top. Below it, six categories are highlighted with black banners: "Policy Tools", "Observation Tools", "Data Tools", "Language Tools", "Document Review Tools", and "Leadership Tools". Each category contains several thumbnail images of documents, reports, and guides. Some visible titles include "PERSPECTIVAS: Higher Education Policy and Practice", "Calculating Equity Gaps", "SYLLABUS REVIEW GUIDE", "WELCOMING | CREATING A PARTNERSHIP", "Minded Knowledge", and "QUADRANT".

<https://cue.usc.edu/tools/>

One of the things the Center does to bring about race conscious change in mathematics, institutions, in policies, etc in adhering to concept of social cultural concepts of learning is that in order to bring about self change as practitioners then you need tools to mediate change. This talk will be centered around the CUE tools and how they've been implementing them in colleges around the US.

Action 1: Language and New Concepts



Identify groups:

- Latinos/Hispanics
- Blacks/African Americans
- Native Americans
- Asian Americans
- Whites
- Somali
- Veterans



Avoid ambiguous terms:

- URM
- At-Risk
- Minority
- Non-Underserved
- Highest Performing Demographic
- Non-traditional
- 21st Century Students
- Opportunity Generation

Language- Race colleges may have trouble talking about race specifically. They go through many contortions to avoid/obscure race. They've come up with all of these other terms to obscure race. For example, URM: **Underrepresented Minority**. Language is an important tool, we need to know who we are talking about so avoid the ambiguity that reflects our discomfort in talking about race.

Language - Equity

A lot of times people are using Equity without knowing what it means.

EQUITY \neq **EQUALITY**
DIVERSITY

Equity is not the same as equality or diversity

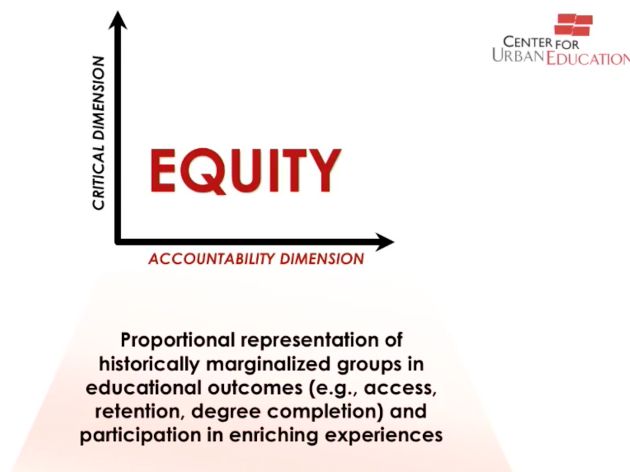
Equity vs. Diversity

Diversity	Equity
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Emphasis on access to an institution and representation within the student body• Valuing difference and providing equal treatment	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Emphasis on achieving parity in educational outcomes and experiences• Race-conscious: awareness of how race and ethnicity can affect the opportunities available to an individual

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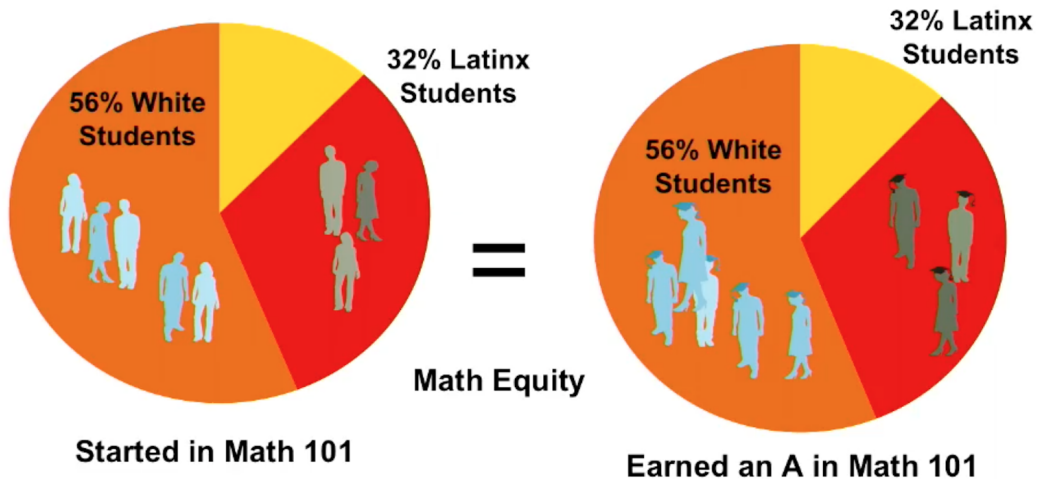
Often diversity is about offering equal treatment whereas equity is about parity.

Equity has two dimensions: Accountability and Critical dimension.



- Accountability: Parity of outcomes. So if you have 32% Lantinx students in Math 101 then at least of 32% of all the students who earn an A should be Lantinx in Math 101. Most departments don't look at the data in this way.

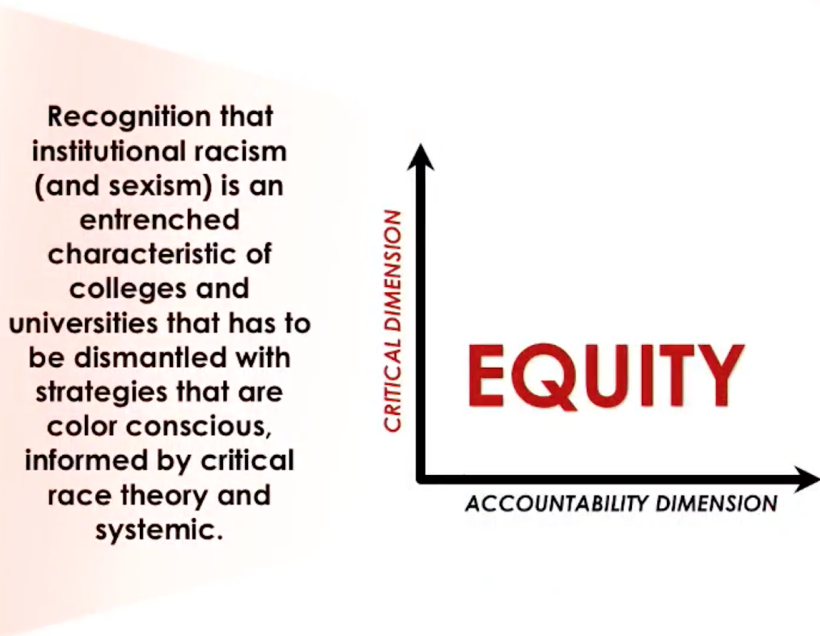
EQUITY as ACCOUNTABILITY



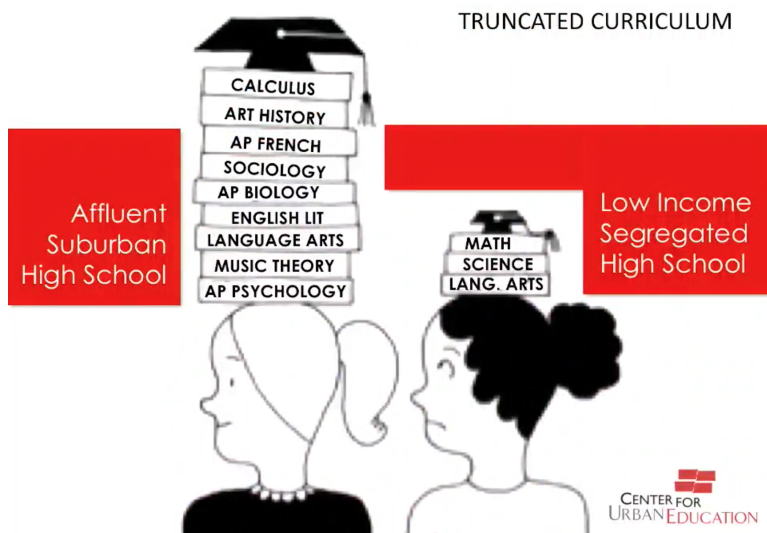
Often when this is shown to departments the faculty will react by saying it's not possible. It's not possible if we don't start measuring and assessing it. Many departments don't look at their data like this.

In addition to accountability, you need critical question of equity:

TO ACT FROM THE
STANDPOINT OF EQUITY YOU
NEED TO LEARN HOW TO
ENGAGE THE 'RACE'
QUESTION CRITICALLY



Critical dimension: There needs to be a recognition that institutionalized racism is a fact of our institutions and our practices. If we are going to say that we care about equity then we need to work collectively to dismantle those practices, which are often hidden. It's not about overt racism. It's much more difficult to understand how racism and racist outcomes are created through the things that we assume to be quite neutral and objective like hiring practices, selection of text book, who is asked to do certain things. the practices happened in systems we aren't aware of.

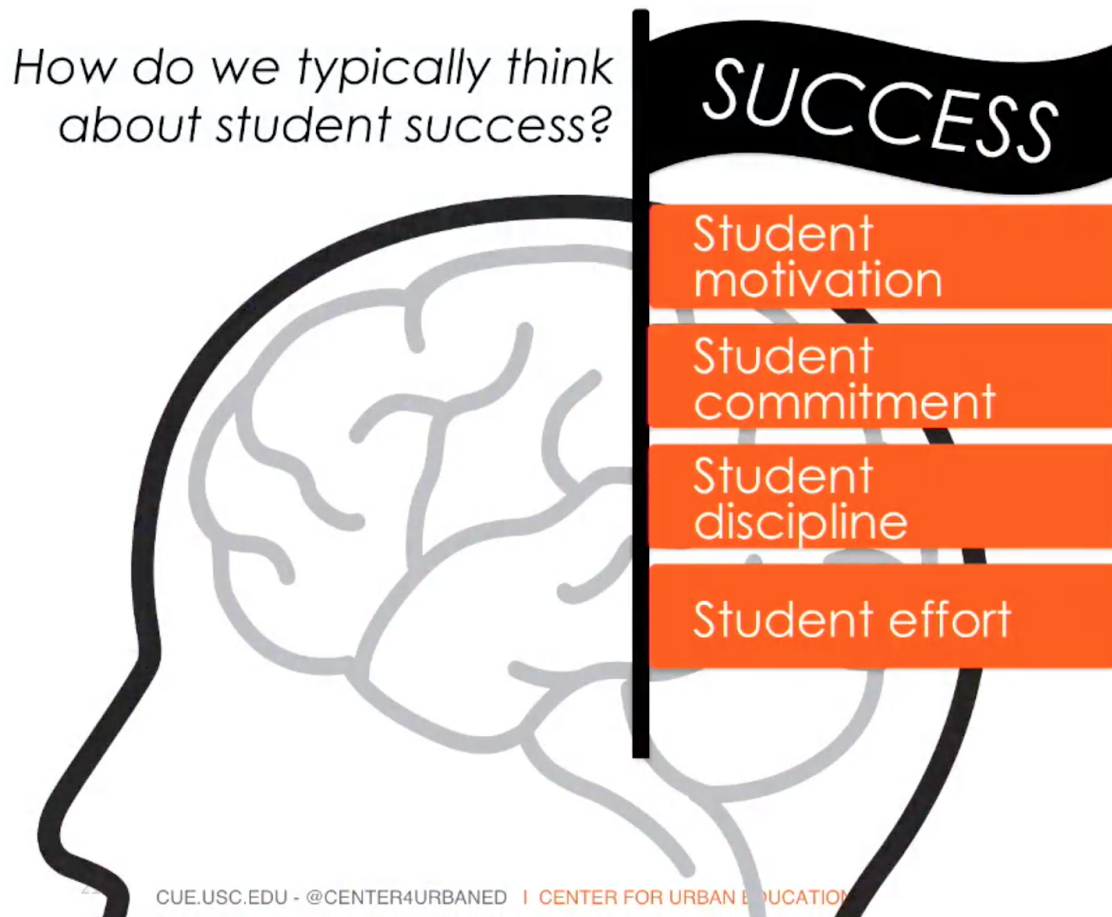


Example: Working with community colleges there is often an assumption of underpreparation of the students without the understanding that the curriculum in the schools are much different and the students who seem to be better students have gone to much better schools where they seemed to have had a much richer curriculum to the other. Underpreparation is not a function of culture but a function of the housing policies.

Action 2: Learn a new mental Schema: Anti-deficit

Think about how you can work with your colleagues to incorporate this back to your institution.

A lot of work at the Center was inspired by the work of Dr. Don Polkinghorne, a humanistic psychologist/philosopher who would say how our actions are guided by unconscious things in the background that are culturally acquired from the theories that guide our work. Unfortunately in higher education, our theories of student success is motivated by what students do:



The surveys that they give at 4 and 2 year institution is about that, student engagement in their work. It's not that these theories are bad but they've become so much a part of our unconscious background that when students don't do well we see it as a deficit in the student, even if the deficit are articulated in benign ways. The deficit is always in the student.

K-12 education research is more advanced because they have focused on teachers/ teacher knowledge. In higher education we do not. There are a few people who do (Anna Newman, Teacher's College, <https://cola.unh.edu/faculty-member/anna-newman>) and the Center has been focused on practitioner knowledge.

When the Center goes to visit institutions they get things like this, this is a quote from a professor of science at a 4-year HSI institution who is being asked to talk about Latinx students in their classes:



This is the deficit perspective, and it's very prevalent. These practitioners needs to learn to think differently

We can also see it in their syllabi:

Rules-Oriented Syllabus

Grading and Assessment

Grading: This course is graded on a letter grade basis. The final grade will be based on the following: 20% for the in-class essays, 20% for the in-class assignments, 20% for the in-class presentations, 20% for the in-class projects, and 20% for the in-class exams. The final grade will be based on the following: 20% for the in-class essays, 20% for the in-class assignments, 20% for the in-class presentations, 20% for the in-class projects, and 20% for the in-class exams.

Attendance: Attendance is required for this course. Students who miss more than three classes will be dropped from the course. Students who miss more than five classes will be dropped from the course.

Classroom Etiquette: Rudeness will not be tolerated. Turn off pagers and cell phones. Your calls can wait. No tape recorders. Please do not socialize in class. Take notes on instruction, the questions asked by classmates and the answers given to your classmates. If you are disruptive in anyway, you will be asked to leave. If it happens twice, I will insist that you do not return to class. Examples of disrupting the class: talking loudly, putting on make up, doing your own or someone else's hair, putting your head down on desk, sleeping, etc.

This is a hybrid course, which means that in addition to attending the in-person class, you must also complete 2 hours of work in the electronic classroom each week. **If you do not complete the online class by the due dates, you may be excluded from the class.**

In class essays are to be written in the classroom during the assigned class time. Once engaged in taking the in-class essay, you may not leave. The first in-class essay will serve as a draft for the first formal paper; **therefore, if you miss the first in-class essay, you will not be able to turn in paper #1 – you will be dropped from the class. There are no make-ups for in-class essays. If you do not pass at least one in-class essay, you will not pass the class.**

Classroom Etiquette: Rudeness will not be tolerated. Turn off pagers and cell phones. Your calls can wait. No tape recorders. Please do not socialize in class. Take notes on instruction, the questions asked by classmates and the answers given to your classmates. **If you are disruptive in anyway, you will be asked to leave. If it happens twice, I will insist that you do not return to class. Examples of disrupting the class: talking loudly, putting on make up, doing your own or someone else's hair, putting your head down on desk, sleeping, etc.**

Students who are tardy will not be allowed to ask questions on what was covered during their absence. If you are late, or you have missed a class meeting, ask a classmate to fill you in on what you have missed. I will not cover material twice. If you arrive late, please do not disrupt classroom activity, quietly sit down. If I am lecturing, do not interrupt me. **Please do not offer an excuse for being tardy; I will never ask you why you were tardy. Classroom etiquette rule of thumb: DO NOT MAKE YOUR PROBLEMS EVERYONE ELSE'S.**

Look at deficit in syllabus - they are boring and there is a lot of rules from instances that happen once, can be very gendered and doesn't come from a space of mutual respect. There are examples of really interesting syllabi on their website.

It's quite frequent where we see syllabi like this, where students are treated like rule breakers from the start.

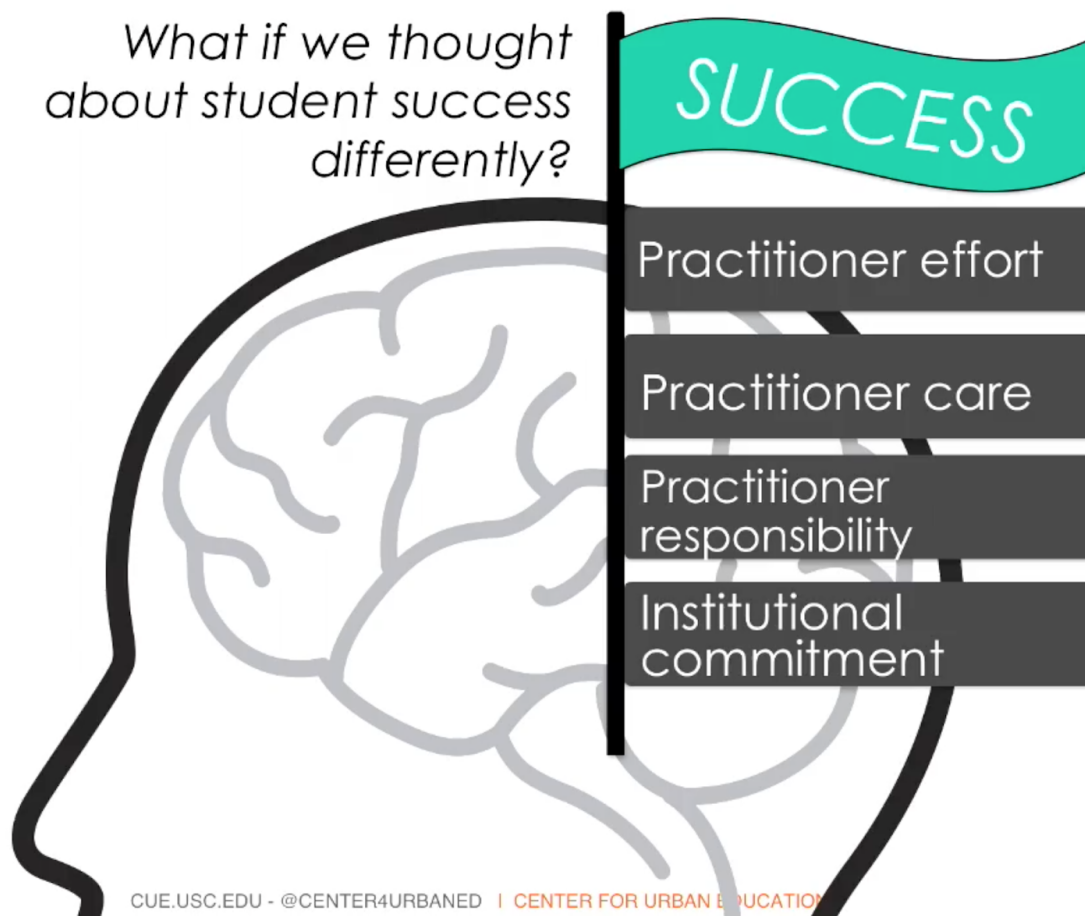
There was also something like this, given in developmental math class where they are intimidating students on the first day of class with the formula.

Math Syllabi Review Findings

TO CALCULATE YOUR COURSE AVERAGE:

$$CA = 0.1x \text{ HW} + 0.1x(E1+E2+E3+E4+E5+E6)+0.2x\text{FE}$$

What we are trying to do in the work of the Center is to think about what if we thought about student success differently.

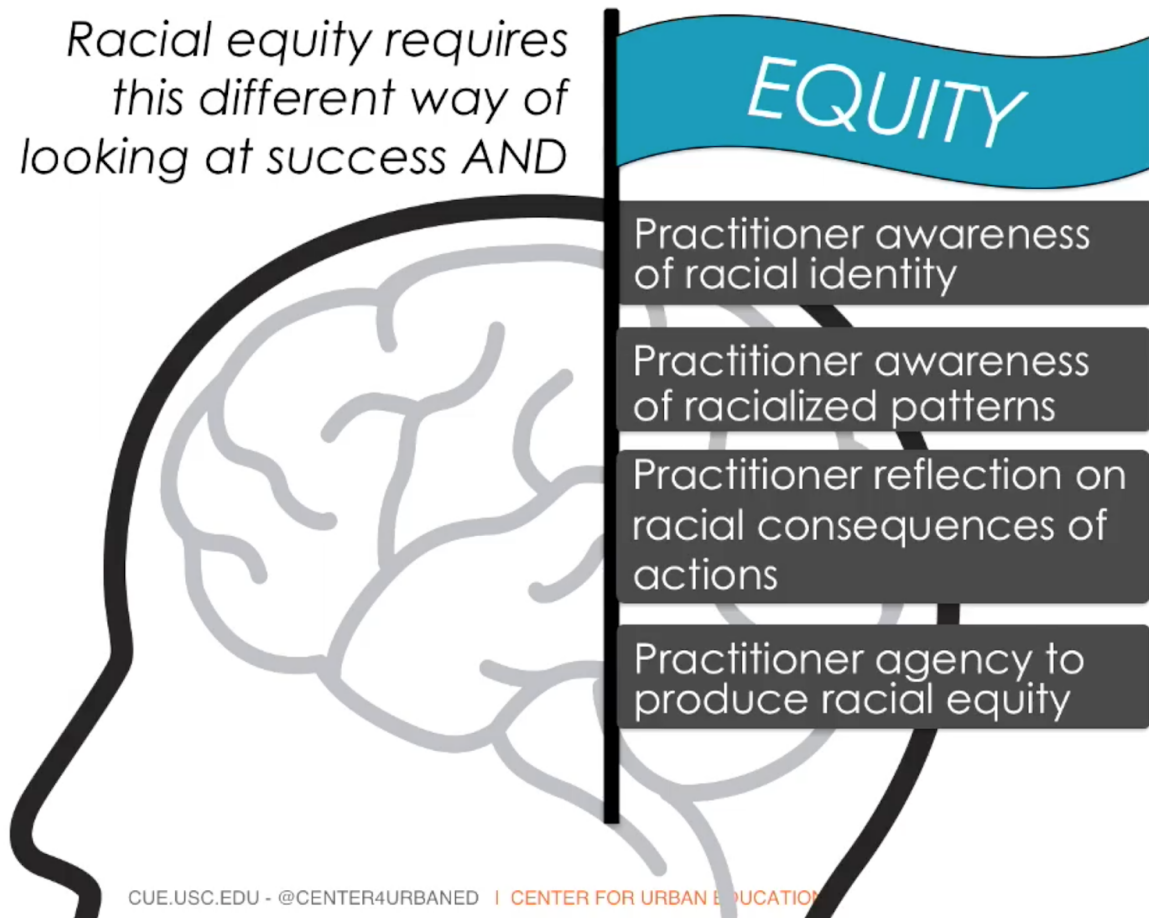


- Practitioner effort - the effort that we as practitioners exert to help our students be successful
- Practitioner care- Angela Valenzuela has the book *Subtractive Schooling* (<http://www.sunypress.edu/p-3046-subtractive-schooling.aspx>) where she describes authentic care. There is also the work of New Noddings (<https://ed.stanford.edu/faculty/noddings>)

- Practitioner responsibility and Institutional commitment to creating racial equity in institutional outcomes.

Action 3: Learn how racialization happens

*Racial equity requires
this different way of
looking at success AND*



- Practitioner awareness of racial identity: If practitioners are white they need to know they are white and understand how white identity shapes what they see, what they fail to see, what they do, and what they fail to do.
- Practitioner awareness of racialized patterns in classroom. We're going to see how this can be done.
- Racial consequences of actions
- Agency to produce racial equity.

We're going to look at examples of how they do these things.

Tools: capture racialized patterns in classroom observations

The Center has created a protocol to do classroom observations, even for faculty that have never been previously engaged with looking at race in the classroom.



Elizabeth is a Math instructor. She just observed her colleague, Tim's, Math class. Elizabeth recorded her observations in a journal. The following statements are her reflections.

Elizabeth's Reflections:

I. Noticing Whiteness in Engagement

"It was very interesting visiting Tim's class and capturing the interactions. I noticed that the most talkative students were white students."

"There were several students who shared, answered questions, and just spoke up in general and they were white."

Elizabeth's Reflections:

II. Contextualizing and Quantifying Latinx and White Engagement:

"What I found interesting as well is that there were 4 students who appeared to be Latinx (3 men and 1 woman) and only one of them shared at all. The student who did share I know from the math center (our tutoring center) and he knows Tim well."

"Even feeling comfortable with the instructor he answered two questions. This was in comparison with a white male student who shared 10 times."

Elizabeth's Reflections:

III. Reflecting on Racialization in Engagement:

"Why did the other Latinx students not share? Was it how Tim was asking questions?"

"Did it have to do with their comfort in the class? Were they more shy in general? I don't know what to make of this yet."

Elizabeth's Reflections:

IV. White Entitlement and Rule-breaking:

"Another interesting thing that I observed was that there were a few students who briefly checked their cell phones (quick and when Tim wasn't looking, like they knew it wasn't ok)."

"The students who checked their phones were the white students. I'm not sure where to go with this, just wanted to make note."

Action 4: Creating the conditions for math practitioner learning to be equity minded: Math Equity project in Colorado Community Colleges

Project in Colorado - in 3 community colleges.

Started by interviewing the three chairs to get to know them.

73% said departmental meetings leave out discussions of race/ethnicity in favor of discussions about best practices, pedagogy, policies, etc.

"Our dept. meetings are more about policies, changes in our structure within the department like what's required on syllabus. Little things like our schedules and supplemental instruction program."

"We don't talk about specifically r/e. We talk about the success of all students. We talk about what teaching strategies to deploy. Making sure we're employing all students."

One of the things that came out from the interviews is that they don't talk about race and don't use data. That's where they started and they then began a project focused on the practitioners learning through assisted inquiry. In order for practitioners to change they have to become researchers of their own practices. Support this through creating the structure and tools for the practitioners;

Learning through assisted inquiry

- Data close to practice
- Syllabi Review
- Mapping progress
- Logs
- Observations
- Personal memo's



- **Data close to practice** - faculty bring their grade book, color code the grade book by race and ethnicity based on student outcomes, seeing pass /fail patterns by race/ethnicity from each of their classes. This is why it is data close to practice. Many depts don't use data because often it's indecipherable and doesn't seem relevant.

What does this look like as a timeline:

September
2017



October
2017



November
2017

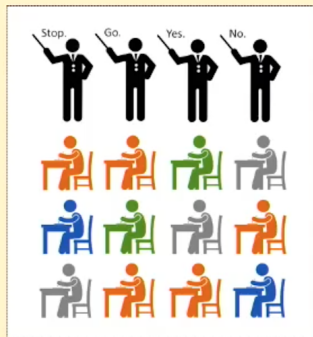


'Get to Know You'
Interviews

Change Lab #1
& *Disaggregated Data*
Analysis

Team Meeting #1
Classroom
Observations

February
2018

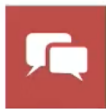


CUE Classroom
Observations

Team Meeting #4
Equity-Minded
Progress Mapping

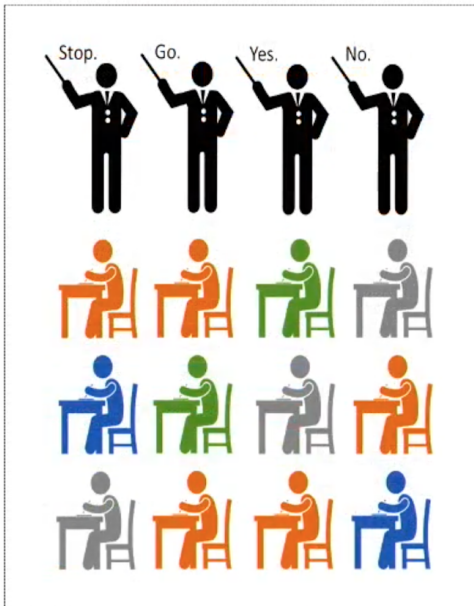
- **Syllabi Review** - The Center created a protocol to study and change syllabi in a purposeful way. It has a structure for how to do it.

- Observations



INQUIRY ACTIVITIES

WHO IS GIVEN VALUE AND POWER?



CLASS OBSERVATIONS

Observations were conducted with a focus on whose norms, culture, and knowledge are given **value** and **power**?



- Personal memo's

Action 5: Learn how to act like an empowerment agent

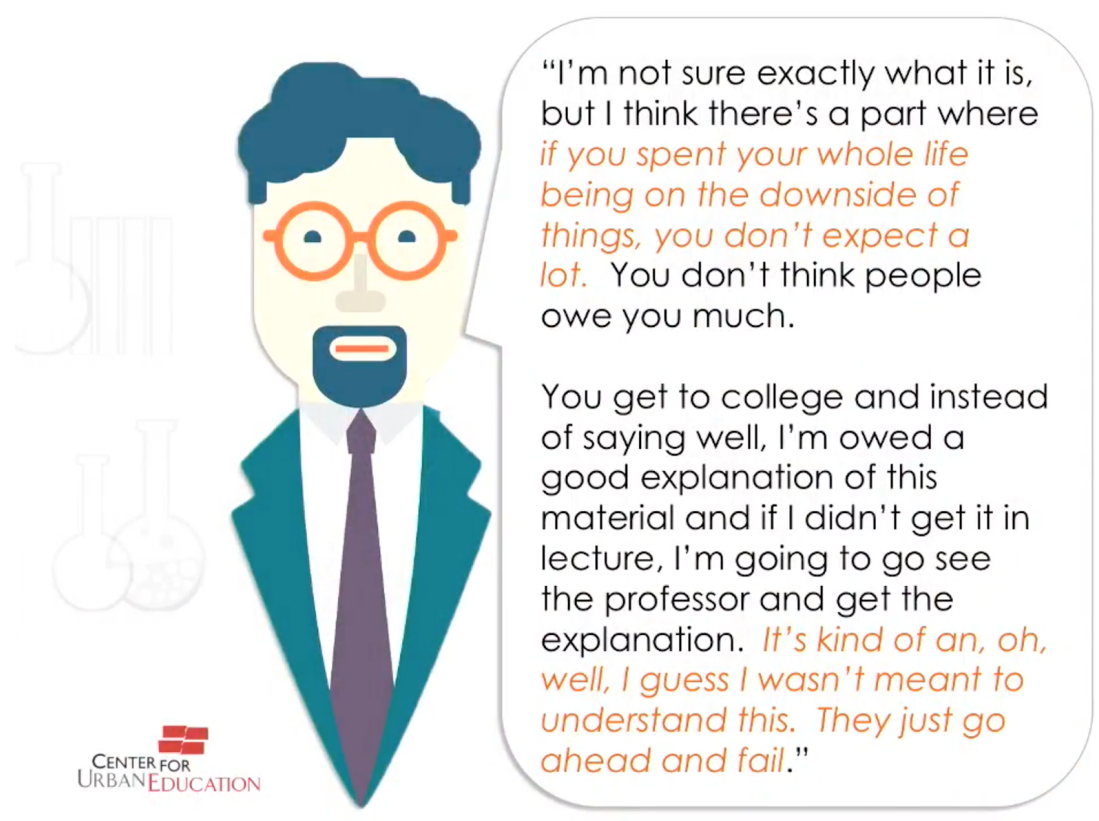
There is work by Ricardo Stanton-Salazar on Institutional Agents (<https://scholar.google.com/citations?user=revl3SoAAAAJ&hl=en>)

The way that individuals that have power (position, being at a highly selective institution, networks, etc) use that power that you have on behalf of others?

Think back to the gentleman from before who has power from being at a 4 year institution



He said:



What he is recognizing is that students don't have a sense of entitlement that comes from privilege. He recognizes this and when asked, what do you do about this? He tells

them that they are doing it wrong. He wasn't an empowerment agent because he didn't use his knowledge to extend himself to the student.

In addition to doing, it is not enough to care, you also have to be an empowerment agent

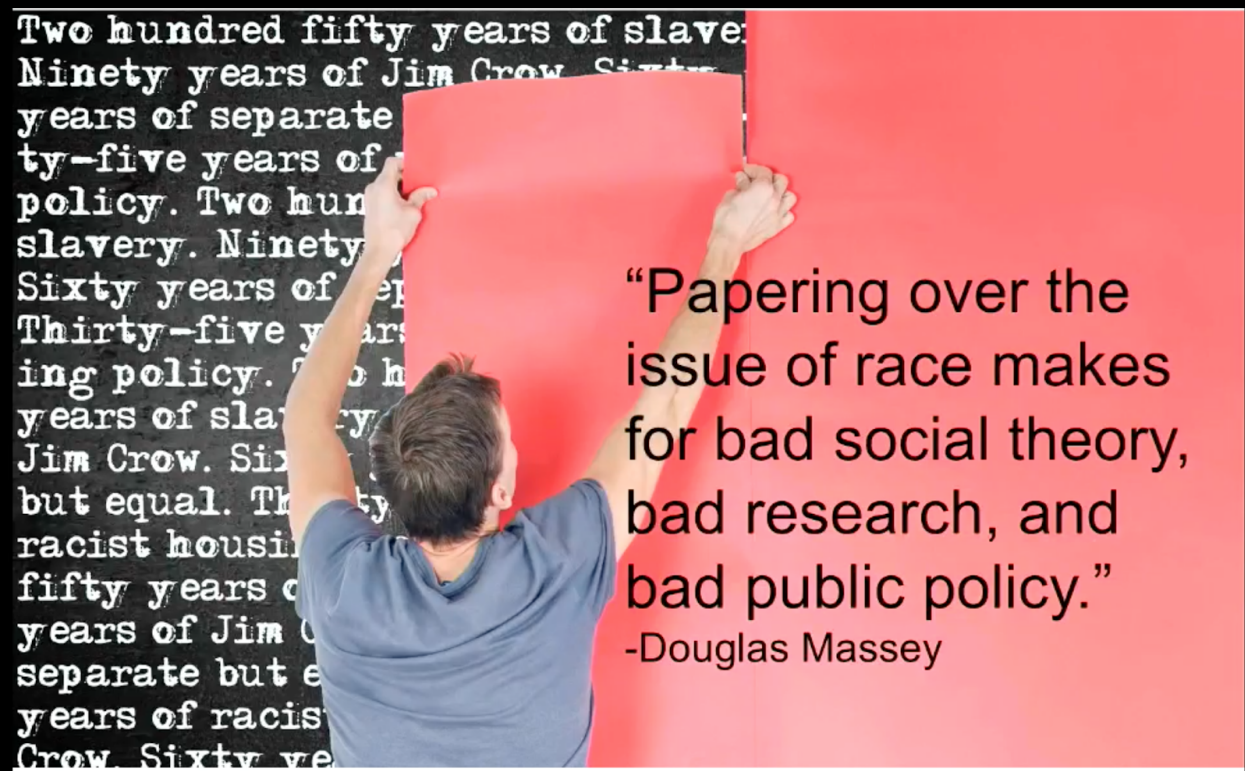
The Center have created these Institution Agent: Self Assessment for faculty members to think about the kinds of things they do to assist the students.

Institutional Agent: Self Assessment

STATEMENT	FREQUENCY				
	Never	Sometimes		Frequently	
	1	2	3	4	5
I routinely share the "tricks" of studying for a test with my students [Resource Agent]					
At the start of the semester I invite each student to meet with me for half hour to have an informal conversation about their experiences [Advisor]					
I make it a point of talking to students individually and inviting them to my office before a test so that I can provide more direct assistance [Knowledge Agent, Resource Agent]					
When a student is not doing well I make it a point of learning how I can help them [Advocate]					
At the beginning of the semester I take my students to the tutoring center and show them how to access the resources. [Cultural Guide]					
I make it a point of creating a classroom climate that is inclusive. [Integrative Agent]					
I am intentional about making myself available to assist African American and Latino students navigate the institution. [Integrative Agent]					



But an empowerment agent is more than that,



“Papering over the issue of race makes for bad social theory, bad research, and bad public policy.”
-Douglas Massey

- TA-NEHISI COATES, “The Case for Reparations, *The Atlantic*”

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At the same institution as this gentleman she interviewed some Latinx faculty who were going around the system but weren't able to change the departments. The reason for that is that it's too damn risky to antagonize your colleagues about race and racism. In order for us to have empowerment it has to be a collective action that includes white colleagues. That is the part we're all struggling with. We know that things are not working. We do know institutionalized racism but it's very hard to bring it out because we're afraid to antagonize colleagues. Still feel the pressure of the culture of niceness.

Creating a society within society: A case study of the nexus between math professional learning communities and conversations about culture

Jose Vilson, NYC Department of Education and Math For America Master Teacher Fellow <http://thejosevilson.com/>, <http://thejosevilson.com/this-is-not-a-test/>

It's not too often that a K-12 teacher gets to talk to professors. :)

Preface for the talk: **Math for America (MFA, <https://www.mathforamerica.org/>) Master Teacher Fellow** -The premise of MFA is that teachers should empower themselves and fellow educators to make the work professional work happen. This talk should be an example of that and should challenge what does it mean to value teacher voice a bit more. Think about the professors in the previous talk and how many professors are in charge of the standards that that teachers are teaching. It's very much a deficit model.

There is a conversation online, based on Dr. Gutierrez work to challenge people to think about whiteness. Mr. Vilson then wanted to think about what a K-12 teacher could add to the discussion and it led me to the question, **is math neutral?** Try this..

MATH WAS NEVER NEUTRAL

- Ask people the following:
 - How did we arrive at the numbers we use?
- If they don't believe you, ask:
 - Who made those decisions?
 - Is everything we've learned a fact, a theorem, or an axiom?
 - How universal is math?
 - Who decided that the math we're learning in the school is the most important math to know?

A HISTORY OF MATHEMATICS
SECOND EDITION
CARL B. BOYER
REVISED BY LITA G. MEDZBIACH

Are there things we need to have to make everything else function? If that's what we believe then we've instilled an idea that these were created because we had to to make the big institution work. If, someone made the decision along the line to build this culture - it didn't just come to be.

How universal is math? Is 20 the same in every country that you've been to?
"Math is universal, it's inextricable from life" How did we come about tha?

Someone threw down [A History of Mathematics](#). In reading through it he discovered **al-Khwārizmī**, no one everyone talks about that and just skips to old Greek guys. They don't talk about Mayan history, etc. and instead focus on one thin strand of math because it is easier to deal with.

Who decided that the math that we're learning in school was the math that we have to learn? Someone decided that a form of math was important and they knew it all and they then bludgeon people with that math, saying "if you don't get it then you don't count in life". And then you go out in the world. There is a big disconnect between how I'm living and the other things. That's culture. If we don't recognize that it's a big history.

We don't just teach math - we're teaching math history and culture. Teaching history through a math lens.

WE DON'T JUST TEACH MATH

- ... we explicitly teach math history and culture
- Our grammar is embedded in notations and operations
- Most of the items we're presenting have already been solved
- We determine how true a solution is depending on well the stories connect to one another
- Our standards are thematic units

We don't just teach numbers. Why teach $1+1$ unless it's part of the history. Most of the items that are presented have already been solved, "*we already came up with this and want to show you*". Too many people believe that if you've already come up with a solution then you are intellectually superior as opposed to saying the kids need the struggle to ensure that kids can do way better math than us -vs- we need to prove how smart we are.

We often determine how true a solution is depending on how well the stories we tell about the solution connect to one another. Someone will find the area by sharing the equations and process, another will break it into units and I counted the units. We are nodding because you believe me and you went through that story and you know math. If we aren't teaching culture and history you won't have the connection. **So we don't have math without math history and culture.**

Today with the Common Core State Standards people are saying that we need to de-emphasize facts and need to start teaching themes. But math people have been doing themes for forever and a day. Algebra, Geometry, Trig, is a theme. Even 1st-8th grades are broken into themes where we're asked to look at kids and the way they are applying those themes. So we're teaching math, we're teaching culture but we can't think about the ways that we're teaching math without understanding the fact that this is all culture, this is all history. And the way that we approach that culture often leave some people in and some people out.

This is also assuming neutrality in numbers and thought.

ASSUMING NEUTRALITY IN NUMBERS AND THOUGHT



- Who gets to argue in their natural intonations?
- Who is assumed to be struggling because of an assigned number of grade level?
- Who readily sees more representations of themselves over the course of the year?
- How do our own biases and prejudices intersect with what we're teaching?

- Who gets to argue in their natural intonations? When you go into a classroom, do you say to yourself “*are they arguing like mathematicians or are they too rowdy?*” Some kids argue loudly as part of their culture but it’s as if we’re saying that mathematicians never curse at each other, always come up with the same solutions, etc. Arguing is real math. Even thinking about how abstract thinking is happening over beer, over meals, in social settings, at conferences and outside the class. Kids don’t get to see this because they are often taught in very isolated places that teach them that this is the only way you should be taught the math.
- Who is assumed to be struggling When you look into a math classroom do you assume they’re struggling because of what they look like? Because of an assigned number of grade level? Because they ask a question? There are places that if you ask a question then you are assumed to be struggling whereas they could be trying to get to a deeper understanding of math.
- Who readily sees more representations of themselves over the course of the year? There is great work out there by teachers (Annie Perkins, Megan Smith, the Twitter Math Camp Circle) have been discussing about what it means to be a mathematician and putting mathematicians in front of them. Even here, how many of us get to highlight each other in the work we’re doing? Everything can be a competition in higher ed.
- How do we look at our own biases and prejudices inherent with what we’re teaching. It can feel like we’re going to get called out on all this.

There is Hope: How do we do this work within struggle - **it starts with us.**

Too much of the power has been stripped from the people who want to do work and we’re working on bringing that back

- Math teachers ask critical questions - why don’t we apply this same work to other areas (race, gender, LGBTQIA, non-Christians)
- Math teachers ask these questions of themselves and others
- Math teachers prepare for teachable moment - Why can’t we do that

- Math teachers expect non-closure- there are some of us that understand that we might not get through everything today
- Math teachers stand on the principles of inquiry and openness.
- Math teachers ask for and allow for multiple pathways - we allow multiple approaches complete, correct and consistent.

In sum, when we look at all this stuff there comes out Racially Relevant Pedagogy (PLT) through the lens by Glenn Singleton based on *Courageous Conversations About Race* (<https://courageousconversation.com/about/>
<https://www.amazon.com/Courageous-Conversations-About-Race-Achieving/dp/0761988769>)



**RACIALLY
RELEVANT
PEDAGOGY
PLT**

- Developed based on *Courageous Conversations About Race* by Glenn Singleton
- Brought to MFA by Michael Driskill, Gretel Johnson, and others
- Four two-hour sessions a semester
- I was a participant first.

This is a Math For America Professional Learning Teams (PLTs, <http://www.mathforamerica.org/course-type/plt>)

Where they were going to be thinking about what it means for teachers to come together and have conversations about race.

Facilitators: Jose Vilson and Wendy Menard, a MFA teacher who worked with Jose previously. They both had a passion for social justice system.

How Jose prepared for this work as a Facilitator: I've done this work through my blog and <http://www.educolor.org/> and **Twitter Math Camp**, <http://tmathc.com/> Teachers connected through Twitter come together over the summer to create their own professional development from Pre-K through College. Dan Meyer is a participant.

THE 2016—2017 SEASON



- We were intent on three ideas:
 - We wanted to create a safe space to discuss timely issues around race
 - We wanted to develop solutions, or at least get better at dealing with these issues
 - We wanted to push that into the core of what MfA did, not at the periphery

- Create safe space in New York City to discuss race and math
- Develop solutions or at least get to the point where we could have a sense of discussion
- Push to core of what Math for America does - not just personal, the institutional. It was going to revolutionize how MFA works.

Constructing the sessions

CONSTRUCTING THE SESSIONS

- The written and unwritten codes
 - Stay engaged, experience discomfort, speak your truth, and expect / accept nonclosure
- We spoke for about an hour planning out the year
- Active facilitation matters.
- Required participation is critical to building trust.
- Much more than reading (though shared reading is critical)



- The written and unwritten codes
 - Stay engaged
 - Experience discomfort
 - Speak your truth
 - expect/accept non closures

Had to also check in about when people were not talking. When everyone is talking it builds community because we build up trust and we've heard all people's voice.

- We spoke for about an hour planning out the year
- Active facilitation matters. Anytime you have a difficult conversation that no one is leading then it makes everyone uncomfortable.
- Required participation is critical to building trust

It was key that that we have active participation. It was after school and it was important to keep it active. And then after **Nov 9th, 2016**

AFTER NOVEMBER 9TH, 2016



- We had planned activities; we discarded them
- We had agreements, we set those aside
- We had a group of educators who didn't come to go to a PD; we had a group that needed community

These were educators that had come there for professional development but really wanted community at that time. This goes back to the start of what we're talking about. If Math doesn't have to do about culture then why do people not want to come to your class? But we are yearning for us to have a sense of community and as we were modeling that for each other.

A Sampling of Activities

A SAMPLING OF ACTIVITIES

- The Four Corners Activity
- Defining Critical Race Words
- I See Me / They See Me
- The One-Word Response
- Pair-Share
- Open Session (unconference model)

- 4 corners- how strongly do you feel about x. - move in the room how you feel. Flood to the people who represent your point of view.
- Defining critical race words (racism) -everyone post definitions and then we circle and discuss to develop a common definitions and common sense of what we're talking about - common understanding of what these words are.
- I see me/How do my students see me - How do you see yourself as a teacher? How do your students see at you as a teacher? Look for commonalities.
- The one-word response.
- Pair-Share
- Open Session /Unconference - people talk out whatever they would like to do.

We have this idea that having these conversations around race doesn't have to be an act of joy.

POSITIVE IMPACT

- After our workshops:
 - More people felt good about Math for America
 - More people felt ready to lead their own workshops
 - More people wanted to create more concentrated PLTs on doing this in their own classrooms and schools
 - More teachers felt like building clubs for kids and race PLTs after school or integrated into PDs
- MfA has social justice offerings
- Most importantly, the effect on kids

If we start talking about sexism all the fragile men in the room are going to say, what about me. It's not about you. In the same way, any marginalized group can say these are the things you don't know about me at all and that you did to us and over time you haven't done anything about that. We need to build something off that. We build these communities because we want people to be affirmed and challenged to the point that they are going to act. If they have a difficulty with something they know who to turn to rather than the one person of color in the building. So then I too can help out as a result. There are too many cases where the people of color are playing dean for the kids in the building. Don't you have responsibility for that child too? Build communities that are thoughtful in that way. If you can build a community around the racial issue then the pedagogical community develops from there. Math and race all tied together.

After the workshop, we got really good grades on our MFA PLT evaluation. More people felt good about being in MFA after that. People of color were saying, we feel like we belong here now. These are folks that took a math test, took interviews, answered

questions and didn't feel like they belonged until this workshop. More people felt ready to do their own workshop, leadership building - More people able to learn their own. There was also more PLC that were specific after that. More people were going to their schools to build out clubs because they felt affirmed. For example, a set of girls that wanted a hair club and this workshop helped them do it, having conversations with people from the community (hairdressers, etc) on how to deal with natural hair. When black girls are asking the black women how to do that, and then it's the black women math teachers creating the club to do that. Create a sense of community.

They started integrating it into their own PDs. For example, conversations include differentiation is neutral, but it is not. What does it actual mean for the Indian kids to learn this when they're coming straight from their places of residence vs the Irish kids vs. ... that led to conversations like we never took into account the fact that only one person on staff speaks a foreign language or that some people on staff aren't given credit for speaking English because it's not as "good". They had that conversations too, and it was hard.

To their credit, because of this movement MFA had more social justice offerings. The effect on the kids must have been phenomenal because the adults felt affirmed and were able to take it the students.

This led to the question... **How do our institutions support a more intersectional culture in our learning spaces?**

Mainly for kids but not just for the kids. Make the adults (administrators, staff, professors) have this conversation. It really matters, not just for my 1000+ kids that I've now taught but also for my kid. I want to thank you because it's critical to have this conversation with so many of you. Even if you think in ivory tower, you are indirectly making decisions how my child learns. And the things I'm talking about now may directly or indirectly make relevant for your child. My child is your child and your child is mine. Keep doing this work because the decisions you are making will ultimate affect mine.

THANK YOU!

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- *This Is Not A Test: A New Narrative on Race, Class, and the Future of Education*
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Thank you for the talks. I teach at a community college. Community college don't get educational classes in graduate school and they come in blind, with a lot of the antideficiency stuff that you discussed.

Student in South Carolina, I've heard the exact same language from my faulty members. We have a great relationship. We're going out to lunch to have a conversation about this. Initial steps.

Estela- It's very hard. Lunch is good but it doesn't happen over one lunch. What we've learned from our work is when we arrive the faculty don't like us and they feel apprehensive about us. Over time we develop a relationship and there is more trust to be able to reveal one's vulnerability. That is what is going with your colleague. Faculty don't know and are afraid to admit it. Some people don't change.

In California with the change in demographics there is also a strong move to maintain power. Look at the examples. Look at the leadership, the dept chair can create a culture of change.

In the characterization of race/ethnicity - is that student opinion or is that looked at from another classification. You can look at someone and they can fall into and the individual may not view themselves. Is the student or society's view.

Estela - the question has comes up. In one institution that we worked at the faculty refused to use protocol because they didn't want to student's identify. My response, what you see is color. Anthony Appiah (<http://appiah.net/>) has said race is not a biological trait. Nevertheless, we make judgement explicitly or implicitly based on color, it's a fact of American life. The observer from the presentation, Elizabeth, was making determination, she could have been wrong. That's the best we can answer. Not suggesting taking away student identity.

Jose - You look at me and then when I speak, when I eat I get similar reactions. That is not going to save me from white supremacy and the deleterious effects of what I was raised or where I was born. How much harder I have to work. I self identify as one thing and we mitigate that with society's expectation is we consciously or unconsciously do so.

Work at university in a city that is very white. I want the school to change. All the things you say. Also for first generation white students from the middle of nowhere. How to get my colleagues to agree and do something about it. Don't Your white students that look like you also have these issues

Jose - Your question had an answer in. These methods don't just work for black and Latino students and asian pacific students and first nation indigenous students. Pretty much everybody.

Too much of deficit model is focused on deficits of black and latino students. Don't want to pedagogies to go to everybody because that would create equity

Model it first, open the door and ask them to come see it. Make your colleagues reflect on that.

You as a person can only do so much in an institution. See how I connect, even with the students that are white. Hope for that.

Estela - **I have tenure** - being an embedded agent can be very difficult to bring change - your tenured so you have so status. We showed the faculty in Colorado there was a problem by showing all the data by course and course section by faculty, race and ethnicity. Chair showed his data first to all the students. If you have a willing chair - start with the data and question what your doing. You have to have more than you.

It's hard to work inside. We're working as outsiders.

Why don't you think it would be successful

Estela: Because these are your colleagues. When we go in as outsiders - we have our accomplishments It's hard to do this with your own colleagues. We just did the syllabus review at our own school and it wasn't same. I'm not saying it can't be done it just takes a different structure and skills.

Two claims: (1) Continual interrogation why we do (2) we need to envision the world for our students once the math door opens for them. Are there patterns that emerge. What emerges in the thermes. What do we want for them in the worlds where they are going to exist?

Estela: not so much - the mepowerent and thinking of our students' future from a larger vision. In Colorado a group of Latino students go to the American Hispanics in Higher Education - seeing themselves as future in education.

On campuses - not always warm and people aren't always receptive to us. It happens over time. There is a lot of white fragility. At a campus lately where a top administrator said how difficult it was to be a white man on his campus.

National association of system heads - Wisconsin,
They want to talk about disabilities, not race and ethnicity. Socioeconomic status.