

Creating Authentic Partnerships with Historically Marginalized Families and Other Stakeholders: Embracing an Equity Mindset

Educational systems in this country have been shaped by the influence of White dominant culture, frequently precluding the authentic partnership of families and stakeholders who are vested in the success of historically marginalized students in their communities. The continuum below demonstrates characteristics associated with White dominant culture on the left and characteristics that are rooted in an intentional equity mindset on the right. This continuum can be used to assess the cultural norms that currently exist and to think about what changes are needed to create authentic opportunities for partnership that can improve learning conditions and outcomes for historically marginalized populations.

CHARACTERISTICS OF ENGAGEMENT ROOTED IN WHITE DOMINANT CULTURE

CHARACTERISTICS OF ENGAGEMENT ROOTED IN AN INTENTIONAL EQUITY MINDSET

Power-Driven

- Those with power think they are capable of making decisions for those without power
- Those with power do not think it is important or necessary to understand the viewpoint or experiences of those for whom they make decisions
- Those with power feel threatened when anyone suggests changes in how things should be done
- There is a desire for individual credit and recognition

Shared Decision-Making

- Those who are affected by the system are actively engaged in identifying problems and implementing solutions
- Everyone involved knows and understands how decisions are made
- Ensure everyone involved knows and understands their level of responsibility and authority in decision-making
- Understand that change is inevitable and challenging those in power can be healthy and productive

Directed

- Leaders chart the path, make decisions, and empower others to take action
- Things are either/or, good/bad, right/wrong, with us/against us
- Does not acknowledge a need for time and creativity to seek solutions or come up with more options

Interactive

- Leaders and stakeholders join together, build consensus, chart the path, and collectively take action
- There is an intentional effort to include all parties involved
- Notice when people use 'either/or' language and challenge others to come up with more than two alternatives

CHARACTERISTICS OF ENGAGEMENT ROOTED IN WHITE DOMINANT CULTURE

CHARACTERISTICS OF ENGAGEMENT ROOTED IN AN INTENTIONAL EQUITY MINDSET

Traditional

- Values strong documentation and writing skills over non-traditional methods of communication
- Does not take into account or value other ways information can be shared

Progressive

- Take the time to analyze how people get and share information
- Be open to alternative ways of communicating
- Value the contributions and efforts of every person on the team
- Use language free of technical terms, acronyms, and buzz words

Authoritative

- Belief in solving problems alone
- Those in power drive decisions and carry out the work in a technical approach
- Belief there is only one right way to do things
- Belief that when others do not adapt or change, something is wrong with them

Make people accountable as a group

Shared Responsibility

- rather than as individualsAccept that there are many ways to get
- to the same goal
- Respect the decisions that others make
- Always be clear that you have something to learn
- Never assume you know what is best

Objective

- Maintain a strong belief in objectivity or neutrality
- Belief that emotions are inherently destructive and irrational, and should not play a role in decision-making
- Invalidate people who show emotion
- Ignore or invalidate those who do not think in a linear manner

Empathetic

- Understand that everyone has a worldview and that it affects the way they understand things
- Sit with discomfort when people express themselves in ways that are unfamiliar
- Assume that everyone has a valid point, and it is your job to understand what that point is

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