

Before the Meeting

"In the Chat"

- ★ Add your school to your name in Zoom and turn on cameras!
- ★ In the chat, drop one word or phrase that describes how you are coming into this space and WHY



Excellence and Equity

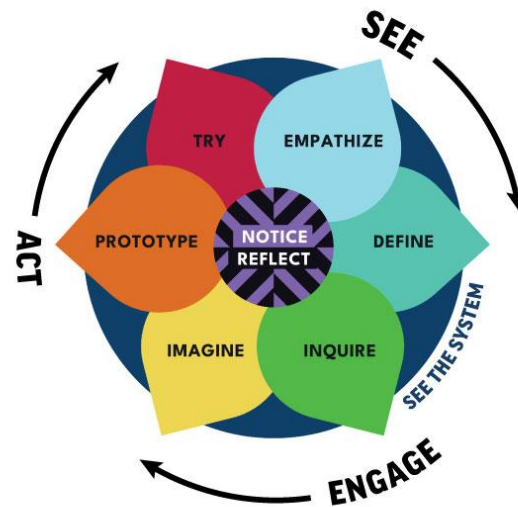
RSVP Meeting
October 16, 2025

3:45 – 5:15 pm



Overview of the Day

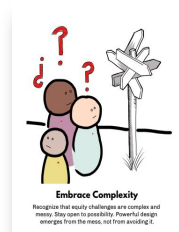
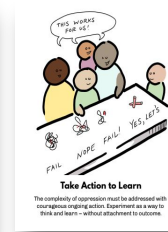
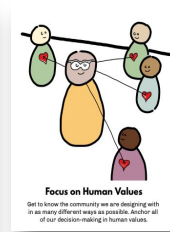
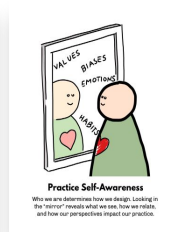
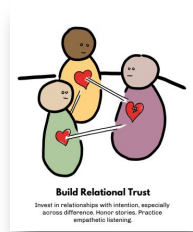
- Welcome & Inclusion: If you only knew...
- Our Work 25–26: Site Based Equity Dilemma
- Liberatory Design & Co-Design Review
- Empathy Deep Dive
- Next Steps & Feedback



Source: [National Equity Project](#)

Community Agreements 25–26

Adopt, Adapt, Abandon



1. Ask questions beginning with "Tell me more..." to surface what we don't know, rather than asserting what we think we know
2. Build from the strengths, stories, & skills of the team and honor the wisdom in the community **by creating opportunities for people share**
3. Keep the problem *and* solution spaces open by listening to multiple, diverse perspectives rather than rushing to fix, **making sure to include the voices of those most impacted by the challenge or the solution**
 - a. Create collaborative spaces that prioritize inclusion and allow well-thought-out ideas to form
 - ~~b. Powerful design emerges from the "mess," which shows that we are doing something and trying new ways~~
4. Put aside preconceived notions of how things should be and ~~think/talk "crazy"~~ "be fearless" (wild ideas to spark creative courage **and outside-of-the-box thinking**)
5. Create opportunities for sense-making before decision-making **by listening to diverse voices**

Feedback on Feedback

Dimension	Average Score	Interpretation
Relational Trust	4.38	Strong sense of belonging and connection
Relevance	4.51	Highly aligned with student leader roles
Clarity	4.50	Clear understanding of goals and processes
Useful Materials	4.59	Practical and actionable takeaways

5. Most Meaningful Aspects

Learning and Applying Liberatory Design: Students valued hearing directly from experts and understanding how to apply Liberatory Design in their leadership work.

Building Community and Connection: Students appreciated meeting peers from across schools and building authentic relationships through dialogue.

Empowered Leadership and New Perspectives: Participants felt inspired to make meaningful change and better understood their role in shaping equitable systems.

6. Areas for Improvement

More Time and Depth for Collaboration: Students requested extended breakout discussions, rotating groups, and more opportunities to share ideas.

Clarifying Roles, Goals, and Next Steps: Many wanted clearer expectations, future plans, and concrete examples of their work as RSVP leaders.

Increasing Engagement and Interactive Elements: Suggestions included more hands-on learning, energetic starts, and interactive activities.

Welcome & Inclusion

Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie



"Many stories matter. Stories have been used to dispossess and to malign. But stories can also be used to empower, and to humanize. Stories can break the dignity of a people. But stories can also repair that broken dignity."

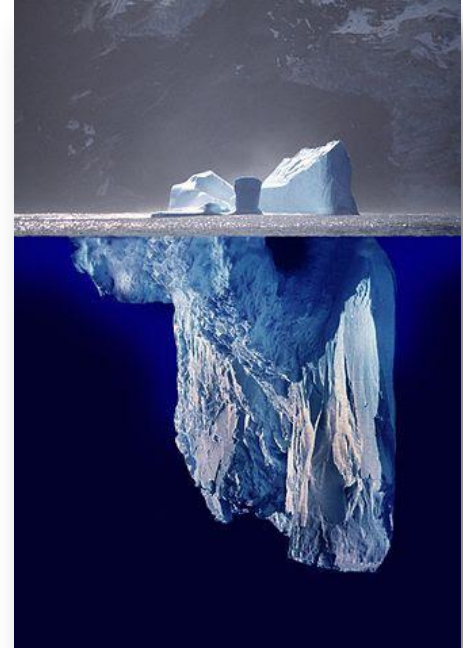
If you only knew?

An activity to get to know your peers and why they are the way they are! More specifically, their *accumulated life experiences* in micro-stories.

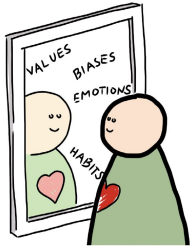
Instructions:

Complete the following sentence and be prepared to share aloud:

If you only knew that _____, you would understand why _____.

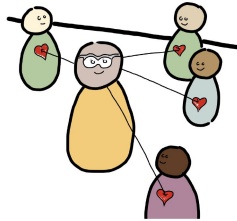


Examples: If you only knew... (Dr. Twal)



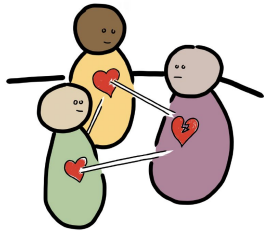
Practice Self-Awareness

Who we are determines how we design. Looking in the "mirror" reveals what we see, how we relate, and how our perspectives impact our practice.



Focus on Human Values

Get to know the community we are designing with in as many different ways as possible. Anchor all of our decision-making in human values.



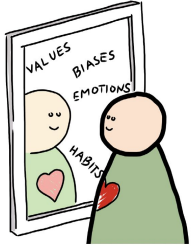
Build Relational Trust

Invest in relationships with intention, especially across difference. Honor stories. Practice empathetic listening.

If you only knew that my mother had to fight for her education in a country that didn't allow her to get one, you would understand why I see education as the key to justice and equity.

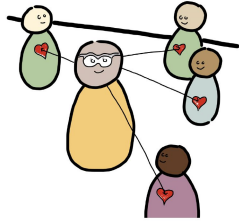
If you only knew that I grew up with sidewinder snakes in the desert, you would understand my paralyzing fear of snakes.

Examples: If you only knew... (Dr. Baker)



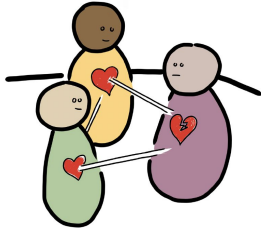
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If you only knew that my father and mother were both the first to go to college in their families, you would know where I get my value of education.

If you only knew that I am a cancer survivor/thriver, you would know how I developed the courage that I have to do things even when I am scared.

Site-Based Equity Dilemma

Timeline Overview

Introduction & Orientation

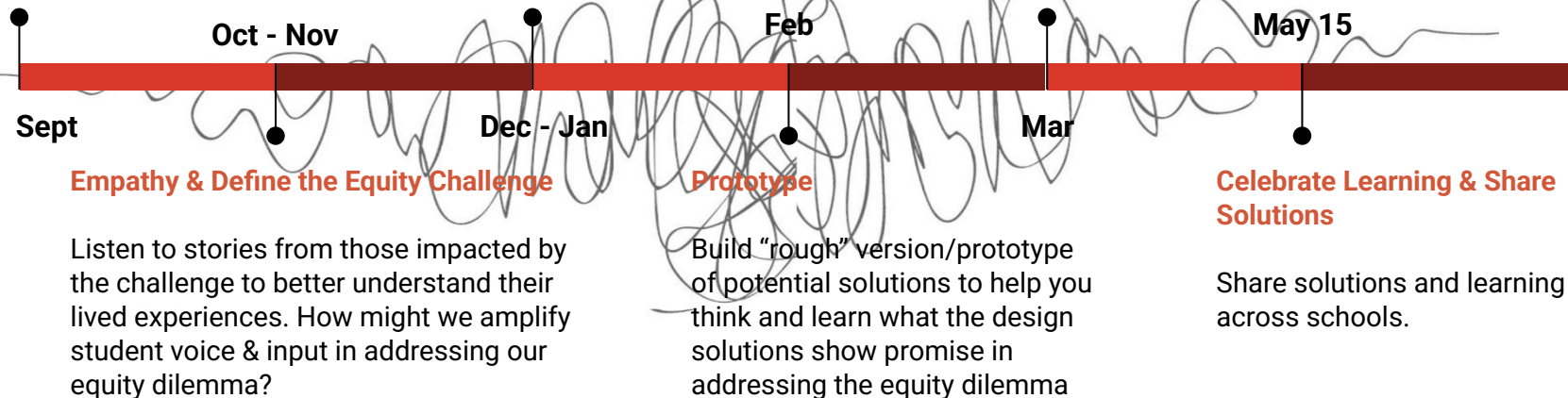
Define purpose of the group and build a shared understanding of the co-design partnership to support site equity dilemma

Define the Dilemma, Inquire, & Imagine Solutions

Involve our peers and adult liaison in coming up with creative solutions to the equity dilemma

Try

Share the prototype in rough form with others to get feedback on what's promising so you can improve your design.





Equity Dilemma Interview: See the System

Schedule a meeting with your principal or their designee to learn more about an "Equity Dilemma" that your administration would like to partner with students to address

Interview the principal or designee using these three questions:

1. What is an equity dilemma that you want to prioritize for our work this year?
2. How did you select this equity dilemma? Why?
3. What do you want to know from a student's perspective that would help you learn more about (and perhaps even solve) your equity dilemma?

Take notes on the responses and come to the next meeting ready to share what you learned.

Preparing to meet your principal or designee

Sample email or introductory communication

Designee can be any of the following:

- Activities Director
- Assistant Principal
- Pathway Coordinator
- Or other teacher leader at the site

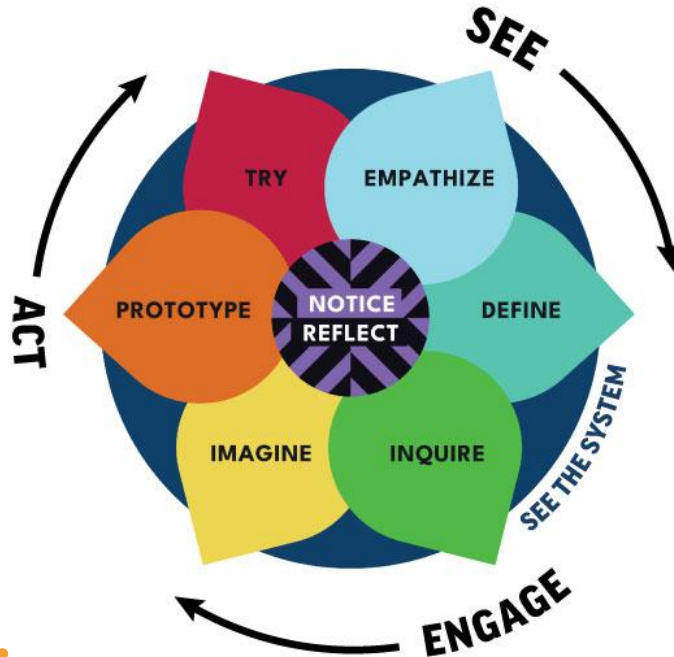
If you are going in as a group, make sure to assign parts and be clear on who is doing what.

Sample Dilemma – Differing/disparate experiences between pathway programs

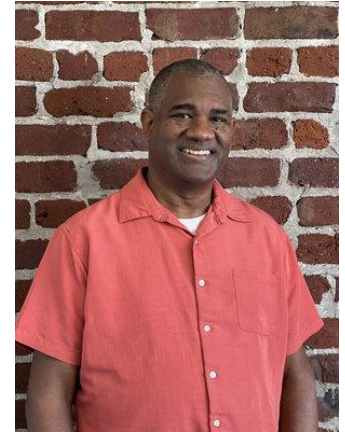
Liberatory Design for Co-Design

Liberatory Design – Designing “With”

Source: [National Equity Project](#)



Tom
Malarkey
he / him



Mark
Salinas
he/him

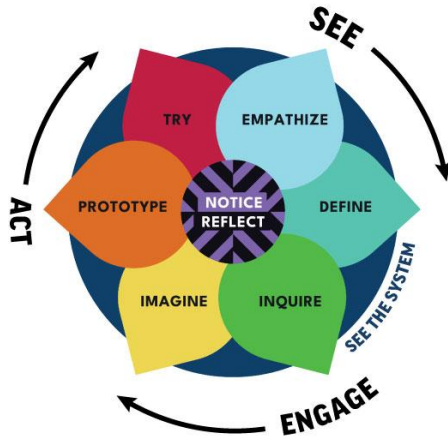


*Excellence
and
Equity*

MINDSETS



MODES



Components of Liberatory Design

Liberatory Design Mindsets: Mindsets that can be used creatively to invoke stances and values to ground and focus your design practice.

(Ways of *being*)

Liberatory Design Modes: Types of action that provide process guidance for your design practice.

(Ways of *doing*)





Practice self-awareness
(identity, emotions, power)
and situational awareness
(context, people, history)

Pause to reflect on actions,
impact, emotions, relationship -
and adjust intentions, direction,
presence

Share prototypes with
stakeholders - to learn and
improve your design

Listen to stories from those
impacted by the challenge - and
build relationship in the process

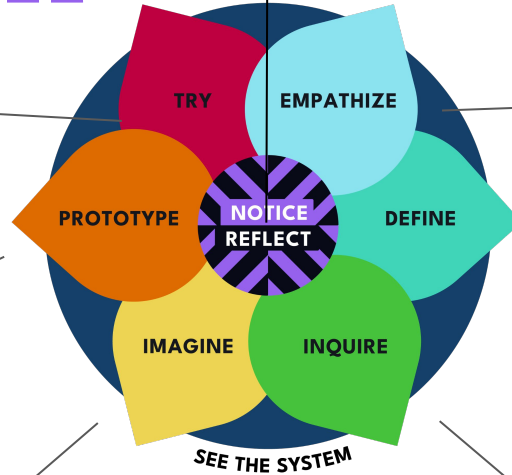
Build rough versions of
potential approaches - to
help you think and learn

Frame the challenge and opportunity;
determine how complex it is -- and if
we need to understand it better
before designing

Get outside of your box
and imagine “what if?!”

Recognize patterns of inequity, look at
the system creating those—and identify
a challenge to address

Design small “safe-to-fail” actions
to learn more about your situation
- to inform your design direction

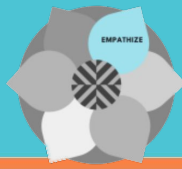




Empathy Deep Dive

David Clifford

Director of Design + Making @ the Collaboratory at Head-Royce, Oakland
Co-Creator, Liberatory Design
Stanford University, Fellow of Design Thinking in Education (2014-2015)



Empathize

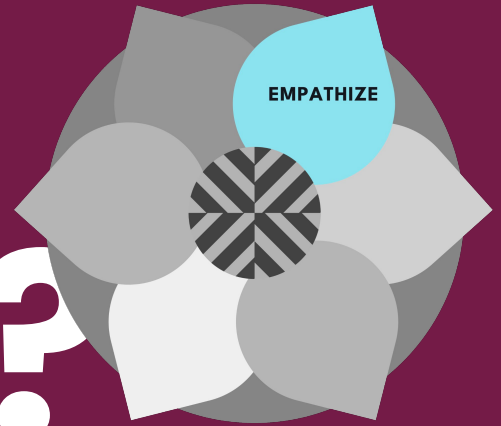
Empathy is the foundation of a human-centered design process. To empathize, you:

- Observe
- Engage
- Immerse

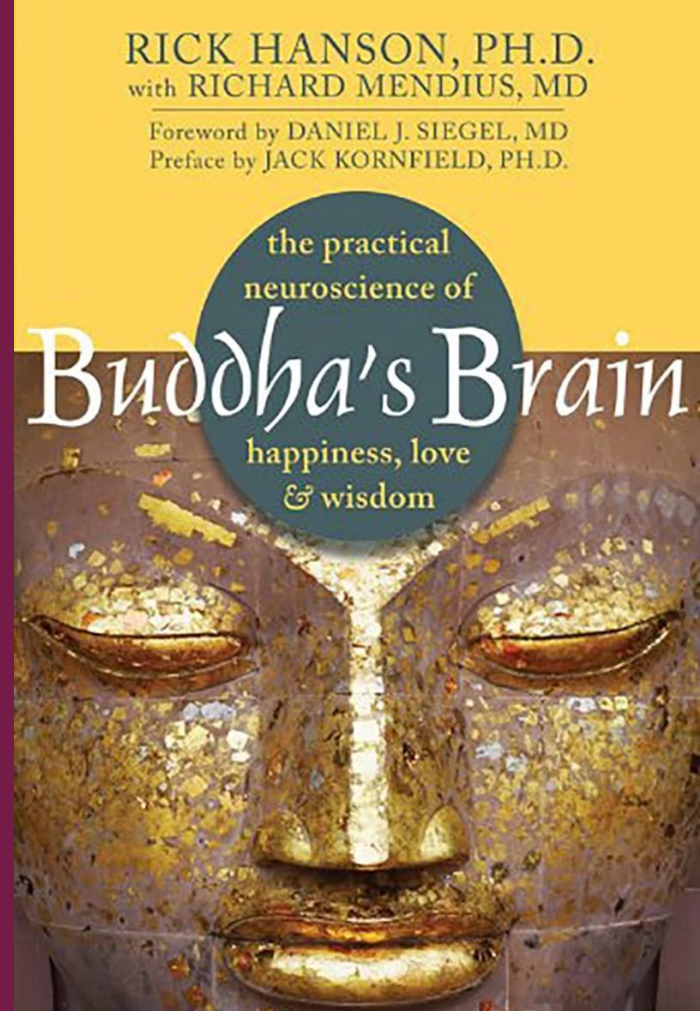
Read the one-pager and be ready to share highlights.



Why EMPATHY?



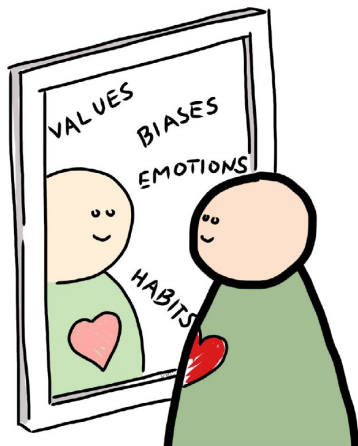
- **Empathy** cuts through the automatic tendencies of the brain to create an “us” and “them.”
- **Empathy** contains an inherent generosity: you give the willingness to be moved by another person.
- **Inadequate empathy** erodes trust and makes it harder to solve interpersonal problems.
- **Empathy** is a state of being curious, not critical.
- The neurotransmitters of serotonin, dopamine, and norepinephrine are released when we experience **empathy**.



Some critical mindsets

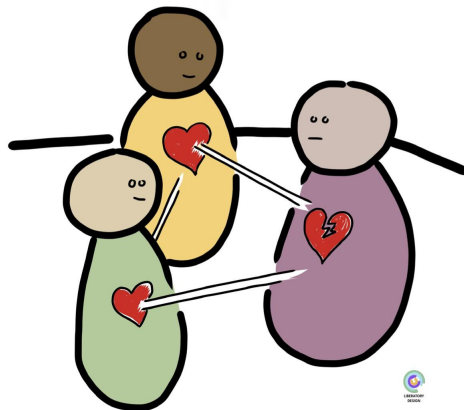
to ground our empathy practice





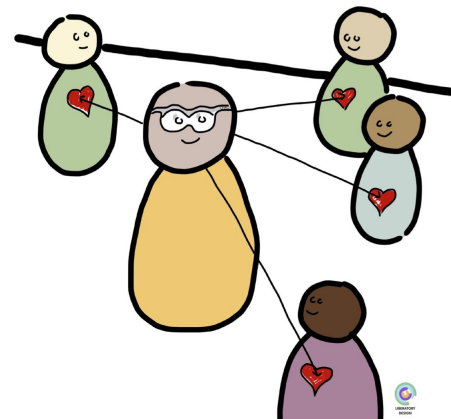
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Share, Don't Sell

Practice transparency and non-attachment in sharing ideas with collaborators.



Recognize Oppression

Learn to see how oppression, in its many forms, has shaped designs that lead to inequity.



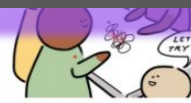
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Seek Liberatory Collaboration

Recognize differences in power and identity to design "with" instead of "for." Design for belonging.



Exercise Creative Courage

Every human is creative. Creative courage allows us to push through self-doubt and creative fragility so we can design bravely against oppression.

EQUITY PAUSES



Dr. Christine Ortiz



Caroline Hill



Michelle Molitor



EQUITY

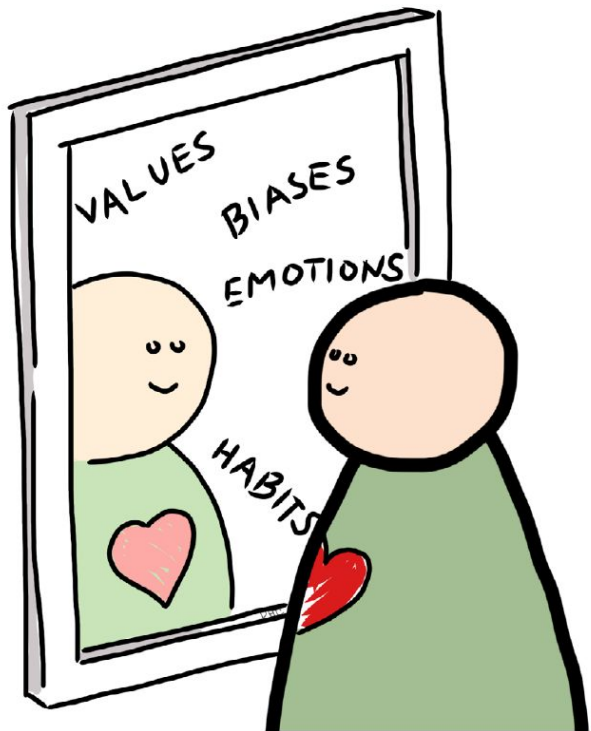
PAUSE



A deliberate moment to slow your roll so you can **NOTICE + REFLECT** and *"Check yourself before you wreck yourself (and others)"*.

-adapted from eXd's Caroline Hill, Michelle Molitor and Christine Ortiz, definition of Equity Pause

-quote from Ice Cube's *Check Yo Self*, 1992



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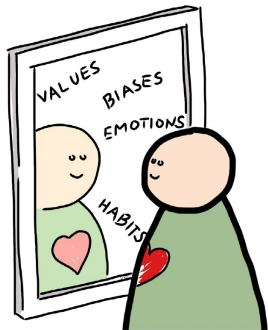
“Who we are shapes what we see, how we relate, and how we design.”

Liberatory Design

To know oneself is to study oneself in action with another person. Relationship is a process of self-revelation. Relationship is the mirror in which you discover yourself. To be is to be related."

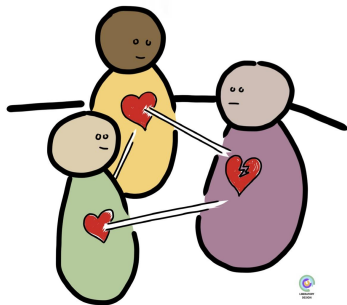
-Bruce Lee





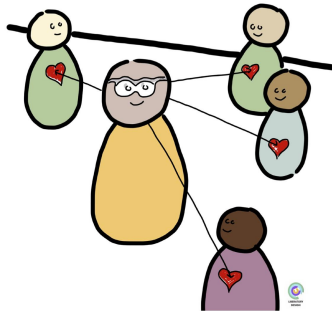
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NOTICE:

For this practice equity challenge, which mindset feels like a **strength** and which one feels like a **stretch**? Why?

How might you **intentionally elevate the strength** and address the stretch?

2min. Quiet self-reflection
10 min Break out

NOTICE
REFLECT

EMPATHY

PAUSE



Empathize: 3 methods

Immerse

Observe

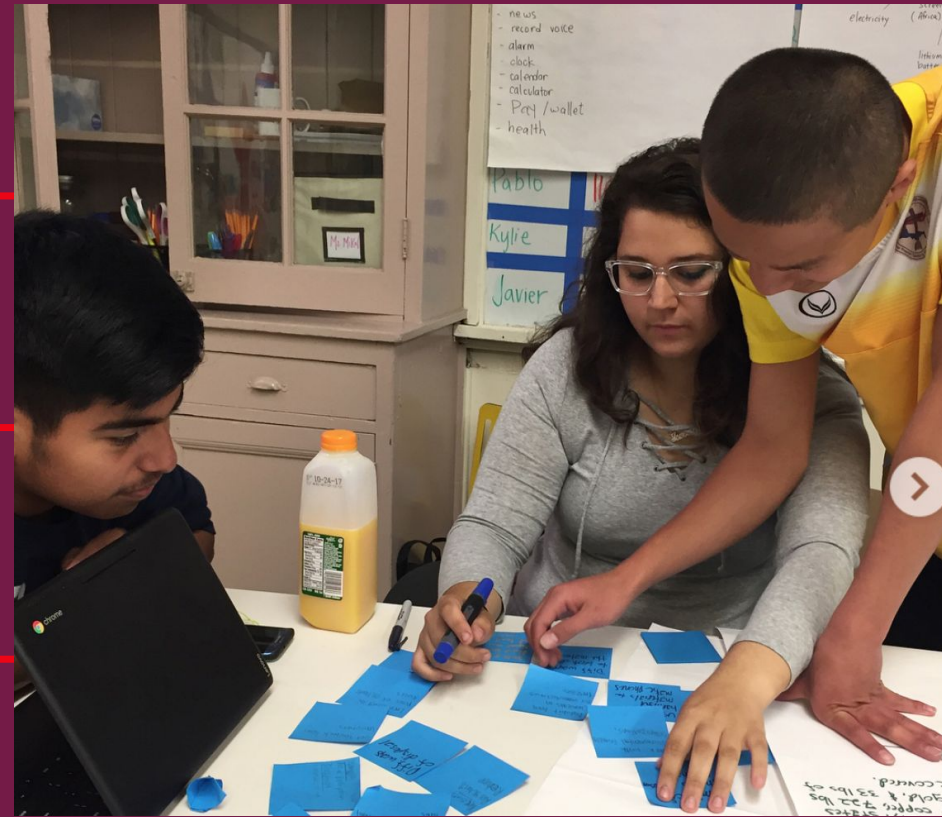
Engage



Immerse

Observe

Engage



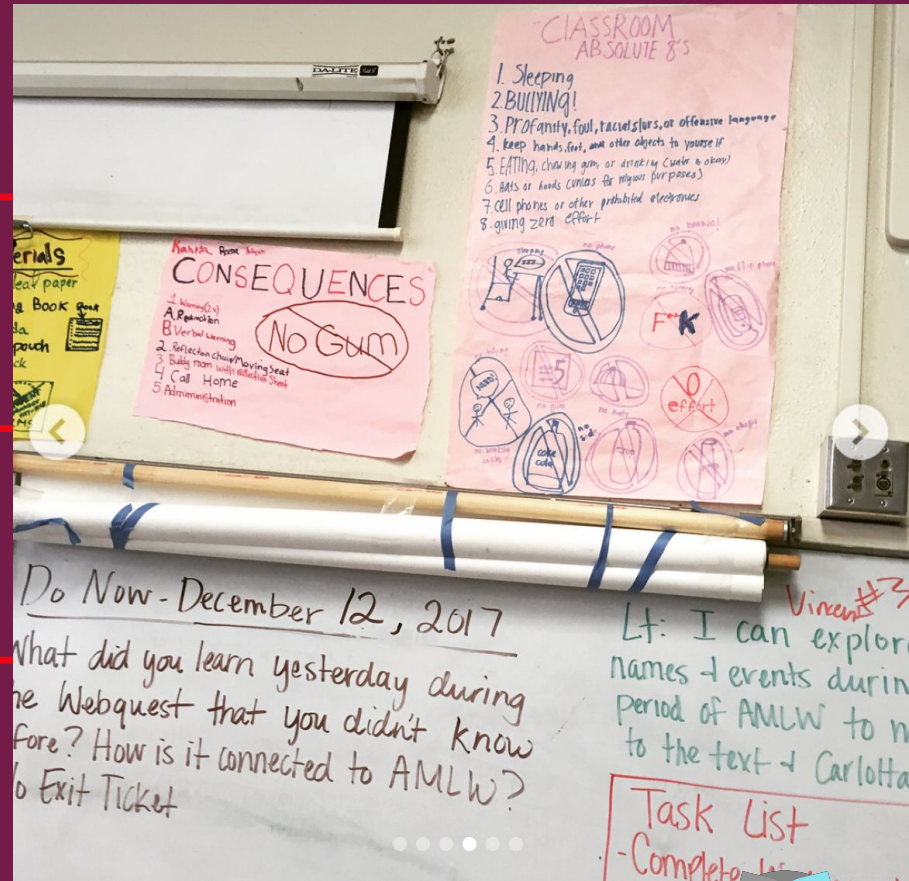
Empathy Methods



Immerse

Observe

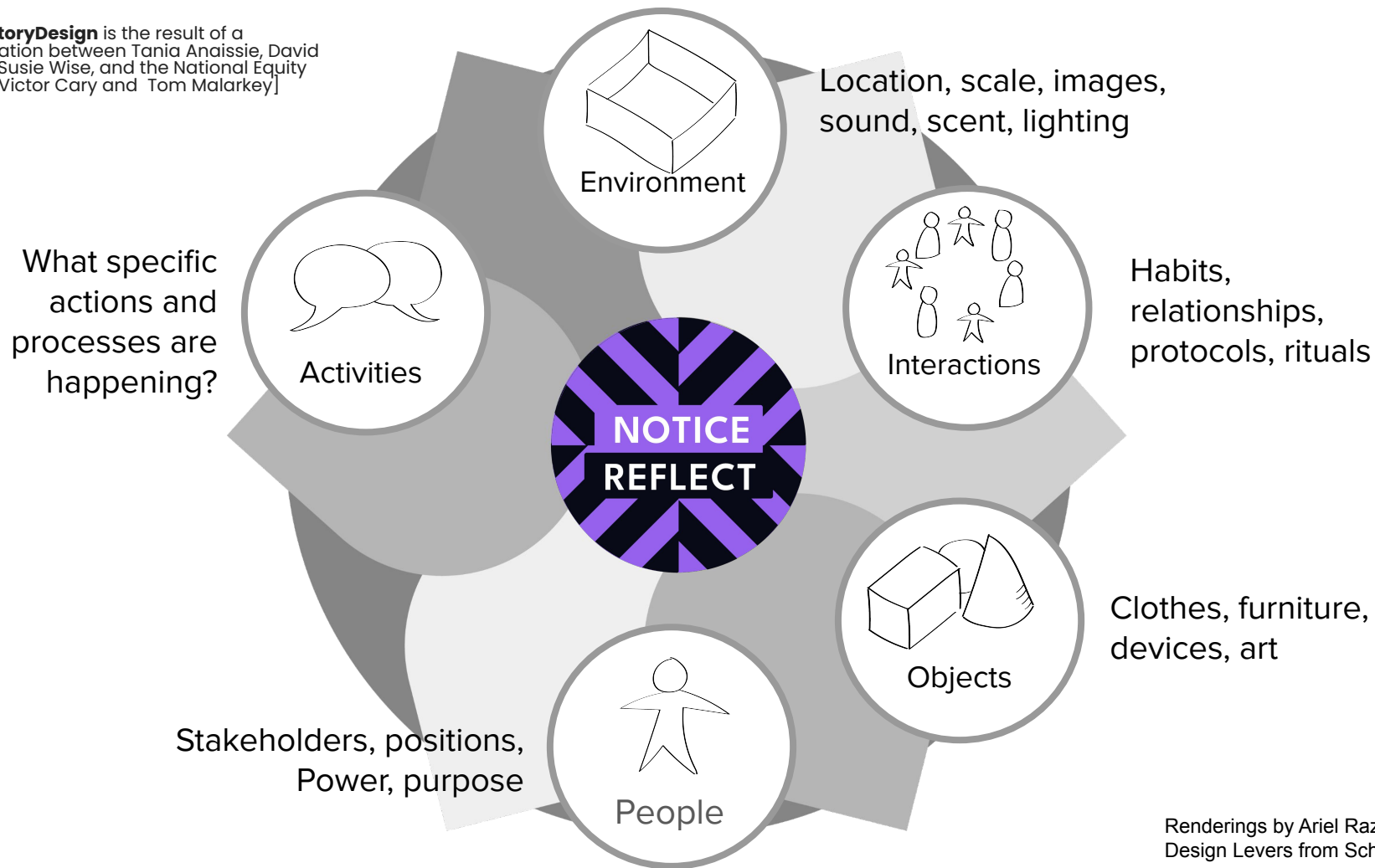
Engage



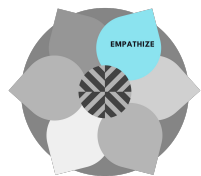
Empathy Methods



#LiberatoryDesign is the result of a collaboration between Tania Anaissie, David Clifford, Susie Wise, and the National Equity Project [Victor Cary and Tom Malarkey]



Renderings by Ariel Raz
Design Levers from School Retool



EMPATHY Observation Tool

A tool to observe, empathize and learn from a learning experience with care and curiosity.

Whom do I have the privilege of empathizing with?

What equity challenge are they working on?

Write here

Why?

Write here

What do they hope to learn from this person?

Write here.



Familiarize yourselves with the Liberator Design Mindsets and Process

Note what you are observing below.

Activities

Write here

What specific actions and processes are happening?

Environment/
"Energy"

Write here

What is the character of the space you are observing (classroom, office, hallway, common space, zoom, etc)?

Interactions

Write here

What is the nature of interactions that are routine versus special?

Objects

Write here

What are the objects and devices students have in their environments, and how do they relate to the activities?

People
(f.k.a. "Users")

Write here

Who is there? What are their roles and relationships? What are their values and prejudices?

EXAMPLE

EMPATHY Observation Tool

A tool to observe, empathize and learn from a learning experience with care and curiosity.

Whom do I have the privilege of empathizing with?

ELA Teacher of 5 years

What equity challenge are they working on?

Students are disengaging from the curriculum.

Why?

He's not quite sure so he invited students to observe his class

What do we hope to learn from this person?

We hope to learn how the AEIOP might be preventing engagement



Familiarize yourselves with the Liberatory Design Mindsets and Process

Note what you are observing below.

Activities

Write here

What specific actions and processes are happening?

Environment/ "Energy"

Fluorescent lighting
Musty

What is the character of the space you are observing (classroom, office, hallway, common space, zoom, etc)?

Interactions

Teacher at his desk look at computer as students walk in.
Students sneak peaks at their phones

What is the nature of interactions that are routine versus special?

Objects

Posters on the wall. Not level. Not sure what they relate to.
Couches
Beanbag chair
Desks in rows

What are the objects and devices students have in their environments, and how do they relate to the activities?

People (f.k.a. "Users")

One teacher (AA)
30 students
18 female presenting, 10 male-presenting, 2 non-binary

One LS

Who is there? What are their roles and relationships? What are their values and prejudices?

EXAMPLE

EMPATHY Observation Tool

A tool to observe, empathize and learn from a learning experience with care and curiosity.

Whom do I have the privilege of empathizing with?

Students in X pathway

What equity challenge are they working on?

Disparate experiences pathway programs

Why?

Pathway programs should promote equity not a culture of haves & have nots

What do we hope to learn from this person?

What are the daily experiences of someone in X pathway. What opportunities/barriers exist for them?



Familiarize yourselves with the Liberatory Design Mindsets and Process

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Write here

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Who is there? What are their roles and relationships? What are their values and prejudices?

Immerse

Observe

Engage



Empathy Methods



ENGAGE: Empathy Interview Arc

I'd like to ask you some questions to help me understand....

Your juicy questions that get to emotions and lived experience

"Tell me more about..."
(something you noticed in something they shared)

Why their voice matters.
They're the expert.

Thank them for sharing their time and story.

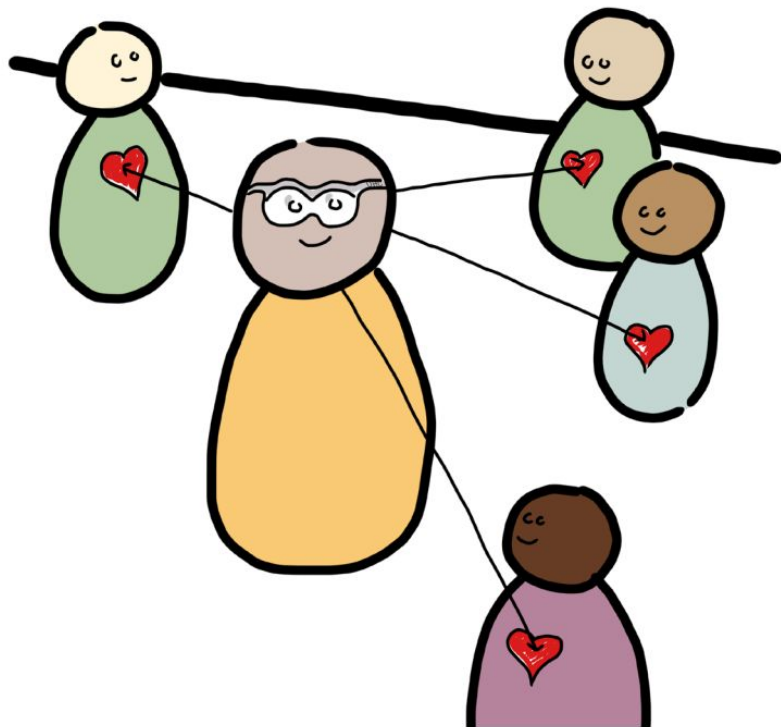
You share next steps and invite them to design with you

Intro yourself to build trust
This project and why you reached out them.

You got this!!

30-60 minutes





Focus on Human Values

Get to know the community we are designing with in as many different ways as possible. Anchor all of our decision-making in human values.

How:

- Listen from a place of radical care and curiosity. Be humble and acknowledge that we are not the expert.
- Honor the stories, experiences, and emotions that community members share.
- Stay connected to the community we are working with through every phase of the project.
- This is the beginning of co-designing trust!



Miriam E. Wilt (1950)

**“A study of teacher awareness of listening as
a factor in elementary education.”**

The Data on Listening

80% of awake time is spent
communicating

We spend 45% of awake time listening

75% of the words are ignored,
misunderstood, or forgotten

Most Adults listen actively for 17
seconds at a time.





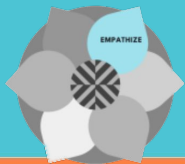
SET INTENTIONS

Reflecting co-design work ahead, which 1-2 Liberatory Design Mindsets would you like to guide your design work for this equity challenge?

Which do you hope your school leader grounds in and why?

5-10 min.





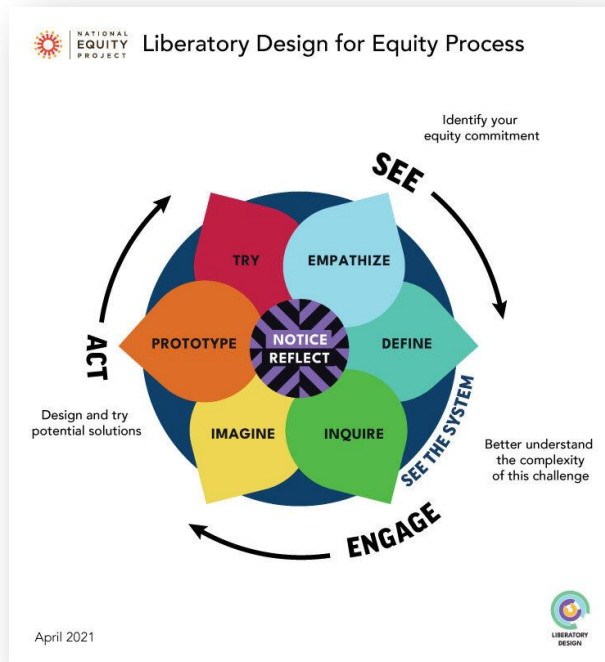
Empathize Team Time

COORDINATE SCHEDULES & NEXT STEPS: In school alike groups, consider **HOW** you will interview your administration and **HOW** you will subsequently gather information from your peers to help answer the questions that your administrator or designee had about the Equity Dilemma.

Observe	Interview	Immerse
<u>What? How? Why?</u>	<u>Interview Preparation</u> <u>Interview for Empathy</u> <u>Extreme Users</u>	<u>Shadow a Student</u>
<u>Note-taking Template</u> (Make a copy)		

Next Steps & Feedback

What now?

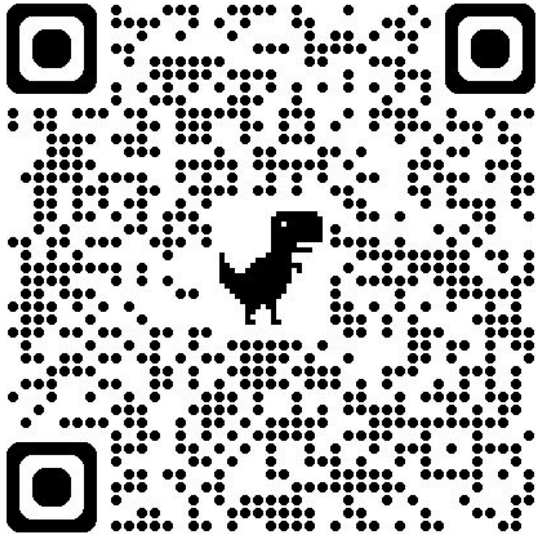


- ❑ Conduct Meeting with Admin (Equity Dilemma)
- ❑ Based on the interview, gather information using Empathy tools
- ❑ Come ready in November to share Empathy experience, Define the Challenge based on your Empathy Findings

“By centering students’ needs through the liberatory design process, we repositioned students as centers of knowledge. We listened to them in ways that shifted our practice, and we recognized that both teachers and students have the capacity to educate each other... Our students recognized that their voices and perspectives mattered, and they began to advocate for themselves in new ways.”

Jessica Lee Stovall, Lamar Timmons-Long, Thomas J. Rodney and Taylor Hall
“Black Teachers’ Use of Liberatory Design to Promote Literacies of Healing” (Stovall 2023)

Next Steps & Feedback



Please scan the QR code and take a moment to offer us your insights and feedback.

Your voice matters. We want to hear you!

Next Meeting: November 13, 2025

3:45 – 5:15 pm

Complete interview with admin and begin gathering empathy data from peers.

In-Person Meetings:

12/18 (Nelson MS) & 3/19 (Browning HS)

**4:00 – 5:30 pm to accommodate travel time*