



# Creating Safe and Brave Learning Spaces

Joan Edwards - Director of Equity

I have come to a frightening conclusion. I am the decisive element that creates the climate. It is my personal approach that creates the climate. It is my daily mood that makes the weather. As a teacher, I possess tremendous power to make a child's life miserable or joyous. I can be a tool of torture or an instrument of inspiration. I can humiliate or humor, hurt or heal. In all situations, it is my response that decides whether a crisis will be escalated or de-escalated, and a child humanized or dehumanized.


-Haim Ginott



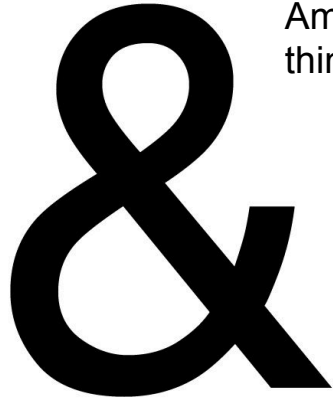
To courageously lean into what it means for each of us  
to become anti racist so that all students can flourish.

“You cannot dismantle what you cannot see” – Layla F. Saad

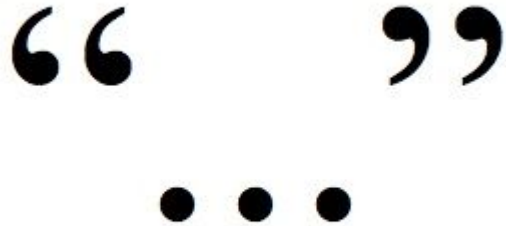
# Naming Some Assumptions

- We all want to feel like we are helping not harming students.
  - There is a dominant culture at KO that dictates the norms, assumptions and expectations, policies and practices that advantages ppl who are white/white passing.
  - We cannot address inequitable norms, assumptions and expectations if we don't name them.
  - Identity is intersectional and multi layered.
  - Systemic racism is destructive.
  - Being an educator that focuses on all students flourishing requires a commitment and ongoing practice.
- 

# Guiding Principles



Am I practicing both/and thinking?



Am I practicing courageous inquiry?



Am I leaving room for more to be discovered in my story or the story of others?

# What does EQUITY mean?

\*\*When everyone gets what they need to grow and thrive.

An equity emphasis seeks to render justice by deeply considering structural factors that benefit some social groups/communities and harms other social groups/communities.

Sometimes justice demands, for the purpose of equity, an unequal response.

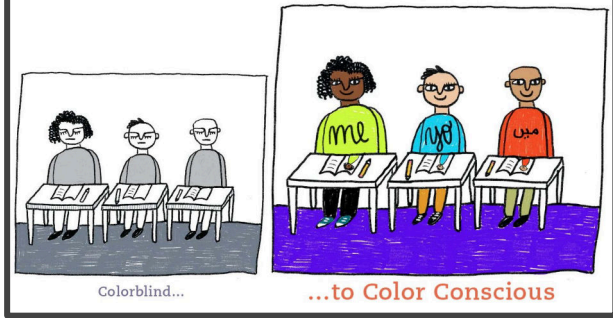
\*\*Borrowed from RE-Center

Shift 1: Mainstream → Margins

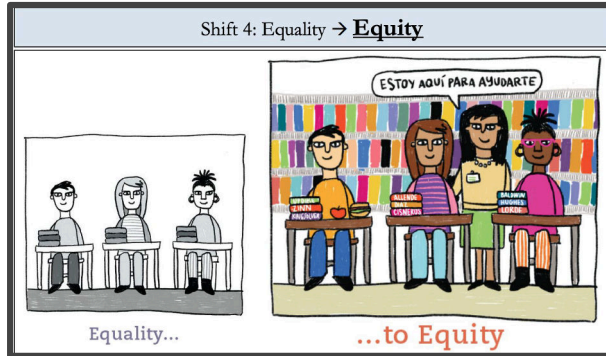


# Equity Shifts

Shift 2: Colorblind → Color Conscious



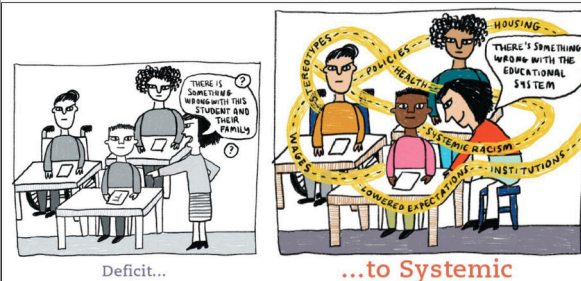
Shift 4: Equality → Equity



Shift 5: Racism requires INTENT to harm → **IMPACT** that **disproportionally harms people of color is racism**



Shift 3: Deficit → Systemic



"Racism requires INTENT to harm"...

...IMPACT that disproportionately harms people of color is racism

# Brain Rule #1 (p.47)\*

The brain's **two prime directives are to stay safe and be happy**. The brain takes its social needs very seriously and is fierce in protecting an individual's sense of well-being, self determination, and self-worth along with its connection to community. We cannot downplay students' need to feel safe and valued in the classroom. **The brain will not seek to connect with others if it perceives them to be threatening to its social or psychological well-being** based on what they say and do. As a result, the amygdala stays on alert, trying to detect other microaggressions.

*\*Culturally Responsive Teaching and the Brain - Zaretta Hammond*

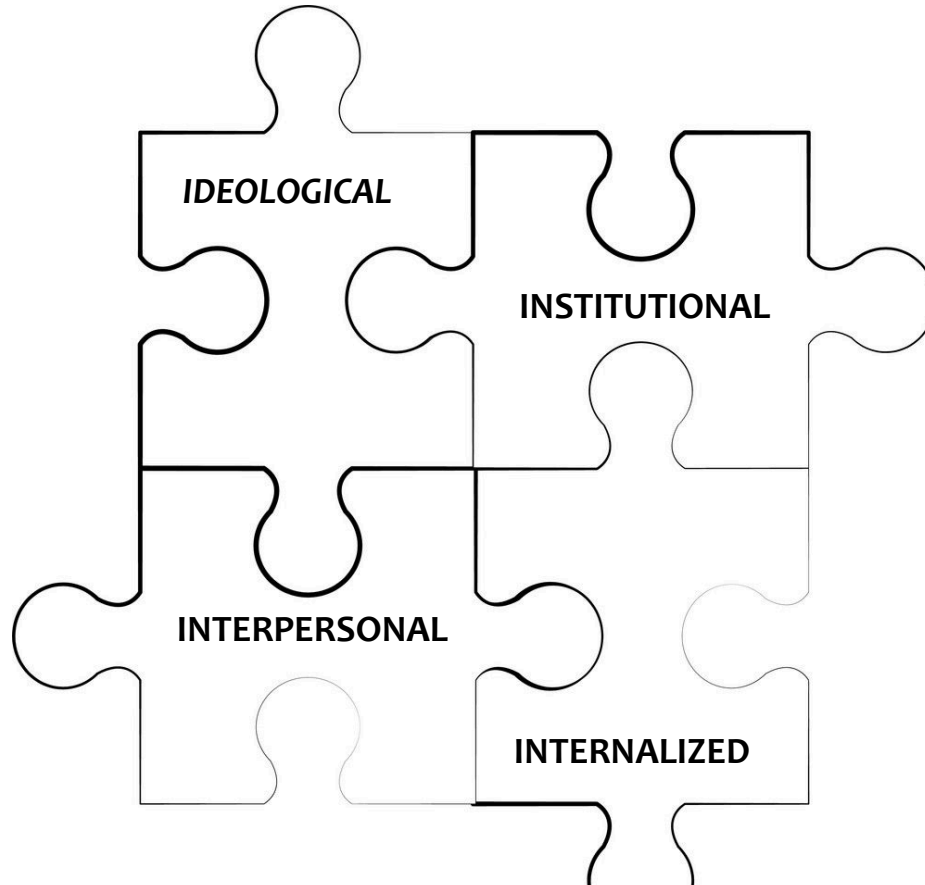






*Credit: Andrew M. Ibrahim MD, MSc  
www.surgeryredesign.com*

# Systemic Racism - more than just one piece



*Created by S. Schmidt*

# Defining Terms: What are we saying?

**Anti racist** - Committed to dismantling systemic racism (structures, policies, practices...)

**BIPOC** - Black/Indigenous/People of Color.

**Equity** - Instead of giving everyone the same thing (equality) it is giving everyone what they need.

**Implicit bias** - (also known as prejudice ) - Largely unconscious and automatic prejudice that operates below conscious awareness and without intentional wound. Implicit bias is absorbed from the messages surrounding us and results in acts of discrimination. (D'Angelo)

**Privilege** - inherent unearned advantage conveyed upon an individual or a group.

**White supremacy** - an ideology, a paradigm, an institutional system, and a worldview that we have all been born into. It is set of norms, rules and laws that centers on and advantages people who are white or white passing. (Saad)

## Equity in Practice Guidelines (Re-Center)

- Try on - *Invitation to be open minded*
- Experience discomfort - *Opportunity to learn*
- Move up, Move up - *Intentionally monitoring participation and engagement*
- Be aware of intent and impact - *Recognize that our intent and impact may not match.*
- Practice Both/And thinking - *More than one reality/perspective can be true*
- Notice Content AND the Process -
- Practice self-focus - *Pay attention to and be curious about our thoughts/reactions*
- Expect and accept non-closure
- Anything else to create a safe/brave space? - *Co-create with your students.*

# Educator Phrases and Pedagogical moves

1. I noticed the comment/behavior and I must interrupt in the moment;
2. I noticed the comment/behavior and timing means I must address later;
3. I didn't notice or I didn't make time and I want to return to it.



The first and last day of school are the hardest for a teacher. The first day you are starting all over again. The last day you are letting go of the progress that was made. What comes in the middle is the building of a classroom community. Create your classroom community first, and the learning will fall naturally into place.

Kathy Griffin's Teaching Strategies  
Copyright 2013

# Resources

[Culturally Responsive Teaching and the Brain](#) - Zaretta Hammond

[Me and White Supremacy](#) - Layla F. Saad

[How to be An Antiracist](#) - Ibram X. Kendi

[Waking Up White](#) - Debby Irving

[Teach and Transform](#) - Liz Kleinrock

[Teaching Tolerance](#)

