



Centering Equity in Educator Effectiveness: Critical Reflections on Intersectionality

American Culture & Education, H341
Indiana University Purdue University Indianapolis

Presented by Tiffany S. Kyser, M.A.
November 24, 2015



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Agenda



Introduction &
Presentation
Overview



Identifying Our
Identities



Examining Power &
Privilege



An Introduction to
Intersectionality

Our commitments for engaging in courageous conversations

Stay engaged

Speak your truth

Experience discomfort

Expect and accept non-closure

Introduction & Overview

Presenter Information
Center Overview

Presenter: Tiffany Kyser, M.A.

- *Assistant Director of Technical Assistance*
- *Ph.D. Candidate, Urban Education Studies – Indiana University*
- Works in support of and collaboration with the Center's team to plan, direct, and manage supports and professional learning experiences offered to state and local education agencies throughout the Center's six-state region.



Center Overview

One of the ten regional EACs funded by the U.S. Department of Education under Title IV of the 1964 Civil Rights Act. The Great Lakes Equity Center provides assistance to state education agencies and public school districts in the areas of race, gender, and national origin equity.



Our Mission

Ensure equity in student access to and participation in high quality, research-based education

Expand states' and school systems' capacities to provide robust, effective opportunities to learn for ALL students

Reduce disparities among and between groups in educational outcomes

Serve as a resource for the Office for Civil Rights and Department of Justice

Our Partnership Activity

Consultation

Collaboration Calls

Facilitated Learning
and Planning

Co-development and
co-delivery of
Professional Learning
Experiences

Equity Tools

Development

Monitoring

Evaluation

Resources

Networking

Readings/materials

Collaborating with
Partner TA/D agencies

Understanding Equity

Educational equity... when educational policies, practices, interactions, and resources, are **representative** of, constructed by, and responsive to all people such that each individual has **access** to, can **meaningfully participate**, and make progress in high-quality learning experiences that empowers them towards self-determination and reduces disparities in **outcomes** regardless of individual characteristics and cultural identities

(Fraser, 2008; Great Lakes Equity Center, 2011)

Participants will be able to:

- **Explain** their own identity(ies)
- **Connect** how those identity(ies) provide power and privilege
- **Examine** the concept of intersectionality
- **Identify** intersectionality in school based example

Framing The Discussion

Why Are We Talking About
Intersectionality?

Group Share

What does the term,
intersectionality, mean to
you?



Racialbias
OutdatedPolicies
Sexism LowExpectations
Ableism DiscriminatoryPractices
NormativeAssumptions Genderbias Racism
Homophobia
UnexaminedPractices

Identifying Our Identities

Identity Wheel

Identity Wheel Activity



Split into pairs (2)



Complete identity
wheel using
Post-Its



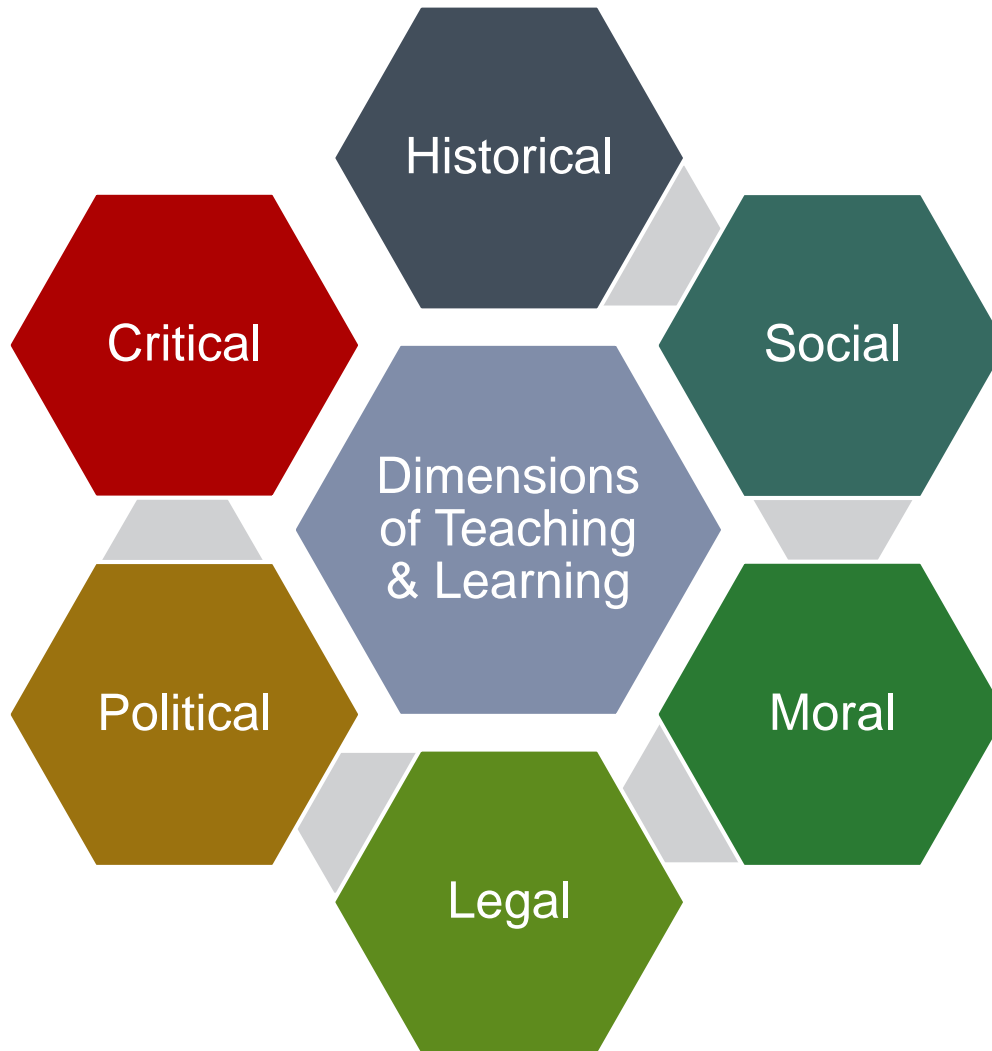
Share your identity
wheel with your
partner, then post
around the room



“Self-exploration is central to our growth as individuals, our relationships with others, and our ability to promote equity. Our various social identities--sex, race, ethnicity, sexual orientation, gender, age, socioeconomic class, religion, and ability, among others--are important aspects of our selves that shape our attitudes, behaviors, worldviews, and experiences.”

- Diane J. Goodman, *Diversity & Democracy*

Connecting to The Class



Examining Privilege & Power

What Is Privilege?
Journal Reflection

What is Privilege?



Video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hD5f8GuNuGQ>

Journaling Activity:

What personal connections can you make between your identity(ies) & privilege and power?



Reflect upon your own personal identities, life experiences, conversations with family/friends, and professional experience.

Privilege & Power

Privilege

refers to any advantage that is unearned, exclusive, and socially conferred

(Allan Johnson, 2005)

Power

is the legitimate control of, or access to, those institutions [resources and opportunities] sanctioned by the state [authorities]
(Barbara Major, 2002)

Intersectionality

Connecting Our Identities to Privilege & Power

Intersectionality

The study of overlapping or intersecting social identities and related systems of oppression, domination or discrimination. The theory suggests that—and seeks to examine how—various biological, social and cultural categories such as gender, race, class, ability, sexual orientation, religion, caste, age and other axes of identity interact on multiple and often simultaneous levels.

Intersectionality

Consider an analogy to traffic in an intersection, coming and going in all four directions.

Discrimination, like traffic through an intersection, may flow in one direction, and it may flow in another. If an accident happens in an intersection, it can be caused by cars traveling from any number of directions and, sometimes, from all of them. Similarly, if a Black woman is harmed because she is in the intersection, her injury could result from sex discrimination or race discrimination.

How does intersectionality help us better understand the dynamics of power and privilege and the complexities of systemic injustices and inequality?

Helps us understand that oppressions within society do not act independently of one another. Instead, forms of oppression **interrelate**, creating a **system of oppression** that reflects the "intersection" of multiple forms of discrimination.

Helps us understand that there is **no singular experience** of an identity.

Helps us understand that **seemingly discrete forms and expressions of oppression** are shaped by one another.

“It is not our differences that divide us. It is our inability to recognize, accept, and celebrate those differences.”

--Audre Lorde, *Our Dead Behind Us: Poems*

“Apart from and as a part of”

--bell hooks, *Talking Back: Thinking Feminist, Thinking Black*

Scenario Activity

Individually – 5 mins

- Read the scenario silently to yourself
 - Highlight, circle, underline any key points

Small Group – 10 min

- Review the scenario together
- Share one key point you noted
- Discuss
 - In what ways is Mr. Robbins privileged? Explain.
 - In what ways is Mr. Robbins oppressed? Explain.
 - How do the intersections of Mr. Robbins' identity(ies) play out at in this scenario?

Whole Group Process – 5 min

- What conclusions might we draw about identity, privilege, and power in schools?

Scenario

Recently Eddie, a white male, was verbally harassed and physically assaulted by a group of boys in the first floor restroom at his high school. Knowing that Eddie comes from a home with two working class, lesbian mothers, the boys teased him about his parents' lifestyle. Feeling scared and anxious that the boys might corner and harass him again, Eddie sought a teacher whom he believed would be sympathetic to his situation.

Although Mr. Robbins, an African American, middle class male, was not officially “out” to the staff and students of Southwest High School, he and his partner had lived together in the community for many, many years. Mr. Robbins was heavily involved in the school community and one day desired to be principal.

When the incident was discussed with him, Mr. Robbins assured Eddie that the group of boys would be reprimanded for teasing him but offered no consolation for the discrimination that had occurred. Because of district policy, Mr. Robbins felt he could not address the matter specifically. Eddie felt discouraged and alienated.

Later that day, Eddie attended Mr. Robbins' Literature class. During the discussion of the book, *The Perks of Being a Wallflower* by Stephen Chbosky, one of the students raises his hand and asks if the main character is gay. Mr. Robbins quickly states it doesn't matter and quickly redirected the student and his classmates away from any conversation about the character's sexual orientation, and instead focused the conversation on other themes permeating the book including student alienation, introversion and physical abuse.

Mr. Robbins is one of four men on the district's seven person English/Language Arts Curriculum committee. He is the only African American male teacher on the committee and as far as he knows the only person who may personally identify as LGBTQ. When the curriculum committee discussed using the book *The Perks of Being a Wallflower*, there was much discussion about the how and which of the book's themes would be explored in class. Teachers advocated for various perspectives to be highlighted for class discussions that were deemed germane to the core content standards as well as relevant to students' experiences.

Although sexuality and teen dating are prominent themes in the book, and Mr. Robbins realizes the relevance to the lives of his students, he avoids any discussion of these themes. He did this in efforts not to violate a district policy that the school board for Southwest Community Schools passed a few years earlier that stated school staff should remain "neutral" on matters regarding sexual orientation, including but not limited to student-led discussions.



[WHO WE ARE](#)

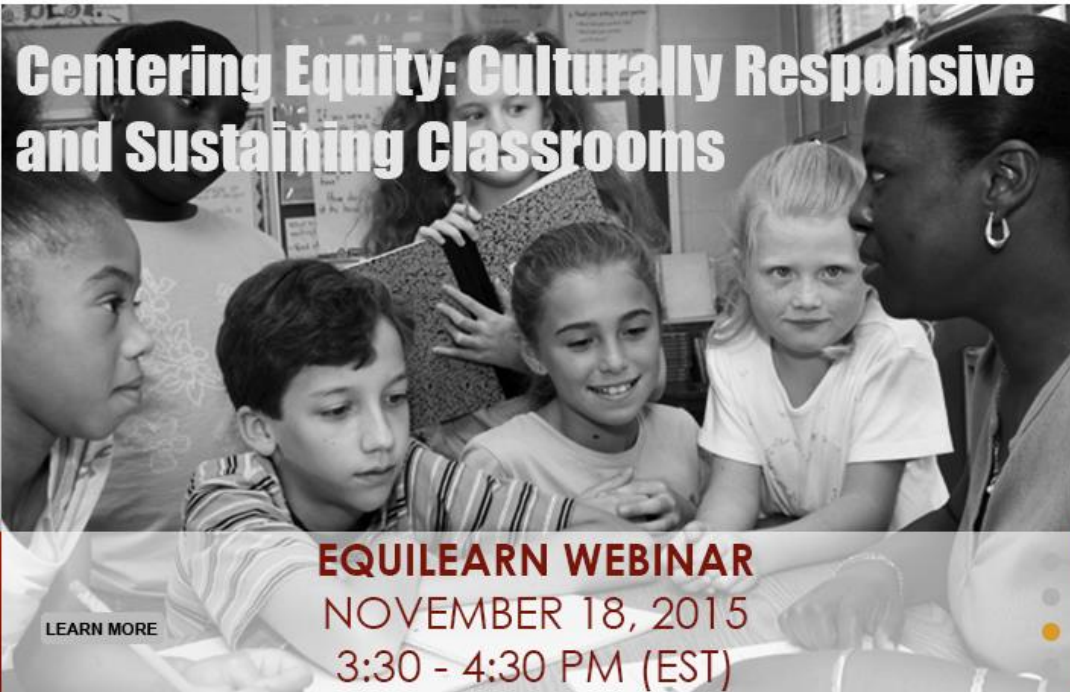
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[LEARNING EXPERIENCES](#)

[EQUITY LIBRARY](#)

[RESOURCES](#)

Welcome to the **Great Lakes Equity Center**, one of ten regional Equity Assistance Centers (EACs) funded by the U.S. Department of Education. We provide technical assistance, resources, and professional learning opportunities related to equity, civil rights, and systemic school reform throughout our six-state region of **Illinois, Indiana, Michigan, Minnesota, Ohio, and Wisconsin**. Please explore our website to learn more about what we do and how we may serve as a resource for you. We look forward to hearing from you!



Centering Equity: Culturally Responsive and Sustaining Classrooms

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Equity Dispatch

Culturally Responsive and Sustaining Learning Environments

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Did You Know? | Why It Matters | For Equity Now

October 2015

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Equity Con
American,
Indian, and

- Rodney S. Wi
- Kathleen A. K
- Seena M. Sk
- Tiffany S. Ky



"When instructional methods privilege cultural and language practices, knowledge, and abilities of dominant groups, they become barriers for students' learning and participation, and tools for assimilation to dominant school cultures."

- Waitoller & Thorius, 2015



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Equity Center



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Thank you for your participation and completion of Post Session Questionnaire!

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