

Asset-Based Approaches To Professional Development



Professional development is often oriented toward closing achievement gaps. However, attention to achievement gaps focuses on a symptom of a much deeper problem: systemic barriers to high quality learning opportunities for all students.

One of those barriers is thinking about students as deficits—as problems to be fixed by educators. Here, educators tend to blame victims of systemic barriers by assuming historically marginalized students do not value hard work or are too damaged by their status to be successful. Instead, research suggests that students benefit from approaches that value difference and view students' racial/ethnic backgrounds and linguistic and heritage practices as assets.

This document is organized into two categories: Use This and Instead of That. On the right side you will find deficit based frameworks that are currently utilized in many schools. Click on each title to find a resource that problematizes these practices and/or offers asset-based and restorative ways of thinking. Review texts in the left column for ideas on how to center equity and shift towards asset-based professional learning.

USE THIS

INSTEAD OF THAT

Addressing Barriers to Student Success

[We Want to Do More Than Survive: Abolitionist Teaching and the Pursuit of Educational Freedom \(Love, 2020\)](#)

[Teaching and Learning as Cultural Endeavors](#)

[Mindset: The New Psychology of Success \(Dweck, 2007\)](#)

[Grit: The Power of Passion and Perseverance \(Duckworth, 2018\)](#)

Supporting Students Living In Disinvested Communities

[Equity-Centered Trauma-Informed Education \(Venet, 2021\)](#)

[Antiracism and Universal Design for Learning \(Fritzgerald, 2020\)](#)

[Teaching Broken Kids: Becoming a Trauma-Informed School \(Bender, 2019\)](#)

[Motivating Students Who Don't Care: Proven Strategies to Engage All Learners \(Mendler, 2021\)](#)

Summaries of Recommended Texts



We Want to Do More Than Survive: Abolitionist Teaching and the Pursuit of Educational Freedom

Bettina L. Love



Drawing on her life's work of teaching and researching in urban schools, Bettina Love persuasively argues that educators must teach students about racial violence, oppression, and how to make sustainable change in their communities through radical civic initiatives and movements. She argues that the US educational system is maintained by and profits from the suffering of children of color. Instead of trying to repair a flawed system, educational reformers offer survival tactics in the forms of test-taking skills, acronyms, grit labs, and character education, which Love calls the educational survival complex.

Equity-Centered Trauma-Informed Education

Alex Shevrin Venet



In this fresh look at trauma-informed practice, Alex Shevrin Venet urges educators to shift equity to the center as they consider policies and professional development. Using a framework of six principles for equity-centered trauma-informed education, Venet offers practical action steps that teachers and school leaders can take from any starting point, using the resources and influence at their disposal to make shifts in practice, pedagogy, and policy. Overthrowing inequitable systems is a process, not an overnight change. But transformation is possible when educators work together, and teachers can do more than they realize from within their own classrooms.

Teaching and Learning as Cultural Endeavors

Taucia González



In this Equity by Design brief, we bring a cultural lens to focus on the pernicious and persistent educational inequities in academic achievement that Students of Color continue to experience.

Antiracism and Universal Design for Learning

Andratesha Fitzgerald



Andratesha Fitzgerald presents Universal Design for Learning (UDL) in a new light: As an effective framework to teach Black and Brown students. Drawing vivid portraits of her classroom instruction in urban over the past two decades, Fitzgerald shows teachers how to open new roads of communication, engagement, and skill-building for their students. The result? Helping students become expert, lifelong learners who feel honored

Additional Professional Development Resources

[Assessing Bias in Standards and Curricular Materials](#)



[Teaching Towards Understandings of Intersectionality](#)



[Centering Equity in Educator Professional Learning](#)



[Reframing the Achievement Gap: En- suring All Students Benefit from Equitable Access to Learning](#)



[Culturally Sustaining Pedagogies: Teaching and Learning for Justice](#)



[An Intersectional Approach to Building Inclusive Schools](#)

