



# EQUITY BY DESIGN

Delivering on the Power  
and Promise of **UDL**

Book Club Guide

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"When we think about the work of deconstructing our school systems, it is clear that none of us can do this important work alone. We are called to find partners to carry the weight of this work because our students who are historically marginalized deserve an army. And this is our fight."

-Equity by Design

# USING THIS GUIDE

As you facilitate your book club, remember to incorporate the principles of Universal Design for Learning (UDL). For example, consider offering opportunities for synchronous or asynchronous sessions, in person and/or virtual sessions, and options for participants to respond to prompts using multiple means of action and expression. Consider setting up a free course in a platform like Moodle or Canvas so you can utilize discussion boards where participants can post reflections in written form, audio, and video. Alternatively, you can use social media platforms like Twitter, Instagram or Facebook to host a book club chat (don't forget to create a hashtag for everyone to use and follow!). Although virtual is great for some, you may also want to have the option for participants to attend a traditional book club where small groups meet in person.

## TIPS FOR FACILITATING A SUCCESSFUL BOOK CLUB



Have a designated point person for each book club option (i.e., the social media maven, the check-in person for in-person sessions, and the course manager if setting up a virtual course). This person can check in with the teams to monitor progress, provide feedback, and offer motivation to keep on reading!



Regardless of the pathways the participants select, consider offering synchronous Zoom sessions periodically where participants can share their thoughts, questions, and “aha!” moments as they read the book.



When participants are posting online, be sure to keep the conversation going - ask questions, share resources, make comments, and provide feedback.

# BOOK CLUB MODULES

This book club guide for *Equity by Design* by Mirko Chardin and Dr. Katie Novak is broken into “modules” which correspond to each chapter in the book. You can determine the pace of getting through the modules based on the preferences of the group. In each module, participants read the associated chapter, consider the reflection questions at the end of the chapter, and/or choose one of the resources to further explore and put learning into practice.

## OPTIONS FOR PARTICIPATING



Host an online book group on Canvas, Moodle, or other free tool.



Select 2-3 online tools or social media sites for people to respond to weekly prompts using a hashtag.



Offer opportunities for teams to meet in person and have discussions and then email notes.

# CHAPTER 1

## Universal Design as an Instrument of Change

### SETTING THE STAGE

Chapter One is split into three sections. In the first section, we introduce the Universal Design for Learning (UDL) framework, a powerful framework that was created to eliminate inequalities, and discuss how the implementation of the framework helps to build equity in our schools and classrooms. Next, we define the concept of social justice education and make the connection between UDL and social justice explicit. Lastly, we provide concrete examples and case studies to help educators see the connection between UDL and social justice and to take first steps in deconstructing systems that don't work for all students.



### REFLECTION QUESTIONS

- + What is privilege? Name examples of the different forms of privilege that exist within your institution, practice, and/or classroom.
- + How does the UDL framework ensure that all students have equal access to teaching and learning?
- + Why is it important to consider race, class, gender, religion, and sexual identity in addition to ability level, and/or language when designing learning experiences?
- + What is a socially just education, and how does it align with the principles of UDL?
- + How can a socially just education address some of the disparities that your students have or may encounter?
- + What are the key differences between “equality” and “equity”?
- + What is a “hidden curriculum”? What hidden curriculums exist in your institution, practice, and/or classroom?
- + What does “impact over intentions” mean to you?
- + How do UDL and social justice complement each other?

## GROUP DISCUSSION

Take time independently or with colleagues to journal your answers or foster courageous conversations in a professional learning community or faculty meeting using the following questions.

- + What is our desired impact?
- + What does it look, feel, and sound like when we are successful?
- + How do we acknowledge and celebrate differences?
- + Do all members of our school community feel safe, seen, and heard?
- + Sanjin (2009) notes that “during his or her stay in school, the student experiences three types of education: useful, unnecessary and negative” and made an explicit connection to these three types of education and hidden curriculum. Take a moment and consider your own education. What strikes you as being the most useful thing you learned in school? The most unnecessary? The most negative?

Useful	Unnesesary	Negative

- + What are we allowing our students to teach us?
- + How are we helping students to feel representation, agency, and self-efficacy?
- + Identify, if any currently exist, or develop opportunities for students who are currently considered as disengaged to positively contribute to the school community in nonpunitive ways, for example community service, as mentioned above.
- + Create a list of potential community service opportunities and resources for students.

## ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

- + Learn more about the UDL Framework by reviewing the UDL Guidelines at [udlguidelines.cast.org](http://udlguidelines.cast.org)
- + Visit Zaretta Hammond’s website, Culturally Responsive Teaching and the Brain, at [crtandthebrain.com](http://crtandthebrain.com)
- + To learn more about UDL and the concept of variability, access UDL Theory and Practice, which is free online at [udltheorypractice.cast.org](http://udltheorypractice.cast.org)
- + Learn more about the Center for Artistry and Scholarship’s Perrone-Sizer Institute for Creative Leadership at [www.artistryandscholarship.org/psi](http://www.artistryandscholarship.org/psi)

# CHAPTER 2

## Laying the Groundwork for Social Justice in Our Classrooms and Learning Communities

### SETTING THE STAGE

Chapter Two introduces five steps for beginning social justice and equity work in our classrooms and learning communities: concept stabilization, concept calibration, identity development, equity audit, and taking action. Each of these steps is critical in building the foundation of a more equitable school and aligns to the principles of Universal Design for Learning (UDL). Concrete strategies, steps, and protocols are offered in each step.



### REFLECT & DISCUSS

- + What are the best ways for teachers to check in on students academically? Behaviorally? Socially? Emotionally? For example, do you prefer informal check-ins every day, check-ins via technology, scheduled meetings, and so forth?
- + What supports in class help you to feel successful and a part of the community?
- + What practices help you to feel cared for in the classroom?
- + If you do something that requires discipline, what are the most effective ways to help you to not repeat the behaviors?
- + After learning about the Photo-Cultural-Ecological Self-Study Paper, how can you examine your own ideological assumptions by adapting the paper into your own reflection?
- + What stage is your community in, in regard to social justice and equity work?
- + Have you taken the steps that we have recommended? If not, which steps do you believe will be the most challenging and which will be the most rewarding?

## NEXT STEPS

- + Challenging your own belief system and asking colleagues to do the same is difficult, and at the same time is both rewarding and necessary. Because when beliefs are challenged, they lead to action. As you begin or continue your journey, consider the following next steps.
- + Share your definition of social justice with a colleague, preferably someone who shares the same group of students as you, and ask them to draft one as well.
- + Calibrate your definitions. What was similar? What was different? What can you agree on? What can you agree to disagree on?
- + Discuss what these definitions look like in action. How will you ensure that you and your colleagues will be held accountable to these “look-fors.” What does it look like to be held accountable? What can students hold you accountable to and how?
- + Tell other colleagues and school leaders about what you’re doing, explicitly focusing on the commitments that you are making.

## ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

- + The School Justice Partnership, which provides an overview of the impact of trauma on students, offers strategies for creating trauma-informed classrooms. You can download this guide at [safesupportivelearning.ed.gov/resources/trauma-informed-classrooms](https://safesupportivelearning.ed.gov/resources/trauma-informed-classrooms)
- + Rita Pierson: [www.ted.com/talks/rita\\_pierson\\_every\\_kid\\_needs\\_a\\_champion](https://www.ted.com/talks/rita_pierson_every_kid_needs_a_champion)
- + Research for Better Teaching: [www.rbteach.com/about-rbt](https://www.rbteach.com/about-rbt)
- + Research for Better Teaching: [The Skillful Teacher: The Comprehensive Resource for Improving Teaching and Learning \(7th ed.\)](#)
- + Developmental Designs: [www.originsonline.org/developmental-designs](https://www.originsonline.org/developmental-designs)
- + National Center on Time and Learning: [timeandlearning.org](https://timeandlearning.org)



# CHAPTER 3

## Social Justice Through Collaboration And Community

### SETTING THE STAGE

Universal Design for Learning (UDL) reminds educators that fostering collaboration and community is critical to provide multiple means of engagement. In order to implement UDL and create more equitable classrooms, educators need to commit to ongoing professional growth and continuously examine their own individual practices and beliefs. In this chapter we will share specific strategies for addressing opportunity gaps for all learners through the creation of collaborative communities that examine the academic, social, emotional, and behavioral needs of students through a social justice lens.



### REFLECT & DISCUSS

- + How can protocols such as Micro Labs and Circles of Identity help your Intentional Learning Community facilitate difficult conversations and growth? And why is it important to go beyond these protocols to have deeper, more meaningful conversations?
- + Think about your school or district. Who do you think are the students who are not being served? Do you think there are certain policies and practices that privilege some students, while potentially oppressing others? Write down your answers and examine them after you analyze data to see where your inclinations may not be in line with the data.
- + What makes fostering collaboration and community within an Intentional Learning Community a critical strategy to provide multiple means of engagement?
- + How can minimizing threats and distractions lead to increased engagement when having difficult conversations with our colleagues about social justice?
- + After reviewing the key considerations for an Intentional Learning Community, do you believe that you have this type of professional learning community in your school? Why or why not? In your position, how could you help to build it?
- + How can cogen groups help us benefit our practice?
- + Implementation of the Going Beyond Access framework requires that all educators collaborate to reflect on the academic, social-emotional, and behavior needs of all students. Does your school/district have common planning time to have these critical conversations? If not, what is the impact on students?

## NEXT STEPS

Take time independently or with colleagues to journal your answers or foster courageous conversations in a professional learning community or faculty meeting using the following questions.

- + Review some of the protocols mentioned that are available on the SRI website: [www.schoolreforminitiative.org/protocols](http://www.schoolreforminitiative.org/protocols). Consider and discuss ones that you could use with your colleagues.
- + Respond to the following quote from Dr. Christopher Emdin: “Equity is hearing somebody’s voice about what they need and providing them with that.”

## ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

- + School Reform Initiative is an organization made up of educators throughout the world that are fiercely committed to educational equity and excellence: [www.schoolreforminitiative.org](http://www.schoolreforminitiative.org). They provide professional development for participants and facilitators, as well as tools and resources for educators to develop and implement strong Intentional Learning Communities.
- + Check out this incredible resource to learn about how to run a better equity-focused meeting: Color Brave Space Agreements by Equity Matters, [fakequity.com/2017/05/26/color-brave-space-how-to-run-a-better-equity-focused-meeting](http://fakequity.com/2017/05/26/color-brave-space-how-to-run-a-better-equity-focused-meeting)
- + To further explore the concept of cogenerative dialogues/cogen groups, watch the following video of Dr. Christopher Emdin sharing about five strategies that can transform urban education: [youtu.be/2Y9tVf\\_8fqo](https://youtu.be/2Y9tVf_8fqo)
- + Visit the Tripod Project website to explore videos, articles, and research on why collecting student feedback improves teacher instruction. [tripoded.com](http://tripoded.com)
- + Read “3 Ways of Getting Student Feedback to Improve Your Teaching,” which identifies three ways you can get feedback from students. Although the article is about collecting feedback at the end of the year, the strategies could be used any time. [www.edutopia.org/blog/student-feedback-improves-your-teaching-vicki-davis](http://www.edutopia.org/blog/student-feedback-improves-your-teaching-vicki-davis)

# CHAPTER 4

## Personalized Learning For Equity

### SETTING THE STAGE

Chapter Four is focused on the design process and how it can be leveraged to create flexible, meaningful learning opportunities for all students. When educators are committed to intentional learning communities and social justice education, they design curriculum and teaching that eliminates barriers that prevent all students from learning at high levels. The foundation for this work is Universal Design for Learning (UDL).



### REFLECT & DISCUSS

- + How can thoughtful interviews and observations help us inform a greater picture of our design challenges? Why is it important to go through this “learning phase” of the design process intentionally?
- + Why is it important to include students in the lesson or unit design process? How can their feedback and perspective help you eliminate barriers to learning, particularly for those students who have historically been marginalized?
- + How can the UDL Flowchart help you as a learner meet the goal of eliminating barriers to learning? Do you think this tool will be useful for you? Why or why not?
- + Are you comfortable with providing learning options to your students “buffet-style”? What barriers do you expect as a teacher when beginning this process, and how do you think you may be able to overcome those? How do you think this technique will help you pique student interest and be more culturally relevant?
- + Before reading this chapter, did you imagine that executive functioning and social justice could be connected? How has that changed?
- + In your learning environment, do you currently employ any strategies to teach your students about and support executive functions? Discuss creative ways to do this that will engage your students.
- + Think of a time you were experiencing executive dysfunction due to stress or distraction. How did you get back on task, and what techniques and strategies do you find most helpful for supporting your own executive functioning?

## NEXT STEPS

Make a checklist or plan for how you will begin to teach your students about executive functioning and how you can regularly incorporate strategies into your lesson and unit planning. Share with your colleague(s).

## ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

- + The National Equity Project in collaboration with the K–12 Lab at Stanford’s d.school developed an equity-centered approach to design called Liberatory Design. [www.nationalequityproject.org/frameworks/liberatory-design](http://www.nationalequityproject.org/frameworks/liberatory-design)
- + The Teacher’s Guild Design Thinking for Educators Toolkit is a way to understand Design Thinking in schools. It helps educators by providing tangible steps for individuals or teams. [www.teachersguild.org/approach](http://www.teachersguild.org/approach)
- + Equity-Centered Community Design, created by Creative Reaction Lab, is a creative problem-solving process based on equity, humility-building, integrating history, and healing practices. [www.creativereactionlab.com/](http://www.creativereactionlab.com/)
- + Learn more about the Cambridge Educators Design Lab by visiting [www.cpsd.us/office\\_of\\_curriculum\\_and\\_instruction/innovation\\_design\\_lab](http://www.cpsd.us/office_of_curriculum_and_instruction/innovation_design_lab), where you can view videos and visit more links
- + The UDL Progression Rubric ([castpublishing.org/novak-rodriguez-udl-progression-rubric](http://castpublishing.org/novak-rodriguez-udl-progression-rubric)) helps educators understand how to provide choices to students as they personalize their education using the UDL Guidelines. Educators can explore the guidelines at [udlguidelines.cast.org](http://udlguidelines.cast.org) and explore how the classroom shifts from being teacher-directed to teacher-facilitated through the UDL model that is focused on student voice and choice.
- + Harvard University’s Center on the Developing Child has numerous resources for various topics related to child development. Their website includes an activity guide on strategies to practice executive functioning with children of all ages. The activity guide is available at [developingchild.harvard.edu/resources/activities-guide-enhancing-and-practicing-executive-function-skills-with-children-from-infancy-to-adolescence/](http://developingchild.harvard.edu/resources/activities-guide-enhancing-and-practicing-executive-function-skills-with-children-from-infancy-to-adolescence/)
- + The National Center for Learning Disabilities has published an e-book that provides information on what executive functions are and how to support them in the classroom and at home. Executive Function 101 is available at [www.understood.org/~media/040bfb1894284d019bf78ac01a5f1513.pdf](http://www.understood.org/~media/040bfb1894284d019bf78ac01a5f1513.pdf)
- + For more information on the Pomodoro Technique, visit [francescocirillo.com/pomodoro-technique](http://francescocirillo.com/pomodoro-technique). Many different pomodoro timers are available online; one example can be found at [tomato-timer.com](http://tomato-timer.com)

# CHAPTER 5

## Identity, Mirrors, And Funds Of Knowledge

### SETTING THE STAGE

This chapter is focused on curriculum and techniques that honor student identity and culture and increase tolerance of diversity in schools. We will explore windows and mirrors as a way of assessing our own identities, recognizing privilege, and embracing differences in others. We will then discuss how we can use the UDL framework and funds of knowledge to shape and change curriculum to ensure that students are valued and represented for who they are.



### REFLECT & DISCUSS

- + Through Lipkin's excerpt, we see how diverse curriculum can increase acceptance of differences of those traditionally marginalized but also for those who may be considered part of a privileged group. For example, Lipkin notes LGBTQ curricula can help heterosexual transgender boys by building more acceptance of more "feminine" traits into society. How could similar curriculum that explores issues of race, ethnicity, religion, or nationalism similarly broaden our perspectives beyond acceptance?
- + Brainstorm some ideas for collecting students' funds of knowledge in your learning environment. How could you change your lessons, assignments, or prompts to be more flexible?
- + When we hear stories of selves, it is easy to label our learners. But embracing their funds of knowledge and encouraging a growth mindset, we can see how a student's story of self can transform. What can you do differently to better understand your students' stories and what activities would you like to begin incorporating in your learning environment to help students reshape their stories?
- + When facilitating courageous conversations with students, which of the five E's would you struggle most to adhere to? Why would it be difficult?
- + How does the idea of "windows and mirror" ensure learner visibility?
- + What structures and/or strategies are currently being utilized in your school community to provide students with windows and mirrors?
- + How do you support high expectations for writing for all students? Which strategies from this chapter could you begin to implement immediately in your practice to optimize and elevate student academic voice?

## NEXT STEPS

Think and discuss how you can better support students with communicating their thoughts and ideas through writing and spoken language in your learning environment even if you aren't an ELA or writing teacher.

## ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

- + Watch a short video of Luis Moll talking about Funds of Knowledge, [www.youtube.com/watch?v=aWSOYBpGkkE](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aWSOYBpGkkE).
- + Read Funds of Knowledge for Teaching: Using a Qualitative Approach to Connecting Homes and Classrooms from Moll, Amanti, Neff, and Gonzalez, [www.academia.edu/15916623/Funds\\_of\\_Knowledge\\_for\\_Teaching\\_Using\\_a\\_Qualitative\\_Approach\\_to\\_Connect\\_Homes\\_and\\_Classrooms](http://www.academia.edu/15916623/Funds_of_Knowledge_for_Teaching_Using_a_Qualitative_Approach_to_Connect_Homes_and_Classrooms)
- + Review Brown University's information on Teaching Diverse Learners while considering funds of knowledge, [www.brown.edu/academics/education-alliance/teaching-diverse-learners/families-0](http://www.brown.edu/academics/education-alliance/teaching-diverse-learners/families-0)
- + Note: Echoes & Reflections offers a rich trove of eyewitness testimony, model lessons, and sound pedagogical lesson planning tied to National Core Curriculum Standards. One does not need to be a history teacher or study the Holocaust for this resource to provide relevant, easy-to-access material. Please take the time to look at their general website at [echoesandreflections.org](http://echoesandreflections.org)
- + Indiana University Bloomington's Center for Innovative Teaching and Learning has published a very helpful guide, including step-by-step instructions for managing difficult classroom discussions and is rich with references to similar work: Indiana University Bloomington Managing Difficult Classroom Discussions: Diversity and Inclusion, [citl.indiana.edu/teaching-resources/diversity-inclusion/managing-difficult-classroom-discussions/index.html](http://citl.indiana.edu/teaching-resources/diversity-inclusion/managing-difficult-classroom-discussions/index.html)

## WRITING

- + Graff, G., & Birkenstein, C. (2018). They say/I say: The moves that matter in academic writing. New York/London: W.W. Norton & Company.
- + Tatum, A. (2013). Fearless voices: Engaging a new generation of African American adolescent male writers. New York, NY: Scholastic Inc.
- + Atwell, N. (2002). Lessons that change writers. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.
- + Gallagher, K. (2011). Write like this: Teaching real-world writing through modeling and mentor texts. Portsmouth, NH: Stenhouse Publishers.
- + Tough, P. (2016). Helping children succeed: What works and why. Mindsets, [paultough.com/helping/web](http://paultough.com/helping/web)

## FEEDBACK

- + Cohen, G. L., Steele, C. M., & Ross, L. D. (1999). The mentor's dilemma: Providing critical feedback across the racial divide. Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin, 25(10), 1302–1318.
- + Tatum, A. (2013). Fearless voices: Engaging

# CHAPTER 6

## Cultural Responsiveness And Equity

### SETTING THE STAGE

This chapter focuses on integrating culturally responsive teaching techniques within the UDL framework. We will explore what culturally responsive teaching means and how it helps create a more equitable learning environment.



### REFLECT & DISCUSS

- + How do you currently empower families of all students, including English language learners, to participate in the school community?
- + How can UDL provide a framework for elevating and celebrating the voices of English learners and their families?
- + What is culturally responsive teaching, and how does it relate to Universal Design for Learning (UDL)?
- + What is the significance of incorporating culturally responsive practices?
- + What culturally responsive practices are currently being utilized in/at your school community?
- + How does your school currently handle holidays?
- + How can the guidance in this chapter help you to make teaching and learning more culturally responsive during times where holidays may be marked on the calendar?

## NEXT STEPS

- + Think about your current teaching practices, lessons, and celebrations. Reevaluate how you may change those practices, lessons, and celebrations to be more universally designed, culturally relevant, and accessible for all students.
- + Think about how social justice and culturally responsive teaching are related. Examine policies and practices in your school that may be perceived as exclusive or inauthentic, and discuss with your colleagues and stakeholders.

## ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

- + Learn more about Race Project KC at [www.raceprojectkc.com](http://www.raceprojectkc.com)
- + Although antibias educational practices have roots in early childhood education, the beliefs and practices can be adapted to working with children and families across grade levels. [www.teachingforchange.org/teacher-resources/anti-bias-education](http://www.teachingforchange.org/teacher-resources/anti-bias-education)
- + Lee, E., Menkart, D., & Okazawa-Rey, M. (1997/2006). [\*\*Beyond heroes and holidays: A practical guide to K-12 anti-racist, multicultural education and staff development\*\*](#). Network of Educators on the Americas, P.O. Box 73038, Washington, DC 20056-3038.
- + The Pluralism Project, Harvard University, [pluralism.org/home](http://pluralism.org/home). This website provides religion-specific resources inclusive of a range of world traditions and nonreligious groups, as well as links to educational resources on how to navigate religious- based issues in school contexts.



# CHAPTER 7

## Restorative Justice And Restorative Practice

### SETTING THE STAGE

Oftentimes, students face behavioral barriers that prevent them from accessing and engaging academically. In a universally designed system, educators eliminate these barriers by creating learning environments that foster self-regulation and minimize threats and distractions. In schools today, this work can be fostered with a focus on restorative practices.



### REFLECT & DISCUSS

- + Do you use restorative practices in your learning environment? How might using the techniques discussed in this chapter create a safer school environment?
- + Think of a time where you had a student or group of students who regularly caused disruptions in your classroom. How did you handle that situation? What might you do differently now?
- + How does using punitive measures such as sending students to the principal's office and/or suspending students have the potential to lead to unequal outcomes for students? How can restorative practices help us overcome these outcomes?

## NEXT STEPS

- + Engage in professional learning on restorative practices, and begin addressing disruptive behaviors with conversations in lieu of punishments. Use this as an opportunity to further unpack, apply, and analyze the impact of these new practices with your colleagues/fellow book club members.

## ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

- + Trinity Foundation Boston: [trinityconnects.org](https://trinityconnects.org)
- + Circle Forward by Carolyn Boyes-Watson and Kay Pranis: [www.livingjusticepress.org](http://www.livingjusticepress.org)
- + Suffolk University Center for Restorative Justice: [www.suffolk.edu/cas/centers-institutes/center-for-restorative-justice](http://www.suffolk.edu/cas/centers-institutes/center-for-restorative-justice)

# CHAPTER 8

## A Student's Journey

### SETTING THE STAGE

In this chapter we will share why we believe in the power of social justice education by sharing the account, with permission, of a student who has only succeeded as a result of it. For the purposes of this narrative, we shall refer to the young man, whose journey we will be sharing, as “M.”



### REFLECT & DISCUSS

- + “In this chapter we learn how “M” felt while in school. When thinking about our students, are we explicitly valuing their funds of knowledge or treating them like empty vessels to be filled?”
- + After reading about M’s story growing up, what steps could his teachers have taken to connect with him and reach him at a young age?

### NEXT STEPS

- + Engage in professional learning on restorative practices, and begin addressing disruptive behaviors with conversations in lieu of punishments. Use this as an opportunity to further unpack, apply, and analyze the impact of these new practices with your colleagues/fellow book club members.

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