



# **EMBRACING ASSET- BASED PRACTICES**

**EDUC 201: Identity and Difference in Education**  
**Week 5: September 23, 2025**

# **HOMEWORK**

- For this week's discussion sections, be ready to discuss articles by Bell (2016) and Paris & Alim (2014)
- For next week (Week 6), read articles by Ladson-Billings (2006) and Lareau et al. (2018)

# A BRIEF NOTE ON CASE STUDIES

- During discussion sections, you will be provided with case studies to help you understand EDUC 201's various topics
- Case studies will provide opportunities to put learning into practice – to connect theory with practice
- Case studies will provide opportunities to engage in perspective taking

# CASE STUDY DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- **Provide an Initial Reaching:** What is your initial reaction to the case? What are your gut reactions, initial intuitions, or questions?
- **Course Topics:** Based on your understanding of course content and what's been discussed in class so far, what issues/topics/concepts come to mind when reading this case and why?
- **Analyze the Case (Define the Problem):** What is the problem(s)? For whom? Who is most vulnerable? What is the context? What don't you know but would like to know?
- **Analyze the Case (Take perspectives):** What interests, rights, or obligations do stakeholders have? What ethical, legal, and theoretical principles or perspectives are relevant?
- **Decide on Actions at Multiple Levels:** What should the people in the case study (short, medium, and long-term)?
- **Provide a Post-Reflection (Practicing Reflexivity):** How did your understanding of the case change from your initial reaction or responses? How did your experiences/identities shape your response?

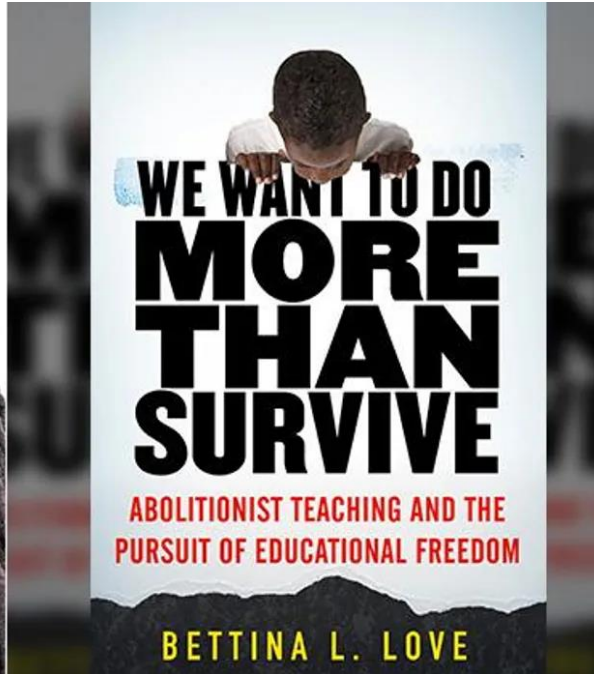


Photo of Dr. Bettina Love and cover of her book

“Do we really love all children?”  
- (Love, 2019, p. 12)

## GUIDING QUESTIONS

- What does it mean to center the bodies of knowledge of *all* your students?
- What does it mean to help students understand their privileged identities?
- What does it mean to help students understand and embrace their minoritized identities?



# ASSET-BASED THINKING

**Definition:** a focus on strengths. Students alike are valued for what they bring to the classroom rather than being characterized by what they may need to work on or lack.

# THINK-PAIR-SHARE

What does it mean to teach for social justice? What does social justice in education mean?



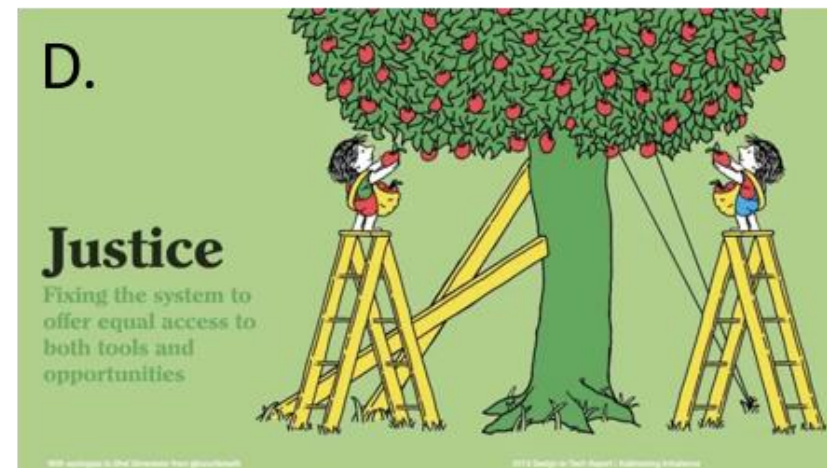
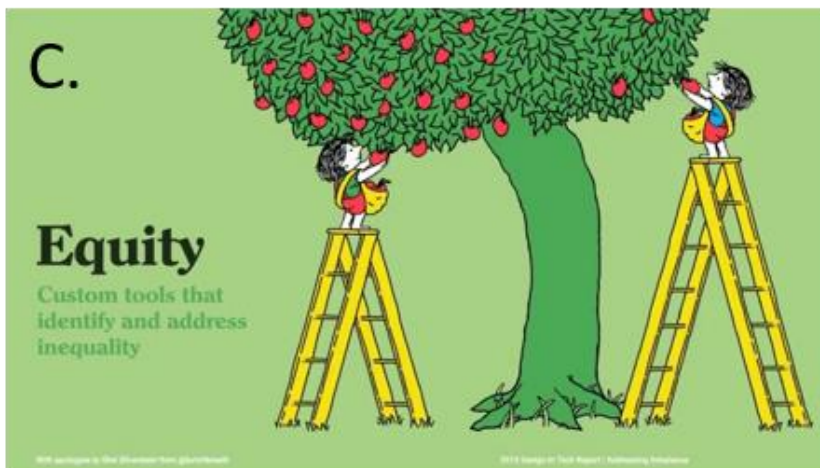
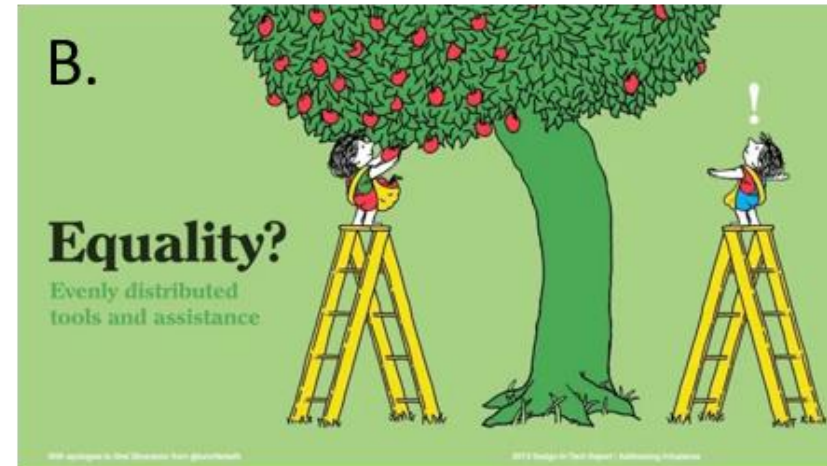
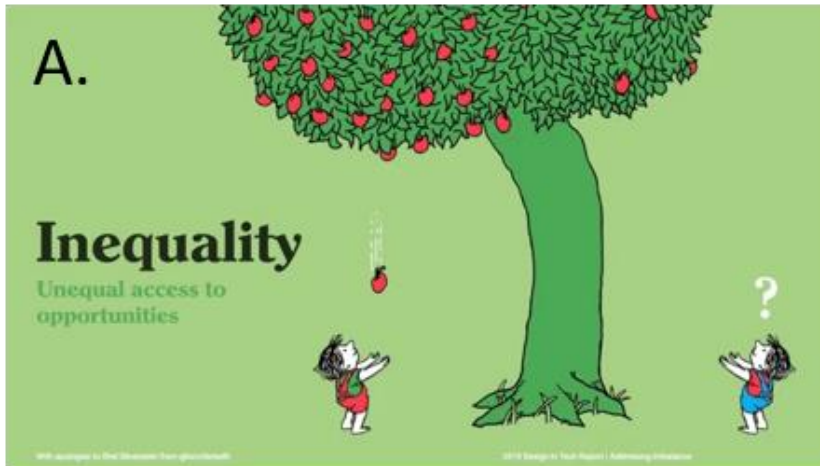
# **ASSET-BASED EDUCATORS STRIVE FOR EQUITABLE & JUST PRACTICES**

Educators advocate for and alongside their students and families to bring about changes that counter the status quo in schools. As such, this work entails being accountable and in solidarity.

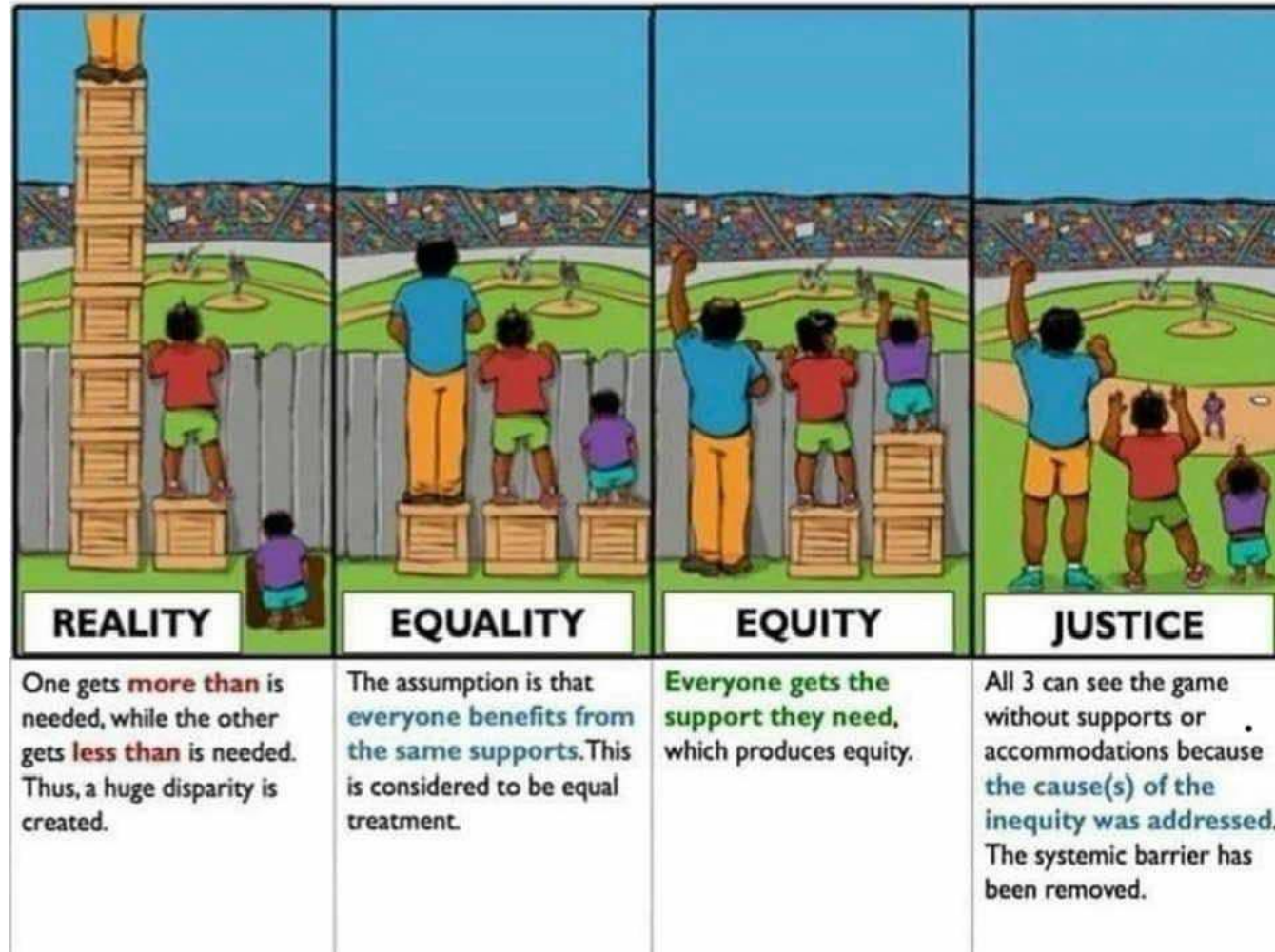
# UNDERSTANDING EQUITY

**Definition:** allocation of resources and support based on differentialized needs and aspirations.

# UNDERSTANDING EQUITY & JUSTICE




# UNDERSTANDING EQUITY & JUSTICE



# UNDERSTANDING JUSTICE

**Definition:** to the dictionary!

# DEFINING JUSTICE

 Dictionary Thesaurus justice x Q Games Word of the Day Grammar Word Finder Slang

## Dictionary

Definition

Synonyms  
Example Sentences  
Word History  
Phrases Containing  
Rhymes  
Entries Near  
Related Articles  
Show More

Save Word

# justice

noun

jus·tice ˈjə-stəs

plural **justices**

[Synonyms of justice](#)

**1 a** : the maintenance or administration of what is **just** especially by the impartial adjustment of conflicting claims or the assignment of merited rewards or punishments  
| meting out *justice*  
| social *justice*

**b** : **JUDGE**  
*especially* : a judge of an appellate court or court of last resort (as a supreme court)  
| a supreme court *justice*  
→ used as a title  
| *Justice* Marshall

**c** : the administration of law  
| a fugitive from *justice*  
  
*especially* : the establishment or determination of rights according to the rules of law or equity  
| a system of *justice*

**2 a** : the quality of being just, impartial, or fair  
| questioned the *justice* of their decision

**b** (1) : the principle or ideal of just **dealing** or right action  
(2) : conformity to this principle or ideal : **RIGHTEOUSNESS**  
| the *justice* of their cause

**c** : the quality of conforming to law

**3** : conformity to truth, fact, or reason : **CORRECTNESS**  
| admitted that there was much *justice* in these observations  
—T. L. Peacock

# JUSTICE IN PRACTICE

“A theory of teaching practice that supports justice is not about specific techniques or best practices, but about guiding principles that play out in a variety of methods and strategies, depending on the particular circumstances, students, content, and communities.”

- Cochran-Smith, M. (2010). Toward a theory of teacher education for social justice.



# **ASSET-BASED EDUCATORS RESIST CHECK-LIST MINDSET**

Education is too complex to be understood solely through lens of “best practices.”

# RESISTING CHECK-LIST MINDSET

“Educators need to reject the present methods fetish so as to create learning environments informed by both action and reflection. In freeing themselves from the blind adoption of so-called effective (and sometimes ‘teacher-proof’) strategies, teachers can begin the reflective process, which allows them to recreate and reinvent teaching methods and materials by always taking into consideration the sociocultural realities that can either limit or expand the possibilities to humanize education.”

(Bartolome, 1994, p. 171)

# **ASSET-BASED EDUCATORS ARE REFLEXIVE**

Educators can't solely rely on "good" intentions. Strong educators reflect on who they are, their practices, and work to understand their students as complex actors immersed in complex systems.

# UNDERSTANDING REFLEXIVITY

**Definition:** the practice of examining your assumptions, biases, feelings, and actions.

# REFLEXIVITY IN PRACTICE

- Positionality – awareness of self
- Journal
- Observe – don't be afraid to be nosy
- Ask questions - talk to peers, mentors, students
- Build community – don't work in silos, collaborate

# FOR MORE ON REFLEXIVITY

## Check out these additional resources:

- [\*UCLA Teaching & Learning Center \(2025\). Leveraging self-reflection to improve your teaching\*](#)
- [\*Education Week \(2018\). On being a reflective educator\*](#)
- [\*Kaplan \(2017\). The power of reflective action to build teacher efficacy\*](#)
- [\*Washburn University. The reflective educator\*](#)

# **ASSET-BASED EDUCATORS UNDERSTAND THAT OPPORTUNITY GAPS EXIST**

Educators can't solely rely on "good" intentions. Strong educators reflect on who they are, their practices, and work to understand their students as complex actors immersed in complex systems.



# UNDERSTANDING OPPORTUNITY GAPS

“The ‘opportunity gap’ frame, in contrast, shifts our attention from outcomes to inputs – to the deficiencies in the foundational components of societies, schools, and communities that produce significant differences in educational and ultimately socioeconomic-outcomes” (p. 3).

- Welner & Carter (2013). *Closing the Opportunity Gap*

# OPPORTUNITY GAPS IN EDUCATION

- Opportunity and achievement are different things
- Shifts focus away from student outputs (e.g., grades, testing scores) to inputs (e.g., resources)
- “Thinking in terms of ‘achievement gaps’ emphasizes the symptoms; thinking about unequal opportunity highlights the causes” (Carter & Welner, 2013, p. 3)

# FOR MORE ON OPPORTUNITY GAPS

## Check out these additional resources:

- [WBUR \(2019\). Part 1: Achievement gap, or opportunity gap? What's stopping student success](#)
- [Learning Policy Institute \(2023\). Close opportunity gaps without gimmicks: Four lessons from exemplary public high schools](#)
- [The Hechinger Report \(2024\). 'Opportunities,' not poverty alone, predict later-life success for children](#)

# **ASSET-BASED EDUCATORS STRIVE FOR CULTURALLY RELEVANT PRACTICES**

Educators should include the cultural and linguistic worlds of their students in their teaching practices and relationships they make with students and their families.

# UNDERSTANDING CULTURALLY RELEVANT PEDAGOGY (CRP)

**Goal:** "produce students who can achieve academically, produce students who demonstrate cultural competence, and develop students who can both understand and critique the existing social order" (p. 474).

- Ladson-Billings, G. (1994), Toward a theory of culturally relevant pedagogy. *American Educational Research Journal*, 32(3), 465-491.

# CRP IN PRACTICE

- **Conceptions of understanding self and others**
- **Social relationships**
  - Maintain fluid student-teacher relationships
  - Demonstrate a connectedness with all students
  - Develop a community of leaders
  - Encourage students to learn collaboratively and be responsible for one another
- **Conceptions of knowledge**
  - Knowledge is not static; it is shared and constructed
  - Knowledge must be viewed critically
  - Teachers must be passionate about knowledge and learning
  - Teachers must scaffold or build bridges to facilitate learning
  - Assessment is multifaceted, incorporating multiple forms of assessment

**FOR MORE ON CRP**

## **Check out these additional resources:**

- [Howard, T. \(2003\). Culturally relevant pedagogy: Ingredients for critical teacher reflection](#)
- [Ladson-Billings, G. \(2020\). Building culturally relevant schools](#)
- [Education Week \(2022\). What should culturally relevant teaching look like today?](#)



# TAKEAWAYS

- **Asset-based educators ...**
  - Resist deficit practices
  - Resist check-list mindset
  - Reflect – invest in vulnerability and reflexivity
  - Understand that opportunity gaps exist
  - Strive for equity and justice
  - Engage in culturally relevant practices

# LECTURE ACTIVITY

## REFLECTION

In four or more complete sentences (one paragraph), respond to the following questions:

- **What is your biggest takeaway from today's lecture? What pushed your thinking the most?**