

The background of the slide is a vibrant, abstract splatter of colors including green, yellow, orange, red, purple, and blue, set against a dark grey gradient. The splatters are of various sizes and shapes, creating a dynamic and artistic feel.

Building Equity Into Transition Practice and Service Delivery

2023 Washington Summer Transition Institute

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Agenda

- Acknowledgements
- The Why
- Step 1: Self-reflection
 - Equity Framework Review
- Step 2: Identification
- Step 3: Action

CAVEAT: The hope is to create an honest respectful discussion where we can be comfortable with being uncomfortable with each other and give this the mental headspace and effort it deserves.

(In the very limited time, we have together)



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Acknowledgements

Acknowledgements

- This work came out of my participation as Chair of the Human Rights and Diversity Committee within the Division of Career Development and Transition (DCDT), a division of the Council for Exceptional Children.

- Our work should:

reflect a deep **understanding of intersecting identities** (e.g., class, gender, sexual orientation, race, ability) and how the intersections mediate access to privilege and positive post-secondary outcomes.

promote the **development of sociocultural awareness**, including the critique of the master narrative, creation of counter-narratives, and critical cultural literacy.

be **grounded in community-based well-being and knowledge**.

Culturally Responsive Transition Programing (CRTP) involves using an **asset-based framework** to **foster connections** between content, practices, professional dispositions and students' cultures for the purpose of improving outcomes for all students and their families.

Why review our practices?

- Achievement /Opportunity gap between youth with disabilities and those who don't experience disability and this achievement gap continues to persist for youth with intersecting identities. DCDDT needs to:
 - **create best practice programs and services** that address the unique needs of diverse youths with disabilities
 - *develop and evaluate professional development to increase cultural competence*
 - **identify effective instructional strategies** and techniques that lead to improved teacher and service provider competence



Step 1: Self-reflection

Individual Check-In

- Have [I/we] been seeing trends in data that shows disparate outcomes for diverse students with intersecting identities?
- Have [I/we] found a framework or approach that helps facilitate my action to support diverse students with intersecting identities?
- Do [I/we] have a level of awareness that allows [me/us] to think systemically on how our work impacts diverse students with intersecting identities?



Equity Frameworks

Abolitionist

- Abolitionist teaching is the practice of working in solidarity with communities of color while drawing on the imagination, creativity, refusal, (re)membering, visionary thinking, healing, rebellious spirit, boldness, determination, and subversiveness of abolitionists to eradicate injustice in and outside of schools.
- Demand and fight for an education system where all students are thriving, not simply surviving (Love, 2019)
- **“The ultimate goal of abolitionist teaching is freedom. Freedom to create your reality where uplifting humanity is at the center of all decisions”**
- Dunn, Chisholm, Spaulding, & Love (2021):
 - Radical Joy (self-awareness and celebration)
 - Radical Trust (repair harm)
 - Radical Imagination (reimagine learning opportunities)
 - Radical Disruption (activity dismantle)

Anti-Racist

- Education is political
- Overt and covert racism exist (Jana & Bran, 2020)
- Anti-racist teaching is about consciously committing to the struggle of fighting for racial justice (Kendi, 2019)
- We understand that BIPOC and other historically marginalized groups are living, enduring, and resisting the dominance of white supremacy within our educational system EVERY DAY (Tevis et al., 2022)
- Critically examine and work to dismantle unjust system (Kendi, 2019)

Anti-Ableist

- Ableist perspectives, or ableism, is the belief that nondisabled people are superior to disabled people and advances the ways society privileges able-bodiedness (Valle & Connor, 2017).
- Ableism is a form of discrimination that favors able-bodied people (Linton, 1998).
- Educators and researchers who engage in anti-ableist pedagogy recognize disability as a social construction
- Work to eliminate deficit perspectives about disability.
- 7 tenets of DisCrit (Annamma et al., 2013, 2022)

Asset-based

- A commitment to applying antiracist, abolitionist, and anti-ableist principles to our transition practices and service delivery requires:
 - shift from a deficit lens to an asset perspective on transition experiences of youth.
 - shift in perspective values students, families, and their communities through the power of understanding and sustaining assets, communities and privileges differences held by each.
- An asset-based perspective moves transition practitioners to value, maintain, and sustain the cultural practices and strengths of communities and extend beyond responsive and relevant approaches to transition planning (Paris, 2012).

Think-Pair-Share

- What framework resonated with you?
- What aspects of the framework resonated with you?
- Why do you think that is?
- What excites you to apply the framework to your practice?




Self-reflection

- Critical self-reflection, the need to become aware of and thoroughly examine the impact of our positionality, is at the foundation of implementing anti-oppressive work.
- Without understanding our own and youth's positionality based on their intersectional identities, educators may make assumptions about the students and families they serve.
- This process is personal, emotional, and vulnerable.

Self-reflection - Ask yourself and answer

- Who benefits and who is being harmed/excluded by current policies in my setting?
- Who needs to be included/who is missing? Are the “right” people at the table when we discuss transition planning?
- Are current practices valuing the intersectional experience of our students and their families?
- What are the oppressive conditions (e.g., social, economic, gender, class, ability, racial) that exist that impact our students and families during the transition process?
- How are we measuring successful transition outcomes? Is it the same for all students?
- Are there resources and services that need to be identified and shared that would support our students and their families?
- How do we respect, honor, and support families in preparing to guide their child in transition?



Step 2:
Identification

**“Be Brave, Be
Bold, Be Urgent”**

– Valarie Williams,
Director of the Office for Special Education Programs

You self-reflected, now what?

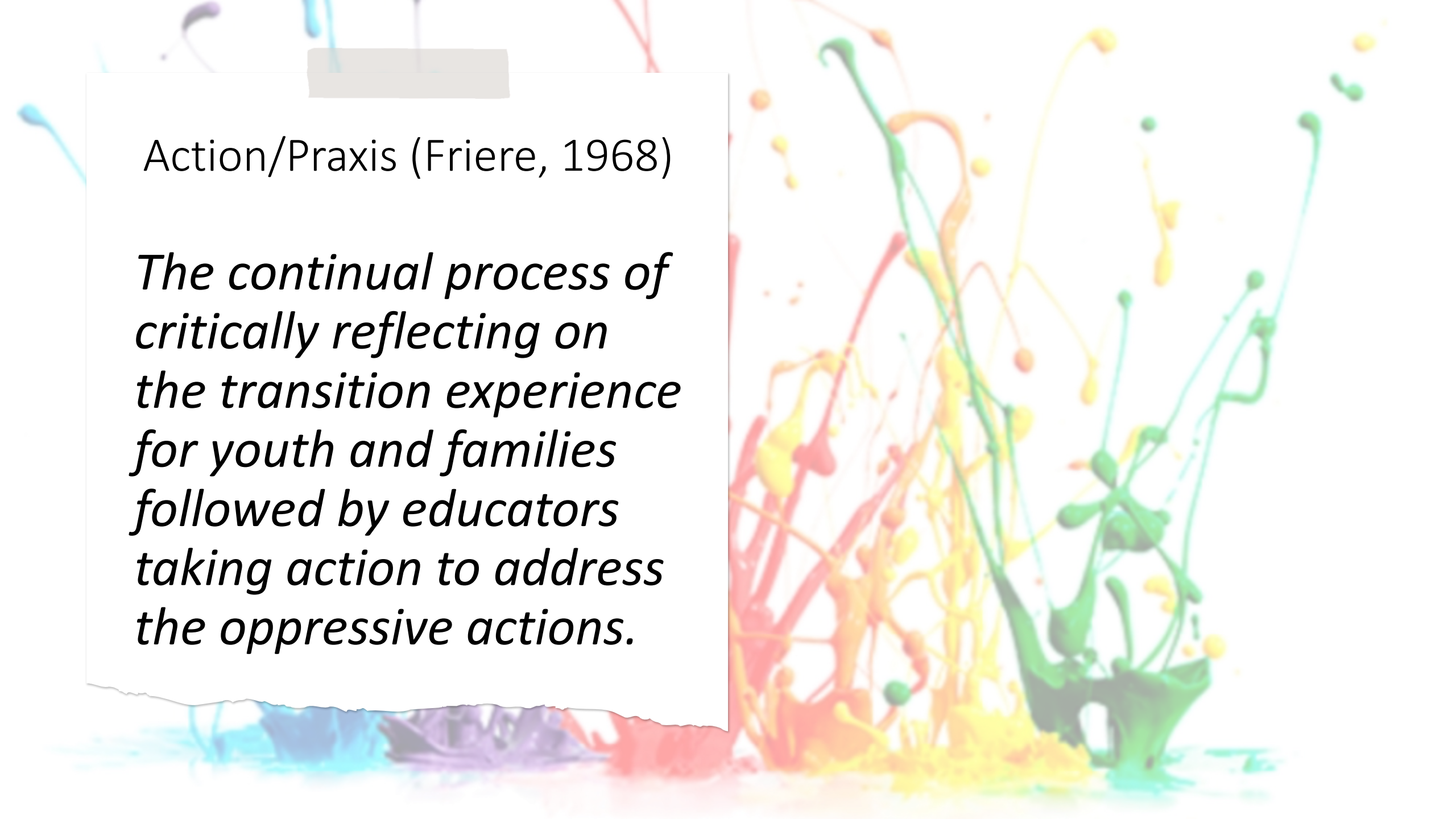
- **EFFORT** must be committed to move from self-reflection to action.
- Systemic change might not occur with one person, but one person can begin small change.
 - A system has many functions and levers, and finding one that is feasible to shift will be critical for sustainability.
- **Ask yourself – what practice do I know I can help shift?**
 - Write it down.
- **Share with a neighbor what practice you want to focus on.**

Evaluate the practice you identified. Work through with a neighbor.

- What is the **purpose** of this practice/guidance?
- Have I **critically examined** the practice/guidance to see if it is inclusive to diverse students?
- How can I **purposefully implement** the practice/guidance for the students I serve?



Step 3: Action



Action/Praxis (Friere, 1968)

The continual process of critically reflecting on the transition experience for youth and families followed by educators taking action to address the oppressive actions.

DCDT Transition Standards

- **Assessments:**

- Special education specialists use valid and reliable assessment practices to minimize bias

- **Leadership and Policy:**

- Special education specialists provide leadership to formulate goals, set and meet high professional expectations, advocate for effective policies and evidence-based practices, and create positive and productive work environments.

- **Curricular Content Knowledge:**

- Special education specialists use their knowledge of general and specialized curricula to improve programs, supports, and services at classroom, school, community, and system levels.

- **Collaboration:**

- Special education specialists collaborate with stakeholders to improve programs, services, and outcomes for individuals with exceptionalities and their families

Transition Practitioners

choose and create assessment tools that are relevant to students, their families, and communities

Transition Teams

recognize extent to which assessments are chosen that perpetuate overvaluing skills and goals consistent with European White

Abolitionist

Assessment

“Special education specialists use valid and reliable assessment practices to minimize bias”

Higher education

prepare practitioners to evaluate assessment tools for bias and notice their own bias in use and synthesis of these tools

Service Providers

Transition Practitioners

advocate for school and district policies that disrupt segregation, overrepresentation, inequitable and harmful discipline practices

Transition Teams

advocate for analysis of school and district level data to evaluate the impact of transition services and programming to question and change policies

Anti-Racist

Leadership and Policy

“Special education specialists provide leadership to formulate goals, set and meet high professional expectations, advocate for effective policies and evidence-based practices, and create positive and productive work environments”

Higher education

teacher education programs prepare educators to identify and collaborate with partners in support of culturally responsive and sustaining transition practices

Service Providers

Transition Practitioners

support and affirm youth in their intersectional identity development through self-determination curricula

Transition Teams

contextualize transition goals and align activities within the student's environment and community

Higher education

professionals model the identification and calling out of deficit models in education, teacher preparation practices, and research

Service Providers

Anti-Ableist

Curricular Content Knowledge

“Special education specialists use their knowledge of general and specialized curricula to improve programs, supports, and services at classroom, school, community, and system levels”

Transition Practitioners

critically consider who is invited to ensure that the student's priorities and community assets are well represented and understood, especially by those who do not have proximity to the student's community

Transition Teams

approach the definition of "family" broadly to ensure that those who the student considers critical to their decision making are involved in transition planning

Higher education

professionals partner with faculty from across disciplines to provide effective, interdisciplinary preparation which allows future practitioners to practice collaboration from multiple perspectives

Service Providers

Asset-Based

Collaboration

"Special education specialists collaborate with stakeholders to improve programs, services, and outcomes for individuals with exceptionalities and their families"



Move to action by:

- **Advocating** for support for through funding, guidelines, and service opportunities for traditionally underserved youth.
- **Learning about** youth and their family's **values, desires, and needs.**
- **Reflecting,** on your own intersectionality, positionality, and implicit biases.
- **(Re)Building trust** and **strengthening relationships** with youth, families, and community members by participating in local events, creating listening spaces, and highlighting the assets.
- Acknowledging that **growth is a process that takes time** and comes with mistakes. Partners need to provide space for the growth and take responsibility for their actions and step into healing spaces when things go awry.

Fritzgerald's (2020) Code of Honor

The elements were adapted from Delpit's (1988) Code of Power.

Educators can choose to uphold these five elements:

1. **Recognize the power structure** that exists-both past and present.
2. Acknowledge the purposeful intent and **actions of abolishing the limitations** of the power structure at hand.
3. Reflect the code of honor by **empowering each member** of the learning community daily in the structures, supports, and choices available.
4. Make an effort to **invite members of the learning community** into positions of authority, power and decision making- even if that means taking yourself out of power to do so.
5. Create opportunities for members of the learning **community to make powerful decisions** that govern their best possible outcomes.

What happens next?

- Write a goal for yourself or with a colleague.
- Think of your next steps.
- **REMEMBER:**
 - You run a marathon one step at a time, what is going to be your next steps?





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