



Lenses of Humanity: Equity-focused Approaches to Education

Kyle Reyes, Ph.D. | September 16, 2020

Humans long for two primary things:
purpose and **connection**.

Our **humanity** is found in our ability to facilitate the pursuit of these goals with others.

If we are committed to humanity, we must be **deliberate** in our desire to develop new and diverse lenses **grounded in cultural humility**.

4 Lenses of Humanity

Introspective

Contextual

Interpersonal

Communal

Introspective Lens

Humanity-driven people engage in ongoing self-analysis, reflection, and lens checking.

What are our students negotiating and navigating every day?

- ▶ *Belonging*
- ▶ *Safety*
- ▶ *Relationships*
- ▶ *Intellect*
- ▶ *Talents*
- ▶ *Identity*
- ▶ *Connection*
- ▶ *Sense of Place*

Codes

- ▶ *Belonging*
- ▶ *Safety*
- ▶ *Relationships*
- ▶ *Intellect*
- ▶ *Talents*
- ▶ *Identity*
- ▶ *Connection*



Why Do We **View the World** the Way We Do?

Ascribed	Roles & Hats	Experiences
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What were you born in to? • First language • Geographic location • Family structure • Birth order • Family religion / worldview • Family political leanings • Socioeconomic status • Working parent(s)/guardian(s) • Gender • Ability/Disability 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What roles do you play? • What hats do you wear? • What responsibilities do you have? • What titles do you carry? • Who depends on you? <p style="text-align: center; color: teal; font-weight: bold;">So What?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What significant experiences have you had that influence who you are today? • Positive or negative • Person, place, incident • Life changing/turning events • Experiences that affected your state of living, state of mind, emotions, motivation, and trajectory



We don't see
things as **they**
are.

We see
things as **we**
are.

Anais Nin, 1961

Three Stories

Left Handed
Bedtime Funnies
An Accident

Privilege

You benefit from not having to spend emotional, psychological, or physical energy thinking about how you will have to navigate society with your identity(ies).

Lens Checking = Bias Checking

- Why do I view the world the way I do?
- Why did I react to what someone said/did?
- What might I not know about this situation that could help me understand their point of view more?
- In what ways do I assume that my view is the “normal” or “correct” view?
- What am I doing to actively be exposed to differences of perspective and experience?

So What?

As educators, once we recognize the limitations of our lenses and experiences, we can move towards more equitable educational approaches for students because we recognize the variation of perspectives, stories, experiences, and resources.

Contextual Lens

Humanity-driven people study and engage with diversity of history, thought, and perspective.

Context

360



Danger of a **Single Story**

So that is how you create a single story: show people as one thing, as only one thing, over and over again and that is what they become.

The problem with stereotypes is not that they are untrue, but that they are incomplete. They make one story become the only story.

Stories can break the dignity of a people. But stories can also repair that broken dignity.

- Chimamanda Adichie

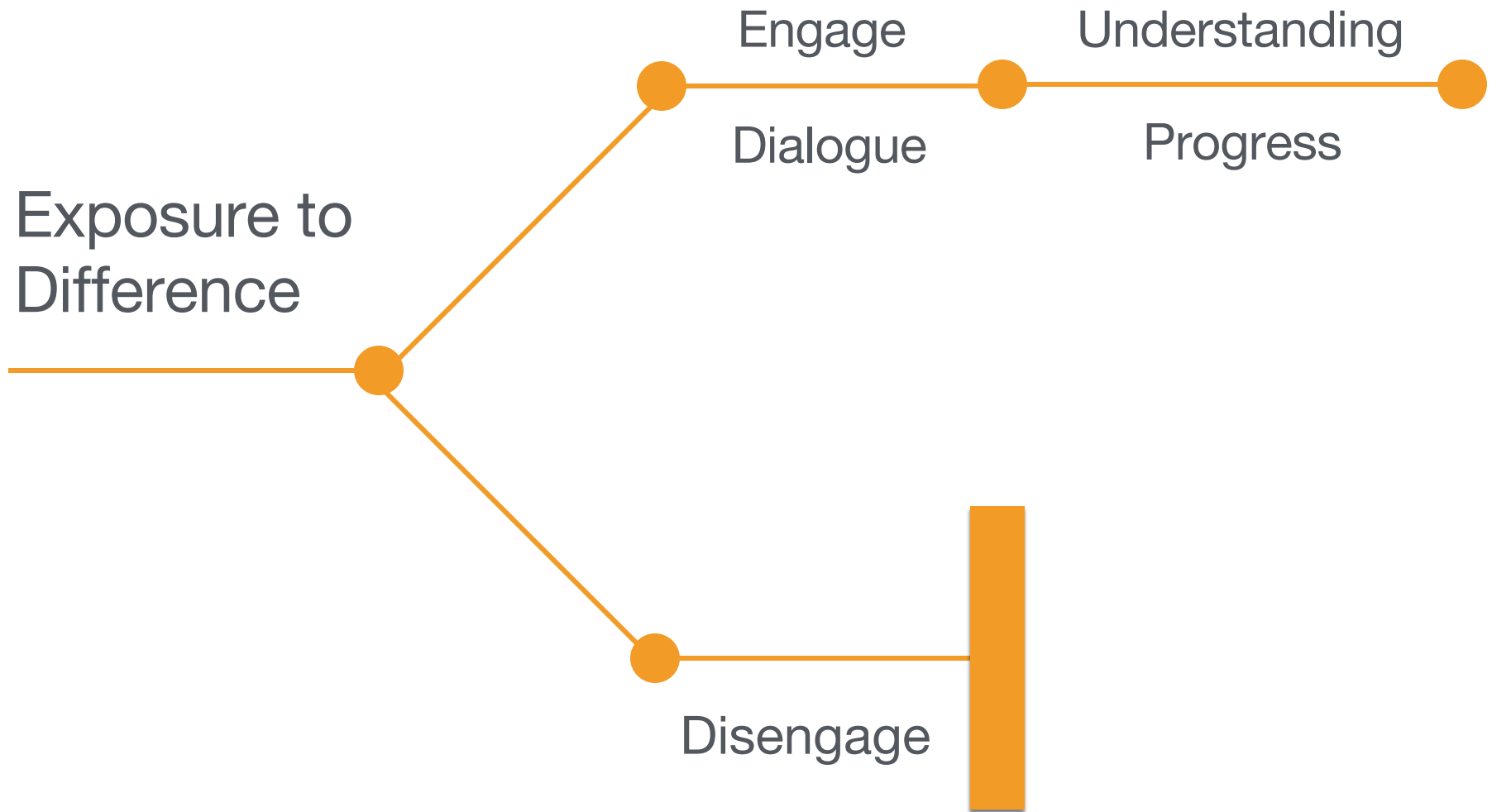
TED



Danger of a **Single Story**



Healthy Dissonance



Educational Debt

“When we think of what we are combating as an achievement gap, we implicitly place the onus for closing the gap on the students, their families and their individual teachers and schools.

But the notion of **education debt** requires us to think about how all of us as members of a democratic society, are implicated in creating these achievement disparities.”

– Gloria Ladson-Billings



Educational Debt

- Don't focus on the year-to-year gaps (educational deficit)
- Focus on the ongoing systemic barriers that lead to a compounded and perpetual gap (educational debt)

– Gloria Ladson-Billings



Access

In education, the term **access** typically refers to the ways in which educational institutions and policies ensure that students have equal and equitable opportunities to take full advantage of their education.

Increasing **access** generally requires schools to provide additional services or remove any actual or potential barriers that might prevent some students from equitable participation in certain academic programs or opportunities.

Source: www.edglossary.org

Access

Factors such as race, religion, gender, sexual orientation, disability, past academic performance, special-education status, English-language ability, and family income or educational-attainment levels—in addition to factors such as relative community affluence, geographical location, or school facilities—may contribute to certain students having less “**access**” to educational opportunities than other students.

Source: www.edglossary.org

Types of Access

- **Access** to assistive technologies, accommodations, or modified school facilities and transportation vehicles that make full participation in school programs possible for students with various forms of disability (ADA, IDEA).
- **Access** to equal opportunities in educational programs and activities regardless of gender, race, or sexual orientation, including extracurricular activities and sports (Title IX).
- **Access** to adequate health care and nutritional services, including free or reduced-price school breakfasts and lunches to ensure that children living in poverty are not attending school sick or hungry.
- **Access** to adequate public transportation to attend public schools and charter schools that may or may not be located near student homes.

Types of Access

- **Access** to preschool or kindergarten so that students enter school prepared to learn and succeed academically regardless of income level or a family's ability to pay for early childhood education.
- **Access** to intensive instruction in the English language or academic language for students who cannot read, write, or speak English, and access to interpreters and translated documents for non-English-speaking students, parents, and families, including multilingual translations of school policies, academic materials, parent communications, event announcements, website content, etc.
- **Access** to counseling, social services, academic support, and other resources that can help students who are at risk of failure or dropping out remain in school, succeed academically, graduate with a diploma, and pursue postsecondary education.

Types of Access

- **Access** to individualized education programs (IEPs) for special-education students, access to mainstream classrooms and academically challenging content through inclusion strategies, which includes access to any trained professionals or specialized educational resources.
- **Access** to advanced-level learning opportunities such as honors courses or Advanced Placement courses, dual-enrollment opportunities, or other programs that historically required students to meet prerequisites before being allowed to enroll in a course or participate in a program.
- **Access** to technology, including high-speed internet connections and adequate hardware (computers, laptops, tablets) and software (particularly learning applications) so that students have equitable access to the same digital and online learning opportunities regardless of their family's income level or ability to pay for these technologies.

Types of Access

Access to:

- Assistive technologies or accommodations
- Equal opportunities regardless of race, gender, sexual orientation
- Adequate healthcare and nutritional services
- Adequate public transportation
- Pre-school or kindergarten
- Intensive English instruction and language learning
- Counseling, social services, and academic support
- Individualized educational programs
- Advanced-level learning
- Technology software, hardware and internet

What would you add to this list?

Equity

In education, the term **equity** refers to the principle of fairness. While it is often used interchangeably with the related principle of equality, **equity** encompasses a wide variety of educational models, programs, and strategies that may be considered fair, but not necessarily equal.

It has been said that “**equity** is the process; equality is the outcome,” given that **equity**—what is fair and just—may not, in the process of educating students, reflect strict equality—what is applied, allocated, or distributed equally.

Source: www.edglossary.org

Equity

Inequities occur when biased or unfair policies, programs, practices, or situations contribute to a lack of equality in educational performance, results, and outcomes.

For example, certain students or groups of students may attend school, graduate, or enroll in postsecondary education at lower rates, or they may perform comparatively poorly on standardized tests due to a wide variety of factors, including inherent biases or flaws in test designs.

Source: www.edglossary.org

Types of Inequity

- **Societal Inequity:** Inequity in education is most commonly associated with groups that have suffered from discrimination related to their race, ethnicity, nationality, language, religion, class, gender, sexual orientation, or disabilities. These groups may be disadvantaged by preexisting bias and prejudice in American society, with both conscious and unconscious discrimination surfacing in public schools in ways that adversely affect academic achievement, educational aspirations, and post-graduation opportunities.
- **Socioeconomic Inequity:** Evidence suggests that students from lower-income households, on average, underperform academically in relation to their wealthier peers, and they also tend to have lower educational aspirations and enroll in college at lower rates (in part due to financial considerations). In addition, schools in poorer communities, such as those in rural or disadvantaged urban areas, may have comparatively fewer resources and less funding, which can lead to fewer teachers and educational opportunities— from specialized courses and computers to co-curricular activities and sports teams—as well as outdated or dilapidated school facilities.

Types of Inequity

- **Cultural Inequity:** Students from diverse cultural backgrounds may be disadvantaged in a variety of ways when pursuing their education. For example, recently arrived immigrant and refugee students and their families may have difficulties navigating the public-education system or making educational choices that are in their best interests and may struggle in school because they are unfamiliar with American customs, social expectations, slang, and cultural references.
- **Familial Inequity:** Some students may live in dysfunctional or abusive households, or they may receive comparatively little educational support or encouragement from their parents (even when the parents want their children to succeed in school). In addition, evidence suggests that students whose parents have not earned a high school or college degree may, on average, underperform academically in relation to their peers, and they may also enroll in and complete postsecondary programs at lower rates. Familial inequities may also intersect with cultural and socioeconomic inequities. For example, poor parents may not be able to invest in supplemental educational resources and learning opportunities—from summer programs to test-preparation services—or they may not be able pay the same amount of attention to their children’s education as more affluent parents—perhaps because they have multiple jobs, for example.

Types of Inequity

- **Programmatic Inequity:** School programs may be structured in ways that are perceived to be unfair because they contribute to inequitable or unequal educational results for some students. For example, students of color tend, on average, to be disproportionately represented in lower-level classes with lower academic expectations (and possibly lower-quality teaching), which can give rise to achievement gaps or “cycles of low expectation” in which stereotypes about the academic performance of minorities are reinforced and perpetuated because they are held to lower academic standards or taught less than their peers.
- **Instructional Inequity:** Students may be enrolled in courses taught by less-skilled teachers, who may teach in a comparatively uninteresting or ineffective manner, or in courses in which significantly less content is taught. Students may also be subject to conscious or unconscious favoritism, bias, or prejudice by some teachers, or the way in which instruction is delivered may not work as well for some students as it does for others.

Types of Inequity

- **Staffing Inequity:** Wealthier schools located in more wealthier communities may be able to hire more teachers and staff, while also providing better compensation that attracts more experienced and skilled teachers. Students attending these schools will likely receive a better-quality education, on average, while students who attend schools in less-desirable communities, with fewer or less-skilled teachers, will likely be at an educational disadvantage. Staffing situations in schools may also be inequitable in a wide variety of ways. In addition to potential inequities in employment—e.g., minorities being discriminated against during the hiring process, female educators not being promoted to administrative positions at the same rates as their male colleagues—students may be disadvantaged by a lack of diversity among teaching staff. For example, students of color may not have educators of color as role models, students may not be exposed to a greater diversity of cultural perspectives and experiences, or the content taught in a school may be culturally limited or biased—e.g., history being taught from an exclusively Eurocentric point of view that neglects to address the perspectives and suffering of colonized countries or enslaved peoples.

Types of Inequity

- **Assessment Inequity:** Students may be disadvantaged when taking tests or completing other types of assessments due to the design, content, or language choices, or because they have learning disabilities or physical disabilities that may impair their performance. In addition, situational factors may adversely affect test performance. For example, lower-income students who attend schools that do not regularly use computers may be disadvantaged—compared to wealthier students with more access to technology at home or students who use computers regularly in school—when taking tests that are administered on computers and that require basic computer literacy.
- **Linguistic Inequity:** Non-English-speaking students, or students who are not yet proficient in English, may be disadvantaged in English-only classrooms or when taking tests and assessments presented in English. In addition, these students may also be disadvantaged if they are enrolled in separate academic programs, held to lower academic expectations, or receive lower-quality instruction as a result of their language abilities.

Types of Inequity

- Societal inequity
- Socioeconomic inequity
- Cultural inequity
- Familial inequity
- Programmatic inequity
- Instructional inequity
- Staffing inequity
- Assessment inequity
- Linguistic inequity

What would you add to this list?

So What?

- Humanity driven educators engage with diversity of history, thought, and perspective.
- Our lack of exposure to difference creates a single story about the other.
- We are limited in our ability to provide equitable educational opportunities if we do not develop broader contextual lenses.
- Let us focus on the Educational Debt (sustained, systemic, and compounded barriers for students) that we all contribute to.

Interpersonal Lens

*Humanity-driven people
learn from and improve
empathy for diverse
individuals.*

The absence of exposure to diverse perspectives, lenses and experiences **limits our ability to connect.**

It is hard to build a bridge to a land mass that you are **not aware of.**

1-on-1 Conversations

The majority of change I have seen take place in both individuals and institutions has been brought about because of **courageous conversations and relationships**. Never underestimate the importance of building meaningfully diverse relationships.

Bridges of Empathy

Education



Bridges of Empathy

Engagement



Interpersonal Lens

Bridges of Empathy

Immersion



Interpersonal Lens

Cultural Humility

The recognition that your awareness and understanding of the experiences and perspectives of others is limited...And, you genuinely believe you can learn from them.

So What?

- **Engage in Reciprocity & Reflection**
 - “What can I learn?”, all parties are teachers and learners, mutually beneficial, reflective journaling
- **Practice Cultural Humility & Cultural Courage**
 - Beware the Savior mentality, use asset lenses, ask sincere and open-ended questions (genuine inquiry)
- **Expand Language and Self-Monitor**
 - Words matter, personal pronouns, seek clarity, attend trainings, check in, engage new texts
- **Allyship and Advocacy**
 - Use privilege on behalf of those who don't have it, speak up

Communal Lens

*Humanity-driven people
connect with and lift
groups and
communities.*

What Does It Mean to Build Community?

- Identify who you consider to be your community(ies)
- Why did you identify them in the way you did?
- Are there people you don't consider to be a part of your community(ies)?
- Why is that?
- The greater exposure to diversity, the more inclined we are to consider people with diverse identities and experiences to be a part of “our” communities.

Organizational Lens Check

- Barriers to Student Access, Learning, & Achievement
- Equitable Resources
- Cultural Competency
- Personnel & Involvement
- Data and Assessment
- Commitment & Buy-In
- Organizational Culture, Values, Goals, Mission

Summary of Progress 2014-2020

- Increased Latina/o/x student enrollment from 7.8% to 12% (over 5,200 students total now)
- Launched three additional multicultural initiatives with dozens of services, programming, and events: Native American Initiative, People of the Pacific (POP) Initiative, and the African Diaspora Initiative
- Cut the ribbon on a new Veterans Center
- Cut the ribbon on an Ecumenical Reflection Center (for students and employees of all faiths, religions, worldviews to reflect or meditate)
- Raised \$2.5 million for a new Wee Care Center (on campus daycare facility for low income students with children)
- Cut the ribbon on the first four facilities named for solely for women: Barbara Barrington Jones Family Foundation Wee Care Center, Becky Lockhart Arena, Melisa Nellesen Center for Autism, and Norma T. Anderson Dance Complex
- Improved closed-captioning of online videos and major events
- Strengthened the Global Spotlight program focusing the entire campus on a region of the world
- Improved our Global Intercultural curriculum and training and launched the GI (Global Intercultural) graduation distinction for students
- Created the Center for Global and Intercultural Engagement with cross divisional collaborations among Student Affairs and Academic Affairs
- Opened an LGBT Student Services office and created and filled a full-time Program Director position
- Hosted first UVU Lavendar graduation for LGBTQ students and allies

Summary of Progress 2014-2020

- Received a third \$24 million GEAR UP grant for low-income and first-generation students
- Launched a robust first-generation initiative with a newly funded position and programming including the “I Am First” Initiative
- Implemented a more robust training program for Safe Zone and Sexual Violence Awareness
- Implemented the UVU PREP program – a program designed to prepare diverse 7th-9th graders for STEM fields
- Funded \$400,000 in needs-based scholarships
- Retrofitted or created 34 new family/all-gender bathrooms
- Cut the ribbon on a Women’s Success Center
- Increased DME (Domestic Multicultural Experiences) and Alternate Breaks for immersion in diverse contexts
- Hosted the first National Student Leadership Diversity Convention in the Mountain West
- Organized the state’s first Hip Hop Dance Company
- Started the Champions of Inclusion recognition program (awarding five individuals and departments) for their work to advance inclusion
- Created the food pantry for students with food insecurity
- Ramped up emergency preparedness and campus safety protocols
- Hosted the Governor’s Native American Summit and UVU's Tribal Leaders Summit six straight years
- Established three different partnerships with the Navajo Nation

Summary of Progress 2014-2020

- Co-sponsored race relations dialogues with Provo and Orem Police Departments
- Launched scholarships and positions for Multicultural Student Council and International Student Council
- Enhanced the Cultural Envoy Leadership Program increasing student empowerment, cultural connection, and persistence
- Increased mental health awareness and programming
- Funded positions for AA/EEO, Title IX, and HR trainings
- Hosted the Utah Women in Leadership Project
- Developed four mother's rooms for students and employees with newborn babies
- Hosted a diverse set of nationally recognized speakers for MLK Commemoration, Presidential Lecture Series, and other events
- Hosted dozens of Women in Business and Women in STEM conferences, outreach opportunities, and programs
- Changed non-discrimination policy to include sexual orientation and gender identity/expression
- Broke the ground for a new Autism Center that was fully funded (\$5.2 million from private donations)
- Developed and launched a campus-wide Foundations of Inclusion workshop series for all employees (with 280 participants the first year of implementation – 2017-2018)
- Created a comprehensive inclusion website (www.uvu.edu/inclusion)
- Launched a campus-wide Accessibility Committee

Summary of Progress 2014-2020

- Hosted Utah's first Dual-Language Immersion Fairs
- Developed Inclusion Dashboards to access data related to representation of race and gender by major
- Launched student-led diversity dialogues and the diversity lecture series
- Launched a transgender / gender non-conforming task force
- Launched the Some College, No Degree initiative inviting adult learners to complete their education
- Announced commitments of \$8 Million toward a \$15 Million Presidential campaign to improve First Generation Completion and Student Success
- Implemented four Mamava pods for nursing mothers (students and employees)
- Expanded maternity leave from 2 weeks to 6 weeks
- Developed a Dreamer / DACA website and task force to address needs of undocumented students
- Launched Emergency fund for students
- Doubled the size of the UVU Food Pantry
- Launched the CARE Task Force focused on Basic Needs Insecurity
- Launched Mental Health Task Force with expanded services for group and 1-on-1 therapy
- Developed Inclusion Plan 2.0 with over 70 more action steps to be taken from 2020-2024

So What?

What Can Leaders Do to Improve Humanity Lenses Organizationally and Collectively?

- Create opportunities for diverse voices to be heard
- Don't stop the conversation
- Develop a culture of lens checking
- Ask: who is/isn't around the table, who is/isn't represented, who is/isn't talking, and whose perspectives/voices/ideas are valued?
- Create incentives and performance metrics concerning intercultural competence development

Lenses of Humanity

Introspective

Contextual

Interpersonal

Communal

Mahalo

kyle.reyes@uvu.edu

