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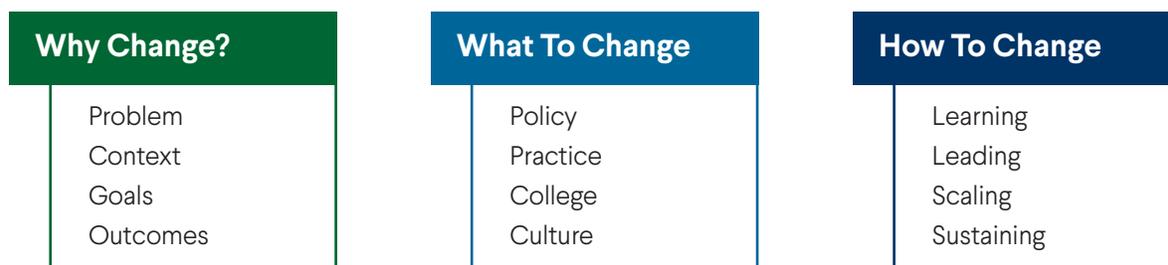
Enacting Equity in Guided Pathways

by Debra D. Bragg

Purpose of the Tool:

This tool is designed to be used by Student Success Center executive directors to gather input and prepare coaches to integrate and enact an equity frame in guided pathways implementation. The tool utilizes the Community College Research Initiative's (CCRI) Coaching for Change framework (*see Figure 1*) to apply equity and equity-mindedness (Center for Urban Education 2019) to guided pathways.

Key Concepts and How to Use the Tool:

To use this tool, coaches need to understand the four pillars of guided pathways: 1) clarify paths to students' end goals, 2) help students choose and enter a pathway, 3) help students stay on a path, and 4) ensure that students are learning (Bailey et al. 2015). Coaches also need to understand the concepts of equity and equity-mindedness (Center for Urban Education 2019; Witham et al. 2015).

Figure 1. **CCRI's theory of evidence-based coaching for change**

Why Change?	What To Change	How To Change
Problem	Policy	Learning
Context	Practice	Leading
Goals	College	Scaling
Outcomes	Culture	Sustaining

Adapted from *Evidence-Based Coaching for Change in the Student Success Center Network* (Bragg et al. 2018).

Critical reflective practice is also important to using this tool in that colleges are encouraged to engage in individual and group reflection promoting social change that focuses on "making the educational system more equitable" (Earl and Ussher 2016). Reflection *on* action and reflection *for* action (Schön 1983) are both necessary to integrate equity into guided pathways.

Strategies for Executive Directors to Support Coaches in Using This Tool with Their Colleges:

- Executive directors should work with coaches to assist colleges—including college teams designed to lead the implementation of guided pathways—to use this tool, including the planning, gathering, and information analysis needed to execute this work.
- Executive directors should work with college leaders to study and understand the *Five Principles for Equity by Design* (Center for Urban Education 2019) in relationship to guided pathways implementation.
- Executive directors should work with coaches to model and facilitate inquiry-focused strategies that coaches can use to support their colleges in looking for what has and has not been done to integrate equity and equity-mindedness in guided pathways implementation.
- Executive directors should work with coaches and colleges in the use of critical reflection to assess individual and collective understanding of equity in the implementation of guided pathways.

Instructions for Enacting Equity in Guided Pathways Tool:

1. Led by the executive director, **coaches discuss and document current examples** of implementation activities within each of the four pillars of guided pathways. These examples may come from colleges that coaches are currently working with or an example college provided by the executive director.
2. **Coaches use the grid below to document why, what, and how equity is being integrated** within the implementation activities in step one.
3. Led by the executive director, **coaches engage in critical re lection to assess how equity is or is not integrated** into the implementation activities identified in step one. Discussion and reflection should be informed by the *Five Principles for Creating Equity by Design* (Center for Urban Education 2019).
4. Led by the executive director, **coaches learn to help their colleges** (and college leadership) to develop a statement of the colleges' current enactment of equity in guided pathways, and also provide a statement of next steps in colleges' implementation of equity in guided pathways.

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Guided Pathways Pillar	Why What systemic inequities are negatively impacting underserved students?	What What strategies are being implemented to address systemic inequities impacting underserved students?	How What methods and measures demonstrate more equitable outcomes for underserved students?
Identify how equity is being implemented per pillar.	Identify equity gaps in student outcomes at institutional, department, and course levels. Identify what discriminatory policies, practices, and systemic biases are contributing to equity gaps.	Identify strategies that demonstrably close equity gaps for underserved students. Evaluate these strategies in terms of their impact on closing equity gaps and creating more equitable outcomes for underserved students.	Document processes used in implementing, measuring, improving, and scaling strategies that close equity gaps and create more equitable outcomes for underserved students.
Clarify paths to students' end goals			
Help students choose and enter a path			

Help students stay on
a path

Ensure that students
are learning

Summary of Current Integration of Equity in Guided Pathways:

Recommended Next Steps to Achieve More Equitable Guided Pathways:

Critical Reflection for Coaches to Use with Colleges on the Enacting Equity in Guided Pathways Exercise:

Reflection *on* action:

- As an individual, what did I learn about my own understanding of our college's integration of equity in guided pathways?
- As a college team, what did we learn together about our understanding of our college's integration of equity in guided pathways?

Reflection *for* action:

- As an individual, what have I learned about what I know and need to know to be a more equity-minded practitioner?
- As a college team, what did we learn together about what we should do and how we should engage with others in our college to embody an equity-by-design approach to student success?

References

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Suggested citation: Bragg, D. D. 2019. *Enacting Equity in Guided Pathways Tool*. Seattle: Community College Research Initiatives, University of Washington.