Activity: Identity Reflection Through Noticing

Notice the experiences, identities, and values that each person brings to a team

Framing

Each individual on a design team brings a specific set of talents, values, experiences, identities, motivations, and even biases. Inevitably, these individual characteristics impact the design process and outcomes; for example, someone who loves personal technology may be a strong voice in support of increasing the use of technology in a district's approach to teaching and learning.

Individual and collective self-awareness ensures you are clear-eyed about whose perspectives are represented and whose are not. As you dive deeper into the design process, it will be important for your team to consider the impact of and seek to include any missing perspectives and biases; this will help ensure that your design solution is not just right for some students but for each student — especially those with the most to gain from a new design.

Ensuring Equity & Resiliency

Equity looks like honest reflection about what you do — and do not — bring to the design process, and then using that awareness to proactively include and empathize with those who do not look and feel like you. Equity also looks like creating opportunities to help team members identify strengths, commonalities, biases, and blind spots, allowing team members to see how their individual attributes influence the larger team dynamic.

Resiliency looks like being open and seeking to understand others' perspectives. Resiliency also looks like revisiting this step often so that individuals on your design team continue to deepen their awareness and to invite other perspectives into the conversation. It is important to regularly reflect on the current environment and how your identities, experiences, and motivations impact how you show up.

Steps to Implementation
Suggested time: 1 hour

1. Gather your team in a room (in person or virtually).

2. Have each individual make a personal, private copy (digital or paper) of the Design Team Noticing Activity *(see Appendix: Workpages).* Consider offering this as pre-work for those who may need more processing time.

3. Introduce the activity to the team and explain its purpose.
   Note: Acknowledge varying feelings that people may have in doing this activity (e.g., unease, frustration, "ah-hah," joy). Ensure them that this is a personal exercise and that their work will be private to them.

4. Ask each individual to open the Design Team Noticing Activity. Allot about ten minutes for each individual to follow the directions and jot down their answers for each category.

5. Take about 40 minutes for group reflection and discussion about the identities around the table and their implications.

Discussion Question	Notes
How does this team show up in terms of... **Identity:** Who am I/we? Who are the people we're designing for (i.e., students, teachers)? **Power:** What access to opportunity and positional/ institutional power do we each have? **Context:** What is our situation - what are our challenges to equitably serving our students and community? **Partnership:** Given the above, how can our design team operate in a way that benefits everyone?	
What did you learn from this process? What made you feel uncomfortable? Why?	
How did this activity make you think about empathizing with others through this process?	
How might one of your biases get in the way of your ability to empathize and design equitably?	

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6. Close out the activity by offering each individual about five minutes of quiet reflection about how today's activity and discussion will inform the way they approach this work.

7. Finally, bring the group together to develop a shared commitment to this work by defining your "why" or rationale for engaging in this process at this time.

This activity was inspired by the 'Notice' stage of [Stanford d.school - Liberatory Design Cards](#).