

MASTERY-BASED LEARNING WORK GROUP MEETING

September 29, 2020 Meeting Agenda

1:00-4:00 p.m.

Location: Zoom meeting

Agenda:

1:00-1:15 Welcome and Updates

Alissa welcomed work group members and provided a quick update noting that the SBE did [adopt final rules for mastery-based crediting](#) at their Board meeting two weeks ago. These rules were shaped largely by the MBL work group members' input at previous meetings.

The work group members who served as panelists at the Aurora Institute Conference session focused on sharing about our work with a national audience, entitled [Increasing Capacity for MBL in Washington](#), had a chance to debrief with the rest of the work group about the experience. *(Note: Alissa's background slides, along with the webinar recording, can be accessed through the hyperlink.)*

1:15-2:00 Current Educator Panel on Instructional Practices

Social Justice Classroom Instruction through the Climate Justice League

Ali Coker, NBCT, Science Educator at Camas High School

Building Culturally Responsive Teaching, AntiBias/Antiracist Pedagogy, and Social Justice Standards into My Teaching Practice

Christina deVidal NBCT, English Language Arts Educator at Eastlake High School

Alissa provided a brief introduction regarding the purpose for the panel:

Our first agenda segment is responsive to several work group members' request at the July Work Group Retreat to hear from current educators about how they incorporate culturally relevant instructional practices into their classrooms to help each student feel a sense of belonging in their school community. Ali will be sharing about Social Justice Classroom Instruction through the Climate Justice League. Her presentation aligns well with your vision for an education system that demonstrates flexibility and responsiveness in our changing world. Christina will be sharing about Building Culturally Responsive Teaching, AntiBias/Antiracist Pedagogy, and Social Justice Standards into Her Teaching Practice. Her presentation aligns well with your vision for closing the opportunity gap through honoring students' assets and engaging students through their diverse cultures.

Ali shared an example of a classroom activity she did last year with her students in an art integrated biology and general biology class. In planning the activity, the goal was for students to gain awareness of where their food comes from, how certain groups of people are impacted, and how climate change is making it harder for people to sustainably grow food. Ali collaborated with other science educators to develop a rubric and guiding questions to assess learning. The instruction included both Washington-specific examples of how climate change affects crops as well as examples from around the world. The

activity focused on having students develop solutions for agricultural practices that would combat climate change while making less of an impact on small farms and populations.

As Ali reflected on what she learned through the Climate Justice League experience, she shared that her students gained empathy through roleplaying. Students expressed wanting more real-world learning experiences where they are able to get out in their community and make positive change to combat food scarcity and other social justice issues (e.g. income inequality). Her students also experienced deeper learning beyond the classroom because they were so interested in the real-world applications; they sought out additional learning opportunities through research at the public library outside of their school day. For additional details and to see the student work samples, see Ali's [presentation](#).

Chris shared about her participation in the [OSPI Fellows Network](#) and Summer English Language Arts (ELA) Collaborative. Through those programs, she collaborated over the summer with teachers across the state to learn more about culturally responsive teaching and to develop lessons for the ELA classroom with a culturally responsive, antiracist, and anti-bias lens.

She also shared that she is intentionally seeking out to include in her instruction examples of non-dominant cultures through intentional selection of texts. For example, she has utilized The New York Times [The 1619 Project](#) (intentionally selected because it is controversial) as well as Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC) writers to examine their experiences of the U.S. Students discuss whose stories are told and whose stories are missing in each text analysis.

Christina explained her understanding of the differences between Culturally Responsive Teaching vs. antibias/antiracist pedagogy vs. Social Justice Pedagogy, and why they all matter. For instance, for antibias/antiracist pedagogy, there is a focus on her own personal reflection and growth plus curriculum and content:

- As a teacher, read and reflect on her own identity and biases.
- For text selection, highlight voices of underrepresented voices and BIPOC writing. Example: "Idea of America" by Black journalist and Author Nikole Hannah-Jones.
- For text selection, increase use of texts that tell a counter-narrative to the dominant culture "Idea of America" as a counter-narrative to "Declaration of Independence" (Important to offer a counter-narrative about the contributions of BIPOC people).

The goal of culturally responsive teaching is using our knowledge of how the brain works and makes sense of the world (through culture) as a tool to increase student learning (per Zaretta Hammond's book, *Culturally Responsive Teaching and the Brain*). For additional details, see Christina's [presentation](#).

Ali and Christina also took questions from work group members:

- How are your block period courses graded?
 - They show up on the transcript as two separate classes/grades.
- Have you found resistance from students or parents of students who feel the content of both classes are against their values and/or belief system?
 - In any other year I might have, but I haven't received pushback this year in this current climate. But I know I would have administrative support if I did experience any—and having that support is critical to being able to engage in culturally responsive instruction.
- What are the demographics of your students and staff? Where are you getting your professional development/who is paying for it? I am also curious about how you "true up" what you are reading about the experiences of people of color?
 - Ali: My school is not very diverse. Regarding where I am receiving professional development—primarily has been through the [Climate Justice League](#) project which

included 15-20 people in our cohort. The [ClimeTime legislative proviso](#) provided the funding and additional professional development.

- Chris: I have received a lot of professional development through the OSPI Fellows Network and PSESD; however, I have also spent about \$1,200 out of pocket investing in my own learning around these issues. The diversity that my school does have is largely brought in because of the technology industry—we have a primarily white student body, some Asian and native students, but a much smaller share of Hispanic and Black students. Our AP classes include a lot of immigrant students (only 6 Latinx and one Black student in the last few years), and the students generally come from a pretty high socioeconomic background. We are trying to intentionally encourage students from systemically marginalized groups to try AP classes, and focus on the fact that part of an AP class is learning how to learn.
- How do you assess student learning? How do you think your classes will help to close the opportunity gap? Do you involve families/communities in these classes?
 - Ali: I advise a group of students called GreenTeam, and we include a lot of community involvement through this group. I am hopeful my instruction through the Climate Justice League Project will close the opportunity gap by giving students a different way to engage in their learning.
 - Christina: Assessing student learning is constant in our current climate and includes a lot of informal assessments as well as student self-assessment. Regarding the opportunity gap, one of the things we did in our AP recruitment last year is intentionally seek out students who don't see themselves as strong writers by reaching out to individual students and focusing on their growth opportunities. I send home "What are your hopes for your student? How can you help me be the best teacher for your student?" Calling students and parents and saying here's what I'm seeing—here's what this student is doing, here's this brilliant thing they wrote really helps me engage with our families.

2:00-2:30 Fostering a Culturally Responsive School Climate: WEA's Professional Development Efforts

Ben Ibale, Human and Civil Rights Coordinator, Washington Education Association

Ben shared several [research takeaways](#) from Dr. Joseph Johnson, including that "high performing public urban schools that outperform state standards create a belief and school culture where both students and staff feel valued and respected." The goal of WEA training efforts is to increase hope and resiliency in our students through caring, adult relationships. The mistake most districts fall into when operationalizing equity is saying we need an equity plan or policy so let's just adopt one and then we're done. If you don't go to each staff member and say do you believe racial justice is a moral obligation/what's your why/what do you believe about Black Lives Matter/how does your belief drive how your students respond to you/do you believe we have to change the system? That is where we have to start with every staff member in every school. You can't adopt a policy until you've had conversations with every staff member. Can you have race explicit conversations in your daily work regarding why this group of students is struggling, etc.? Individual efficacy is fantastic, but collective efficacy to operationalize equity through visualizing, normalizing, organizing, and then operationalizing equity is how we move forward with equitable systems change.

Our educators are so over-tasked (e.g. graduation and academic requirements, tests and curriculum) that they can't focus on relationships with their students. Students are negotiating their identity between tasks and relationships—students cannot further their own identity if they don't have a relationship with their teachers. The relationship is the cultural soil (tasks are the technical seed).

WEA has 150 certificated trainers. It is a train the trainer model: WEA trains a handful of people who then train the rest of the district. For example, Central Kitsap is on a five-year plan—they have equity teams and have 17 trainers trained by WEA to be equity leaders in their own district. Currently WEA has trained about 15,000 educators. The goal of the training is to help educators equip students to have the skills to create authentic relationships with people who are different than them. This is one of the most powerful tools we can use to combat implicit bias.

Ben was asked: How would you see this, specifically, as part of mastery-based learning for students? What recommendations do you have for this committee?

He shared that in order for something to be sustainable, you need buy-in from staff. Working with the staff you have to cultivate the experts within the building. Focus on relationships first and develop strategies with the building leadership. This can lead to students and staff creating authentic relationships across differences.

2:30-2:45 Public Comment

No public comment was received at this meeting.

2:45-3:40 Discussion of Draft Report Outline

Work group members engaged in a discussion on several big topics in the report:

- Regarding Aurora Institute’s updated definition for competency-based education:
 - The report needs to clearly distinguish what was in the ESSHB 1599 legislation versus what is in Aurora Institute’s definition. (Note: also need to attribute the ESSHB 1599 reference to a broader group of policymakers that came together to create the original definition).
 - Members agreed to revisit this discussion at the October meeting. In preparation for the discussion, Alissa will send out the Aurora Institute report that explains why they updated their definition.
- Regarding the recommendation to Engage Families: more discussion might be needed here as well. A suggestion was made to add the words “proactive and early” into this recommendation.
- Regarding professional development for educators:
 - The draft report outline currently does not include a recommendation around this (beyond what is needed to support HSBP). Although work group members have discussed at multiple meetings the importance of educator professional development to support MBL implementation—further discussion is needed at the October meeting to decide what exactly the recommendation is around this topic.
- Members do agree with the recommendation to extend the work group, with a primary focus of developing a state Profile of a Graduate (as well as any related recommendations for supporting implementation of MBL).
 - There was also a suggestion made that the Profile of a Graduate somehow incorporate cultural responsiveness that members heard at today’s meeting.
- Kathe shared more about her idea that we should include a recommendation for a practitioner group to be convened.
 - If this was done, then there would be shared, common resources available that educators could turn to if they are interested in this work. She has been asking OSPI content leads to think about what MBL would look like. A practitioner group would show here is the way that MBL could be done.

3:40-3:55 Discussion: Debrief the Day

Members reflected that we have to grapple more with how what we heard today from the presenters can be integrated into MBL and the work we are doing.

3:55-4:00 Next Steps

Kory suggested the idea of breaking up the report into several sections and having the opportunity to discuss it in small groups before the October 22 meeting. Alissa will send out these assignments soon. The next version of the draft report will be sent to work group members on October 15 and discussing this document will be the primary focus of the October 22 meeting.

Alissa also shared that Aurora Institute is offering their virtual conference free of charge this year. It is Oct. 26-28: <https://aurora-institute.org/symposium2020/>

4:00 Adjourn