

**WE HAVE TO DO**

**S O M E T H I N G**

**D I F F E R E N T**

DISCUSSION GUIDE



TEACHING SYSTEMS LAB

# Building Strong Relationships

“Students have to know who I am and where I come from. If I want them to be their full selves, I have to show them my full self.... At the core of it, all learning is about relationships.”

-Neema Avashia | McCormack Middle School, Massachusetts

Neema2

## What did you see?

- What specific practices for building strong relationships did you see in the film?

## What's already happening?

- How are students and faculty bringing their full selves to your school each day? How are educators building strong relationships with students, in and out of the classroom?

## Now what?

- What practices for building strong, authentic relationships would you like to bring into your context?

# Taking an Individualized Approach for Equity

“Everybody needs something different, and it’s my job to figure out what that is.”

-Ronnie Moore | Purdue Polytechnic High School, Indiana

Still Image

## What did you see?

- How did the teachers featured in the film “gather clues” about what their individual students needed? How did they use those clues to support students?

## What’s already happening?

- What individualized supports for students already exist in your school? Which students could be receiving more support?

## Now what?

- What practices for gathering clues and supporting students could you borrow for your own classroom or school?

# Representing All Students in the Curriculum

“When you read something that you see yourself in, it’s exciting. Because it means that, number one, your instructor thinks that experience is valuable because they decided to include it.”

-Sydney Dotson | PSI High, Florida

sidney2

## What did you see?

- How did the teachers in the film work to ensure that their students felt represented in the curriculum? Which practices resonated with you the most?

## What’s already happening?

- How are students represented in the curriculum at your school through classes/projects/texts/etc.? Which students are not currently represented?

## Now what?

- How might you make changes to your curriculum to make sure all students are represented? What practices from the film might you borrow?

# Bringing Awareness of Real-World Issues

“If we have any chance, then our adults in our buildings need to be aware, comfortable talking about racial equity and then be able to embed that into some of their practices.”

-Colin Rose | Boston Public Schools, Massachusetts

Colin

## What did you see?

- How did the teachers in film confront real-world injustices, biases, and struggles in the classroom? How did they equip students to work to solve those problems?

## What's already happening?

- How is your school discussing “the hard stuff” (like race and racism) with students? What supports exist for these challenging conversations?

## Now what?

- What real-world challenges are your students facing? How can you help your students confront those challenges in your classroom or school?

# Centering the Student and Community Context

“What’s the fire in your belly? What is it that motivates you? Oftentimes, that goes back to [the students’] roots.”

-Lillian Hsu | Latitude High School, California

Still Image

## What did you see?

- How did the projects and lessons in the film build on students’ roots and lived experiences? How did different disciplines accomplish this goal?

## What’s already happening?

- How does your school invite students to bring their roots and lived experiences into the classroom? How is the curriculum rooted in the local context?

## Now what?

- What ideas can you bring back to your classroom and school? How might your curriculum build on students’ roots and lived experiences?

# Highlighting Students' Assets

"Ninth and tenth graders are great at listing their deficits to you. I don't want to give them any more ammunition... As soon as I see a nugget of brilliance in them, I accuse them of it a lot."

-Angela Daniel | PSI High, Florida

Still Image

## What did you see?

- How did the teachers in the film work to ensure that their students felt represented in the curriculum? Which practices resonated with you the most?

## What's already happening?

- How do you celebrate students' strengths? How do you balance this asset mindset with identifying gaps in students' skills and knowledge to help them learn?

## Now what?

- How can you highlight students' strengths every day, particularly for those students who often hear about their deficits? What practices from the film might you implement?

## A Call To Action

“We hope that the teachers in this film have inspired you to choose one thing that you can do today to help our schools be something different for students.”

-Justin Reich | MIT's Teaching Systems Lab

Still Image

### Now what?

- Justin ends the film with a Someday/Monday challenge. Our schools are filled with systemic problems that we can't fix immediately, but this film is filled with strategies that you can use in your own school today. What is one “Monday” change that you can make in your classroom or school tomorrow? How do you hope it will help your students learn?



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# NEXT STEPS

- **[Insert any technology platform where people can share their “Monday” changes.]**
- **[Insert any further opportunities to discuss the film and/or equity issues.]**
- **[Insert contact information for any relevant personnel whom people can contact to continue talking about the themes raised in the film.]**