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Introduction

A word as to the education of the heart. We don't believe that this can be imparted through books; it can only be imparted through the loving touch of the teacher.

—Cesar Chavez

It was a Star Trek moment and I was in a parallel universe. I (Kathryn) had just completed a Teaching and Learning Tour, described in detail in Chapter 5, in which I took a group of high school teachers and administrators into several of their colleagues' classrooms as a professional development activity. The goal of this activity was to encourage reflective practice by having teachers and administrators use their colleagues' classrooms as a laboratory to observe instruction, looking for levels of Active Cognitive Engagement, also discussed in Chapter 5. It was not an evaluative activity. The participants were not supposed to judge the quality of the teachers' instruction; we weren't in the classrooms long enough to determine that. The participants were to look specifically at the percentage of students whom they had evidence were actively engaged in thinking about the learning objective. This could be demonstrated in numerous ways, but there needed to be empirical evidence that demonstrated students were thinking about the objective. This evidence could be responses on dry erase boards; it could be group work in which all the students were equally contributing; it could be experiments being conducted in a science lab, and so forth. It could not be students passively sitting as only one or two students raised their hands and offered answers to teacher generated questions.

Prior to this activity, I had discussed with the teachers and administrators the goals of the Teaching and Learning Tours and the concept of Active Cognitive Engagement. I had, also, explicitly explained that this was a professional development activity to enhance personal reflection, not an evaluative activity to judge their colleagues. Each participant was given a reflective guide to complete during the observation. We observed

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several classrooms, and after each 5- or 10-minute observation, we would go into the hallway and debrief about our observations. One of the questions on the reflective guide was, “What is the percentage of Active Cognitive Engagement?” The participants were asked to actually compute the percentage of students that they had evidence were thinking about the learning objective. In other words, were students engaged in discussion, were they performing an experiment, were they solving problems, were they creating models, and so forth. Nearly all the teachers and administrators who went on the tour indicated high percentages of student engagement. They were aware of the students who were obviously not engaged, the ones who were asleep or doing something completely off task. But, for the most part, they believed the majority of students that were compliant were engaged. However, what I saw was very low levels of engagement. We were in parallel universes. I was having a completely different experience than the others.

I couldn’t understand how this was happening. We had discussed the use of the reflective form; I’d explained the purpose of the tour; and I had defined and given examples of Active Cognitive Engagement. How could we see what was going on in the classrooms so differently? They saw students who, for the most part, were well behaved, listening, and responding to the teacher. I saw students sitting in their desks looking at the teacher. I heard a couple of students call out answers to the teachers’ questions. I saw teachers answering most of their own questions. But I did not see evidence of high levels of student engagement. I wondered if this is how the teachers participating in the tour experienced their own classroom. Did they look at their students and interpret compliance, sitting and looking at the teacher, as engagement? Did the administrators think this was engagement? Did they think that because one or two students answered a question correctly that everyone in the class was understanding what was being taught? Did they think that when they reviewed the students’ algebra homework and worked the problems on the interactive whiteboard and then asked, “Any questions? Do you get this?” that all the students really did “get this”? Did they know at the end of each lesson who did or did not understand what was being taught? It’s easy to assume that students are really with us. Often it’s not until a formal assessment that we realize some students were not with us. By this time, it is often too late, a gap has opened or grown wider. Moreover, according to national and state assessment data, the students we are not successfully engaging are students of color and those living in poverty.

Back to the Enterprise and the question, “Why couldn’t these teachers and administrators see the lack of engagement in the classrooms we were observing?” It seemed so obvious to me. I realized that I was an outsider

and not as deeply invested in the relationships with the teachers on this campus. I was far enough removed that when I observed the teachers, I didn't really see myself. These teachers did not represent me. I was no longer a K–12 teacher or administrator, so I no longer felt a strong professional identification with the teachers we were observing as a member of their profession. However, the teachers and administrators seemed to see their colleagues' classrooms and identify with them. They looked for the positive, which addressed the first question on the reflective form—"If this were your classroom, what would you be proud of?" They had much to say about the good things going on in the classroom. However, when it came to the question, "What is the percentage of students that are actively cognitively engaged," they just couldn't see the lack of evidence that students were really thinking about what was being taught. Most students were merely sitting and looking at the teacher, while other students were engaged in discussion with the teacher. Merely observing this compliant behavior was not sufficient to determine how many students were truly engaged. At this point, I realized that if it was difficult for the teachers to see this lack of engagement in other teachers' classrooms, it was probably extremely difficult for them to see it in their own classrooms. As the cliché goes, it's hard to see the forest for the trees.

We continued on with the Teaching and Learning Tours, moving from classroom to classroom and debriefing after each. Most of the teachers and administrators began to see that although they thought students were engaged, they really didn't have any evidence to be certain the students were engaged. I was encouraged, but I worried that although the teachers were beginning to see inequities in the level of engagement in other teachers' classrooms, this might not transfer over into their own. Thinking about my own experience as a K–12 teacher and now as a professor teaching master's and doctoral students, I could attest to the difficulty of ensuring that all students are engaged. I often get on a roll and assume my students are with me. In fact, my experiences working with K–12 schools, auditing for equity, has pushed me to audit my own teaching for equity. In fact, Linda and I try out and incorporate the strategies we suggest within this book in our own university classrooms, and we have had great success improving the engagement level of our students.

At the end of the day, I got in the car and called Linda, as I often do, to share the experience and engage in a little peer debriefing. I explained that at first I was completely baffled when the teachers and administrators didn't see what I had seen—the parallel universe. Then, I was encouraged that as we went into more classrooms, the teachers and administrators began to see the inequity in engagement—that all the students were not engaged, or at least we couldn't determine whether they were engaged or

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not. I also expressed my concern that, although this had been a good start, I was concerned that the learning might not transfer into the classroom. Moreover, I explained that as the teachers and administrators began to see the inequity in engagement, they wanted to know what the teachers could do to engage the students. They wanted strategies. I told Linda that if we ever wrote another book, it should be one for teachers, one that takes equity audits into the classroom, because that's where the real difference is made for students. Well, several years later, after much more collaboration with teachers and administrators, we have an equity auditing book for teachers. Not everything in this book will work for everyone. Context is paramount. However, we hope that you find an idea or an auditing tool within this book that you can incorporate into your teaching or that will inspire you to create your own tools to ensure that your classroom is equitable and excellent.

A BRIEF OVERVIEW OF OUR WORK ON EQUITY AUDITS

We, along with our colleague Jim Scheurich, have been working for over a decade to employ equity audits as a tool for improving schools and school districts. Jim and Linda, along with Juanita Garcia and Glen Nolly, introduced the concept of equity auditing in schools in their article "Equity Audits: A Practical Leadership Tool for Developing Equitable and Excellent Schools" in *Educational Administration Quarterly* (2004). This article generated an enormous amount of interest in equity audits, so much so that a chapter was dedicated to equity audits in Jim and Linda's first book for Corwin, *Leadership for Equity and Excellence Creating High-Achievement Classrooms, Schools, and Districts* (2003).

One chapter, though, was not enough. District and school leaders, along with professors in educational leadership programs, wanted more specific and practical applications of equity audits. This interest led to the second book on equity audits, *Using Equity Audits to Create Equitable and Excellent Schools*. By this time, I was a professor, having left public education, where I had worked as a teacher and principal for over 25 years. I joined Linda and Jim as a coauthor of the second book. This second book met with great success, and we began to use equity audits in our work with schools and school districts throughout the nation and beyond. Although this work was helping to improve schools and school districts, it was not specifically meeting the needs of individual teachers. This, the third book in the series, directly addresses auditing for equity and excellence in the classroom. To help the reader who may not have read the previous books, all of these books are based on the concept that high-quality

teaching combined with programmatic equity leads to academic achievement equity. (See Figure 4.3 in Chapter 4 for a graphic representation of this concept.)

To further explain, we define a high-quality teacher as one who has an equity consciousness and excellent teaching skills (see chapters 2 and 3). Programs, which we define broadly, such as special education and even discipline, are equitable when there is not a disproportionate number of students from any population group represented within a program (see chapters 5–8). For example, if 30% of a school population is white students, white students should not compose 60% of the gifted and talented students. This is a disproportionate number of students from one population group represented within the gifted and talented program. Last, we consider equity in academic achievement to have been attained when all students, regardless of race, gender, economic level, and so forth, achieve at high levels. In other words, there is no achievement gap.

PREVIEWS OF CHAPTERS 2–9

The chapters in this book are divided into two sections. The first section (chapters 2–4) focuses on the conceptual and historical framework for this work. This section lays out our explanation of equitable and excellent teaching, including equity consciousness and high-quality teaching skills, as well as the history of equity audits that led to our use of this tool to improve school districts, schools, and classrooms. The second section (chapters 5–9) concentrates on specific areas to address when auditing within the classroom for equity and excellence. In this section we provide specific strategies for teachers to use to ensure that they are teaching well all of their students. A brief preview of the content of each chapter follows.

Section I: Conceptual and Historical Frameworks

Chapter 2

In this chapter, we introduce the two aspects of equitable and excellent teaching that research (both our own and a considerable body of work conducted by other scholars) has consistently identified as important factors in classrooms and schools that are successful with diverse students. These two aspects are *equity consciousness* and *high-quality teaching skills*.

Chapter 3

Chapter 3 focuses on the qualities of an equitable and excellent classroom. Although this chapter is about the classroom, we include an

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example of an equitable and excellent school to demonstrate what can happen when classroom instruction meets the needs of all students. Included is a Classroom Equity Assessment you can use to determine the level of equity within your classroom.

Chapter 4

This chapter concludes Section I by offering a historical look at equity audits. Included are equity audits in international settings and equity audits in U.S. education. In regard to U.S. education, we discuss civil rights auditing, curriculum audits, and accountability audits. We conclude this chapter by explaining the equity audit tool and the ways we have used this in schools.

Section II: Equity Auditing in the Classroom

Chapter 5

We begin the second section, which covers auditing in the classroom, by discussing auditing for teaching and learning. We begin by briefly reviewing the research on teaching and learning and then introduce the concepts of *Active Cognitive Engagement* and *Zone of Self-Efficacy*. We believe for students to learn they must be actively cognitively engaged and be in the teacher's Zone of Self-Efficacy. Additionally, we offer an equity tool—Teaching and Learning Tour—that we find useful both in determining the level of Active Cognitive Engagement in a classroom and identifying which students are in or out of the Zone of Self-Efficacy.

Chapter 6

In this chapter, we discuss auditing for discipline. We begin with a review of the research on discipline disproportionality, that is, the extent to which students in a given subgroup may be subject to behavioral discipline more often than students in other subgroups. This is followed by examples of discipline disproportionality. We conclude by providing three tools to audit your classroom disciplinary practices. These include a reflective survey, a discipline record, and a family communication chart.

Chapter 7

Next we examine auditing for parental involvement. Again, we start with the review of the literature, focusing now on parental or family involvement. Then, we address in more detail the six broad categories of findings in this research. These include a sense of welcome, misconceptions among stakeholders, use of and issues related to resources, home context and student performance, program structures, and roles of

those involved in school-family connections. We conclude by offering a Classroom Parental Involvement Inventory to assist you in auditing for parental involvement.

Chapter 8

The last auditing category we address is programmatic equity. In this chapter we provide examples of the types of programs that should be audited and strategies that can be used to audit these programs. The programs we chose to address include advanced placement, gifted and talented, and special education. We provide a literature review that addresses issues of inequity in each of these programs followed by examples that illustrate these inequities. As we did in the other chapters in this section, we offer an auditing tool to address equity in each of the three programs we focus on.

Chapter 9

In our concluding chapter we pull all the pieces together by reviewing and summarizing each of the main concepts we have addressed.

CHAPTER CONCLUSION

Whereas our previous work has focused on district- and school-level audits, the goal of this book is to take audits to the classroom. We believe teachers are the ones who most impact student learning. Moreover, we understand that you cannot have equitable and excellent districts or schools unless there are equitable and excellent classrooms. We believe the auditing tools we offer in this text can provide teachers with usable classroom strategies to improve excellence and equity, which will improve schools, school districts, and education in general in the United States. It's time all our students have the quality education they deserve.