



Upcoming Professional Learning Opportunities

We are pleased to share some of our upcoming planning with you and hope you can join us in the learning conversations on upcoming **Twitter chats**, or our **March Virtual Panel** discussion or an **April Article Debrief** that will be offered. All of us are learning to communicate more effectively using virtual tools. No doubt virtual learning will continue to influence our learning and student learning environments for a long time to come.

Click on the Image to ACCESS the article below.



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Article Review: Connections bring us closer to Equity and Justice

by Ellie Drago-Severson, Jessica Blum-Destefano and Deborah Brooks-Lawrence

(October, 2020, The learning professional, Vol. 41, No. 5):

In the context of education in the midst of a pandemic, the concept of teaming is as important as ever. While more voices on school and community teams heard will help us get closer to truly antiracist learning environments, we must recognize that our own biases and aspects of privilege can get in the way. The article under review suggests that the concept of teaming needs to be examined with a more critical lens.

The Learning Forward article that we are showcasing in this Newsbrief asks us to consider new ways of thinking about teaming in the light of seeking a better understanding of meeting equity goals. As a principal quoted in the article suggests:

“Teams are critical now and can serve as integral spaces of planning, connection and advocacy for social justice, broadly defined. Yet educators enter into pressing conversations about equity, race, identity, culture, and the health and well-being of the community from a wide range of starting places”.

The authors ask an essential question: “How can teams—and the people who compose them—grow together and forward together toward more equitable action and understanding?” The article goes on to discuss the usefulness of a Courageous Conversations Strategy and Protocol developed by Glenn Singleton (2014). The protocol includes a commitment to embrace Four Agreements or Courageous Conversations which aim to value openness, honesty and relative safety. Glenn Singleton’s book outlines this protocol in detail and is a valuable resource.

The article goes on to discuss the value of a constructive-developmental continuum in helping to map the internal progression adults go through towards greater self-understanding and greater meaning about the difficult work of dismantling barriers and seeking true equity in our schools. The article offers a chart continuum to consider different ways of knowing and teaming for change. The intention behind the research and the article is to understand that teaming can be strengthened if the work

of understanding different lenses that educators bring to their work and students bring to our classroom is brought into the mix.

As those of us who have worked in education for many years understand, at the heart of this work is the foundation of all change work - relationships. Strategies are discussed in the article which enhance team interconnection and a stronger sense of mutuality. Strategy examples include:

- *Checking in individually and collectively about expectations regarding proposed collaborative work. What are participant hopes for the work?*
- *Generating plans, norms and agreements - setting a clear plan for team time can optimize conditions for growth.*

Finally the authors ask us to consider some questions in our reflections about teaming:

- *What is one thing you value about your team?*
- *What is one thing you'd like your team to be better at?*
- *How has the shift to virtual team meetings been going for you?*
- *What is one insight or take away from the article?*
- *What is your next step?*

What learning processes will achieve more equitable outcomes for all students?

This is an essential question for all of us. Equity Drivers are discussed as one of 10 new draft standards for Learning Forward (We are an affiliate of this larger organization):

Equity Drivers: Educators reflect individually and collectively to identify and address their own biases, support and collaborate with diverse colleagues, and cultivate beliefs, knowledge and behaviours that accelerate ambitious outcomes for all educators and students.

Equity drivers are seen as one of the four “transformational processes” along with evidence, learning designs and implementation.

In the discussion paper regarding this transformation process, the following essential actions are proposed to achieve more equitable results. As you read them, reflect on what needs to be better understood in your own working/learning environment:

- (1) Develop a deep understanding of our unique social, cultural, economic and political context for learning.
- (2) Engage in individual and collective reflection on bias and privilege and how it operates often unconsciously in various educational, social, cultural, racial and political contexts.
- (3) Examine and name stereotypes, bias and the institutional structures and policies that drive behaviour related to inequity.
- (4) Enable and facilitate shifts in mindsets about the need for asset-based approaches to teaching as well as inclusive and equitable learning designs and practices.
- (5) Learning about culturally sustaining and anti-racist ideas and strategies, hold themselves to measurable outcomes that reflect their practices and build capacity for self and colleagues to engage in equity focused professional learning conversations, including giving and receiving feedback.
- (6) Plan and engage in professional learning related to culturally sustaining pedagogy, affirming instructional practices, relationship -building strategies, and multiple learning designs that increase access to learning for adults and students.

Equity drivers is one area of 10 new draft standards for Learning Forward.

Why not join us in unpacking what these drivers mean and how we can use these drivers to move towards better outcomes for all students through supporting educators. Please let us know if you would like to join this non-profit voluntary professional learning organization at membership@learningforwardontario.ca

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LEARNING
RE-IMAGINED



A Learning Forward Ontario Virtual Panel Discussion

How can our COVID hybrid/virtual experiences today help us reimagine teaching and learning for tomorrow?

Join us for an informative evening focused on Virtual/Hybrid Learning & Digital Pedagogy.

When: Wednesday, March 24th, 2021.

Time: 7:00 p.m. - 8:30 p.m.

Who: Educators, Elementary & Secondary Classroom Teachers, Administrators, Educational Consultants, join us!

Where: Online via Zoom

How: Registration begins on EventBrite starting on **March 1st.**

Cost: \$5.00

Visit our website for updates and details related to this virtual event.

www.learningforwardontario.ca

[#learnfwdON](https://twitter.com/learnfwdON)

Meet our Learning Re:Imagined Virtual Panelists

Virtual Panel Discussion Panelist Profiles

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VIRTUAL PANEL DISCUSSION PANELIST SPOTLIGHT



Michelle Parrish

@MProom31

Michelle Parrish is the Blended Learning and Digital Skills Curriculum Support teacher at Keewatin-Patricia District School Board. She enjoys learning and leading with colleagues both within her board and beyond. Although Michelle works in a central role, she often draws on her experience as a classroom teacher to ensure focus remains on the individual learner. Over the last decade, she has developed a keen interest in technology-enabled instruction and its relationship to global competencies. She enjoys reading, travel and spending time with family and friends.

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This event will take place on Wednesday, March 24th, 2021. 7:00-8:30 p.m.

LEARNING FORWARD ONTARIO



VIRTUAL PANEL DISCUSSION PANELIST SPOTLIGHT



Patrick Sefa


@Mr_P_Sefa

I am a Ghanaian born, Canadian raised educator who lives in the beautifully diverse city of Toronto. Currently, I am an Itinerant Teacher on the Behaviour Regional Services Team in the Toronto District School Board (TDSB). I am passionate about the capacity building work I do within the board to support staff and students which centers around anti-oppressive education and providing students with equitable opportunities to be successful within the system. I am a music enthusiast, a soccer fanatic and a proud father of my soon to be 7 year old son.

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Virtual Panel Discussion Panelist Profiles

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**VIRTUAL PANEL DISCUSSION
PANELIST SPOTLIGHT**



Bernadette Smith @B_ernadette

Bernadette Smith is currently the Regional Principal for the Elementary Virtual School in the York Region District School Board. As an innovative educational leader, she has navigated through the role of Principal for the past 15 years in the YRDSB; has recently completed a secondment as an Education Officer at the Ministry of Education with the System Planning, Research and Innovation Division and is a designer and course instructor for OPC. Through her collaborative leadership practices with staff, families, and community partners, she has been committed to deepening student engagement to promote equitable outcomes for underserved and underperforming students and building the capacity and consciousness of educators and leaders to create inclusive learning and working environments that are affirming of diverse social identities and voices.

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Register Now for this Event: [Learning Re:Imagined Panel Discussion](#)

LEARNING FORWARD ONTARIO



**VIRTUAL PANEL DISCUSSION
PANELIST SPOTLIGHT**



Zack Teitel @ZackTeitel

When Zack Teitel isn't riding unicorn-cats with his daughter or complaining to his wife about how his knees just aren't the same anymore, he's usually thinking about ways he can make school more meaningful. Zack's been a public high-school teacher for 10 years and recently became the Department Head of English at Unionville High School in the YRDSB. As both a teacher and department head, he strives to work with a pedagogical frame that centers both equity and student voice. Zack has never been more excited about working in education than he is now. He thinks that the current generation of students are poised to change the world for the better, and he hopes that a stop in his classroom can help them to do so.

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Learning Forward Ontario- Website

We invite you to visit our Learning Forward Ontario Website for all the latest information and updates. Be sure to check it out at www.learningforwardontario.ca



Contact Us

If you have thoughts to share or questions, please email us at: membership@learningforwardontario.ca

Our Monthly Twitter Chats

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We invite you to join our monthly #LearnfwdON twitter chats. They are held on the **second Monday of each month**. Be sure to check the website for more details, and follow @LearningFwdON on Twitter where we will post topics and questions prior to the chat.

Upcoming Twitter Chat:

Monday March 8th, 2021 Topic: [What is Key to Sticky P.D.?](#)

Monday, April 2th, 2021 Topic: [Teacher Leadership](#)

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