



HERE WE GO

Suzanne Bouffard

Multiple perspectives shine a bright light on equity

Producing a magazine takes real collaboration — not just to share the workload, but to generate ideas and combine multiple perspectives. That collaboration is what makes the work rewarding for us and useful for you. Learning professionals know how important collaboration is for broadening the lens beyond personal experience and challenging the status quo.

For this issue, I was fortunate to collaborate with guest editors Jill Harrison Berg and Sonia Caus Gleason on a topic that underlies all of our work and confronts the status quo head-on: educational equity.

Gleason and Berg are both long-time Learning Forward members and contributors to our publications. Their perspectives and expertise have expanded our thinking formally and informally, and I'm delighted that you'll have the opportunity to benefit from their wisdom as well.

As authors in this issue point out, equity is a goal everyone seems to get behind in theory, but few have yet to realize. Even defining equity is complex. Stories can help us understand equity, and so can data. Images can be illuminating, too. Angus Maguire from the Center for Story-based Strategy shares with us a tool for redesigning the now-familiar graphic depicting the difference between equity and equality (p. 72).

To help all of us take the first steps and then the next steps to achieving

equity, our guest editors have curated a set of articles for the Focus section that address both the big picture of why equity matters and the nuts and bolts of how to get there. The strategies and examples the authors share highlight the fact that this work must occur on multiple levels.

Glenn Singleton (p. 28) writes about equity as “an unapologetically top-down process” that requires leadership at the highest levels. Not incongruously, though, Bill Bigelow and Linda Christensen (p. 48) share their experience promoting equity from the ground up by engaging teachers in a “democratic and social justice-oriented vision of professional learning.”

Joaquin Noguera and Pedro Noguera (p. 44) bridge these two ends of the spectrum, calling for a system of mutual accountability in which all education stakeholders demand from one another attention to equity.

To work toward equity, we need to be reflective, transparent, and vulnerable. We must examine our beliefs and implicit biases, both as individuals and as members of teams and larger systems. On pp. 66-68, Berg and Gleason provide a tool for asking the tough questions and taking the next steps to do that. Throughout the issue, authors detail how to create spaces for engaging in these conversations with colleagues that are both safe and productive. Discussions about race, class, gender, and ability are unquestionably difficult, but



unequivocally important.

This issue is neither the beginning nor the end of Learning Forward's commitment to promoting equity through professional learning. As Stephanie Hirsh and Fred Brown explain on p. 8, the board of trustees recently revised our organizational vision statement to make our commitment to equity more explicit to all of our stakeholders.

We hope this issue challenges your beliefs and assumptions, stretches your strategies, and helps you reaffirm your own commitment to ensuring that each and every child can access excellent teaching and learning every day.

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