

Jeremy's Journal

Practice Space Facilitator's Guide

from **Becoming a More Equitable Educator: Mindsets and Practices**

MIT's Teaching Systems Lab



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Welcome to Jeremy's Journal Facilitator's Guide!

This is a guide to help you facilitate Jeremy's Journal practice space, a digital scenario developed by the Teaching Systems Lab to help teachers rehearse typical and challenging classroom moments.

In this scenario, participants will experience a simulation focused on the work products and classroom behaviors of a single student.

The goal of this activity is to guide educators in a conversation about the Equity and Equality Educator Mindsets. Participants will talk about the multiple factors that might impact students, the roles of teachers in the classroom, and the concept of shared responsibility when addressing student performance.

We believe that mindsets like Equity and Equality are often out of balance in schools, and hope that conversations and activities like these will help us begin to rebalance these mindsets. To learn more about the Educator Mindsets access our online course, [Becoming a More Equitable Educator: Practices and Mindsets](#) or watch [this video](#) by instructor Richard Milner.

The practice space should take between 60-90 minutes.

In this guide you'll find the following sections...

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Getting Ready to Facilitate a Practice Space

Prepare yourself.

- Watch [this video](#) from instructor Justin Reich about facilitating practice spaces.
- Spend some time looking over the following documents. You'll need to be familiar with them to facilitate effectively.
 - The Jeremy's Journal [scenario](#) itself
 - i. For help navigating TeacherMoments, watch [this tutorial](#).
 - ii. Make sure to fill out the survey at the end (it's different from the one in the course); it helps us understand how people are using and sharing our materials.
 - The [Equity versus Equality Educator Mindset Table](#)
 - The [Debrief Guide](#) and Mindsets in the Practice Space [handout](#).
 - For more resources, see [Appendix A](#).

Schedule a time to meet

- We recommend planning 60-90 minutes to do the practice space with a group. A longer time will give you more time to debrief. If you have less than 60 minutes, consider asking participants to complete the practice space individually before meeting.
- If you are new to facilitating equity conversations, you may want to consider inviting a smaller group of colleagues before sharing with a larger audience.

Gather needed materials Each participant will need:

- a device with internet access to do the practice spaces. We find laptops and Chromebooks work best for TeacherMoments, while the platform doesn't work as well on mobile devices.
- a copy of the Equity versus Equality Mindset Table ([Handout 1](#))
- a copy of the Equity and Equality Handout ([Handout 2](#))

Facilitating the Practice Space

Before starting the Practice Space (5-10 minutes)

Facilitator Actions	Suggestions
Set up	Set out a copy of Handouts 1 and 2 for each participant, face down.
Once participants arrive, orient them and frame the simulation	Talk about what you're about to do and how it fits in with shared goals and challenges in your context.
Set norms and expectations	Share that practice spaces are great places to try out responses, take risks in a structured environment, and potentially make mistakes. Encourage participants to be open-minded and ready to listen and learn from the conversation.
Let them know about the practice space survey	Let them know there will be a survey at the end of the practice space, and encourage them to complete it - either during the workshop or afterwards if they run out of time. This survey is very helpful to us, because it helps us understand how people are using our materials.
Connect everyone to the practice space	Share link to Jeremy's Journal , and then troubleshoot as needed - On the login page, tell everyone to "continue anonymously" instead of logging in - See Appendix C for help troubleshooting

During the Practice Space Digital Scenario (30 minutes)

Note that you would skip this part if you chose to have participants do this section ahead of time

Facilitator Actions	Suggestions
Manage time	- Check in about time every ten minutes or so. 5-10 minutes before time is up, ask everyone to skip ahead to the page marked "Thursday," and encourage them to try to complete Thursday and the reflection questions. - Let them know it's OK if they don't complete the survey if they run out of time
Troubleshoot as needed	Walk around to see if participants have questions

- See Appendix C to troubleshoot.

Debrief Guide (20-40 minutes)

Facilitator Actions	Suggestions
1. Ask participants if they gave Jeremy the quiz or not, and why they made that decision.	Focus on why people choose to give the quiz or not, not just on their decision.
2. Ask participants to turn over Handout 1: Equity versus Equality Educator Mindset Table and briefly review it.	Draw their attention to two pairs of squares: - 1C / 4C - 1B / 4B
3. Pause a moment to read Handout 2: Mindsets in the Practice Space	Ask people for their thoughts after reading, and to locate their own responses along a spectrum of Equity versus Equality.
4. Ask participants: What role do you see yourself playing in Jeremy's academic achievement and success? To what extent does your reaction look like stepping into a mentorship role to support Jeremy?	We encourage participants to think of their role as akin to a mentor for Jeremy. This is a good place to also look at the 3A/6A squares on the Mindset Table. For time's sake, you may want to just gather a few answers here.
5. Ask participants: It's a common opinion that <i>"effort and sacrifice guarantees students will have opportunities to succeed."</i> What is your opinion on this statement? How might your opinion of the prior statement transfer to your instructional practice, with a student such as Jeremy, for example?	Remind participants of some of the factors that might get in the way of opportunities to succeed for some young people. See a sample response from an educator in the debrief tips below.
6. Connect to your own practice (if you haven't already)	If folks need a prompt: What connections can you make between this practice space and dilemmas you've faced as an educator?
7. Call to Action: Are there places you could experiment with bringing more	Examples of adding Equity aspects might be noticing outside factors inhibiting student

Equity-based reasoning in your practice?	learning, or being flexible/differentiating learning based on needs
Could you experiment with bringing more equity to bear in addressing the needs of one student in the coming weeks?	

Next Steps (5-10 minutes)

Facilitator Actions
Next Steps: How do you see Equity or Equality mindsets in action in your context?
What next steps might this group take together to continue to address these issues in your context?
Thank everyone for their time and encourage participants to fill out the survey at the end of the practice space if they haven't already.

Debrief Tips

1. As you talk about how people responded to Jeremy, you can probe by asking what people noticed about Jeremy during the week, what conclusions they drew from what they noticed, and how it impacted their decisions. Point out that teachers make thousands of decisions a day, and we all notice, reason and interpret differently. Opening up your mind to the possibility of different details being salient, or interpreting those details differently, is a great way to gain perspective, stretch your brain, and fight bias.
2. If participants are getting derailed by the specifics of the scenario, here are some ways to respond:
 - a. "Something in this scenario isn't realistic to my circumstances!" this is just a scenario, and the details won't all match with every participants' circumstances. For now, how can we use the scenario to talk about our own reasoning about students?
 - b. "I don't know enough about Jeremy!" There are often scenarios where we don't know that much about students, for example a student that transfers into a school in the middle of the year. You could ask people what they would want to know, or what they didn't see.
 - c. "A lot of the things to help Jeremy are things that needed to happen weeks ago!" This is often also true in real life - we realize that the best intervention for a student is something that we wish we'd done weeks ago - so the question is: what can we do now going forward?
3. As you talk about Equity and Equality, you could point out that in schools these mindsets are often out of balance, with lots of Equality reasoning - we want to think about how to bring more Equity reasoning.
4. If participants are expressing an Equality mindset, ask them to look at the first row of the mindset chart, and see if they could reframe their position using this orientation.

Appendices

Appendix A. Want to dig deeper as a facilitator?

- a. Watch a video of [educators debriefing](#) after doing Jeremy's Journal together
- b. Learn more about Equity and Equality Mindsets in [this video](#) from Richard Milner IV, professor of education at Vanderbilt University.

Appendix B. What are practice spaces?

- a. A practice space is an online scenario that allows you to explore an improvisational moment with students in a way that helps you stretch and grow. It allows you to try things and then reflect on how well they might work or how you reasoned about your decisions.
- b. Watch this [short video](#) to learn more about how we describe practice spaces in the Teaching Systems Lab.

Appendix C. Troubleshooting TeacherMoments

Watch [this video](#) for a tutorial on using TeacherMoments.

If you have any trouble with TeacherMoments, try the following:

- Make sure you have an updated browser, preferably Chrome ([instructions to download and install Chrome](#) AND Instructions to [update Chrome](#))
- Refresh your browser and try again
- Hard refresh your browser and try again ([instructions](#) on how to do hard refresh)
- If possible, we recommend going through TeacherMoments on a laptop or desktop. We've had better luck there than on smartphones.

If you forget your password:

- There is no password reset; just create a new account

If Teacher Moments is not loading, we have an [alternative version](#) which you can use if you cannot get TeacherMoments to work on your device.

If you run into any issues using TeacherMoments, we'd love to hear about it at equitymit503@gmail.com.

Appendix D. Handouts

Handout 1 - Educator Mindsets Table: Equity versus Equality

Scroll to the next page for a printable handout; click [here](#) for a digital version.

Navigating the chart: The chart can be read from left to right. Each mindset has orientations (common ideas or thought patterns), explanations of the orientations (describing the reason behind the thought patterns), and consequences that result from the mindset.

A Framework of Educator Mindsets and Consequences

EQUITY VERSUS EQUALITY

Mindset	Orientation	Explanation	Consequences
EQUITY	1A) Some students enjoy unearned privilege and some don't. This distorts achievement and success.	1B) Educators realize that structural injustices distort success, and that success is based on more than individual effort and ability.	1C) Fairness is related to individual needs, so marginalized students get high quality education with additional supports to achieve.
	2A) When I teach, I seek to recognize that students experience school differently due to structural inequities.	2B) Educators consider ways that societal structures disadvantage some students and privilege others.	2C) Educators identify individual needs and work in partnership with students to address them.
	3A) If students fail to perform academically, it is our shared responsibility.	3B) Educators play a role in helping students from all backgrounds and circumstances achieve.	3C) Student identity and demographics are central in supporting student academic achievement at the school policy level.
EQUALITY	4A) All students generally have equal opportunities to succeed with effort and sacrifice.	4B) Educators believe that students' achievements are based solely or mostly on their individual effort and ability.	4C) Fairness is equated with sameness, so marginalized students receive lower quality education without additional supports to achieve.
	5A) Student identity and background does not play a role in curriculum or teaching.	5B) Educators do not recognize how structural inequities related to demographic identity impacts the daily lives of students in the classroom.	5C) Instructional and curricular decisions do not address structural inequities related to demographic identities.
	6A) If students fail to perform academically, it's their responsibility.	6B) Educators see student background and identity as unrelated to decision making and school policy.	6C) Educators do not consider larger societal issues and barriers that may help address low student academic performance.

Adapted by the MIT TSL from R. Hilback and A. Green of USC Rossier School of Education, and derived from the work of Bartolome, 2008; Hancock, 2011; Milner, 2010; Pollock, 2008*



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Handout 2: Mindsets in the Practice Space- Jeremy's Journal

"As you think about the student success, I would encourage you to see a fair classroom not as one where every student receives the exact same support and attention, but where every single student receives the support and attention they individually need."

- Rich Milner, Professor of Education, Vanderbilt University

Equity-based reasoning

An equity point of view understands that a students' performance is often based on multiple factors, including what's happening outside the classroom. What we might perceive as ability or effort in the classroom might not be the whole story. An equity rationale might not have Jeremy take the quiz, focusing on learning and eventual mastery, rather than performing under pressure.

Equity mindset: "I would tell Jeremy that he does not have to take the test that day. After all, the point is for him to learn the material and it kinda doesn't matter exactly when."

An equity rationale might also mean giving Jeremy the quiz. For example, an instructor might give the quiz but not grade it, and use it as a chance to learn more about Jeremy's needs.

Equality-based reasoning

An Equality point of view emphasizes policies, and standards, and might reason that regardless of the situation, Jeremy needs to take the quiz just like everyone else. This could be to hold him accountable or simply out of a desire for fairness.

Equality mindset: "Take the quiz today. Regardless of the situation, he needs to take the quiz with everyone else. I don't want to embarrass him by explaining to others why he didn't take it, and I still don't know what's been really going on with him."

What goes into student success?

In the simulation, as in real life, there's so much we don't know about any given student that could be affecting their academic performance (home life, access to medical care, social embarrassment or a trusting relationship with the teacher). An Equity mindset doesn't just consider these factors, but attempts to learn and provide supports and solutions. An Equality mindset might focus only on individual effort, and assume that Jeremy's behavior indicates a lack of interest or ability.

Final thoughts

"Rather than thinking about these mindsets as pairs of absolutely good or absolutely bad, we want you to test out a hypothesis: that these mindsets are way out of balance in schools. [For example,] we have a bias towards equality, when our schools would benefit from bigger heapings of equity."

- Justin Reich, Director, MIT Teaching Systems Lab

If looking back on your responses, you think you brought Equality-based reasoning to your decision, we'd invite you to try out more Equity-based reasoning.

- Try noticing outside factors that may be inhibiting student learning.
- Try strategies to be flexible and differentiate instruction to meet different student needs.

Appendix E. Sample invitation email text

Here is sample text for inviting a colleague to do a practice space activity with you.

Dear _____,

I have been taking an online course about equity teaching practices as a pathway for transforming the school experience, and I would like to share some of what I learned with folks at [insert name of school or organization]. I'm hoping that it will help us talk about ways to support all of our students, and close gaps of opportunity or access they face.

To do this, I'm inviting colleagues to get together and complete an activity from the course called a practice space. A practice space is a digital scenario representing a typical interaction at a school. Each participant will respond individually, and then we'll talk about what actions we chose, what we'd like to practice more, and how this can help us understand best practices in supporting students.

I would like to invite you to join us on [Insert Date]. Can you join us?

You do not have to register for the course or review content in order to join the activity. However, if you would like to learn more about the course, visit the [Becoming a More Equitable Educator](#) edX page or [YouTube channel](#). If you're interested, consider enrolling in the course to get access to videos, readings, and other activities.