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Design Clinic Notes

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Could you help me...

This is where the person offers their question.

“...embody equity as we design and initiate a new community of practice here in Walla Walla?”

We are very intrigued by this idea. We are rich in socio-economic diversity. We have a lot of agriculture as part of our foundation and we also have three higher education institutions. We have a lot of community organizing and wisdom. We would like to build a community of practice that would bring these groups together to improve the quality of life for everyone. We are keen on keeping equity as part of how we build this and the design.

Share more about...

This is where we ask for more context.

...are there structures that undergird this process so far

“Nothing that is as specific as the design clinic model. Whitman has an extensive variety of ways that we connect with our community. The community engagement team at Whitman College is looking to build on those relationships and how to make these relationships as intentional and thoughtful as possible.”

...any stumbling blocks that you see to the question that you pose/

One that felt almost insurmountable is the issue of access. If we are not able to be together how can we incorporate equity. A challenge is how to have an in-person plan and a virtual plan. Another challenge might be how to garner enthusiasm and participation so that we have a good cross-section of community.

...how your relationships do or do not embody equity with the community and/or the other institutions

“I believe we have a somewhat diverse set of relationships. There may be other institutions in Walla Walla that may be stronger than we are. There is an opportunity to share knowledge in that way. A challenge that we have heard from our community partners is connecting with members of our community that speak Spanish. I think there is always room for improvement in the extent we embody equity. Some of the community engagement programs in our office were built to address community needs. The Bilingual united and adopt-a-grandparent programs are a couple of examples of how we have tried to respond to needs in our community.”

“This makes me think of...”

Consider your wide-ranging life experiences, images, metaphors, etc. Let creativity flow!

...the fear that can be associated with working alongside a university.

...how COVID-19 has highlighted both our need for connection and the inequity of the divide between those who have internet and those that do not.

... my local public school system and the challenges they faced providing laptops to all students who didn't have access to an electronic device at home.

...

...the disconnect between the elitism of higher ed historically/currently and the fervent desire to move beyond that.

...wishing certain plants would grow in my garden even though I don't have the right habitat.

...Skagit county cultural divides based on language--great efforts to overcome!

...Trust is the building block that allows people to come together and create safe places for community

...a women's bookstore who embodies inclusion by staying out of academic-speak and class hierarchy speak. Speaking intelligently with normal words.

...trust building takes time, thought, reflection and input from many partners.

...epistemic justice models in community engagement.

---bell hooks and from margin to center, inviting some of those “on the margins” to be part of an organizing team

... birthday party driveby.

...the role of food and gathering within and across cultures and culture shares

...the challenges that HS seniors are facing entering a world and a job market that is in uncharted territory

...how are all parties being invited to participate in the decision making?

...moving to a new neighborhood or starting a new job. I starting exploring and reaching out to different people to connect with to learn about the area or organization. It is scary to be on the side of not being familiar with the new surroundings, but helps me feel comfortable when getting to talk to people or getting familiar.

...of Travis's efforts to work specifically with Lummi youth, creating a space just for those who have been excluded.

...what equity actually looks like/sounds like/feels like

...a 1,000 piece colorful mosaic puzzle

...some of the challenges with a concept like 'equity' when different partners may have different ideas of what it means, how it should be operationalized, or which 'facets' of it they most (or least!) value.

Need to be asking our contacts who else they think it would be good for us to meet and then asking them for help with that.

A recent story I heard about how one community was trying to get the word out to migrant workers about Covid 19. A truck with a PA system drove thru the fields and the community to make announcements, because this is a typical way of disseminating info in the communities/countries from which these people came.

Patti

The resource gap between areas of community

...What the pandemic is showing us - that our essential community members have always been just that - but our practices in higher ed have not been as inclusive or intentional as they could have been and we have not invited them to participate and co-create shared knowledge...nlw is the time and a community of practice is a great step forward.

"You might try..."

Share one at a time. Try to be brief. Include links or contact information as desired.

...asking the community partners you have a relationship with, who they think should be included

...connecting with other local organizations that have been successful at bringing groups of people together. Sherwood Trust and Community Council specifically.

...asking communities what they would want to achieve by being in coalition with you
...offering conversational language classes for your campus community
...reading The Art of the Gathering: How we meet and why it matters

...a demonstration event which is offered in multiple languages where some of the social learning practices are modeled.

... you might try undertaking a values-creation exercise internally to articulate what equity looks like for your institution, your place and your way of knowing, and for this community of practice. Write it all down and share it out to partners.

...asking community folks what isn't happening fairly in their lives, equitable means commitment to just and action

Asking community members what aspects of equity they feel are most challenged or lacking from their perspective

... seeking input from partners on campus who are immersed in work involving equity and inclusion.

...attending local task force and coalition meetings to garner ideas.

“What struck me...”

The person who offered the question can share reflections here.

...it was amazing. I was feeling like one of those sci-fi shows where someone gets a download of large amounts of information.

...I really think the concept of internally knowing our narrative and being able to develop one that is shared will truly help consider and relate to the different entities of our community.

...having the idea of internally having a good grasp of what equity means within our team and being able to connect with partners and having a shared definition and creating that definition together. I loved some of the associations with a puzzle, seniors, etc. We really want this definition to be understood and important.