

Tangible Equity

A Guide for Leveraging Student Identity,
Culture, and Power to Unlock Excellence
In and Beyond the Classroom



Colin Seale

An **Eye On Education** Book



Book Study



Tangible Equity Book Study Table of Contents

Tips for Getting Started	4
Tangible Equity Reading Schedule	5
Tangible Equity Color Page	7

Part I: The “Why” of Tangible Equity

Introduction	
Introduction Discussion Questions	8
Chapter 1	
Chapter 1 Discussion Questions	9
Chapter 1 Root Cause Analysis	11
Chapter 2	
Chapter 2 Discussion Questions	14
Chapter 2 Pre-Mortem	15
Chapter 3	
Chapter 3 Discussion Questions	17
Chapter 3 Investigation and Discovery	19
Chapter 4	
Chapter 4 Discussion Questions	24
Chapter 4 Analysis from Multiple Perspectives	26

Part II: The “How” of Tangible Equity

Chapter 5	
Chapter 5 Discussion Questions	27
Chapter 5 RACK Analysis	29
Chapter 6	
Chapter 6 Discussion Questions	32
Chapter 6 The Six P's	34
Chapter 6 Three Steps to NIP Problems	37
Chapter 6 Overlapping Priorities	39
Chapter 7	
Chapter 7 Discussion Questions	40
Chapter Double-If Process	41

Part III: The Five Tangible Equity Philosophical Shifts

Chapter 8	
Chapter 8 Discussion Questions	42
Chapter 9	
Chapter 9 Discussion Questions	43
Chapter 9 Public Policy Debate	45
Chapter 10	
Chapter 10 Discussion Questions	47
Chapter 10 Where's the Drama?	49
Chapter 11	
Chapter 11 Discussion Questions	52
Chapter 11 Stakeholder Analysis	54
Chapter 12	
Chapter 12 Discussion Questions	58

Part IV: Tangible Equity at the Classroom Level

Chapter 13	
Chapter 13 Discussion Questions	59
Chapter 13 Nine + One Checklist	61
Chapter 13 Three-Step Questioning Flow	64
Chapter 13 Probing Questions Planning Document	65
Chapter 14	
Chapter 14 Discussion Questions	67
Chapter 14 Settlement and Negotiation	69
Chapter 15	
Chapter 15 Discussion Questions	72
Chapter 15 Mandate Joy	73



Tangible Equity **Book Study** Facilitation Tips



- The Tangible Equity book study includes discussion questions, activity pages, and premade PowerPoint slide decks to help facilitate reflection and discussion.
- The thinkLaw book study to accompany Tangible Equity contains a lot of probing discussion questions and activities. Do not feel like you need to ask every question or do every activity. Consider the needs and goals of your group and select the questions and activities that are the best fit for your group.
- thinkLaw probing discussion questions do not have one “correct” response. The most important part of any response is the reasoning. Encourage participants to share their thought process.
- This book study uses the same critical thinking strategies that are used in our thinkLaw curriculum and P.D. These strategies are good for EVERYONE! Part of creating a culture of critical thinking is incorporating these types of exercises into every aspect of a school and district. The strategies are impactful for kids and adults!
- Be sure to schedule your 30-minute call with Colin in advance. The call is most effective at the end of the study so Colin can answer questions the group may have. Reach out to janelle@thinklaw.us to schedule your time slot.
- Please share your takeaways! You can tag @thinklawus and @colineseale on Twitter or Instagram. Please also consider joining our Facebook community group named, “thinkLaw’s Tangible Equity Community.”



Tangible Equity

Reading Schedule

Chapter	Date
Introduction: Equity for What? <i>(Pages 3-10)</i>	
Chapter 1: The Tangible Equity Equation <i>(Pages 11-23)</i>	
Chapter 2: Beyond the Buzzwords <i>(Pages 24-29)</i>	
Chapter 3: The Case for Tangible Equity <i>(Pages 30-50)</i>	
Chapter 4: Avoiding Extreme Optimism and Extreme Pessimism <i>(Pages 51-58)</i>	
Chapter 5: Beyond Good People with Good Intentions <i>(Pages 61-68)</i>	
Chapter 6: The Six P's for Actually Doing Something about Educational Inequities <i>(Pages 69-91)</i>	
Chapter 7: Tips for Successfully Implementing and Sustaining Tangible Equity Priorities <i>(Pages 92-101)</i>	
Chapter 8: Classroom Level Philosophical Shifts for Tangible Equity <i>(Page 105)</i>	
Chapter 9: Beyond Relationships <i>(Pages 106-110)</i>	
Chapter 10: The Top 10% Rule <i>(Pages 111-118)</i>	
Chapter 11: From Closing Achievement Gaps to Shattering Achievement Ceilings <i>(Pages 119-125)</i>	
Chapter 12: Low Floor, High Ceiling <i>(Pages 126-131)</i>	
Chapter 13: Building the Low Floor, High Ceiling Ladder <i>(Pages 136-152)</i>	
Chapter 14: Discussing Controversy without Becoming the Controversy <i>(Pages 153-160)</i>	
Chapter 15: Mandating Joy <i>(Pages 161-163)</i>	



Tangible Equity

Reading Schedule

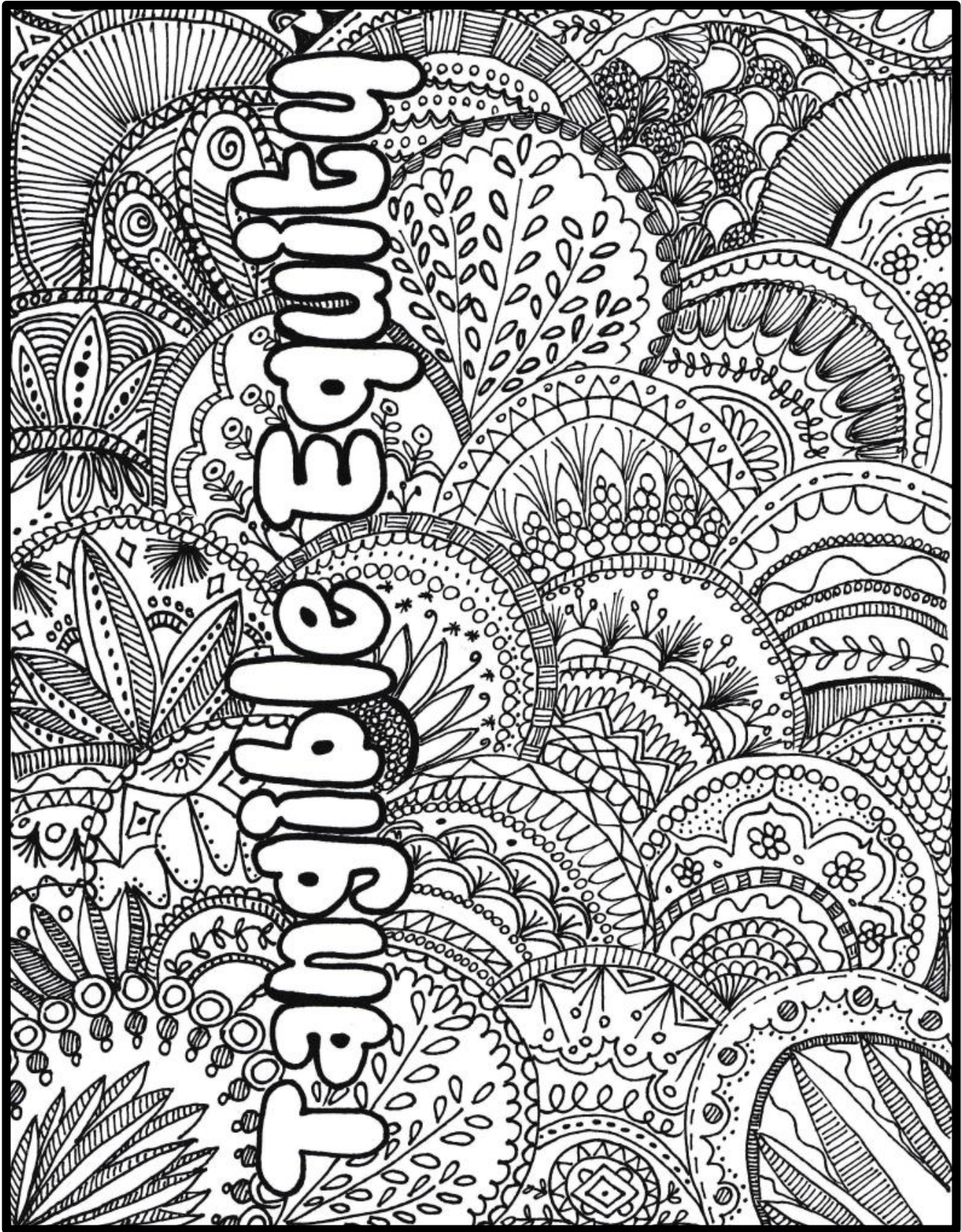
Section	Date
Part 1 The “Why” of Tangible Equity <i>(Pages 1-58)</i>	
Part 2 The “How” of Tangible Equity <i>(Pages 59-102)</i>	
Part 3 The Five Tangible Equity Philosophical Shifts <i>(Pages 103-132)</i>	
Part 4 Tangible Equity at the Classroom Level <i>(Pages 133-163)</i>	



Tangible Equity

Reading Schedule

Section	Date
Part 1 The “Why” of Tangible Equity <i>(Pages 1-58)</i>	
Part 2 The “How” of Tangible Equity <i>(Pages 59-102)</i>	
Part 3 The Five Tangible Equity Philosophical Shifts <i>(Pages 103-132)</i>	
Part 4 Tangible Equity at the Classroom Level <i>(Pages 133-163)</i>	





Tangible Equity

Introduction

Equity for What?



- The graphic of three boys watching a baseball game from outside the fence is a common image that is used to explain equity. What other common images, phrases, or stories do we use in education to explain equity?
 - How do those images, phrases, or stories help?
 - How do those images, phrases, or stories hurt?
 - How could they be modified?
- Have you ever experienced or observed the “equity for what” disconnect? In what way?
 - How has this impacted your teaching practices?
 - How has this impacted your philosophy of education?
- How would the current narrative in education change if we focused primarily on raising critical thinkers?
 - What would change at a policy level?
 - What would change at a classroom level?
 - What would change at a community level?
- “Equity is about reducing the predictive power of demographics and zip codes to determine the success of young people inside and outside the classroom to zero.”
 - Think about the zip codes in the community where you serve. What do they predict?
 - Are there specific neighborhoods, schools, apartment complexes, or other physical markers that hold predictive power? What do they tend to predict? Why?



Tangible Equity

Chapter 1

The Tangible Equity Equation



- Colin explains, “On demographics alone, I am the type of student our educational system typically does not serve that well.”
 - Consider your experience growing up. What story would your demographics have told? Did your experience match? Were you the exception or the rule?
 - How has that experience impacted your view of education and the role of teachers?
- What role does asking questions play in your classroom?
 - What challenges arise when students ask a lot of questions?
 - What advice would you give a first-year teacher about students who ask a lot of questions?
- “There is a massive prerequisite for critical thinking to flourish in today’s education system that is almost entirely an adult issue: ensuring children have the safety to be brilliant.”
 - Do a quick root-cause analysis using the additional materials. The root cause analysis question is, “What keeps adults from giving children the safety to be brilliant?”
- What would you say to someone that said, “Equity of outcomes sounds utopian?”
 - What is the best argument that this statement is true?
 - What is the best argument that this statement is not true?
- “Merit, alone, is not enough.”
 - What examples can you think of in your educational career with outcomes where merit alone was not enough?
 - What examples can you think of in your personal life with outcomes where merit alone was not enough?
 - What could have changed that situation? What else is needed?
 - How would you complete this equation: Merit + _____ = Success

- What are the rules for playing the game to be successful where you teach?
 - What are the rules for winning the game?
 - How are you teaching kids to navigate the game?
 - How are you challenging the unfair system?
- “The most important lesson of this hidden curriculum was that important pieces of me needed to stay hidden.”
 - What important pieces of your students are they being taught to hide?
 - Have you ever needed to hide an important piece of yourself? What impact did that have on you?
- Are we putting equal effort into helping young people play the game AND equipping them with the transformational tools needed to slay these unjust games altogether?
 - What skills do our kids need to play the game?
 - What skills do our kids need to slay the games altogether?
 - How do these two skill lists compare? Where do they overlap? Where are they different?
 - What are we doing well?
 - What can we do better?



Tangible Equity

Chapter 1

The “Why” of Tangible Equity



Root Cause Analysis

Before you solve a problem, it helps to know the cause of the problem. Lawmakers go through the process of doing a **root cause analysis**, which is a way of problem solving that helps you break down a very large problem into more manageable pieces. The thinkLaw program uses this root cause analysis with students in grades K-12.

Why should you use this strategy?

- Before you can solve a problem, you need to deeply understand *why* the problem occurs.
- When thinkers break down a complex problem, they can brainstorm solutions that will address the root causes that lead to a larger problem. A root cause analysis will lead to more effective solutions.

A root cause analysis is conducted in multiple rounds. Thinkers begin by considering a big question and conduct the root cause analysis by asking “Why?” through multiple rounds.

Read the following excerpt from chapter 1.

*What could have been a moment of willful defiance in any other classroom became a moment where my advocacy and leadership was encouraged and celebrated. This memory helps me see that I omitted a huge piece of the puzzle in my zealous advocacy for a critical thinking revolution in education. **There is a massive prerequisite for critical thinking to flourish in today’s education system that is almost entirely an adult issue: ensuring children have the safety to be brilliant.** In many of our hyper-compliant, rules-over-everything classroom environments, I question whether these spaces are psychologically safe for students to wonder, ask, speak up, collaborate, offer alternatives, think creatively, and do all the things we associate with 21st century readiness.*

What keeps adults from giving children the safety to be brilliant?

We’re going to do a root cause analysis. In the first round, you will write down every possible answer to the big question. There are no right or wrong answers.

The big question is:

What keeps adults from giving children the safety to be brilliant?

Round Two- Turn each of your responses into a why question.

Round Three- Answer your why questions.

Round Four- Turn each of your responses into a why question.

Round Five- Answer your why questions.

Think about these reasons and questions. What do you think is the main root cause of this systemic issue?

--

How do you address that root cause?

--



Tangible Equity

Chapter 2

Beyond the Buzzwords



- Does your building experience change fatigue?
 - What has led to this climate? Why do we make so many changes?
 - What would help you personally avoid change fatigue?
 - How are students impacted by change fatigue?
- What are the “buzzwords” in education?
 - Think of each buzzword. How have these concepts improved equity in the classroom?
 - How have these concepts harmed equity in the classroom?
- “Whether we want to call it Mother Theresa syndrome or Pobrecito syndrome, educators sometimes believe that because some children have it so tough in life, we should excuse their academic struggles in school and lower our expectations.”
 - Why do so many educators struggle with this issue?
 - How do you define the word “empathy”?
 - What are we doing to overcome out-of-school challenges AND ensure we do not traumatize students even further by denying them access to the transformational experiences they need?
 - What systems can we put into place to hold ourselves accountable from the bigotry of low expectations?



Tangible Equity

Chapter 2

Beyond the Buzzwords



Pre-Mortem

A pre-mortem is a business strategy used before launching a new product or service. Employees think about a potential future scenario where the idea failed. They brainstorm all the reasons the project might have failed.

Why should you use this strategy?

- Premortems are helpful because they allow people to think creatively. During a premortem, flaws in the plan may be discovered and can be addressed before they lead to failure.

In chapter 2 Colin says, “Going further down the equity checklist, one-and-done workshops on concepts like culturally responsive pedagogy, restorative justice, diverse book selection, and trauma-informed education do not get us to Tangible Equity either.” Let’s think deeply about this quote by doing a premortem.

Imagine a scenario where we were going to have a one-and-done workshop about a concept related to diversity. We spent months planning and flew in a top expert to represent. We had the workshop and it seemed to be well received. But one month later, nothing in building has changed. What went wrong?

Reasons the workshop failed to stick:	What can we do to prevent that from happening?

How can this thought exercise help us plan more effective professional development?

How can this thought exercise be applied in classrooms with students?



Tangible Equity

Chapter 3

The Case for Tangible Equity



- Is this the land of the free? Is this the home of the brave?
 - What evidence would you present to prove either point?
 - What arguments would people make that these two ideals are not true in our country?
 - Are these ideals goals? How do we make progress towards these goals? What other ideals would you add?
 - Why is criticism sometimes viewed as unpatriotic?
- Where are your community's socioeconomic divides?
 - How do they impact your school district?
 - How do they impact teachers in your district? How do they impact students in your district?
 - Does every child in your school district have the same educational experience? Why or why not?
- "The simple exercise of developing a plausible argument for a side you do not agree with is a powerful tool. The ability to put oneself in the shoes of others to experience a conflict from their point of view is the essence of empathy."
 - What arguments has your school district faced against your equity initiatives? What are the people who make these arguments trying to say? What is their concern? What do they fear?
 - How can you address these fears AND continue to work towards educational equity?
- Split up each of the following sections: The New Deal or a Raw Deal? The Rural South, Escaping Racism for More Racism, Home Ownership and the Wealth Gap.
 - How does the past impact our present?
 - What stands out the most? Why?
 - How does this section present in your local community?
 - What questions do you have after reading this section?

- What other resources do you have to further explore these sections? Do you have recommendations?



Tangible Equity

Chapter 3

The Case for Tangible Equity



Investigation and Discovery

In an Investigation and Discovery activity, thinkers are given a very brief synopsis of a conflict. They are then placed in charge of the investigation. What witnesses need to be interviewed? What evidence needs to be collected? What questions need to be asked? As thinkers progress through the lesson, more and more information is revealed. Thinkers may also use this approach when investigating a problem that needs to be solved.

Why should you use this strategy?

- We want our thinkers to use this approach in their everyday lives. What should they do when they hear a headline? Thinkers should press pause and consider what they need to know and where they can find that information. This approach is very systematic.
- Investigations help thinkers to think deeply about each piece of information rather than quickly reading a paragraph or chapter.
- This approach helps build excitement. Thinkers want to know the information you are about to reveal.

The Case for Tangible Equity in YOUR Community

Before you begin, review the slides in the deck that show different maps and data from our sample community. Answer the following questions.

How does this information, gathered in one place, present a picture of the challenges this community faces?	What would happen if a school district refused to understand this historical and current data?
How could this information inform decisions made by local school leaders?	What concerns might community members raise about schools analyzing this information? How would you address these concerns?

Let's plan to understand the history and data of YOUR school community.

In an investigation plan, we start with witnesses. A witness can be anyone who can help you understand or obtain the information you need to make an effective plan. Who are the experts? Who knows the community? Who knows the history? Who can interpret the data? Who could help you ask better questions?

Round 1: Witnesses

Witness 1:	
What might this witness know?	Why is this information important for your plan?
Witness 2:	
What might this witness know?	Why is this information important for your plan?
Witness 3:	
What might this witness know?	Why is this information important for your plan?
Witness 4:	
What might this witness know?	Why is this information important for your plan?
Witness 5:	
What might this witness know?	Why is this information important for your plan?

--	--

Physical evidence is also a very important part of discovery. This includes all papers, documents, videos, forms, maps, and other physical items that may be important to the case. Complete the chart below by listing 5 pieces of physical evidence. Explain where you can find this evidence and how this evidence will help you paint a clear picture of your community. Consider what outside sources might have information. You will be able to

Round 2: Evidence

Evidence 1:	
Where can you find this evidence?	How will you use this evidence?
Evidence 2:	
Where can you find this evidence?	How will you use this evidence?
Evidence 3:	
Where can you find this evidence?	How will you use this evidence?
Evidence 4:	
Where can you find this evidence?	How will you use this evidence?

Evidence 5:	
Where can you find this evidence?	How will you use this evidence?

Questioning is probably the most important part of a discovery plan. Using the table below, come up with 5 questions to give you the information you need to compile your report.

If you have trouble thinking of questions, go back to your witness list. What questions would you ask each witness?

Round 3: Questions

Question 1:	
Who can answer this question?	Why is the answer to this question important?
Question 2:	
Who can answer this question?	Why is the answer to this question important?
Question 3:	
Who can answer this question?	Why is the answer to this question important?

Question 4:	
Who can answer this question?	Why is the answer to this question important?
Question 5:	
Who can answer this question?	Why is the answer to this question important?

We highly encourage your book study group to execute your investigation.

Tips:

- Divide it up! Assign different members data to research and have everyone bring it back to the group for analysis.
- Use the internet! Many of these maps are available online. Take a moment to brainstorm key words that will help your search. Mapping Inequality is a great website to start your investigation: [Mapping Inequality \(richmond.edu\)](http://MappingInequality.richmond.edu)

Reflections:

- What surprised you the most? What surprised you the least? Why?
- How would you explain this information to different stakeholders?
- How should this information inform policy for the school district? What are the action steps?
- What is the most important information? How can we share that information with other staff?



Tangible Equity
Chapter 4
Avoiding Extreme Optimism



and Extreme Pessimism

- “But it is so important that as we approach this work, we avoid the kind of extreme optimism or extreme pessimism that stifles momentum and incentivizes inaction.”
 - What examples of extreme optimism have you encountered in your teaching career?
 - How does that outlook impact the culture of a school staff?
 - How does extreme optimism stifle momentum and incentivize inaction?
 - What examples of extreme pessimism have you encountered in your teaching career?
 - How does that outlook impact the culture of a school staff?
 - How does extreme pessimism stifle moment and incentivize inaction?
 - Which is worse? Extreme optimism or extreme pessimism? Why?
- Do you tend to be an optimist, pessimist, or realist?
 - In what situations do you tend to be an optimist? Why?
 - In what situations do you tend to be a pessimist? Why?
 - In what situations do you tend to be a realist? Why?



Tangible Equity **Chapter 4** *Avoiding Extreme Optimism and Extreme Pessimism*



Analysis from Multiple Perspectives

In this strategy, thinkers will examine a conflict or issue from multiple perspectives to develop an informed opinion about how the issue should be resolved in a fair and just manner.

Why should you use this strategy?

- We want our thinkers to develop empathy. One component of empathy is intellectual empathy. Intellectual empathy allows us to understand where other people are coming from. Explicitly providing opportunities for thinkers to consider multiple perspectives develops the capacity for intellectual empathy.
- If thinkers can understand a problem from multiple perspectives, they can create more persuasive arguments and reach better settlements to disagreements.

Consider a few of the following common school-related scenarios through the lens of an analysis from multiple perspectives.

<p><i>Last year's test scores came back. Unfortunately, demographics predicted outcomes with lower socioeconomic students receiving lower test scores. The district has assembled a team to analyze the data and create an improvement plan.</i></p>	
<p>How will an extreme optimist react?</p>	<p>How will an extreme pessimist react?</p>
<p>How does that outlook harm students?</p>	<p>How does that outlook harm students?</p>
<p>How would a realist react? How does that outlook help students?</p>	
<p><i>The school district is determined to renew their commitment to equity. They have adapted a new program with a consultant to strengthen district-wide equity initiatives.</i></p>	
<p>How will an extreme optimist react?</p>	<p>How will an extreme pessimist react?</p>

How does that outlook harm students?	How does that outlook harm students?
How would a realist react? How does that outlook help students?	
<p><i>The school district is adopting a new equity initiative. Their goal is to reduce the predictive power of demographics and zip codes to determine the success of young people inside and outside of the classroom to zero. A group of parents are expressing concern that this initiative is unfair for some students.</i></p>	
How will an extreme optimist react?	How will an extreme pessimist react?
How does that outlook harm students?	How does that outlook harm students?
How would a realist react? How does that outlook help students?	



Tangible Equity
Chapter 5
*Beyond Good People with
 Good Intentions*



- “Try teaching a child with personality traits and behaviors that remind you of a child who bullied you growing up. Think about the explicit bias of teachers who struggle to name their own children because certain names bring up students they would never want to conjure up when saying their own child’s name.”
 - What personality traits and behaviors in students trigger you? Why do you think those behaviors bother you?
 - Are there personality traits and behaviors in adults that trigger you? Why do you think those behaviors bother you?
 - It is normal to have certain behaviors or traits trigger negative emotions. Can you share any tips or strategies that work for you to manage those responses?
- “It is easy to become so normalized around inequity that you fail to notice anything is wrong. In other words, there are no magic glasses to help you to view education with an equity lens.”
 - What can we do to keep ourselves from becoming normalized to equity issues?
 - If we did put on “magic” equity glasses, what do you think we would see? If an outsider came to our school community, what issues of inequity might they observe?
- Consider the RACK Analysis of data-driven instruction when answering the following questions:
 - What happens when we shift our priorities towards student weaknesses instead of strengths?
 - What harm can be caused when we shift our priorities towards student weaknesses instead of strengths?
 - Consider the earlier discussions about change fatigue. How can we ensure that our changes “stick” and we do not revert to our old patterns of behavior?
- “Tangible Equity is not about being a good person. It is not about having intentions. It is about understanding that we are human beings with explicit biases that inform our decisions and emotions.”
 - Discussing explicit biases is inherently vulnerable. What norms can we commit to together as we engage in this work? How can we support each other? How do we move past the good person/bad person paradigm to do serious reflection?

- Have you had conversations about explicit bias with other people? What went wrong? What went right? What did you learn?
- Learning from our experiences above, how can we commit to having conversations about explicit bias with people outside of this group?



Tangible Equity

Chapter 5

Beyond Good People with Good Intentions



RACK Framework for Restoring the Harm of Explicit Bias

- Use this framework whenever you make a significant decision.
- Use this framework whenever you feel a significant emotion (anger, sympathy, frustration, happiness, laughter).

Choose a significant decision to use in your analysis:

R

Reflect honestly on my explicit bias without judgement and with a clear understanding that in some way, in some form, my explicit bias is doing harm to students.

Example: Data-Driven Instruction

- Data-driving instruction involves a lot of subjective decision-making. It is easy to reduce my students to a number instead of the full human beings they are.
- A data probe may lead me to the conclusion that my students are “too low” to engage in rigorous, grade-level content, my data-driven decisions may result in an all-too-common lowering of the bar that ensures my struggling learners stay “low.”

A

Acknowledge (a) the harm your explicit bias is causing and (b) the concrete actions you engage in that lead to this harm.

Example: Data-Driven Instruction

- My fear of “low” students falling behind forced me to teach the simplest, least-rigorous version of everything to the whole class.

- Several of my “low” students weren't low at all. They just met the level of my low expectations and stayed there.
- My “high students” gradually lost interest because my data-driven decision was the starting pistol for the race to the bottom.

C

Change your actions to counteractions that stop this harm and restore our students.

Example: Data-Driven Instruction

- Teach the whole class, including the “low” students, in a way that challenged my “high” students.

K

Keep reflecting, acknowledging, changing, and spreading the word, recognizing that we all have some level of explicit bias within us that, left unchecked, can lead to harm to students.

Example: Data-Driven Instruction

- Understanding that this approach applies to all data-driven decisions. Every piece of data from parent surveys, attendance records, standardized exams, and even informal thumbs-up/thumbs

down formative assessment data lends itself to a RACK process.



Tangible Equity

Chapter 6

Six P's for Actually Doing Something about Educational Inequities



- The Paper Straw Problem speaks to one of the most common reasons educators have struggled to make equity real at the classroom level:

the system seems so stacked against this effort. Tangible Equity seems compelling in theory. But when it comes to the practicalities involved in trying to reduce the predictive power of demographics as a classroom teacher, thousands of educators have told me some version of this hopeless admission: “I am just a teacher.”

- What overwhelms you most about equity work? Why?
- What is the root cause that has led to teachers feeling “I am just a teacher”? How can that root cause be addressed?
- How has the internet, social media, and a 24-hour news cycle led to burnout? How can we focus our energy and efforts within our community?
- Consider the following:
 - Teachers have the power to unlock magic.
 - Teachers also have the power to crush young souls.
 - Teachers have the power to hold a mirror up to students so they can see their own power.
 - Teachers have the power to create a child’s lifelong sense of self-confidence.
 - Which statement speaks to you the most? Why?
 - Which statement would you choose to share with preservice teachers? What would you tell them about this statement?
 - Do you have a story to share that illustrates one of these statements? Which one?
- “We are so used to prioritizing issues that involve the fight *against* other people’s power that we avoid prioritizing the issues that involve the fight that *aligns* to our power.”
 - What makes “power” an uncomfortable word?
 - What different power dynamics exist within a school building?
 - What do you NOT have power over?
 - What DO you have power over?
 - What issues align most closely with the areas you have the most power over?
- “Educators who engage in equity work without reflection often develop a troubling superpower: the ability to spot all the inequities in the world without being able to see the inequalities that are right in front of them.”

- What are the top inequalities you see in the world?
- How do you see them manifest locally?



Tangible Equity

Chapter 6

*Six P's for Actually Doing Something
about Educational Inequities*



The Six P's

Power

- What day-to-day responsibilities do you decide how to execute?

What are 2-3 areas you have decision-making authority over?

- What are important areas of your control where you can make decisions that do not require any approval?

Priorities

What one area can you focus on as a priority for fighting racial inequities?

- What opportunities (within your scope of power) do you have to make sure the policies, procedures, and practices (both written and unwritten) in your school and/or school system are color-kind instead of color-blind?

Probe

What information, data, and/or resources do you need?

- Why is this priority important? Why is it urgent?
- What are the root causes of the racial inequities involved?
- What more do you need to know to effectively fight for this issue?

Privilege

How, specifically, can you leverage your privilege to make this change happen?

- How can you leverage your race, identity, relationships to achieve this priority?
- What unique advantages, networks, and/or resources do you have that can help you achieve this priority?

People

Who do you need to make this happen?

- What colleagues, families, students, and stakeholders must be involved?
- Who can help you find and connect with the people you need?
- Who can give you outside perspectives on who you are not including?

Problems

What roadblocks, pushback, and challenges can you anticipate and plan to overcome?

- What and who are the financial, policy, procedure, people-based, and structural barriers that will make this challenging?
- How can you address these challenges without compromising your priority?



Tangible Equity

Chapter 6

Six P's for Actually Doing Something about Educational Inequities



Three Steps to NIP Problems

1. **N**ame the problematic things.

Example: Unduly harsh discipline

- Policies, procedures (both written and unwritten), structural barriers
- Teacher evaluation rubric
- My fear that I would be doing my students a disservice

2. Identify the problematic people.

Example: Unduly harsh discipline

- Behavior lady
- Parents who viewed me as a baby educator
- Students that wanted me to be strict

3. Prioritize the problem over the things and people.

How will you "hold the line" as you work to remove obstacles?



Tangible Equity

Chapter 6

Six P's for Actually Doing Something about Educational Inequities



Overlapping Priorities

There are countless important priorities in our school system. How can you build a sense of urgency around your priority? Conducting an effective probe requires a two-prong exploration.

1. Determining the root causes of the issue you are prioritizing.

2. Determining how your issue may be an important contributor to other urgent challenges.

My Priority <i>Increase powerful critical thinking instruction</i>	Their Priority <i>Decrease the number of fights in the building</i>
Big Question <i>How can we increase powerful critical thinking instruction?</i>	Big Question <i>How do we decrease the number of fights in the building?</i>
Solutions 1. Practice analyzing from multiple perspectives 2. Consider alternative viewpoints 3. Challenge assumptions	Solutions 1. Practice analyzing from multiple perspectives 2. Consider alternative viewpoints 3. Challenge assumptions

My Priority	Their Priority
Big Question	Big Question
Solutions	Solutions



Tangible Equity

Chapter 7

Tips for Successfully Implementing and Sustaining Tangible Equity Priorities



- What do people mean when they say, “Education has not changed in 100 years”?
 - What is true about this statement?
 - What is NOT true about this statement?
 - Why do some people have this sentiment?

- If you were to create an educational system from the ground up today, what would be the main priorities? Why?
 - What would you keep the same? Why?
 - What would you change? Why?
 - Why can the educational system be slow and resistant to change?
- “But there is an important rule to implementing policy effectively that so many high-level policy-makers and system-level leaders fail to follow: those closest to the desired change must be meaningfully included in planning and executing that change.”
 - What barriers exist to incorporating more stakeholders into district-wide decision making?
 - What are reasons people might hesitate to join advisory committees? How could these issues be addressed?
 - How are you communicating with stakeholders? How do you know that style and form of communication is effective?
- When it comes to policy changes, what is the most important key component of effective implementation? Why?
 - What is the most important aspect of making a program sustainable?



Tangible Equity

Chapter 7

Implementing and Sustaining Tangible Equity Priorities



Double-If Process

Consider an initiative that you’re developing. How can you evaluate this initiative with the double-if process?

Impact Storytelling	Implementation Considerations

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Allows every stakeholder to answer the question: “Why does this problem matter to me?” • Who are all the people that matter to this issue? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • _____ is the proposed solution to this problem. What configuration of this solution would work best given your context? • Have you seen a similar solution in the past? What lessons learned from implementing that solution can help us be more successful now?
Failure Prediction	Future Relief
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Start by naming your proposed solution and ask: “Why will this NOT work?” 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What would it look like if this solution was an overwhelming success? • What would it feel like if this solution was an overwhelming success?



Tangible Equity
Chapter 8
Classroom Level Philosophical Shifts for Tangible Equity



- What does it mean to be disruptive on purpose and disruptive with a purpose?
 - What examples can you give of each? When is a time you or someone else was disruptive on purpose?

- “Mindset Shifts” could also be considered an educational buzzword.
 - What does “mindset shifts” mean to you?
 - In what other contexts have you experienced a mindset shift? How did it impact your outlook?



Tangible Equity

Chapter 9

Beyond Relationships



- What's the strongest argument you can make for the statement “kids can't learn from teachers they don't like”? How do you define “like” in this context?
 - Think about a teacher you “liked” growing up. What made them so likable? What influence did this person have on your instructional practice?

- Think about a teacher you “disliked” growing up. What made them so dislikable? What influence did this person have on your instructional practice?
- How would you define “relational instruction”? Think back over your teacher training. Did it include conversations about relational instruction?
- “It worries me that in the large diverse district they surveyed, less than 33% of middle school students had a strong relationship with their teachers—a number that dropped to 16% for 12th graders and was lower, overall, for students from low-income backgrounds.”
 - Why do you think the percentage of students who said they had a strong relationship with teachers dropped so dramatically?
 - If you had to guess, how do you think elementary students would respond to this question?
- The five components of how to build developmental relationships were:
 - Expressing Care
 - Challenging Growth
 - Providing Support
 - Sharing Power
 - Expanding Possibilities
 - Which component is the most important? Rank them 1-5. Why did you choose that order?
 - Which component comes the most naturally to you? Why?
 - Which component is the most challenging for you? Why? How can you be intentional about incorporating this element into your practice?
 - What does our staff need to successfully include all five components into their classroom?
- Think about students you have served.
 - Can you think of a time when you had a strong personal relationship with a student but a weak instructional relationship? Thinking back, what could you have done differently?
 - Can you think of a time where a student might not have liked you, but grew as a thinker and a learner? What happened? What can you take away from that experience?
- How would you respond to a coworker or administrator who said, “Kids don’t learn from teachers they don’t like?”



Tangible Equity

Chapter 9

Beyond Relationships



Public Policy Debate

In a thinkLaw public policy debate, thinkers examine arguments from both sides of an issue and brainstorm counter arguments before reaching their conclusion.

Why should you use this strategy?

- When thinkers hear the word “debate,” they often think that means they should just try to yell over their classmates. Participants in a public policy debate spend more time listening and thinking before taking time to respond.

- It is important to understand both sides of the argument even if you disagree. What do your opponents think? What is the most logic response to their reasoning?

When a lawyer works to create a solid case, he or she must consider every side of the issue. It's important to be aware of the arguments both sides will present so that the lawyer is prepared. **EVEN IF YOU DON'T AGREE** with what the other side is arguing, it's important to understand how they view the issue.

Consider some arguments that are presented in Chapter 9. How would an opponent argue against this claim?

Argument	Counterargument
<i>Kids don't learn from people they don't like.</i>	

Argument	Counterargument
<p><i>Building relationships means sacrificing instructional time.</i></p>	
<p><i>If we take the time to form strong relationships with our students, many of our other problems will disappear.</i></p>	
<p><i>Building relationships with younger students is easier. The older students get, the more difficult it is to form positive relationships with them.</i></p>	

How would you explain your teacher/student relationship philosophy to a student teacher? What advice would you offer? Why?



Tangible Equity

Chapter 10

The Top 10% Rule



- “Challenging the Top 10% means we must name where the Top 10% is most likely to struggle.”
 - Consider your top 10%. Make a t-chart. Label one side of the chart, “What are my Top 10% of achievers typically good at?” Label the other side of the chart, “Where are my Top 10% of achievers most likely to struggle?” Complete the chart individually before comparing results with other participants.
 - What results appeared on more than one chart?
 - Why do the Top 10% of achievers typically struggle with “grey” areas? Why is it important to provide opportunities for students to struggle?
- Why does the term “differentiation” feel like a four-letter-word to some educators?
 - What barriers exist when moving differentiation from a theory to classroom practice?
 - What are your tips and tricks for differentiation? What advice can you offer colleagues?
 - “Differentiation outside of federally-mandated differentiation required under federal laws for special education is so complex in practice that many educators decide to do the same thing for ‘all students.’ ‘All’ often refers to the imaginary middle student. But in reality, ‘all’ means no one at all. ‘All’ makes the unique needs of individual students invisible. If we truly wish to obtain Tangible Equity, we must shift from ‘all’ to ‘each.’”
 - How have you seen this passage manifest in your educational career?
- “[Gut feelings] are a combination of all of your five senses plus your identity, your culture, your experiences, your values, and your prior education—both inside and outside of the school building. Gut feelings become an important piece of the critical thinking process when we can name our gut feeling, understand the subjective bias

that leads us to adopt that gut belief, and spend our time as learners understanding how to disprove that gut feeling.”

- Why is it important to take time in class to acknowledge gut feelings?
- Gut feelings are normal. Everyone experiences them every day. Critical thinkers recognize their gut reactions and then think about everything they do NOT know. Why is this an important skill? How can you practice this skill with the students in your classroom? What are questions you can ask your students to elicit a gut reaction?
- If you are a member of the thinkLaw Teacher Platform, the following lessons are referenced in this chapter.
 - thinkLaw Lesson Chapter 9, page 115: [Show Me What You're Made Of](#)
 - thinkLaw Lesson Chapter 9, page 115: [Better Late than Never](#)



Tangible Equity

Chapter 10

The Top 10% Rule



Where's the Drama?

The key to high student engagement is identifying the drama within a topic to use as a hook for critical thinking.

Why should you use this strategy?

- All thinkers have an inherent sense of justice and fairness. Thinkers instantly become more engaged in a topic when there is conflict or injustice.

How to Identify the Drama

Think about the upcoming topics you will be covering. Use this guide to help you brainstorm potential hooks.

TIP ONE Look for areas of conflict or disagreement.		
ELA	SS	Science
How could two characters have made a different decision? How would that change the outcome of the story?	Marie Antoinette was famously disconnected from her subjects. If you were a peasant during this time, how would you feel about her making decisions about your life? Why does representation matter?	Studying space? How would you debate a flat-earth?

TIP TWO Look for examples of real-world problems.		
Art	Health	Math
Who owns a piece of art? What should be done about all the collections in the U.S. and Europe of ancient African and Egyptian artifacts? Should they be returned? Why or why not?	Look at examples that people are given online to be healthier. For example, making a "super food" smoothie. Is that attainable for everyone? Can everyone afford those ingredients? Does everyone have access to those ingredients?	Instead of graphing imaginary data from the textbook, pull real-life charts. Graph test scores, income level by education, graduation rates, etc.

TIP THREE**Asking, "What would the world look like if..."**

SS	Math	Science
What would the world look like if the colonies had lost the Revolutionary War?	What would the world look like if we did not teach fractions? How would that complicate things? How would that impact everyday life?	What would the world look like if people disappeared? How would the planet start to change?

TIP FOUR**How would you respond if someone said ___?**

Art	ELA	Science
"Art programs are a waste of money. Schools should dedicate the money to other programs."	"I don't need to learn proper spelling or grammar. Everything I use is digital and has grammar and spelling checks. "	"We should stop spending money on the space program. That money should be used for other areas."

TIP FIVE**Rank: Always have a devil's advocate! Force thinkers to defend their response!**

Health	Math	SS
What are the three most important habits for someone to have if they want to be healthy?	What are the three biggest misconceptions about algebra?	What are the top three issues that a new president needs to tackle in their first 100 days in office?

TIP SIX**Which is better? Which is worse? Why?**

Art	Math	Science
Look at a modern painting and an older painting. Which is more impressive? Why?	Both answers are incorrect. Which mistake is worse? Why?	Is it better to focus on recycling or reducing carbon emissions? Why?

TIP SEVEN**What are the big questions? Look for the questions that do not have one correct answer.**

SS	ELA	Science
Everyone learns that voting is important in school, but voter turnout is often very low. Why don't people vote?	Often the reading level of newspapers and medical literature is 5 th grade. Why do you think it's so low?	What happens in society when people don't understand science? Is science political? Why or why not?

Read the following excerpt from the book.

"No-one can expect that every lesson, every day, will be meaningful, fulfilling learning experiences that give our students the opportunity to change the world. Conjugating verbs in French class means you are conjugating verbs in French class. The quadratic formula is the quadratic formula. But when you use something as simple as a five-minute exploration of whether people who eat pineapple on pizza should be burned at the stake, you can change students' stake in their learning, lighting said stake on fire."

Using the tips from above, consider what topics you would be teaching in the upcoming weeks. Where is the drama within these topics?

Upcoming Topic	Where is the Drama?



Tangible Equity

Chapter 11

From Closing Achievement Gaps to Shattering Achievement Ceilings



- What concrete things would change in an average classroom if teachers planned and taught like they were teaching to the top 1% of intellectually and academically gifted students?
 - How would our master schedules change?
 - How would our extra curriculars change?
 - How would our budget change?
 - How would our parent/teacher conferences and family nights change?
 - What else would be impacted by this mindset shift? What else would change?
- Colin's three-part premise to frame gifted education:
 1. All students have gifts and talents.
 2. Some, but not all, students are academically gifted and talented.
 3. The current population of students we identify as academically gifted and talented is unacceptably whiter and wealthier than the actual student population of academically gifted and talented students should be.
 - Do you agree with the three-part premise? What would you add? What would you change? Why?
 - If you had a magic wand and could, without restraints, create the perfect g/t program, what would it look like?
 - How could your g/t program benefit ALL students?
- “When teachers do not understand that gifted learners can struggle mightily with underachievement, especially in underrepresented populations, they cannot provide the tools and services needed to address this need. If teachers do not understand the ‘gifted and’ complexities of identifying and serving English Language Learners, students receiving special education services, and children of

undocumented families, they are all but guaranteed to leave all this brilliance on the table.”

- Describe one student you know who might be high achieving, but not gifted.
 - Describe one student you know who might be gifted but not high achieving.
 - Describe one student you know who might be gifted AND _____. (i.e., ESOL, IEP, etc.)
- What is your gut reaction to reading, “If what you are doing seems comfortable, there’s a good chance it is not equity work”?
 - Can you connect a personal experience with this statement?
 - What makes equity work uncomfortable?



Tangible Equity

Chapter 11

From Closing Achievement Gaps to Shattering Achievement Ceilings



Stakeholder Analysis

In a stakeholder analysis, thinkers brainstorm a list of stakeholders for a decision. They sort the stakeholders by interest and influence and create a policy that they feel will be in the best interest of key stakeholders.

Why should you use one?

- A stakeholder analysis forces thinkers to press pause and think about everyone who will be interested and impacted by a decision. Thinkers determine solutions based on the needs of these people.
- You cannot make everyone happy. Thinkers consider how their decision might upset other people and what they could say to the unhappy stakeholders to try to persuade them.

Let's try a stakeholder analysis together. For this exercise, list an opportunity that is provided to gifted and talented students in your district. In the chapter, Colin referenced the opportunity for all 8th grade students to take Algebra. List the opportunity you would like to think about below:

A stakeholder analysis has three parts:

Part One: Identify Stakeholders

List EVERYONE you can think of who will have an **interest or concern** with this decision. Some stakeholders will be obvious. Other stakeholders might be less obvious. For example, leaders from surrounding districts would likely take an interest in your decision and the results you may see after your decision has been implemented. Or in the algebra example, the textbook company would likely be interested in the outcome.

Stakeholders:

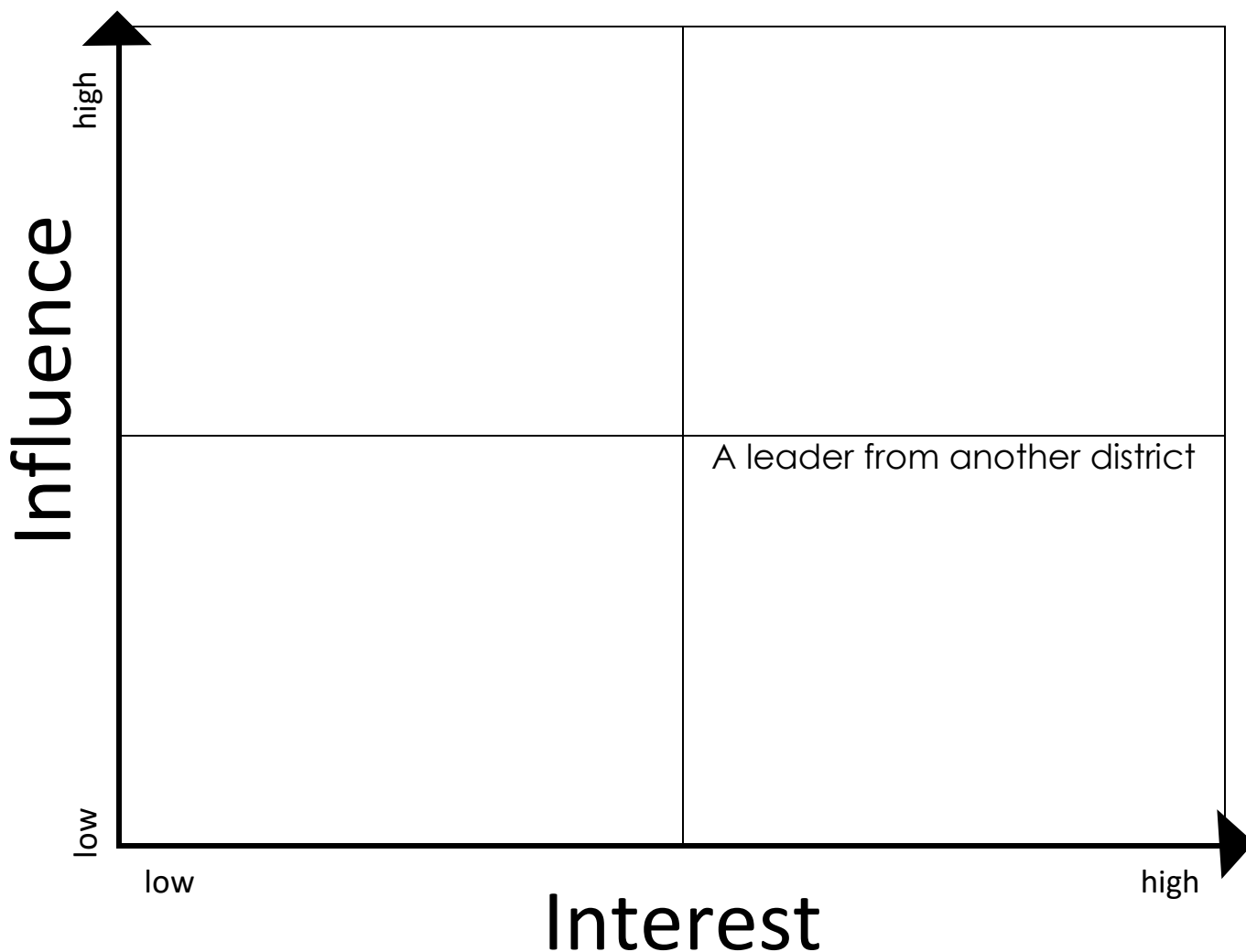
Part Two: Prioritize Your Stakeholders

You now have a list of everyone who will be interested in your decision or impacted by your decision. The opinions of some stakeholders might be more influential than others.

You will sort your stakeholders into categories.

The first category is **influence**. This means that these stakeholders will have a big impact on the decision. The second category is **interest**. Who would be interested in this issue? For example, a leader from another district might have a high level of interest in your issue, but a low level of influence. You may decide to place a leader from a different district in the high interest, low influence quadrant.

What you must decide is how influential and how interested each stakeholder is in the district's decision.



Which group of people do you think the school needs to consider the **MOST** when making their policy? Why?

Part Three: Understand Your Key Stakeholders

Answer some questions about your most important stakeholders.

Who is your most important stakeholder? Why?

What responsibilities does the school have to these stakeholders?

How do you think the key stakeholders feel about the current policy?

What policy would you write?

How is your policy fair?

Which stakeholders will be unhappy with your decision?

What information would you give these unhappy stakeholders to convince them that your policy is fair?



Tangible Equity

Chapter 12

Low Floor, High Ceiling



- How would you explain “low bar, high success rate in climbing over the low bar” to a colleague?
 - Where do you see this manifest in modern education?
 - How does this relate to grade inflation?
 - Why has this phenomenon become so prevalent in classrooms across the nation?
- Educators have strong reactions to the idea that “Reteaching prerequisite concepts should only be done if absolutely necessary.”
 - What is your gut reaction?
 - What is the best argument to support this claim? What is the best argument against this claim?
 - What would school look like if we always stopped to reteach prerequisite concepts?
- If you are a member of the thinkLaw Teacher Platform, the following lessons are referenced in this chapter.
 - thinkLaw Lesson Chapter 12, page 126: [Gaming Limits](#)
 - thinkLaw Lesson Chapter 12, page 131: [The Cost of Living](#)



Tangible Equity

Chapter 13

Building the Low Floor, High Ceiling Ladder



- Think of a lesson that you will be teaching soon or a lesson that you have taught in the past. “Finding the funk is not simply about problem-solving, it’s about problem-finding. Incorporating this funk is key to the transformational education students need to not just play the game, but slay the game.” Where is the funk in your lesson?
 - Is there a rule?
 - Are there interesting or weird characters, concepts, or events involved?
 - Is there something to compare contrast or rank?
 - Does the concept lend itself to multiple perspectives?
 - Is there an opportunity for a real-life call to action?
- Consider the teddy bear factory lesson example from the chapter. Have you ever planned a lesson that you thought would be transformational, but did not have the impact you intended?
 - What went wrong?
 - What would you do differently if you were to reteach this lesson?
 - How can you apply the learning you experienced from that failed lesson to future lessons?
- “Direct instruction still matters. The urge to engage students in deeper learning can sometimes get educators thinking that ‘stand and deliver’ has no place in the classroom. This is not true. What makes teaching with Tangible Equity focus look different is the rapid transfer of power from educator to student when it comes to doing the heavy lifting in learning.”
 - If a guest came into a classroom, how could they tell if students were doing the heavy lifting? What would it look like?
 - How do you decide if it’s time for direct instruction or student control? What criteria do you use to make the decision?
- Have you ever encountered a student that struggled with “help addiction”? What happened?
 - What led to this student experiencing this issue?

- How do you determine when to help and when not to help?
- In the chapter Colin says, “probing questions can be a gateway drug for help addiction.” How do you encourage students to ask themselves questions? Why is that an important skill to develop? What questions do you ask yourself when you’re stuck? How do they help you?
- What tips do you have for facilitating a lively classroom discussion?
 - What can you do if no one wants to talk?
 - What can you do if everyone agrees on the same decision?
 - What can you do if the conversation is getting heated or too personal?
 - Why is it important to have follow-up questions like, “What makes you say that?” or “Can you explain how you reached that conclusion?”
 - Do kids see civil disagreement modeled? Why or why not? How can you use the “bad” examples of disagreement as a teachable moment?



Tangible Equity

Chapter 13

Building the Low Floor, High Ceiling Ladder



9 + 1 Critical Thinking Planning Sheet

The lesson I'm going to teach in the next few weeks that I want to "beef up":

Critical Thinking Technique	How will I use this technique in my lesson?
<p>Finding the Funk</p> <p>Where can I add in conflict, a real-world problem, "What if...?" scenario, ranking, or other opportunities for funk?</p>	
<p>Identifying Key Concepts, Vocabulary, and Algorithms</p> <p>What do students need to know to successfully complete this lesson? What do they already know?</p>	

<p>Releasing Control and Encouraging Productive Struggle</p> <p>How will I make sure students are doing most of the heavy lifting?</p>	
<p>Anticipating Likely Mistakes</p> <p>Do I know the most common mistakes and misconceptions with this material? Am I prepared to address them?</p>	
<p>Make Personal Connections</p> <p>How am I connecting the lesson with students' real-life experiences, interests, or current events?</p>	
<p>Creating Probing Questions</p> <p>Do I have a list of probing questions prepared throughout the lesson that will lead to a rigorous discussion?</p>	
<p>Scaffolding the Challenge</p> <p>Did I make time to link the previous learning and review relevant vocabulary?</p>	

<p>Building Lively Discussions</p> <p>Am I prepared to keep the conversation constructive, civil, and on topic? Where could it go wrong? How can I avoid that problem?</p>	
<p>Grappling with “Good” Mistakes in Real Time</p> <p>Am I prepared to respond to students’ good mistakes during the lesson? How will I remember to press pause and take advantage of these learning opportunities?</p>	
<p>Prioritizing the Learning Goal</p> <p>How will I know ALL students meet the learning goals of the lesson?</p>	



Tangible Equity

Chapter 13

Building the Low Floor, High Ceiling Ladder



Three Step Questioning Flow

<p>Step 1: What do they need to know?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- What do they already know?- What do they need to know? <p><i>Intellectual Prep: What do they need to know to do this?</i></p>
<p>Step 2: Do they know what I'm doing RIGHT NOW?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Do they understand <u>key vocabulary, concepts, algorithms, and procedures</u>?- If not, do I understand EXACTLY what they do not understand? <p><i>Intellectual Prep: (1) What are the main THINGS and (2) how are these commonly MISUNDERSTOOD?</i></p>
<p>Step 3: Can they learn it?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Can they independently and successfully complete this learning activity?- Can they clearly articulate what successful completion of this learning activity looks like? <p><i>Intellectual Prep: What does successful learning look/sound like?</i></p>



Tangible Equity

Chapter 13

Building the Low Floor, High Ceiling Ladder



Probing Questions Planning Document

What lesson will you be teaching in the next few weeks?

Write potential probing questions that could be used with this lesson based on the question frames below. Not every question frame may apply to your lesson.

Question Frame	My Question
Would you rather....? Why?	
Which deal is better? Why?	
I wonder why...? What do you wonder?	
What don't we know? Is that important? Why or why not?	
Let's list out different characters, stakeholders, etc. What do you think each individual thinks about _____?	

What would the world look like if...?	
What are two other things you/they could have done? How could that have changed the outcome?	
What is the best thing that could happen? What is the worst thing that could happen?	
What impact does this decision, event, knowledge, etc. have on the world?	
What is the best argument that ____ is right? What is the best argument that _____ is wrong?	
If you could ask this scientist, historical figure, character, etc. one question, what question would you ask? Why is the answer to this question important?	
Whom do you think decided you should learn this information? Why do you think they decided you should learn it?	
If you were going to tweet about today's lesson, what could you say in one sentence?	



Tangible Equity

Chapter 14

Discussing Controversy without Becoming the Controversy



- What are some news stories you've seen recently about a controversial decision made by a teacher or administrator?
 - What questions do you ask yourself when you see those stories?
 - Nothing exists in isolation. What impact do these incidents and stories have on other teachers and classrooms?
- Politics is "who gets what, where, when, and how."
 - What is political about education?
 - Can politics ever fully be removed from public education? Why or why not?
- What is your gut reaction to the word "debate"?
 - Do you enjoy debating? Why or why not?
 - Do you enjoy facilitating a debate? Why or why not?
 - Do a pre-mortem. You plan to have a debate in your class. The debate day comes and goes, and the activity was a total failure. What went wrong? What could you have done to prevent that issue?
- Look at each of the lines Colin mentions in the chapter, below:
 1. "We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal."
 2. "One nation, under God, with liberty and justice for all."
 3. "O say does that star-spangled banner yet wave o'er the land of the free and the home of the brave?"
 4. "I have a dream that my four children will one day live in a nation where they will not be judged by the color of their skin, but by the content of their character."
 - What is an argument that these statements are "controversial"?
 - What is an argument that these lines are NOT "controversial"?
 - How has the passage of time impacted how these phrases are viewed?
- What state standards do you teach that mandate arguments, critiques, and other potentially "controversial" activities?

- “The key to understanding the balance between discussing controversy without becoming the controversy is to focus on the civil discourse trifecta. First, we ensure students know how to listen to understand. Second, we ensure students know how to speak to be understood. And third, we ensure students know how to disagree without being disagreeable.”
 - How can you develop these skills within your curriculum?
 - How do these skills help our students outside of the classroom?
- “The reality is, that this is and has never been about indoctrination or controversy. This is about learning. Critical thinking. Engaging students in deeper learning opportunities. And creating a new normal where we no longer purposely shy away from politics, religion, and money to be polite, limiting our society’s ability to have any sort of meaningful conversations about politics, religion, and money.”
 - When you talk about politics in the classroom, what emotions do you experience? Why?
 - What happens when we are afraid to have meaningful conversations? What happens if students are never asked to discuss topics where they disagree?
 - How do children learn how to disagree without being disagreeable?
- If you are a member of the thinkLaw Teacher Platform, the following lessons are referenced in this chapter.
 - thinkLaw Lesson Chapter 14, page 156: [Little Boy Blue](#)



Tangible Equity

Chapter 14

Discussing Controversy without Becoming the Controversy



Settlement and Negotiation

Thinkers are tasked with creating a settlement agreement between two conflicting parties. They must determine the issues and interests, the best alternative to a negotiated agreement, and create an opening offer.

Why should you use this strategy?

- Settlements teach thinkers to learn how to disagree without being disagreeable.
- Learning how to find the common ground between two conflicting parties is an essential skill.
- Settlement and negotiation teach thinkers to work much more effectively as collaborators and problem solvers in a group context.

Sometimes thinkers find it anticlimactic when they hear that a lawsuit was settled. The truth is only about 2% of lawsuits make it to trial. Many lawsuits are settled outside of court. Why? It is always better to solve your own problem. If a third party needs to solve the problem, you lose control over the outcome.

A conflict you might experience within your community might center around a topic or issue that is “controversial.” We will go through the three-step process of a settlement and negotiation activity to think deeply about this conflict.

What is a conflict in your school community over a topic or issue that is “controversial”?

1. Define interests.

It is usually easy to find out the main issue of a conflict. It takes deeper thinking to figure out what each party's actual interests are. An **interest** is what's really going on. For example, a parent might complain about an issue, but upon further reflection you can understand what's driving that complaint. What are they really afraid of? When you understand the interest, you have more options to solve a problem. To think about the interest, start with the most obvious answer to the question, “Why is this person upset?” Once you have answered this question, as yourself “why?” multiple times.

Person that is upset about the controversy

School Personnel

What is the most obvious reason they are upset?	What is the most obvious reason they are upset?
What is really going on? What are they really upset about?	What is really going on? What are they really upset about?

2. Identify BATNA.

BATNA stands for **Best Alternative to a Negotiated Agreement**. In other words, the BATNA is important because it helps you figure out how hard you should try to settle a case. Before you can see BATNA, you need to think about the strengths and weaknesses of the case brought by the person that is upset over a controversial topic or issue.

Strengths of their case	Weaknesses of their case
What is the worst-case scenario for one side? What is the best-case scenario?	What is the worst-case scenario for the other side? What is the best-case scenario?

thinkOffer

- 1) Make an opening offer. What can the school offer to address the fears behind this person's outrage?
 - a. How can you address the underlying fears?
 - b. How can you be transparent about what's happening?
 - c. What other creative ideas do you have for solving this problem?

	Offer	Why?
How can you address the underlying fears?		
How can you be transparent about what's happening?		
Other creative solutions		

Put yourself in the shoes of the person that raised the complaint. How would they feel about this plan? Why?



Tangible Equity

Chapter 15

Mandating Joy



- What is the difference between hard work and heart work?
 - Why is the distinction important?
- Why is joy a revolutionary act in education today?
 - Think about school pre-Covid and post-Covid? How did this shared experience impact educational joy?
 - What can we do to get it back? What can we do if we never had it?
- Why do joyful classrooms lead to joyful teachers?
 - What brings you joy at your job?
 - What robs you of joy at your job?
 - How can you mandate more joy for yourself?
- We've reached the end of our book study.
 - What stood out to you the most?
 - What is one action item you plan on doing after finishing the book? How can we support you in that work?
 - What questions do you still have? Why are the answers to these questions important?
 - What excites you the most about the completion of this study? Why?



Tangible Equity

Chapter 15

Mandating Joy



Joy is a revolutionary act in education today. Mandating joy in classrooms is an extreme act of defiance. For so many students in our nation, laughing and learning at the same time is a privilege.

How will you implement the mandate of joy?	Why will this create joy?

Be sure to reserve time to share ideas with the group! We're better when we put our heads together!