

TRIZ Sampling: Small Group Discussions of Destructive Actions and Action Steps

What is TRIZ?

TRIZ is based around the concept of creative destruction, and asks: What must we stop doing in order to make progress on our deepest purpose? TRIZ is not an acronym, and for more details on the process see www.liberatingstructures.com/6-making-space-with-triz/. TRIZ:

- asks participants to let go of what they know but rarely admit to
- makes it possible to challenge sacred cows safely
- encourages heretical thinking
- induces courageous conversations

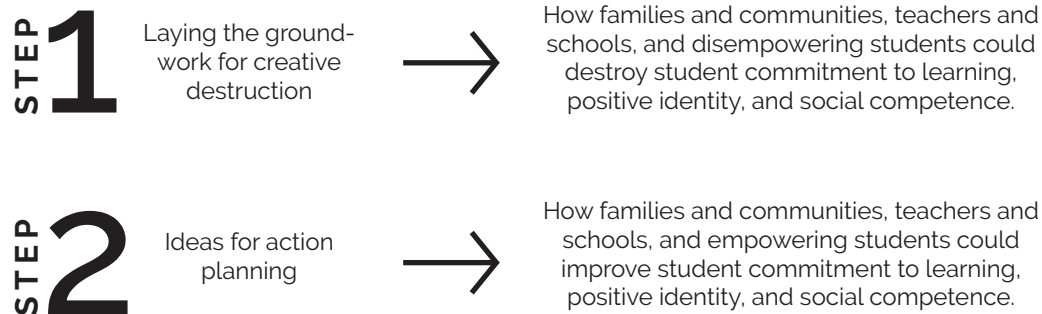
Educational Equity in Action attendees used the student skills (commitment to learning, positive identity, and social competence) and supports (families and communities, teachers and schools, empowering students) identified in Dr. Michael Rodriguez' plenary presentation analyzing the Minnesota Student Survey results.

About the Process:

In small groups, participants asked what could be done by the student support to destroy the specific student skill. They then explored whether there is anything we are doing now that resembles those items, and found that many (most) in fact were occurring somewhere. Finally, they identified the counterproductive activities/programs/procedures that either:

- Have the best chance of making positive change if it could be reversed,
- Will have great benefit and can be done relatively easy,
- Has not been tried before, or
- Address an especially difficult or important aspect of inequity.

Destructive Actions & Action Steps



Laying the Groundwork for Creative Destruction



Sampling of responses: How Families and Communities Could Destroy

Student commitment to learning

- Lack of encouragement and acknowledgement of students/youth
- Not attending celebrations or involvement in school
- Not learning language
- Financial issues e.g. paying for college
- Male dominance, gender roles
- Too high or too low expectations
- Lack of communication
- Lack of help and support in response to bullying
- Blame victim
- Forcing to work while still in school
- Constant mobility
- Providing no structure in home
- Basic needs not being met
- Lack of belief that students can succeed
- Community narrative that doesn't support student achievement
- Lingering addiction issues
- PTO/school board that doesn't reflect community

Student positive identity

- Chaotic home-life environment
- Model failure approach (I failed, I'm not good at math...), demonize success
- Don't talk about aspirations
- Isolation- families on own, no out of school programs
- See kids as deficits
- School/district workforce that resides outside of community
- Blame community for "their own problems"
- Not teaching resiliency, financial literacy
- No affection or demonstration of love
- Disbelief or denial of the child's experience
- Ignoring traumatic experiences

Student social competence

- Assumptions about competencies – only some people have skills
- Defaulting to dominant culture in testing, programs and social interactions
- Frequent moving of households
- Failure to recognize identity – emphasize sameness
- Unequal funding for youth development orgs/ programs to support families
- Incentivize competition/scarcity mindset
- Not spending time with kids
- Not allow kids to have own dreams and values



Sampling of responses: How Teachers and Schools Could Destroy

Student commitment to learning

- Harsh grading policies, stringent homework policies (e.g. zero score)
- Zero tolerance behavior (suspension), out of class punishment
- Focus on competition
- Pre-reqs, teacher recommendation, requirements for high school class selection
- Lack of differentiation (talk to all not individual)
- Derogatory/sarcastic comments by teacher
- No feedback to students
- Not see selves in curriculum
- Don't teach strategies to combat failure
- Never talk about commitment to learning
- Provide no safety nets
- Don't provide teacher professional development for improved instruction
- No student voices
- Disconnect families from school
- Eliminate field trips and place-based learning
- Faculty not representative of student body or not trained in culturally relevant teaching

Student positive identity

- Curriculum that is not accurate or excludes
- Define success narrowly
- Expect all students to be treated the same, won't catch the success
- Focus on one test to determine futures
- Lack of choice
- Shaming – wrong answer
- No opportunities to challenge themselves
- Only acknowledge weaknesses, not strengths
- Brush off students' reports of racist or other comments, avoid discussion of micro-aggressions
- Decisions on appropriate dress
- Mispronounce name, Americanize them, use numbers
- Be color blind, ignore cultural identity
- Fail to connect with families
- Physical environment of schools
- Assumptions about time management

Student social competence

- Limiting social interaction/cooperative group work so children don't develop skills
- Punish children for skills they don't have or expectations that have not been expressed
- Don't teach or model social interaction skills
- Treat all students exactly same/one size fits all approaches
- Farm out behavior problems to people who don't have relationship with child
- Limiting non-English language use
- Taking away recess, no talking at lunch



Sampling of responses: How Disempowering Students Could Destroy

Student commitment to learning

- Dispute their potential
- Explicit and implicit discrimination
- Not give them choices
- Shaming them
- Demanding v. Asking
- Not allow them to offer critiques of systems
- Assuming what students need rather than asking
- Not teach curriculum/issues related to their racial/ethnic/cultural backgrounds
- Utilize tests/assessments that reinforce a student's sense of incompetency
- Inequitable access to learning enrichment
- Not provide guidance or context surrounding test scores and/or opportunities to learn in different ways
- Categorize students based on test scores early on

Student positive identity

- Dress code policies that limit expression (value religious identity over other cultural identities)
- Do things for students so they don't develop a skill
- State goals v. student goals
- Curriculum builds on traditional families and other groups with privilege and power
- Use blanket praise with no depth
- Ignore reports of bullying or discriminatory comments
- Breaking connections – rotating wheel of youth workers, not allow friends to comfort each other
- Ignoring students unless getting great grades or being disruptive
- Ignore policies proposed by youth
- Tell students they are 'just kids'

Student social competence

- Zero tolerance policy – no opportunity to explain circumstances – and apply it unequally
- "At risk" perpetuates oppression and assumptions
- One size fits all approaches
- Granting system – promotes competition and lack of teamwork
- Belittle and punish any expression of emotion
- Define success for students, without youth voice
- Disinterested, disengaged, inconsistent adults. Adults don't learn self-awareness
- Not modeling appropriate boundaries – put youth in role of caretaking
- Not show respect for students – silencing
- Label students based on disparities and disadvantages
- Incarcerate youth in dangerous, socially isolating environments
- Eliminate all support systems/services – OST programs, FR lunches, health care, etc.
- Invalidate and alienate by 'one size fits all' approach

Ideas for Action Planning



Sampling of responses: What Families and Communities can do to Improve

Student commitment to learning

- Provide structural support for class size, financial support.
- Provide easy access to enrichment programs in summer, that are fun, accessible (transportation), optimally free, and spread awareness
- Provide parent/community engagement in school. Mini-grants for specific purposes rather than blanket funding.
- Healing practices and uncomfortable conversations. Start within community, understand systemic oppression, history, how we got here.
- Celebrate students' successes. Define what success means to families and start there. Meet in the middle. Alter school expectations to earn trust between parents and school. Do thorough surveys, home visits, open forums, parent night, going to community events
- Use someone who speaks community language
- Make sure students set their own expectations and definition of success.

Student positive identity

- Ask questions that get at relationships. Identify teachers who teach the heart and head
- Create more asset-based after school programs. Get teams of people who offer diverse skills. Less time pressure. Funding. Focus on relationship building, parents and youth.
- Acknowledge how culture uses applications of STEM. Lose idea of "natural ability".
- Teach families, break down perspective of not being good at math.
- Make space, be inclusive, give agency to youth, e.g. choices
- Be inclusive of community voice – for buy in, to tap into strengths, be culturally relevant
- Help parents better access resources to support their children. Info sessions in community, multiple times and languages, mixed delivery systems. Access religious leaders, advisors, elders, to promote and identify resources, reflect community need.
- Access to healthcare, services, activities, etc.
 - Connecting organizations, corporations and community for \$ and time or after- school programs, family events
 - Sharing economy community, does a church have a bus? Share resources
 - Create a community-based "next door" site, offer/take advantage of services
- Physical space to gather as families, communities
 - Encourage churches/faith organizations to expand access to space for wider community, and to host events to create community, especially during the week
 - More all community events with low commitment (dances, potlucks)

- Start where the individual and family is at – what more do you need?
- Showing up 'on time' – redefine what that is, what is normative and what is okay.

Student social competence

- Involve communities/students in designing solutions and measuring impact. Create program to support youth who enroll in school mid-year. Hire youth to collect and analyze data.
- Create local community fund to close gaps in opportunity for youth (OST activities, basic needs, etc.) Eliminate barrier to low income families by paying for volunteer time. Local neighbors help cover cost of playing a sport, etc. Volunteer hub.
- Train adults in community in Search Institute and other Youth Development best practices and family engagement. Map gaps in access to OST and other opportunities. Resource share between PTOs matched across equity lines.
- Create an "equity Budget Audit" that community can request of public system resource to get equitable allocation
- Change discipline policies from punitive to restorative justice practices
 - Empower kids and families by listening and honoring student and parent voices.
 - Open, transparent, up front. Not punitive but restorative.



Sampling of responses: What Teachers and Schools can do to Improve

Student commitment to learning

- Review and evaluate current grading/homework policies
 - Develop sense of urgency through research to present topic
 - Facilitate the 'why' understanding. Structure conversations among teachers
- Behavior Policies (out of class punishment)
Engage families so they understand student's behavior, performance, incidents
 - Data analysis: why are they out of class in order to address reasons for removal
 - Develop resources to prevent escalation
- Sense of Belonging
 - Increase number and diversity of clubs, activities
 - Guide students to find meaningful connection
 - Structure time to provide aligned opportunities to be involved (during advisory, before/ afterschool)
- Get to know names of students, school wide expectation around knowing and acknowledging every student. Model relationships across system.
- Address chronic absenteeism, using metrics at the student level not school average.
- Meaningful opportunities for parent involvement at the secondary level
- Mindset of curiosity. SEL must be embedded.
- Mastering differentiating. Co-teaching models and co-planning, common planning time. Homogeneous and heterogeneous learning communities over time.
- Relationship, school culture, student voice/ choice to support learning
- Pipeline to teaching for more diversity. Provides money to support (recruiting, supporting). Embed specifically in Career Days or advisory Programs.

- Change the "all visitors must check in the office" to "Welcome. Please come to the office so we can greet you."
- Bring community into the schools, historical and cultural knowledge of community.
- Replicate Northside Achievement program.
- Encourage discipline not punishment within classroom and system. Give them power and control with Discipline. More Restorative justice program.

Student positive identity

- Remove seat time requirements. Reimagine how time is spent in schools
- Empower local decision-making by teachers and communities to do what is most powerful to meet local needs. Requires rethinking district and state policies.
- Menu of culturally responsive simple tools to connect with students and for all staff: handshakes, greeting, tell me something good, what new thing did you learn, representing students in classroom.
- Student evaluate teachers – focus groups, informal interviews
- Coherent, inclusive, grassroots, integrated curriculum. Coherent narrative.
- Storytelling as strategy
- PD on culturally responsive teaching, equity coaching.
- Use of equity screens that are referred to in making decisions, e.g., asking: Who is favorably impacted now, and how. Who is negatively impacted now, and how? Does it align with equity vision? What has been done in the past? Who is not at the table?
- Help students write a personal credo and a class creed.
- Create family story project.
- Define common expectations: What is hurting kids' ability to have a positive identify at school?

- Gather expectations of teachers and students, barriers within the system. Plan Do Study Act. Evaluate if having impact. If need more improvement, one on one coaching for teachers and students. If going well, celebrate with community.
 - Principles to uphold: Make process explicit. Empower people to think they can solve problem. Make sure students' voice is heard throughout, including evaluation. Make sure teachers get skills and tools they need. Everyone commits to actually do the practices and uphold new expectations.

Student social competence

- Cultural Acceptance/Awareness – Create lens. Mandatory training with coaching. Space of hard conversations must come from above. Culturally responsive teaching practices. Hard conversations, moments of discomfort. Accountability structures.
- Provide open time during the day – relationship building, time for building social skills, time to check in on SEL and skills, creating democratic norms. Time and space to just be – belonging, unconditional.
- Focus on social skills as of value to human development.
- Use whatever tools (PD, SEL, counseling, time to connect, part engagement, administrative effort) available to support positive relationships between teachers and students
- Enlighten all teachers on trauma informed education, institutional racism, historical trauma, poverty and its impacts, SEL perspective/skills/principles
- Develop more community engagement – use the IDI at the county level



Sampling of responses: How Empowering Students Could Improve

Student commitment to learning

- Incorporate youth in the entire process. Ask for input from beginning to end, give students told to implement the plan they want.
- Establish community members as volunteers/mentors in school and facilitating dialogue between multiple support systems regarding with students
- Promoting collaboration between networks of people as caring adults in a student's life – not creating expectations for mentors as experts
- Promoting student potential rather than telling students they will become something
- Students are present in all facets of leadership in schools, and value placed on this effort (admin meeting, leadership teams, vote, decision)
- Students vocalize their strengths, allowed multiple pathways to demonstrate learning.
- Move away from reliance on standardized testing/measures of learning
- Youth voices about what makes them feel safe and belong is directly implemented into school environment: providing spaces to make mistakes. Students choose action plans/take ownership over goals.
- Providing opportunities for community members to be mentors, coaches, volunteers.

Student positive identity

- Empower students to enter education field by providing leadership opportunities and chances to each other's. Exploratory career pathway programs.
- Give students input. Survey students about curriculum. Inquiry based project-based- problem-based. Training for teacher to use student input. Give students choices,
- Relevant curriculum: extensive review of curriculum to include all student identities and lived experiences. Include students in curriculum adoption process.
- Build relationships, explore strengths while also addressing weaknesses or individual limits. More counseling/support staff, lower teaching loads.
- More diversity in teacher corps.
- Address lack of college access resources by increasing partners, hiring more college counselors, train teachers on college access resources and integrate throughout school.
- Address failure to address discriminatory or offensive acts with training on recognizing bias and intervening. Start conversation about identity, stereotypes, etc. early. Having step by step protocol in place of incidents. Reflective practice.
- Address experience of being overlooked by adults with cooperative learning, smaller class sizes, mentoring, bring in parts/family/community into school. Check-in systems set up by teacher to make sure they keep up with every students. Diagnostic tools to reflect on adult relationships in students' lives.

Student social competence

- Change how we categorize students to reflect many identities of each student. Empower students by letting them self-identify with their multiple identities (tell us about your name or something else that has meaning for you)
- Change labels that we use (think about differences between ELL Students and Immersion program students, both learning second language, but viewed as different)
- Have teachers and other adults model their identities and talk about them
- Talk about pervasiveness of implicit biases and how we learn to recognize them
- Give people space to acknowledge their shortcomings and mistakes
- Institute more robust, systematic adult parent education programs that promote good disciplinary habits, communicate with educators and more collaboration within community. Base off Montessori education model.
- Emphasis on project based learning in place of institutional grading system.
- Help disengaged and ill-prepared adults by training all staff (including, cooks, and engineers) in school social capital. Accountability measure that include student input
- Change portrayal and belief of negative stereotypes. Normalize calling out negative stereotypes. Provide cultural competence training with accountability measure and ensure that it is dynamic. Include students in the training.