



Framework for Co-Creating Community

Grounded in the National Equity Project's liberatory design, The Framework for Co-Creating Community supports schools in engaging campus and community stakeholders (such as students, staff, families, and local partners) in co-designing structures that support deeper learning conditions in their learning community, interrupting inequity, and ensuring all students have access to opportunities, especially those who have been historically marginalized.





Culturally Affirming and Sustaining

Represent the beliefs and values of all members and sustain cultural, linguistic and literacy practices to affirm diverse identities.

Connected and Engaged

Foster relationships and connections across individuals and groups to create engagement, trust and belonging.

Nurturing and Restorative

Cultivating an environment that supports members through transitions and restores relationships during times of upheaval.

Equitable and Inclusive

Recognize existing power dynamics and seek to incorporate a diversity of perspectives and abilities into collaborative decision-making.

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Additional Reading List

National Equity Project: [Liberatory Design](#)

Community: The Structure of Belonging by Peter Block

Design for Belonging: How to Build Inclusion and Collaboration in Your Communities by Susie Wise

The Art of Gathering: How We Meet and Why It Matters by Priya Parker

“Leadership in the Age of Complexity: From Hero to Host” by Margaret Wheatley





Community Engagement Framework

	Culturally Affirming and Sustaining	Connected and Engaged	Nurturing and Restorative	Equitable and Inclusive
	Represent the beliefs and values of all members and sustain cultural, linguistic and literacy practices to affirm diverse identities .	Foster relationships and connections across individuals and groups to create engagement, trust and belonging .	Cultivate an environment that promotes individual growth and shared learning to better understand different viewpoints and encourage constructive dialogue.	Recognize existing power dynamics and seek to incorporate a diversity of perspectives and abilities into collaborative decision-making .
Decision Making	Tap into stakeholders' knowledge (lived experiences, community traditions and connections) to deepen understanding of students and community; prioritize those who have been historically marginalized Involve stakeholders in prioritizing the issues that impact them and are relevant to their beliefs and values Work collaboratively to co-design solutions that affirm stakeholders' identities	Design intentional opportunities for connection and collaboration among stakeholders Build trust by allowing stakeholders to process decisions over time Create a process for establishing and changing roles and groupings that involves a diversity of stakeholder voices, especially those who have been traditionally marginalized	Invest in meaningful conversations with stakeholders from different parts of the system Utilize protocols to create safe spaces for dissent, disagreement and challenge Provide timely, flexible and accessible opportunities for community stakeholders to offer feedback	Acknowledge existing power dynamics and employ protocols to actively shift this dynamic Create processes that provide all stakeholders with opportunities to be heard and different ways to provide input and participate Build stakeholder capacity to be authentic thought partners and share in leadership roles
	<i>Suggested Strategies or NTN Practices:</i> Focus Groups Asset Mapping Think, Feel, Care Community Walks	<i>Suggested Strategies or NTN Practices:</i> Paseos or Circles of Identity Community Circles* Storytelling*	<i>Suggested Strategies or NTN Practices:</i> Constructivist Listening Dyad What? So What? Now What?* Establish a Culture of Critique	<i>Suggested Strategies or NTN Practices:</i> Co-Create Community Agreements Lift Up Assets Through Co-facilitation Project Team Agreements and Group Roles Microlabs
Shared Purpose or Goal	Use the purpose or goal to determine which stakeholders should be represented, intentionally including stakeholders who have historically been marginalized Co-construct shared purpose and goals with a diversity of stakeholders Intentionally design groups and group structures to affirm stakeholders' diverse identities	Create a clear invitation that is welcoming and inclusive, and communicates a clear purpose and role for stakeholders Dedicate time and attention to building relationships and honor connection between stakeholders Provide opportunities for stakeholders to make personal connections and process new ideas	Honor assets of different community groups and acknowledge different funds of knowledge (eg: lived experiences) Engage in shared learning with stakeholders to more deeply understand historic or systemic context Facilitate protocols that encourage collaborative, respectful communication among stakeholders	Invite stakeholders to hold clear, meaningful and authentic roles within meetings, events and decisions Establish a collaborative decision-making process that enables stakeholders to share responsibility for the goal or purpose Empower stakeholders as equal partners to actively engage with each other to make decisions
	<i>Suggested Strategies or NTN Practices:</i> Start with Your Why Co-create Community Agreements* Project Team Agreements and Group Roles	<i>Suggested Strategies or NTN Practices:</i> Constructivist Listening Dyads Hopes and Dreams See Think Wonder* Connections	<i>Suggested Strategies or NTN Practices:</i> Asset Mapping Text Discussion Protocol Praise Question Suggestion*	<i>Suggested Strategies or NTN Practices:</i> Project Team Agreements and Group Roles Compass Points W.O.O.P.* Stop, Start, Continue

*indicates cards that are included in the sample deck that can be downloaded here: <https://newtechnetwork.org/resources/practices-cards/>



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Gathering Spaces and Ways of Communicating	Shift meeting times and spaces to center / accommodate stakeholder needs (eg: creating multiple moments for entry / exit within meetings)	Arrange physical spaces and seating to center collaboration and trust building	Choose a space that sized to meet the needs of the gathering and allows for participant connections	Consider the physical / audio / visual needs of stakeholders when choosing or arranging gathering spaces and make accommodations that are welcoming to all community members
	Use virtual spaces to increase accessibility and broaden stakeholder participation	Begin with introductions and connections to build trust and a sense of belonging	Create clear process and protocols to invite feedback and dialogue from stakeholders without fear of repercussion	Provide opportunities for stakeholders to advocate for additional accommodations if needed
	Vary your means of communicating and make materials reflective of the cultural, linguistic and literacy needs of the community	Use language and terminology that is understood by all stakeholders (avoid acronyms or unnecessary technical language)	Prioritize different ways to input and participate in discussions (eg: oral and written, multiple languages, etc)	Use equity of voice protocols to balance power dynamics and ensure all voices are heard
	<i>Suggested Strategies or NTN Practices:</i> <i>Focus Groups</i> <i>Think Pair Share*</i> <i>Co-design Learning Environments</i>	<i>Suggested Strategies or NTN Practices:</i> <i>Community Circles*</i> <i>Connections</i> <i>Block Party</i> <i>Name Tags</i>	<i>Suggested Strategies or NTN Practices:</i> <i>Establish a Culture of Critique</i> <i>What? So What? Now What?*</i> <i>Chalk Talk*</i>	<i>Suggested Strategies or NTN Practices:</i> <i>Shadow a Learner</i> <i>Think Pair Share*</i> <i>Co-create Community Agreements*</i> <i>Welcome Stakeholders at the Door</i>
Rituals and Practices	Celebrate and communicate the importance of stakeholders’s cultural identities within the larger community	Design opportunities for stakeholders to share something authentic and personal	Honor and acknowledge stakeholder contributions, providing opportunities for stakeholders to contribute their individual talents or expertise (eg: volunteering)	Be aware of and acknowledge how personal lenses / biases may influence beliefs or approach
	Encourage stakeholders to come as they are / show up in authentic ways	Create “signals” or rituals that can communicate community “membership” to all and foster a sense of belonging	Seek feedback from stakeholders’ regularly to assess sense of belonging and evaluate rituals and practices regularly to assess stakeholders’ feelings of belonging	Continuously invite new perspectives and voices to co-design community rituals and practices
	Provide regular opportunities for stakeholders to share hopes and dreams	Collaboratively determine community agreements and/or norms	Create a process and prioritize time and space for repairing relationships	Interrupt existing patterns of power and privilege by increasing opportunities for inclusion
	<i>Suggested Strategies or NTN Practices:</i> <i>Asset Mapping</i> <i>Co-Create Community Agreements*</i> <i>Community Calendar</i> <i>Hopes and Dreams</i>	<i>Suggested Strategies or NTN Practices:</i> <i>Storytelling*</i> <i>Community Circles*</i> <i>Establish Rituals and Routines</i> <i>Connections and opportunities for play</i>	<i>Suggested Strategies or NTN Practices:</i> <i>Lift up Assets Through Co-Facilitation</i> <i>Establishing a Culture of Critique</i> <i>Restorative Circles</i>	<i>Suggested Strategies or NTN Practices:</i> <i>Empathy Interview</i> <i>Re-frame Attributes</i> <i>Co-Design Learning Environments</i>

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