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GWU School of Education Doctoral Candidates Publish Learning Module on Creating Conditions for Equity

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GWU School of Education Doctoral Candidates Publish Learning Module on Creating Conditions for Equity

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Office of University
Communications

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New Resource is Available Free From Online Journal, IMPROVE

At a time when many people in America and around the world are calling for justice and equality, three Gardner-Webb University graduate students have published a virtual professional learning module on a related subject. The students are doctoral candidates in the School of Education's Curriculum and Instruction program. The module, "How Leaders Create the Conditions for Equity," is available free from the GWU Digital Commons in the online journal, IMPROVE (Instructional Modules for Professional learning Responding to Opportunities and Valuing Educators).



"Anyone in the world can access the journal," noted Dr. Sydney Brown, Dean of the Gayle Bolt Price School of Graduate Studies and a professor of education. "IMPROVE has global reach. There are 19 modules published in the journal currently. In the past year, there have been over 1,350 downloads of resources from the journal from all over the world."

The authors of the learning module are, from top, Tiesha Pickett, Charli Kinard, and Anastasiya Shchetynska

IMPROVE is a peer-reviewed virtual professional development resource. All of the modules are collaboratively authored by candidates in their final semester of coursework in the GWU Doctor of Education in Curriculum and Instruction Program. Two other units in the journal also focus on the issues of equity and justice: "Building a Foundation for Cultural Responsiveness," published in 2018 and downloaded over 200 times and "Facilitating Equitable Classrooms," published in 2015 and downloaded 75 times.

The new module is authored by Charli Kinard, Tieshia Pickett and Anastasiya Shchetynska. Kinard has 21 years of teaching experience, including Spanish as a world language, general

education, multiage, and language immersion. Pickett has been a classroom teacher for seven years and is transitioning to an instructional coach position. Shchetynska has taught high school mathematics for 14 years and recently defended her doctoral dissertation.

They developed the unit to help educators understand the complexities of providing equity. “Equity is a term that comes up frequently as a rationale for curriculum materials adoptions, new programs and school reform initiatives,” Kinard observed. “It’s important that we have a shared understanding of the term, so that we can know what we mean by equity, how we can achieve it, and whether proposed instructional and organizational reforms truly are aligned with equity principles.”

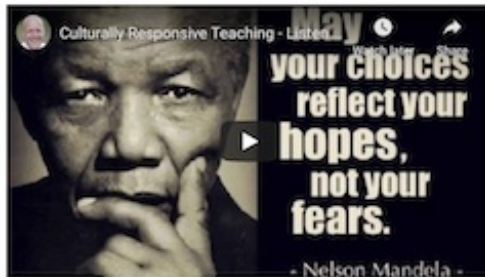
Kinard said they chose to target school leaders because of their influence. “Leaders set the tone and create the vision for equity in our schools and districts,” she asserted. “We used the module to provide some tools leaders can use to establish a common understanding of equity, to evaluate where the site is along an equity continuum, and to involve the school community in equity work.”

In choosing the topic, the authors also wanted to improve their understanding of equity and how it is incorporated in their own school districts. “Equity is an issue we were all passionate about and knew creating the Professional Learning Module would help grow our knowledge, as well as help others,” Pickett affirmed. “Since enrolling in the doctoral program, I have been able to apply what I have learned in my own classroom. What has helped me the most is collecting and analyzing data to improve and increase student learning.”

For more information, visit <https://digitalcommons.gardner-webb.edu/improve/19/>

Cultural Relevance and Equity

"What is a school culture of equity? A school culture of equity is one where educators create a classroom, school, and system where excellence is achieved for every student, no matter who that student is or where that student comes from. In a school culture of equity, diversity becomes the norm for all, not the exception for a few" (Linton & Davis, 2013, p. 1).



Reflect on the video and think about your own ability to embrace equity by uncovering your own biases, stereotypes, and privileges. Record your reflection on your note taking sheet.

Linton, 2011: "The purpose of engaging in this process of centering one's self in equity is simple: if you do not understand deeply your own realities, it is very hard to help others - such as your students - successfully negotiate their own realities" (p.6).

A screen shot of one of the activities in the virtual professional learning module by three doctoral candidates in the School of Education's Curriculum and Instruction program. The module, "How Leaders Create the Conditions for Equity," is published in IMPROVE.

[Learn more about the GWU School of Education.](#)