Elevating the Ingenuity of Communities to Transform Education

Our Team Today

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Poll

Who is in the room?

- Teacher
- Student
- School Leader/Instructional Coach
- District Administrator
- Education Solution Provider/Entrepreneur
- Researcher
- Policymaker
- Philanthropy

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Agenda

- Overview: Center for Inclusive Innovation at Digital Promise

- Experience: You Are a Researcher

- Context Expertise in Action

- Emerging Findings

- Small group focus on your problem of practice: Strategies to center context expertise

- Whole group share-out and closing

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Digital Promise's Center for Inclusive Innovation supports schools working in partnership with communities to create equitable powerful learning opportunities for students.

What is Inclusive Innovation?

A Radical Commitment To Equity

INCLUSIVE INNOVATION

Removes barriers to the participation of individuals, groups, and regions that are underrepresented in the education innovation ecosystem **BY** creating and catalyzing equitable opportunities for individuals to successfully **lead**, **participate in**, and **benefit from** innovation

LEAD
Positions of power and authority as leaders and decision-makers

PARTICIPATE IN
Roles as the creators -- ideators, designers, entrepreneurs, developers

BENEFIT FROM
Outcomes designed to create impacts of value to schools and communities

Definition Adapted for OECD Paper -- Making Innovation Benefit All: Policies for Inclusive Growth

OUR VISION
A world where students who are furthest from opportunity can learn, grow, and thrive as their authentic selves.

OUR WORK

Centered on the students who are historically and systematically excluded, including students who are Black, Brown and Indigenous; those experiencing poverty; multilingual learners; and students experiencing learning differences.

OUR OUTCOMES

Creating the conditions and the capacity for equity-centered R&D that enable districts to collaborate with communities to create bold, innovative, and sustainable solutions.
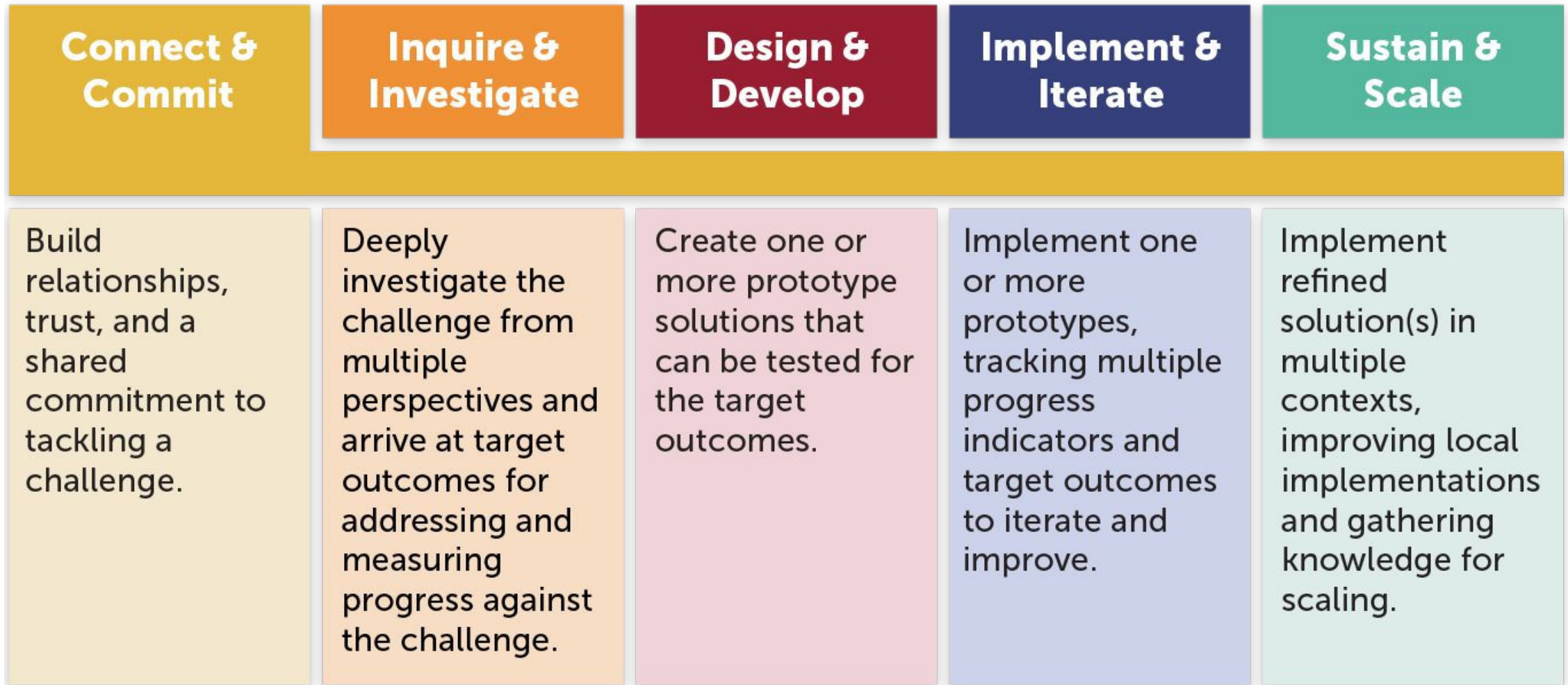
Core Tenets of Inclusive Innovation

Co-Leadership

The work is co-led by stakeholders who are reflective of the diversity of communities and schools to ensure mutual benefit

Center Equity

The solutions are designed to address the systemic inequities that impact students — poverty, race, language, learning differences —and their intersections

Co-Research and Design

The education challenges are co-researched and co-designed to address issues the community deems important and build on what is already working within communities and schools

Reimagine Progress

Progress measures must be multi-dimensional — access, participation and benefit — in recognition of the needs of the whole child

Honor Context

Context and context expertise is prioritized to center the history, culture, and perspectives of those with lived experiences relevant to the education challenge

Build Capacity

The process resources communities to sustain the capacity for equity-centered R&D into the future

Inclusive Innovation Model

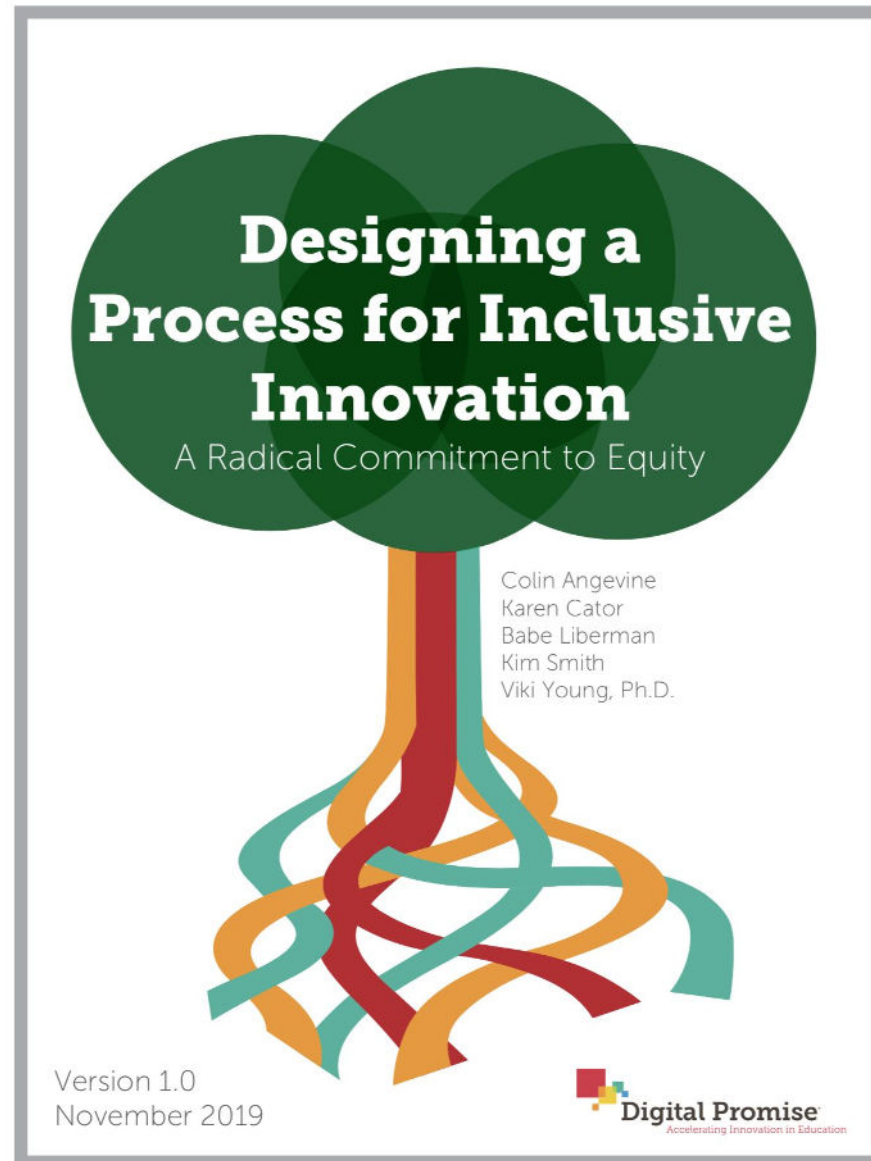| Connect & Commit	Inquire & Investigate	Design & Develop	Implement & Iterate	Sustain & Scale
Build relationships, trust, and a shared commitment to tackling a challenge.	Deeply investigate the challenge from multiple perspectives and arrive at target outcomes for addressing and measuring progress against the challenge.	Create one or more prototype solutions that can be tested for the target outcomes.	Implement one or more prototypes, tracking multiple progress indicators and target outcomes to iterate and improve.	Implement refined solution(s) in multiple contexts, improving local implementations and gathering knowledge for scaling.

Equity-first practices: Engagement, Capacity Building, Reflection, Recognition

Putting the Model into Action

Designing a
Process for Inclusive
Innovation

A Radical Commitment to Equity

Colin Angevine
Karen Cator
Babe Liberman
Kim Smith
Viki Young, Ph.D.

Version 1.0
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Accelerating Innovation in Education

[Designing a Process for Inclusive Innovation](#)

Student-Designed Writing Experiences

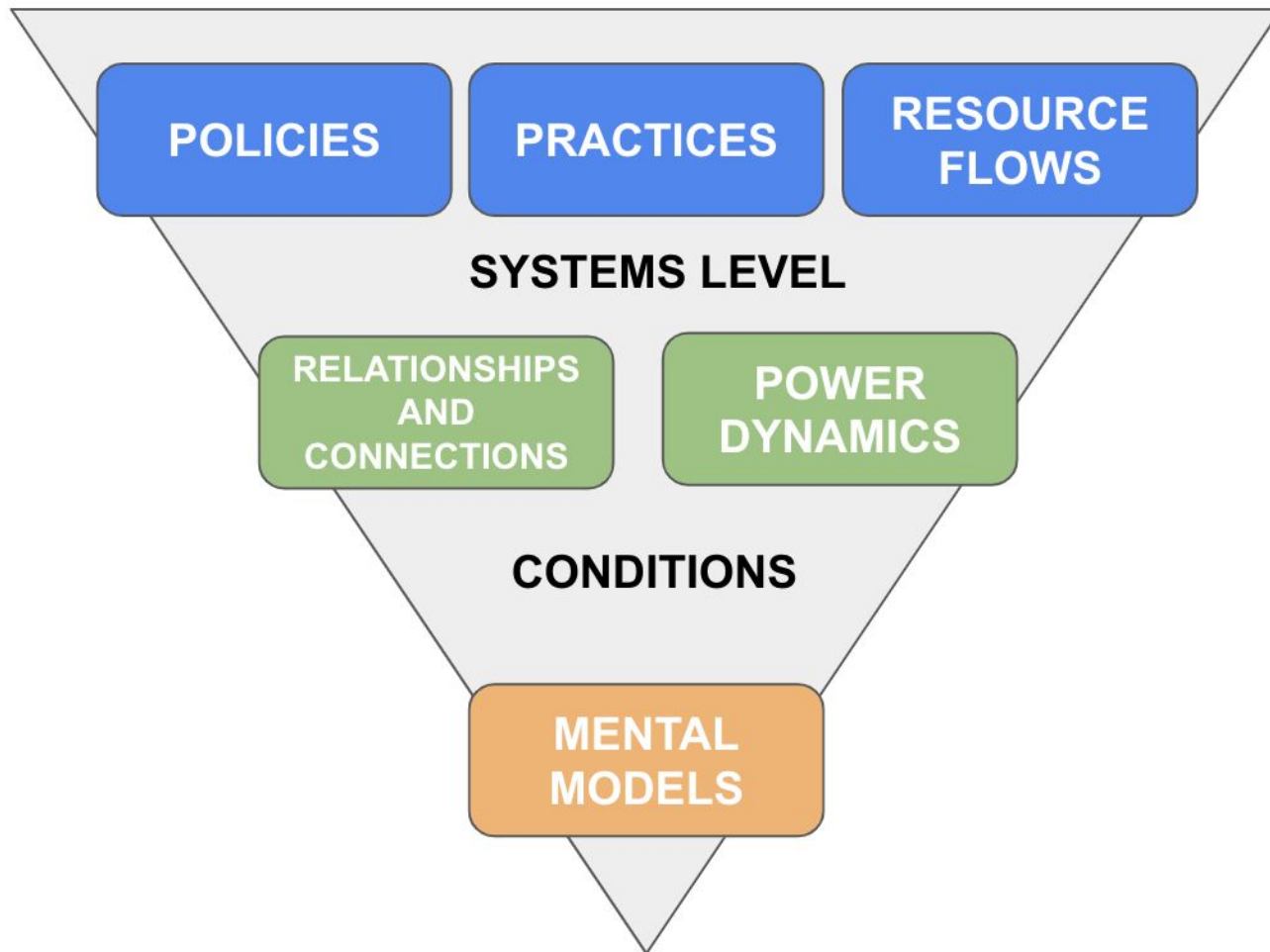| 01	VOICE	• My ideas are valued and topics are relevant to my interests
02	CHOICE	• I have agency in how I investigate a topic and demonstrate my learning
03	CONTRIBUTION	• I am recognized and rewarded for my participation in co-designing learning

Interactive Writing Wall	Students share and receive constructive peer feedback on their writing in any genre, pose questions and generate student community discussion, supported by tech platform
Small Writing Groups	In-person, safe space for students to share expression in varied formats, in groups formed around common interests, to build confidence

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Equitable Systems Transformation
Unpacking District's Mental Models

POLICIES **PRACTICES** **RESOURCE FLOWS**

SYSTEMS LEVEL

RELATIONSHIPS AND CONNECTIONS **POWER DYNAMICS**

CONDITIONS

MENTAL MODELS

How can we **create equitable college and career experiences** to give Black and Brown students life-ready skill sets?

How can we intentionally **increase high school graduation and A-G completion rates** among English Language Learners?

How can we address the **disportionality in our exclusionary discipline data** for Black and African American students?

How can the district **prepare teachers and staff to be culturally proficient** and competent?

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Mental Health and Racial Trauma
Developing Community-Centered Supports

There needs to be a structure, training, and processes in place so teachers feel they are able to discuss race when opportunities or situations arise or are brought to them by students.

There is a stigma around going to therapy. Mental health supports are not framed to make the experience positive.

People pretend that racism does not happen. If it does not happen, it does not exist.

12-member Core Team of district leaders, teachers, students, school board members, parents, and community members conducted a root cause analysis

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Activity

Centering Context Expertise

"Content Experts are professionals, staff in your organization, service providers, and leaders with formal power who have knowledge, tools, and resources to address the issue."

*"**Context Experts** are people with lived experience of the situation, including children and youth. They are the people who experientially know about the issue."*

—Tamarack Institute

"And without them saying that that's not working or without someone actually … speaking on this item that actually lived that experience and telling you that those things don't work or this is what they need or maybe this might make a difference, I think the group would have been more of a, 'We're just going to kind of fix it,' but not fixing it."

—Parent, Core Team Member, Inclusive Innovation pilot project

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Context Expertise at the Center

- Research together with full permission and participation of those most affected by the problem we are trying to solve

- Who should we listen to? What should we listen for/ask? Where/how should we listen?
- Consider racial inequity inherent in the system
- Prioritize student/youth perspectives

- What assumptions are you making?
- What information are you bringing to bear to make sense of the data? Does everyone have access to the same information?
- How does your lived experience and culture influence your interpretation of the data?

- Value non-traditional forms of data, including stories and examples from lived experience

- Engaging community stakeholders:
  - Inclusively
  - Appropriate to the local context
  - Demonstrate respect for their knowledge, experience, insights, and willingness to share

Diagram segments:
- Full participation
- Expanded definition of "data"
- Producer and respondent
- Making meaning
- Empathy stance
- Perspective on root causes

Center: Context expertise

Breakouts: You Are a Researcher

If you had the opportunity to reimagine a local community learning space, what information would you need to make that decision?

What do you notice about multiple ways of gathering data, or the different types of data that can inform a decision?
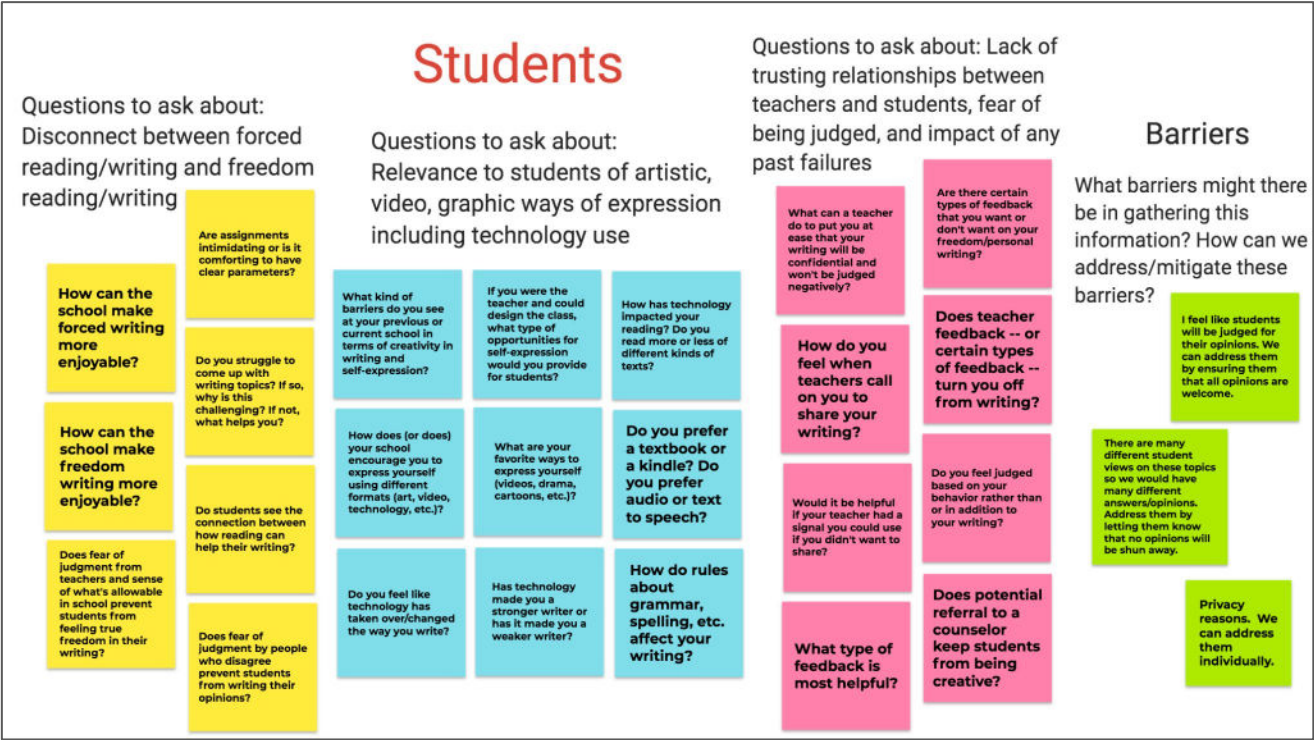
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Context Expertise in Action

Co-leadership/Co-design with Those Closest to the Challenge

Determining root causes
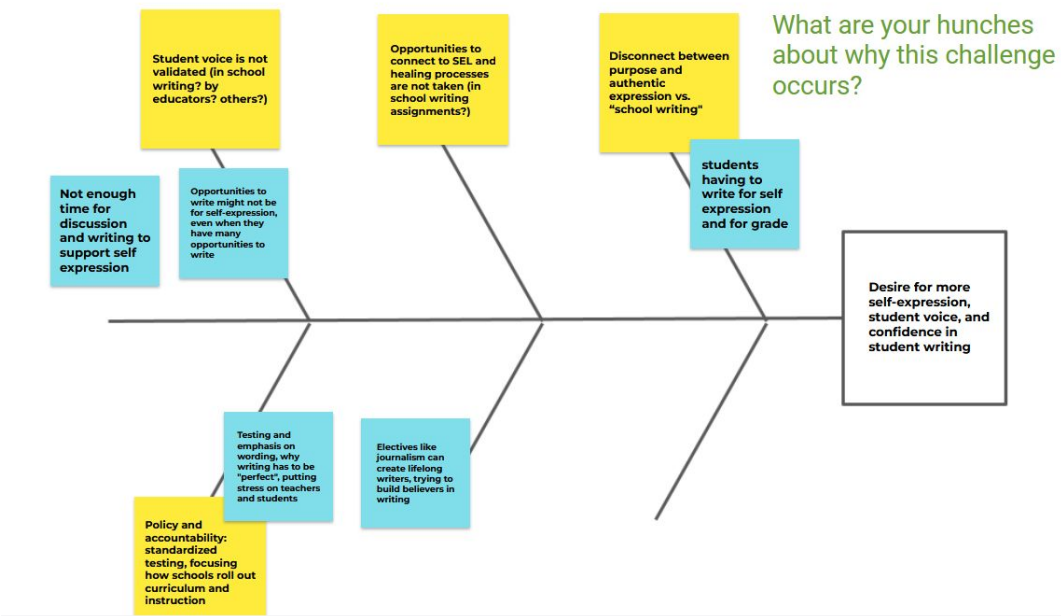
Generating, analyzing, and interpreting data

to define the problem, articulate desired outcomes, and develop a solution that centers the needs of students furthest from opportunity

An Example in Progress

Community-District Core team

Priority Root Causes
- Disconnect between forced reading/writing and freedom reading/writing
- Relevance to students of artistic, video, graphic ways of expression, including technology use
- Lack of trusting relationships between teachers and students, fear of being judged, and impact of any past failures

Examined through focus groups with over 40 community stakeholders, led by Core team members

Priority Problem Statements
- Teachers need innovative strategies to help them design authentic writing opportunities that will support and nurture scholars' creative expression through a medium of their choice
- Scholars need opportunities to use their distinctive creativity to enhance their learning through writing across all content areas

Desired Outcomes
- Students demonstrate increased confidence in writing
- Students take up opportunities for authentic, creative expression through different avenues
- Students write across content areas

An Example in Progress

Journey Map: Understanding Intended Beneficiary

Stretching Solution Concepts: Innovation X Equity

Focus groups with students, parents, and teachers to receive feedback on priority solution concepts
- Interactive writing gallery
- Small writing groups
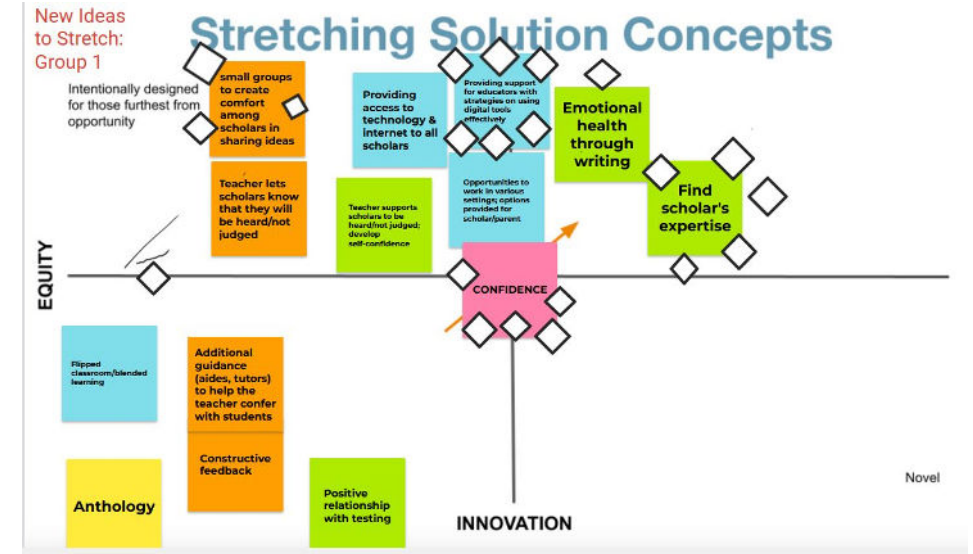
Iterate to refine solution concept, using stakeholder-generated design criteria and specifying benefits, features, key components leading to development and implementation

Emerging Findings

Context Expertise Valued

Based on Inclusive Innovation participants' perspectives, community members' contributions reflect moral stance, views of reality, and practical and instrumental considerations

- Bring a human picture of what students are like outside of school, where they can express their frustrations and hardships in "safe" spaces
- Are necessary because "it takes a village"
- Advocate for students
- Provide a dose of reality to educators who might be in their own "bubble" and prevent them from being in their "silo"
- Offer "objective" views and perspectives of "reality on the ground"
- Create connections between what students are learning in school and the "real world"
- Know the "local culture" and lived experience of historical discrimination in the community
- Use their lived experience to "help explain how to fix it [the identified problems]"
- Give access to community resources that educators may not know about
- Build support across the community and access different networks

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Context Experts as Equity Advocates

"I knew everything about the dominant culture, but the dominant culture didn't know anything about me. My whole being was invisible. **I don't want our students to feel invisible in the classroom until they go to an HBCU.** *I don't want our little Black boys and girls, our children of color, to feel like they aren't King of the World."*

—Community Member, Core Team Member, Inclusive Innovation pilot project

"…we had people from different viewpoints, obviously… I think that we had the adults who were obviously from those context experience areas and stuff. Like [Community Member], obviously. And with all of us together, we were able to keep racial equity in mind."

—Student, Core Team Member, Inclusive Innovation pilot project

Emerging Themes
Why Participants Think Student Voice Matters

Participants expressed students' rightful place in co-researching and co-designing solutions to education issues

> *"I knew that I kind of had to make sure that we were really keeping in mind the student perspective"* —Student

> *"I was like, 'Hey, I'm actually getting listened to.' Because as a student, because I'm young, I feel like I don't get listened to as often as I feel like students should, which kind of downplays the whole role of trying to make things better for the students because our voices are not being heard."* —Student

Students' voices matter in framing the problem and knowing what kind of solution would make a difference

> *"[I]t's like adults making a decision for kids, which they don't even know the problems to."* —Student

> *"I think we would have wound up with a bunch of adult solutions that we thought would help kids."* —Parent

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Emerging Themes
Conditions for Student Voices to be Heard

Critical mass of students and protected discussion space helped alleviate some pressure

> *"So being able to talk one on one with another student… It really helped us hash out the ideas and make them into actual ideas before we presented them to the adults."* –Student

Adults need to learn to listen

> *"[T]he district decision-makers don't exactly all the time know what's best for the students themselves, and we're the ones that are sitting there for eight hours."* –Student

> *"I think because …the voices of the administrators and the teachers were so strong, …I don't think [a solution] would have really centered around the student voice as much…. I think that's something that we probably would have missed if we didn't really talk to students."* –Student

Intentional facilitation and adult champions

> *"Everyone on the team knew I had to be a part… -and they wanted to check with me for validation before they did anything further."* –Student

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Emerging Findings from Inclusive Innovation: An Equity-Centered R&D Model

Context Expertise in Inclusive Innovation: Understanding, Integrating, and Building

In Their Own Voices: Participants' Perspectives on Honoring Student Voice

Capacity Building in Communities to Achieve Equity-Centered Educational Opportunities

Fostering Racial Equity Through Inclusive Innovation

Using Inclusive Innovation to Create Equity-Centered Educational Outcomes

Emerging Findings from Inclusive Innovation

Focus on Your Problem of Practice

Context Expertise in Your Problem of Practice

Identify a current problem of practice in your work

Consider:

- How do you identify context expertise for your problem of practice? Who are the intended beneficiaries?

- How are those with context expertise and beneficiaries part of decisionmaking? Why?

- In your experience, what strategies have been successful in fully incorporating context expertise in decisionmaking?

- What barriers, if any, inhibit their deeper involvement?

- What conditions need to be in place to elevate context expertise for your problem of practice?

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Breakouts

Share your problem of practice briefly and one question you invite your small group participants to consult on

Come back for large group share out and closing

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Thank you!

Get in touch

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