

# Being an Equity- Oriented Educator: Centering equity in everyday practice

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Presented by:

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December 17, 2015



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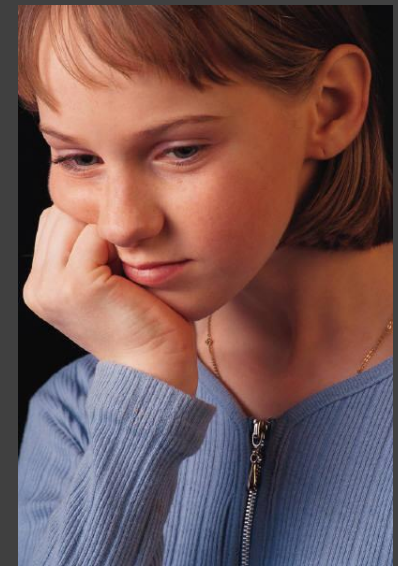
Director

Great Lakes Equity Center

# Objectives

Participants will be able to

- **Explain** what it means to “center” equity in instruction and learning
- **Describe** the three Cs for centering equity in daily practice
- **Reflect** on one’s own practice in consultation and intervention planning



*How do I know school is a place for me ... a place where I can achieve?*

*Can I be successful in school and still be me?*

Do my teachers, principals and other adults in my school believe I can achieve to high standards? How do I know?

# Equity-Oriented Practitioners...

**ensure school** policies, practices, interactions, and resources, are **representative** of, constructed by, and responsive to all students such that each student has **access** to, can **meaningfully participate**, and make progress in high-quality learning experiences. Equity-oriented educators work to empower all students towards self-determination and commit to reducing disparities in **outcomes across student groups** .

(Fraiser, 2001; Great Lakes Equity Center, 2011)

# How do inequities show up in schools?



# Centering equity .....

the overall **approach** one takes in delivering instruction, using curricular materials, making educational decisions, including student discipline; and interacting with students and their families.

the **lens** through which educators see their students and their students' learning.

the **filter** through which educators **listen** to how students express their needs and desires.

# Diversity

Each individual is unique and their differences should be accepted and respected

Includes dimensions of race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, socio-economic status, age, physical abilities, religious beliefs, political beliefs, or other ideologies

It is about understanding each other and moving beyond simple tolerance to embracing and celebrating the rich dimensions of diversity contained within each individual.

# Equity

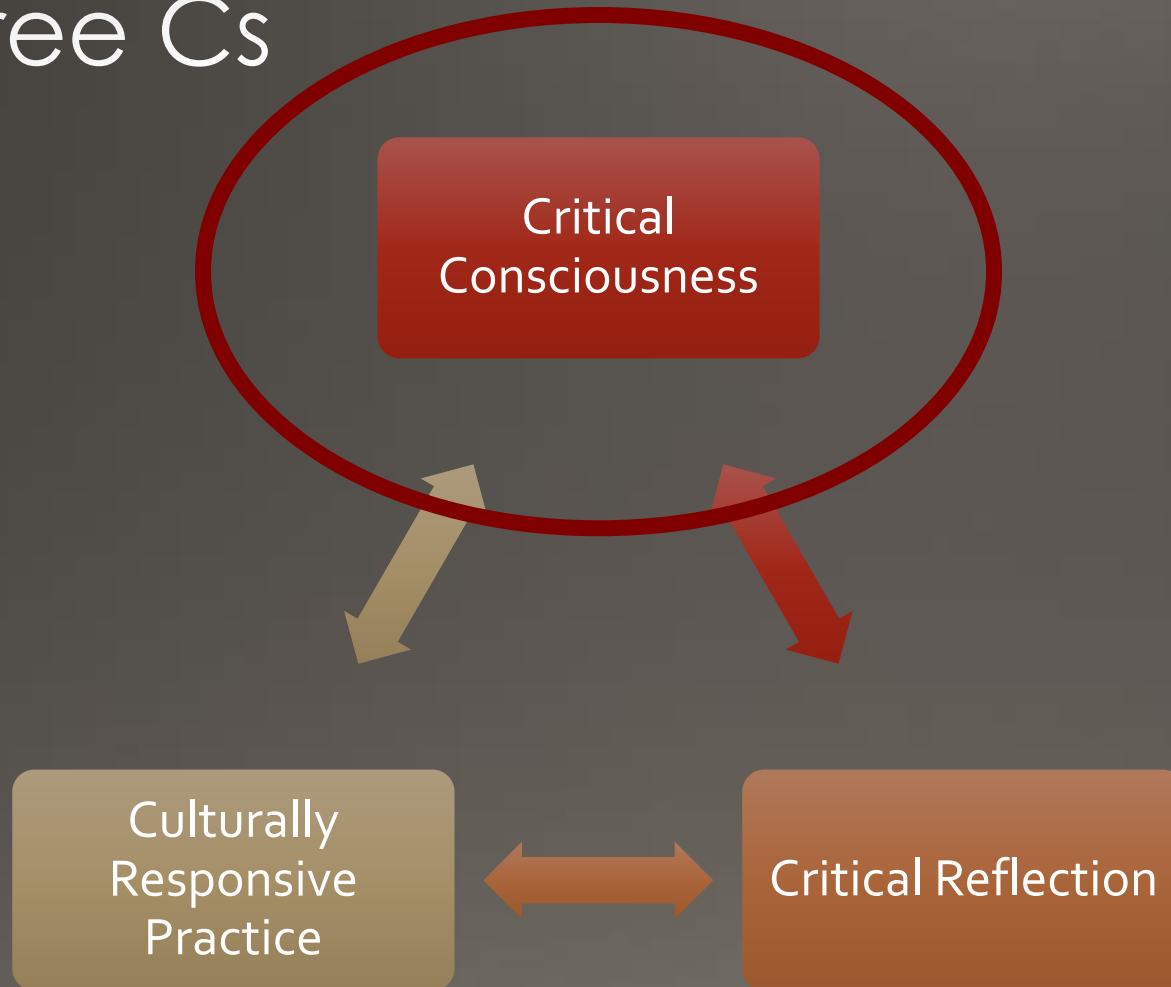
Personal and social circumstances - such as gender, socio-economic status, race, national origin or ability – should not be an obstacle to achieving educational potential

Equal is not equitable. Equitable policies and practices address opportunity gaps by providing the supports necessary for *all* students to be successful

It involves access, meaningful participation, and outcomes and debunks deficit ideologies.



# Centering equity in everyday practice requires a critical stance: The three Cs



# Critical Consciousness

**The willingness and ability to see how [implicit bias], power and privilege are at work to systematically advantage some while simultaneously disadvantaging others**

**(Radd & Kramer, under review, p. 7).**

# Implicit Bias, Power & Privilege

## Implicit bias

refers to the attitudes or stereotype that affect our understanding, actions, and decisions in an unconscious manner (Blair, 2002; Rudman, 2004, in Staats, 2014)

12/17/2015

## Power

is the legitimate control of, or access to, those institutions [resources and opportunities] sanctioned by the state [authority] (Barbara Major)

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## Privilege

refers to any advantage that is unearned, exclusive, and socially conferred (Allan Johnson)

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# Implicit Bias

The **attitudes** or stereotype that affect our **understanding, actions, and decisions** in an **unconscious** manner. These biases are **activated** involuntarily and **without** an **individuals' awareness** or intentional control. (Blair, 2002; Rudman, 2004, in Staats, 2014)

We are bombarded everyday with messages that influence our thoughts and behaviors without our awareness.



[Derren Brown - Subliminal Advertising](#)

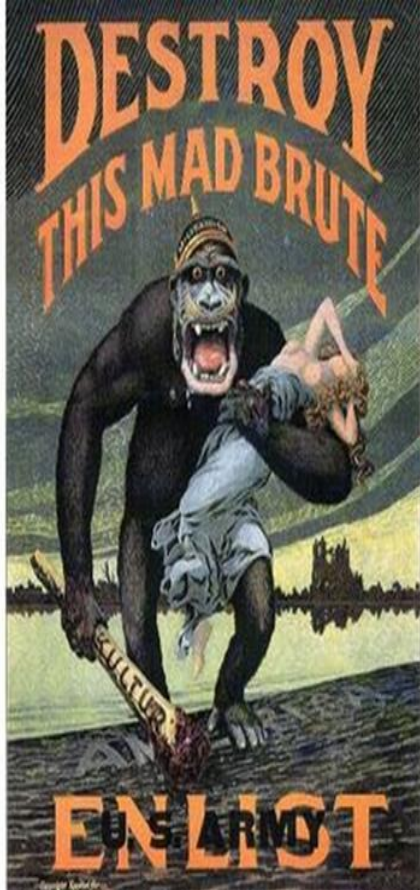
# HAVING COURAGEOUS CONVERSATIONS



What reactions do you have from the video?

What connections can you make in terms of perceptions or ideas related to race, gender, dis/ability etc.?

What messages do we  
receive about race  
through media content.  
images, conversations  
with friends, families,  
co-workers, etc?



Former officer Darren Wilson in his grand jury testimony in the shooting of Michael Brown.

“Brown was a demon, a monster with terrible resilience and incredible strength. When I grabbed him the only way I can describe it is I felt like a 5-year-old holding onto Hulk Hogan.”

Darren Wilson is 6 foot 4 inches and 210 pounds. Michael Brown was 6’5” and 290 pounds.



# How are children are viewed?

Research published in the *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* found that African-American boys as young as 10 were significantly less likely to be viewed as children than were their white peers. "In black boys' lives, ... there are more situations that demand that they be adults than there are in the average white boys' lives, and the problem is we rarely see our black children with the basic human privilege of getting to act like children." (Goff, 2014 NPR)

In a study that reviewed how teachers described student behavior related to the return of school library book, found that "when a white student fails to return their library book, they're seen as forgetful and when a black student fails to return a library book, terms like 'thief' or 'looter' were used." (Ferguson, 2001)

What are the dominant messages about race, gender, dis/ability etc. adults and children receive through media, images, conversations with families, friends, co-workers etc.

African American and Latino boys are not interested in science and higher level math courses

Students who live in poverty deal with too many neighborhood issues to be able to compete in high level courses

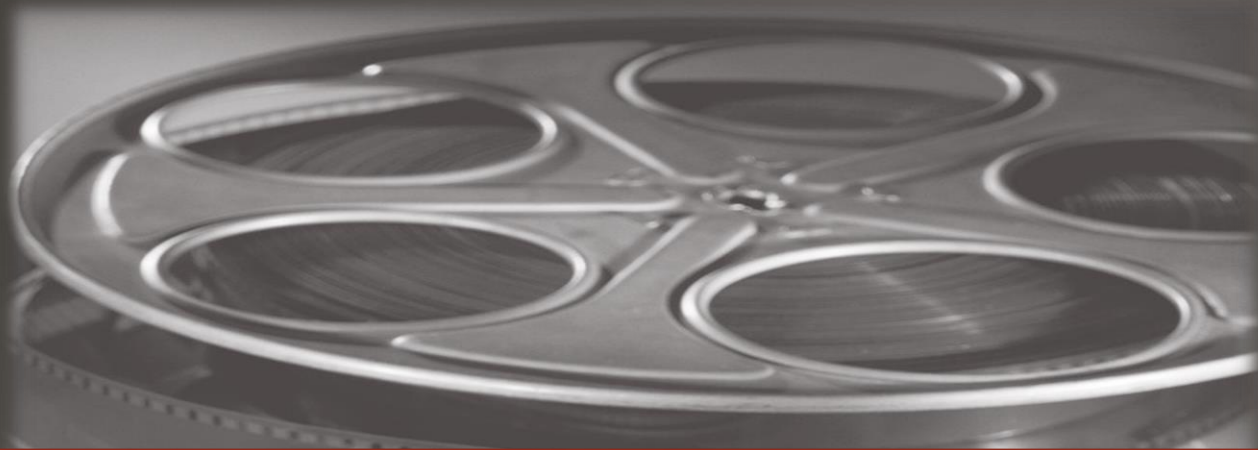
Our girls are not interested in AP Math

Students with dis/abilities need to focus on basic skills

EL students need to speak English at home and school, supporting their home language will only interfere with their learning

If he would just cut his hair, he wouldn't get picked on by the other boys.

# INTERNALIZED MESSAGES ABOUT RACE AND BEHAVIOR



**Anderson Cooper**  
**A Look at Race Relations through a**  
**Child's Eyes**

# INTERNALIZED MESSAGES ABOUT RACE AND BEHAVIOR



# HAVING COURAGEOUS CONVERSATIONS



The video clip demonstrated that biases about race are internalized at a very young age. What implications do you see for educators' role in addressing racial bias ... how about other biases (e.g. gender, dis/ability, ses etc.)?

# Complicating Matters: Intersectionality

The extent to which various biological, social and cultural categories such as gender, race, class, ability, sexual orientation, religion, caste, age and other axes of identity interact on multiple levels and related systems of oppression or discrimination.

Crenshaw, 1989

# How does intersectionality help us better understand the dynamics of power and privilege and the complexities of systemic injustices and inequality?

Helps us understand that oppressions within society do not act independently of one another. Instead, forms of oppression interrelate, creating systems of oppression that reflect the "intersection" of multiple forms of discrimination.

Helps us understand that there is no singular experience of an identity.

Helps us understand that seemingly discrete forms and expressions of oppression are shaped by one another.

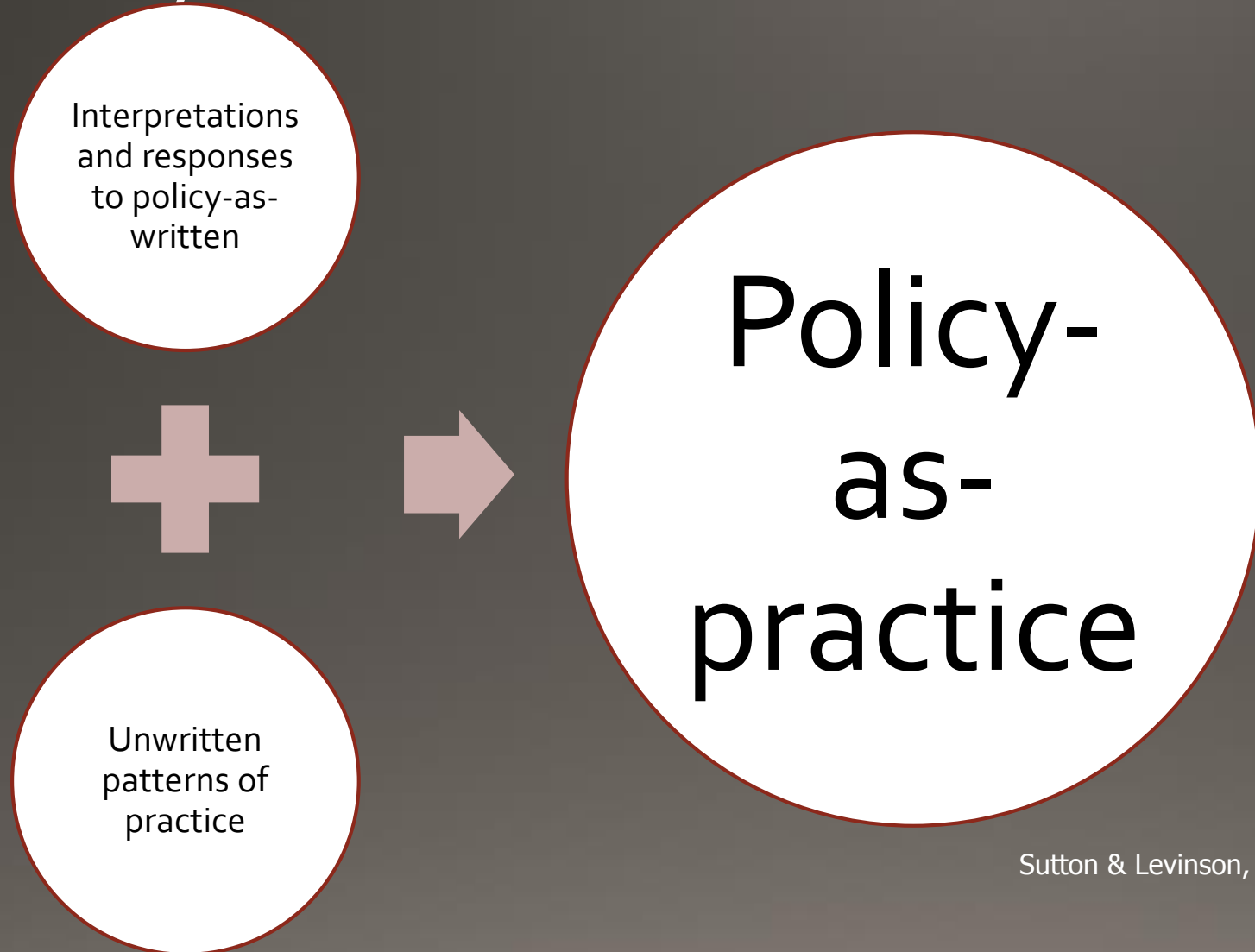
Implicit bias about difference  
contributes to policies and  
practices (power)

that privilege some ....

and marginalize others.



# The Reciprocal Influence of Policy and Practice



Sutton & Levinson, 2001

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Policy is never simply implemented. Rather, it is interpreted, negotiated, and appropriated by multiple actors in educational environments

(Brown, Maguire, & Ball, 2010; Levinson et al., 2009).

King Thorius, K.A., Maxcy, B.D., Macey, E., & Cox, A. (2014)

Local policy appropriation may produce inequitable outcomes because many policies stimulate intensely rooted issues of power, privilege, status, and difference on the basis of race, language, [gender dis/ability] and class (Artiles, 2011).



Local Policy Example

# Dress Code

# Two examples: Dress Code

On June 14, officials at Horizon Science Academy in Lorian, Ohio sent a letter to parents, outlining the school's new dress code for the upcoming school year. Among other rules regarding hats and tattoos, the regulations said that "afro-puffs and small twisted braids, with or without rubber bands are NOT permitted,"



7-year-old Jakobe was sent to the principal's office at Arrowhead Elementary School in Santa Clara, Utah. His father, Gary Sanden, said administrators told him the hairstyle violated school policy. School officials called his parents and asked them to get it cut

Federal and State Policy Example

# Special Education

# Contributing to disproportionality in Special Education referrals

What teachers believed was the reason for disproportionality in special education referrals

Poor and racial/ethnic minority students are viewed as not “ready” for school by educators

What researchers found as actual contributors to disproportionality for special education referrals.

Special education is viewed as fixing struggling students

Minimally articulated core curriculum and consistent support of teaching ability

Inconsistent knowledge of the purpose and implementation of curriculum, assessment or instructional strategy.

Intervention services for struggling learners are not well structured .

# How are groups of students experiencing schooling in the U.S.?

African American, Latino/a, students with disabilities and LGBTQ students are overrepresented in a range of school disciplinary outcomes, including classroom referrals, out-of-school suspension and zero tolerance–related expulsions.

Schools serving more students of color are less likely to offer advanced courses and gifted and talented programs than schools serving mostly white populations, and students of color are less likely than their white peers to be enrolled in those courses and programs within schools that have those offerings.

The provision of strong teachers and stable teacher workforces is less likely to occur in schools with the highest enrollments of students of color and students with disabilities.

Schools serving the most students of color having lower quality or fewer resources than schools serving largely white populations even within the same district.



# How do implicit bias, power and privilege play out in schools?

Disparities in policy implementation & lower tolerance for mistakes for some students

- Disproportionality
- Overrepresentation in disciplinary actions and harsher consequences

Lower academic expectations for some students & disparities in resource allocation

- Opportunity Gaps
- Achievement Gaps

Curricular and instructional decisions , content and materials

- Curricula Bias
- One-Size-Fits- All Instructional Strategies

Many moment-to-moment decisions made every day

- Daily Adult - Student Interactions



# Some Examples

# ... in what behaviors prompt discipline referrals

White students are referred more for:	Black and Latino Students color referred more for:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>■ Smoking</li><li>■ Vandalism</li><li>■ Leaving w/o permission</li><li>■ Obscene Language</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>■ Disrespect</li><li>■ Excessive Noise</li><li>■ Threat</li><li>■ Loitering</li></ul>

# ... in the rigor of assignments

## Grade 10 Writing Assignment High-level Assignment (in low poverty schools)

A frequent theme in literature is the conflict between the individual and society. From literature you have read, select a character who struggled with society. In a well-developed essay, identify the character and explain why this character's conflict with society is important.

## Grade 10 Writing Assignment Low – Level Assignment (same district in high poverty schools)

Write a composition of at least 4 paragraphs on Martin Luther King's most important contribution to this society. Illustrate your work with a neat cover page. Neatness counts.

# ... in the feedback provided to students

A major study, led by Rutgers-Newark psychology professor Kent D. Harber, indicates that public school teachers under-challenge minority students. Study found that when teachers were presented a poorly written essay, they provided more praise and less criticism if they thought the essay was written by a minority student than by a white student.

“The social implications of these results are important; many minority students might not be getting input from [teachers] that stimulates intellectual growth and fosters achievement” (Harber, 2012).

# ... in curricular and instructional materials

Most elementary and secondary U.S. history textbooks offer a romanticized view of the Europeans' experience in the United States whereas most of the experiences of Native Americans and/or Africans in these same lands are either misrepresented or underrepresented (Loewen, 2007).

Many texts marginalize the achievements and significant traditions of many ethnic minority populations living in the United States (Howard, 1999; Loewen, 2007). Research has also shown that additional academic domains such as the natural sciences and English also promote a [Eurocentric] ideological focus (e.g., Solano-Flores & Nelson-Barber, 2001).

# ... in every day interactions with students

## Teacher Actions That Reflect Low Expectations

<b>Affective Tone</b>	<b>Academic Content Interactions</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Less eye contact</li><li>• Smile less</li><li>• Less physical contact</li><li>• More distance from student's seat</li><li>• Engage in less playful or light dialogue</li><li>• Use of comfort talk ("That's ok, you can be good at other things.")</li><li>• Display angry disposition</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Call on less often</li><li>• Provide less wait time</li><li>• Ask less challenging questions</li><li>• Ask less specific questions</li><li>• Delve into answers less deeply</li><li>• Reward them for less rigorous responses</li><li>• Provide answers for students</li><li>• Use simpler modes of presentation and evaluation</li><li>• Do not insist that homework be turned in on time</li><li>• Use comments such as, "Wow, I'm surprised you answered correctly."</li><li>• Use less praise.</li></ul>

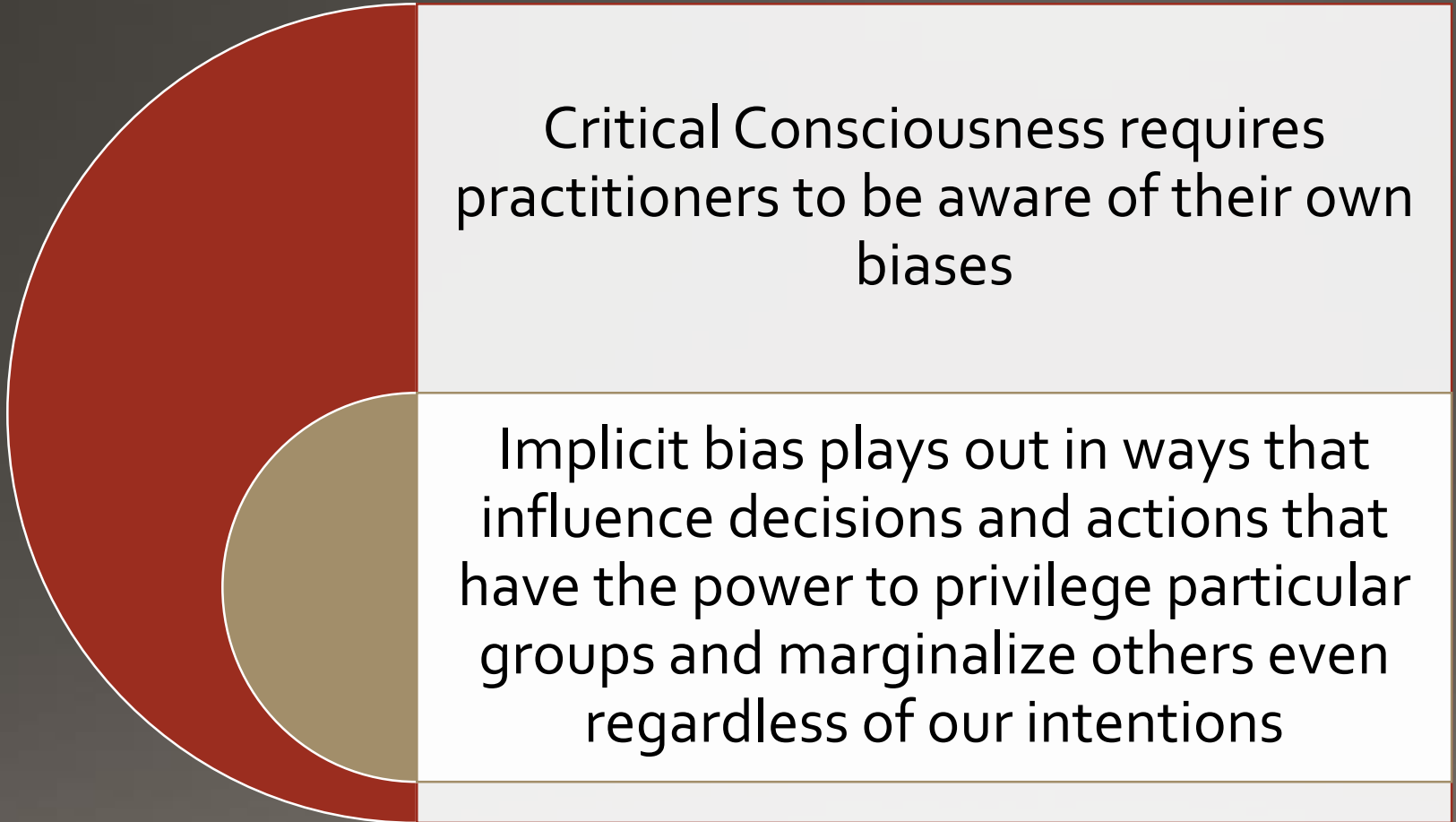
# HAVING COURAGEOUS CONVERSATIONS



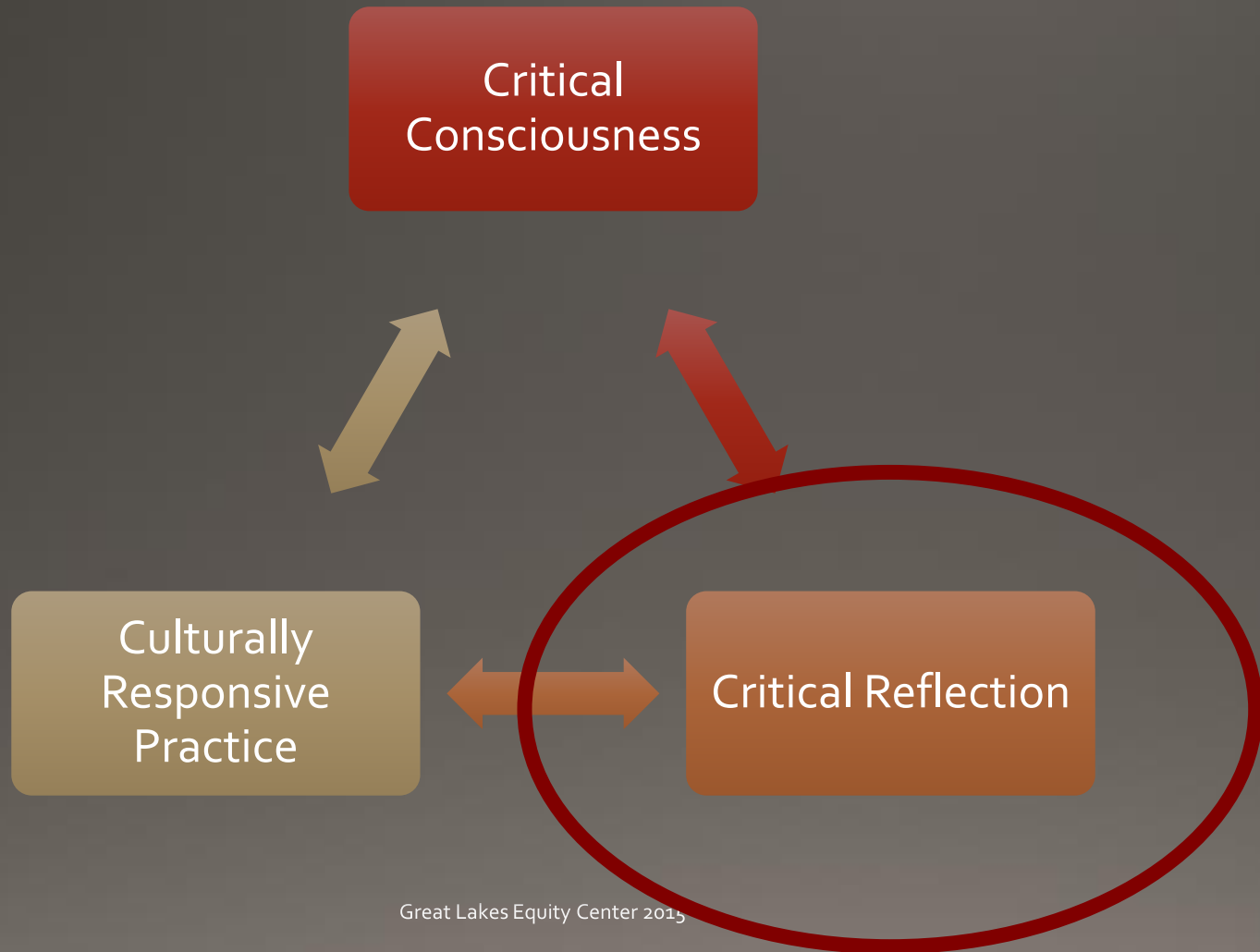
Reflect on examples in your practice where you have observed or experienced either conscious or unconscious bias about a particular student, group of students or families played out in ways that appeared to privileged or marginalized the student, students or families.



# Summarizing Critical Consciousness Slide



# Centering Equity in everyday practice requires a critical stance: The three Cs



# Critical Reflection

To engage in critical reflection is to question the logic and/or assumptions underlying particular ideas, arguments, or social constructions. In the context of schools, this type of reflection often leads individuals to question and act on policies that create or maintain unequal power relations among specific groups (Burbules & Berk, 1999; Freire, 1998).

# Critical Reflection

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Critical reflection encourages practitioners to be willing and able to question, explore and critique ways of behaving and thinking as they engage in workplace experiences (Higgins, 2011).

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Critical reflection allows us to synthesize different perspectives to help explain, justify or challenge what we have encountered in our own or in other people's practice.

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Critical reflection also allows us to analyze what we have learned and how we have learned to enable us to take control of our own professional development. (The Open University, retrieved 12,17,2015)

# Actions for Promoting Critical Reflection

## Examine your own personal identities and biases

- Encourage and create opportunities for staff to reflect on their own personal identities and examine their own biases

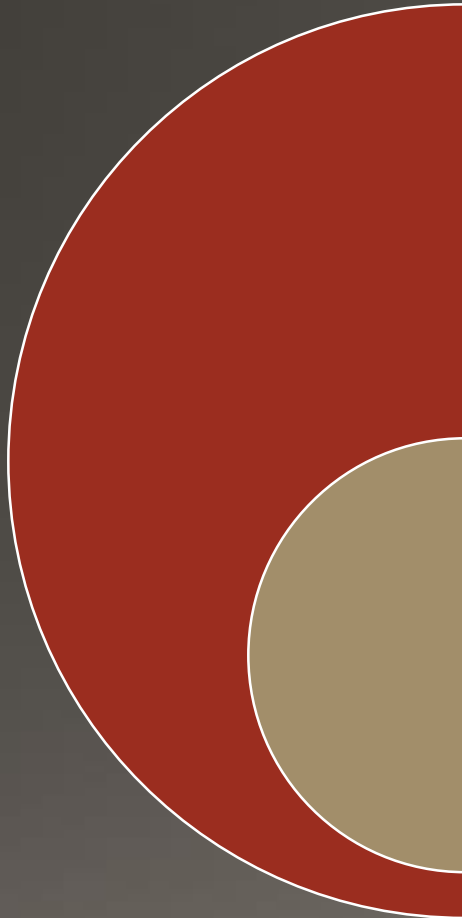
## Get to know the cultural practices of students

- Recognize and acknowledge the diversity of students and families in your school
- Demonstrate curiosity about your students lived experiences, connect with families and community members

## Surface issues of power and privilege

- Collect information about school culture and climate from students, staff and families
- Examine programming, resource allocation and assignment/course rigor etc. along with student participation data disaggregated by student groups to determine gaps in learning opportunities

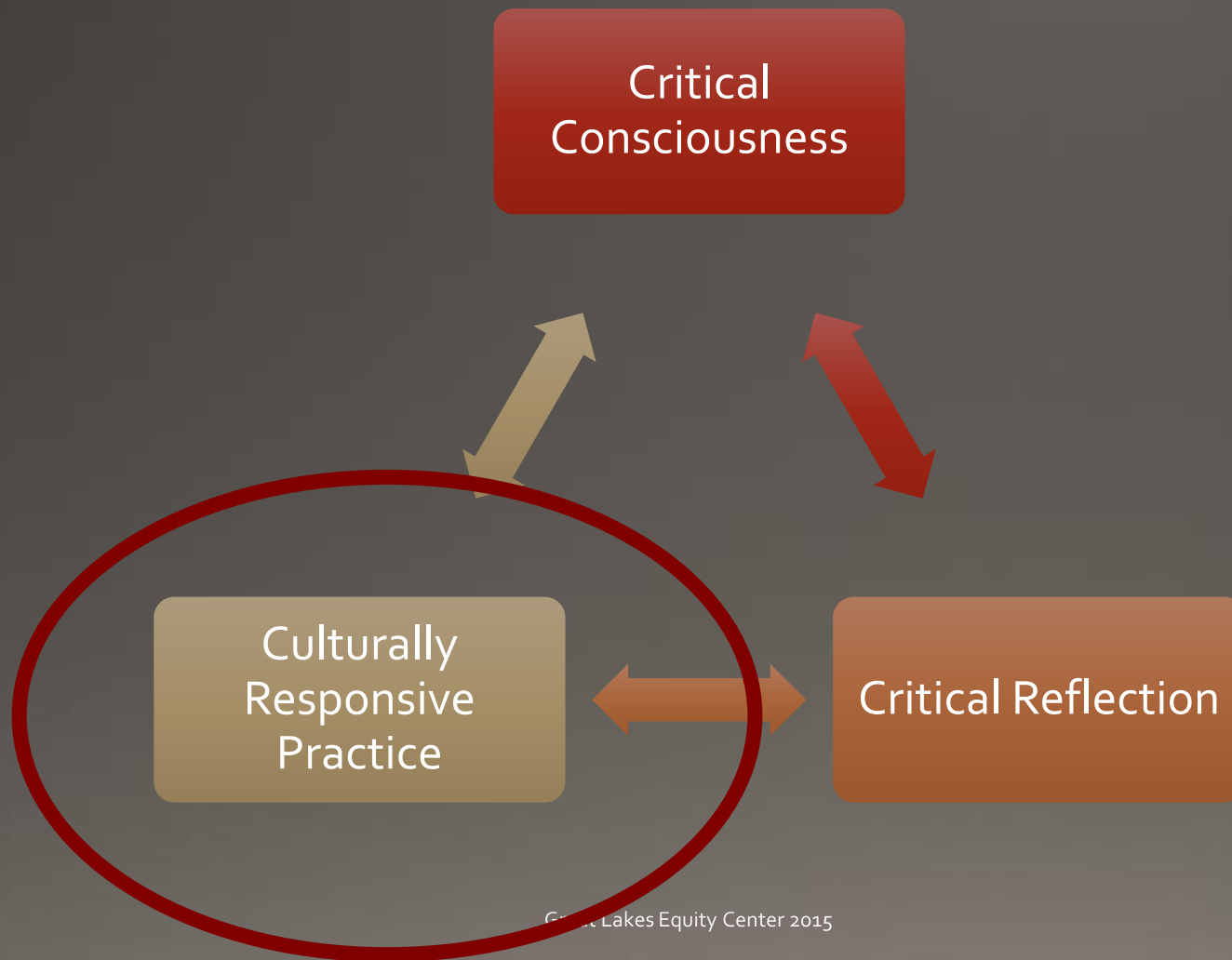
# Summarizing Critical Reflection



Ongoing critical analysis and evaluation of one's practice allows a refocusing of existing knowledge and helps practitioners to generate new knowledge about their individual professional practice (Larrivee & Copper, 2006).

Practitioners must consciously consider the ethical implications and consequences of practices, with self-reflection, deep examination of personal beliefs, and assumptions about students and learning (Larrivee, 2000).

# Centering Equity in everyday practice requires a critical stance: The three Cs



# Learning is Culturally Mediated



Culture is dynamic,  
contextual and  
socially mediated.



What is taught and  
how instruction  
occurs communicate  
what is culturally  
valued.



Learning is mediated  
by social interactions  
with people, tools  
and shared  
experiences.



**The Cultural  
Nature of  
Learning**

**Cultural  
Histories**

**What  
people  
bring with  
them**

**What's  
already  
there**

**The work  
people  
do  
together**

**Institutional Culture**

**The Culture We Create**



“...without consideration of how culture mediates and influences everything we do, the potential for inappropriate eligibility decisions are still present...”

(Harris-Murri, King, & Rostenberg, 2006, p.9)

# Cultural Responsiveness is...

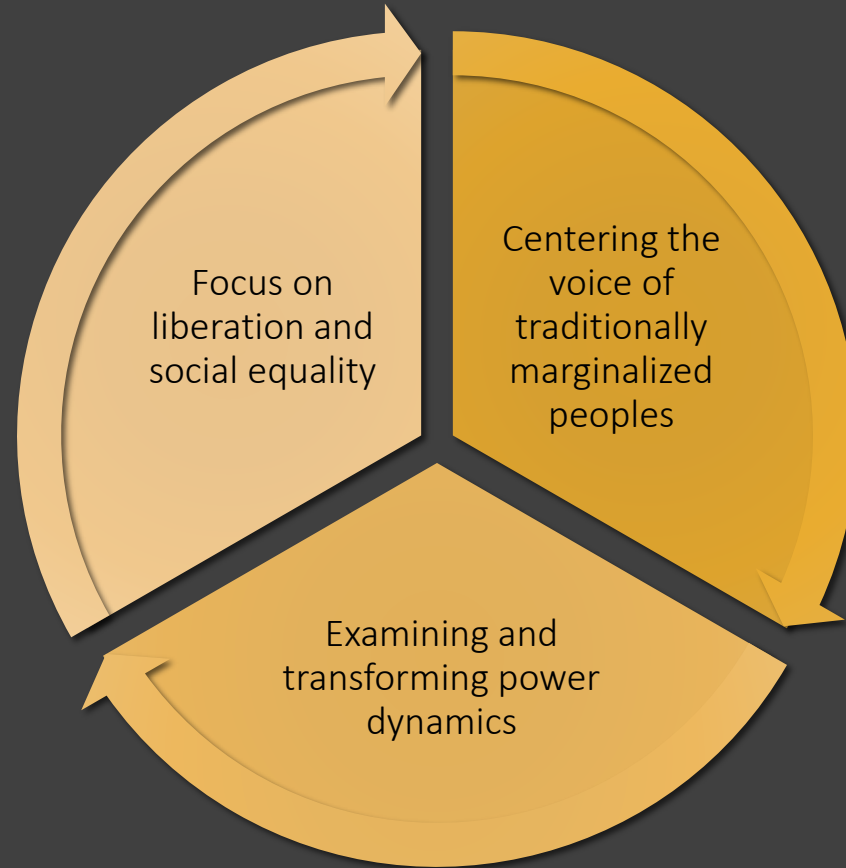
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the valuation, consideration, and integration of individuals' culture, language, heritage and experiences leading to supported learning and development.

# Foundational Concepts

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# Culturally Responsive Practices in School Psychology

Demonstrating appreciative orientation towards difference

- Rather than an deficit orientation

Using language of empowerment

- Rather than language of risk

Inviting and valuing multiple perspectives/data

- Rather than privileging one perspective or data source

Conducting ecological assessments that surface problematic patterns of interactions along racial, gender, class etc. lines

- Rather than observing student interactions absent from an analysis of power differential among actors in the learning context

Facilitating Intervention planning that addresses barriers toward learning in context as well as increases student's self-determination

- Rather than focus on student compliance or decontextualized skill acquisition

## Appreciative Orientation Towards Difference

Positive regard to  
difference

Deficit labels are  
replaced with  
language that places  
the subject back at  
the center of  
discourse

## Language of Empowerment

Language that is  
inclusive

Demonstrate value  
in community

## Multiple Perspectives

Representative

Access

Meaningful

Contribute to  
Outcome

## Critical Ecological Assessments

Conducting ecological assessments with an equity stance that surface power dynamics that prevent equal access to quality learning experiences

## Planning For Self-Determination

A way of thinking, talking, acting, being that create the conditions for all students to be liberated and empowered to reach their full potential

# Culturally Responsive Practices

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Systemic  
Level

Multi-tiered Systems  
of Support

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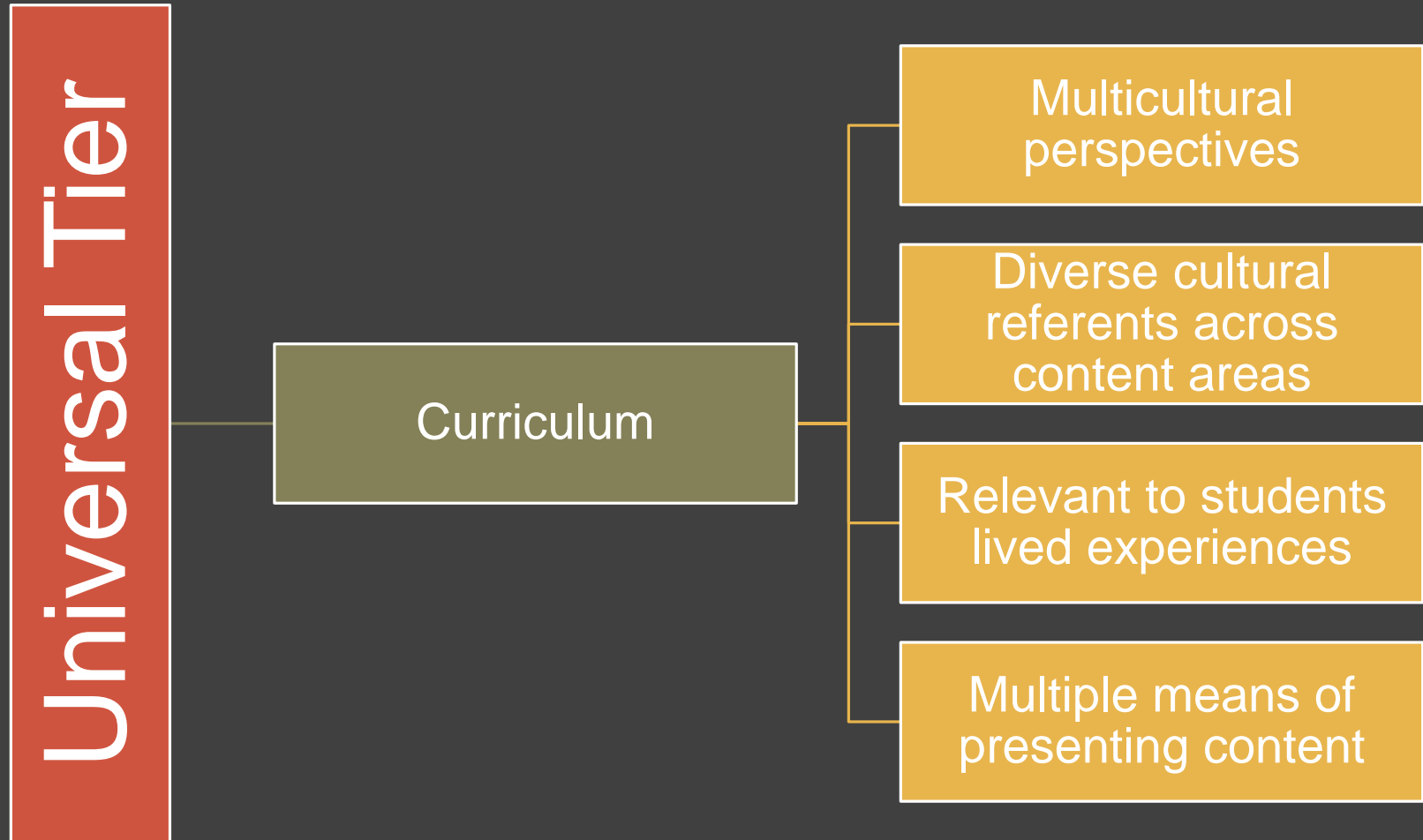
Individual  
Level

Intervention  
Planning

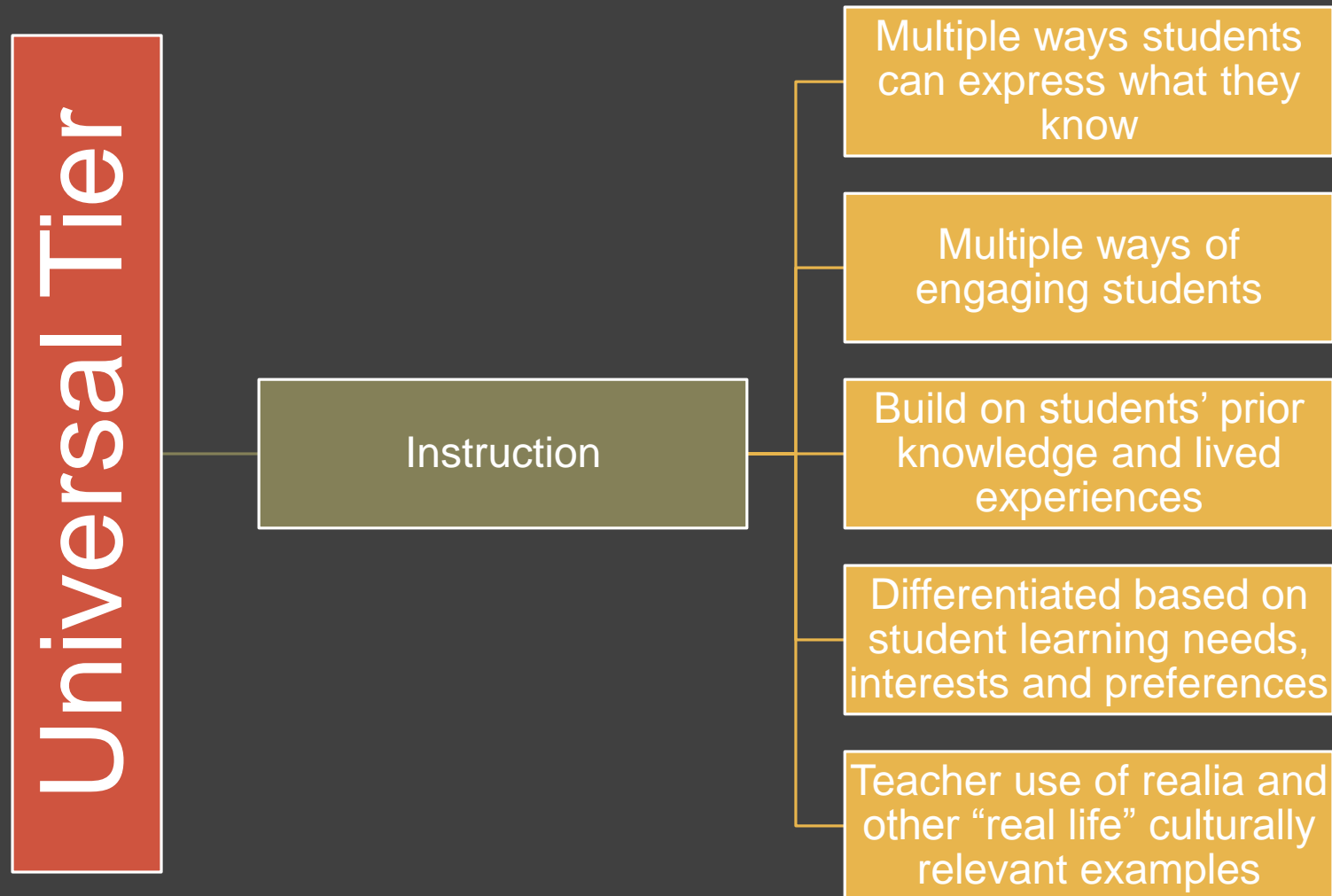
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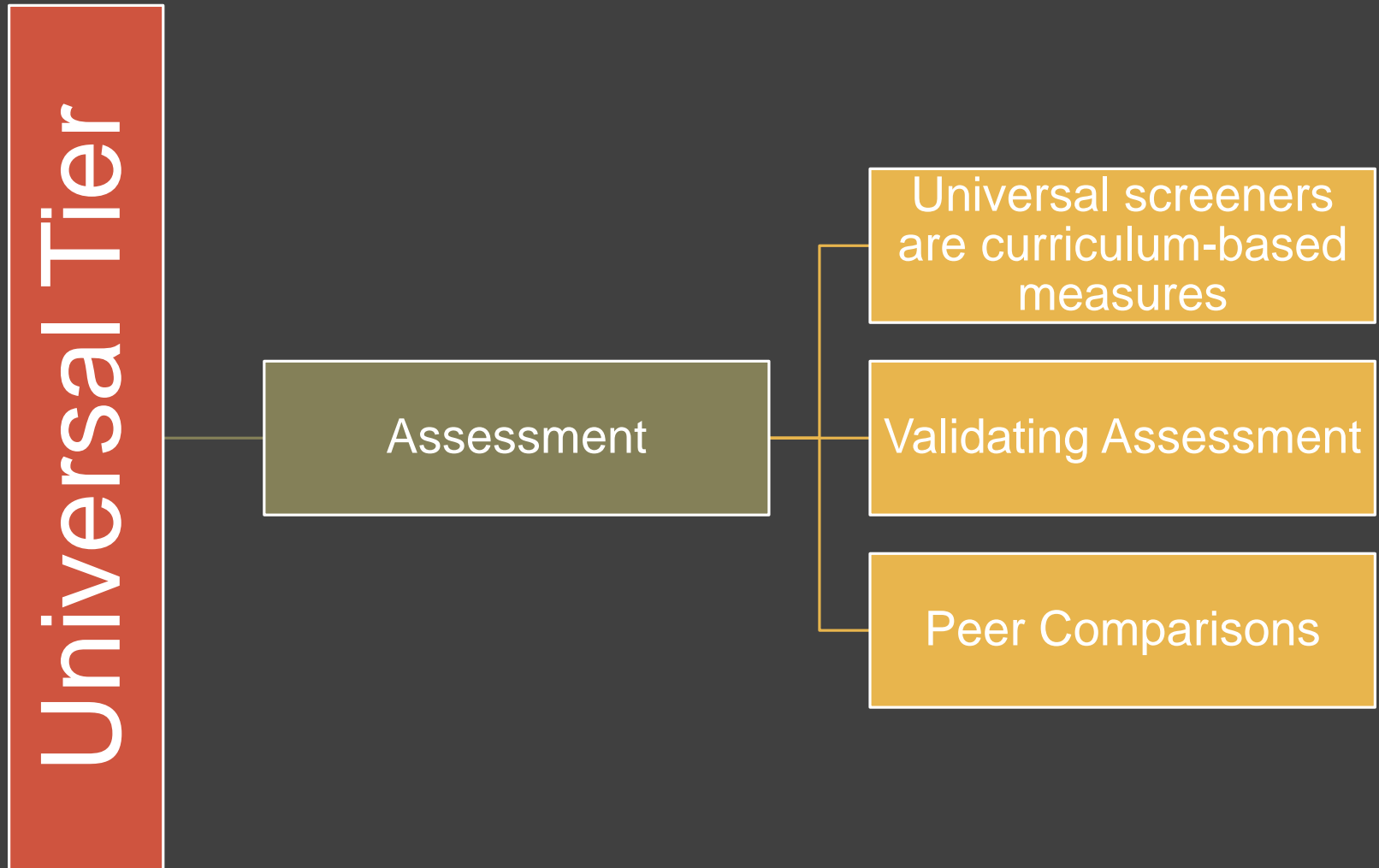
# Considerations



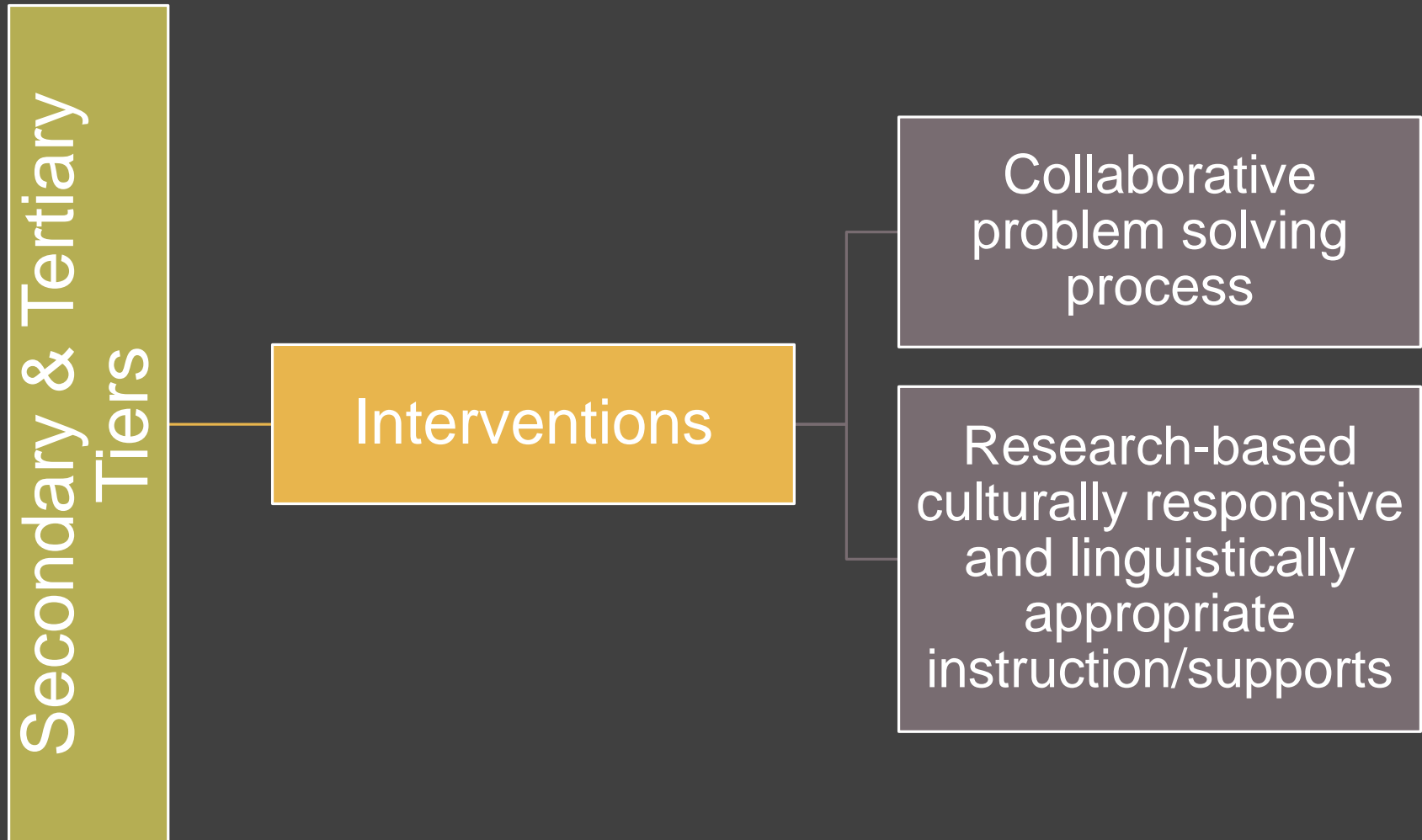
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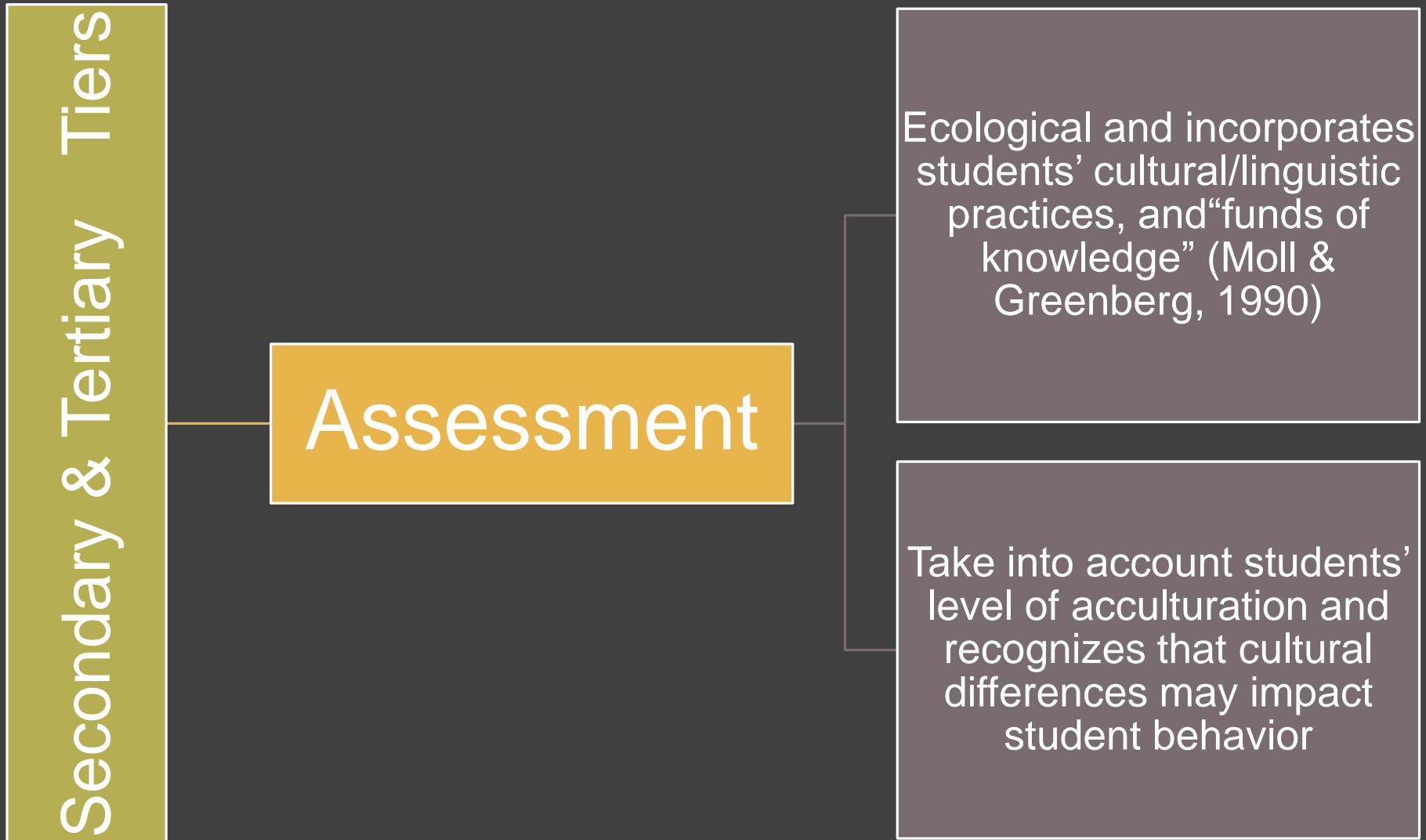
# Considerations



# Considerations



# Considerations



# Monitoring for Disproportionality

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Student data are used to evaluate the effectiveness of interventions and supports used across the three tiers.

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Students accessing and exiting tier two and three supports are examined periodically in terms of student group representation for patterns of disproportionality.

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Consistent overrepresentation of any specific student group requiring tier two and /or tier three supports is addressed by strengthening the responsiveness of tier one or tier two instruction.

# Culturally Responsive Intervention Plan for Individual Learners

Opportunities for student to learn/practice new skills that capitalize on student's funds of knowledge, community assets and areas of strength

Methods of Acknowledgement and Affirmation

Home/Community Connections

Reduction Strategy

Crisis Plan (if needed)

Progress monitoring

Long Term Quality of Life components (Knoster, 2002)

Opportunities to help the student develop a sense of personal and civic efficacy (Banks, 2000)

# Centering Equity in Everyday Practice

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Disrupts and dismantles assumptions, beliefs, and practices that marginalize and disenfranchise students, families and staff.

Equity-oriented educators engage in culturally responsive practices, demonstrating critical consciousness and promote self and group reflection among colleagues, staff and students.



# Wrap Up: 3 -2-1 Reflection

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**3** Key take-aways from this webinar

**2** Immediate next steps to forward this work personally

**1** Thing that you would share with colleagues



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