

COACH WRIGHT PRACTICE SPACE

FACILITATOR'S GUIDE



Becoming a More Equitable Educator: Mindsets and Practices



TEACHING SYSTEMS LAB

Welcome to Coach Wright Facilitator's Guide

This is a guide to help you facilitate the Coach Wright practice space, a digital scenario developed by MIT's Teaching Systems Lab to help teachers rehearse common and challenging classroom moments. In this scenario, participants will experience a simulation where they play the role of a school literacy coach supporting an English language arts (ELA) teacher and her students.

The goal of this activity is to guide educators in a conversation about the [Asset and Deficit Educator Mindsets](#). Participants will talk about how they interpret interactions with students, and how to leverage strengths and help all students thrive in the face of challenging academic work.

We believe that mindsets like Asset and Deficit are often out of balance in schools, and hope that conversations and activities like these will help us begin to rebalance. To learn more about the Educator Mindsets, access our online course, [Becoming a More Equitable Educator: Practices and Mindsets](#).

The practice space should take between 60-90 minutes.

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Getting Ready to Facilitate a Practice Space

PREPARE YOURSELF

- Watch [this video](#) from instructor Justin Reich about facilitating practice spaces.
 - Spend some time looking over the following documents. You'll need to be familiar with them to facilitate effectively.
 - The Coach Wright [scenario](#) itself
 - i. For help navigating TeacherMoments, watch [this tutorial](#).
 - ii. Make sure to fill out the survey at the end (it's different from the one in the course); it helps us understand how people are using and sharing our materials.
 - The [Asset versus Deficit Educator Mindset Table](#)
 - The [Debrief Guide](#) and Mindsets in the Practice Space [handout](#).
 - For more resources on facilitation, see [Appendix A](#).
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SCHEDULE A TIME TO MEET

- We recommend planning 60-90 minutes to do the practice space with a group. A longer time will give you more time to debrief. If you have less than 60 minutes, consider asking participants to complete the practice space individually before meeting.
 - If you are new to facilitating equity conversations, you may want to consider inviting a smaller group of colleagues to try it out with you before sharing with a larger audience.
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GATHER NEEDED MATERIALS

Each participant will need:

- a device with internet access to do the practice spaces. We find laptops and Chromebooks work best for TeacherMoments, while the platform doesn't work as well on mobile devices.
- a copy of the Asset versus Deficit Mindset Table ([Handout 1](#))
- a copy of the Mindsets in Practice Handout ([Handout 2](#))

Facilitating the Practice Space

BEFORE STARTING THE PRACTICE SPACE (5-10 MINUTES)

Facilitator Actions	Suggestions
Set up	Set out a copy of Handouts 1 and 2 for each participant, face down.
Once participants arrive, orient them and frame the simulation	Talk about what you're about to do and how it fits in with shared goals and challenges in your context.
Set norms and expectations	Share that practice spaces are great places to try out responses, try new things and make mistakes in a structured environment. Encourage participants to be open-minded and ready to listen and learn from peers.

DURING THE PRACTICE SPACE DIGITAL SCENARIO (30 MINUTES)

Note that you would skip this part if you chose to have participants do the individual, digital part of the practice space ahead of time.

Facilitator Actions	Suggestions
Connect everyone to the practice space	Share link to Coach Wright , and then troubleshoot as needed <ul style="list-style-type: none">• On the login page, tell everyone to "continue anonymously" instead of logging in• See Appendix C for help troubleshooting
Let them know about the practice space survey	Let them know there will be a survey at the end of the practice space, and encourage them to complete it - either during the workshop or afterwards if they run out of time. This survey is very helpful to us, because it helps us understand how people are using our materials.
Manage time	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Check in about time every ten minutes or so.• Around five minutes before time is up, ask everyone to click forward to the Reflect section, even if they haven't completely finished Enact.
Troubleshoot as needed	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Walk around to see if participants have questions• See Appendix C to troubleshoot.

DEBRIEF GUIDE (20-40 MINUTES)

If you find yourself with 20 minutes or less to debrief, we recommend choosing 5-6 of these prompts.

Facilitator Actions	Suggestions
1. "How did you interpret the events in the scenario on Monday (the summary discussion), and how did you coach Ms. Porter about them?"	Focus particularly on how folks saw the interactions with Jeremy.
2. Ask participants to turn over Handout 1: Asset versus Deficit Educator Mindset Table and briefly review it.	Draw their attention to square 2A: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "Students from every culture can be engaged in learning and experience academic success" Talk about how it's important to avoid making assumptions about students (for example, when Aaliyah and Jeremy didn't raise their hands - we don't know what their norms are).
3. "When and how do traditional school norms (e.g. hand raising, time allowed for bathroom breaks) benefit students?"	Try to elicit ways that school norms can impact students. What are some potential positives? Negatives?
4. "What were your reactions to the events on Tuesday (Jeremy leaving group work to use the restroom and the interaction with Coach Wright)?"	As you discuss Coach Wright and his relationship with Jeremy, you can point to square 3B on the mindset table : <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "Educators know how to motivate and challenge all students, including tapping into unique strengths and traits." If you need another prompt, you could ask what participants thought of the way that Ms. Porter handled Jeremy's bathroom trip.
5. "Do you think Jeremy should have received a referral? Why or why not?"	We believe student-teacher relationships are central to equity, and that accountability within relationships is a powerful way to motivate students. What are some ways Ms. Porter could've held Jeremy accountable as well as built her relationship with him?
6. Ask participants to review the Handout 2: Mindsets in the Practice Space .	Ask them to consider their own responses along a spectrum of Asset versus Deficit, and share responses to the handout.

DEBRIEF GUIDE CONTINUED

Facilitator Actions	Suggestions
<p>7. "How did you coach Ms. Porter on Wednesday, after the heart vs brain brainstorming activity? Did you draw on Jeremy's strengths to encourage, motivate, and challenge him?"</p>	<p>You can point to square 2C on the Asset side of the mindset table:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "Educators recognize and build on strengths and potential that each student brings into the classroom."
<p>8. A key part of asset framing is in square 3C on the mindset table: "All students experience a curriculum that is challenging, focuses on meaningful work and encourages higher order thinking."</p> <p>How would you advise a teacher to do that, knowing that she had a student who was using trips to the bathroom to avoid work?</p>	<p>Draw on the wisdom of the group: How could a teacher leverage Jeremy's strengths, encourage him, and help him to reach high standards?</p>
<p>9. Connect to your own practice (if it hasn't already come up in the conversation).</p>	<p>If you need a prompt, ask: what connections can you make between this practice space and dilemmas you've faced as an educator?</p>
<p>10. Call to Action: are there places you could experiment with bringing more Asset-based reasoning in your practice? Where and how?</p>	<p>Here are some suggestions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Find ways to intentionally learn about students as individuals, including interests and skills. • Try noticing how you can put students' uniqueness at the center of your interactions • Use these strategies to be more flexible, and differentiate instruction and discipline to meet different student needs <p>For a more specific experiment you could also offer this:</p> <p>Over the next few weeks, look at your roster and see if you can name strengths for all students. If you find it difficult, choose a few students, focus on identifying their strengths, and finding ways to leverage them in support of academic work.</p>

NEXT STEPS (5-10 MINUTES)

Facilitator Actions
Next Steps: How do you see Asset or Deficit mindsets at play in your context? Do they seem balanced or out of balance?
What next steps might this group take together to continue to address these issues in your context?
Encourage participants to fill out the survey at the end of the practice space if they haven't already.

DEBRIEF TIPS

1. As you talk about how people responded to Ms. Porter, Coach Wright and Jeremy, you can probe by asking what people noticed each day, what conclusions they drew from what they noticed, and how it impacted their decisions. Point out that teachers make thousands of decisions a day, and we all notice, reason and interpret what we notice differently. Opening up your mind to the possibility of different details being salient, or interpreting those details differently, is a great way to gain perspective, stretch your brain, and fight bias.
2. If people are getting derailed by the specifics of the scenario, here are some ways to respond:
 - a. "Something in this scenario isn't realistic to my circumstances!" this is just a scenario, and the details won't all match with every participants' circumstances. For now, how can we use the scenario to talk about our own reasoning about students?
 - b. "I don't know enough about Jeremy!" There are often scenarios where we don't know that much about students, for example a student that transfers into a school in the middle of the year. You could ask people what they would want to know, or what they didn't see.
 - c. "A lot of the things to help Jeremy/Ms. Porter are things that needed to happen weeks ago!" This is often also true in real life - we realize that the best intervention for a student is something that we wish we'd done weeks ago - so the question is: what can we do now going forward?
3. If participants are expressing a Deficit mindset, ask them to look at the top half of the mindset table, and see if they could reframe their position using any of these Asset-based orientations.

Appendices

APPENDIX A. Want to dig deeper as a facilitator?

- a. Watch a video of [educators debriefing](#) after doing Coach Wright Practice Space together.
 - b. Learn more about Asset and Deficit Mindsets in [this video](#) from Richard Milner IV, professor of education at Vanderbilt University.
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APPENDIX B. What are practice spaces?

- a. A practice space is an online scenario that allows you to explore an improvisational moment with students in a way that helps you stretch and grow. It allows you to try things and then reflect on how well they might work or how you reasoned about your decisions.
 - b. Watch this [short video](#) to learn more about how we describe practice spaces in the Teaching Systems Lab.
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APPENDIX C. Troubleshooting TeacherMoments

Watch [this video](#) for a tutorial on using TeacherMoments.

If you have any trouble with TeacherMoments, try the following:

- Make sure you have an updated browser, preferably Chrome ([instructions to download and install Chrome](#) AND Instructions to [update Chrome](#))
- Refresh your browser and try again
- Hard refresh your browser and try again ([instructions](#) on how to do hard refresh)
- If possible, we recommend using TeacherMoments on a laptop or desktop. We've had better luck there than on smartphones

If you forget your password:

- There is no password reset; just create a new account

If Teacher Moments is not loading, we have an [alternative version](#) which you can use if you cannot get TeacherMoments to work on your device.

If you run into any issues using TeacherMoments, we'd love to hear about it at equitymit503@gmail.com.

APPENDIX D. Handouts

Handout 1 - Educator Mindsets Table: Equity versus Equality

Scroll to the next page for a printable handout; [click here](#) for a digital version.

Navigating the chart: The chart can be read from left to right. Each mindset has orientations (common ideas or thought patterns), explanations of the orientations (describing the reason behind the thought patterns), and consequences that result from the mindset.

A Framework of Educator Mindsets and Consequences

ASSET VERSUS DEFICIT

Mindset	Orientation	Explanation	Consequences
ASSET	<p>1A) Successful teachers find ways to draw on students' home culture and language assets.</p>	<p>1B) Disconnects between home and school cultures are recognized and addressed equitably.</p>	<p>1C) The number of students from marginalized groups being referred for disciplinary action or special education is reduced.</p>
		<p>2A) Students from every culture can be engaged in learning and experience academic success.</p>	<p>2B) Educators hold an expansive view that all students are able to learn.</p>
	<p>3A) All students can take on challenging tasks, especially students who have had to develop resilience.</p>	<p>3B) Educators know how to motivate and challenge all students, including tapping into unique strengths and traits.</p>	<p>3C) All students experience a curriculum that is challenging, focuses on meaningful work and encourages higher order thinking.</p>
	<p>4A) All students must conform to traditional school culture and teaching approaches.</p>	<p>4B) Educators privilege academic culture and view inconsistencies between home and school culture as student deficiencies.</p>	<p>4C) Students from marginalized groups are disproportionately referred for disciplinary action or special ed.</p>
	<p>5A) Students from some cultures are unable to experience academic success.</p>	<p>5B) Educators hold narrow views of who can and can't learn based on dominant cultural stereotypes.</p>	<p>5C) Educators fail to recognize or build on the potential that each student brings into the classroom.</p>
	<p>6A) Expecting high achievement from students from some cultures is simply setting them up for failure.</p>	<p>6B) Educators do not see value in finding alternative ways to engage or challenge some students.</p>	<p>6C) Culturally or linguistically diverse students experience curriculum that is less rigorous and emphasizes lower order thinking.</p>
DEFICIT			

Adapted by the MIT TSL from R. Filback and A. Green of USC Rossier School of Education, and derived from the work of Bartolome, 2008; Hancock, 2011; Milner, 2010; Pollock, 2008”



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HANDOUT 2: MINDSETS IN THE PRACTICE SPACE

COACH WRIGHT

“Teaching with an asset mindset involves seeing all students as capable of learning, holding high expectations for all, and using students’ strengths and talents to help them succeed in a challenging and meaningful curriculum.”

- Rich Milner, Professor of Education, Vanderbilt University

DEFICIT-BASED REASONING

Deficit framing takes school standards around curriculum and behavior as the norm, and teachers often find themselves particularly attentive to ways that students fall short of those norms. A Deficit point of view may perceive students from certain backgrounds as less capable, and favors classroom conformity and disciplinary action over finding alternative ways to encourage and challenge all students.

Deficit mindset: “You need to follow the school policy and give him a referral or he’ll think he can always get away with this. Coach is protecting him because he doesn’t want him to miss the game.”

ASSET-BASED REASONING

An Asset-based mindset focuses on strengths, and emphasizes that all students have the capacity to thrive under a challenging curriculum, no matter their background or the topic. Ultimately, teachers who are more reflective can help reduce the number of students, particularly students of color, subject to disciplinary actions.

Asset mindset: “What is more important, [to] discipline a child, or striving to understand them so they can be successful? In the end, Jeremy did complete his work, just like Coach predicted. Maybe I would suggest Ms. Porter have lunch with Coach so that she could better understand Jeremy.”

An Asset-based mindset recognizes Jeremy’s skills and interests both in and out of the classroom, regardless of whether they align with traditionally expected behaviors. An Asset mindset suggests Jeremy should not receive the referral, and instead leverages strengths to build confidence and maintain a rigorous curriculum.

Even when teachers use disciplinary consequences, asset framing can still be a crucial part of rebuilding trust and rapport. In some circumstances, it may be necessary to carry through with discipline (for Jeremy, perhaps he’s constantly leaving class, perhaps it’s a safety issue, etc.) During these moments of conflict, it can be especially important to ask yourself: “What is great and special about this young person, and how can we build on that moving forward?”

FINAL THOUGHTS

If looking back on your responses, you think you brought a Deficit-based reasoning to your decision, we’d invite you to try on more Asset-based reasoning:

- Finding ways to intentionally learn about students as individuals, including interests and skills.
- Try noticing how you can put students’ uniqueness at the center of your interactions
- Use these strategies to be more flexible, and differentiate instruction and discipline to meet different student needs

APPENDIX E. Sample invitation email text

Dear _____,

I have been taking an online course with MIT's Teaching Systems Lab about equity teaching practices as a pathway for transforming the school experience. I would like to share some of what I learned with folks at [insert name of school or organization]. I'm hoping that it will help us talk about ways to support all of our students, and close gaps of opportunity or access they face.

To do this, I'm inviting colleagues to get together and complete an activity from the course called a practice space. A practice space is a digital scenario representing a typical interaction at a school. Each participant will respond individually, and then we'll talk about what actions we chose, what we'd like to practice more, and how this can help us understand best practices in supporting students.

I would like to invite you to join us on [Insert Date]. Can you join us?

You do not have to register for the course or review content in order to join the activity. However, if you would like to learn more about the course, visit the [Becoming a More Equitable Educator](#) edX page or [YouTube channel](#). If you're interested, consider enrolling in the course to get access to videos, readings, and other activities.