



AR Leadership Partners

Quantum Learning Leadership Institute for School Teams

**Module 1: Foundation Quantum
Learning Leadership: *Ubuntu is
the framework for Excellence
in Leadership. Principles and
Application***





Ubuntu Mindset for Effective Teams

I am because we are...

Ubuntu is an ancient framework of values and practices from First Nations people of southern Africa. A summarized translation of the term is, “I am because we are.” A person who has incorporated these concepts in daily behavior is said to “*Have Ubuntu*”. As a mindset, Ubuntu sets the stage for teams and communities to thrive. Ubuntu principles can be applied to individual and group behavior practices and to policy-making.

Reflection and Notes

- | | |
|--|---|
| ❖ <i>Interdependence</i> | ❖ Respect for Others |
| ❖ Sharing | ❖ <i>Helpfulness and Trust</i> |
| ❖ Peaceful Relationships | ❖ Unselfishness |
| ❖ <i>Empathy and Compassion</i> | ❖ Consensus |
| ❖ <i>Community Relationships Over Individual Interests</i> | ❖ Environmental and Spiritual Awareness |

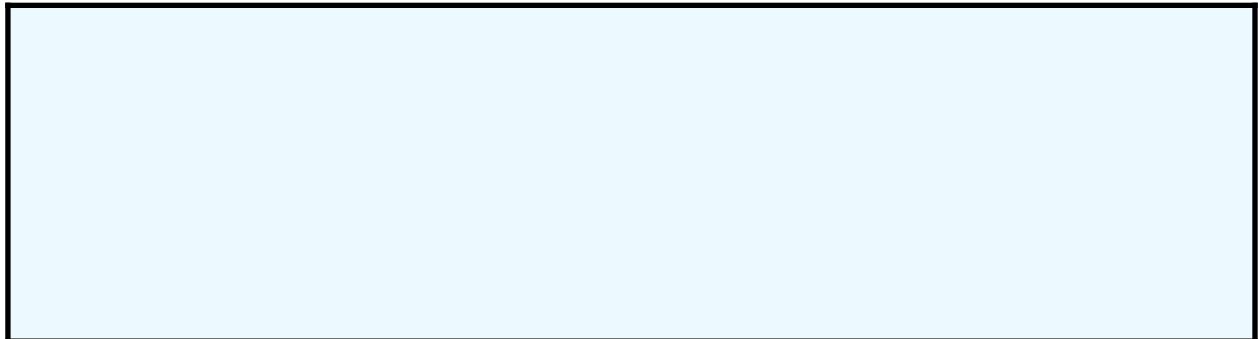
Consider how a team might apply the elements of the Ubuntu Mindset in daily, and ongoing practice:

- Conflict leadership
- Scheduling
- Strategic planning
- Policy development
- Interpersonal Communication
- Professional Learning and Development

- Does our community experience Ubuntu with me? Us? Where are the gaps? For whom are there gaps?
- What practices can I introduce to ensure my brand communicates Ubuntu for my community at work?
- What practices can my leadership team introduce to ensure our community experiences Ubuntu at work?

How can you and your team use the Ubuntu Mindset to upgrade your practice and results?

Reflection and Notes





What's My Professional Brand?

Notice the professional individuals depicted below. Choose one and ask yourself the questions below; record your reflections in the space provided. *What about the image helps you develop your responses?*

Professional brand questions:

Enter your notes and responses below

What do you imagine drives them professionally? Why do you think this?

What about them might distinguish this person from others?

How do you imagine they want to be seen by others?

What specific knowledge might they possess?

What can you imagine are their notable successes?

What do you imagine they are working to overcome?

Any questions or other thoughts?

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What is my Professional Brand anyway?

Personal Brand

Personal Brand is: The amalgamation of associations, beliefs, feelings, attitudes, and expectations that people collectively hold about you. Personal branding is an intentional, strategic practice in which you define and express your own value proposition. To a certain extent, your brand is what people say about you when you're not in the room.



Point: You'll want to take steps to ensure that the narrative created about you is accurate, coherent, compelling, and differentiated.

Notes and Reflections

Your leadership opportunities are heavily influenced by Brand Management:

A strong, well-managed personal brand benefits you by enhancing your visibility to those who matter to you and to the things you hope to accomplish. Your brand also helps you to expand your network and attract new opportunities. Lastly, your brand can help you uncover, celebrate, and share the unique abilities you bring to the world.

What's the connection between Brand and Ubuntu?

Notes and Reflections

Key questions to help you define your brand *(consider the questions below and record your reflections in the space provided):*

My Personal Value Proposition:

Who are my clientele? 1 How do I make a difference for them?	
2 What do I hope to provide?	
3 How do I stand out from my peers and competition?	

Your “Ubuntu” is expressed in your personal brand and distinguished by your distinctive capabilities. What are your unique capabilities in service to your clientele?



Use the template to articulate your distinctive capabilities:

My Distinctive Capabilities: “Brand Declaration”:

[SAMPLE]

For my clientele in Business, Education, and NonProfits, I will make a difference by offering the opportunities for them to create sustainable, practical, adaptable systems for singularity service that meet their internal and external clients’ needs. Apart from other leadership consultants, I will be sought after because of my ability to connect with leaders and their teams. Because of my formal education, expertise, and experience in service leadership, I will continue to provide distinguished service.

For [A particular group of people] I will make a significant difference by offering [the singular experience and /or service you will provide] . Among all [competitors] I will stand out due to my unique set of [skills, personality traits, habits, experiences, credentials and cultural capital]

Now you try it (with a focus on clients through the lens of Ubuntu):

*Fill in the shaded areas of the template below to create your **Brand Declaration**:*

For		I will make a significant difference by offering
		. Among all
I will stand out due to my unique set of		

Equity Leadership connection:
*How does your personal brand engage the principles of Ubuntu?
Equity Leadership?*

Notes and Reflections

What about the team?
Teams can use brand to engage the principles of Ubuntu to improve performance and client experience
*Working as a team, fill in the shaded areas of the template below to
create your **Team's Brand Declaration**:*

For		Our Team will make a significant difference by offering
		. Among all
We will stand out due to our unique set of		

Team Brand Declaration:
Notes and Reflections



Theory of Action for Equity Leadership

How Theory of Action Connects Ubuntu to Excellence *From and For All*

Participants will engage colleagues in dialog, reflective writing, and close reading to attain the following objectives and outcomes:

1. *Attain principles and leadership tools for Equity Leadership*
2. *Connect Ubuntu, Equity, and Theory of Action Elements to a “real-world “ context*
3. *Create a Theory of Action that includes aligned Vision, Intentions, and Commitment statements for the Team that “Has Ubuntu”*
4. *Develop and Affirm Equity Leadership VIC¹*

Read the vignettes below. Carefully consider the protagonist’s behavior and circumstances as you read. Afterward, discuss your impressions, and insights, and ask and answer questions with those around you. After a brief discussion, team up with a colleague(s) to discover the Values, Intentions, and Commitments that, if applied, could sustainably improve Julian’s circumstances ...

First Days of School

The sun streamed through the tall windows of Room 12, casting golden patches on the scuffed linoleum floor. Mr. Baxter stood at the front of his 5th-grade classroom, his lesson plan clutched tightly in one hand, a faint sheen of nervousness on his brow. The week had been tougher than he anticipated. His students were a vibrant tapestry of abilities and backgrounds—English learners hesitating over new words, children with special needs requiring tailored instruction, and others buzzing with uncontainable curiosity.

Despite his thorough preparation, Mr. Baxter felt overwhelmed. His lessons often drifted off track, and the classroom’s energy teetered on the edge of chaos. He wrestled with feelings of inadequacy, questioning if he had made the right choice in becoming a teacher. Frustration crept in until one afternoon, as he gathered his scattered papers, the Principal, Ms. Ramirez, paused at his door.

¹ Values Intentions and Commitments (VIC)

“How’s everything going, Mr. Baxter?” she asked with a warm smile.

He hesitated, then sighed deeply. “Honestly, I’m struggling. I thought I was ready, but I can’t seem to reach every student. It feels like I’m failing them.”

Ms. Ramirez stepped inside, her expression thoughtful. “You’re not failing. You’re learning. Teaching isn’t meant to be done in isolation. Have you spoken with Mrs. Lee, our reading specialist, or Mr. Ahmed, the program specialist? They’ve got great strategies to share.”

Encouraged, Mr. Baxter arranged a meeting with Mrs. Lee the next day.

She greeted him warmly. “Tell me what’s been challenging, Mr. Baxter.”

“I have students who are struggling with reading. I try different things, but nothing seems to click,” he admitted.

Mrs. Lee nodded. “That’s a common challenge. Let’s look at some differentiated reading strategies. We can scaffold texts, use visual aids, and tailor activities to their levels. You’re not alone in this.”

Later that week, Mr. Baxter met with Mr. Ahmed, the program specialist.

“I feel like I’m missing something when it comes to my students with special needs,” Mr. Baxter confessed.

Mr. Ahmed smiled reassuringly. “It’s great you’re seeking support. Inclusive practices aren’t about doing more; they’re about doing things differently. Let’s create a plan that incorporates flexible seating, sensory tools, and personalized learning approaches.”

Conversations with fellow teachers added more layers of support. Over coffee in the staff lounge, Ms. Patel shared, “I had the same struggles in my first year. Classroom management felt overwhelming. I found that setting clear routines and expectations made a huge difference.”

Gradually, Mr. Baxter transformed his classroom. He implemented small group sessions, visual aids, and hands-on activities. The room buzzed with engaged learners, each finding their rhythm and voice. Watching his students thrive, he often reflected on his journey.

By spring, Room 12 was a vibrant hub of growth. Mr. Baxter stood taller, not just as a teacher but as someone who had grown through the support, wisdom, and encouragement of his colleagues. He learned that teaching was as much about collaboration as it was about instruction.



How a Learner, Her Peers, and Their Teacher Have Ubuntu

Ana sat quietly at her new desk in Room 12, Mr. Baxter's fifth-grade classroom, her wide brown eyes reflecting a mixture of curiosity and apprehension. The classroom buzzed with the unfamiliar melody of English words—quick, sharp sounds that felt like waves crashing against her understanding. Having recently arrived from Mexico, Ana clung to the few English phrases she knew, feeling adrift in a sea of foreign voices.

The classroom was a vibrant tapestry of colors and learning prompts. Bright posters adorned the walls: the alphabet with vivid illustrations, a number chart with playful designs, and a "Word of the Day" board that proudly displayed simple terms like "apple" and "friend." At the front, Mr. Baxter had created a corner labeled "Language Lounge," stocked with picture dictionaries, flashcards, and bilingual storybooks. A cozy rug invited small group gatherings, fostering a space where students could interact more comfortably.

Mr. Baxter, enthusiastic yet clearly inexperienced, moved through lessons with a mix of energy and uncertainty. However, his genuine effort to support all his students was evident. He incorporated specific strategies to help English learners like Ana thrive. He used visual aids extensively, drawing simple pictures on the whiteboard to connect images with new vocabulary. Common classroom items were labeled in both English and Spanish, allowing Ana to build word associations throughout her day.

After the first few weeks, Mr. Baxter found himself reflecting on Ana's progress. He noticed that while she was attentive, her participation was minimal. He questioned whether his strategies were truly effective. One evening, as he reviewed his lesson plans, he jotted down notes: "More visuals? Pair work? Hands-on activities? What sparks Ana's interest?"

Understanding the power of repetition, Mr. Baxter introduced "Chant and Repeat" sessions where the class would rhythmically repeat key phrases together. Observing Ana's hesitant but growing participation, he realized the rhythm created a safe space for her to practice without fear of standing out. Encouraged, he added more music and movement-based activities, noticing Ana's eyes light up during interactive songs.

He also adjusted his "Think-Pair-Share" activities by thoughtfully pairing Ana with Mia, a supportive classmate who understood both the challenge of learning a new language and the comfort of peer connection. This adjustment paid off when Ana timidly raised her hand during a vocabulary game in the "Language Lounge" and correctly identified a "book" from a set of flashcards. The class clapped, and her heart swelled with pride—a small victory Mr. Baxter mentally celebrated as well.

Recognizing the universal language of numbers, Mr. Baxter incorporated word problems with visual cues during math lessons. When Ana confidently solved a problem on the board, her answer greeted with nods of approval, he felt a surge of validation. His strategies were making a difference.

Mr. Baxter’s reflections became an integral part of his teaching growth. He regularly observed, adjusted, and tailored activities to meet Ana’s needs—not just with academic goals, but with an understanding heart. Gradually, Ana’s world began to shift. She started to recognize words, then phrases, her confidence blossoming like a flower reaching for sunlight. Though the days were still filled with challenges, Mr. Baxter’s thoughtful strategies, colorful environment, and supportive peers created fertile ground for Ana’s growth. Her journey was one of courage, resilience, and the steady glow of small victories lighting her path in a new world.

3. What would you guess?

Considering the vignette and the behavior exhibited, record in the space provided what you would guess is the school district’s:

- Core Values
- Core Commitments
- Intentions
- Vision

Core Values	Core Commitments
Intentions	Vision

4. Core Values

The Theory of Action is the rationale that frames all action of the adults in a school district. Whether articulated or implied it informs all systems and the underlying assumptions that inform individual and whole-group performance. The foundation of a theory of action is the “Why” of an organization; it is comprised of the **core Values** and **Commitments**. Members of a school district, for example, might embrace the following core Values:

- *High-quality, free public education is essential to democracy*
- *The adults are responsible for building and maintaining high performing organizations that ensure all students will successfully acquire the knowledge, skills, and values necessary for success*
- *Principals and teachers make the critical difference in student achievement*
- *Engaging the student’s family and the community in the education process enhances learning and academic achievement*

Intentions and Commitments

The school district that clarifies its shared Values is empowered to articulate its **Intentions**, and/or **Core Commitments**:

- *Our school district prioritizes student physical safety, and mental and emotional wellness.*

In alignment with such values, a school district, for example, could articulate commitments held in common among adults e.g., *Together we commit to:*

<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. <i>Providing all students with the opportunity to perform to their fullest potential and ensuring that there is no discernible difference between the achievement levels of students by race, gender, or economic level</i>2. <i>Preparing all students to be successful in institutions of higher learning or the workforce without a need for remediation in core subjects</i>3. <i>Providing a clear Theory of Action for Change and an effective Superintendent and administrators to lead its implementation</i>4. <i>Giving all students access to a well-rounded, rigorous curriculum that is researched-based and data-driven</i>5. <i>Basing our educational culture on merit and individual achievement</i>6. <i>Embracing our community's diversity and using it to enhance the educational environment</i>	<ol style="list-style-type: none">7. <i>Operating effectively and efficiently with fiscal accountability</i>8. <i>Securing and allocating adequate resources according to the needs of each child</i>9. <i>Providing safe and orderly learning and working environments</i>10. <i>Ensuring that an effective principal leads every school</i>11. <i>Ensuring that an effective teacher instructs each class</i>12. <i>Providing resources for relevant professional learning</i>13. <i>Encouraging and providing engagement opportunities for all students' families</i>14. <i>Partnering with community members to maximize student connectedness to their community.</i>

Vision

Having clearly stated its Core Values, Intentions, and Commitments, the school district can articulate a compelling **Vision** of its future:

- *Our schools provide all students the best education available anywhere, preparing every child to lead a rich and productive life.*

Theory of Action

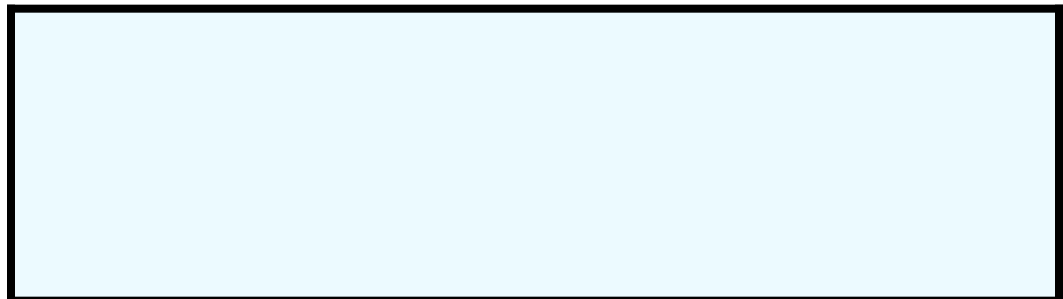
Having articulated the desired future of the school district community (Vision) the Mission (“why” and/or purpose), and the core Values and commitments (“How, and the “What”) of the district, the district can be said to have created a complete **Theory of Action**.

The Theory of Action can inform and empower the adults’ activities and production leading to the realization of the Vision, which is the continued success and wellness for all children the district serves. The absence of a coherent TOA held in common by the adults of the school district community can set the stage for poor performance among adults, in-fighting, and an emphasis of time and resources on politics. It can also contribute toward performance and innovation stagnation and apathy toward ensuring all students thrive. Key to the work of Superintendents and administrators is the articulation of a coherent and universally held Theory of Action, and an aligned culture of performance among the adults.

4. Your Team’s Theory of Action

Draft your **District’s Theory of Action** as an important first step in the process of becoming a highly effective school district that ensures excellence for every child you serve:

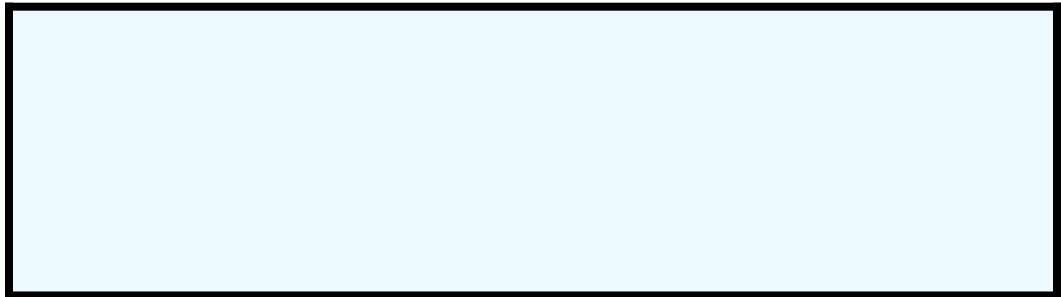
1. What are you community's **values** about student learning and public education? (**Core Values**)



2. Given your shared core values, what are your **Intentions** and **Commitments**?



3. Given your Core Values, and your Intentions and Commitments, what would be **your shared vision** of your organization? (Write your sample organizational vision for future student learning and development in present tense):



4. Considering your Core Values, Intentions and Commitments, and strategically aligned Vision what is the **Theory of Action** that will realize? (Consider these samples before writing one for your team following a frame, If we (engage in certain actions, then we will be achieve/realize....)

a. Samples:

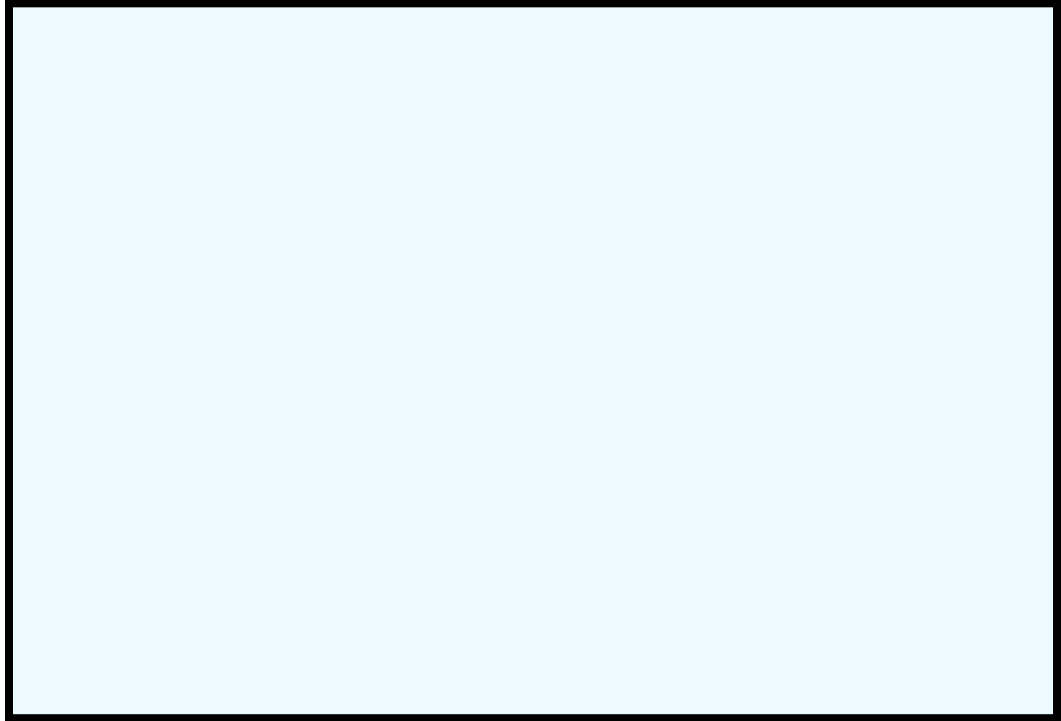
i. **San Francisco Unified School District**

- If we. . .
 - Engage students to learn a rigorous standards-based curriculum
 - Invest in the professional learning of teachers, leaders and school staff
 - Enlist our partners and engage families in a community schools approach
 - Align school and central office supports and resources to our Six Strategies for Success
- Then
 - every student who enrolls in our schools will graduate ready for college, career and life

li. LA Unified School District

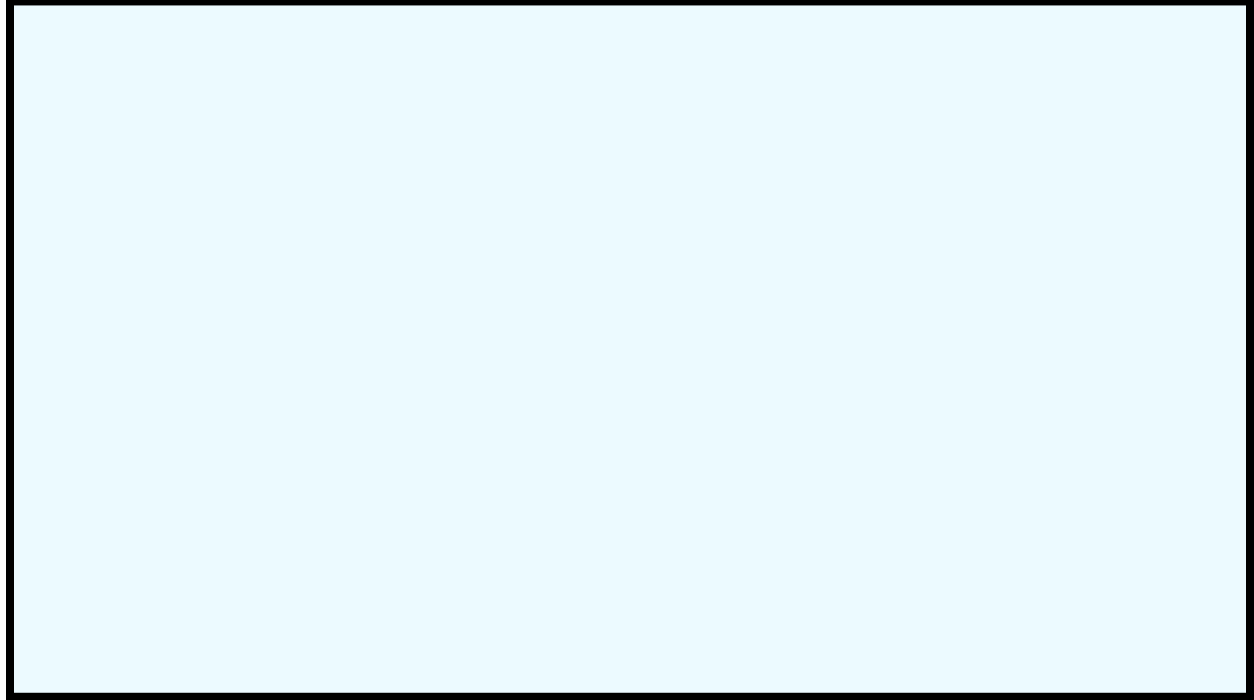
- If we. . .
 - Transform human capital by ensuring there are effective employees at every level of the organization focused on improving student outcomes
 - Give our students and parents a portfolio of high--quality school choice;
 - Hold ourselves accountable through strong performance management;
- Then we will keep our promise to graduate every student in our schools college-prepared and career-ready

Now you try it: “If We...; Then...”

A large, empty rectangular box with a black border, intended for a writing activity. The box is light blue and occupies the central portion of the page below the heading.

How do your drafted team VIC and Vision, and Theory of Action elements align with what you've unpacked about Equity, Ubuntu, and your team's leadership?

Notes and Reflections



Practice Ubuntu

Reflective Quadrants for Leaders: *Equity in Action*

I. What's here that you expected or anticipated? Didn't expect or anticipate?	II. What feelings did you experience? What questions do you have?
III. What implications do your reflections have for our work?	IV. Given your learning, what do we as a team need to Start, Stop, and/or Keep Doing?



- **JELLY**

- What gave you Joy?
- What did you Expect?
- What did you Learn?
- What did you Lose?
- What's here that's useful to You?

Reflection and Notes

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