Educating Student of Color
“The Umoja Way”

Umoja Community Education Foundation
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umoja community
INDABA OUTCOMES

➢ To highlight how Umoja practices inform teaching and learning strategies
➢ To provide a live learning demonstration
➢ To share successful outcomes via student voices
WHAT IS UMOJA?

umoja
community
UMOJA is...

*a Kiswahili word meaning unity*

*a community and critical resource dedicated to enhancing the cultural and educational experiences of African American and other students.*

*a community that believes that when the voices and histories of students are deliberately and intentionally recognized, the opportunity for self-efficacy emerges and a foundation is formed for academic success.*
UMOJA VALUES & PRINCIPLES

• **Students Are Our Highest Priority** (serving to promote student success for all students)
• **Touching the Spirit** (using a holistic approach to reach each student—Body, Mind, and Spirit)
• **Building Community** (creating an environment that encourages students to be accountable to each other’s learning)
• **Connections to the African Diaspora** (expanding students' cultural awareness of the diaspora and articulating their place in that experience)
• **Ethic of Love** (expressing compassion and care in the learning community)
• **Culturally Relevant Pedagogy and Practices** (developing curriculum relevant to the students’ lives for learning)
• **Ritual** (engaging in cultural practices rooted in African traditions to strengthen the community and the people within the community)
UMOJA PRACTICES
Data

➢ 72% of Black undergraduates attend a California community college

➢ Only 3% of Black students transfer in two-years and 37% transfer within six-years

➢ 63% of Black students do not earn a degree, certificate or transfer within six-years

➢ Umoja has been shown to positively impact student outcomes

➢ Umoja actively serves and promotes student success for all students through curriculum and pedagogy (Bell Hooks, 1994; Bransford, Brown & Cocking, 2000; Yosso, 2005) that is responsive to the legacy of the African American and Africa Diasporas.
LIVE LEARNING EXPERIENCE
Ground Rules and Agreements

• Be fully present
• Balance listening in with speaking out
• Suspend judgment
• Honor time commitments
• Take care of yourself
• Respect and understand our different perspectives (understand/agree to disagree)
• Maintain confidentiality (generalization- ok; specifics- not ok)
• Take care of those around you
Live learning is **risky; it is freewheeling and open.** The **instructor yields control of meaning and understanding** in the classroom while keeping a keen eye on learning as it is emerging. Live learning implies that the learning experience is **generative and performative.** In a live learning situation, the exact content and learning experience are not known before the class session begins. **Surprise and original language** burst out all over the classroom; **the instructor facilitates and culls** the learning that is happening. Live learning **intentionally captures and documents learning** in real time. It is a way of having a discussion that really flies, while focusing the insight, capturing it on boards and in notebooks, so the discussion does not disappear after the students leave the class session. It is **democratic and analytically rigorous** at the same time. Live learning demonstrates to the students through their own words that **language is powerful; ideas and texts are rich** and can be made their own. Most importantly live learning demonstrates to the students that they are smart, deep.
To say at all times "What Is Really Going On Here," a learning environment should be open, respectful, playful; there should be argument, dissection and revision. It should be personal, political and philosophical. The porch can often be candid and sometimes even painful. Storytelling is privileged and sometimes song breaks out. Porch talk invites humor, noise, sometimes unruliness. A classroom with such honesty and visibility can produce frustration and, also acceptance. Needless to say, trust is at the foundation of a Porch talk learning environment and trust has to be earned, modeled, practiced, openly reflected upon, and revisited. Porch talk is intentional, for example, the instructor looks for an opportunity to draw out, celebrate and dignify the quieter students, so all the voices in the room make up the porch. The porch is a place where our students safely communicate and advocate for themselves.
HIP - HOP Genius: Remixing Education
SAMPLING — Just as hip-hop producers sample songs from other genres, educators can mix multiple teaching techniques and school designs to find the blend that best serves our students.

QUESTION
• Discuss the concept of SAMPLING, how might/do you apply SAMPLING in your classroom and/or profession?

THINK ABOUT
• How are you tapping into the intellectual, spiritual, and artistic creative geniuses in the classroom?
STAYING FRESH – “A hot beat yesterday was...a hot beat yesterday,” educators must do something new to remain relevant in an everchanging society.

QUESTION
Discuss the concept of STAYING FRESH. How might (do) you apply STAYING FRESH in your classroom/profession?

THINK ABOUT
What new, promising and relevant strategies are you implementing in your learning spaces? Is it effective?
RESOURCEFULNESS – Faced with our own resource constraints, educators must find new platforms & new moves

QUESTION
• Discuss the concept of RESOURCEFULNESS. How might/do you apply RESOURCEFULNESS in your classroom and/or profession?

THINK ABOUT
• What platforms are being used in YOUR learning space?
Hip-Hop Genius –
a. Creative Resourcefulness in the face of limited resources.
b. Changing education to respect and build from young people's brilliance; where students are engaged as creators not consumers
WHAT DOES THIS MEAN FOR BLACK STUDENTS?