Title: Infrastructuring for justice: Reframing scale through a rightful presence framework  
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Focus: Cultural Approaches to Stem

Key Terms

Heteropatriarchy: a hierarchical society or culture dominated by heterosexual males whose characteristic bias is unfavorable to queer people and females in general

Sociopolitical: relating to or involving a combination of social and political factors

Relationalities: a practice of how we understand ourselves, others, and things in relationship to each other and in context

Rightful Presence Framework: This framework asserts that all people have a right to belong in a place and we should be making the sociopolitical struggles of those among us recognized. This highlights the limitations of equity as inclusion within the classroom which does not adequately address the ways in which systemic injustices manifest in local classroom practice. Rightful presence focuses on the importance of political struggles to make students feel welcomed, paired with their institutional rights to provide access and opportunity.

Key Concepts

When infrastructures are working well, they go unnoticed. If you are not within an oppressed group, the system works well for you, but this drives complacency in leaving brazen and antiquated ideologies, frameworks and structures unchallenged. The systems and structures that uphold our modern-day education system are stained with intentional oppression and we are still operating under conditions that do not serve all students. There is a dire need for inclusive education efforts for students of diverse backgrounds because schooling is centered around the dominant culture of the west.

We need to revolutionize the way we think about infrastructure because we are inclined to adhere to what is most familiar, relinquishing our ability to think beyond those constraints.

We can work within the existing systems and frameworks to drive the change need to infrastructure for justice. The concept of infrastructuring for justice refuses separation of the past from the present and the possible future, recognizing the critical importance and impact of our actions. We cannot succeed if reformations not called into question the larger systems in operation.

If we continually equate success with the completion of set parameters, we will never actualize the greatness of our youth. We have the right to rework existing structures, transforming them to create new innovative systems that recognize and promote success for people of all backgrounds. Change requires a critical openness to multiple perspectives that recognize sociopolitical struggles to redesign components, relations, and routines to meet the needs of our community. Not only do we combine new systems with the existing, but we must offer new tools and points of access that encourage us to ask, “what does this infrastructure do for us”? Within the resistance there exist intersectional needs that require accommodation, disruption and revision of existing work will allow us to reach students in the margins.

This work requires careful attention to the power dynamics, ideas, and histories that come into play as people of various backgrounds come to work together. It is essential to utilize relationship building to connect with those in our communities and by integrating their involvement to make relevant and tangible change. Relationship building across networks were critical to integrating new components into existing structures. The scalability of an initiative take place within existing structures and unfortunately dependent on maintaining unjust power dynamics. When disagreement arises there need to be intentional efforts to remind us of core values and practices to unify people under a common goal.