

# Examining Current Realities

**Current Realities** represent ideas about what classroom practices, school, and district programs and policies, as well as state and federal legislation directly affect student and their experience both at school and in their larger community. **Current Realities** are reflected in the **Essential Policy** portion of the **Inclusive Pedagogy** framework asking the question:

*What programs and practices are available to support this child in the school setting?*

## The Process of Examining Current Realities

Against a background knowledge of definitions, needs, and resources, teachers can begin to explore the programs and practices that exist for special population students using the Process of Examining Current Realities (Table 1). This process asks teachers to examine the programs available in a school, the policies behind those programs. But it also asks teachers to contemplate carefully their own practices and policies for educating students.

### Phase 1: Processes

Engaging in a process of critical reflection, teachers begin by identifying classroom and school practices Teachers look to programs, curriculum, and classroom interaction processes in this identification phase.

#### Phase 1 Questions to Ask

- What are the programs, curriculum, and classroom interaction processes that exist in general?
- What are the programs, curriculum, and classroom interaction processes that exist in my student's reality?

### Phase 2: Origins

Then teachers look historically, both at the story of the development of school programs and at their own individual history of development as a teacher. They trace how things got to be the way they are.

#### Phase 2 Questions to Ask

- How did these programs and practices come to be?
- What are the reasons for existence of these programs and practices?
- What are the historical developments of these programs and practices?

### **Phase 3: Supports**

Next teachers reflect on the skills and messages that get communicated to students. They question how the programs and practices support the academic, intellectual, social, and identity development of their students.

#### **Phase 3 Questions to Ask**

- What skills are encouraged and shared with students through these programs and practices?
- What direct and indirect messages are communicated to students through these programs and practices?
- How do these programs and practices support my students' academic, intellectual, linguistic, social, and identity development?

### **Phase 4: Efficacy**

Following this, teachers evaluate the efficacy of these practices asking who benefits from the structure and organization of schools, programs, policies, and classroom practices. Such questioning results in an evaluation of whether what is happening in a school is what is best for students.

#### **Phase 4 Questions to Ask**

- What is the efficacy of these programs and practices?
- Who benefits from the structure and organization of these programs and practices?
- Are these programs and practices the best way to support my students?

### **Phase 5: Action**

In light of this judgment, teachers must then determine what action they should take and how they will act. The theme of this question is the understanding of current realities.

#### **Phase 5 Questions to Ask**

- What action will I take as a professional and as a teacher of individual students?
- How can I better support my students in my classroom? How will I change my classroom practices?
- How can I better advocate for my students in my school or district?

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#### **Adapted with permission from:**

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## Principles of Language Acquisition

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