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Think about someone
in your life who you trust.



What does that relationship
look like, feel like and sound like?





TRUST = Care + Truth + Hope



As we began this journey to understand, capture, and describe the guiding principles of student powered improvement through our partnerships and personal experiences, of course, trust emerged as an essential element. However, Trust was a concept that we noticed was defined in many different ways and was often thrown around flippantly without attending to the nuance or complexity of how to develop deep and lasting trust alongside youth. What emerged as we looked more closely at examples of youth partnerships, reflecting on our own experiences working with youth, and reading the research was the ideas of care, truth, and hope as essential components of trust.



The concept of care was captured by Nel Noddings and Angela Valenzuela who, in describing how teachers develop strong relationships with students, attended to an idea they called authentic care. This term and it's description was reflected in the youth partnerships we observed as well as our own work with youth. (Read slide)



Related to vulnerability and reciprocity is the idea of truth. Our partners at Californians for Justice and Creative Reaction lab as well as work from Timothy San Pedro (2017) pushed us to think about how truth is an essential part of trust. And, this begins with an examination of our own identities and their relation to and intersection with others in the group. We need to reflect on our power and privilege as well as share our own personal experiences to begin to build trust.

We also need to be transparent about the structures and processes of the organization. Whether this is a school, district or nonprofit - we must demystify who makes decisions, where power lies, how funding operates, and how to navigate the organizational system. In order for students to “trust” the work they need us to be honest and transparent about the organizations we work in.

Lastly, we need to partner with youth to examine *historical truths* (local

regional or national) as a way to better understand the origin of current systems and root causes to the problems we want to solve. These historical truths might also intersect and impact the stories students have shared - highlighting how their experiences in schools have been directly impacted by a series of decisions made by people in power over time. Uncovering **historical truths** can create the conditions for students and adults to see how they fit within the system, how inequitable systems can be interrupted, reversed, or redesigned, and provide an authentic and audacious form of hope.

Hope is something we need to hold sacred. We need to be careful not to project a false sense of hope often found in initiatives that tokenize youth. Students need to see adults show up, be willing to engage in difficult conversations, and ultimately see meaningful evolution in practices and policies.

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For students to feel like they have the power to change their current circumstances, there must be *hope*. We primarily pull from Jeff Duncan Andrade - an educator and scholar - who calls for critical form of hope, which he basically describes as when young people get to speak their truths, see adults wrestle with these truths, and then work together as real changes are made to policies or practice. This is not a false sense of hope or “hokey hope” as he calls it where youth share their stories or work to solve a problem and nothing ever changes. Our role is not to stand on the sidelines but to stand courageously alongside them, in partnership and solidarity.