



Disproportionality Technical Assistance

NETWORK

ADDRESSING WISCONSIN'S RACIAL DISPARITIES IN SPECIAL EDUCATION



Foundational Beliefs, Values and Practices

The Network provides training to develop and strengthen a belief framework that pays attention to race and values culturally responsive practices. The goal is to strengthen educator commitment to equity, diversity, and justice necessary to eliminate race as a predictor of success in Wisconsin schools. This document highlights some of the beliefs, values, and practices used by The Network.

Courageous Conversation

The Courageous Conversation protocol for discussing race utilizes the four agreements, six conditions and compass to engage, sustain, and deepen interracial dialogue about race.

MODEL DEVELOPED BY:  **COURAGEOUS CONVERSATION™**

FOUR AGREEMENTS

1. Stay **engaged**
2. Experience **discomfort**
3. Speak your **truth**
4. Expect/Accept **non-closure**

SIX CONDITIONS

1. Focus on **personal**, local, and immediate.
2. **Isolate** race.
3. Normalize **social construction** and multiple perspectives.
4. Monitor agreements, conditions, and **establish parameters**.
5. Use a **working definition** for race.
6. Examine the presence and role of **whiteness**.

Promoting Excellence for All: Focus Areas and Beliefs

EFFECTIVE INSTRUCTION

We honor cultural backgrounds, acknowledge similarities, and provide diverse perspectives and multiple modalities for learning. We are critically aware of our own cultural identity and the ways it permeates our world views. We draw from the students' cultural backgrounds and experiences to connect to the curriculum. In our culturally responsive learning environments, students of color are valued, respected, and accepted as individuals. Students of color are provided equal access to a rigorous curriculum. The classroom environment empowers students to take risks.

SCHOOL AND INSTRUCTIONAL LEADERSHIP

We believe that highly effective school and instructional leaders close race-based achievement gaps by empowering students of color to become actively engaged in their own learning. Students, staff, and families, who are supported and motivated by one another, form a community that embraces cultural differences and allows members to express themselves openly. This school community sets high expectations for all students, fosters a sense of belonging, infuses instruction with culturally relevant practices, and celebrates individual as well as group achievements.

STUDENT-TEACHER RELATIONSHIPS

We believe positive student-teacher relationships start with a safe, trusting, culturally responsive environment in which both students and teachers are empowered to have open conversations, share personal information, and create authentic connections to foster long-term relationships beyond the classroom. Open conversations about race, ethnicity, disabilities, and culture should be intentional, and other modes of cultural competence should be infused into the classroom. We create a safe space to hear students' experiences and voices and that builds trust.

FAMILY AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

We believe new and different ways of engaging families based on mutual trust and respect are required because our schools belong to all. When we engage culturally and linguistically diverse families and communities, we feel we are making a difference because we are actively seeking out diverse families as partners who have valuable contributions to make toward the success of their children. Our schools are strengthened by a diverse community in which to live, work, and grow—we choose diverse schools.



Singleton, G., & Linton, C. (2006). *Courageous Conversations About Race: A Field Guide to Achieving Equity in Schools*. Thousand Oaks: Corwin.



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The Will to Lead, the Skill to Teach

Anthony Muhammad and Sharroky Hollie

WILL

The power of making a reasoned choice or having control of one's own actions. It is characterized by determination, a certain attitude, or particular desire or choice.

SKILL

A shift in beliefs, attitudes, and knowledge to a stance that sees what the student brings culturally and linguistically as an asset, a capability, and an element that can be built upon. In this mind shift, students are not the problem but rather the source of the solution.

Culturally Relevant Practices

Gloria Ladson-Billings

Teacher sees herself as an artist, teaching as an art.

Teacher sees herself as part of the community and teaching as giving something back to the community, encourages students to do the same.

Teacher encourages a "community of learners."

Teacher encourages students to learn collaboratively. Students are expected to teach each other and be responsible for each other.

Teacher helps students develop necessary skills.

Teacher sees excellence as a complex standard that may involve some postulates but take student diversity and individual differences into account.

Teacher is passionate about content.

Teacher believes all students can succeed.

Teacher helps students make connections between their community, national, and global identities.

Teacher sees teaching as "pulling knowledge out"—like "mining."

Teacher-student relationship is fluid, humanely equitable, extends to interactions beyond the classroom and into the community.

Teacher demonstrates a connectedness with all students.

Knowledge is continuously recreated, recycled, and shared by teachers and students. It is not static or unchanging.

Knowledge is viewed critically.

Critical Race Theory in Education: 5 Tenets

Derrick Bell

1. Counter-Storytelling
2. The Permanence of Racism
3. Whiteness as Property
4. Interest Convergence
5. Critique of Liberalism
 - a. Color-Blindness
 - b. Neutrality of Law
 - c. Incremental Change
 - d. Equality is Not Equity

Tribal Critical Race Theory: 9 Tenets

Bryan McKinley Jones Brayboy

1. Colonization is endemic to society.
2. U.S. policies toward Indigenous peoples are rooted in imperialism, White supremacy, and a desire for material gain.
3. Indigenous peoples occupy a liminal space that accounts for both the political and racialized natures of our identities.
4. Indigenous peoples have a desire to obtain and forge tribal sovereignty, tribal autonomy, self-determination, and self-identification.
5. The concepts of culture, knowledge, and power take on new meaning when examined through an Indigenous lens.
6. Governmental policies and educational policies toward Indigenous peoples are intimately linked around the problematic goal of assimilation.
7. Tribal philosophies, beliefs, customs, traditions, and visions for the future are central to understanding the lived realities of Indigenous peoples, but they also illustrate the differences and adaptability among individuals and groups.
8. Stories are not separate from theory; they make up theory and are, therefore, real and legitimate sources of data and ways of being.
9. Theory and practice are connected in deep and explicit ways such that scholars must work towards social change.



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