

4J EQUITY

EXCELLENCE AND LEADERSHIP

Want Change? Discourse II

Does it seem like no matter how much lip service your school community devotes to the “achievement gap”, nothing changes? Its likely that this common problem has to do with how willing and adept (or not) your school community is at engaging in and sustaining Discourse II (DII) level conversations.

In the article shared at CFEE “Changing the Discourse in Schools” (Eugene Eubanks, Ralph Parish, and Dianne Smith, 1997) the authors assert that in order to achieve any substantial school reform, school communities must create the conditions for sustained DII Discourse to occur.

To grasp the concept of DII Discourse it is necessary to consider that schools by and large function to preserve and replicate the hegemonic social/economic order. “Schools are a major part of society’s

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Leon Lincoln talks about the legacy of slavery in the United States and how its repercussions continue to effect young black men and women today. “We need to know our history because ignorance is slavery.”

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Kevin Summerfield facilitates a conversation about the importance of school success while the young men consider what success means to them and how they can support each other to achieve it.



Boys to Men

Leon Lincoln, retired Portland City Schools teacher and 4J Multi-cultural Studies teacher, is bringing an innovative mentorship program to Churchill and South Eugene High Schools called Boys to Men. The program, originating in Portland OR, brings together young black men with adult black men to form meaningful mentor relationships that support and inspire the

students’ success throughout high school and beyond.

A strong part of the program is the four year commitment that the young men and adult mentors make with each other. Kevin Summerfield says, “Historically African American men have not occupied many educator or mentor roles in our schools. We are changing that with this program.”

institutional processes for maintaining a relatively stable system of inequality. They contribute to these results by active acceptance and utilization of a dominant set of values, norms and beliefs, which, while appearing to offer opportunities to all, actually support the success of a privileged minority and hinder the efforts and visions of a majority.” (Eubanks, Parish, Smith, 1997)

Taking this paradigm into consideration, DII Discourse involves stakeholders critically examining the hegemonic cultural norms that exist within their school community and, in the process, deconstructing the ways that those norms have been internalized/ institutionalized by the

individual stakeholders and by the school community at large.

What will it take to have DII Discourse in our schools? This is the question that many 4J educators and community partners have been asking for years. One way CFEE/Taking It Up facilitators promote DII Discourse at the trainings is by asking participants to adopt five agreements that are revisited at the start of each day:

1. Stay engaged
2. Experience discomfort
3. Speak your truth
4. Expect and accept non-closure
5. Confidentiality

At CFEE participants also learned that DII Discourse involves individuals willing to publicly stand up for

Equity. To practice this, participants coached one another on declaring a “DII Equity Stance.”

The key to DII conversations is building capacity. To that end, the Churchill region CFEE/ Taking It Up trained educators are getting together on Dec. 9th from 4-6 at Churchill Alt. The goal is to reunite, revitalize, and refresh as a way of supporting ongoing DII Discourse and leadership.

FROM THE EDITOR:
In the next few issues we will be featuring the DII Equity Stances of leaders in our schools. Let's support each other in making public our commitment to ending racism and other forms of institutional oppression in our schools.

LCC LONGHOUSE CELEBRATES ITS OPENING!!!



LCC is the first OR community college to host a Longhouse on its campus. The building will be used for Ethnic Studies, Native American Studies, and American Indian Language classes besides community

