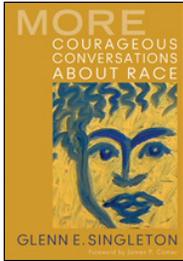


Book review

Three excellent resources for discussing race

By Dave Lehman, Connections Executive Editor



More Courageous Conversations About Race

(link to purchase on NSRF website)

by Glenn Singleton
Corwin Press, 2013

a College Education. He is also an adjunct faculty member at San Jose University.

The original volume introduces the “Four Agreements:”

- 1) stay engaged
- 2) expect/accept non-closure
- 3) speak your truth
- 4) experience discomfort

Additionally, people need to remember a progression of “Six Conditions” foundational to conversing about race:

- 1) getting personal, right here and right now
- 2) keeping the spotlight on race
- 3) engaging multiple racial perspectives
- 4) keeping us all at the table
- 5) what do you mean by race?
- 6) let’s talk about whiteness

Both volumes also refer to the “Courageous Conversations Compass” which resembles a five-coordinate Chinese compass: east, west, north, south, and center. The compass offers a metaphor about the various perspectives from which individuals might begin speaking about race, and the challenges when different people in one conversation are coming from different “directions,” not necessarily valuing the opposite. The center space – where thinking, feeling, believing, and doing all come together – is the most productive place for conversations, honoring all “compass points.”

In *More*, Singleton revisits his “Courageous Conversations Protocol,” a series of writing exercises a reader can conduct after having begun work with the Six Conditions. The practice is designed to deepen thought around race and race relations as they relate

to schooling:

Level I – Memorization. Singleton asks whether a reader can write each Condition on a separate piece of paper, without referring to his book or written notes;

Level II – Internalization. Now, on each sheet of paper, write your understanding of the definition of each Condition, using your own words, and explain the significance of each Condition in advancing courageous conversations about race.

Level III – Application. Now remember when you have participated in a courageous conversation. Explain how you applied each Condition to navigate into and through that conversation.

Together, the Agreements, Conditions, and Compass comprise the key elements of the Courageous Conversation, and the Protocol facilitates further reflection on the process.

More builds on all these elements and goes deeper. The goal is to engage the reader in “narratives that compel you to synthesize your knowledge and transform it into direct and measurable action....to close the ‘knowing-doing’ gap in education.” The primary difference in the two volumes is that the earlier work was “primarily descriptive and theoretical,” and the new book “focuses on implementation,” with two major objectives:

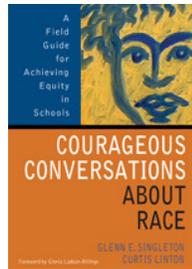
“...to help White educators move beyond guilt and rhetoric to a place of purposeful action,

“and to support educators of color in finding the courage and language to name the individual and systemic racism around them, accept the challenge to speak their truth, and feel empowered to hold the system ac-

Courageous Conversations About Race: A Field Guide for Achieving Equity in Schools

(link to purchase discounted first edition from NSRF)

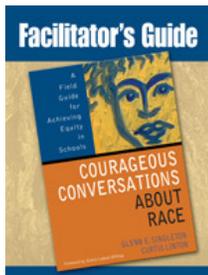
by Glenn E. Singleton and Curtis Linton
Corwin Press, 2006



Facilitator's Guide to Courageous Conversations About Race

(link to purchase on NSRF website)

by Glenn E. Singleton and Curtis Linton
Corwin Press, 2007



Glenn Singleton and Curtis Linton wrote *Courageous Conversations About Race: A Field Guide for Achieving Equity in Schools* in 2006, and the following year the *Facilitator's Guide* for the original volume was published. Now comes the sequel, *More Courageous Conversations About Race*, also published by Corwin, this time written by Singleton as a solo author. Glenn is the founder of PEG Inc., the Pacific Educational Group, and FCE, the Foundation for

countable for providing quality education for all children.”

Thus, there are new chapters here, such as Ch. 3, “Revisiting the Courageous Conversations About Race Protocol,” in which he introduces an expanded version of a horizontal, six-point “Courageous Conversation Protocol Developmental Scale,” where readers can assess themselves to see where they fit beginning with “Knowledge,” and progressing to higher levels – “Comprehension,” “Application,” “Analysis,” “Synthesis,” and finally “Interruption.” This “Developmental Scale” is presented in a 4-page table with the left-hand, vertical column encompassing 10 categories beginning with the above “4 Agreements,” including the “Compass,” and other categories such as “Examining Whiteness.” (This table reminds me of Sonia Nieto’s table of 7 “Levels of Multicultural Education” and 5 “Characteristics of Multicultural Education” in her book, *Affirming Diversity: The Sociopolitical Context of Multicultural Education*, which I expected to be referenced by Singleton.)

Also, new is Ch. 6, “Moving Courageous Conversations Beyond Black and White,” in which Singleton addresses the unmet needs of other people of color, specifically “Brown” (Hispanic) and “American Indians,” and all those for whom English is a second language. Additionally Ch. 8, “Leadership for Racial Equity From Theory to Practice” is new in this book and includes more acronyms – “District Equity Leadership Teams” (DELT and DELTA), “Site and Central-Office Department Leaders Engaged in Equity/Anti-racism Development” (LEADs) and “Students Organized for Anti-Racism” (SOAR).

The Courageous Conversations About Race: A Field Guide for Achieving Equity in Schools featured little boxes throughout each chapter with “Reflection” questions addressed to the reader e.g. “Before you opened this book, how consciously aware of race were you?” At the end of each chapter there are “Implementation Exercises” and “Racial Autobiographies.” Similarly in *More Courageous Conversations* these are replaced

with “Essential Questions” at the end of each chapter that are related to one’s own personal preparation for engaging in courageous conversations, along with “Voices from the Inside,” personal stories of people involved in the struggle.

With this summary and brief comparing of the original volume with *More*, for the rest of this review I will use NSRF’s [Four A’s Text Protocol](#).  I’ll offer some thoughts about content within the books with which I “Agree,” identify some “Assumptions” I believe Singleton makes, share aspects about which I might “Argue,” and close with that to which I “Aspire” in the books.

To begin, I certainly Agree that we are not in some mythical post-racial biases era, and need courageous conversations more than ever. I also concur with the following statement of the dilemma facing those educators like Singleton – and hopefully many of you readers of *Connections!* – who are willing to face and work on these issues:

“I learned in crafting my first book that writing about race for a U.S. audience requires that I first state exactly what must be said to enlist the confidence of and maintain my credibility among racially conscious people of color. It next demands that I craft a revision that does not overwhelm or alienate my majority White readership. This is because, alongside my critical and targeted audiences, there exists a powerful and largely White body of critics who will indiscriminately challenge any attempt I make, meaningful or otherwise, to elevate the conversation and consciousness about race and racism in this country to a higher and more urgent level.”

However, I would question an Assumption which I believe is embedded in the following statement Singleton makes so emphatically:

*“...put this book aside right now if you have not read and internalized its precursor, *Courageous Conversations About Race: A Field Guide to Achieving Equity in Schools*.It is my steadfast view that this first text*



Glenn E. Singleton

is effective only when readers carefully consider the narratives contained within it, complete the book’s exercises, and apply its Protocol to their personal, professional, and organizational racial equity challenges.”

I understand that Singleton intends to take his readers deeper and wants them to have done some initial work on issues of race, but I believe he assumes that reading his first book and doing the exercises therein is the only way to be prepared to go deeper. There are too many others laboring in these same fields to see his introductory work as the sole point of entry. I think of the work of the “National Equity Project,” a near neighbor to Singleton in California, the work of Henry Louis Gates, Geneva Gay, Pedro Nogueira, Gary Howard, Lisa Delpit, Gloria Ladson-Billings, Linda Darling-Hammond, Julie Landsman and Chance Lewis, as well as others who continue to write about, speak-out about, and do workshops about race, working with people of all backgrounds.

I would Argue with Singleton that, although he is to be lauded for recognizing an area of his own growth by adding a chapter addressing the educational inequalities facing countless Latino/Latinas and Native Americans, I do not see a discussion of the devastating impact of poverty as a frequent additional contributing factor

to racial discrimination, nor is there discussion of the gender bias which is so destructive to all too many of our young women of all races. Rather he focuses in depth only on the acknowledged challenges facing Black males in our society. Also missing is a discussion of the challenges facing our gay, bisexual, lesbian, and transgender young people – particularly those of color – among whom there are all too many suicides. Suicide is but one dramatic indicator of the tremendous challenges they face.

Furthermore, although I recognize that his two books are specifically addressing issues of race, I would argue that this discussion is incomplete without actual discussions – courageous conversations and exercises – to help educators work more effectively with

students of all races, all sexes and genders, from all economic backgrounds, and sexual preferences, as well as students who have learning disabilities and physical handicaps, thus facing doubly difficult challenges as second-class citizens. Thus, I look forward to a third book by Singleton in which he addresses these disparities in our education system.

Lastly, I Aspire to the same kinds of things that Singleton hopes for and longs to see – more demonstrably effective changes in our schools and school systems, addressing the needs of students of color. And I admire the thoughtfulness and thoroughness with which Singleton presents the chapters in his latest book, **MORE Courageous Conversations About Race**. Would that all educators, not only White, but

of all races, genders, cultures, ethnicities, sexual orientation, and income level could work through Singleton's exercises, reflections, and essential questions, doing the personal work needed to carry on the struggle for social justice.

For me, personally then – beyond being a writer of book reviews and articles for **Connections** – I know, and accept that my work as an NSRF National Facilitator has “no closure” as Singleton puts it. It is a life-long commitment to which I aspire.

So I recommend you get a copy of **More Courageous Conversations About Race** and let us know at NSRF what you think; how it might help you and the people with whom you work in education? 🍃

Improve the effectiveness of your audiovisual presentations

In the September issue of the journal, **Mind, Brain and Education**, an excellent article on “The Neuroscience of PowerPoint” includes research-based tips on preparing Powerpoint presentations.

- 1) Written text with spoken word does not work.
- 2) Visual images with spoken word is much more effective.
- 3) Utilizing the “point” in PPT can help.

Drawing not only on years of research from earlier behavioral studies, but on current neuro-imaging studies, the author, Jared Cooney Horvath (Professor of Psychological Sciences at the University of Melbourne, Australia), reports on recent findings from brain scans of students and others when looking at visual PPT slides and text while listening to an accompanying aural presentation.

The researchers observed that the same region of the brain is involved in reading text on a PPT slide as listening to the concurrent oration of the presenter. Reading competes with listening rather than enhances it. So, drop text slides from your presentations and give people a chance to really hear what you're saying.

The “modality principle” of multi-media learning theory is now supported by other current neuro-imaging studies. These studies tell us that aural presentations supported with relevant IMAGES (rather than words) enhance learning. Scans of these test subjects show that combined visual and auditory presentations activate different, complementary regions of the brain. So, keep

those slides with images and illustrations, but make sure they're relevant and don't overdo it.

Another key concept in multi-media theory, the “signaling principle,” suggests that learning can be enhanced when attentional cues are used to highlight essential learning during a presentation. For example, circling or adding an arrow to highlight a slide's details (such as a graph or chart) can focus the observer's attention to key aspects of your presentation. So, try using graphic signals as a way of emphasizing key points.

Lastly, keep those slides to a reasonable number – remember that old principle, less is more!

More on improving presentations

Nancy Duarte has written several books about presentations, and coaches many of the greatest TED speakers. Her talk at TEDxEast offers more great advice on presentations and is a wonderful example of the power of simple slides. <http://bit.ly/1A7WuqN>

