

digital divide, then provides a summary and closing section on dismantling the divide. After each of the discussions of the “digital divides,” he gives several ways to counter these issues, citing means of “access” that address the various divides. For example, in the section on “ableism and the digital divide,” he includes descriptions of access to computers and the internet, access to affordable equipment, and access to a nondiscriminatory and supportive IT culture. Gorski ends this chapter with a list of five websites which specifically address issues of the “digital divide,” as well as a lengthy bibliography.

The remaining nine chapters of Multicultural Education and

the Internet are devoted to different topics and means of accessing information on the Internet – e.g. “Web Integration and Multicultural Curriculum Transformation,” “Bridges and Dialogues: Online Networking for Educators,” and “Evaluating Educational Web Sites: A Multicultural Approach.” Each of these chapters ends with a lists of specific websites and useful references. And, as mentioned in the introduction of Paul Gorski, he maintains two excellent websites – www.edchange.org and www.edchange.org/multicultural - which are continually updated and are full of references to websites useful to educators from kindergarten through college/university. The book is only 226 pages long,

easily accessed, highly readable and full of useful materials; Gorski has provided us with a truly valuable resource.

*** Note** – see Paul Gorski’s thorough analysis of Ruby Payne’s writings in the article – “Peddling Poverty for Profit: Elements of Oppression in Ruby Payne’s Framework” (2009, originally published as in “Equity and Excellence in Education”) to be found in the section “Our Publications” of the EdChange website.

For questions/comments or for more information contact Dave Lehman at davelehman@mac.com

ASK THE DIRECTOR

Dear NSRF,

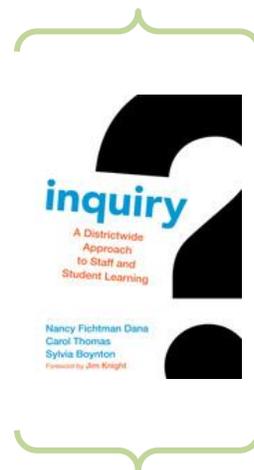
I am trying to get buy-in for Critical Friends Groups (CFGs) at my school. Many of our staff are in a pretty negative place over our “low performance” on our current high stakes test. We are doing all we can to bring up those scores, but many feel that none of the things we’ve tried in the past worked, and this is just one more thing. Can CFGs really change school culture for the better?



From the Director:

In this current wave of “school reform,” our poorest children’s education consists of being drilled in facts, learning rules and following directions with the explicit intent of raising test scores. Maybe more than ever, educators need tools to raise student achievement by developing critical thinking skills, fostering creativity and encouraging reflective practice. In conveying the power of CFGs to those unfamiliar with the practice, it can help to reference schools that have successfully used them to help create a positive school culture of high achievement.

A good example is illustrated in the book “District-Wide Professional Development: An Inquiry Approach” by Nancy Fichtman Dana, Carol Thomas and Sylvia Boynton. By using the inquiry model of learning, the educators in Pinellas County School District brought out their student’s passions by showing them how to target their interests, collect and analyze data to inform their questions and share out the results. Just as importantly the central office administration sent out a very clear message to all students, teachers, principals and other administrators—learning is the most important job of everyone in the school district. As such, all educators were required to participate in inquiry themselves through ongoing, job-embedded professional development, (CFGs). The result? A school culture where all students and staff members are dedicated to achieving high levels of learning by continually improving their performance.



Questions/Comments Contact Michele Mattoon at Michele@nsrfharmony.org

ARTICLE: CFG’S IMPLICATIONS FOR PROJECT BASED LEARNING BY AL SUMMER

Al Summer has been working in education for 40 years. He is an instructional coach for Region 8 ESC who provides follow up coaching to teachers who were trained in project based learning this past summer under a generous grant from Talent Initiative. Previously, he taught middle school science for 28 years in a rural district in Ohio.

We were in our fourth day of training being led by members of NSRF when, out of the blue, one of our group said, “every meeting should be run like this!” Although to a casual observer that statement may have seemed a

revelation, to those of us in the training it was a rather matter of fact remark. It could have come from any one of us.

We were a group of instructional coaches, trained in Project Based Learning (PBL) and charged with working with

teachers throughout the coming school year. We had gotten a “taste” of critical friends on the third day of PBL training when we were involved in a protocol they called “Critical Friends.” This protocol was actually a slightly