

and meet at least once monthly throughout the year. We received interest from nearly twice the number of teachers who could be accommodated in the pilot group, but have since developed ways to narrow the field while involving everyone in some capacity. Secondly, the faculty members were invited to participate in focus groups that will utilize specific protocols so that faculty members can take full advantage of the professional development conferences that are being offered in Athens this year. All interested teachers will meet in collaborative groups to review professional offerings at three local conferences prior to the sessions. In these focus groups, teachers will share their goals and key outcomes from the conferences. After having implemented one or more of the new ideas gained from the workshops, teachers will have

the opportunity to share the impact of those practices with their colleagues in those groups.

We are three months into the school year and our pilot group has a firm base, one made possible with strong administrative support, time in the regular meeting schedule, and willingness of teachers to explore. The group met during one professional day to “break the ice,” to establish the group’s understandings, and to create a foundation of questioning skills so crucial to CFG protocols. We understand that some of the best professional development comes when teachers have time to share and focus on their practices to improve student learning. The first impressions that our faculty had of Collaborative



Learning Communities resulted in greater interest and increased potential. Teachers were not told of the possibilities that CLCs offered, rather they experienced the collaborative potential that groups like CFGs hold. We look forward to collaborating with NSRF and other schools in our region as we seek to realize the full potential of our collaborative groups.

A special thank you to Penny Kynigou, ACS Elementary School Teacher and co-organizer.

Questions or Comments? Contact David Nelson at nelsond@acs.gr.

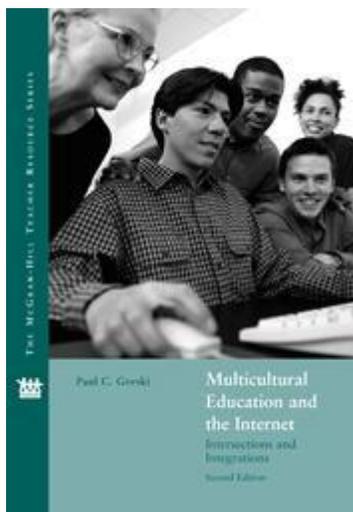
BOOK REVIEW: MULTICULTURAL EDUCATION AND THE INTERNET: INTERSECTIONS AND INTEGRATIONS, 2ND EDITION BY PAUL GORSKI BY DAVE LEHMAN, CONNECTIONS EDITOR, NATIONAL FACILITATOR

Readers of Connections may remember Paul Gorski from the outstanding interview done by Camilla Greene in the

Fall 2007 issue in which Gorski – Founder of the websites, EdChange and the Multicultural Pavilion, and

Assistant Professor of Integrative Studies at George Mason University, Fairfax, Virginia - presented a

compelling case against Ruby Payne's A Framework for Understanding Poverty, dispelling her myth* of a "culture of poverty." Here, in the 2nd Edition of his Multicultural Education and the Internet, Gorski provides not only a strong argument for the thoughtful use of the internet in our schools, but in addition



gives us annotated lists of useful websites in a number of key curricular areas.

In the Preface to this book, Paul Gorski states his concerns about the increasing use of computers and the Internet by educators, particularly classroom teachers:

"Before considering the ways in which the Internet can contribute to multicultural education, we must understand its relationship to the ways in which it may contribute to existing inequities.

Before hopping on the Internet bandwagon I must be sure that my teaching is grounded in sound multicultural pedagogy, not driven by the latest educational fad. We must collectively reflect on the implications of the growing reliance on computers and the Internet in education when there is little evidence that these technologies improve teaching and learning."

With that said, Gorski continues in the Preface to make the case for the appropriate use of the Internet: *"If we dedicate to engaging ourselves in individual reflection and collective dialogue about thoughtful and equitable employment of these technologies, I still believe that the Internet can be the most contributive, progressive, multicultural teaching and learning medium."*

Paul Gorski then goes on to spell out clearly his conceptualizing of multicultural education in a chapter on "The Multiculturality of the Internet," first noting the crucial difference in the way educators ask themselves questions as they make decisions in designing their teaching – "... when the

question becomes 'How do I incorporate this technology into my teaching?,' instead of 'What is the most effective way to teach this lesson or unit and how does this technology fit into that scheme, if at all?,' it becomes crucial to reflect deeply on what drives our educational decisions." He continues in this chapter noting that the basis of multicultural education can be effectively expressed by another key question – "Does every student who walks into our schools or your classroom have an opportunity to achieve to her or his fullest, regardless of race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, religion, socioeconomic status, first language (dis)ability, national origin, or any other personal social, or political identifier around which we have historically experienced and continue to cycle achievement gaps (including gaps in dropout rates)?"

In a new chapter in this 2nd Edition, Gorski discusses thoroughly "The Digital Divide," referring to various studies on: racism and the digital divide, sexism and the digital divide, classism and the digital divide, linguisticism and the digital divide, and ableism and the

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 list 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?

