

Race Matters

John Patrick Moran, California

Since evolving our CFG Coaches trainings to be Equity Based and – for the sake of our most underserved students – explicitly prioritizing race (at least for the weeklong institute), we have learned much about the dynamics and reactions that can be expected as our curriculum and community develop across the intensive week and as participants face and assess their individual journeys and roles within our educational system.

Common is the “This is not all about race” statement. Another argument is “Race doesn’t matter if we love and respect each other,” suggesting that our goodwill and behaviors will counter the impacts of the larger socio-logical impacts issue of racism within our classes. Our recent Equity Based-CFG training with the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction proved to be no exception to the rule. Following a rich and deep discussion as to whether or not race matters in good education, one of our participants could not stop thinking about the discussion, even after he had gone home for the evening. He returned the next day and offered the following reflection during Connections. – Greg Peters, California

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Race matters.

It mattered when I was introduced to Dorothy Counts on the steps she previously climbed on a journey to integrate Harding High. And as I looked into this face of greatness, I realized that race matters.

Race matters.

It mattered when I walked up those same steps to join the faculty of Irwin Avenue and when I introduced myself, one teacher turned to another, and said, “I don’t need to talk to no white man.”

Race matters.

It mattered *within* the inner halls of these same steps when segregation played itself out and I have to ask myself: if race doesn’t matter, why have we let history repeat itself? And most importantly, what is my role in changing it?

Race matters.

It matters every time my partner and I go out into the world:

One black man with one white one, and I have to ask if race doesn’t matter:

why do I sometimes see the face of indifference?

Race matters

It matters then and today, I believe it matters still.

To believe otherwise am I not denying my own history?

Are we not denying our collective struggle?

Our connected story?

I am not color blind for to believe that I am denotes sameness

Denies not only who I am as a white man

with a story and a heritage of his own,

wrought with the same struggles and triumphs as yours,

but a man unique in this differ-

ence.

I am not color blind for to believe that I am denies who you are.

Your story.

Your heritage.

And the legacy you wish to leave.

And if I could leave you with one final thought: in my life and especially in my work as well as my relationships with the rest of you, will this difference be something to loathe and hate? Or instead, will it be something that needs to be embraced and celebrated. Today I choose the latter. ■

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