



Reflections on the Equity Conversation

Good start to the equity conversation ... How do I begin these talks in my school? What does "equity of outcomes" look like? How do we deliver it? My lack of ability/clarity in this area scares me.

Washington State

How do we create situations that draw people to take risks and walk on the skinny branches?

Winter Meeting, 2001

Racism is so prevalent in our society, it is in the air we breathe. It is part of the operational practices in the institutions that function in our society. What is important for individuals, I believe, is to understand how it operates, understand our own beliefs and values with regard to people of color, and monitor our own behavior. Each of us can influence the institutions in which we function and act to impact individuals.

New York

Many children of middle and upper class African Americans do poorly on standardized tests etc. Why is this so? Can we have a discussion about equity without discussing race in a country that in the last century segregated and in the century before enslaved? I don't think so. Race is a difficult, painful topic but we cannot ignore it. I have been troubled every time I am present at a national meeting and the issue of equity arises either purposefully, placed on the agenda or by accident. I often feel that people don't speak their minds because they are afraid. We need to continue to talk about race and class.

Florida

Yesterday the Sub picked on me for no reason. When the table next to me was talking, the Sub blamed it on me. She yelled, "Quit talking!" I said, "Excuse me?" Then she rudely said, "Do you know English?!" That made me angry inside because just because I'm Mexican it doesn't mean I don't know English.

Student, Eisenhower High School, Houston

I really appreciate this conversation. It's probably the dilemma that troubles me most. Can we as a humanity move forward and what is this going to take? It seems to me that dealing with our fears is part of it. I wonder if we also have to "hold our own views gently" as Senge says in his piece on dialogue. This is difficult for me.

I have always viewed my beliefs as who I am. I realize how this gets in the way of communicating or connecting to people who think differently from me.

Indiana

I can tell you why unraveling racism in particular is important to me. In my writing about racism so far, I have uncovered two instances in my own teaching practice in which I believe I abused my students by addressing them through a lens of racism. It was unconscious and unintentional, but damaging nonetheless. In order to ensure that I never do that again, I need to find out why I did it and then make a fundamental change. If I can then help others to similarly reflect on their practice, that would be good too.

Vermont

Equity is what someone perceives as right or fair. I don't believe equity can be generalized and applied to people as a whole because one man's equity could be another man's injustice.

Student, Eisenhower High School, Houston

What we are realizing is that even when we think we have taken off our "lenses" we are wearing contacts and still see through bias. While we may never be able to see without bias we can certainly act with forethought and integrity. Sounds simple, but is difficult.

Florida