

a month earlier at the NCLR national office in Washington, D.C., assisted us with the facilitation and organization of the learning communities. Our agenda emerged from the work of the institute and, through the use of activities and protocols, provided a context for profound connections and reflections.

The NSRF and the Center for Community Educational Excellence will continue to work together to support all members of the NCLR family in teaching with the mind and heart, as a means of empowering Latino children everywhere. ■

CES Northwest...
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solid observable evidence – laid a solid foundation for more challenging feedback later in the week. The fact that the feedback was always tied to the questions the facilitators themselves had posed was key to the success of the debrief sessions. There were never any ‘gotchas.’ This trust-building process was not given short shrift, and its value should not be underestimated. After all, most of the facilitators had never met John or me prior to this seminar week together.

I was surprised to learn how absolutely crucial the use of concrete observations was to the overall process. As I look back on the experience, I liken the whole observation process to a four-day ATLAS protocol. I used my laptop constantly each day, and found that the most efficient way for me to collect the data was to simply script the behaviors of the facilitators. I tried to be as objective and descriptive as possible, keeping my interpretations out of the scripting. I included direct quotes whenever possible, and kept some track of start and end times of the various activities. My note taking evolved into a four-column table format:

- Description
- Warm Feedback

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•My Questions
•Connection to Focus Questions
During the course of the day, I only typed in the description column. (This was the equivalent of round one of an ATLAS protocol – “What do you see, literally?”) Later each day, I would add warm feedback, my questions, and finally the connections to the facilitators’ focus questions. (This information was similar to “Interpreting the Work” and “Implications for Practice” rounds in an ATLAS protocol.) It was this note-taking process that provided the concrete and specific feedback that the facilitators seemed to appreciate. It enabled me to provide feedback that was nonjudgmental, because all interpretations were tied directly to the scripted activities – the raw data – and were not simply my opinions, based on my own experiences and preferences.
I have to mention the importance of having some facility with the laptop in this role as process observer. John and I each had about 7 pages of computer-generated notes daily. These we e-mailed to the facilitators at the end of the week. I am sure I could not have kept the pace with scribing and with organizing information later if I had tried doing it using handwritten notes.

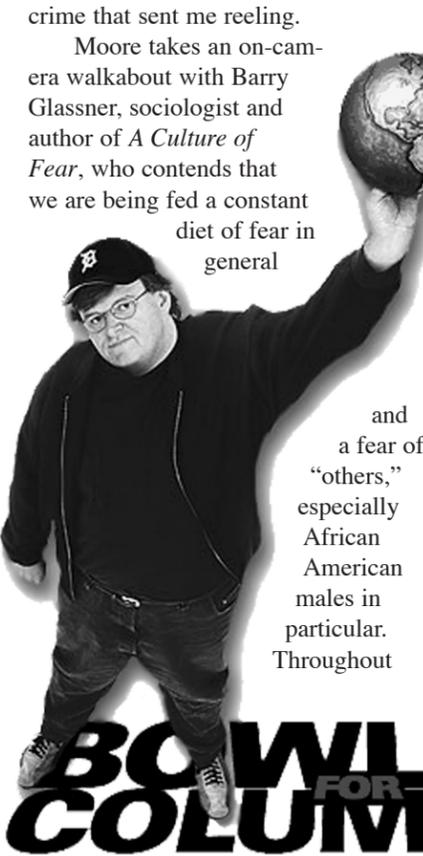
• One thing that I began to reflect upon about myself as a facilitator: I began to wonder if I am as inclusive of other facilitators as I like to think I am. As I watched the facilitators working together and becoming smoother in their interactions over the course of the days, I came to wonder about the role I play when working with co-facilitators. I watched the lead facilitator, who has given so much of herself in helping to provide a strong foundation for the learning community work at CES NW, as she sought to share the leadership with others. I wondered how comfortable I really am with sharing the leadership, and I wondered how much my personal investment in the outcomes of CFG work in our area may be restricting the creative input of the very talented facilitators with whom I work regularly.
I learned a great deal from this experience, and I appreciate the way Jill Hudson and the seminar facilitators of CES NW “walked the talk” of making their work public. ■

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Did you know that while violent crime has declined steadily to the tune of 20% in recent years media coverage of these crimes has increased by 600%? I didn't, but I did know that I've been feeling less secure lately, what with all the child kidnappings and the sniper attacks. Yet it never really occurred to me that my fears were being manipulated to such a flagrant degree. In fact, I was even wondering if I was feeling more vulnerable because I was getting older...

But recently I went to the movies and I got a new lens on the whole fear issue... I was feeling a little anxious going in because I knew the film, *Bowling for Columbine*, might not be easy to watch, but I really wanted to see what Michael Moore had to say about gun violence in general and school violence in particular.

It turns out that the title of the film is based on the bowling class that Kleibold and Harris attended at Littleton High. The two young men actually attended their first period bowling class in the early hours that fatal morning when they took their high school hostage. The reminders of Columbine were hard to take, as were a number of other 911 calls by teachers and school personnel, but in the end it was Michael Moore's consistent questioning about our society's predilection for violence and the exposure of the media's saturation coverage of



crime that sent me reeling. Moore takes an on-camera walkabout with Barry Glassner, sociologist and author of *A Culture of Fear*, who contends that we are being fed a constant diet of fear in general

and a fear of “others,” especially African American males in particular. Throughout

tion of Native Americans and on down to the formation of the NRA and KKK during Reconstruction. He follows his thinking through history, up to, and including, white flight to the suburbs and a near hysterical frenzy of gun purchases all designed to keep “them” out of our homes and communities.

Moore's not so tongue-in-cheek examination of racial fear and its manipulation by the powers that-be was driven home in the movie and was underscored by his recent remarks as a guest on Oprah. He basically said that as long as we're consumed with fears of each other, we're sidetracked from a focus on the real problems that affect us all, problems like under-funded schools, unemployment and the threat of world war, to name just a few.

I'm encouraging all my colleagues, friends and family to see this film and I'm reading Glassner's *The Culture of Fear*. I

the film Michael Moore keeps returning to the question of why we're so afraid as white people and whether our fears have resulted in our essentially violent national culture. He even goes so far as to offer an original, animated portrayal of our nation's history as one based on fear, from the arrival of the Pilgrims, through the decima-

think the implications for our struggles to build community and social equity are clear and I'm hoping that the power of this film's message will open some hearts and minds that fear has paralyzed until now. ■

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NSRF Mission Statement

The mission of the National School Reform Faculty is to foster educational and social equity by empowering all people involved with schools to work collaboratively in reflective democratic communities that create and support powerful learning experiences for everyone.

CONNECTIONS

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