How to have **Courageous Conversations about Race and Culture**

**WITHOUT BLAME OR SHAME**

SARAH HESTRES
This sounds uncomfortable, why go there?

Proficient or Advanced ACT Scores 2018-19

- Amer Indian: 16.5%
- Asian: 36.3%
- Black: 8.0%
- Hispanic: 18.4%
- Pacific Isle: 21.1%
- White: 43.5%
- Two or More: 30.7%
- Unknown: 22.0%
This sounds uncomfortable, why go there?

2018 Graduation Rates (4-year Cohort)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ethnicity</th>
<th>Graduation Rate</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Amer Indian</td>
<td>77.80%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asian</td>
<td>91.00%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black</td>
<td>69.30%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Hispanic</td>
<td>82.30%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pacific Isle</td>
<td>94.00%</td>
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<tr>
<td>White</td>
<td>93.50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Two or More</td>
<td>85.00%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Unknown</td>
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</table>
So that’s why we need to go there.

Out of School Suspension Rates 2017-18

- Amer Indian: 13.80%
- Asian: 1.50%
- Black: 41.50%
- Hispanic: 9.10%
- Pacific Isle: 6.60%
- White: 3.80%
- Two or More: 13.00%
So where do I start?

- Stakeholders need to be on board
- Educate yourself
How do I get stakeholders onboard?

- School_Equity_Profile_17-18_school_year.xlsx

- https://www.livebinders.com/media/get_centered/MTcxNjc0ODY=
How do I educate myself?

- First and foremost reflect and be willing to be vulnerable
  - Write your own racial/cultural biography
  - Own your own biases
  - Recognize your privilege
- Go out and learn
  - Beyond Diversity I and II (Thenetworkwi.com)
  - Social Justice (thenetworkwi.com)
  - African Heritage Emerging Students Leaders Institute
  - CCRTL (Center for Cultural responsive Teaching and Learning)
  - Put yourself “out there” Go to cultural events and places that you’ll feel uncomfortable
Ok, I’ve educated myself, how do I start with my school’s staff?

- Create a “safe” space
- Have them write their own biographies
- Get rid of “isms”
- Consider ways that people approach this issue
- Set some ground rules that everyone can accept
How do we approach tough issues?
### Ground rules? Can we commit....

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Staying Engaged</th>
<th>Speak Your Truth</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>* Listening fully with our ears, eyes, and heart</td>
<td>* Without blame and judgement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>* Monitor your distractions</td>
<td>* All voices and perspectives are welcome and honored</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Expect/Accept Non-Closure</th>
<th>Experience Discomfort</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>* Be open to the experience and each other</td>
<td>* Notice moments of discomfort and stay curious</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>* Building relationships and equity/social justice work takes time</td>
<td>* We recognize that this is challenging work</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The Wisconsin RtI Center/Wisconsin PBIS Network (CFDA #84.027) acknowledges the support of the Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction in the development of this [product] and for the continued support of this federally funded grant program.
Ok, so I’m ready to go, now what?

- Rings of Culture
- Racial/Cultural Autobiographies
- Iceberg Concept of Culture
- VABBing
- Where do we get our information?
- What is a 3rd option-avoiding binary thinking
“I’m writing about all the things I ought to do before I die. It’s my oughtobiography.”
Iceberg concept of culture

**The Iceberg Concept of Culture**

Like an iceberg, nine-tenths of culture is below the surface.

**Surface Culture**
Most easily seen
Emotional level - low

- Food, dress, music, visual arts, drama, crafts, dance, literature, language, celebrations, games

**Shallow Culture**
Unspoken Rules
Emotional level - high
- courtesy, contextual conversational patterns, concept of time, personal space, rules of conduct, facial expressions, nonverbal communication, body language, touching, eye contact, patterns of handling emotions, notions of modesty, concept of beauty, courtship practices, relationships to animals, notions of leadership, tempo of work, concepts of food, ideals of child rearing, theory of disease, social interaction rate, nature of friendships, tone of voice, attitudes toward elders, concept of cleanliness, notions of adolescence, patterns of group decision-making, definition of insanity, preferences for competition or cooperation, tolerance of physical pain, concept of “self”, concept of past and future, definition of obscenity, attitudes toward dependents, problem solving roles in relation to age, sex, class, occupation, kinship, and...

**Deep Culture**
Unconscious Rules
Emotional level - intense
Validate: Making legitimate that which the institution (academia) and mainstream media have made illegitimate culturally and linguistically.

Affirm: Making positive that which the institution (academia) and mainstream media have made negative culturally and linguistically.

Build: Creating the connections between the home culture/language and the school culture/language through instruction (teaching necessary skills) for success in school and the broader social context.

Bridge: Creating opportunities for situational appropriateness or utilizing appropriate cultural or linguistic behaviors.

(adapted by the Wisconsin RtI Center from the work of Dr. Sharroky Hollie)
Where do we get our information?

I know I know!  
I don't know what I don't know!

I know I don’t know!  
I don’t know, but I believe I do!

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XG1-9GXGAek
Binary Thinking

Right    Wrong
Good     Bad
Us       Them

Is there a 3rd option?
Things I’ve learned the hard way

- You will find surprises
- Be wary of the stalling arguments and be prepared to keep things on track
- Remember even when people disagree with you, they have to be reflecting
- It’s ok that you don’t have all the answers
Questions?

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