2018-19 TeachingWorks Streaming Seminar Series

Panel Discussion: Expanding the canon: What other disciplines might we include in our K-12 schools to illuminate, nurture, and grow students’ brilliance?

**Featuring:**

Na’ilah Suad Nasir  
President, Spencer Foundation

Thank you for your patience.  
The session will begin at 4:10 p.m.

Email questions to twseminar@umich.edu #twseminar
Teaching for Equity as Intentional Work: Why we must take up race in schools

Na’ilah Suad Nasir
UC Berkeley
Spencer Foundation
Talent is Equally Distributed Across Populations
A Key Conundrum

Schools as institutions, both reproduce social inequality and disrupt it.
Why Race Matters to Learning

• Access to high-quality instruction
  • Disparities along every dimension by race here:
    • Well-prepared, experienced teachers
    • Rigorous coursework
    • Equitable funding
    • Teaching that focuses on critical thinking

• Access to identities as a learner
  • Burden of negative racial storylines
The Power of Racial Storylines

- Stereotypes as racial narratives or storylines: *lived, used, invoked*
- *Common ways of thinking & mechanisms of oppression*: Artifacts that organize our perceptions, opinions, and action.
Current National Context

• High level of social and educational inequality
• Powerful public narratives about race
• Changing national demographics
Developmental Needs of Adolescents

- Competence and autonomy
- Care and community
- Identity and sense of place in the world
How Developmental Needs Intersect with Racialized Experience
Racial Identity and Learning
How Teaching Can Support Racial Identity

• By supporting learning identities
• By supporting reframed and expanded racial identities

“...I was colluding in a system and in practices that reinforced racism without consciously being aware of this.”

Stephen Brookfield
On the Teaching in Higher Ed Podcast #147
Creating Equity through Math Instruction at “Railside”

- Urban, comprehensive high school in Northern California
- Multi-racial Student population:
- De-tracked mathematics department
- Multi-ability curriculum
- Strong record of success: Elimination of race and gender gaps by senior year. (Boaler & Staples)
Important Underlying Assumptions at Railside

- All teachers and students are learners
- Working from strengths/making space for vulnerability
- Redefining “smart”
- Redefining what it means to do math in school
- The importance of relationships
Hallmarks of the Railside Approach

• Elements of the Program:
  • Commitment to Equity
  • Block scheduling
  • Complex Instruction & Groupwork
  • Teacher professional community

• Aspects of Teaching Practice
  • Groupworthy tasks
  • Multiple representations
  • Focus on big ideas
  • Justification
  • Students presentations
Daring to Teach with Love: Manhood Development in OUSD

• District sponsored program for African American males

• Manhood Development Program (MDP) classes with cohorts of 20-25 MS and HS students.

• Classes held for one period every day, or after school, and led by African American male instructors.
What Characterizes MDP Classrooms?

- Teaching philosophy: Humanization & love
- New kinds of discipline practices
- Debunking/reframing stereotypes about black males
- Building of community; multi-layered relationships
Debunking Stereotypes About Black Males

- Explicit discussions of black manhood
- Role modeling new ways of being
  - Historical actors as role models - reframing the past
What Structures Need to Be in Place in Schools and Districts?

• Intentional priority on equity and on disrupting inequity

• Structural practices that support identity work
  • Detracking, integrated classes, teacher professional development, hiring practices, structures that support belonging

• Belief in the potential of all students; understanding of the education debt

• Willingness to disrupt structures of privilege
  • Rectify unearned advantage and undeserved challenge
What Does This Mean for Teacher Education?

• Racial literacy as a key aspect of teacher education
• Requires support in unlearning everyday racism
• Viewing identity work as a deeply connected to content learning
• Training in how to support healthy racial identities, to create classrooms with new norms
• Diversify the teaching force
• Creating contexts where the collective work is fundamentally about equity