

POSITIVE RESTLESSNESS: RECLAIMING LEARNING FOR DEMOCRACY

Agenda Week 3: October 14, 2008

6:00 *Evening's agenda and check-in*

Class housekeeping

- Brief overview of class's assessment of collaborative learning process
- Revised *Weekly Schedule* (handout)
- Faculty comments on Reflection Journal and RR paper)
- Check-in on access to *Positive Restlessness* online learning community

6:20 *Examining Johnson's conceptual framework for understanding the social construction of difference**

- Work groups (around 5-6 classmates)
 - track key intellectual "moves" in Johnson's argument
 - identify questions for group of the whole discussion
- Individual and group work on the Diversity Wheel
- Conversation pairs: Using theory to think through/account for experience
- Review of Reading Response paper structure

* BREAK (15 minutes sometime during this agenda point)

8:30 *Workshop: Assembling a Writer's Argument*

Focus on Tatum's argument in *Can We Talk About Race? And Other Conversations in an Era of School Resegregation* (see handout)

9:55 *Adjourn*

References from tonight's class:

- Johnson, Allan G. 2006. *Privilege, Power, and Difference*, 2nd edition. New York: McGraw Hill.
- Rattansi, Ali. 2007. *Racism: A Very Short Introduction*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Tatum, Beverly Daniel. 2007. *Can We Talk About Race? And Other Conversations in an Era of School Resegregation*. Boston: Beacon Press.

⇒ please turn over page for Journal Topics

JOURNAL TOPICS: for week of Oct 15-21 (due October 21--week #4)

- Tatum argues for the importance for each person to explore her or his own racial identity and how that identity was formed through life experiences. As you explore your own racial identity, what do you find? What experiences have been particularly influential? What questions or troubling insights come up?
- Apply Tatum's ABC vision (pg. 21 and after) to your own K-12 education. To what extent did your schools provide experiences in support of those three goals? Where might the schools have accomplished more than they did? How has it affected you and your sense of racial/cultural identity to grow up within those school processes?
- In chapter 1 of *Privilege, Power, and Difference*, Allan Johnson describes the common assumption that it is "human nature" to fear what is unfamiliar, whether that unfamiliar trait is race, religion, culture, gender, sexual orientation, etc. But Johnson denies the validity of that assumption:

As popular and as powerful as such arguments are, the only way to hold on to them is to ignore most of what history, psychology, anthropology, sociology, biology, and, if people look closely, their own experience reveal about human beings and how they live. We are not prisoners to some natural order that pits us hopelessly and endlessly against one another. We are prisoners to *something*, but it's closer to our own making than we realize. (pg. 3-4)

What ideas, experiences, and questions come to mind if you apply Johnson's idea to your own life?

- Working with the Diversity Wheel often arouses various types of discomfort or resistance in students. Were there any pieces of the wheel that proved troubling for you? Explore your responses and consider those responses in relation to the argument that Johnson makes.
- On page 36 of *Can We Talk about Race?* Tatum writes,

As many scholars and writers have explored in recent years, Whiteness is not an identity without meaning. Some White people who haven't thought much about these issues will say, "Well, you know, I'm an individual. I want you to see me as an individual." And of course, each of us is an individual, and we want our individuality recognized. But we each also have a social identity, with a social history, a social meaning. Recognition of the meaning of Whiteness in our society is recognition of the meaning of *privilege* in the context of a society that advantages being White.

Respond to and explore these ideas in any ways that interest you.