Transforming Schools: A Practical Guide for Empowering Change Agents to Facilitate Diversity Transformation

Michael Mott

Follow this and additional works at: https://scholars.fhsu.edu/alj

Part of the Educational Leadership Commons, Higher Education Commons, and the Teacher Education and Professional Development Commons

Recommended Citation
Available at: https://scholars.fhsu.edu/alj/vol7/iss4/37

This Article is brought to you for free and open access by FHSU Scholars Repository. It has been accepted for inclusion in Academic Leadership: The Online Journal by an authorized editor of FHSU Scholars Repository.
For several years now we have all been made aware via numerous media sources and publishing outlets that the demographics of United States K-12 student body and teaching faculty is rapidly transforming into an increasingly more racial, ethnic and religious melting pot representing our democratic societal milieu. Recent research has pointed out the value that a diverse teaching and learning community offers by supporting multiple viewpoints that expand the understandings we develop about ourselves and the world in order that we contribute to our democracy (Banks, 2007). Diversity textbooks cover teacher methods for best practice. Yet for elementary and secondary school principals responsible for administering to their K-12 faculty, less has been articulated about the “how” school-based administrators can lead teachers in leveraging the increasingly pluralistic student body to enhance both teaching and learning.

Building upon the theoretical and practical work of multicultural education for pre- and in-service teachers by such notable authors as James Banks, “Transforming Schools…” extends the dialogue by aiming to equip school-based administrators with a straightforward methodology designed for principals to lead their “teacher-team” in developing classroom practices that draw upon their own diverse backgrounds to enhance the student academic experience.

Thomas and Bell draw from their own research (2008) and national consultation experience to authoritatively introduce the reader to the theoretical rationale for school faculty diversity transformation using a team-building model. The acute need for faculty team building is convincingly addressed and the thesis, that a unified faculty equipped with a vision for how to embrace diversity as colleagues undergirds diversity classroom practice, is supported by the instructional modules that scaffold reader-participants in the process.

Following-up on the introduction to the need for school diversity transformation, the authors outline the steps an administrator and faculty team are to follow to ensure that diversity is not only addressed but nurtured. The modules scaffold the faculty within a program of clearly defined steps that range from Recruiting a School Diversity Leadership Team and Culturally Inclusive Teaching Practices to Action Planning for School-wide Diversity Transformation. The modules contain directions, prompts for discussion, data-gathering instrumentation and assessments for participants to use to accomplish module goals and objectives.

Transforming Schools is an ambitious book, and more often than not, meets the goals the authors
strive for. The book is written in a professional, concise, graphical and easy-to-understand manner (and with the hectic pace in schools this quality is more important than most authors of education textbooks realize). As a university professor and supervisor of school-based field experiences I would like to see a more comprehensive section on teaching practices with accompanying tools (CD with video vignettes of the various exercises addressed) for the classroom to better realize the fruit of the faculty team building process the modules set out to accomplish.

As a higher educator assigned to work with students and K-12 school faculty and administrators, I recommend this book for use in undergraduate foundations/diversity courses as a secondary text and graduate-level educational administration courses as a primary text. The book deftly builds upon the diversity literature, has high utility for administrators responsible for maximizing learning in diverse settings, and uniquely builds upon the field of diversity practice.

References


VN:R_U [1.9.11_1134]