

IMPLEMENTATION EXERCISE

ENGAGING MULTIPLE RACIAL POINTS OF VIEW

Time required: 45 minutes

Materials required: For each participant, Courageous Conversation Journal and a copy of the poem below

1. Explain and explore the Third Condition of Courageous Conversation:

Normalize social construction of knowledge, thus engaging multiple racial points of view in order to surface critical perspective.

Based on your reading, describe for the group the following terms:

- Normalize
- Social construction of knowledge
- Multiple racial points of view
- Critical perspective

2. Ask the group how the application of this condition can create a safe environment for people to share their honest opinions and feelings about race and racism.
3. Conduct a listening exercise. Divide participants into groups according to their race (racial affinity groups), and have them read the poem “I Dream” by Pablo Vega, which is on the worksheet.
4. Invite each educator to provide an individual response to the following question:

- What is Pablo saying about the impact of race on his life, both inside and outside of school?

Have members of each racial affinity group share their responses with others in their same group and create a unified interpretation of the poem that highlights the shared meaning and understanding arrived at by all or most of the group members.

5. Bring all the participants back together, and have each affinity group present its interpretation of the poem.
 6. Invite the participants to examine each racial affinity group’s interpretation of the poem, summarizing the multiple racial viewpoints and surfacing the critical racial perspective, or the *counternarrative*, and revealing ideas most people in the room were not aware of.
- What were the similarities and differences among racial viewpoints?

- What social constructions were apparent in each group's interpretation?
 - What value to the group's understanding came from hearing multiple racial points of view regarding Pablo's experience as described in "I Dream"?
 - How can these multiple viewpoints be more fully honored in all conversations?
7. Have each participant reflect on this conversation in their Courageous Conversation Journal.

I Dream

I am from a clash of Color,
 From an idea of love, modeled for others' perception.
 I see me as I am, but am hidden from others' views.
 I am who I am, but a living contradiction to my peers.
 I see life as a blessing, a gift granted to me.
 Why should my tint describe me?
 Why should my culture degrade me?
 Why should the ignorance of another conjure my presence?
 Too many times I've been disappointed by the looks,
 By the sneers and misconceptions of the people who don't get me,
 Who don't understand why it hurts.
 I dream of a place of glory and freedom,
 Of losing the weight of oppression on my back.
 I dream of the enlightenment of people,
 Of the opening of their eyes.
 I dream for acceptance,
 And for the blessing of feeling special just once.
 One moment of glory . . . for the true virtue in my life.
 For the glimmer of freedom, and a rise in real pride.

—Used with permission of Pablo Vega, Junior
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REFLECTION

What is Pablo saying about the impact of race on his life, both inside
 and outside of school?