

CONGRESSIONAL  **SCHOOL**
DIVERSITY, EQUITY AND INCLUSION COMMITTEE

February 28, 2019

In attendance:

Molly Allen
Mena Burke
Tinelle Davies
Sandra Buteau
Darcy Franz
Amaya Franklin

James Greene
Nicole Guagenti
Evie Hinrichs
Sara King
Emily Manes
Maxine McLeod Miller

Silvia Moore
Kim O'Neil
Mar Ramirez
Andrea Weiss

On the phone:

Stephanie Hecker

Rose Landa

Crystal Willis

Andrea opened the meeting at 8:15 am and referred to the agenda for an overview of meeting topics.

People of Color Conference (PoCC) Reflection

Takeaways from the People of Color Conference (PoCC).

Amaya stated she learned a tremendous amount. She experienced the most life changing activities she's ever had. Her biggest takeaway from the conference was that it changed her opinion regarding affinity groups.

Silvia's biggest takeaway was cultural competency; looking at Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion with a rubric. We can't say we are teaching cultural competency to our students if they, or us adults, don't value diversity. We need to be intrigued enough about different people to want to find out more about them. We also need to be sensitive to other people's differences. Another thing I aspire to be doing is to be globally aware, not just know about the world, but to understand, we need to embed in cultural competency.

Emily's biggest takeaway was also to the affinity groups. She stated the PoCC was an incredible experience and loved getting to talk to different teachers on their experiences around the country. She discussed how on the final day of affinity groups, they had open spaces where fifteen different conversations were going on and each person got to choose which one they liked most. She choose one titled, "*Do white people belong at the People of Color Conference*"? It was a time for her to ask questions, to challenge her own thinking and to really question whether or not the conference was for her in the long run. It was a life changing experience for her as an educator.

Question Formulation Technique (QFT) Introduction

Silvia reported that the PoCC used the Question Formulation Technique (QFT) and the Committee thought it would be fun to teach it to everyone today. This technique is very robust, it asks members to question everything, to be critical thinkers, to be divergent and to synthesize our differences to come up with actions. The QFT has six steps:

1. **Question focus.** A stimulus; a springboard you will use to ask questions. Can be a topic, image, phrase, or situation that will serve as the focus for generating questions.
2. **Producing questions.** Ask as many questions as you can. Don't stop to discuss, judge, or answer. Write down every question exactly as it is stated. Change any statement into a question.
3. **Improving questions.** Analyze and identify your questions as open or close ended. Discuss the value of each and practice changing one type to another.
4. **Prioritizing questions.** Select your top priority questions based on your learning goals. Name a rationale for your prioritization and notice where they come in the process.
5. **Next steps.** Your questions can now be put into action. What will you do with them? How will you work to answer them?
6. **Reflection.** Reflect on the work you have done, what you have learned and how you can use it. The reflection helps internalize the process, its values and how to apply it further.

Emily laid out the rules for the QFT:

- Ask as many questions as you can
- Do not stop to judge, discuss, edit, or answer any question
- Write down every question exactly as it was asked
- Change any statements into questions

She noted the big takeaway is not to stop and judge any questions, just rapid fire and ask as many as you can. The group was going to run through a QFT together as an example.

QFT Group Activity

Step #1: Question focus

Committee members were given the question, *Congressional students and faculty actively challenge society's norms and injustices.*

Step #2: Producing questions

Various questions were asked by the group and written down by the facilitators on easels.

Step #3: Improving questions

The next step was to improve the questions by identifying which ones are open vs. closed.

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| What are societies' norms? | Open |
| Who decides what an injustice is? | Open |
| What does it mean to actively challenge? | Open |

Students of all age levels?	Closed
What about politics?	Open/Closed
Does faculty include staff members?	Closed
What is the purpose of challenging norms and injustice?	Open
Are we talking about local, global or national societies?	Open/Closed
What's the point of it?	Open
Why just students and faculty?	Open
How are conflicts resolved?	Open
What does a challenge mean?	Open
How are we challenging them?	Open
Do you feel like you've been a victim of social injustice?	Closed

Discussion around feedback, what was difficult, what might be helpful, how can QFT be used in the future followed. Molly stated that she saw a lull toward the end of the timeframe, which she also sees in her classroom stating that the lull might come earlier. One challenge could be that depending on who you are working with, the lull may be even earlier. Silvia responded that she has a book on how to use QFT in the classroom as it is a technique that has been around for many years. It is liked because it allows for questions, freedom and to participate without the judgement.

Amaya commented that QFT was born out of trying to engage the more reluctant. The people who developed it were invited to figure out why some parents came and participated all the time while others did not. The feedback they received was that parents didn't know what questions to ask, they hadn't thought about how they could contribute. QFT gives that freedom, it allows the more reluctant to speak out.

QFT Activity

Silvia reported that they took a look at what the Committee had done previously and came up with some discussion prompts to ignite the thinking around them; the parent perspective, around curriculum, around awareness and recruitment and retention. Members will be doing gallery walks using QFT on these prompts which are displayed on easels around the room.

Emily explained that gallery walks were meant to get you out of your seat. Members will walk around to each easel with their post-it notes and write questions for each prompt. There will be ten minutes to do rapid fire questioning for each discussion prompt.

The Discussion Prompts that were displayed:

1. Parent perspectives about cultural competence are important and included in the decision-making process.
2. Congressional School students relate to the world with cultural competence and take action to promote change.
3. Congressional School community excels at acquiring and retaining diverse faculty and families to provide success-promoting support.

4. The Congressional School curriculum encourages students to engage in topics using multiple lenses and asking meaningful questions.
5. Congressional School advocates for creating an environment that values a sense of belonging.

The group walked around the room placing post-it notes with their questions under the various discussion prompts.

Tinelle specified the next step was to separate into five groups, look at the questions under each discussion prompt and improve those questions, step #3 of QFT, by identifying which ones are open and closed and changing any to open that are closed.

The five groups took five minutes to do this.

Tinelle then indicated each group should prioritize their questions, step #4 of the QFT.

The five groups took ten minutes to do this.

Tinelle stated that step #5, next steps, is where your questions can now be put into action. What will you do with them? How will you answer them? Silvia responded that this was going to be skipped since most everyone did this in their small groups already.

QFT Reflection

Silvia detailed that step #6 is a reflection. What were your top 3 questions that need to be answered? Why? What next steps need to be taken? Why?

Each group commented on the top 3 questions they chose as noted below:

1. Parent perspectives about cultural competence are important and included in the decision-making process.
 - What is cultural competence? To put a definition around it. To be able to clearly identify it. This would help us to first step into it.
 - How do you reach the bigger community as well? Everyone in this room is committed to this work. But what about those who have a difference of opinion?
 - What do we do when parent perspective differs from that of the group? Based on religion, political views, etc. what do we do as a school to address this all together?
2. Congressional School students relate to the world with cultural competence and take action to promote change.
 - What is cultural competence at Congressional School?
 - How are we teaching students to be cultural competent?
 - How do we measure cultural competency?
 - What are accepted means to promote change?
3. Congressional School community excels at acquiring and retaining diverse faculty and families to provide success-promoting support.

- Does it really? How does it excel? What about the staff?
 - What's missing? How do we ensure the faculty is feeling safe?
 - What is the school administration doing to attract and maintain diverse families?
4. The Congressional School curriculum encourages students to engage in topics using multiple lenses and asking meaningful questions.
 - What if conflicts arise? We are not the final word on our way forward, so it's really about how do we get by for the ideas we have and move forward.
 - How do we have a diverse curriculum at every grade? How do we define it? How is it measured? Are there safe spaces to measure these types of things?
 - How do we explain what multiple lenses means? Is it just an opinion? An experience, etc.? What about historical context, is that a lens? Is there a lens missing?
 5. Congressional School advocates for creating an environment that values a sense of belonging.
 - What does belonging mean and how do we engage in the discussion? We saw a lot of themes on what does it really mean to belong to a group but how do we talk about it, promote it, etc.?
 - What are the actions the school is taking to build a sense of belonging and where do we want to be? How are we advocating? Where do we envision ourselves going?
 - How does the school support identity development for students, faculty and staff?

Silvia responded that all of these questions are going into a document that all of us would be owners of. All of the information will be available and shared. The work that was done today will lead us into our next steps.

Andrea closed the meeting by saying that it is a goal for the Committee to grow. It will be through the working groups that changes for the school are made. It is very hard to take two hours of your day to attend these meetings and we really appreciate it.

Amaya made a final comment that the goal for the next meeting is for each member to find 1-2 working groups that peak their interest and begin working in those groups. We hope that people will start wanting to do conference calls, create Charters, purposes and short-term goals. Lastly, please let others know to dispel the myth that this Committee is for like-minded individuals and that it is for everyone and all are welcome to attend as it is a safe place.

DEIC Working Groups

- Recruitment and Retention
- Student Experience
- Curriculum
- Parent Support & Awareness

Sandra added a final comment that if anyone has any documents from previous Committee meetings to please provide it in the resources folder as there was a lot of work done and we need to recapture that work.

Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 9:39am.