



**Courageous Conversations About Race: A Field Guide for Achieving Equity in Schools**

*By Glenn E. Singleton and Curtis Linton*

Selected as NSDC's book of the year in 2006, this book is written from a professional learning context in schools. Singleton and Linton offer a framework to encourage educators to examine their beliefs about race openly to reach solutions for offering all students equitable learning opportunities in schools. The authors build on a frame of educator passion, practice, and persistence and offer tools and rationale. (*Corwin Press, 2006*)

# WE NEED *to* TALK

**P**roductive conversations are a central element of collaborative learning, and, in many cases, those conversations are difficult because of disagreements and conflicts. Here are resources that tackle how to approach contentious conversations. Many include tools and protocols, and each offers a particular framework to guide how to handle this tough topic.

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TWEETED BY @LEARNINGFORWARD:

**We're curious:** What collaboration skills do you find to be essential for your work in professional learning teams? How do you build them?

**@VaelHeidi says:** Nonjudgmental feedback, authentic listening, shared decision making, open communication, inclusion.

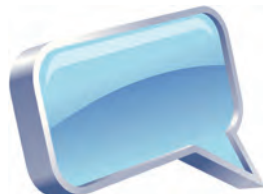
**@kindtwinsmom says:** Talking with teachers about the difference between inquiry and advocacy and the need to be explicit in what you are doing.



**Crucial Conversations:  
Tools for Talking  
When Stakes Are High,**  
2nd edition

By Kerry Patterson,  
Joseph Grenny,  
Ron McMillan,  
and Al Switzler

This communication model emerges from a corporate training context and emphasizes establishing skills to hold conversations when stakes and emotions are high and those conversing have different opinions. The framework helps those communicating create a safe environment for talking, stay in control of emotions while being open to other perspectives, and move toward mutually beneficial results. (McGraw-Hill, 2012)



**Difficult Conversations:  
How to Discuss What  
Matters Most,** 10th  
anniversary edition

By Douglas Stone, Bruce  
Patton, and Sheila Heen

From the Harvard Negotiation Project, the authors write about managing tough conversations, which happen in every organization or family, no matter how well-managed, effective, or seemingly happy. Among key points in the book are the need to avoid blame in conversations and the importance of acknowledging the emotions present in a difficult interaction so that they don't continue to create tensions. (Penguin Books, 2010)

**Fierce Conversations:  
Achieving Success  
at Work and in Life  
One Conversation  
at a Time**

By Susan Scott

As columnist for *JSD*, Scott and her colleagues explore what it means to make conversations fierce or "real" because conversations *are* the relationships between people. The fierce model is based on seven principles, including mastering the courage to interrogate reality, taking responsibility for your emotional wake, and letting silence do the heavy lifting. See the latest column on p. 58. (Berkley Trade, 2004)



**Having Hard  
Conversations**

By Jennifer Abrams

In moving from working with kids as a teacher to working with adults as a coach, Abrams realized that she hadn't developed the skills to have difficult conversations. This conversation model builds on a basic foundation of getting clear about why we aren't speaking up, crafting what we'll talk about, and communicating using the right words in the right time and place. (Corwin Press, 2009)

## TRUST

Trust is crucial to open and productive collaboration. Studies indicate a relationship between trusting relationships in schools and higher student achievement. In their work exploring trust in schools, Wayne Hoy and Megan Tschannen-Moran define five elements of trust:

### Benevolence

Confidence that one's well-being or something one cares about will be protected by the trusted party ... the assurance that others will not exploit one's vulnerability or take advantage even when the opportunity is available.

### Honesty

The trusted person's character, integrity, and authenticity ... acceptance of responsibility for one's actions and not distorting the truth in order to shift blame to another.

### Openness

The extent to which relevant information is shared ... openness signals reciprocal trust.

### Reliability

Consistency of behavior and knowing what to expect from others ... a sense of confidence that one's needs will be met in positive ways.

### Competency

The ability to perform as expected and according to standards appropriate to the task at hand.

Explore these ideas and related tools in a 2010 issue of *Tools for Schools*, available at <http://bit.ly/10VX870>.

**Source:** Hoy, W.K. & Tschannen-Moran, M. (2003). The conceptualization and measurement of faculty trust in schools. In W. Hoy & C. Miskel (Eds.), *Studies in leading and organizing schools* (pp. 181-208). Greenwich, CT: Information Age Publishing.