Chapter 6

Inclusive Curriculum Exercise

To assess the need inclusiveness of the curriculum, you might divide readers into groups, giving each group one card. Ask them to determine where, in the curriculum, the student might see himself or herself included or have the opportunity to discuss his or her reality. How might each child perceive school and what might be some of the barriers you could remove that could facilitate his or her success.

Card 1: Your name is Denny. You are 12 years old and are beginning to wonder who you really are. You were adopted when you were three by a single White gay man. You have been told that your natural father is Black and your mother a Latina immigrant from Mexico.

Card 2: You are Shukri, an 11 year old Muslim-American. You were born in America, and have recently decided, after long conversations with your mother that you want to wear the hejab. You live with your parents who immigrated from Somalia and speak little English; you also have an older brother, 15, who plays on his school’s football team and has accepted everything American. Your older sister, 16, has chosen not to wear a hejab and thinks you are crazy to do so as well as a younger sister who has made no decision.

Card 3: You are a 15 year old, Black, male student named Jayden. You live with your mother who is a single parent and your younger four siblings. Even though your mother wants you to attend school, she is struggling to hold a job and often needs to ask you to stay home to look after a sibling who is ill. You really want to succeed in school and attend college to either study business administration or dentistry but there is no-one to advise you. You have heard teachers saying (falsely) that you are always away on Welfare Wednesdays so your mother can cash her check and go to the Casino.

Card 4: You are Gabriel, a 13 year old immigrant from Nicaragua whose family was well-off in its country of origin but had to leave because of the Sandinistas. Because you speak fluent Spanish and are still learning English, you have been placed in a special education classroom where you find that teachers expect very little of you and the work seems very easy. Nevertheless, you are beginning to internalize the message that you and your classmates are too “stupid” to learn and you are making plans to drop out of school as soon as you can.

Card 5: You are Ah Lam, a 9 year old American girl, who is popular and very articulate. Your name means “peace,” but you often find yourself angry because you are asked over and over where you are from. You were born in Denver. You play the piano, soccer, and ringette, and hope to be a teacher. Your favorite subjects are French and English Language Arts and you are so tired of everyone expecting you, because you “look Asian,” to both like and be good at Math.

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