

# Journal of Applied Research on Children: Informing Policy for Children at Risk

---

Volume 3  
Issue 2 *Measuring Success in Public Education*

Article 24

---

2012

## Resource Review of Walking the Equity Talk: A Guide for Culturally Courageous Leadership in School Communities

Tamara M. Chung Constant

University of Massachusetts - Amherst, tconstan@educ.umass.edu

Laura A. Valdiviezo

University of Massachusetts - Amherst, lav@educ.umass.edu

Follow this and additional works at: <https://digitalcommons.library.tmc.edu/childrenatrisk>

---

### Recommended Citation

Chung Constant, Tamara M. and Valdiviezo, Laura A. (2012) "Resource Review of Walking the Equity Talk: A Guide for Culturally Courageous Leadership in School Communities," *Journal of Applied Research on Children: Informing Policy for Children at Risk*: Vol. 3 : Iss. 2 , Article 24.

Available at: <https://digitalcommons.library.tmc.edu/childrenatrisk/vol3/iss2/24>

The *Journal of Applied Research on Children* is brought to you for free and open access by CHILDREN AT RISK at DigitalCommons@The Texas Medical Center. It has a "cc by-nc-nd" Creative Commons license" (Attribution Non-Commercial No Derivatives) For more information, please contact [digitalcommons@exch.library.tmc.edu](mailto:digitalcommons@exch.library.tmc.edu)



*Walking the Equity Talk: A Guide For Culturally Courageous Leadership in School Communities* provides a blueprint for the practice of equity in various levels of education for teachers, teacher educators, administrators, and policy makers. This book is an important contribution by the author John Robert Browne II to debates surrounding equity in the U.S. education system. Browne brings back broadly used terminologies while highlighting the concept of cultural democracy. Moreover, he provides a balance between reviewing the inequities and current leadership practices that exist in the education system and providing space for readers to be reflexive of their own practices. He shares the daily nuances that create inequities for ethnic and racial minority children inside and outside formal educational structures. One aspect that the reader who is familiar with issues of inequity and leadership in U.S. education may wonder is what makes this guide different from other publications dealing with these issues. Browne introduces the guide by identifying the underperforming population in the U.S. school system and the various arguments presented by education advocates, teachers, administrators, and policy makers concerning their underperformance. The text consists of three sections with a total of sixteen chapters plus an introduction. It provides facilitator notes and questionnaires in the appendixes. The first section describes individual and institutional dynamics that are possible contributing factors to underachievement amongst specific populations. Browne introduces the culturally courageous leadership paradigm in section two which highlights actions performed by those in the field. Then section three builds on the discussions which took place in the chapters in section two.

Throughout the guide, Browne utilizes KWL as framework to engage the reader in thinking about their own education experiences. He explains that KWL stands for what "...you already know about the related content of the guide, what you want to know, and what you have learned from prior experience or from reading the guide (KWL) when it comes to the issue of leadership within school communities... (3)". KWL exercises become a first step to bring the reader's life experiences in the use of the guide. It is in the reader's hands to continue a critical reading of the text and to engage in further reflexivity

The author analyzes obstacles and biases that exist at various education contexts. Browne frames his analysis within Ramirez and Castaneda's definition of cultural democracy. According to Browne "cultural democratic learning environments are settings where students can acquire knowledge about their own culture and the dominant culture" (5).

The guide does not attempt to offer a discussion surrounding culture and in that sense some readers may wonder about how issues of power intersect in the practice of cultural democracy according to Browne. Nonetheless, the guide is helpful in showing a clear connection between the individual and the institution for educational change to take place. By highlighting the complexities of personal identities and beliefs that reinforce biases, barriers and educational outcomes, the author shows the ways that individuals reinforce institutional inequities through subtle mundane practices.

Browne takes discussions surrounding leadership and equity a step further by exposing and analyzing the responsibilities of education institutions and those who uphold them. The reader will appreciate the honest explanation of the pitfalls of pursuing equity transformation. The text outlines existing normative biases at the curricula and scheduling levels, personal selection and professional development, supervision and

evaluation, perception of the student economic status and the student's primary discourse, and perception of parental involvement that reinforces inequity in schools. Browne also articulates actions that culturally courageous leaders in public schools need to perform while exposing the daily challenges ethnic and racial minority students face. He provides several examples of the ways the cultural courageous leadership paradigm has been implemented at different public schools and has shaped access to equitable opportunities for all students. While highlighting successes Browne also points at what remains to be developed. The author does not lose sight of the institutional issues that continue to negatively impact ethnic and racial minority students.

*Walking the Equity Talk: A Guide For Culturally Courageous Leadership in School Communities* is very clear to understand as it provides sections, chapters, and subsections for those who want to focus on what has been done in the area and for those who are interested in learning how to implement equity practices in schools. Also, the appendixes in the guide constitute an added bonus. One of the strengths of this publication is the use of many interactive exercises that help those interested to get a taste of what it means to walk the "equity walk".