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Is Your Teaching Style Racism Free?

Shani Byard

Loyola Marymount University, drshanibyard@gmail.com

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Faculty Pub Night – Fall 2015

Date: October 13, 2015

Speaker: Shani Byard



Introduction

The second Faculty Pub Night of Fall 2015 features Shani Byard, Adjunct Professor of Specialized Programs in Urban Education at LMU's School of Education. Professor Byard's presentation, *Is Your Teaching Style Racism Free?*, will discuss her research, theory, and practice related to Afro-Media Literacy (AML), a contemporary educational framework she designed to teach educators and youth how to dismantle institutional racism within their media-saturated schools and communities.

About the Author

Dr. Shani Byard is an educator and consultant who specializes in educational leadership for social and racial justice. A proud native of Leimert Park Los Angeles, Dr. Byard spent the early part of her career in TV and music video production, working with hip hop icons including Dr. Dre, Snoop Dogg, Eminem, etc. She left the media production industry understanding the damaging impact media influence has on the minds of young people, and redirected her career towards media and arts education. In 2000, Dr. Byard began utilizing the tools of arts & media education, leadership development and career awareness to empower youth, families and educators throughout Los Angeles and Long Beach Unified School Districts, continuation schools and probation camps.

Noticing a severe lack of media literacy and cultural education in our school systems and curricular framework, Dr. Byard set out to fill the void. In 2008, she founded Message Media Education (MME) – the only Afro-Media Literacy, professional development training company in the nation. Trainings and

workshops are primarily offered to youth, families, faculty and staff from K-12 schools, non-profit organizations, community colleges, universities and small businesses.

In addition to her work via Message Media Education, Dr. Byard is the Co-Chair of L.A. County Supervisor Mark Ridley-Thomas' Empowerment Congress - Education Committee. She is an adjunct professor at UCLA, LMU and Pacific Oaks College teaching courses in critical media literacy, research in urban education and the impact of social justice issues on human development.

About the Author's Work

As a society we consume racist media stereotypes every day. In fact, these media messages have sustained the foundation for colorism: the practice of discrimination or bias that favors people with lighter skin versus darker skin. Color-based media stereotypes reinforce self-image, self-efficacy, self-awareness, self-doubt, self-destruction and fuel the building blocks of internalized racism, perception of "others", racial profiling and discrimination. All people, all colors and ethnicities are impacted. We all have ecological upbringings that shape our belief systems, morals, values and ideologies. With today's saturation of media, our ideologies, work policies and practices unconsciously support the institution of racism. To build personal and professional anti-racist ideologies, lifestyles and belief systems, we must embrace professional development spaces that challenge our lenses, disrupt unconscious ways of thinking, practice analyzing media, provide cultural education and awaken our innate, collective humanity.

The Afro-Media Literacy (AML) experience embraces participants in a cultural and media rich learning space filled with love for humanity that critically analyzes each person's unconscious/conscious role in creating, sustaining, countering and dismantling the impact of institutional racism on each person's mind, professional environments and surrounding communities. AML blends valuable tools of cultural awareness with 21st Century skills of critical media literacy, increasing participants' knowledge-base of the cultural communities they serve and teaching participants to challenge dominant stereotypes, images and values they are inundated with, and therefore unconsciously adopt, on a daily basis.