

Engagement Day Summary Poem

Engaging With Diverse Young People

We've gone on a journey in many ways
epitomized by Sheldon from Big Bang Theory
maybe you all laugh about chemical symbols – but it's not that normal
the route to change: who feels welcome
in England we are really good at stopping young people getting into STEM
a pivotal time in their identities.

Apart from being an absolute nerd
Denmark should be in charge of the world
lots of happy people discussing things
not a super clinical super formal stuffy place.

We are defining young people broadly today
there are so many little things people overlook
everyone has so much going on inside, invisible
running and leaping through the fields
everyone is human and multifaceted
we want that passion to spread throughout the whole community
a lovely meritocratic discourse
don't be scared to talk to young people.

The word 'disclose' sounds like a secret
what you know, how you think, what you do, who you know
not to scare you off but
we can get young people to exclude themselves
equity work is a journey of disrupting privilege
not diverse based on how they look but who they are
a social justice approach: is this for, to, or with young people?
changing the practice and not changing the young people
discomfort is key to addressing privilege and power.

Basically have a compassionate attitude
listen more than you speak
learn to let go
don't call it an interview – call it a chat
how underserved and underrepresented voices are heard
extract those wonderful thoughts
shine a light (which I don't have) on the people
if you like a metaphor – which I do
we can have a cookie.

Assume everyone is broke and no one has money
looking at yourself from a different perspective
science and STEM are interesting – but not for me
it's not that a lack of interest in science is the issue
but what feels appropriate for people like me
all of society is telling him that science and STEM equates to cleverness.

Today's Engagement Day has been brought to you by...
the tools and language and evidence
knowledge, skills, attitudes, behaviours
habitus, capital, and field
the competence, knowledge, and identity
of being human
it's all very complex – more research is needed
it's not like: "the project's over, we'll never speak again!"
but in the meantime:
think about what would attract you
don't overcomplicate things
be nice, and be kind.

Co-created by Hala Zein, Isra Sulevani, and Dan Simpson (29 November 2023)