

Defining | US

PODCAST LEARNING COMPANION

Our podcast companions expand learning beyond the walls of schools and organizations by bringing crucial conversations to the leaders, educators, and organizations that matter. Use this guide to promote critical reflection, deeper discussion and meaningful connections among your staff around the topics that define US.

YOUTH VOICES OF CHANGE

A Podcast with Darion Allen

INSIDE EPISODE 2:

"I Am Because We Are"

Join the conversation as Darion Allen, Ingrid Chung, and Angel Diaz engage in a discussion about the importance of building and sustaining long-term loving communities of care to support marginalized students in reaching their full potential.

[DOWNLOAD THE TRANSCRIPT](#)



MEET INGRID CHUNG AND ANGEL DIAZ

Ingrid Chung grew up in Cincinnati, Ohio and moved to New York to pursue a bachelor's degree in English and creative writing at New York University where she became an accidental teacher through the New York City Teaching Fellows program, earning a master's degree in adolescent English education at Hunter College. She began her first year of teaching at the Urban Assembly School for Applied Math and Science (AMS) 15 years ago as a 7th grade humanities teacher in Room 4 and immediately fell in love with teaching, AMS, & her students. Her passion for and commitment to equitable public education experiences for all young people led her to return to New York University for a master's in educational leadership in 2011 and now, to pursue her doctorate in urban education leadership at Columbia University, Teachers College. Chung currently lives in East Harlem and loves to travel, wander the city, try new restaurants, read, write, eat everything she can find, hang out with "AMS babies," and be near/on the water as often as possible.

Angel Diaz was born and raised in the Bronx, New York. While living in the neighborhood of Highbridge, he attended the Urban Assembly School for Applied Math and Science and is currently working for New York JTL as director of their after school and summer camp program, while also serving as a paraprofessional for high school students. Diaz is enrolled at Bronx Community College, seeking a degree in secondary education. Most meaningfully, he continues to be a part of his own high school brotherhood program, Umoja, where Diaz began as a student eight years ago, and continued first as an alumni, and now staff member.



LISTENING AND REFLECTING

Use this learning companion to dive deeper into the episode topic, with suggestions for asynchronous listening, engagement and experiences that offer opportunities for reflection, connection and commitment. Use this learning companion to dive deeper into the episode topic, with suggestions for asynchronous listening, engagement and experiences that offer opportunities for reflection, connection and commitment.

WAYS TO LISTEN

Consider these three methods for listening. Use the podcast transcript to increase engagement by following along and highlighting words, phrases, or concepts that stand out in the conversation. Take notes in the margin of reflections, connections and questions.

1. Open Listening - Listen to the podcast to simply notice and note the words, phrases and moments in the conversation that spark emotion, questions.
2. Focused Listening - Listen to the podcast with a focus on the Moments that Matter providing the time stamp and topics from the "Podcast Notes"
3. Reflective Listening - Listen to the podcast with a focus on critical self-reflection, using any or all the reflection questions below.

CRITICAL REFLECTION QUESTIONS

BEFORE YOU LISTEN:

1. What do you hope to learn from listening to this episode?

AS YOU LISTEN:

1. AMS serves students and families in grades 6-12 where the Umoja program was specifically created to support and nurture the development of young men of Color in their school community. How did the importance of loving long-term communities of care show up for you in your experience as a middle and high school student? Who was a part of the community? What was your role in it? How did it impact your life?
2. In what ways were you encouraged to go deeper and build stronger and more caring relationships in the community that you were a part of (think back to question 1)?
3. Why is it critical to create opportunities to build community in the way that it was described in this episode, especially for students who are typically marginalized and face inequities because of their race, ethnicity, and/or socioeconomic status?

AFTERWARDS:

1. What about this discussion resonated with you?
2. What questions or ideas would you like to explore further?
3. How does the concept of long-term loving communities of care show up for you now? How could this concept show up for you in your work with students (if applicable?)
4. What conversations will you have or immediate actions will you take to create change in your own sphere of influence?

EXPERIENCES THAT ELEVATE THE LEARNING

The following experiences are intended for use with leaders, educators, parents and those working in educational organizations. The purpose is to promote critical reflection, connection and commitment toward action. They should be used and adapted based on the individuals, group dynamics and organizational context of the learning.

EXPERIENCES TO PROMOTE CRITICAL SELF REFLECTION

Reflect on Important Moments in the Conversation

Re-listen to 20:13 where Ingrid and Angel discuss the concept of Umoja which means “unity” in Swahili. The unity of the family and community are stressed in Umoja. The African proverb “I am because we are” reflects the idea behind Umoja. Journal on your experiences with the idea behind Umoja.

- How does your identity, experiences and knowledge influence your understanding of this topic?
- What are the implications to your practice?
- How will you continue the conversation in your school/community/organizations?

EXPERIENCES TO PROMOTE BUILDING DEEPER CONNECTIONS BETWEEN INDIVIDUALS AND THE LEARNING

School/Program Audit

Umoja was described as a critical experience that gave Angel “purpose in life.” Audit your school/program(s) to see what opportunities currently exist as a safe, nurturing, caring and long-term community for students who are marginalized. Collaborate with a guidance counselor or a peer to create a school climate survey for students to share how connected or disconnected they feel in school and why. Use that information to build a community of care with students. Review each timestamp and list what information you might need as you work to create or deepen the connections being made between students and faculty for some of your most marginalized students.

- 1:33 Catching up with Ingrid and Angel. Hearing what they've achieved since filming “Defining US”
- 3:27 How Umoja started and grew to be what it is now
- 6:26 The Umoja experience from a student perspective
- 8:40 How Umoja gives Angel “purpose in life” even as an adult
- 10:13 The Umoja retreat
- 15:30 Darion relates the Umoja experience to his own experiences
- 18:55 Angel tells the amusing story of having his cell phone taken away at the retreat
- 20:13 “I Am, Because We Are”

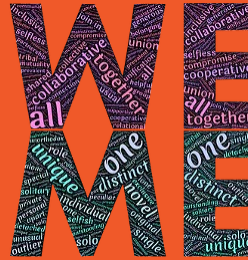
EXPERIENCES TO PROMOTE TAKING ACTION

DO SOMETHING

It can be easy to feel stuck or like there is nothing that you can do to help reduce/eliminate the inequities that exist in education and in society. But everyone has the power to do something to change the future. Ingrid and Angel talked about the loving and lasting connections that were created through Umoja. Take a few minutes to journal about where you have made lasting connections, who those connections were made with and how you can create similar types of loving and lasting connections with and for students/youth you interact with. Would your version of Umoja include a yearly retreat? Why or why not? Identify adults you would need to be in community with to achieve this goal and name challenges you may encounter. For the final step, list one or two things that you might do to overcome those challenges.

INDEPENDENT READING AND BOOK CLUB RECOMMENDATIONS

LEARN MORE
ABOUT
UMOJA AT
AMS



SCHOOLS AS
COMMUNITIES
OF CARE

RELEVANT RESOURCES:

- <https://www.bkreader.com/featured-news/umoja-the-first-principle-of-kwanzaa-means-unity-2-6546027>
- <https://www.cnn.com/2019/12/26/us/kwanzaa-principles-trnd/index.html>

FOLLOW US

