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TEACHING TOLERANCE

ISSUE 51 | FALL 2015 
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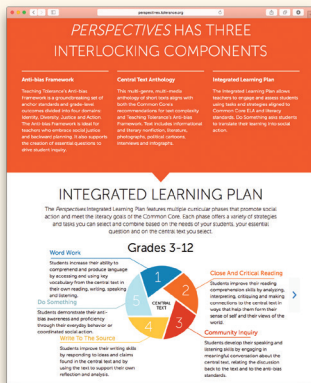
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TEACHING TOLERANCE

ISSUE 51 | FALL 2015

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Voting rocks! So why don't more young people do it? Get your students ready—and excited—to cast their first ballots.

ILLUSTRATION BY **ROMAN MURADOV**

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My, how *Perspectives for a Diverse America* has grown!

Online Exclusive!

You're invited to a virtual art exhibit hosted by Story Corner's own Kennedy Nganga.
tolerance.org/kennedy



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DEDICATED TO THE MEMORY OF

JULIAN BOND

1940–2015

Julian Bond was a champion for civil rights and a longtime Teaching Tolerance contributor. He narrated our Academy Award-winning documentary, *A Time for Justice*, wrote the forewords to our *Teaching the Movement* reports about the state of civil rights education, and served as a historical consultant for our most recent film, *Selma: The Bridge to the Ballot*. It was our privilege to call him a friend.

Perspectives

“America is race. From its symbolism to its substance, from its founding by slaveholders to its rending by the Civil War”

—JULIAN BOND

SPEAKING AT EDGEWOOD COLLEGE IN
MADISON, WISCONSIN, MARCH 2015



JULIAN BOND was not only a champion for civil rights, he was a champion for civil rights education and for honest scholarly discourse about race. During his career, he taught the history of the movement at several prestigious colleges and universities and contributed to both of Teaching Tolerance’s *Teaching the Movement* reports on the state of civil rights education in the United States. ¶ Bond’s anecdotal classroom observations matched our empirical

observations about the lack of civil rights content taught in America’s public schools. He said of his students, observations about the lack of civil rights content taught in America’s public schools. He said of his students,

None could tell me who George Wallace, the segregationist governor of Alabama, was ... They knew sanitized versions of the lives and struggles of Martin Luther King Jr. and Rosa Parks, but nothing of their real stories ... [T]he stories of bravery and sacrifice in the movement for civil rights were absent from their memories and their high school curricula. “My teacher didn’t have time to get to it,” they told me. “The semester ended too soon.”

He also shared Teaching Tolerance’s concern for what shortchanging civil rights history instruction means for our democracy and our collective understanding of racial identity.

An educated populace must be taught basics about American history. One of these basics is the civil rights movement, a nonviolent revolution as important as the first American Revolution. It is a history that continues to shape the America we all live in today.

Mr. Bond recently echoed these sentiments in a March 2015 address to students at Edgewood College when he said, “America is race.” We couldn’t agree more. These words go to the heart of Teaching Tolerance’s message, a message we try to help educators talk about in safe and pragmatic ways.

We hope Mr. Bond would be proud of this issue of the magazine, in which we explore teaching about skin-color bias and discrimination in “What’s ‘Colorism?’” and challenge educators to “get real about race” in an excerpt from scholar Richard Milner’s new book, *Rac(e)ing to Class: Confronting Poverty and Race in Schools and Classrooms.* Similarly, our story on “Rewriting History—for the Better” looks at filling curricular gaps where traditionally marginalized people live, work and raise families—a cause we know he cared about deeply.

The cover story for this issue also tackles a topic that was dear to Mr. Bond’s heart: voting. He fought for voting rights as a young activist, and he stood up for potentially disenfranchised

voters as an elected member of the Georgia House and Senate. Without a sound understanding of the voting rights struggle in this country, however, voting loses significance, as it has for many young people today. We hope “The Young and the Registered” spurs the kind of teaching, learning and action that Mr. Bond crusaded and sacrificed for throughout his career.

In his foreword to *Teaching the Movement 2011*, Mr. Bond quoted the late, great James Baldwin, who said, “History does not refer merely, or even principally, to the past. On the contrary, the great force of history comes from the fact that we carry it with us, are unconsciously controlled by it in many ways, and history is literally present in all that we do.” We hope this issue offers you tools and knowledge to help your students connect to the history they need to understand themselves, their peers and their world.

And we hope you will take a moment to talk to your students about the life and legacy of Julian Bond, a man who devoted his life to making all our lives better.

—Maureen Costello

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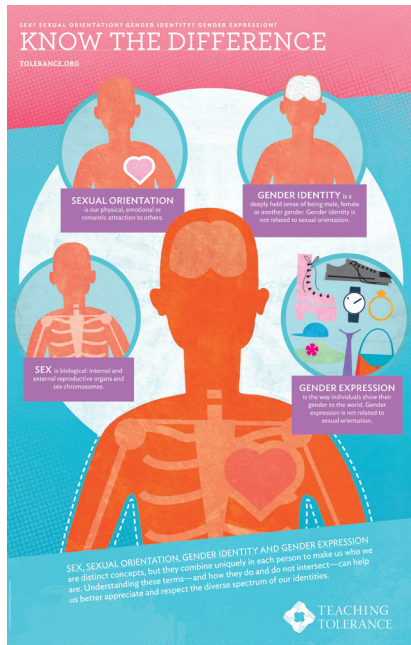
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Download the poster today!
bit.ly/knowthedifference

Reader Reactions

“Sex? Sexual Orientation? Gender Identity? Gender Expression?” and the accompanying classroom poster highlighted the importance of getting vocabulary right.

Interesting and well written. My only disagreement is this: I believe that three of those four, not just sex, are biological. ... GENDER IDENTITY is the biology of the part of your brain that makes you feel like a boy or a girl or somewhere on a spectrum from one to the other at any moment in time and that leads you to prefer different ways of acting/expressing. SEXUAL ORIENTATION is the biology of the part of your brain that gives you crushes, makes your heart pound or your stomach flutter in somebody’s presence, gives you erections, lets you fall in love.

—SUBMITTED BY BETH REIS
VIA TEACHING TOLERANCE MAGAZINE ONLINE

Great poster from @Tolerance_org on terms like sexual orientation, gender identity, and gender expression

—SUBMITTED BY SARAH MCKIBBEN (@EDITORBYTRADE)
VIA TWITTER

The Spring and Summer issues of *Teaching Tolerance* sparked tremendous response—from a critique of our latest cover story to praise for the art that enlivens our pages.

THERE WHEN IT MATTERS

[On “A Hand to Hold”] What a perfect story for Teacher Appreciation Week! It is a wide and awesome responsibility to be a teacher.

BETH HOFFMAN
VIA FACEBOOK

MASTERING PERSPECTIVES

Wow! I found [*Perspectives for a Diverse America*] via my class in Multi-Cultural

Education. We had an assignment to create three lessons on Teaching Tolerance. Upon graduation with my Master[s] in Reading Education degree, I am hoping to secure a position as a Literacy Coach K-2 in a public school. This resource could prove to be invaluable as I work to collaborate with teachers in grades K-2. ... Thank you very much!

CATHERINE BELL
VIA EMAIL

LOOKING BEYOND SCHOOL

I am a [K]-6 school counselor in a small, rural, Ohio farming community. Teaching [T]olerance provides me with the means to promote social justice, challenge bias, and engage students in discussions about diversity that would perhaps not happen otherwise. I want them to be prepared to take their place in a rapidly changing global

society, and your resources give me the platform to look beyond what's outside their window. Thank you, thank you, thank you!

TONIA VERVILLE
VIA EMAIL

BEAUTIFUL ARTWORK

Recently I completed your survey on *Teaching Tolerance* [m]agazine. One of the things I forgot to mention that I so appreciate is the artwork—on the cover and throughout the issues. The artwork reinforces visually the ideas and topics included in the written text of the articles. Thank you for continuing to include the artwork.

E. GAELE GILLESPIE
VIA EMAIL

STORY CORNER REFLECTIONS

[On “The Day I Swam Into a New World”] I remember going to our community members only swimming/rec center in the early 60s and seeing [b]lack children standing and looking through the ... chain-link fence. It all seems so foreign to me now but back then I thought

nothing of it. It saddens me to think that I didn't care.

KAREN SUTHERLAND
VIA FACEBOOK

STUDENTS CHEERED!

When was the last time I showed a video and the students cheered? ... I used [*Selma: The Bridge to the Ballot* on] the anniversary of the march and several students saw CSPAN and other news coverage they might have missed had they not had the excellent teaching tool the day before. So many thanks for all you do to promote peace and justice.

ANONYMOUS
VIA SURVEY



FAVORITE MAGAZINE

This is the only educational magazine I read front to back and highlight every single time I get an issue. I love it and have recommended it to multiple other educators.



Mariusz Galczyński @MariuszEDU



[On Summer 2015 issue] So many facets of #RightToBeDifferent hi-lited in @Tolerance_org's STELLAR new issue ... #edchat

After I am done with an issue, I leave it out for my students to look through and read. Keep producing such amazing educational resources—America's education system needs you!

ANONYMOUS
VIA SURVEY

NOT A FAN

I disagree with the message you teach. We should not accept every screwed up human idea that some politician or alleged special interest group throws out.

JERRY COKER
VIA FACEBOOK

BULLIED TEACHER SPEAKS

As a former victim myself, I'm happy to see this issue is finally getting the attention it needs [in “Under Attack”]. Too many times, we as professionals see this as business as usual in most schools, not as the destructive and



potentially harmful activity it really is. In my case, it took me nearly three years to find another job after my bully had gotten done with me. ... Even where I am now, teacher on teacher and supervisor on teacher bullying is common.

K. M. CUTIA
VIA TEACHING TOLERANCE MAGAZINE ONLINE

TELL US WHAT YOU THINK!

Have an opinion about something you see in *Teaching Tolerance* magazine or on our website? Email us at editor@tolerance.org with the subject line “Letter to the Editor.” Or mail a letter to 400 Washington Ave., Montgomery, AL 36104.



Anne Wagaman Nickles
[On “Guess What...We Won!”] Your materials are exceptionally well done!!! Congrats, well deserved!!

VIA FACEBOOK

ILLUSTRATION BY BYRON EGGENSCHWILER (BULLIED); PIXILATED PHOTO BOOTH (TEACHING TOLERANCE AWARDS)

Ask Teaching Tolerance



Q: Our 12-year-old son is taking a class on race. While we have always talked openly about inequalities and white privilege, the class is hitting home quite hard. His comment is, “I’m only 12. There’s nothing I can do to change this.” I’m looking for ideas to help him see that he *can* take action and be part of the change he wants to see.

Being informed means being overwhelmed sometimes, especially when learning about systems of inequality. Remind your son that even small daily actions, such as standing up to biased comments,

can have a ripple effect. Encourage him to read first-person accounts by activists who had to overcome the same sense of discouragement to achieve progress. Connect him with change makers in

the community who are trained in youth development so he can find age-appropriate outlets for his social justice urges. Inspire him with examples of youth activism that you read about in the news. (Be sure

to check out our “Youth United!” video series at tolerance.org/youth-united.)

Ultimately, your son’s journey will be his own. Encourage him through your words and actions. It may take some time for his mind to catch up with his heart.

Q: Is Teaching Tolerance taking recommendations for the *Perspectives Central Text Anthology*?

Yes! Anyone can suggest a text using our *Appendix D* tool. We created the tool to help curate the diverse readings in *Perspectives*, and now we’ve opened up the process to educators across the country. Simply search for the tool on our website, fill it out and send it to appendixd@tolerance.org. You’ll be prompted to answer such questions as *What voices are featured in the text? How does it provide a window or mirror for students in your classroom? How do you teach your students using this text? Why did you decide to select it?* We’ll review your suggestion and add a selection of exemplar texts to the *Perspectives Central Text Anthology*.

To see examples of completed *Appendix D* tools, visit our Pinterest board at pinterest.com/appendixd.

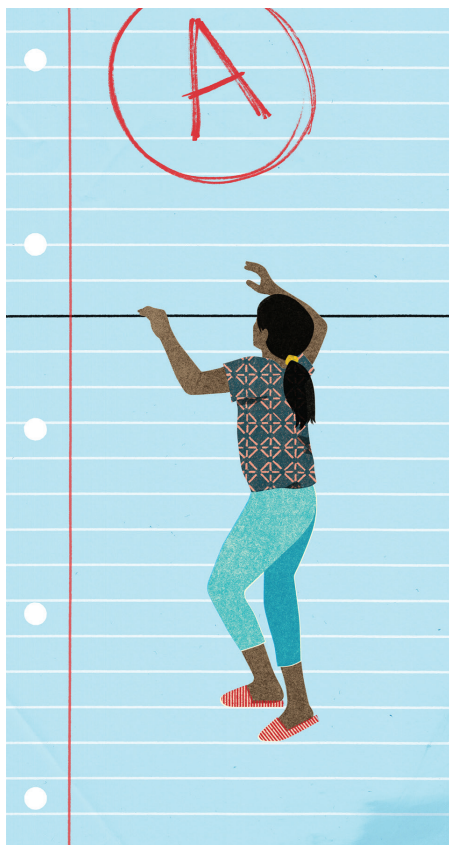
ASK TEACHING TOLERANCE!

Need the kind of advice and expertise only Teaching Tolerance can provide? Email us at editor@tolerance.org with “Ask TT” in the subject line.

Teaching While White

Promoting a diverse teaching force is absolutely essential to the success of so many children. But we still find ourselves in a system where students of color make up more than half of the student population, but teachers of color only account for 18 percent of the workforce.

Let that sink in. Before we can even discuss what it means to be a white teacher who truly serves their students, we have to explore the implications of those numbers. Those numbers mean that the majority of students of color can go through their entire school careers having only one or two teachers [who] look like them. Imagine for a second that nearly every single person whose responsibility it is to impart formal knowledge does not look like you[.] Not only is that message harmful, but it is just one of many damaging messages students of color are forced to endure. So while I understand that there are good white teachers, that's not the only issue here.



HAVE YOU SEEN OUR BLOG LATELY?

Check out some of the most talked-about blog posts. Go to tolerance.org and search for these headlines.



Complexities of Complexion—Revisited



When Third-Graders Are Advocates



When Youth Get to Be Teachers



Why Teaching About Social Justice Matters

And readers replied...

This reads like a journal for me and for several teachers I know. It is painful to accept the fact that no matter how good I am, I am not the ultimate model. ... That said, the truly interesting part was the wisdom to include the need to teach white students the issues. The [dilemma] exists here. I wouldn't know what I know about race if I hadn't been blessed to find people along my way. The system is not set up to tell on itself.

People cannot be represented by a singular aspect of their identity. ... Patricia Hill Collins' theory of the matrix of domination explains the intersection of systems of oppression as they affect an individual's social position. Even when people share an identity, the multitude of other identities within those people determines their schema and results in different outcomes of experience. Change cannot come from exclusivity, and this dialogue should be more nuanced.

GET THE FULL DISCUSSION HERE:

tolerance.org/blog/teaching-while-white

DID YOU KNOW?

30% of Muslim Americans describe themselves as white, 23% as black, 21% as Asian, 6% as Hispanic and 19% as other or mixed race.

—PEW RESEARCH CENTER

Late-Night Bike Rides and Taking Risks

IT WAS SUMMER 1974 in Detroit, Michigan, the year I became a teenager. One night in late June, my buddies and I decided to sleep out in my backyard. Our tent was “old school”: an old bed sheet tossed over a clothesline, then staked into the lawn using clothespins. There would be more to this night than a campout. Our plan was to wait until my parents were asleep and then ride our bikes all the way to Grosse Pointe! We knew we were taking chances, but it was worth the risk to experience Grosse Pointe—especially Lake St. Clair—on our own terms.

After an hour or so navigating through a variety of lamp-lit neighborhoods, we reached Lake Shore Drive, where homes like castles glowed by floodlights and wealth existed everywhere, even in the ornate street signs. In the midst of it all, I believe the seven of us felt equally wealthy. We pedaled on, ultimately reaching our destination: an expanse of black sky, pinholed with stars set around a well-lighted moon that painted its trail toward us. Once there, all we could do was stare and just sit awhile and live, listening to lake sounds, breathing air different from our part of town, proud of our journey.

That night, we broke some rules to do something our own way, as if we'd eaten portions of freedom and growth we hadn't been given but had taken for ourselves because we hungered for it. It is something I have not forgotten.



Jim Bolone teaches reading and literary arts at Anthony Wayne Junior High School in Whitehouse, Ohio.

In an age of the Common Core, data collection, skills assessments and seemingly endless paper trails, somehow I have been able to process, accept and rationalize it all by using the words of Charles R. Swindoll as my guide: “Life is 10 percent what happens to you, and 90 percent how you react to it.” So I do my best to honor what is expected of me, and I make an effort to take risks.

For example, in my classes, I'll take an extra day to really get into a terrific

short story, the kind with soul that deserves extra time to digest and discuss, make text-to-life connections, analyze characters' traits and intentions and share important themes. An additional class period or two might cover the making of a good response essay, taking time to clarify all steps and approaches. If a current event demands discussion, we'll do that and tie it into the text. We'll even take time to consider personal subjects

SHARE YOUR STORY

What motivates you to get up each morning and serve students in our nation's schools?

We want to hear from you. Send your 600-word submission for the “Why I Teach” column to editor@tolerance.org.

too. (It's amazing how much students like to discuss social issues.)

Being a junior high teacher means spending school days with kids who are at the age I was the night of that Grosse Pointe journey. Even though I don't take my students on late-night bicycle excursions, I do dream with them. There is a place for this in everything we do as instructors, mentors, coaches and, yes, leaders. It could begin as a reflection, an anecdote or a remembrance, but what matters is helping to reveal the genuine you.

Spontaneity is authentic and is key to growing a classroom community. Unfortunately, many teachers feel that their classrooms have been diminished by sweeping changes in education; for them, spontaneity hides in shadows of trepidation.

I say welcome those changes. But if it comes to a choice of being bogged down by burdensome detail or giving kids an authentic life primer, choose the latter and flaunt it. In an age when technology and testing are ubiquitous, I believe in a classroom where technology and testing can complement my work, while students still get a good dose of me, the dreamer and risk-taker.

I teach because every day is like that bike ride in 1974—one we all experience together and one I never tire of.



BLOG 5.11.15 // CLASSROOM PRACTICE, TEACHING

Common Ground

Schools can capitalize on what research tells us about the benefits of children's engagement with natural environments. Fortunately, many schools are already doing this by naturalizing—or “greening”—the school grounds. Results indicate that the efforts are well worth it.

In addition to enhancing the curriculum across all areas of study, naturalized school grounds are also serving as a stimulus for the creation of inclusive communities. One principal noted how parents working in their school garden were adding a whole new dimension to the school's multicultural education program. Parents from diverse backgrounds were sharing information with the children about the kinds of plants and foods prevalent in their respective cultures.



DID YOU KNOW?

Child poverty rates are highest among black, Latino and American Indian children.

—NATIONAL CENTER FOR CHILDREN IN POVERTY, *QUICK FACTS*

92% percent of American Indian students attend regular public schools; only a small minority attend schools controlled by the Bureau of Indian Education.

—EXECUTIVE OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT, *2014 NATIVE YOUTH REPORT*

And readers replied...

My goodness, we are still talking about such projects after 45 years of “knowing” their benefits and how a garden can be a central part of a curriculum.

Oh yes, so true. We had a great garden that the students built, and I made a point of teaching my students what the herbs were and what ailments they were good for. Not feeling so great after eating a greasy cafeteria lunch? Go eat some mint.

GET THE FULL DISCUSSION HERE:

tolerance.org/blog/common-ground

When Brian Siverson-Hall talks about racial equity, he's not just looking for conversation—he's looking for results.



Not all educators stand at the front of a class. In each issue, we interview an outstanding educator who works outside the classroom.

Moving the Needle on Racial Equity

Brian Siverson-Hall is the executive director of community engagement for Osseo Area Schools, Minnesota, and the president of the Minnesota Community Education Association. To say he wears many hats is an understatement, but regardless of which part of his job he's doing, Siverson-Hall is always trying to move the needle on racial equity and to help other educators do the same.

How have you helped your district work toward equitable school experiences for students?

All of the leaders in the school district ... developed our own personal racial equity purposes. For me, my purpose is as a leader for racial equity. I believe all students and community members have the right to opportunities in education that will enable them to achieve their dreams and become

their best selves. Therefore, I intend to isolate race and seek multiple perspectives to learn what opportunities are most salient to various racial groups. I will ask myself and those I work with to be mindful of our strategies to ensure there is no predictable pattern to participation or success in community ed. programs by race.

How do you get other stakeholders in Osseo committed to racial equity?

[T]his is adaptive work, not technical work. It is not like there is one thing you can do to say, "All right, if we do this one thing then tomorrow we will completely close the racial achievement gap," for example.

There are some folks in our organization who think we're moving too quickly in this work, and then there [are] others who believe we need an

even greater sense of urgency because we only have young people for a limited amount of time. When I am thinking about this, one of our most important things to do is create the conditions that are most likely to keep us in a productive zone at the heart of adaptive change. [O]ne of the ways to get other stakeholders committed to the work is to model what it means to be both a learner and a leader at the same time.

What have been important shifts or milestones in your racial equity work?

[One milestone] was ... helping to plan our first community forum on race last year, and then following it up with our second annual forum just this past May. We worked with a couple of community colleges, as well as our K-12 system and some faith-based groups, to provide this forum. I would say, for me, this was

a visible way for me to step out in my leadership around racial equity. These forums really allowed me to hear multiple perspectives and the counter-story of people whose voices traditionally are often marginalized, unfortunately, in the education setting. The thinking behind it was, especially the first time, to give people some tools [for] how to have conversations about race in their own community so they could do that as an individual.

What are markers of success in your work?

[T]here’s multiple markers. Some of the work I’m doing in my own professional development, what I’m seeing with my department I’m leading, and then what we’re seeing as a school district overall. We’ve created [an] eight-person equity team for our [community engagement] department. We devote half of our monthly meetings to professional development around equity, as well as participating in the equity team training that takes place at our school district level with all of the building-site equity teams. All of our partnerships with various community agencies, I think, are also markers of success to me.

We’ve really had some amazing success when it comes to graduation. For the state of Minnesota [in 2014], white students graduate at about 86 percent on time and at Osseo we are [at] 92 percent. Asian students: 82 percent, Osseo 91 percent. [Kids receiving]

free-or-reduced lunch: Minnesota state averaged 66 percent, Osseo 77 percent. American-Indian students: state of Minnesota 51 percent, Osseo 73 percent. Black students: 60 percent statewide, Osseo 71 percent. Hispanic students: 63 percent, Osseo Area schools 71 percent. This is a real testament to the hard work of our teachers, staff and administrators.

What suggestions do you have for educators who want to scale up the changes they achieve at the individual or building level?

Number one is adaptive change. It is a collective set of practices done over a period of time that will lead to success. Number two, I believe administrators are responsible for modeling individual learning while simultaneously leading the work. That goes back to this idea of being both a learner and a leader at the same time and being vulnerable in your own professional development. Last, I would say just be real and authentic with your data and use it as a guidepost from where you are and where you want to be.

If I got to add a bonus one, just keep having resolve in your work. Stay committed to it. You won’t always see rapid change, but also don’t settle for incremental change.

DOWN THE HALL

Know an excellent administrator, librarian or counselor we should interview? Tell us all about them at editor@tolerance.org.

Lessons Learned

Our classroom resources are grade-specific and align to the four domains of the Teaching Tolerance Anti-bias Framework—Identity, Diversity, Justice and Action. Find them at tolerance.org/activities.

Art and Racial Justice: What Is in a Self-Portrait?—Identity
(Elementary School)

Students learn about the role of art and identity in struggles for racial justice.

Pass or Fail in Cambodia Town—Diversity
(Middle and High School)

Students participate in a guided viewing of an *America by the Numbers* episode that examines barriers to high school graduation for Cambodian youth.

A Historical Primer on Economic (In)Equality—Justice
(Middle and High School)

This primer on poverty and economic inequality in the United States can be used as a reading assignment or as an organizer.

What Responsibilities Accompany Our Rights?—Action
(Elementary and Middle School)

This activity, excerpted from a Center for Civic Education curriculum, asks students to consider the responsibilities associated with five essential rights.

FREE STUFF!

These Web resources offer diversity-rich information and materials for teachers.

Graphite helps educators find the best apps, games, websites, digital curricula and Common Core-aligned resources. The website offers detailed product reviews.

graphite.org

Clocking-In: Making Work That Works for All of Us, a project by Race Forward, uses infographics and role-playing games to teach about racial and gender inequities in the restaurant, retail and domestic sectors.

clockingin.raceforward.org

Transformative Teachers, distributed by PBS LearningMedia, offers videos and resources to help educators build student empathy, forgiveness, gratitude and self-acceptance.

pbslearningmedia.org/collection/transformative-teachers

Word Generation is a supplementary resource for middle-grades ELA, science, social studies and math classes. The weekly units use a social dilemma to build vocabulary, literacy and argumentation skills.

wordgen.serpmedia.org



Burning Brightly or Burning Out?

Nearly a half-million teachers left the teaching profession this year. Many left because they're experiencing burnout—frustrated by long hours, endless paperwork, discipline issues, class size and minimal administrative support. Not everyone who feels burnout leaves; some tough it out and others switch schools. The impact on individual and systemic health (the loss of beginning teachers costs the United States up to \$2.2 billion annually^{*}) is profound.

^{*} Haynes, Mariana. *On the Path to Equity: Improving the Effectiveness of Beginning Teachers*. Alliance for Excellent Education, July 2014.

Are you experiencing burnout?

Is your passion for teaching burning brightly or nearly out? Take this quiz to find out.

Indicate how strongly you disagree or agree with these statements on a scale of 1 to 5, with 1 being “I strongly disagree” and 5 being “I strongly agree.” Total your score.

I often do not feel like going to work.

strongly disagree 1 2 3 4 5 *strongly agree*

I have stayed at home several days because I felt unable to go to work.

strongly disagree 1 2 3 4 5 *strongly agree*

I find it difficult to concentrate on and complete job-related tasks.

strongly disagree 1 2 3 4 5 *strongly agree*

My workload is overwhelming.

strongly disagree 1 2 3 4 5 *strongly agree*

I am unable or feel inadequate to complete the tasks I am assigned.

strongly disagree 1 2 3 4 5 *strongly agree*

I feel disconnected from my students and colleagues.

strongly disagree 1 2 3 4 5 *strongly agree*

I have more than one hostile relationship with co-workers.

strongly disagree 1 2 3 4 5 *strongly agree*

School often irritates me.

strongly disagree 1 2 3 4 5 *strongly agree*

I have experienced insomnia, digestive disorders, headaches and/or heart palpitations.

strongly disagree 1 2 3 4 5 *strongly agree*

I often feel professionally inadequate.

strongly disagree 1 2 3 4 5 *strongly agree*

Total Score

If your score is:

40-50 POINTS Burnout detected!

You may be feeling disconnected from your students, colleagues or community. Perhaps you no longer see your daily accomplishments. Do you feel emotionally or physically exhausted? These are signs of burnout. Although it’s always easier to prevent burnout than to address it after it has occurred, all is not lost. Remember why you chose teaching? Reconnect with the motivations you had when you first started. Keep a daily reflection journal of successes and joys. Take a guilt-free day off to pamper yourself when necessary.

30-39 POINTS The embers of your passion for teaching need stoking! Sign up for professional development right away. Join the Teaching Tolerance community. Our online communities can provide allies to help you through the slump. Follow us on Twitter and “like” us on Facebook, and then head over to tolerance.org for blogs from fellow anti-bias educators and professional development opportunities.

20-29 POINTS Prevention is worth a pound of cure! Although you may be safe from teacher burnout now, prevention is key to avoiding it later. Reach out to colleagues about concerns or issues you may be confronting. Find a mentor and identify the events and experiences that are weighing heavily on you. Together, come up with a plan to put vision back into your work. Whenever possible, leave your work at school—but don’t wait until the last minute to catch up on grading papers.

19 OR FEWER POINTS No burnout here! You love everything about teaching. Be sure to monitor your feelings. List what you love about your job. Plan to avoid burnout with an action plan. Make sure you’re doing everything you can to remain connected to your students, colleagues and practice while taking care of yourself.

STAY CONNECTED

STAY INSPIRED AND CONNECTED WITH THESE 11 TT RESOURCES!

tolerance.org/join-our-community

Bypassing Burnout

Maintain your pep and bypass burnout with these tips.

ADDRESS ISSUES IN A TIMELY MANNER. Need a colleague to step up? Need support from an administrative leader? Have a student whose behavior derails lessons daily? Don't be afraid to speak up. Teachers who seek to resolve problems report higher job satisfaction and engagement, and are less cynical.

SEEK PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT. One way to experience personal achievement is through learning. Is there an area you'd like to know more about? Do you want to add skills to your assessment repertoire? Would you like tools to strengthen students' social emotional growth? Developing yourself will increase job commitment.

LIST YOUR ACCOMPLISHMENTS. Focus on *all* of your achievements—big and small. Take a moment every day to make a list and bask in the little things you do for students daily.

SET SMART GOALS. Smart goals are specific, motivating, achievable, results-driven and trackable. Seeking to reach just one student may not be challenging enough, but setting the goal that all students achieve perfect scores on their end-of-course exams is too distant and unrealistic to fuel a sense of success. Daily or weekly goals that you can feel good about can be a key to avoiding burnout.

UPDATE YOUR CURRICULUM AND CLASSROOM PRACTICES. Using new resources, instructional strategies or assessments can keep you passionate, involved and engaged.



Teaching Tolerance has free online professional development modules that you can complete independently or with colleagues. Start with Teaching Tolerance's Anti-bias Framework.

tolerance.org/seminar/teaching-tolerance-s-anti-bias-framework

Check out *Perspectives for a Diverse America*. Create an integrated learning plan. Take a look at *Critical Practices for Anti-bias Education*, and incorporate some new anti-bias practices into your classroom this school year.

Don't forget: *Critical Practices* also has professional development modules.

perspectives.tolerance.org

tolerance.org/critical-practices

tolerance.org/seminar/critical-practices-anti-bias-teaching

Burning Brightly Benefits Everyone

When teachers stay, they enrich their students, colleagues and communities.

Students gain ...

- reliable, quality instruction.
- consistent disciplinary structure.
- caring advocates.
- academic growth.
- social emotional stability.
- connection to curriculum, school, peers and teachers.

Colleagues gain ...

- dependable colleagues and allies.
- stable approaches to discipline.
- academic progress with students.
- social emotional stability for students.
- parent and community trust.

Communities gain ...

- trust in schools and educators.
- advocates for their children.
- academic and social emotional stability.
- quality, consistent educators.
- time and money for substitutes and/or a replacement.
- accreditation and rigor.

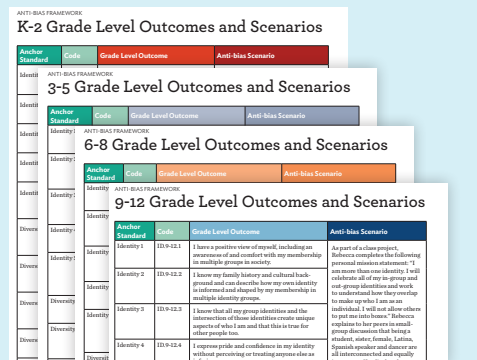
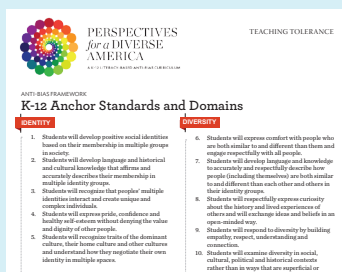
THE TEACHING TOLERANCE

ANTI-BIAS FRAMEWORK



A road map for anti-bias education at every grade level

The Anti-bias Framework provides a common language and organizational structure—perfect for teachers who embrace both social justice values and backward planning.



Four Anti-bias Domains allow educators to engage a range of anti-bias, multicultural and social justice issues.

Anchor Standards provide a common language and organizational structure.

Grade Level Outcomes illustrate what anti-bias attitudes and behavior may look like in the classroom.

“I’m creating a better curriculum because of the Anti-bias Framework. It’s making me a better teacher.”

—AMY BINTLIFF, Oregon, Wisconsin

TEACHING TOLERANCE



A PROJECT OF THE SOUTHERN POVERTY LAW CENTER

tolerance.org/anti-bias-framework



BOOK SMARTS

“Do it yourself” publishing is a simple, responsive way to fill the gaps on your library shelves.

BY ALICE PETTWAY ILLUSTRATION BY DANIEL DOWNEY



ZETTA ELLIOTT GRADUATED from high school never having been assigned a book by an author of color. When she finally was—during her last semester of university—it brought her to a disturbing realization. “I had been erasing myself when I read,” she says.

Determined to help other children of color grow up with books that reflect their experiences, Elliott began searching out stories with diverse characters. When that wasn’t enough, she began writing children’s books herself.

Elliott now works with the Brooklyn Prospect Charter School to produce an anthology of middle-grade student writing. Maybe the anthology will be picked up by a mainstream publisher, maybe it won’t. It doesn’t really matter to Elliott. For her, the solution to the lack of diversity in children’s books is simple: Stop begging at the doors of traditional publishers, and publish diverse books yourself. It sounds lofty, but thanks to the explosion of digital publishing tools, it’s now possible for just about anyone to publish a

professional-looking book—simply and affordably, online or in print.

The Time Is Now

For educators who are juggling a million responsibilities, it’s tempting to say, “Yes, the lack of diverse books is a problem, but the publishing industry is improving.”

It’s true that publishers are slowly responding to demands for more diverse literature. A few, such as Lee & Low, even focus exclusively on promoting multicultural titles and authors. But according to the Cooperative Children’s Book Center at the University of Wisconsin-Madison, the fact remains that in 2014 only 5.8 percent of published children’s books were written by authors of color, and only 7.9 percent were about people of color. Those

Educators can use classroom publishing to validate the experiences of all students and to introduce critical literacy.

numbers represent a slight increase from the previous year, but they still do not reflect the diversity of young readers in the United States.

Why is this a problem? When children of color are bombarded with stories about white middle-class characters, “They’re being told that this is how things are, how things ought to be, and if your life is different than this, then your life is somehow inferior,” says Elliott.

She recounts a recent experience at a conference: An educator from a majority-Samoan high school approached her, distressed because her school library had no books by or about Samoans.

It’s the perfect example of why educators have to look beyond mainstream publishers, says Elliott. “There’s a pretty good chance that books that reflect the reality of those Samoan high school students aren’t going to end up on *The New York Times*’ best-seller list, but those books have to exist, because those kids need mirrors.”

And they need them now. That’s where digital publishing comes in.

“Why not gather together in some sort of collective,” says Elliott, “so a teacher can say, ‘All right, I have this class of 30 Samoan kids. Let’s start writing some stories. Let’s publish an anthology.’”

That sort of departure wasn’t feasible 20 years ago, but today it is. Elliott has used print-on-demand publishing tools to make many of her books available—and popular—without help from a traditional publisher. Teachers use cloud-based tools like Storybird or apps like Bitstrips to publish students’ work. Most educators have access to diverse written resources that reside on the Web, often available for free.

Classroom to Publishing House

The flexibility inherent in this broad spectrum of digital tools means that educators can use classroom publishing to validate the experiences of all students *and* to introduce critical literacy.

Mariela Nuñez-Janes, former co-director of the ethnic studies program at the University of North Texas, has extensively researched the need for Latina and Latino students to see their own experiences in their schooling. She knew that digital storytelling was one way to help students talk about their lives, so she teamed up with Tim Sanchez, a high school physics teacher, to make it happen.

Both Nuñez-Janes and Sanchez say that the storytelling process is central to classroom publishing. Their students join a story circle to share their experiences and help each other decide where their strongest stories lie. Then they write. It’s a delicate process, says Sanchez. “You don’t really know what’s going to happen because you don’t know what’s in the room until you ask.”

Meeting this challenge pays off, says Nuñez-Janes. In schools where students’ experiences are often disregarded, “to be able to connect beyond the façade, to be able to tell a story that’s deeply personal, challenges ... the dehumanizing that’s happening in classrooms.”

Nuñez-Janes and Sanchez’s students digitally distribute their stories to their families, friends, the local community and the online world via videos composed of written narratives and photos. Both educators emphasize, though, that any publishing platform would work just as well—it’s the publishing of the stories themselves that’s important.

Caitlin Kingsley, a social studies teacher at an affluent middle school, uses digital publishing to meet a different teaching goal: introducing her students to critical literacy. She and her students create children’s books that question the traditional Thanksgiving story. Like Nuñez-Janes and Sanchez, Kingsley says that her process is one that can be easily replicated in any classroom.

First, she presents a mainstream children’s book about Thanksgiving to her students and asks them to evaluate the story. The students research portions of the narrative they think might be questionable. “By practicing critical literacy, ... my students were able to begin to transition from being blind consumers of information,” says Kingsley.

After the research is complete and the class has discussed the perspectives missing from the traditional Thanksgiving story, students write their own, more accurate stories. Finally, they choose an online digital publishing platform and use it to create their books.

Many teachers already conduct projects like these in their classrooms. The key says Elliott, is taking the stories to publication. “Students know that their work ... is becoming part of an official historical record,” she says. “It may not be *the* historical record, it may not end up in a textbook, ... but it’s available online and will be for some time to come.” ♦

Pettway teaches creative writing in Bogotá, Colombia.

Digital Publishing Tools

Give these publishing platforms a try in your classroom. Don’t forget to keep an eye out for new titles by diverse authors—each of these sites also offers independently published stories and books.

Storybird is a great tool for educators who want to dip a toe into the digital publishing world. Create books using an impressive collection of illustrations, and share via social media or the Storybird website. Online creation and sharing are free.

Bitstrips is a comic-strip app with lots of illustration flexibility. Creation and sharing are free.

Wattpad allows users to upload longer books chapter by chapter in a social media environment. No illustrations are available, but creation and sharing are free.

Lulu is a good option for educators looking to create and sell books independently. It’s more complex than some other self-publishing sites but produces higher-quality results and offers selling tools as well. E-book creation and listing on the website are free.



TOOLKIT

Put this story into action! VISIT » tolerance.org/book-smarts



Culturally responsive teaching requires training and practice.
When it comes to supporting diverse classrooms...

TWO HEADS ARE BETTER THAN ONE

BY EMILY CHIARIELLO ILLUSTRATION BY JON KRAUSE

SECOND-GRADE TEACHER RACHEL

Mulligan was like most early-career teachers: When it came to the curriculum, she followed the lead of her more seasoned colleagues. But when a fellow teacher handed her a folder of 200 worksheets and said, “This is our unit on Australia,” Mulligan took one look and turned to her mentor, Jim Hiller, for help.

The unit was a prime example of a “food and fabric” approach to teaching about culture. Mulligan particularly wanted her students to learn about the lived experiences of indigenous people in Australia. After thinking about her goals, Mulligan and Hiller co-planned an original activity in which students were given stereotypical and

nonstereotypical pictures of indigenous people and told to sort them into groups. After explaining that *all* of the images were of Aboriginal Australians, Mulligan led a discussion with her students about problems that occur when we promote stereotypes and judge people based on their appearance. “I’m so glad she chose to go through with the conversation, and her class ended up having a really rich conversation,” Hiller says. The mentoring process yielded a foundational lesson in anti-bias education that Mulligan would return to throughout the school year.

Mentoring and instructional coaching programs can be powerful tools for increasing equity in schools and building cultural proficiency in

teachers. Because these relationships are intended to be nonjudgmental and confidential, they create a low-stakes environment where teachers feel safe to speak honestly about how the dynamics of identity play out in their classrooms. Coaches and mentors can tailor their support to the specific needs of the teacher they’re assigned to help *and* to the culture of that teacher’s classroom.

Coaches and Mentors: What’s the Difference?

Instructional coaches tend to be building-based, chosen by the principal and positioned as content experts. Mentors, by contrast, often give support in non-academic, even personal areas of the new-teacher experience. While the

roles played by mentors and coaches are distinct and vary from district to district, both occupy a space where teacher practice can be transformed—including developing cultural competency and promoting equity.

Tovah Koplow, director of the Instructional Coaching Program for District of Columbia Public Schools (DCPS), says that one of the ways her district is making equity a priority is by staffing nearly every school with an instructional coach. “Every single teacher can be developed and every single teacher can grow,” she says. “As a result of growing every teacher, we’ll be growing and supporting every student. That way we can ensure that every one of our students has the best teacher standing in front of them.”

Mulligan teaches in Beaverton, Oregon, where the district-based mentoring program follows the New Teacher Center’s model in which first- and second-year teachers are paired with full-time mentors like Hiller. Mentors have a maximum caseload of 16 teachers, typically spread over multiple schools. Hiller says, “We aren’t influenced by school politics. That works in our favor. Our primary goal is to support the teachers.”

Doing What Works

Coaching doesn’t just benefit teachers; there is evidence it helps students academically as well. A four-year longitudinal study of the Literacy Collaborative program—funded by the U.S. Department of Education’s Institute of Education Sciences—found that schools participating in the program saw students’ literacy learning increase in tandem with their teachers’ level of expertise. The Literacy Collaborative notes, “Teacher expertise increased substantially and the rate of improvement was predicted by the amount of coaching a teacher received.”

But what does coaching that is culturally responsive look like? In their book *Culturally Proficient Coaching:*

Supporting Educators to Create Equitable Schools, scholars Delores Lindsey, Richard Martinez and Randall Lindsey explain, “Culturally proficient coaching intends for the person being coached to be educationally responsive to diverse populations.” And, as Transformational Leadership Coach Elena Aguilar wrote in *Education Week*, “Coaching with an equity lens means that we pay attention to the social and historic forces which create and maintain systems in which children are treated differently based on who they are.”

The facilitative and collaborative nature of coaching is itself more responsive and engaging for adult

Coaches and mentors can tailor their support to the specific needs of the teacher they’re assigned to help *and* to the culture of that teacher’s classroom.

learners than traditional professional development formats, such as single-session workshops and “sit-and-get” trainings. This personal attention is especially important because being culturally responsive requires teachers to tread in sensitive areas, such as assessing their own culture, examining their biases and challenging inequalities in their classrooms. As Koplow puts it, “[Coaches] need to use their relationship and their ability to show how valuable they are and [how valuable] the work that they will do with the teacher is. That’s the foot in the door.”

The coach-teacher relationship has another key advantage: It’s often non-evaluative. But when the mentor steps into an evaluative mode, it’s important that this relationship is rooted in trust. Delores Lindsey points out, “Good coaching does not assign judgment.”

Hiller tries to build a trusting relationship early on with beginning teachers. He does this in a number of ways—learning about their families, asking about their journey to teaching, and even finding out their favorite hot beverage. “Because we have that trusting relationship, they’re going to start opening up to me about things as things start to come up,” says Hiller, adding that he regularly gets questions about diversity issues, struggling students and issues new teachers may be facing on their team or in their school. “If you don’t have that relationship, that’s just simply not going to happen.”

Good mentors and coaches also use listening to facilitate reflection. Delores Lindsey explains that a culturally proficient coach will listen more than talk, and “paraphrase[e] in a way that the person you’re coaching hears their own thinking.” This technique provides the teacher being coached a mirror for self-reflection. “Reflection has direct implications for culturally responsive teaching,” says Hiller, “because if you’re not doing that, you’re not going to be consciously reaching out to your diverse student population.”

But coaching for equity is not limited to conversations and reflection. A deliberate focus on praxis is necessary as well. Consider this scenario:

An instructional coach working with a fifth-grade teacher notices that a particular student’s name comes up every time they meet. The teacher, who is white, uses words like “bad” and “problem” to describe the student, an African-American girl. “She’s shouting out in class,” the teacher complains. So, in his next observation, the coach focuses his notes on the girl’s interactions with her teacher and peers. He observes, “This girl tried to participate in this math lesson seven or eight times by raising her hand and was never

called on.” In the debrief, he asks the teacher, “You didn’t call on her. Why?” The teacher tells him that every time she calls on the girl, the student gives the wrong answer. Again, he cites what he observed. “I sat behind her and listened to what she was whispering to her neighbors. She had the right answer.” By taking note of the teacher’s actions and tracking student participation, he is also able to show the teacher that she had, in fact, called on several other students with wrong answers.

In presenting objective data, asking reflective questions and allowing for pauses, the coach was able to start a meaningful conversation about equity in the classroom. In that conversation, several concrete suggestions might be made. In this case, the teacher shifted her practice and began to use Popsicle sticks to track how often she called on students. Two weeks later, her coach returned to collect more data and noticed marked improvement, not only in the girl’s participation, but also in overall engagement among all the students.

Coaching the Coach

In the *Journal of Language and Literacy Education*, coaches Jan Burkins and Scott Ritchie write, “One of the biggest obstacles to coaches and to districts hiring them is how to support the professional development of the coach.” This obstacle can be especially steep when culturally responsive coaching is the goal, because culturally responsive *teachers* do not automatically possess the skills to mentor or coach for equity. In addition to content knowledge, an effective coach possesses a set of skills specific to coaching. Obtaining those skills requires training, and without sustained investment and prioritization on the part of the school or district, coaches will have little impact.

On top of acquiring a basic set of coaching skills, coaching for equity requires self-awareness *and* awareness of the needs of diverse students.

COACHING TECHNIQUE	COACHING THROUGH AN EQUITY LENS
Co-planning	With the teacher, audit classroom materials for diversity. Do they provide windows and mirrors for students in the class? Who is not represented? Prioritize those gaps in future planning.
Goal setting	Encourage teachers to align their own goals with the success of underserved, vulnerable or challenging students. Create goals that make those students visible.
Analyzing data	Collect data about student participation, attendance or behavior referrals. Analyze that data looking for patterns across identity groups. Are there disparities?
Modeling	Model the use of inclusive language during the lesson. Replace the word <i>parents</i> with <i>families</i> or <i>caregivers</i> . Avoid gendered nouns like <i>guys</i> or <i>boys and girls</i> .

Delores Lindsey calls this the “inside-out approach” to cultural proficiency. Examples of the inside-out approach can be found in “Mentoring for Equity,” a two-day training program offered by the New Teacher Center in Santa Cruz, California. And this school year, instructional coaches in DCPS will be working with the district’s “Empowering Males of Color” initiative to receive inside-out training around issues related to cultural proficiency.

“As a coach, I need to know who I am,” says Lindsey. “I need to know my own values, beliefs and assumptions about kids and about their parents and about their community. I also need to know that those things are important about the person that I’m coaching.”

Back in Beaverton, Mulligan is emerging as a budding teacher leader who knows herself inside and out. She was horrified by what she observed

during her second year when she sat in on an IEP meeting for one of her Spanish-speaking students. The special education director refused to allow extra time to include a translator. Mulligan spoke with Hiller about what she viewed as racist treatment of the student. After role-playing the conversation with Hiller, Mulligan was able to bring the issue to her principal. The administration immediately changed school policy to double the amount of time given for IEP meetings where translation is needed.

Coaching for equity, like teaching for equity, means being an advocate for students in the margins, Hiller explains.

“It took my teacher bringing that to people’s awareness,” he says. “I was so proud of her.” ♦

Chiariello is a freelance writer based in upstate New York.





Extreme Prejudice

Why teach about extremism? *Not* teaching about it can put students in danger.

BY **MARISA FASCIANO** ILLUSTRATION BY **DONGYUN LEE**

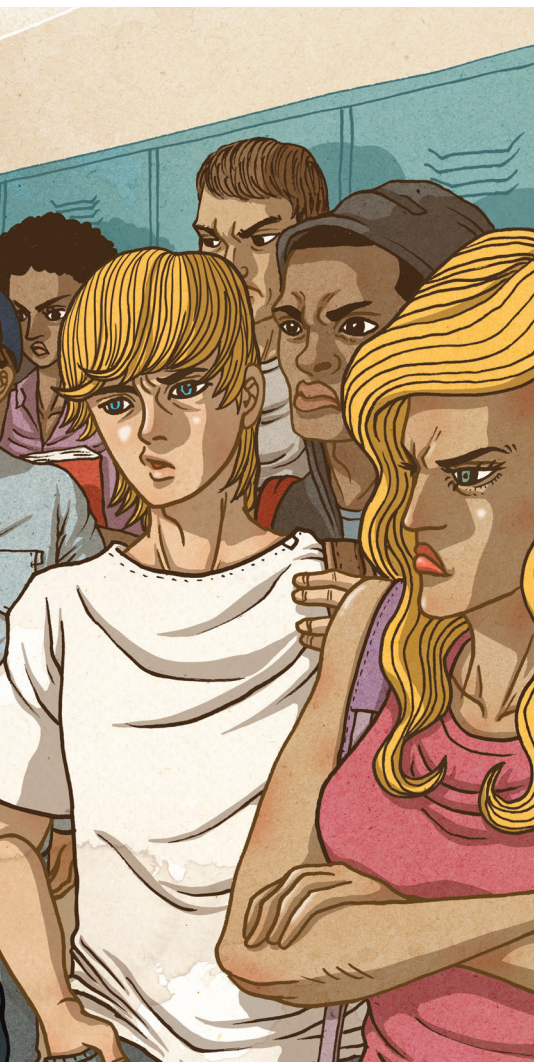
LATELY, THE NEWS HAS BEEN full of horrifying stories and images linked to the actions of such terrorist groups as ISIS and Boko Haram, which self-identify as Muslim. There is additional fallout closer to home. As the number of media events portraying Islam as a dark threat increases, so do threats to American Muslim students—and to their Sikh classmates, who are often mistaken for Muslims. Ignorance about religious diversity and extremism has left these students vulnerable to stereotyping and bullying by classmates and even teachers, and has created hostile environments that can make it difficult for students to learn. Such

environments can also be the breeding ground for other religious identity-based bullying perpetrated against students who are considered different or “other.”

Here’s what that hostility can look like: According to a survey of Muslim youth by the California chapter of the Council on American-Islamic Relations, nearly half of all respondents were subjected to bullying because of their religion. Girls who wear hijabs (Muslim head scarves) worry about having them yanked from their heads at recess. Ahmed Jamil, president of the Muslim American Society Queens Community Center in New York, told *The New York Times* that Muslim youth

frequently suffer such taunts as “Your father is ISIS. Are you ISIS?” Youssef ElGhandour, a public school student, said a classmate once told him, “You are probably going to bomb up the school.”

A Nigerian-American Muslim student in Brooklyn, New York, described feeling powerless when faced with misconceptions about her religious and cultural identity. According to a *Voices of NY* article, “Amina Adekola, 15, was in her 10th-grade global class learning about the Boko Haram massacres when another student asked, ‘Why are all Muslims terrorists?’ She said that she wanted to stand up for herself, tell him that she was a Muslim and not a terrorist.



But she was embarrassed in the face of what she felt was an overwhelming majority. ‘About 90 percent of the kids in my class feel that way,’ she said.”

American Sikh students encounter similar attitudes. Even though Sikhs are not Muslim, Sikh students can be victims of Islamophobia because their peers—and many adults—are unfamiliar with their religious dress. In its study *Go Home, Terrorist*, the Sikh Coalition found that more than two-thirds of turbaned Sikh children report being bullied at school (32 percent of all students ages 12 to 18 say they’re bullied) and that the bullying can turn physical.

Aasees Kaur, the sister of a Sikh boy who endured a broken nose, a swollen jaw that required two surgeries, and the cutting of his hair, explains that many Sikhs keep their hair unshorn

and wrapped in a turban as an external aspect of their religious identity. “For devout Sikhs, the turban is a declaration of Sikh identity, representing a commitment to the Sikh religious ideals of equality, justice and love,” she writes in the *Atlanta Journal-Constitution*. “For many, the turban reminds them of otherness, making it an easy target for mockery and even violence.”

Why Teach About Religious Extremism?

Each of these bullying instances and the stereotypes that feed them stem from a lack of religious literacy, combined with the generally monolithic depiction of Muslims in the media. The fact is that many kids don’t know much about Islam, Sikhism or the meaning of the term *extremism*. If the media are their only exposure to Islam and only extreme practices of Islam are depicted, students have very few opportunities to learn about more typical practices. This imbalance leads to a belief that all terrorists are Muslims and vice versa. It also contributes to students being unaware of the full scope of extremist activities that involve other religious groups around the world.

That’s where educators come in. Expanding knowledge is the only way to combat these dangerous stereotypes and foster empathy among students, and teachers can do that by adding religion to the curriculum—including extremism that claims the mantle of religion.

Approaching Religious Extremism in the Classroom

Dramatic stories about extremist terrorism need to be counterbalanced with well-rounded and nuanced information about religion delivered via the classroom. Here are some suggestions for providing a complete picture.

➔ **Clarify that extremists are a minority within the religion (e.g., not all Muslims are terrorists).** By definition, extremism is a belief on the fringes, not upheld by most people. It’s important to give students the tools to distinguish

between the diverse mainstream followers of a religion and a religion’s extremists. For example, explain that most Muslims oppose violence in the name of Islam. According to a 2013 Pew Research Center survey, distinct majorities in many of the of 11 Muslim publics surveyed—including over three-quarters of respondents in Pakistan, Indonesia, Nigeria and Tunisia—think “suicide bombings or other acts of violence that target civilians are never justified.”

Along with statistics like these, you might share examples of individuals from the faith in question who have spoken out against religious violence. “What Can Muslims Do to Reclaim Their ‘Beautiful Religion?’” an essay signed by 23 Muslim leaders, addresses the actions of militant groups and asserts that leaders must affirm and promote universal human rights. The essay includes an image of Nobel Peace Prize winner Malala Yousafzai, whose autobiography, *I Am Malala: How One Girl Stood Up for Education and Changed the World*, offers older students an inspirational voice of peace and perseverance.

➔ **Demonstrate that extremism is not unique to a particular religion (e.g., not all terrorists are Muslim).** Help students understand that there is a spectrum of behavior within every belief system and that no single religion has a monopoly on violence. Even Buddhism, which is traditionally associated with nonviolence, has extremist factions. In Myanmar and Sri Lanka, Buddhist supremacist groups led by vitriolic monks launched anti-Muslim riots in 2014, ravaging towns, killing dozens of people and displacing thousands. The inflammatory speech and divisive tactics of these monks are similar to those of some Christian-identity group leaders who promote contempt for Jews and people who are not white. Jewish extremists, such as Yigal Amir, the far-right law student who assassinated Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin in 1995, have made their mark as well. Amir and his accomplices claimed that

they were protesting the prime minister's efforts to make peace with Palestinians. Being exposed to extremism from a variety of religions will show students that the enemy is not one particular faith; the enemy is intolerance from any source.

➔ **Examine the economic and political context.** Violence attributed to religion often stems from other causes, such as competition for material resources or political control. Guide your students in distinguishing the politicized version of a religion from the religion itself, and ask them to consider how extremists might distort religious texts and teachings to

obtain and retain power. For example, in their "Open Letter to Al-Baghdadi," more than 150 Muslim leaders and scholars meticulously detail how the ideological claims of ISIS have no basis in the Quran.

➔ **Highlight religious peacemakers.** By exposing students to positive voices of faith—to problem solvers instead of just problem makers—you can counteract the dominant media coverage that feeds into stereotypes and risks breeding antagonism. Try sharing stories of individuals around the world who are motivated by their religion to bridge

differences and build peace. These individuals may not typically make front-page news or receive regular public recognition, but their daily struggles have important and lasting effects.

For example, Dishani Jayaweera is a Buddhist in Sri Lanka who founded the Centre for Peacebuilding and Reconciliation (CPBR) with her husband, Dr. Jayanta Seneviratne. CPBR's interfaith dialogue work promotes mutual understanding among Sri Lanka's main religious and ethnic groups: Sinhalese Buddhists, Tamil Hindus, Muslims, and Tamil and Sinhalese Christians.

In Pakistan, Azhar Hussain, president and founder of the Peace and Education Foundation, works tirelessly to help madrasa leaders develop peace-building skills and provide moral guidance for their students and communities.

➔ **Empower your students to make a difference.** Take the inspirational examples of peacemakers like Jayaweera and Hussain one step further by encouraging students to promote peace and pluralism in their school community. Whether it's standing up for a Muslim or Sikh peer, giving a presentation that teaches classmates about religious differences or supporting causes that promote interreligious peace, students can channel their concerns into healthy and positive actions that promote empathy and foster productive dialogue.

In her *Huffington Post* article on the subject, Nayomi Munaweera eloquently sums up the importance of teaching and learning about religious diversity: "Ultimately, whether Buddhism, Islam, Judaism, Christianity or any other -ism, the worldwide push toward fundamentalism is also heart-breaking in that it forces those of us sustained by some sort of faith to have to say what should be obvious: These acts of violence do not speak for us." ♦

Fasciano is an education program associate at the Tanenbaum Center for Interreligious Understanding.

Fundamental Knowledge

There aren't any Muslim students in Whitney Foehl's eighth-grade U.S. history class, and only a few in the Washoe County School District in Northern Nevada where she works. But Foehl still thinks it's critical to discuss religious extremism—Islamic and otherwise—in her classes.

"To explain ISIS to an eighth-grader is not my objective," Foehl explains. "It's more about the theme. It's my philosophy that if you don't understand religious extremism, you can't understand the issues facing our nation or our world today."

For Foehl, understanding religious extremism means understanding negative stereotyping and scapegoating—topics that she introduces early in her scope and sequence. She teaches about how colonizers of the American West constructed an image of American Indians as subhuman savages to control popular opinion and further their expansion agenda. She also teaches about the Scopes trial of 1925 to introduce the concept of fundamentalism. And, because of where her school is situated, she uses another religion her students are familiar with, Mormonism, to help reinforce the concept of intra-religious diversity.

"[I'll say], 'Here's the mainstream religion, and then here is the extreme sect or faction of that mainstream religion.' And we talk about how Mormons, for example, ... everyone thinks that they have multiple wives, but no, that's the fundamentalists. So then you're stereotyping the entire religion on [one] sect."

Foehl also uses an activity during which she shows caricatures of various racial, ethnic and religious groups to help students see the folly of essentialism.

"I start with a German who's drinking a beer. I have an American, I have an Italian, I have a French person, and then I go to actual real clips of Muslims that I got from the news, of Muslims being violent," Foehl explains. She then passes out a worksheet that lists stereotype "sentence starters" and asks students to fill in the blanks based on each picture. "We start, 'All Germans are ...' and then you look at the picture. 'All Americans are ...,' 'All Muslims are ...'" She notes that she often has the opportunity to bring this activity back up later if her students refer to stereotypes in class. "I'll use that statement like, 'Oh, are you stereotyping right now? Are you saying all people who believe in Islam are terrorists?' So they've had a lot of training with that, which is so, so important. I don't think you can talk about religious extremism without backing it up with multiple lessons of negative stereotyping."

— ADRIENNE VAN DER VALK





GETTING REAL ABOUT RACE

BY H. RICHARD MILNER IV ILLUSTRATION BY SHANNON MAY

RACE IS NOT A STRAIGHTFORWARD, LINEAR CONSTRUCT. For as long as discussions have focused on race and education, people have attempted to figure out just what race means and how to address it to improve the educational experiences of those who have historically been marginalized and undereducated in schools across the United States. Educators tend to struggle to address race and how it informs their work with students, parents, communities, and colleagues. ¶ In the courses I teach at various universities on race, I often remind my students that they should no longer refer to “color” when in fact they are talking about race because race is much more than skin color. Race is constructed physically, socially, legally, and historically. The meanings, messages, results, and consequences of race are developed and constructed by human beings, not by some predetermined set of scientific laws or genetics. Genetically and biologically, individuals are more the same than they are different.



3. What race are you?

WHITE/CAUCASIAN

BLACK/AFRICAN

AMERICAN

ASIAN

HISPANIC

PACIFIC ISLANDER

NATIVE AMERICAN

ALASKA NATIVE

OTHER

4. How old are you?

5-10

11-15

...I am sorry for the members of the Summit Meeting of Negro Leaders yesterday when you said we must have patience. On hearing you say this, I felt like standing up and saying, "Oh no! Not again."

I respectfully remind you sir, that we have been the most patient of all people. When you said we must have self-respect, I wondered how we could have self-respect and remain patient considering the treatment accorded us through the years.

17 million Negroes cannot do as you suggest and wait for the hearts of men to change. We want to enjoy now the rights that we feel we are entitled to as Americans. We cannot do unless we pursue aggressively goals which all other Americans achieved over 150 years ago.

As the chief executive of our nation, I respectfully suggest that you unwittingly crush the spirit of freedom in Negroes by constantly urging forbearance and give hope to those pro-segregation leaders like Governor Faubus who would take from us even those freedoms we now enjoy. Your own experience with Governor Faubus is proof enough that forbearance and not eventual integration is the goal the pro-segregation leaders seek.

Following is a closer look at these four conceptualizations:

1 PHYSICALLY CONSTRUCTED. Based on skin pigmentation, people in society construct ideas, characteristics, images, and belief systems about themselves and others. These physical constructions are sometimes inaccurate, but they remain nevertheless. It is important to note that physical constructions of race vary from one society to the next. For instance, constructions of race in Africa and Asia are different from constructions of race based on phenotype in North America.

2 SOCIALLY CONSTRUCTED. Based on a range of societal information and messages, people categorize themselves and others. These social

constructions are linked to preferences, worldviews, and how groups of people perform. They are based on a range of perspectives drawn from people's interpretation of history and law, and they shape how we think about individuals and groups of people.

3 LEGALLY CONSTRUCTED. U.S. laws have helped us construct what race is. Landmark cases and legal policies such as the Naturalization Law (1790), *Plessy v. Ferguson* (1896), *Takao Ozawa v. United States* (1922), *Brown v. Board of Education* (1954), and *Milliken v. Bradley* (1974) have all influenced our constructions and definitions of race in U.S. society.

4 HISTORICALLY CONSTRUCTED. Historical realities of how people have

been treated and have fared in a society steeped in racism and oppression also shape the ways in which people understand, talk about, and conceptualize race. For instance, Jim Crow laws, slavery, and racial discrimination influence how people conceptualize and understand race.

People's beliefs about race informed by the areas outlined above shape what they do and do not do in practice. Although race is a central construct used to examine educational outcomes, policies, and practices, the depth and breadth of its applications are limited in public and academic discourse. For instance, people often talk about an "achievement gap" and disparities between white and black/brown

students. However, race is not treated in any substantive way beyond reporting the data outcomes. Rationales for why race is so difficult to address go beyond the scope of this book, but my experience working with more than a thousand educators over the years is that race is a tough topic for people to discuss in “mixed” company.

Some may fear that focusing on race will force them into conflicts with friends or colleagues that they are underprepared to address. Others are concerned that they are not being politically correct in talking about race. Still others wonder if they will be judged and deemed prejudiced based on their conversations and discursive inputs about race. However, while race may be difficult to address among educators, it may be one of the most important issues to consider, particularly in schools where students of color are grossly underserved. When schools collectively decide to engage race to understand its intricacies in relation to their students, growth among both the faculty and students becomes more viable and visible. Based on my experiences, when the topic of race emerges, educators tend to automatically think the focus is on nonwhite people. What should be clear in reading this book is that white is a racial category as well, and we will grapple with whiteness just as we critically examine experiences of people of color.

Some educators in schools do engage in conversations about race, but I have observed that most of the discourses are superficial at best: “I am worried about my black boys” or “I’m not sure why I can’t get the parents of my brown students to come to parent-teacher conferences.” Rarely are the conversations regarding race *real*. By “real,” I mean that these beliefs expressed through educators’ language rarely address racism, discrimination,

When schools collectively decide to engage race to understand its intricacies in relation to their students, growth among both the faculty and students becomes more viable and visible.

and the effects of structural inequity on individual students. In other words, it is difficult to have substantive conversations about race regarding individual students and their parents and families without thinking deeply about the broader collective, societal systems that directly impact the individual. For instance, how often are educators willing to talk about the fact that racist housing policies have kept people out of particular neighborhoods? Or how many educators understand the links between race, student assignment policy, property taxes, and education? How often do educators discuss how racist hiring practices have kept certain groups of people out of jobs in particular communities? It is easy to blame parents for their lack of attentiveness to their children. It is simple to proclaim that parents in a particular “culture” do not care about their children. It is much more difficult, however, to admit that discrimination still mars the experiences of some. Put simply, people of color who do not respond well to sustained and ingrained racism and discrimination can find it difficult to be “model” parents to their children. People tend to do the best they can in the circumstances they face and inhabit.

To be clear, my point is not to present people of color living in poverty as victims who are weak and incapable of

working through the racist and classist systems described above. To the contrary, many of these people actually succeed in spite of unjust policies, practices, and circumstances. Moreover, racism is not the only culprit in the narrative about why some groups of people struggle, but it certainly is one reason. And it can be tough for people who have not experienced racism or discrimination to understand and empathize with others. At times, readers may disagree with me, but my goal is not for readers to agree with every point made. My aim is to shepherd readers—educators—into reflective, proactive, and responsive spaces to move beyond complacency and beyond neutrality. Complacency is unacceptable if educators are committed to improving education for all. Moreover, neutrality is a conscious stance that works against social justice. In short, educators are either fighting for equitable education for all students, or they are fighting against it. *There is no neutral space in this work.* ♦

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Rewriting History— for the Better

By DAVE CONSTANTIN

Illustration by JULIE FLETT

Lettering by RUTH ROWL

American Indians have been largely erased from mainstream social studies curricula. A few states are leading the way toward making history instruction more inclusive—and more accurate.

IT WAS PURE coincidence that, during a recent trip to Northern California's wine country, Kevin Gover, director of the Smithsonian's National Museum of the American Indian in Washington, D.C., stumbled upon a perfect illustration of what's wrong with history instruction in the United States. He and his wife were visiting an original Spanish mission at the same time as a group of fourth-graders. Gover watched as teachers and chaperones dressed as Franciscan friars led the children, who were dressed as Indians, through a series of quaint activities. "They were making candles. They were spinning wool, weaving baskets. The message of the day that a kid would come away with is, 'Wow, it was fun to be an Indian at the mission,'" Gover says. "The reality was that the mission system was astonishingly brutal. Obviously we don't want to teach fourth-graders about murder and slavery, but they also shouldn't come away believing the mission system was good for the Indians."

This kind of Eurocentric approach to American history will come as no surprise to many educators who work from scripted U.S.

history curricula. Aside from some obligatory lessons about Pilgrims and Indians at Thanksgiving and maybe a retelling of Pocahontas and Sacagawea's contributions to Anglo exploration of the New World, generations of American school children grow up effectively ignorant of the tragic and complicated story of this nation's original inhabitants. It's no wonder that many educators themselves lack the foundation necessary to change the conversation. It's a vicious cycle governed by inertia, and it's been like this for as long as anyone can remember. "We aren't seeing any important progress in student performance among Native Americans, and the non-Indian students aren't learning about Indian things any more effectively than they have in the past," Gover says. "We know teachers are teaching about Indians as

AND

Recognizing Real Indians

Debbie Reese was a schoolteacher in New Mexico and Oklahoma before getting her Ph.D. in curriculum and instruction at the University of Illinois and becoming a vocal advocate for stronger American-Indian curriculum. In 2006, she created American Indians in Children's Literature (AICL), a blog that highlights positive views of American Indians in children's literature and works to change negative stereotypes portrayed in commonly taught books. It was a response to obvious education gaps she was aware of, going all the way back to when she was a child growing up on a small Pueblo reservation in northern New Mexico.

"My clearest memory was that the Indians I saw in books and movies were not real," Reese says. "I knew what real was. I knew our dances and our practices and what we were. And we called ourselves 'Indians.' It wasn't until I was much older that I realized there were a lot of different tribes in the country. It wasn't just us. And that speaks to what we got in school. Not much." That's because the curriculum delivered in schools across the United States is very much alike, she says. "It doesn't matter if you're going to school in Rhode Island or you're going to school in New Mexico, you're going to get the same instruction."

Reese sees literature as an obvious way to fill in those gaps left by the standard textbook curriculum. One of her favorite sources for such books is Birchbark Books in Minneapolis, Minnesota, which is owned by Native writer Louise Erdrich. "That's where I buy a lot of books from because I know they're careful in their selection and they're looking for the same kinds of books I'm looking for." Reese also points to the grassroots campaign We Need Diverse Books, which aims to address the lack of diversity in children's literature. For a list of her recommendations of the best books and authors on American-Indian subject matter, and to find out more about her efforts, visit her website at americanindiansinchildrensliterature.blogspot.com.



required elements of their curriculum, but we also know that the textbooks haven't changed in decades and that the information that is being put forward simply is not very good. It's, at best, incomplete, and at times, absolutely inaccurate."

To address this, Gover and his team at the Smithsonian are gearing up to unveil a program called Native Knowledge 360, a nationwide curriculum initiative to make comprehensive Indian education a priority. In pockets of the country, culturally responsive educators, many of whom have been hard at work on various facets of this issue for decades, are waiting with bated breath.

"We're a textbook-oriented society and the textbooks, when they deal with Indians, don't have a lot to say, or it's all Manifest Destiny, so you're really on your own to develop curriculum," says Jon Reyhner, professor of education at Northern Arizona University and the co-author of *American Indian Education: A History*. Reyhner, who taught Native students for four years at reservation schools and spent another 10 years as a school administrator, understands how difficult it is for even the most well-meaning

teachers to tackle this challenge on their own. "When you've got the class sizes that teachers have, asking them to do much curriculum development is a recipe for burnout."

And that's assuming the issue is on educators' radars at all. Although there are 567 federally recognized tribes in the United States, American Indians and Alaskan Natives make up just 1 percent of the population, and most are concentrated in Alaska and the West, along with a few areas in the Great Lakes region and the far Northeast. Not surprisingly, these are the only areas where the needle is being moved on this issue. Montana, Utah, South Dakota, Washington, Wisconsin, Maine and Minnesota all have legislative language or laws calling for comprehensive teaching of Native history and culture. But the implementation varies drastically from state to state depending on how much funding, staff support and political will exists to make the leap from policy binder to classroom curriculum.

Montana stands as the notable exception. Its aptly named Indian Education for All (IEFA) Act mandates a "culturally responsive" curriculum approach that requires school districts to collaborate with

tribal leaders and provide every student a comprehensive education on Native history, culture and tribal sovereignty. But public school students are not the only target audience. A key component of Montana's success (in addition to robust funding and a dedicated team of support specialists who ensure IEFA compliance) is its emphasis on pre-service professional development. But while providing teachers with the education and confidence to teach this content can help break the cycle of ignorance, advocates have found that getting started isn't always easy.

"People are not that eager to learn it at first, I must be honest," says Jioanna Carjuzaa, who facilitates IEFA professional development for the Montana State University system. "Teachers are products of the same K-12 system. What happens on that journey is very limited. I think it is really difficult because you're asking people for a major paradigm shift. Even in a state where we have tons of materials and professional development, we're asking teachers to teach about something they don't have a good understanding about or knowledge base [for]."

Anna Baldwin, a 16-year veteran English and multicultural literature teacher on Montana's Flathead Indian Reservation, knows this struggle well. "One of the things teachers are worried about is, when they are not Indians, how do they do it? Even down to what words you should use," she says. As a white woman teaching at Arlee High School, which is 70 percent Indian, Baldwin has had ample opportunity to test what works and what doesn't. "I think it's really important for students to learn about place, the place where we live," she says. "But I think just as important is that it's contemporary, so we're not just looking through historical lenses, which is how Indians are often presented in textbooks and other materials. Indians are always [pictured] in black and white."

To connect the dots between past

and present and give students a sense of history as a living, breathing entity, social studies teacher Paul Rykken and his colleagues at Black River Falls High School in Wisconsin found that an integrative approach worked best. "In each of our social studies programs where it seemed natural to bring in Native history, we started to do that," he says. "For example, I teach a politics course, and we started to teach the U.S., Wisconsin and Ho-Chunk constitutions in parallel. And that was kind of an interesting, nonthreatening way to bring that in. I've always thought that, if you could get the concept of sovereignty across well, many of the other things fall into place."

Rykken has been teaching at the school since 1990, the year Act 31—a mandate similar to Montana's IEFA—first went into effect. Although he's quick to point out they still have a long way to go, Rykken has seen a definite shift in the mentality surrounding teaching American-Indian history. "In the early stages, there was more resistance from the non-Native population," he says, echoing Carjuzaa's and Baldwin's observations about Montana. "But I think a lot of that has gone away. And it's been interesting to watch that. I think we've got kids talking about things that before they weren't really comfortable talking about. And, I don't want to make this sound better than it is, but getting kids to talk and have thoughtful discussions about race is very challenging. It's a team effort. It isn't something that just happens. You've really got to be deliberate about it."

The good news is that progress, while painfully slow on the whole, is

being made. An increasing number of states are taking notice of Montana's successes and moving toward similar models. Washington just signed its own promising Indian education mandate (SB 5433) into law this May, after a protracted struggle by advocates to change language from "encouraging" schools to integrate tribal history, culture and government into their curriculum to making it mandatory. "There are so many people across the country who are working very, very hard to make sure that American Indians don't continue to slip through the cracks, and that we create a growing awareness of American-Indian history, identity and contemporary issues," says Mandy Smoker Broaddus, the director of Indian education at the Montana Office of Public Instruction.

Fortunately, online access to a host of excellent, free resources means teachers no longer have to wait for policy changes at the top to start improving how this subject is taught in their classrooms right now. (For specific examples, see the toolkit that accompanies this story.) It will take work, but more and more educators are seeing the value in resurrecting a subject that has been sitting on the back burner for far too long. "The history that we're trying to put in place is the best for all the students," says Rykken. "I know that sounds idealistic, but I absolutely believe that. We've got to get away from this kind of one-dimensional, Eurocentric version of the history. It's much more complicated. There is a way to do it, but it is a challenge." ♦

Constantin is a copywriter and editor in San Jose, California.

NATIVE AMERICAN OR AMERICAN INDIAN? People indigenous to the land that is now the United States use both terms, but not everyone is comfortable with both. Teaching Tolerance recognizes the limitations of these identifiers. We use tribal names whenever possible, but—when writing more generally—have opted to use the noun American Indian and the modifier Native based on the recommendations of our advisors who identify as members of this diverse group.



RELIGION

versus

EQUALITY?

A SOCIAL STUDIES DILEMMA

BY MAYA LINDBERG

ILLUSTRATION BY TIMOTHY GOODMAN AND VICTORIA BLACK

WHICH ONE OF THESE STATEMENTS IS NOT LIKE THE OTHERS? My religion forbids me from eating pork. My religion prohibits me from saying the Pledge of Allegiance. My religion requires me to wear special clothing. My religion requires me—as a private business owner—to refuse services to same-sex couples who are planning weddings.

The fourth statement is the outlier in this series, and it's wrapped up in a culture war that pits religious freedom against individual rights. This war is being fought very publicly, and it has implications for students and teachers.

Tensions between advocates for religious rights and advocates for LGBT equality have existed for years, but in the wake of LGBT-rights victories culminating in the U.S. Supreme Court's 2015 *Obergefell v. Hodges* ruling, these tensions have mounted significantly. The Court's decision in *Obergefell* held that same-sex couples nationwide have a constitutional right to marry. Many Americans see the ruling as a watershed moment in the struggle for equality; others consider it a violation of their faith and fear that their free-exercise rights will be trampled on. In the legislative and legal arenas, resistance to LGBT rights, including marriage equality, has come under the umbrella of so-called "religious refusals."

This divide has all the makings of a classic social studies dilemma: competing rights and values, how change often meets resistance, and how the legislative and legal systems can be used to advance *and* thwart social movements. Social studies teachers are uniquely positioned to put these topics into context for students.

Teaching About Religious Freedom and Religious Exemptions

Charles C. Haynes, vice president of the Newseum Institute and executive director of the Religious Freedom Center, says, “Part of the challenge is to find the right place in the curriculum to teach about these issues. ... [B]ut I would say that every government teacher has a wonderful opportunity to address what is arguably the defining issue of our times. That is, how are we going to live with our deep differences in the United States? And to address that issue in our diverse communities, our diverse classrooms, we need to tackle how religion is treated in our public sphere and our communities.”

The on-the-ground realities of religious freedom, Haynes says, need to be a salient part of the story told in classrooms. Why? Religious diversity—and the freedom of religion—is a pragmatic lesson in U.S. history.

First Things First

Haynes cautions against starting with today’s debate; students may simply shout past one another. “Whether it’s a government teacher or, in the earlier grades, a civics teacher or in a history classroom,” Haynes says, “the most important strategy is to start with our historic struggle to live up to the principles in the First Amendment.” But this story begins well before the ratification of the Bill of Rights in 1791.

Teachers can, for example, discuss Roger Williams—who founded the first Baptist church in America even as he was a proponent of religious freedom—and why he founded Rhode Island as the first society where freedom of conscience was protected. Williams certainly did not see all religions as true, but believed that any union between church and state corrupted both.

Or teachers can bring up the Virginia General Assembly, which, in 1786, became the first legislature in the world to disestablish religion when it passed the Virginia Statute for Religious Freedom, written by Thomas Jefferson. Supported by Baptists, Presbyterians and Quakers—dissenters from the state-supported Anglican Church—the statute protected all religious minorities, including Catholics and Jews.

The First Amendment notably states that “Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof.” In U.S. history, religious freedom began as a right to practice and has emerged as an inalienable right to protect claims of conscience. Haynes says, “Most public school teachers today don’t use the word *conscience*, don’t define it, don’t help students understand it, but yet it is at the heart of who we are as a country.” However, although liberty of conscience is both valued and protected, it is far from absolute.

To illustrate how the lines that demarcate religious freedom have shifted over time, teachers can point to landmark cases. In 1878, the Supreme Court ruled in *Reynolds v. United States* that religious belief cannot be used as a

defense in a criminal act—in this case, bigamy. Citing Thomas Jefferson, the Court made the distinction between belief, which is inviolable, and actions, which governments have the power to restrict. Famously, the *Reynolds* ruling noted that the First Amendment would not protect the practice of human sacrifice, even if it were part of someone’s religious beliefs.

In 1963, *Sherbert v. Verner* shifted the line again. Adeil Sherbert, a Seventh-day Adventist in South Carolina, was fired for refus-

ing to work on a Saturday—her Sabbath—and denied unemployment insurance by the state. The Supreme Court ruled in her favor, establishing what is known as the “Sherbert test.” Under this test, a person holding sincere religious beliefs

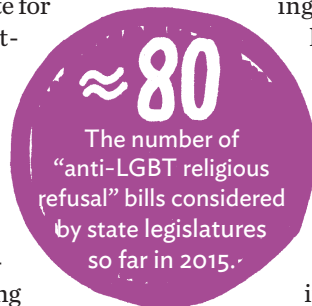
is protected from government action that substantially burdens the exercise of her beliefs unless the state can show a “compelling interest” in limiting that freedom.

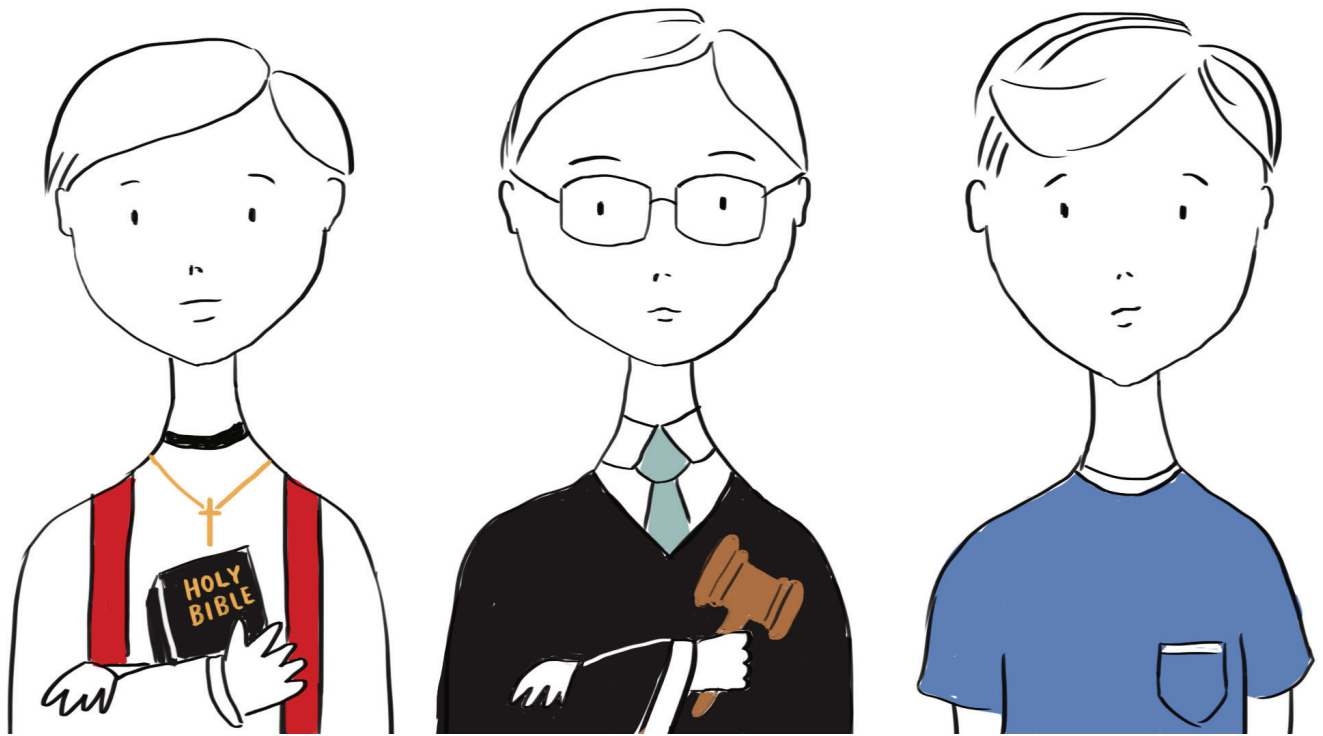
“That doesn’t mean the religious claim wins automatically,” Haynes says. “It just means that we take it seriously.”

Religious Freedom Restoration Laws

Once the historical backdrop is established, teachers can turn to today’s debates over whether one person’s religious beliefs allow them to deny rights or services to another person. In 2015, state legislatures considered nearly 80 bills that amount to “anti-LGBT religious refusals,” according to the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU).

LGBT-rights advocates, including the ACLU, view religious refusals as claims by individuals, groups or institutions to rightfully discriminate





EVERY GOVERNMENT TEACHER HAS A WONDERFUL OPPORTUNITY TO ADDRESS WHAT IS ARGUABLY THE **DEFINING ISSUE** OF OUR TIMES: HOW ARE WE GOING TO LIVE WITH OUR DEEP DIFFERENCES IN THE UNITED STATES?

against the LGBT community in the name of religion. For religious objectors to same-sex marriage, the issue is exemption from providing services on grounds of conscience. Religious freedom restoration acts (RFRA) represent a hot-button issue since

they were the most common bills in the backlash to the marriage-equality movement.

Teaching about RFRA is not easy. A good starting point is the 1990 Supreme Court decision in *Employment Division v. Smith*. Two American Indian

counselors in Oregon were fired by their private employer for ingesting peyote, an illegal hallucinogenic drug, and were denied unemployment compensation from the state. The Court ruled that the counselors did not have the constitutional right to use peyote even though it's used in their Native American Church ceremonies.

The Court's decision in that case weakened the Sherbert test. With the 1990 ruling as precedent, any generally applicable law could now be applied to religious individuals or groups even if it burdens the free exercise of their faith.

In direct response to the *Employment Division* decision, a wide coalition pushed for a federal law that would restore the Sherbert test. In 1993, President Bill Clinton signed this first RFRA, titled the Religious Freedom Restoration Act, into law. It holds that federal laws or rules cannot substantially burden someone's

free exercise of religion, unless there is a “compelling interest” and the government has taken the least-restrictive way to advance that interest. Since 1997, when it became clear in the *City of Boerne v. Flores* ruling that the RFRA only applies to federal laws and policies, a wave of state-level RFRA have been proposed and enacted.

RFRA are important protections for religions in the minority. “[I]f you’re a majority—like in America, if you’re Christian—there are a lot of ways your religion is already just baked into the political and social fabric,” says Kara Loewentheil, director of the Public Rights/Private Conscience Project at Columbia Law School.

So why, some 20 years after the first wave of state RFRA, are states again seeking to pass these laws? Two factors contributed to the recent wave: the rapid gains of the marriage-equality movement and the 2014 Supreme Court decision in *Burwell v. Hobby Lobby*. That decision held that the owners of Hobby Lobby, a for-profit business, could deny contraceptive coverage—required under the federal Affordable Care Act—to employees because of the owners’ religious beliefs.

According to Haynes, the Hobby Lobby case was a light-bulb moment for opponents of marriage equality who saw new state-level RFRA as a way to allow individuals and businesses to opt out of having to honor newly gained LGBT rights.

In no time, the proposed laws drew national attention. “The problem and the reason RFRA are important to pay attention to now,” Loewentheil says, “is that they are being written and lobbied for and used by people who are actually already members of a majority religion, and who actually want other people to have to follow their religion.” Critics of RFRA argue

that no one’s right to religious exercise is being threatened, and that supporters are using the laws to deny the rights of people whose practices they find repugnant.

Restoration or Discrimination?

Indiana’s 2015 RFRA is a case in point. The state legislature passed it just months after a U.S. district court ruling made same-sex marriages legal in Indiana. The state’s RFRA specifically allowed private businesses to make religious claims; efforts to introduce an anti-discrimination amendment were voted down. To its many critics, Indiana’s RFRA, which was backed by prominent anti-LGBT groups, was a “license to discriminate.”

In the face of significant public pressure and the threat of an economic boycott from groups as diverse as the NCAA, Angie’s List and Subaru, the legislature revised the law. Critics of the revised act point out that the changes don’t go far enough because in Indiana, as in many states, anti-discrimination laws covering housing, education, employment and public accommodations do not include sexual orientation or gender identity.

The story does not end here. Religious refusals to LGBT rights—whether they are state-level RFRA, other types of bills or court cases under existing law—will continue.

So what’s the bottom line for educators who want to teach about religious freedom and LGBT rights? Haynes offers these words of advice: “I just hope that teachers in classrooms help students understand that equality and liberty are both core principles in our country, and without both of them we’re lost. We need to teach both and to honor both.” ♦

Classroom Tips

Complicate the binary.

Publicly, the conversation around legislation like RFRA often pits religion against rights. But that’s not the right framing. Many people of faith support social justice and equality, and might be compelled to do so from a place of faith.

Point to historical and contemporary examples.

Throughout U.S. history, communities of faith have supported and organized social justice movements. Examples are found in the abolitionist movement, the civil rights movement, the “Moral Monday” movement in North Carolina and many others.

Support LGBT and religious students.

Classroom conversations on religious refusals to rights may cause LGBT students and deeply religious students to feel vulnerable and threatened. It’s important to recognize that these emotions may emerge and to have strategies on hand to ensure your classroom is safe and inclusive for all students.

Do not tolerate harassment.

Students have the right to express their views about same-sex marriage, whether motivated by religion or not. They do not have the right to mock, insult or ridicule those who do not share their views. If needed, revise your classroom or school policies to underscore this distinction.



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INSPIRE YOUNG VOTERS TO
GET INFORMED, GET REGISTERED
AND GET TO THE POLLS!



THE YOUNG AND THE REGISTERED

LAST MARCH, the rattle and thump of drums filled the foyer of Marie Skłodowska Curie Metro High School as the school’s drum corps led dozens of students out of the building and onto the sidewalks of Chicago’s South Side. The young marchers waved hand-drawn signs, laughed, chatted and chanted as they made the two-block rite of passage. But the parade also carried an air of seriousness. These students were on a Parade to the Polls, headed to vote in a runoff election that would choose the next mayor of their city. Many of them would be voting for the first time.

The parade was not some one-off civic event. It was the culmination of a voter education and registration program that paired social studies classes with Chicago Votes, a non-partisan group that advocates for the rights of young

voters. Staffed by activists, the organization has cheerfully hammered away at institutional barriers that make it more difficult for young voters to reach the ballot box—successfully lobbying for same-day voter registration, for example. The group is also directly engaging youth on the city’s South Side, which includes many of the city’s lowest-income neighborhoods. By its own count, Chicago Votes has registered some 22,000 new voters.

“We want to beat back the narrative that young people don’t care, that they’re apathetic,” says D.J. Jackson, Chicago Votes’ organizing director. “After so many years of disappointment, a lot of them are in places where they feel nobody cares, no one is looking out for them. It’s very important they know that we hear them, that we understand where they’re coming from.

BY SEAN McCOLLUM

ILLUSTRATION BY ROMAN MURADOV

Then we have a chance to show them the changes they can make by becoming politically active and voting.”

Inspiring a Next Generation of Voters

The history of voting rights is a staple of American history courses and of most state social studies standards. The unsteady march toward equal access to the vote includes the extension of suffrage to white men who did not own property, to African-American men, to women, to Native Americans and to younger Americans (the voting age used to be 21). In many instances, young activists were on the frontlines, flanking the forces of disenfranchisement. These individuals and movements endured censure, slander, imprisonment, physical violence, terrorism and even murder.

Today, barriers to voting may be subtler, but they are no less real. The 2013 *Shelby County v. Holder* decision, for example, reversed key provisions in the Voting Rights Act of 1965, a decision many voting-rights activists worry has already disenfranchised thousands of black voters in the South. Mobilizing the next generation of voters—and activists—is critical to our country’s electoral integrity. Yet voter turnout in the United States is among the lowest of the world’s democracies, hitting a 70-year low during the 2014 midterm elections.

As a demographic, young Americans rarely have been enthusiastic voters. In terms of turnout, a stubborn gap of about 20 percent has divided them from their elders. In 2012, for example, only 41 percent of 18 to 24-year-olds voted, compared to 65 percent in the 25-and-over group.

A variety of factors contribute to the low turnout of young voters. For example, young adults are less likely to own property or have school-age children, two important drivers of political involvement. Institutional barriers, like the recent spate of new voter ID laws, also work against this group

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of voters. According to Project Vote, an advocacy group in Washington, D.C., 18 percent of 18- to 24-year-olds lack a form of ID that would allow them to vote in these states.

Still, the biggest barrier may lie within young people themselves. For some, the issue may be ignorance and uncertainty about the registration and voting process. For others, it may be

cynicism about the value of their vote. In some locales, political races may be so uncompetitive that voters see no reason to show up, or they consider the candidates or issues demotivating.

The best way to reverse that trend is to prove to young voters that their vote counts, says Peter Levine, the Lincoln Filene Professor of Citizenship and Public Affairs at Tufts University. “We don’t do a very good job of encouraging participation,” he says. “And that means the interests of young voters, especially the non-college-bound and high school leavers, don’t get considered. The issues that could benefit them, like job training, won’t get a serious mention [in political campaigns], and that’s because they don’t vote.”

In some communities, however, educators, voter advocates and youth themselves are trying to change this trend by reaching out to reluctant voters and coaching them to get in the game.

Engaging the Disengaged

Chicago Votes gets personal in its efforts to convince young people that voting gives them a voice. They start off all youth voter outreach efforts with surveys and listening sessions.

“I try to get a sense of ... what they care about,” says Caleb Porter, a Chicago Votes youth organizer. “Do you care about police accountability? Educational opportunities? Gang violence?” Then we discuss how voting can influence those issues.” Porter, 21, credits Chicago Votes with converting him from a nonvoter into a believer in the power of politics as a force for change. Once potential voters link the personal to the political, registering and voting become acts of self-empowerment, Porter says.

Groups like Chicago Votes, Empower Alabama, Rock the Vote and the League of Women Voters view high schools as effective platforms to promote voter self-empowerment. In schools, students can learn about power politics and the role it plays in representative democracy. Educators



can also create forums for exploring issues that directly affect students and their families, including discussions about where those issues intersect with electoral decisions. With effective instruction—and some positive peer pressure—voting can become a core civic duty, both relevant and cool.

In-school voter education is especially effective when paired with the removal of institutional barriers to voter registration. Same-day registration is one approach currently used to encourage greater voter participation in 11 states plus the District of Columbia. Some states even *require*

in-school voter registration drives. A few communities have experimented with lowering the voting age to 16 for local races and referendums.

According to a recent Duke University study, *Making Young Voters: The Impact of Preregistration on Youth Turnout* (2014), voter preregistration



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FOR THE COLLEGE-BOUND VOTER

In autumn 2016, hundreds of thousands of young adults will leave for or return to college. Before they go, they should have a plan in place for casting votes that will count in November.

The U.S. Supreme Court has ruled that students *are* considered residents of their college communities, if they so choose. However, different states have different voting rules that can affect college-based voters. In some, students can be legally registered to vote, but unless they have an officially approved form of photo ID—one reporting their current address, for example—they may still be turned away or told to fill out a provisional ballot that may or may not be counted.

If students have questions, they can check with their school's office of student affairs, the League of Women Voters or the local affiliate of their political party. They should give themselves sufficient time to get an approved ID or meet other voter registration requirements, if needed, before the next general election.

There are valid reasons college students may choose to vote in their home districts via absentee ballot. They may feel strongly about important races or issues that are on the ballot in their communities. Also, if they have scholarships funded by the state or a local organization, they should review the scholarship terms. Eligibility may depend on maintaining home-state residency.

The process for applying for an absentee ballot differs among states. Students can check the website of the League of Women Voters (lww.org) to find out what rules may apply to them.

may be the most effective reform states should consider if they want to grow new voters. Preregistration, currently in place in 12 states, allows youth to register to vote in their mid-teens, perhaps when they apply for a driver's license. Their names are then automatically added to the voter rolls once they turn 18. The Duke study estimates the preregistration laws increased young adult turnout by 8 percent.

Make It Matter

The key to drawing teens into the political process is to make it matter, Levine says. That means facilitating meaningful discussions about potentially contentious issues. "It's a losing proposition to say what we need is controversy," he says. "But we need to discuss and debate real issues and be OK with controversy. To do that, teachers have to be confident they won't have to look over their shoulders." In other words, administrators need to be on board with the mission and be willing to deal with conflicts that may arise when teachers encourage political debate in the classrooms.

Adam Heenan, a social studies teacher at Curie High, strongly agrees with Levine. "If we don't engage with issues important to our kids, if we aren't real about the practices of political power, we risk losing the trust of our students. Do we want a next generation resigned to doing what it's told? Or one that builds the America it wants?"

These are not just rhetorical questions for Heenan. He encourages his students to register, vote and not stop there. In his civics classes, he teaches students about the myriad ways they can engage and influence the political process—from attending school board meetings, to writing letters, to urging friends and family to register and vote to political protest. He also has accompanied his classes on field trips to Springfield, Illinois, to lobby lawmakers at the state capitol. He wants students to see for themselves that state officials are flesh-and-blood decision-makers who are

accessible and responsive. He wants his students to see where their votes end up.

Voting, with its winner-take-all dynamic, can be disheartening in the face of a big loss, Heenan explains. By remaining engaged on political issues they care about, young people can continue the struggle to shape the communities and country they want to live in, even if an election is not imminent or if the "other side" takes a big electoral win.

High Schools as Catalysts

As research shows, young voters are much more likely to become lifelong voters. The mechanics of registering to vote and voting are important, and schools can be catalysts for establishing civic engagement as a habit.

There is an additional opportunity for educators, administrators and activists bold enough to collaborate with students in promoting in-school political engagement: When young Americans articulate, debate and take action regarding issues that matter to them, they are no longer bystanders to American politics. They become stakeholders. They become citizens. ♦

McCollum is a freelance writer who specializes in education and justice topics.



Did you know that students and teachers were a critical part of voting rights history in the U.S.? Learn more with TT's FREE classroom documentary, *Selma: The Bridge to the Ballot*.

tolerance.org/selma-bridge-to-ballot



“WHAT’S ‘COLORISM’?”

Skin-color bias has real effects.
Do you and your students know how to talk about it?

BY DAVID KNIGHT
ILLUSTRATION BY ALEX EBEN MEYER



WHEN I BEGAN TEACHING IN BOSTON, I was struck by how often students of color referred to each other as “light-skinned” or “dark-skinned.” Almost daily, I witnessed high school students identify, categorize and stereotype their peers based on skin tone. Having grown up African American in Louisiana, I was used to white people’s ideas of white superiority and even those “colorstruck” black people who preferred lighter skin. But I did not expect that so many young people of diverse ethnicities—including Dominicans, Puerto Ricans and Cape Verdeans—would actively engage in everyday forms of skin-color bias. As one teacher in one classroom, what was I to do?

Any response to this question is complicated due to the deep legacy and influence of skin-color preference in the United States and in other parts of the world. Within-group and between-group prejudice in favor of lighter skin color—what feminist author Alice Walker calls “colorism”—is a global cultural practice. Emerging throughout European colonial and imperial history, colorism is prevalent in countries as distant as Brazil and India. Its legacy is evident in forums as public as the television and movie industries, which prefer to cast light-skinned people of color, and as private as the internalized thoughts of some Latino, South-Asian or black parents who hope their babies grow up light-skinned so their lives will be “just a little bit easier.”

It makes sense that teenagers—who are working out their own identities on a day-to-day basis—also engage in color-conscious discourse. But how do young people negotiate such powerful stereotypes, particularly when many of the contributing elements are out of their control?

Research Shows ...

Skin-color bias affects perceptions and interactions in ways that are at once subtle and profound. Since Kenneth and Mamie Clark’s famous doll study of the 1950s, researchers have known that young people of color are profoundly aware of our nation’s disdain for all that is dark. Color-conscious banter between students reflects unconscious *and* unspoken biases—otherwise called implicit biases—that favor lighter skin.

A more modern example of research on colorism comes from Eddie Fergus, an assistant professor of education at New York University who conducted a study on Latino high school males. Fergus found that Mexican and Puerto Rican males with white-looking skin are perceived as white and sometimes treated more favorably, while boys of the same ethnicity who had darker complexions are perceived as black



and often experience discrimination. Not only did the boys in the study navigate the world as Mexican and Puerto Rican, but each navigated different racial expectations based on external reactions to their appearances. Despite being close or even related, people of the same ethnicity face different expectations, different realities and—potentially—different educational and economic outcomes, solely based on their skin color.

Fergus' findings are not unique. Implicit bias related to skin color—within and between racial groups—is so sweeping that, until relatively recently, it has remained largely unquestioned and unexamined. And such bias is not just a failure of adulthood. Developmental psychologist Margaret Beale Spencer found in a CNN-commissioned pilot study of skin-color bias among U.S. children

that white children attribute positive traits to lighter skin and negative traits to darker skin, and—while black children also show some racial bias toward whiteness—white children in particular hold on to these prejudices more strongly as they grow older. “Our children are always mirrors,” says Spencer in a CNN broadcast. “And what we put out there, kids report back. ... We are still living in a society where dark things are devalued and light things are valued.”

The association of dark skin with criminality has become one of the most deep-seated stereotypes in American society, many social scientists say. Multiple studies have shown that dark-skinned people are perceived to be more suspicious, more likely to misbehave and more likely to commit crimes.

Recent research by psychologist Phillip Goff and his colleagues at the University of California Los Angeles (UCLA) found that police officers routinely overestimate the ages of black and Latino children, but not white children. Participants in the study estimated black boys as young as 10 to be an average of four and a half years older than they actually were. What's more, the participants in the study who reported the most dehumanizing ideas about black individuals (viewing them as nonhuman and apelike) also overestimated black children's ages to the largest extent, were more likely to presume black children were guilty and were more likely to support the use of force against them.

Why Care About Colorism?

What relevance do these studies hold for educators? First, they force the realization that implicit bias is pervasive and must be examined if we are to serve students of all skin colors equally well. Jerry Kang, a law professor at UCLA, notes that teachers with unchecked implicit biases are likely to interpret student behavior and performance through the prism of stereotypes that can have long-term effects on how students see themselves and on their opportunities. “Educators, like lawyers and judges, probably assume that they don't have bias because they chose to enter a profession helping others,” he says. “But whatever assumptions others have, teachers also have.” Fergus describes moments in which teachers will experience “color triggers” when talking with students about race-related topics, behaviors and ideologies. Without self-reflection and acknowledgement of bias, these triggers can cause educators to react in ways that are counterproductive to anti-racist classroom discourse.

Another reason schools should pay attention to the research on colorism? It offers the opportunity to launch necessary conversations. “My principal and just about all my colleagues are afraid to talk about race at all or how our interactions with students may differ based on how we see them,” says Katherine*, a white teacher at an elementary school in Brooklyn, New York. Adds her colleague Zack*, “There are many problematic things—interactions with stu-



TOOLKIT

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Break the Silence

☞ Many students of color (and other minority students) perceive that their experiences with discrimination, injustice and stigma neither belong, nor hold much value, in school. Establishing an inclusive classroom environment where students' experiences with implicit bias and colorism are validated can help empower young people to speak up for change.

☞ Provide students with language to explain the phenomena they witness on a regular basis. Teach students words such as *implicit bias* and *colorism*.

☞ Share examples of these concepts in U.S. history and culture. Point to examples of implicit bias in historical events and literature (e.g., eugenics, genomics and the use of human subjects in science).

☞ Create opportunities for students to interact with each other across multiple lines of identity (race, religion, gender, socioeconomic class, ability, national origin and sexual orientation). This work requires organizing learning tasks so that students regularly talk with, challenge and learn from each other. Conscientiously grouping students so that they learn from each other's differences can help students witness one another's humanity.

THE FALSE COLORBLIND PREMISE THAT UNDERPINS THE RHETORIC OF EQUALITY IS NOT LOST ON MANY YOUNG PEOPLE.

dents and blatant statements—that simply go unchecked.” Both educators acknowledge that the leadership at their school keeps the conversation focused on “academic achievement,” with no acknowledgement of the racialized discipline and achievement patterns they continue to witness. In order to sustain themselves, they support each other through critical research-driven discussions about justice, race and teaching and learning.

These types of investigations and conversations also help teachers avoid the pitfalls of colorblindness, which can be a major obstacle in redressing institutional and internalized racism. While many people, educators included, do not want to talk about who does and does not benefit in a system that is supposed to be “equal,” the false colorblind premise that underpins the rhetoric of equality is not lost on many young people. Jasper*, an Asian-American teacher in Sacramento, observes that his overwhelmingly black middle school students are very aware that their teachers treat them slightly differently. “Students say that the afterschool teachers, who happen to be black, prefer the lighter-skinned students,” he says, “which is funny because some of our strongest students are dark-skinned.” To Jasper, this revelation shows that moving beyond colorblindness—and *colorism* blindness—is not simply about white people learning about the experiences of people of color. “It’s about how each of

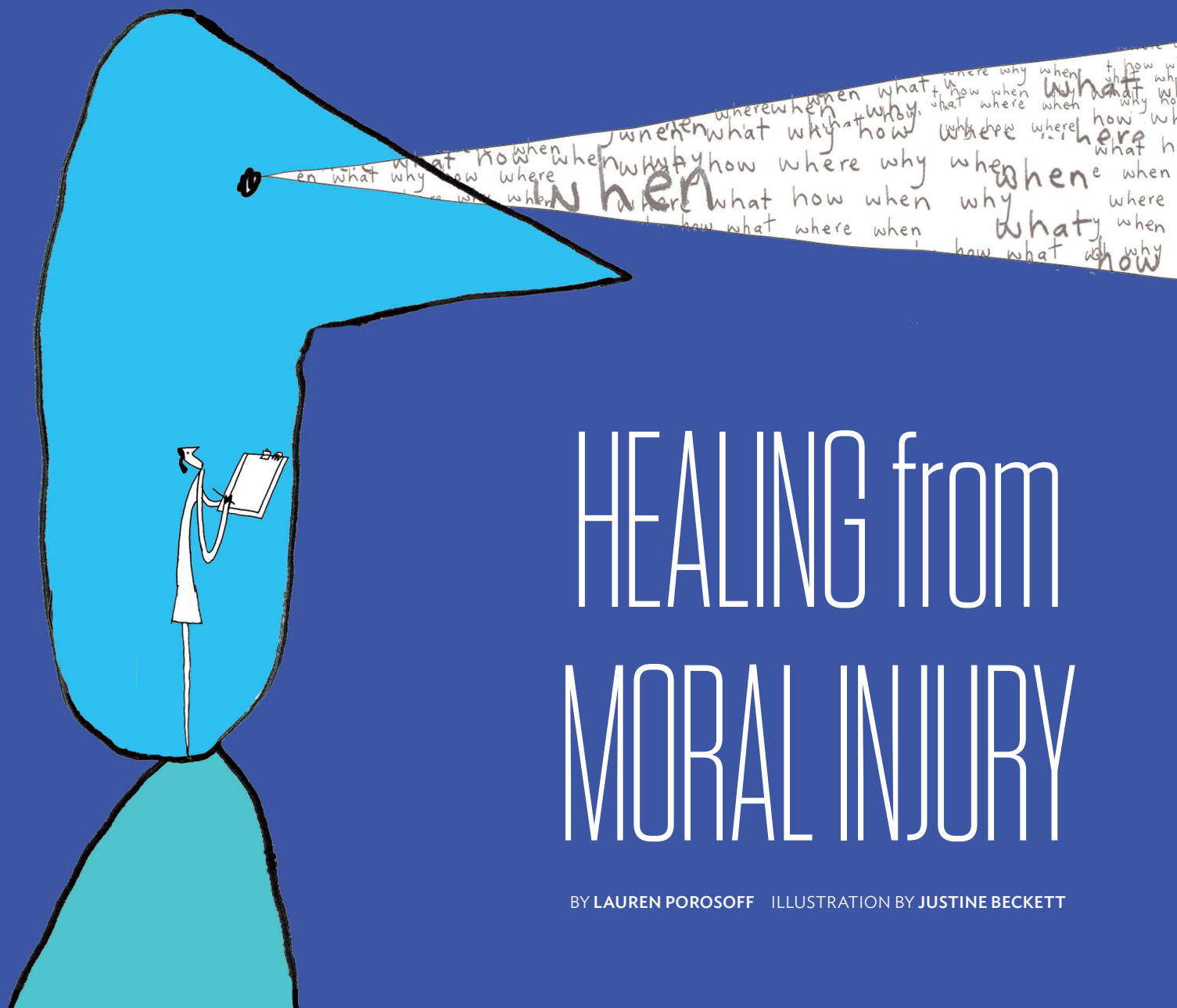
us, regardless of our own color, owns up to our own bias[es] and then does some thing about it,” he says.

Suggestions for Teachers

Returning to the question I have tried to answer for myself over the years: What does one teacher in one classroom do to help address an issue as pervasive as colorism? Staying current on the research related to colorism and implicit bias is an important first step. You can also do what Jasper does: Pose questions about color, status and bias to your students. “When I asked students to think about the famous black women they know, and if they are light-skinned, they smile,” he chuckles. “They haven’t articulated or thought about these issues as deeply. They collect the data of their experience, but have not come up with an hypothesis as 12-year-olds.” Or, you can do what the Brooklyn teachers have done by building a community of critically minded teachers in and beyond your school. Teachers may not be able to control what happens within their institutions, but they can facilitate critical conversations within their classrooms and professional learning communities. Perhaps in doing this work, a colleague or two may begin to see—and ideally talk about—colorism. ♦

Knight taught for several years in Boston and San Francisco. He researches and writes about issues related to youth, identity, politics and education.

* Teachers' names have been changed.



HEALING from MORAL INJURY

BY LAUREN POROSOFF ILLUSTRATION BY JUSTINE BECKETT

BY SEVENTH GRADE, Jerome had a reputation: weak performance on assessments, inconsistent homework, frequent need for redirection in class, inappropriate comments at school and online, physical fighting.

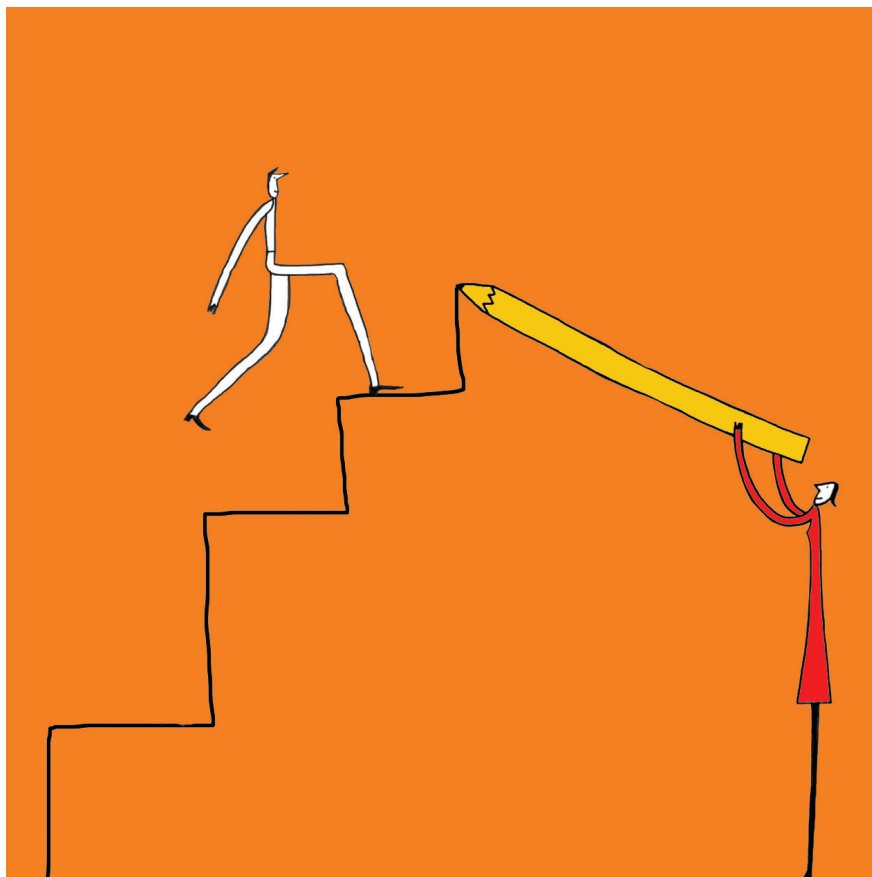
But I saw a different Jerome.

In English class, Jerome was always raising his hand to read aloud or to contribute his insights, even during the Shakespeare unit, when he struggled with the language. He loved to learn! While he often missed basics in his writing, like using evidence to support his thesis, he used every assignment to explore topics that mattered to him—his relationship with his brother, his leadership in a neighborhood trash cleanup, his admiration for a classmate’s perseverance, his experiences playing baseball. As he developed his writing voice, he started to ask for and incorporate feedback, grow from mistakes and listen more openly and compassionately to his peers.

In eighth grade, Jerome got into trouble again. It was the last disciplinary straw, and school officials “had to evaluate his continued enrollment.”

Within Jerome is a kid able to disrupt and derail an expertly run classroom. *And* within Jerome is a kid who works extraordinarily hard and has dealt with more than his share of pain and abandonment. Couldn’t we accept the hurt, angry and impulsive parts of Jerome in the service of educating all of him? Of course there are details I don’t know, and I can’t say whether the school’s decision was or wasn’t best for Jerome or his teachers and classmates. What I do know is that a student who needed compassion and healing and who’d worked so hard was removed from his community. And I was an agent of that community.

Psychologist Brett Litz and his colleagues define “moral injury” as “perpetrating, failing to prevent, bearing witness to, or learning about acts that transgress deeply held moral beliefs and



“I couldn’t escape the feeling that I might have been able to do something that would have led to a better outcome.”

expectations.” The concept is usually applied to war veterans, and I’m not comparing my job to a soldier’s or Jerome’s leaving school to an act of war. Yet I do have a deeply held moral belief in helping all students thrive and in cultivating a sense of belonging. Even if Jerome would get a fresh start at a new school, I couldn’t escape the feeling that I might have been able to do something that would have led to a better outcome. If standing by while a student is forced to leave school is a kind of moral injury, how do teachers recover?

Showing Self-Compassion

As teachers who care, we open ourselves to feelings of sorrow when our students mess up, and despair when our schools make decisions we can’t influence and don’t understand. We might begin to think of ourselves as failures or feel our work must not matter. We might even judge our own grief.

“Why do I feel so sad?”

“What’s *wrong* with me?”

“These things happen.”

“Get over it.”

I thought all of these things after Jerome left. I still sometimes do.

Dr. Kristin Neff writes in a *Psychology Today* blog post that self-compassion has three components: “being kind and caring toward yourself rather than harshly self-critical; framing imperfection in terms of the shared human experience; and seeing things clearly without ignoring or exaggerating problems.” When our institutions behave in ways that go against our values, we can give ourselves the support we’re so good at giving our students. We can remind ourselves that our hard work was worthwhile and allow ourselves to grieve our losses. We can think about how we’ve acted consistently and inconsistently with our own values so we can make conscious decisions about what to do next.

Maintaining a Connection to the Student

One step can be finding creative ways to keep supporting students who no longer have access to our institutions. One way I can stay in touch with Jerome is by reading and responding to his writing. Since I’m no longer his teacher, I can respond to his work purely as an interested reader and helpful critic. I can also offer to write recommendation letters. I can advise his family about his educational path. I can tutor him. I can send him information about conferences, contests and leadership opportunities. I can show Jerome that I remember him, care about him and am still here for him.

Recommitting to Students Who Are Still Here

Some days, I still have trouble coming to work at the school that kicked Jerome out. But if I take a sick day when I’m not actually ill or show up for class physically but not mentally, then I’m not really present for the rest of my students. Avoiding my own pain means also avoiding some of the values that bring meaning and vitality to my work

and that made a difference for Jerome: creating authentic connections and a sense of belonging, and fostering an environment where students can be creative and take risks.

In the months since Jerome left, I decided to recommit myself to my work. I developed a model-building project to help my students understand *A Midsummer Night’s Dream*. I worked on my advisory curriculum and got to know my students better. I asked Nina about the gothic fiction she reads, joked around with Winston and shared in Doug’s fascination with hot-glue sculpting. I gave them all feedback on their writing to show I heard them and cared about their growth. Even when I feel angry or sad or numb—*especially* then—I can acknowledge those feelings and keep teaching in ways that serve my values.

Working Toward Responsive Discipline

Every disciplinary incident I’ve seen in 15 years of teaching was much more complex than a bad kid doing a bad thing. If Jerome got into a fight or used inflammatory language, what was the function of those behaviors? The desire for attention? For social acceptance? An inability to cope with difficult thoughts and feelings? Was Jerome ever taught behaviors that would serve those same functions in a more positive way? Now that he’s gone, I’m thinking about other students who are behaving in ways deemed unacceptable. I’m focused on how my school community can understand the functions of those behaviors and teach behaviors that serve the same functions in more positive ways.

It starts in the classroom by taking time to *know* my students, where they’re coming from, what they’re dealing with. Building strong relationships means that I can better work with my students to determine the feelings behind the behaviors. It also means using a culturally responsive, student-centered curriculum to

foster empathy among students and implement strategies that hold them accountable to each other. This is a great place for the administration to get involved too. Peer mediation and restorative justice practices are alternatives that can keep kids in class and in our school community, fostering a culture rooted in development rather than punishment.

Showing Compassion to School Leaders

I might find it tempting to say *I* would never do something so heartless (or damaging or stupid ... insert your choice of adjective). But no one *wants* to ask a student to leave a school. It’s not like my school’s administrators came to their decision about Jerome lightly, and they have information about his situation that I don’t. And no one—no teacher, administrator or student—always heads in the direction of their values. That doesn’t make us heartless or stupid; it makes us human.

I can express my feelings of grief to my administrators and ask how they feel. Maybe they’re hurting as much as I am. Maybe neither of us has to suffer alone. I can also look for growth opportunities. What else could we, as a school community, have done to help Jerome find his way at our school? How can we help other kids now? And finally, just as I can recommit to my own values, I can help my administrators clarify and recommit to theirs. We really are in this together.

Recovery doesn’t negate the injury. None of these actions will bring Jerome back or take away my disappointment and anger now that he is gone. But they’ll allow me to continue teaching in a way that helped Jerome find his voice, and that’s the teacher I want to be. ♦

Porosoff is a veteran educator and the author of Curriculum at Your Core: Meaningful Teaching in the Age of Standards.





“I THOUGHT ABOUT QUITTING TODAY...”

BY JEY EHRENHALT PHOTOGRAPHY BY DAVID NEVALA

IN MARCH OF 2015, a second-grader approached teacher Miriam Santos-Amador while she was on lunch duty and asked her if she wanted to fight. She disengaged to discourage the question, yet the student continued, asking her repeatedly, “Wanna fight me?” Then—while her attention was elsewhere—he jumped onto a lunch table and slapped her in the face. Her own second-grade students stood in witness.

Santos-Amador is not alone. According to the *Indicators of School Crime and Safety: 2014* report from the National Center for Education Statistics, over nine percent of school teachers were physically threatened or attacked during the 2011-2012 school year. Santos-Amador attributes the lunch-line incident to intertwining symptoms that underlie many of these assaults: trauma and a dearth of responsive psychological services in the school and community. Chronic poverty, for example, can erode many aspects of

a student’s life and cause a host of complex symptoms. At La Esquela Fratney Elementary, where the incident occurred, many kids come to school without socks during the cold Wisconsin winters.

Santos-Amador knew this. She reasoned that the student must have interpreted something about her as threatening and attacked preemptively. But it didn’t make the experience any easier.

The assault Santos-Amador suffered is just one example of the traumas many teachers in the United States experience daily—some suddenly and others over extended periods. Trauma has many faces: the death of a student, a school closure, a bullying administrator or the stress of struggling to meet student needs that dwarf what the institution can provide. Sociologist Paulle Bowen calls teaching in this kind of high-stress environment physically “toxic” because it presents real health risks and bodily dangers for educators.

Mindfulness exercises can help educators remain grounded and compassionate during moments of crisis and over prolonged periods of stress.

Learn about a mindfulness exercise that has helped users for more than 20 years in our exclusive online sidebar! tolerance.org/rain

Santos-Amador felt her own health decline after the assault. Her teaching suffered. Her class misbehaved for weeks. Feeling self-absorbed and guilty, she could not show up mentally for her students. “I didn’t feel like teaching, or going to school, or doing anything,” she reports. “I felt invaded. He took with him my spirit to teach. I felt like I was trampled on in front of the whole school, and no one did anything to defend me.”

To help combat symptoms like those Santos-Amador experienced, a growing number of institutions—and individual teachers—are finding ways to promote resilience and physical and psychological healing from trauma. While some trauma-responsive interventions require deep institutional transformation, others are more personal.

Restorative Justice

Schools across the country have been turning to restorative justice practices as a way to reform their disciplinary policies. But restoring relationships can also promote resilience and healing throughout the larger school community—regardless of whether the individuals involved are adults or kids. Santos-Amador’s greatest difficulty in healing, she says, was an absence of restorative recourse. While a simple apology would have lifted her spirit, “He was never asked to say, ‘I’m sorry,’” she says. The student never understood he had done anything wrong.

A restorative circle is one example of a practice that explores difficult thoughts and emotions that victims and perpetrators experience during and after an incident, and asks how the harm can be repaired. Restorative circles emphasize reparative action rather than rules and consequences, and send a message that the feelings of *all* individuals matter.

At Greenway Elementary in Beaverton, Oregon, where Renee Caballero began the 2014 school year as a new principal, the school culture needed a boost. Seeking to build what she calls a “culture of hope,” she began implementing restorative practices—practices that improved the

lives of teachers, too. Restorative justice is helping this community of educators to adopt a growth mindset and see that change *is* possible through fostering positive relationships throughout the building.

This year, Greenway teachers are learning how to facilitate restorative circles. “[The perpetrators] have to face the people they’ve harmed,” she reports. “We all [make] a plan and verbalize how we [will] support both the victims and the perpetrator.” Instead of sending kids home to play video games during a suspension (which Caballero admits is simpler), her staff will work with the school counselor to help students learn how their behavior impacts the whole community—including the teachers involved in the incident or initial referral.

Response to Trauma

At a more macro level, comprehensive programs such as University of California, San Francisco’s Healthy Environments and Response to Trauma in Schools (HEARTS) work to sensitize the entire school environment to the causes and effects of trauma. This includes supporting staff members who experience burnout. HEARTS trains educators on how trauma affects the brains of both students and teachers, and trains educators how to manage classrooms with chronically stressed students.

The HEARTS project is based on practices at the Trauma and Learning Policy Initiative in Massachusetts. The initiative’s program, Trauma Sensitive Schools, advocates for a “whole-school” approach and views teachers’ own well-being as fundamental to an institution’s success. “There is a cumulative impact on teachers of understanding what students are going through, and working with these students day in and day out,” says Joe Ristuccia,

consultant for the initiative. Signs that a teacher is experiencing direct or vicarious trauma might include depression, developing a short temper, or compulsive shopping, drinking or eating.

The program uses its “flexible framework” to consult with schools, setting individualized priorities for change. It also teaches educator responsiveness to empathy fatigue. Initially, teachers learn self-awareness skills, becoming more attuned to early indicators of burnout. Next, the individual school staff members are trained to take responsibility for their symptoms. Trauma Sensitive Schools emphasizes the basics: conversation and connection with others. “Personal connection and community is ultimately where people turn to for resilience and for the support they need,” Ristuccia says. “We help remove the stigma and make it okay to talk about the impact.”

Mindfulness

Intervention for affected teachers also happens on an individual level. One study at the University of Vermont assessed the effectiveness of a program called Mindfulness Based Stress Reduction on educator stress and well-being. Over an eight-week period, participants learned body scanning, breathing awareness, yoga, and eating and walking meditation. In class, educators learned to nonjudgmentally become aware of their thoughts, feelings and sensations, to disengage from reactive patterns, and to become more resilient when faced with stressors.

As the teachers developed their emotion-regulation skills, the study found they more effectively managed student behavior, de-escalated conflict, and built more positive relationships with their co-workers and students. Participants also slept better and demonstrated more self-kindness and compassion.



In an online course for professionals working with trauma survivors, social work professor and trauma specialist Megan Berthold outlines several benefits of working in areas with high rates of trauma. These benefits include learning to overcome and transform traumatic experience, developing a deeper awareness of the broader socio-political context, and gaining a more realistic worldview. Berthold also describes improved self-esteem, increased empathy and compassion, and greater feelings of efficacy and commitment to one's work. Citing psychologists David Engstrom, David Gangsei and Pilar Hernandez-Wolfe, she asserts that intentionally finding positive value in one's work lowers the risk for empathy fatigue and burnout, initiating and sustaining a cycle of positivity and well-being.

Teachers can soon measure these findings against their own experiences. Hernandez-Wolfe is currently developing a vicarious resilience scale, where professionals working with trauma survivors can assess the positive impact of their work and track it over time. As educators assess their impact holistically, they develop trust in their vicarious resilience and build confidence in their growing efficacy as teachers.

Despite her assault, Santos-Amador found the resilience *she* needed to return to her classroom and teach her students. "I try to put it past me," she says. "Every child needs another chance. Whatever happened yesterday is yesterday." Resilience thrives through seeking a nourishing external community as well as replenishing one's personal reservoir daily. Experts emphasize that compassion—for oneself, for students and for fellow educators—is a key reminder of the strength of human connection. With the right support, educators who breathe in suffering every day can learn to breathe out relief. ♦

Ehrenhalt has taught English and special education in Portland, Oregon, and currently works and practices at San Francisco Zen Center.

Linda Lantieri, founder of the Inner Resilience Program (IRP), puts this study into practice. Although the program was founded to help New York educators process the traumas of September 11, 2001, Lantieri says most teachers were chronically stressed before the attacks. Through contemplative practices like journaling, mindfulness, poetry and yoga, IRP workshops help teachers operating on overdrive to slow down, strengthening their capacity to respond calmly and creatively. As mindfulness increases, Lantieri finds, frustration drops and trust with students and colleagues builds.

Lantieri has seen educators incorporating the practices by encouraging staff meditations before school, creating contemplative peace corners in classrooms and conducting mindful walks with students in the hallways. At one school in East Harlem, Lantieri recounts, teachers were struggling with a high population of special-needs

students. "They could barely get to 3 o'clock without doing something—not exactly unkind—but not as sensitive as they were at 9 o'clock in the morning," she says. The teachers decided to gather in the staff room at lunch and listen to meditation tapes of mindfulness expert Jon Kabat-Zinn. Although they meditated together for just 10 minutes, the teachers reported feeling their best selves at the end of the school day.

Vicarious Resilience

Recent research has validated an old idea that teachers, medical professionals and social workers have noted anecdotally for years: vicarious resilience. Vicarious resilience describes the reality that those working in highly stressed or traumatized environments may actually experience *positive* outcomes, gaining improved skills to cope with and reframe negative events. Vicarious resilience develops and is nurtured within the heart of difficult experience.



A YEAR IN THE LIFE OF *PERSPECTIVES FOR A DIVERSE AMERICA*

See how our K-12 anti-bias curriculum has grown!

BY MONITA K. BELL

IT'S BEEN EXACTLY one year since Teaching Tolerance launched *Perspectives for a Diverse America*—and a productive, jam-packed year it has been! From beefing up the site with user-suggested improvements to winning a major award, we saw *Perspectives* grow and become a go-to resource for many educators in our community. Over the months, we've heard how *Perspectives* is helping educators rethink the way they approach literacy instruction. Teachers, counselors and instructional coaches have told us that, with this curriculum, they *can* address social emotional skills and social justice while also diving deep into complex texts that are relevant to their students' lives. And the best part is that *Perspectives* is being used in totally customized ways—all over the country and the world. Here's a look back at year one in the launch of something totally new, including a glimpse at how three anti-bias educators have used the curriculum to meet the unique needs of the students in their classrooms.

2014

SEPTEMBER 9

After three years of development, we released *Perspectives* to the world! The initial release included more than 242 texts, 52 student performance tasks and 69 teaching strategies.

MID-FALL

We received thumbs-up from some highly respected colleagues in the anti-bias education realm.

“What a remarkably rich resource that will help any literacy teacher work with an anti-bias perspective. I love the custom design scaffolding that enables teachers to craft their own anti-bias lessons that align to Common Core while fitting the needs of one's own classroom.”

— Christine Sleeter, Professor Emerita, California State University, Monterey Bay

2015

JANUARY

We offered our first of eight two-day workshops for educators at the Museum of Tolerance in Los Angeles, California, at its beautiful and inspiring facility. Since then, we've completed 18 total in-person trainings across the country for nearly 1,000 educators.

EARLY WINTER

“Always Running,” an excerpt from Los Angeles Poet Laureate Luis J. Rodriguez' memoir *Always Running, La Vida Loca, Gang Days in L.A.*, became the most popular *Perspectives* text among users and has remained in the top spot ever since.

“The *Perspectives for a Diverse America* curriculum is a wonderful resource for teachers looking for complex, diverse and engaging texts to use with their students. The texts, coupled with the anti-bias standards and literacy strategies, offer helpful opportunities for teachers looking to implement the Common Core Standards and involve their students in discussions around social justice, equity and diversity. I am thrilled to have this resource to share with teachers in our network!”

— Marc Skvirsky, Chief Program Officer, Facing History and Ourselves



SPOTLIGHT: PERSPECTIVES IN THE CLASSROOM

242/285

Texts when *Perspectives* launched / today

50/146

Number of states / countries from which users have registered

20,000+

Users currently registered on the site

“THEY WERE WAITING TO TALK ABOUT IT.”

Kenyatta Greer, a seventh-grade social studies teacher in Justice, Illinois, found several relevant texts in *Perspectives*, including César Chávez’ “Commonwealth Club Address” and the United Nations’ Universal Declaration of Human Rights, to support a unit on labor and poverty. Greer’s classroom included a significant number of immigrant and ELL students who were more than ready to discuss these texts using the Socratic Seminar and Critical Listening Guide as foundational strategies.

“It’s almost as if they were waiting to talk about it because it’s something that they see,” Greer says.

The icing on the cake for Greer and his students was the opportunity to take action. “I think the best part was when we did the Inventing a Better World,” he reflects, “because it allows them to look at some of the global issues that we have and come up with their own practical, concrete solutions.” Using the Writing Letters for Change task, the students communicated their proposed solutions to their local elected officials.

As for what’s next, Greer has his eye on the multimedia selections in the anthology. “Those short video clips are really good for the different learners [who] are present in the classroom, especially in a topic like social studies,” Greer says. “They can get a visual with what they’re reading in some of the written texts.”

EARLY SPRING



In response to user suggestions, we added a keyword-search feature to the anthology, making it possible to search easily for a relevant text.

MARCH 7

When President Barack Obama spoke at the 50th anniversary commemoration of Selma’s “Bloody Sunday,” we knew the speech addressed all four domains in the Teaching Tolerance Anti-bias Framework (ABF): Identity, Diversity, Justice and Action. By that Monday, we’d mapped the speech to the ABF and added it to *Perspectives*.

“The single most powerful word in our democracy is the word *we*. ‘We the people.’ ‘We shall overcome.’ ‘Yes, we can.’ It is owned by no one. It belongs to everyone.”

(D17, D19, D110)

MID-SPRING

The 10,000th user registered for the site. We were thrilled to see the *Perspectives* community growing.

We added yet another user-requested enhancement: Lexile scores on each *Perspectives* text, making it easier to find texts to fit specific classroom needs.

All *Perspectives* texts align to anchor standards in the ABF. This quote from Obama’s speech aligns to three anchor standards from the Diversity domain.

MAY 26



Our first-ever Twitter chat addressed how *Perspectives* texts can reflect students’ lives and experiences and sharpen their critical literacy skills. Nearly 70 users joined the discussion, using #TalktoTT.

JUNE 3

Perspectives became an award-winning curriculum when the Association of American Publishers named it the winner of its REVERE Innovation Award for Whole Curriculum.



REX FEATURES VIA AP IMAGES





SPOTLIGHT: PERSPECTIVES IN THE CLASSROOM

“I WONDER WHY...”

As a third-grade teacher at a dual-language school in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, Emmanuel Godoy and his colleagues wanted to address a topic that would be relevant to their students’ lives—immigration. Godoy got his unit rolling with an essential question: “What is it like to be an immigrant?” He then assessed what his students already knew and wanted to know with a K-W-L chart. When the class played a game to learn about different immigration experiences, things really got interesting. They pretended to be traveling on a ship, and some students had more food and better quarters than others. The class then compared those experiences with “StoryCorps” narratives on immigration from the *Perspectives* anthology, resulting in “a-ha!” moments throughout the class.

“I wonder why what I see today in my neighborhood kind of reflects what I’m learning about immigrants in terms of how they’re being treated,” Godoy remembers a student telling him.

The students’ investigations resulted in engagement with community members who shared their immigrant experiences and details of their home cultures. Thanks to a co-teacher, Sherry Silverthorn, the class also received a visit from a student’s grandmother who had emigrated from Asia. She shared artifacts and explained what her life had been like. The students presented what they learned in a culminating poster project. The takeaway for Godoy? “It just really taught me that it’s completely possible to, one, create lessons that are student-driven and, two, create lessons that reflect our students’ identities.”

“THE PROBLEMS ALL STUDENTS FACE”

For Greenville, Alabama, middle school teacher Denise Schofield, engaging her students about diversity wasn’t a priority until her son came out as gay during junior high school. After witnessing the mistreatment her son endured and learning that some of her students were having similar experiences, Schofield committed to helping young people become more open to diverse identities. That’s where *Perspectives* entered the picture.

The first text she used was Maya Angelou’s classic poem “Still I Rise,” which quickly became a class favorite. Schofield attributes its popularity to the fact that her students—mainly African-American and living in the Deep South—could relate to the struggles Angelou describes in the piece. They broke the poem down with a strategy called Text Graffiti, which allows students to examine small pieces of a work out of context to focus deeply on particular concepts and then to make predictions about the work as a whole.

Pairing “Still I Rise” with Sojourner Truth’s “Ain’t I a Woman?” led to class conversations on gender and gender equality in the workplace. What resulted was a powerful Do Something project: a class-produced PSA about what equality means for everyone. “I think the PSA helped them to connect not just to the problems that are out ‘there’ but that all students face,” Schofield says.

PERSPECTIVES

by the numbers

TEXTS BY LENS

25

Ability

34

Place

131

Race & Ethnicity

21

Community

39

Religion

55

Gender

37

Immigration

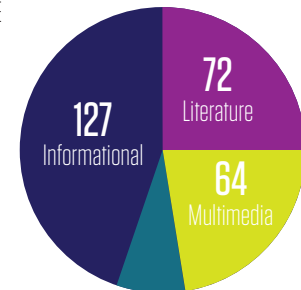
54

Class

35

LGBT

TEXTS BY TYPE



MORE TO COME!

Perspectives for a Diverse America has even more growing to do! Look for these improvements in year two and beyond.

- Larger selections of student tasks and teacher strategies
- Text-dependent questions for each reading
- The ability to include multiple texts in an Integrated Learning Plan
- The ability to search by time period
- Alignment to the C3 Framework
- International resources
- A community forum
- A rating system

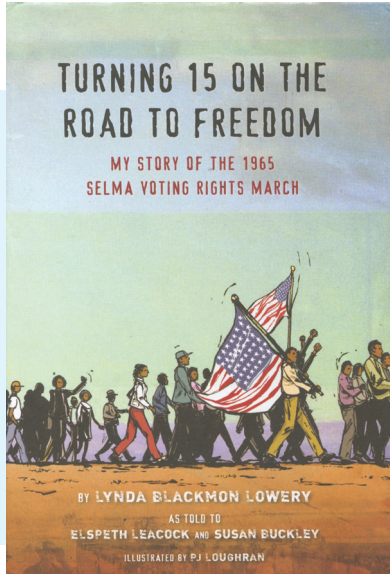


TOOLKIT

Put this story into action! VISIT » tolerance.org/year-in-the-life

What We're Reading

Teaching Tolerance loves to read! Check out a few of our favorite diverse books for diverse readers and educators.



One of the youngest marchers to make the journey from Selma to Montgomery in 1965, Lynda Blackmon Lowery was terrified after being jailed many times and brutally beaten on Bloody Sunday. But as she details in **Turning 15 on the Road to Freedom**, “[D]etermination is a way of overcoming terror.” Photos, freedom-song lyrics and illustrations by P.J. Loughran complement Lowery’s recounting of her contributions to the movement.
MIDDLE SCHOOL

“A great inspiration for today’s young activists.”

—Monita K. Bell

Closing the School Discipline Gap, edited by Daniel J. Losen, asserts that the high number of students removed from classrooms on disciplinary grounds is the result of school policies and practices, rather than students’ misbehavior. This volume recommends a number of cost-effective policies and practices that work—if educators and policy makers are willing.

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Surrounded by blues, jazz and gospel in Kansas City, Missouri, 7-year-old Melba Liston taught herself to play the trombone, despite the slide being longer than her arm. As told in Katheryn Russell-Brown’s **Little Melba and Her Big Trombone**, Melba overcame gender barriers in music to perform and compose alongside such legends as Dizzy Gillespie, Duke Ellington and Billie Holiday.

ELEMENTARY SCHOOL



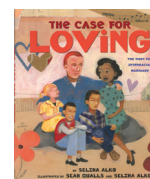
PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion: Strategies for Facilitating Conversations on Race by Caprice Hollins and Ilsa Govan



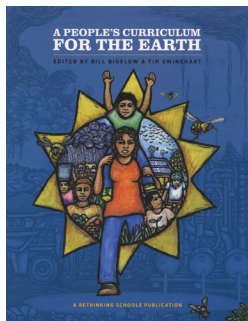
MIDDLE & HIGH SCHOOL

Changers Book Two: Oryon by T. Cooper and Allison Glock-Cooper



ELEMENTARY

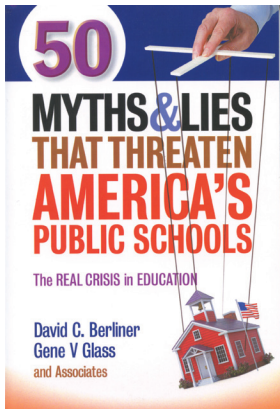
The Case for Loving: The Fight for Interracial Marriage by Selina Alko, illustrated by Sean Qualls and Selina Alko



A People’s Curriculum for the Earth, the new interdisciplinary curriculum from Rethinking Schools, tackles the climate crisis head on. With engaging short readings and lively teaching ideas, the guide will ensure that students learn to ask critical questions about the systems that affect not only the planet but all of our lives. Be forewarned: In certain parts of the country, using this curriculum will take courage.
HIGH SCHOOL

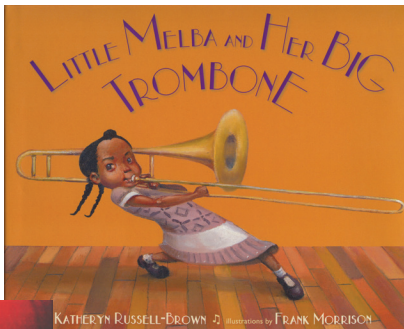
“This is the kind of book that can change the way young people look at everything.”

—Maureen Costello



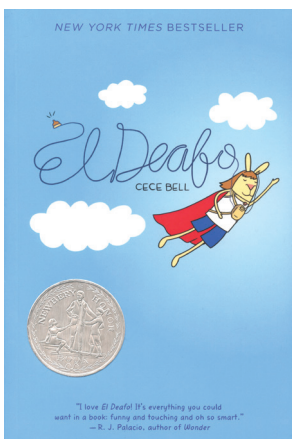
“Read this and stock up on the facts before entering into debate about public education in the United States.”

—Sara Wicht



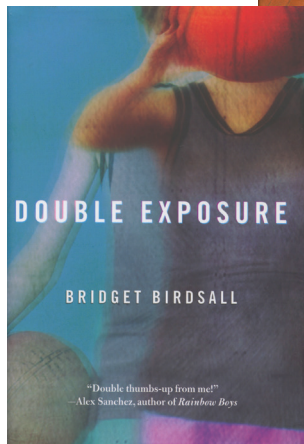
“Frank Morrison’s illustrations are as dynamic as Melba’s talent.”

—Margaret Sasser



“Cece and her alter ego will inspire you to embrace your own superpowers.”

—Maya Lindberg

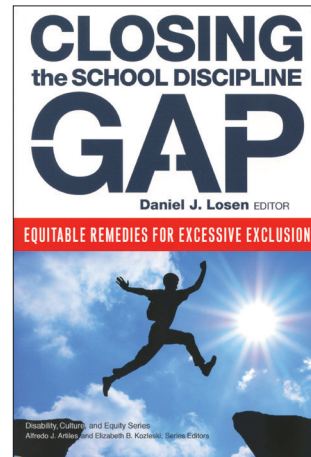
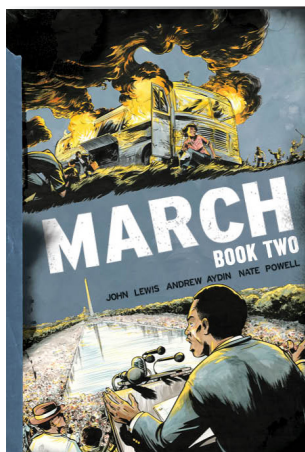


“Nate Powell’s illustrations become the reader’s world.”

—Adrienne van der Valk

“Students rarely get to hear from this kind of protagonist; Alyx’s voice bounces off the pages.”

—Joanna Williams



“Leads the conversation about healthy and positive disciplinary policies for students.”

—June Cara Christian

David C. Berliner and Gene V. Glass tell it like it is! The research and data presented in **50 Myths and Lies That Threaten America's Public Schools** balance disheartening statistics with just the right amount of humor to keep the reader entertained and engaged in reflection about what we can and must do to preserve the nation's education system.

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

El Deafo, Cece Bell's Newbery Honor-winning graphic novel memoir, is about a young rabbit named Cece who loses her hearing at age four and how she navigates a mainstream elementary school. Cece wears a Phonic Ear to school, a device

she finds clunky, but that gives her superpowers and makes Cece see herself as mighty **El Deafo!**

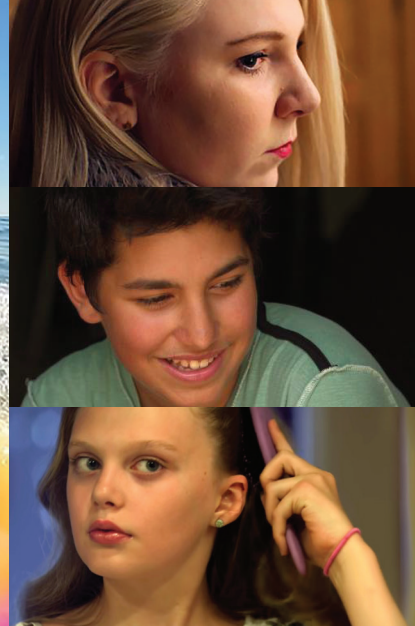
ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

Born intersex and with a love for basketball, 15-year-old Alyx has spent her life struggling to have other people accept her. After moving across the country, she makes the girls' varsity basketball team and finally begins to find her place—until a rival attempts to shatter the identity that she has worked to create for herself. Bridget Birdsall's **Double Exposure** is a novel that takes you into the heart of a character and makes you root for her until the very end.

MIDDLE AND HIGH SCHOOL

March: Book Two, the second volume in John Lewis' graphic novel trilogy (coauthored by Andrew Aydin), picks up in 1961, after the success of the Nashville sit-in campaign, and takes readers through a gripping and often violent few years during which Lewis matures as an activist and leader. The book culminates in the triumph of the 1963 March on Washington for Jobs and Freedom—then alludes to Birmingham and one of greatest tragedies of the movement, illustrating (literally and figuratively) that the march toward racial justice followed an unsteady trajectory.

MIDDLE AND HIGH SCHOOL



What We're Watching

White People, part of MTV's "Look Different" anti-bias campaign, examines how young white people in the United States understand their racial identity. With Pulitzer Prize-winning journalist and filmmaker Jose Antonio Vargas (*Documented*) at the helm, *White People* takes viewers across the United States to investigate the racial identities of five white youth specifically and to hear from larger groups of youth at high schools and community centers. Vargas poses questions such as, "What does it mean to be young and white?" and "What does white privilege mean to you?" The answers Vargas receives underscore the need for sustained, honest and open conversations around whiteness, white privilege and racial prejudice. (41 min.) mtv.com/shows/white-people

HIGH SCHOOL AND PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

180 Days: Hartsville is a two-part PBS documentary that captures the 2013-14 school year at two public elementary schools (West Hartsville Elementary School and Thornwell School of the Arts) in Hartsville, South Carolina. The educators viewers meet in Hartsville are deeply committed to making their students—the majority of whom live in poverty—feel valued and achieve academic success. *180 Days: Hartsville* is an intimate look at how two elementary schools—one low-performing and the

other rapidly improving—navigate the constraints of a rural setting, high-stakes testing, disciplinary practices, education reform and day-to-day student needs. *180 Days: Hartsville* is the second season in the Peabody Award-winning series *180 Days*. (Two 55-min. episodes)

pbs.org/black-culture/shows/list/180-days/watch-online/season-two

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Growing Up Trans, produced by PBS Frontline, offers an unflinching look at the choices families must make when the biological sex and gender identity of their child do not match. The primary subjects of the documentary—children and adolescents who identify as transgender—offer their stories openly and honestly, explaining the realities of being trans in language that will resonate with middle and high school students, and with adult viewers. *Growing Up Trans* explicitly dissects the controversial use of hormone therapy for children who have not reached puberty, as well as the emotional kaleidoscope that even supportive parents feel when their child transitions. The *Growing Up Trans* webpage features several short, topical articles that accompany three- and four-minute clips from the film, which are perfect for classroom use. (84 min.)

pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/growing-up-trans

MIDDLE AND HIGH SCHOOL

I Learn America opens with this fact: "In America, one in four students is a child of immigration." At International High School at Lafayette, the backdrop of *I Learn America*, this fact is very much a shared reality. The public school in Brooklyn, New York, serves some 300 newly arrived immigrant teenagers from 50 countries. *I Learn America* chronicles the experiences of five students: Brandon from Guatemala, Sing from Myanmar, Sandra from Poland, Jennifer from the Dominican Republic and Itrat from Pakistan. Their voices and experiences add an important dimension to what is often—and inaccurately—chalked up to be a singular "immigrant experience" in the United States. *I Learn America* also shows the tremendous value of culturally responsive pedagogy, and offers a wealth of insight and inspiration for educators and students alike. (92 min.)*

ilearnamerica.com

MIDDLE SCHOOL, HIGH SCHOOL AND PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

*Clips from *I Learn America* can be found in *Teaching Tolerance's* literacy-based, anti-bias curriculum, *Perspectives for a Diverse America*. *Teaching Tolerance* readers can also order the full-length film at a 40 percent discount by visiting newday.com/film/i-learn-america and entering the code ILA040 (use the K12 Acquisition option).





A PAINTER NAMED KENNEDY



BY JERRY MCGILL

Kennedy Nganga has a smile as bright as an elephant tusk shining in the sunlight. He lives near Mombasa, the second-largest city in Kenya, which is a very large country in the continent of Africa. In Mombasa people greet each other by saying, “Jambo!” Jambo is a fun word to say; it comes out of the mouth like a song.

Kennedy lives a very different life than many of his fellow Kenyans. He does not live in an apartment or a house. He lives in a small hut on a large and high mountain in a tiny village filled with huts just like his. There is no electricity in his hut. When Kennedy wants to use his cell phone he must charge it at a local café in a town miles away. It isn’t always easy.

Kennedy also has no air-conditioning and no fan, which can be a problem at times because it can get VERY hot in Mombasa. VERY, VERY hot! Everywhere you go in the streets you see that people’s shirts are damp with sweat. Their skin gleams in the light of a powerful orange sun hanging in the sky like a fiery basketball.

Kennedy’s hut has large windows and that helps some. Whenever you go visit him he is usually in bed surrounded by his canvases and his paintbrushes and palettes. Kennedy does not leave the bed often because it is more comfortable for him to stay there. You see, he is in a wheelchair and life in a wheelchair is not very easy in Kennedy’s village. The roads that lead up the mountain to his hut have large potholes in them. There are no sidewalks, only dirt pathways, and when it rains there is mud everywhere, thick like pancake batter.

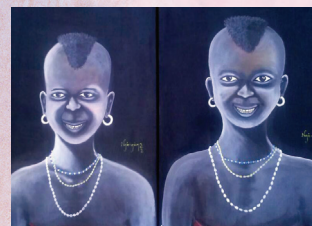
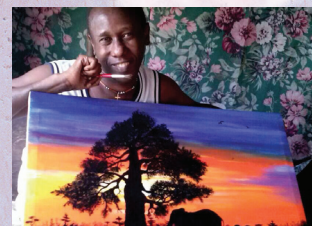
Kennedy was not born with a disability. When he was around 16 years old he was a champion on his school swimming team. All of his friends called him “The Shark” because he was so talented and his skills so natural in the water. But one day he made a

slight mistake. He wanted to cool off from the sun so he took a dive into the pool, but he did not know he was on the shallow end of the pool. He hit the water hard, and his neck broke when he hit the bottom. But, Kennedy smiles all of the time and he is not angry about his life. He knows that he is lucky to be alive, and he appreciates every moment he has.

Shortly after his stay in the hospital, Kennedy saw a television show about an American woman from California. She was in a wheelchair too and she was a painter. Watching her helped Kennedy realize that he could also do something creative and meaningful with his life. He talked to his mother about this and she saw how excited he was about this so she bought him a painting kit. Painting helped him heal and grow into a strong and creative person. He loves painting. Kennedy paints many different things: he paints faces, he paints animals, he paints beautiful skies, sunsets and star-filled nights. He just loves to have a brush in his hand and a brilliant white canvas in front of him. And the best part is that Kennedy’s paintings help other people lead lives that they can enjoy as much as he enjoys his own.

Whenever he sells a painting, Kennedy uses a portion of the money to fund his charity, the Momma Kennedy Fund, named for his mother. This is a charity that helps children with disabilities and their families in Mombasa by providing them with a female goat and chicken. The female goat helps the family have milk, and the chicken helps them have eggs. This one gift can feed a family for a very long time, and they are always grateful to Kennedy for his compassion and his generous heart.

Kennedy did not let the difficulties of life stop him from being kind and happy. From a tiny hut on a high mountain that kisses the pale blue sky, he is making the world a better place. ♦



PHOTOS COURTESY OF KENNEDY NGANGA

Questions for Readers

RIGHT THERE (IN THE TEXT)

What did Kennedy's mother buy for him?

THINK AND SEARCH (IN THE TEXT)

What challenges does Kennedy experience due to not having electricity in his home?

AUTHOR AND ME (IN MY HEAD)

How can you tell that Kennedy is not angry about his life?
How would you feel if you were in his situation?

ON MY OWN (IN MY HEAD)

How can you help children with disabilities and their families?



TOOLKIT

Put this story into action! VISIT » tolerance.org/painter-named-kennedy



Teaching Tolerance and participating artists encourage educators to clip the One World page to hang on a classroom wall. It is created with just that purpose in mind. Enjoy!





SELMA: THE BRIDGE TO THE BALLOT

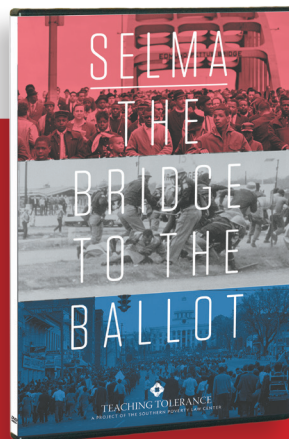
THE TRUE STORY OF THE FORGOTTEN HEROES — SELMA'S STUDENTS AND TEACHERS



This film tells the story of a courageous group of students and teachers who, along with other activists, fought a nonviolent battle to win voting rights for African Americans in the South. By organizing and marching bravely in the face of intimidation, violence, arrest and even murder, these change-makers achieved one of the most significant victories of the civil rights era.

KIT INCLUDES

- ➔ 40-minute film on DVD
- ➔ A viewer's guide to help you plan how you'll teach about the Selma-to-Montgomery marches, the Voting Rights Act of 1965 and voting issues today
- ➔ A timeline of activities and events leading up to and following the marches
- ➔ A map of Alabama illustrated with locations significant to the voting rights struggle

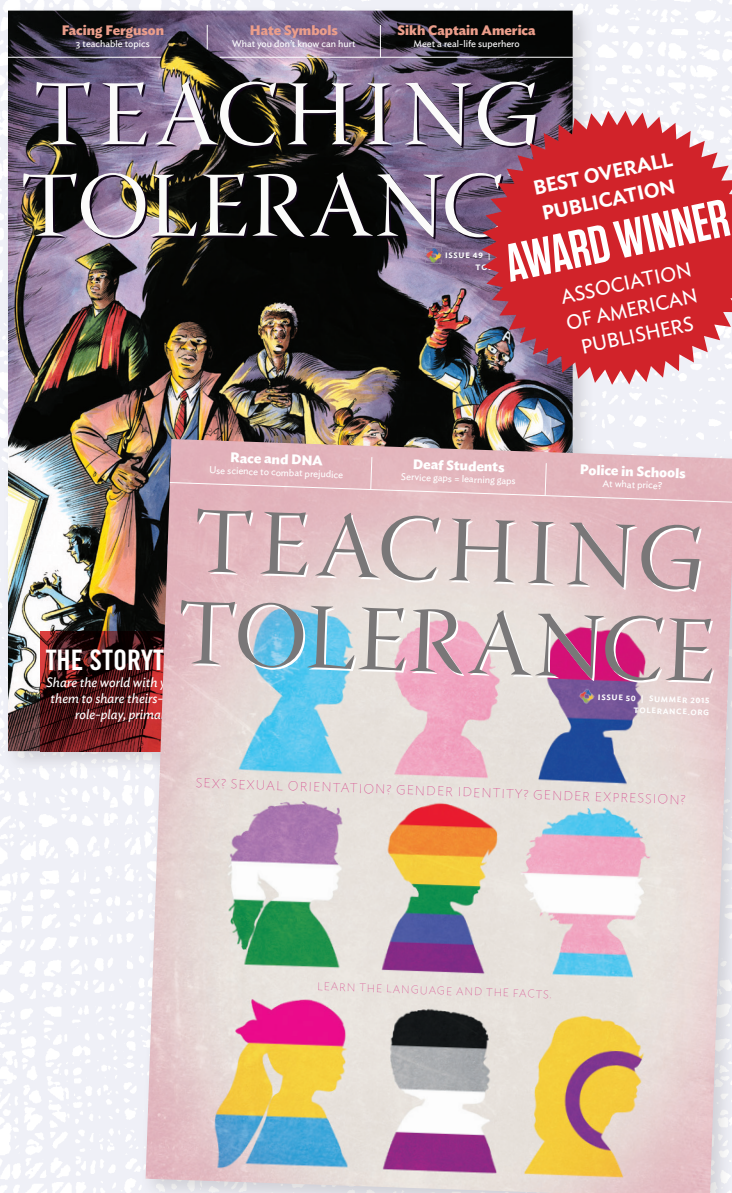


Order *Selma: The Bridge to the Ballot* today!

To receive a FREE *Selma* film kit, order online at

tolerance.org/selma-bridge-to-ballot.

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