

The New Sex Ed
Health class gets inclusive

Whiteness
An "invisible" identity?

Understanding Autism
The research—and the language—have changed

TEACHING TOLERANCE

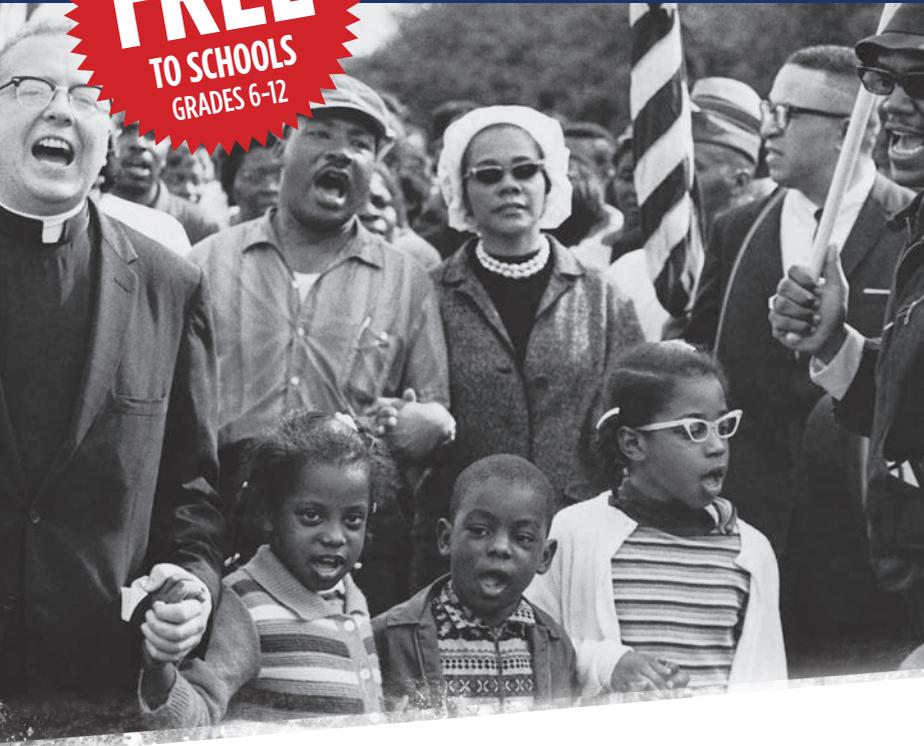
ISSUE 53 | SUMMER 2016
TOLERANCE.ORG

Learn what it
takes to stand
with your students.

ANATOMY OF AN ALLY

FREE
TO SCHOOLS
GRADES 6-12

A NEW FILM KIT AND TEACHER'S GUIDE



SELMA THE BRIDGE TO THE BARRIERS

Discover the Role Educators and Students Played in Securing the Right to Vote



FROM TEACHING TOLERANCE



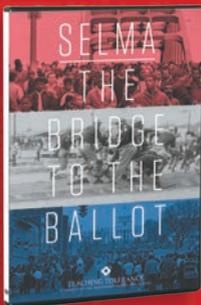
LOT

On March 7, 1965, 600 civil rights activists gathered in Selma, Alabama, and attempted a journey to the state capitol, marching for dignity and equality.

- 18 days • 54 miles • 1 police attack
- 1,900 National Guard troops • 2,000 U.S. Army soldiers

and countless stories later ...
... they arrived in Montgomery — and changed history.

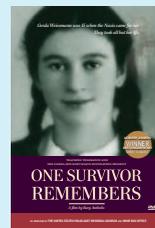
The Selma-to-Montgomery legacy includes the sacrifices of young people whose history is seldom told. Share their stories with your students.



You can order *Selma: The Bridge to the Ballot* at tolerance.org/teaching-kits/order

Recommended for grades six and up.

BRING SOCIAL JUSTICE TO YOUR CLASSROOM.
TRY OUR OTHER FILM KITS



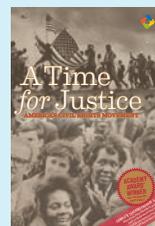
ONE SURVIVOR REMEMBERS

Gerda Weissmann Klein's account of surviving the Holocaust encourages thoughtful classroom discussion about a difficult-to-teach topic.
Grades 6-12
STREAMING ONLINE



VIVA LA CAUSA

An introduction to lessons about struggles for workers' rights—both past and present.
Grades 6-12



A TIME FOR JUSTICE

Follow the civil rights movement from Emmett Till to the passing of the Voting Rights Act.
Grades 6-12



THE CHILDREN'S MARCH

The heroic story of the young people in Birmingham, Ala., who brought segregation to its knees.
Grades 6-12



STARTING SMALL

A tool for early-grades educators creating classrooms in which peace, equity and justice are guiding themes.
Professional Development



BULLIED

A Student, a School and a Case that Made History
One student's ordeal at the hands of anti-gay bullies culminates in a message of hope.
Grades 6-12

FREE TO EDUCATORS

All kits include film and teacher's guide.

ORDER ONLINE!

tolerance.org/material/orders

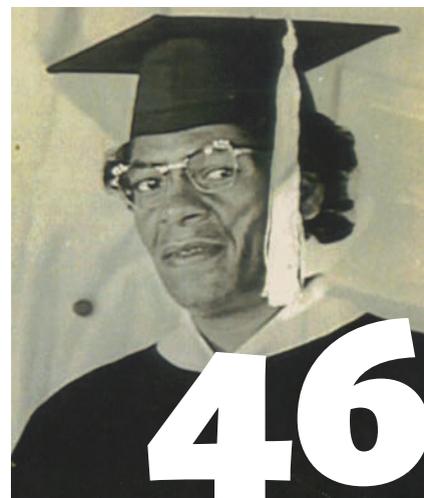
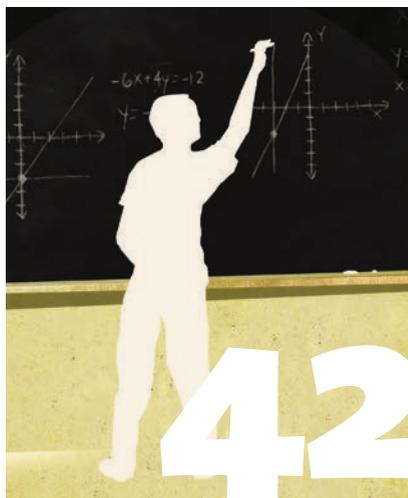


TEACHING TOLERANCE

ISSUE 53 | SUMMER 2016

DEPARTMENTS

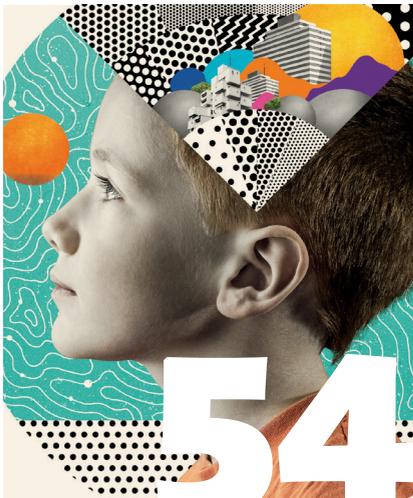
- 5** Perspectives
- 7** Letters to the Editor
- 9** Ask Teaching Tolerance
- 11** Why I Teach
When her third-grade students hit a research obstacle, Syrita Jackson made the call—literally—to teach a point about perseverance.
- 13** Down the Hall
ESOL program coordinator Ann Marie Batista is a “barrier breaker” for ELL students and their teachers.
- 15** PD Café
Summer’s here! Catch up on our on-demand webinars and spread the word.
- 59** Staff Picks
Our book and film reviews can help you keep your practice fresh and informed.
- 62** Story Corner
A trip to Haiti gives Joseph a new perspective on his identity and his adoption.
- 64** One World



on the cover

Teacher allies do more than care about students. Find out what it takes to become an effective ally—and how you can start today!

ILLUSTRATION BY **JOHN HERSEY**



Online Exclusive

Need a brush-up on intersectionality? Watch—and share—our animated video! tolerance.org/intersectionality

FEATURES

- 19 Reel Life**
Make the foreign familiar with films from around the globe.
- 23 The New Sex Ed**
A more inclusive model is gaining popularity. Is it coming to your school? Could it?
- 27 Being There for Nonbinary Youth**
Transgender students need specialized support.
- 31 What Does Whiteness Mean?**
Real conversations about race demand a real answer.
- 34 Anatomy of an Ally**
Be there—for kids and colleagues—when caring just isn't enough.
- 38 Teaching at the Intersections**
Honor and teach about your students' multiple identities.
- 42 Flagler County**
A troubled Florida community becomes a pioneer in discipline reform.
- 46 Browder v. Gayle**
The most important civil rights case you've never heard of.
- 50 Ask Angry**
Meet the woman who gives hope to the young, gifted and undocumented.
- 54 A New Frame of Mind**
What autistic students wish you knew about who they are and how they learn.



◀ Hear Butler Browder reflect on his mother's role in the civil rights movement at tolerance.org/browder.



Printed with inks containing 27.3% renewable resources

TEACH FOR JUSTICE

FREE

professional development
materials from Teaching Tolerance



✓ Choose reading for rigor and relevance with **Appendix D: A Tool for Selecting Diverse Texts**

tolerance.org/publication/appendix-d

✓ Infuse identity, diversity, justice and action into your curriculum with our **Anti-bias Framework**.

tolerance.org/anti-bias-framework

✓ Revamp your history lessons with **Civil Rights Done Right: A Tool for Teaching the Movement**.

tolerance.org/publication/civil-rights-done-right

✓ Teach about mass incarceration with **The New Jim Crow** webinars and teacher's guide.

tolerance.org/publication/teaching-new-jim-crow

Teaching Tolerance's
FREE professional development
materials can help you change the
world—one student at a time!

tolerance.org



DIRECTOR Maureen B. Costello

DESIGN DIRECTOR Russell Estes

MANAGING EDITOR Adrienne van der Valk

WRITER/ASSOCIATE EDITORS Monita K. Bell, Maya Lindberg

TECHNICAL LEAD D. Scott McDaniel

NEW MEDIA ASSOCIATE Joanna Williams

SENIOR MANAGER, TEACHING AND LEARNING Sara Wicht

TEACHING AND LEARNING SPECIALIST Jarah Botello

RESEARCH ASSOCIATE Margaret Sasser

PROGRAM COORDINATOR Steffany Moyer

ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANT Cecile Jones

DESIGN

SENIOR DESIGNER Valerie Downes

DESIGNERS Michelle Leland, Sunny Paulk,
Scott Phillips, Kristina Turner

DESIGN ASSOCIATE Shannon Anderson

PRODUCTION

ACCOUNTING OPERATIONS MANAGER Regina Jackson

PURCHASING PRODUCTION COORDINATOR Kimberly Weaver

CONTRIBUTORS

Margaret Auguste, Emily Chiariello, June Cara Christian, Chris Clark, Jey Ehrenhalt, Oli Frape, Carrie Gaffney, Jonathan Gold, Jeffrey Hanshaw, Robin Henson, John Hersey, Jasu Hu, Claire Mallison, Maricor/Maricar, Eileen Mattingly, Sean McCollum, Mark Miller, MASA, Karsten Moran, Vidhya Nagarajan, Valeria Petrone, Alice Petway, Jon Reinfurt, Carolyn Sewell, Brian Stauffer, Frantz Zephirin

ADVISORY BOARD MEMBERS

Dale Allender, Lhisa Almashy, Kim Estelle, Carrie Gaffney, Sonia Galaviz, Alice Garcia, Gail Heath, Michelle Higgins, Amber Makaiau, Amy Melik, Veronica Menefee, Jane McGowan, Amber Neal, Sarah Neely, Lois Parker-Hennion, David Paschall, Celeste Payne, Donna Saide, Joe Schmidt, Kim Siar, Robert Sautter, Demea Richards-Scott, Scott Thomas, Barbie Garayúa Tudryn, Mickie Wong-Lo

SOUTHERN POVERTY LAW CENTER

CO-FOUNDERS Morris Dees, Joseph J. Levin Jr.

PRESIDENT & CEO J. Richard Cohen

OUTREACH DIRECTOR Lecia Brooks

**CHIEF COMMUNICATIONS
& DEVELOPMENT DIRECTOR** Wendy Via

SPLC BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Alan B. Howard, *Chair* Henry L. Solano, *Vice Chair*

Jocelyn Benson Bennett Grau

Bryan Fair Marsha Levick

Will Little James McElroy

Howard Mandell Lida Orzeck

Elden Rosenthal James Rucker

Ellen Sudow Joseph J. Levin Jr., *Emeritus*

EDITORIAL OFFICE

400 Washington Avenue, Montgomery, AL 36104

EMAIL editor@tolerance.org

SUBSCRIPTIONS tolerance.org/subscribe

Teaching Tolerance is mailed twice and released online three times a year at no charge to educators.

It is published by the Southern Poverty Law Center, a nonprofit legal and education organization.

For permission to reprint articles, email us at editor@tolerance.org.

For media inquiries, email Ashley Levett at ashley.levett@splcenter.org.

ISSN 1066-2847 © 2016 SOUTHERN POVERTY LAW CENTER



Printed with inks containing 27.3% renewable resources



Perspectives

“There may be times when we are powerless to prevent injustice, but there must never be a time when we fail to protest.”

— ELIE WIESEL



THIS MARCH, WHILE most people in the country were following the “madness” of the NCAA play-offs, the basketball story that caught my eye was about a high school game in Merrillville, Indiana. One team was from a mostly white school; the other was from a school with many Latino students and players. It wasn’t the score or the shots that made the news—it was a sign that students supporting the white team made to trash talk the opposing team. The sign read, “We’re going to build a wall to keep you out.”

They can, and should, explore the issues, take sides, volunteer for candidates and get involved. Remind them, too, of the long history of student activism: lunch-counter sit-ins, the Children’s March in Birmingham, the student energy behind the Selma-to-Montgomery marches, fighting for freedom of expression in *Tinker v. Des Moines*, winning the right to have student-led clubs for Bible discussions and gay-straight alliances, and walking out in Detroit to protest poor school conditions.

Many of you have some time off to recharge and plan during the summer. I hope it’s relaxing and energizing—and that you return to school in the fall ready to build and support engaged young citizens. How you teach the presidential election now can influence how well students are prepared to shape the world they’ll inherit. In the words of one of our respondents, “I want all my students to be able to advocate for themselves and for others. The future is theirs.”

—Maureen Costello

If that was happening at basketball games, what was going on in the rest of the school building? The Teaching Tolerance team decided to find out. We quickly sent a survey to our readers and followers asking whether and how the current presidential election was affecting their students and their schools.

The responses—including 5,000 answers to a set of open-ended questions—painted a grim picture. We learned that this year’s campaign is having a profoundly negative impact on schools across the country. Two-thirds of the 2,000 educators who responded described an alarming level of fear and anxiety among children of color, children from immigrant families and Muslim students. They reported that the bombastic tone of the election is being echoed in the schoolyard and the classroom, resulting in an increase in harassment, bullying and taunting that mimics the language heard in the campaign.

The worst part? Many educators fear teaching about this election at all. Fully half of elementary teachers

told us they are avoiding it and focusing instead on keeping students calm and dispelling their fears. Many middle and high school teachers said they were torn between remaining nonpartisan or admitting that this year is different and taking a stand.

Our advice? Teach the election and take advantage of students’ heightened interest and engagement—but take steps to guard against the ugliness that’s giving you pause in the first place. It’s vitally important to make sure each classroom is a civil society, even if the airwaves aren’t. And stereotypes, especially when they’re harmful to students, must be addressed and countered. We’ve started a page on the Teaching Tolerance website for Election 2016, with resources to help counter bias, create a safe space for civil discourse and help teachers address hot topics. We’ll be adding to it throughout the summer and fall.

The stakes are high. Today’s students are tomorrow’s voters. But young people are already participants in civic life.

IT'S NEVER TOO EARLY TO CHANGE THE WORLD.



YOUTH UNITED

VIDEOS ON
TOLERANCE.ORG

Do you know some kids who
could change the world?

[TOLERANCE.ORG/YOUTH-UNITED](https://www.tolerance.org/youth-united)

Check out these short Teaching Tolerance videos featuring young activists from across the United States.

You'll meet two sisters crusading for a safer Internet, a classroom of kids determined to fight hate in their community AND a troop of girls who are redefining the word "radical."

Youth United! videos are perfect for classroom use or to pep up a PD session. Watch, learn and get inspired!
[tolerance.org/youth-united](https://www.tolerance.org/youth-united)



TEACHING TOLERANCE

A PROJECT OF THE SOUTHERN POVERTY LAW CENTER

FIRST BELL

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR 7 ASK TEACHING TOLERANCE 9
BEST OF THE BLOG 10 & 12 WHY I TEACH 11 DOWN THE HALL 13
PD SPOTLIGHT 14 FREE STUFF 14



“I am angry. I am angry about seeing my country succumb to fear on a scale I never thought possible.”

Readers weighed in via email and social media about our feature stories, blogs, magazine departments and more.

PROPS TO THE MATH TEACHER!

Your very last sentence [in “Why I Teach: Solving Problems Beyond Math Class”] was the ultimate summation, “My job is to be a conduit to their path.” That should resonate with every one of us who work with youth in any capacity, as well as ... parents to challenging

children. Thank you for a heartfelt and honestly written perspective. I am sharing this with others.

SKYE GREEN

VIA TEACHING TOLERANCE MAGAZINE ONLINE

INCLUDING NATIVE VOICES

I just wanted to thank Dave Constantin for

his article, “Rewriting History—for the Better.” I teach in New Mexico and was in the process of teaching Manifest Destiny to my students. My Native students were visibly discouraged and one even said, “This makes me sad and mad.” That evening I happened to be reading *Teaching*

Reader Reactions

TT Director Maureen Costello addressed Islamophobia in her Spring 2016 “Perspectives” column—and stirred mixed responses.

As I was reading your Perspectives piece, I was just nodding my head in total agreement. ... We are not a tolerant nation anymore, and I feel we continue to step backward every day. We are on a slippery slope of being a NATION of fear, prejudice and hate. I only hope that your magazine and online resources can make a change. Thank you!

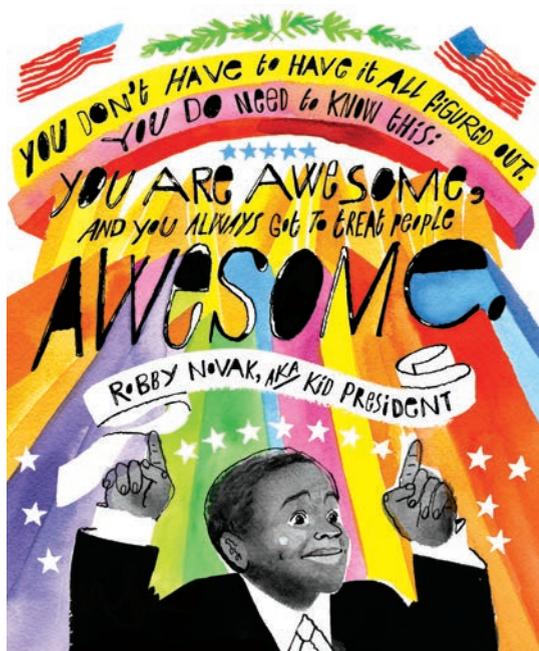
—SUBMITTED BY TERESA JOINER

VIA EMAIL

I appreciate your passion and agree with teaching, in a non-biased way, about Islam, but I didn’t realize there has been a fear-based violent outbreak toward Muslims. ... I believe your term “Islamophobia” is just too strong. In light of what is happening around the world and what has happened in the U.S., can you really blame people for being somewhat fearful?

—SUBMITTED BY TANYA WAHLERT

VIA EMAIL



Whitney Alves @AlvesWhitney
 @Tolerance_org Of all the resources available to teachers online, your work is unparalleled in impact & access. My classroom thanks you!

LOVE FOR KID PRESIDENT

I love the One World posters and use many in my classroom. Thank you!
 CARRIE LYNN RICHARDSON
 VIA FACEBOOK

PERSPECTIVES HELPS ME DO MY JOB

A few of my colleagues and I are using *Perspectives* in our classrooms. It has been amazing and I would recommend it to anyone. My students frequently ask, “Are we going to have more uncomfortable conversations?” This makes me happy and makes me feel like I’m doing my job, exposing my students to issues of social justice. I appreciate the central texts included in *Perspectives* and I use them frequently. Thank you!

KELLY AFUVAI
 VIA EMAIL

BUDDY OR BULLY BENCH?

As a school counselor, I am not a fan of this approach [spelled out in “Wanted: Playground Buddy”]. Imagine the child sitting on the bench and waiting for someone to come over to ask them to play ... and no one comes over. It helps [the] administration feel better, to say they are doing something positive for these kids, but in reality,

[it’s] not teaching kids skills they need to make positive social connections.

LINDA BERGH
 VIA FACEBOOK

PROPS TO TT WRITER!

Kudos to Jonathan Gold for his article [“Shifting Out of Neutral”] on owning and empowering teacher bias for the sake of opening constructive, critical thinking of moral issues within the framework of history, or any subject for that matter. Like Jon, I too teach 7th and 8th grade history. My students often ask me about my opinion on a great many topics. When I do share, I have always tried to be careful to share my “educated opinion” only after my students have had a chance to explore their own thoughts and feelings. Afterwards, I often prompt my students with, “Let’s re-examine, or re-think this issue, now that we have more to consider.”

PAUL MALOY
 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.

Tolerance magazine and saw Dave’s article. The article and resources gave me what I needed to revise my lesson for the next day to include multiple perspectives. The students who had, the day before, been visibly discouraged at the end of class were smiling and cheerfully chatting with classmates at the end

of the class that included resources from the Native American perspective.

SONI BUDA-THORNBURGH
 VIA EMAIL

LOST OPPORTUNITY

I was disturbed by Adrienne van der Valk’s insinuation [in “What We’re NOT Reading”] that students should not read *A Birthday Cake for George Washington* because it “...denies the oppression inherent in slavery but also suggests that resistance isn’t needed or relevant.” ... To dismiss a book out of hand because it does not frame a topic in what we feel is an appropriate way, takes opportunities away from students to see varying points of view and make their own critical decisions about what [they] will and will not read.

MILLARD COVER
 VIA EMAIL

f
Susanna Winters
 Teaching Tolerance is doing great work. Invaluable resource for educators, and very much needed in these times when fear and hatred of “the other” is so much a part of what passes for political dialogue in our country.
 VIA FACEBOOK

Ask Teaching Tolerance



Q. I teach English language learners from many different countries, mostly in Asia, the Americas, Europe and the Middle East. My students—from all groups of color—sometimes use words that depreciate themselves or others for having darker skin. How do I intervene in these situations?

Your students already know the language of colorism, but they may not know the term itself. Start there. Naming the phenomenon tells your students that their experience with skin color bias is important and relevant to their learning. If your students are old enough, you could also talk to them about the history and research surrounding colorism and implicit bias in general. (For more on this research, see the feature story “What’s ‘Colorism?’” in the Fall 2015 issue of *Teaching Tolerance*.)

To make your “in-the-moment” interventions effective, set standards for language usage in your classroom. Build on prior conversations about colorism to point out why disparaging anyone’s skintone is harmful. The goal is not to censor your students or shut down the conversation, but the message must be clear: Colorism is part of a larger set of racial dynamics that ultimately reinforces a white supremacist worldview. Building that structural understanding will build awareness and—ultimately—support change.

What can I do to support educators in Detroit, Flint or other cities where schools are in crisis?

Become versed in the issue underlying the crisis and encourage your students to do the same. In the cases of Detroit and Flint, municipal bankruptcies, the installation of emergency managers and decentralized school governance are at play. These circumstances raise questions about the pros and cons of local control, questions that may be relevant in your own community and school system. Says Margaret Weertz,

editor of *The Detroit Teacher* (a publication of the Detroit Federation of Teachers), “In the guise of ‘school choice’ we now have 14 different entities governing schools in Detroit. ... We appreciate people across the country being informed about the impact of charter schools in urban areas.”

Once you understand the landscape of the problem, reach out to organizations near the schools you want to help and ask what they need. This will prevent you from taking action that may seem like a good idea but—in reality—provide little in the way of support. Another option is to raise awareness of the issue via social media. Weertz says fellow educators can show their support for Detroit teachers by following the Detroit Federation of Teachers on Facebook. Those who want to take additional action could host a Twitter chat. (The new “Do Something” task in *Perspectives for a Diverse America* can walk you through all the steps.) Finally, consider sending cards, letters and small care packages directly to the schools themselves as a show of solidarity. A personal connection—even from a stranger—can go a long way toward helping a person in crisis feel like they are not alone.

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.

Let Black Kids Be Kids: Down With “Respectability”

I went to a predominantly white high school and then to a historically black university. Each of these institutions, at some point, plastered posters featuring this visual: President Obama with his arms crossed, juxtaposed with a black youth wearing sagging pants whose body was marked with a big “X.” The poster included a snarky caption that read something like, “To get ahead, you must pull your pants up your behind.” The message was clear to my friends and me: We didn’t matter to anyone if we looked “black.”

Let me be clear. This is not about letting students sag their pants. This is about the insidious message we send to our students, a message that rests on respectability politics. As teachers, we all too often believe and reinforce the societal narrative that asserts that one’s potential correlates with one’s respectable appearance.



And readers replied...

As someone who prefers to dress casually in life myself, I do not want to be judged by my dress. At work I don’t want to have to care if I get paint on my clothes. At home, I want to feel comfy. And if I go from either of those places to a clothing store or to my broker’s office, I expect to be treated with the same respect as the person wearing a five hundred dollar suit. If I am not, I take my business elsewhere. Unfortunately, our students don’t always have that choice.

I read the entire article and, as an educator, I couldn’t disagree more. I am trying to instill in them habits that will make them employable. Sagging pants and showing underwear are completely unacceptable. As I tell my students, an employer doesn’t have to call you back and he doesn’t have to give you a reason why he didn’t hire you.

GET THE FULL DISCUSSION HERE:

tolerance.org/blog/let-black-students-be-kids-down-respectability



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:



School Is No Place for Class(ism)



Supporting Students Who Are Often Absent



Take It From Me: Auditory Processing Disorder in Class



Out of the Mouths of Babes

DID YOU KNOW?

36 percent of all black male middle and high schools students with disabilities were suspended at least once in 2009-2010.

—Center for Civil Rights Remedies at the UCLA Civil Rights Project



Syrita Jackson teaches third grade at Hapeville Elementary School in Hapeville, Georgia.

That Magic Moment

It was the end of one of those grueling first few days of a new school year. Right before the hectic lunch box-and-book bag scramble, I remembered that many of my students had asked for help with a research assignment that would soon be due.

The assignment required each student to read about scientists from a variety of demographics and backgrounds and then choose one to write a report on, including basic information about the person and a summary of his or her research. As a teacher of mostly Latino students, it is of the utmost importance to me that my kids understand that the possibilities for their lives are unlimited. This assignment was especially critical for my learners because, in a survey of their attitudes

about science, most of my students revealed that they thought scientists were dead white men who'd worn lab coats and glasses. I needed my kids to see themselves as scientists! They needed to know scientists who looked like them.

They were given nearly a week to complete the task, but after a day or two, many had told me that finding their scientists' birth dates and countries of origin was very difficult. A little online research on my part proved the kids right; this information was not readily available. I knew there was no way they could proceed without additional support and tools. So—at two in the afternoon, right before school let out—I held myself accountable as their guide.

Many of the scientists they were considering worked at colleges and universities. I'm a firm believer in modeling as an instructional strategy, so I decided to show my students how easily they could obtain the information they needed. I suggested we simply call the scientists.

I started to dial a scientist at a local university on speakerphone. My kids were amazed.

"You are just going to call them?" they asked, wide-eyed.

"Yes, why not?" I responded nonchalantly.

I called. No answer. I left a very professional, yet basic message on behalf of my students. Then I asked the kids, "Who wants to call their scientist?" Some of the shock had worn off, and a

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.

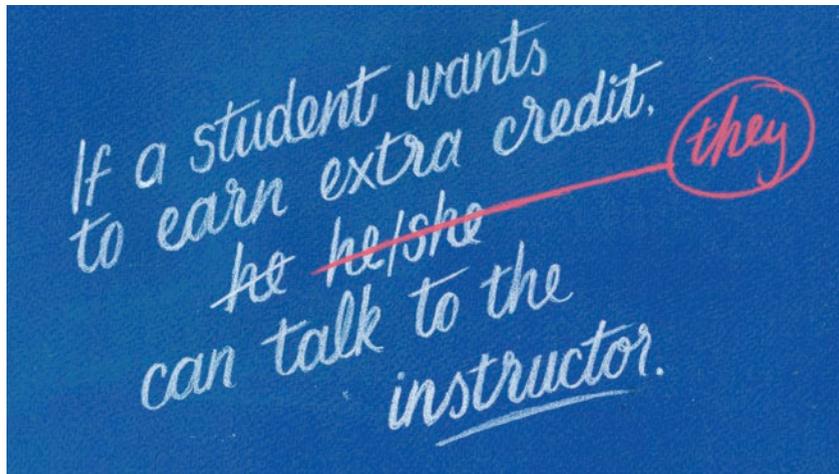
small group courageously stepped forward. We Googled the phone number of the next scientist, and one member of the group reluctantly dialed. It rang once, and suddenly there was a voice on the other end of the line.

We collectively held our breaths. The paranoid teacher voice in my head got louder: “Are we ready for this? The school year has just begun!” “What will she say?” “Have I modeled this well enough?”

As confidently as if we had practiced this a million times, my newly minted third-graders spoke with a paleontologist in California. After recovering from her own shock at being called by a third-grade class, she seemed genuinely flattered to talk with my students. The conversation was brief but thrilling for all of us.

This is why I teach. That magic moment when everything clicks, when all the chaos and paperwork fade into the background. I teach for the privilege of seeing how simple things can become magic in a child’s hands.

In that one moment, my students fell in love with science, with learning and with each other. They discovered more about who I was—and who they could be. They saw themselves as empowered learners who, with a simple phone call, could access a world-renowned scientist, ask questions, get answers and somehow, some way, someday change the world.



BLOG 2.25.16 // GENDER EQUITY, TEACHING

Thanks to the “Singular They”

I always pushed my students to move away from the “singular they.” I wanted them to learn about the grammatical rule for agreement in number. I also used that lesson to teach them about the ways our grammatical structures and rules discriminated against women. I fought that good fight for over a decade.

Twenty years into my teaching career, I get the opportunity again to use pronouns to teach about gender discrimination in ways I never imagined possible at the start of my career, thanks to the singular they. ... I have resolved to teach my students the singular they as an opportunity to explain gender identity and fluidity, and as a way to open the door to other gender-neutral terms. I see no other way to ensure gender equality in language.



And readers replied...

There was an Act of Parliament (The Interpretation Act of 1850) that decided that “he” was the correct generic form. No linguists or grammarians involved, but a bunch of men elected by men. Language belongs to the speakers and if we/ they / ... feel that the “they” serves our intentions better, we should not let a bunch of white men in dusty wigs take that away from us.

I will struggle a little with singular they, because, like the author of the article, I’ve labored to get my students to match their pronouns and antecedents in number and gender. I can live with a little discomfort, however, to be inclusive.

GET THE FULL DISCUSSION HERE:

tolerance.org/blog/thanks-singular-they

DID YOU KNOW?
DID YOU KNOW?

A total of 37 states require that sex education include abstinence: 26 require that abstinence be stressed, while 11 simply require that it be included as part of the instruction.

—Guttmacher Institute

82 percent of transgender youth report feeling unsafe at school.

—National Center of Transgender Equality

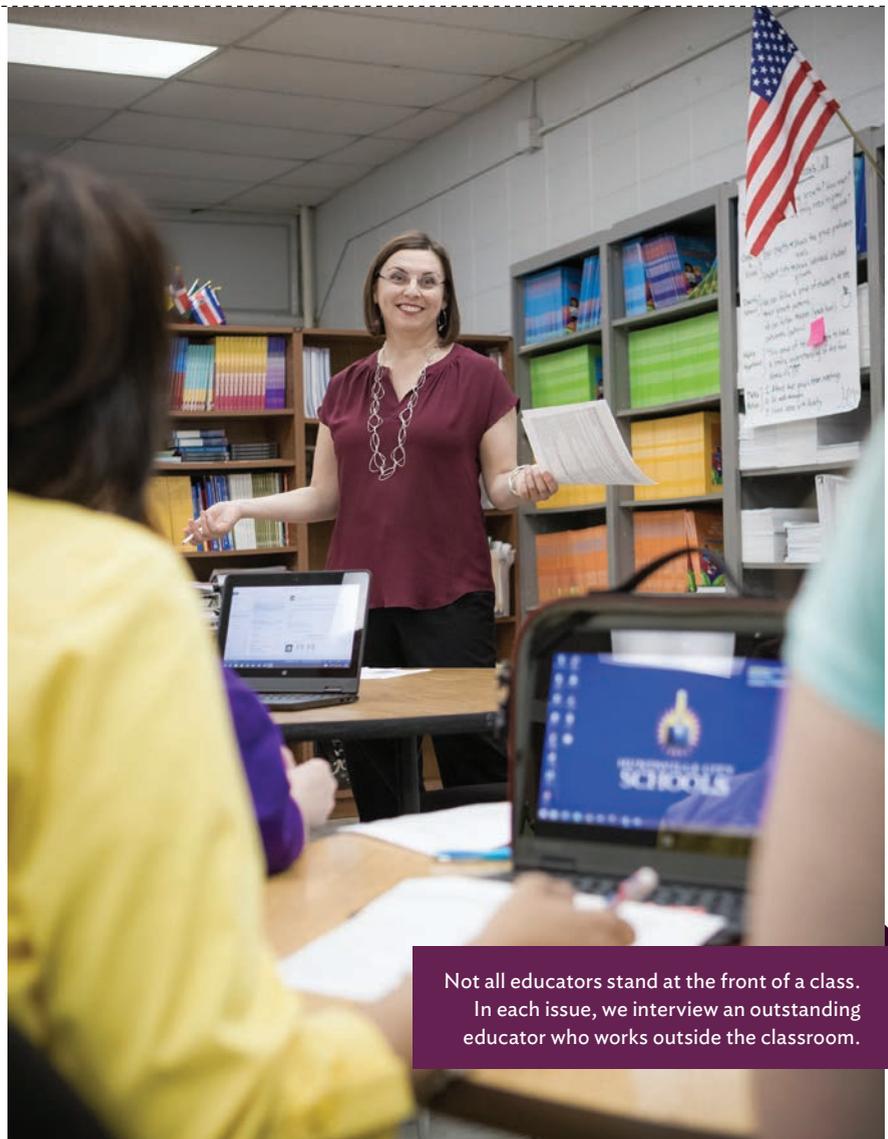
Language Does Not Have to Be a Barrier

Ann Marie Batista is an innovative administrator and advocate for English language learners (ELLs) at Huntsville City Schools in Huntsville, Alabama. In her role as the English for speakers of other languages (ESOL) program specialist, Batista builds classroom teachers' capacity to meet the needs of ELL students and fosters strong relationships with families.

What types of biases about ELL students have you observed in your role?

There remain many misconceptions about English learners, such as thinking you cannot be successful teaching an English learner if you can't speak the language, or not understanding that English learners are on a language acquisition continuum, or confusing parent behavior when it does not match our cultural expectations. My team spends time advocating for these students and re-educating teachers and administrators as we encounter these issues.

We have wonderful educators in our school system, but sometimes you don't know what you don't know. If you are using your assumptions to inform your instruction, then it's going to be a challenge for that student. ... One little PD is not enough, right? It's just a constant communication of, "You *have* to know who your student is." We have immigrants, we have first- and second-generation students,



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

unaccompanied youth. ... The biggest bias is people thinking they know who their student is and where they're coming from—and they don't.

How do you ensure that ELL students' noncurricular needs are identified and met?

Part of my work involves staying connected with other district departments and coordinators so that I can keep a pulse on district-level activities [and] advocate for our English learners as needed. For example, by participating in district staff meetings, I can help facilitate communication

Ann Marie Batista coordinates the ESOL program in Alabama's Huntsville City Schools.

to our ELL families by gathering district communication early enough to have it translated so that parents can receive information in a language they understand.

We have also held ESL classes for parents for the last several years. ... This is a great teaching opportunity for us to educate parents about their valuable role and rights to ask for a meeting so that they can stay informed or clear up any questions they have with the teacher or school.



We can expect more from our kids, but we have to give them the tools to get there.

What recommendations do you have for teachers who have ELL students in their classrooms?

Ask for help. Know that your student has strengths that you can work from, and it does require you get to know your student. Use instructional strategies or sheltered instruction to make your content comprehensible through visual supports, pre-teaching, native language support and so forth. Invite parents to visit and share a little about their culture with the class. Remember that your student is also a child, and not just an English learner. He or she wants to belong and be successful! There are so many wonderful resources at your fingertips to guide your understanding and to learn more about working with English learners. Two of my favorite sites are Colorín Colorado and WIDA.

What’s your favorite thing about your job?

One of my favorite things is hearing success stories. That is always very

satisfying and helps us gauge: Are we on the right track? Are we doing the right thing? For example, we have a student, a sixth-grader, at one of our schools. She’s been in school since kindergarten, and we expect her to be doing better than she was doing in a couple of her classes. ... The ESL teacher went to the teacher and said, “Listen, let’s really focus on giving her some strategies; she doesn’t know how to study. ... Give me the test in advance so I can see how she needs to prepare, and we’ll work with her so that she can be more successful in your classroom.” After that, the student did great! She started getting Bs and As on her tests in the classroom. ... It’s satisfying when an ESL teacher has a breakthrough. We can expect more from our kids, but we have to give them the tools to get there.

DOWN THE HALL

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

PD Spotlight

These popular PD resources support robust, inclusive teaching.

Let’s Talk! Discussing Race, Racism and Other Difficult Topics With Students

Prepare to facilitate conversations about race and racism using the try-tomorrow strategies in this guide and webinar.

tolerance.org/lets-talk

Perspectives for a Diverse America: Webinar Series

These on-demand webinars can tell you everything there is to know about our K-12, anti-bias, literacy-based curriculum. (Look for the Perspectives banner.)

tolerance.org/webinars

Reading Diversity: A Tool for Selecting Diverse Texts

This tool and webinar can help you select texts that offer students diverse, complex and critical reading experiences.

tolerance.org/reading-diversity

The Young and the Registered: Webinar

Inspire the next generation of voters with the strategies from TT and the League of Women Voters.

tolerance.org/webinars

FREE STUFF!

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

Gender Spectrum provides resources and tools for anyone who cares about building gender-inclusive environments for children and teens.

genderspectrum.org

NewseumED is an online educational platform offering lesson plans, primary sources and activities about the First Amendment, U.S. history and media literacy.

newseumed.org

StoryCorps is a national oral history project that captures the stories and conversations of everyday people via short, accessible audio and video files.

storycorps.org

TED-Ed provides a library of customizable video-centered lessons, as well as a set of tools educators can use to build their own lessons based on inspirational talks.

ed.ted.com



Rest, Play, Learn!

Summer vacation means time to catch up on books, movies and, well, *everything* you missed while focusing on the school year. Teaching Tolerance can help you catch up on anti-bias, civil rights and social justice topics! Watch our on-demand webinars—alone or with colleagues—and get inspired to make your school a more equitable and welcoming place in the coming year.

While many Americans assume teachers frolic all summer, **in reality these precious weeks are often spent working:** taking classes, teaching summer school, updating curricula, attending trainings, writing, getting caught up on technology, setting up classrooms for the new year or even working a summer job unrelated to teaching.

SOURCE: EDUTOPIA

AS A
FIRST YEAR **TEACHER,**
I FEEL LIKE SOME OF THESE POINTS WERE SKIPPED
IN MY EDUCATION AND I AM DOING A LOT OF
FRONT LOADING
THIS WILL HELP ME BECOME A
RELEVANT
—AND—
REACHING
TEACHER.

— JOSEPHINE C.



You can find all listed webinars—and more!—at tolerance.org/webinars. Free registration required.

These webinars address a range of topics related to school climate and discipline.

Speak Up At School

We hear the pejorative language in the hallway, the lunchroom and sometimes the teacher’s lounge, and we know that context and relationship matter when it comes to speaking up against bias. This webinar and related resources offer strategies to make “upstanding” part of your school’s culture—for students *and* adults.

“Strategies are easy-to-understand and use—but also important was the overall positive, ‘You can do this!’ environment created by the facilitators. Thank you!”
—Anne S.

Responding to Hate and Bias

Just as schools have plans in place to respond to fires, natural disasters and armed intruders, we must also be prepared to respond to incidents of hate and bias. Use this webinar as a jumping-off point for a faculty planning discussion. Together, reflect on your school’s climate, identify its existing policies and procedures for responding to incidents of hate and bias, and draft an action plan.

“I find the most useful part for me is the slides, the scenarios and the resource guides.”
—Lisa D.

Code of Conduct: A Guide to Responsive Discipline

Summer offers time and breathing room to reflect on your classroom management strengths and strategies. This on-demand webinar walks you through five shifts that can change your thinking and practice when it comes to

discipline. These shifts can help you—and all adults who work in schools—make short- and long-term plans that keep students in the classroom and out of the school-to-prison pipeline.

“The scenarios and the resources were the most useful part, because we were able to reflect and increase our ‘toolkit’ with more student-centered strategies for keeping students in the classroom.”
—Drew K.

These webinars can help you plan historically and culturally relevant lessons for the first day of school and throughout the year!

Beyond the Bus: Teaching the Unseen Story of Rosa Parks and the Montgomery Bus Boycott

Beyond the Bus brings together multiple resources to help educators fill instructional gaps in their coverage of the civil rights movement. Team up with colleagues in your subject

area or grade level, and learn how you can teach the full story of the Montgomery Bus Boycott.

“Listening to ... a group of people facing an uphill battle against the oppressor—this was truly inspiring.”

—Morgan P.

45 Days of Black History

Do you have dedicated time this summer for curriculum writing and mapping? Consider watching the *45 Days of Black History* webinar with your curriculum writing team. This webinar will encourage and equip you to recognize and include African-American history all year long.

“As a first-year teacher, I feel like some of these points were skipped in my education and I am doing a lot of front loading. This will help me become a relevant and reaching teacher.”

—Josephine C.



Time Tip

Not enough summer time to watch all these webinar events? No problem. Instead, plan a monthly professional viewing party and watch them with colleagues throughout the school year.

Before your viewing ...

- 🕒 Set a schedule for the school year. (We recommend limiting it to October through May.)
- 🗺️ Share the full schedule with your colleagues, including time and location, if possible.

On the day of your viewing ...

- 🍷 Provide snacks and refreshments.
- 🕒 Watch the full one-hour webinar.
- 🗨️ Debrief and discuss.
- 💡 Brainstorm ways to implement the ideas and strategies from the webinar in your practice.

After your viewing ...

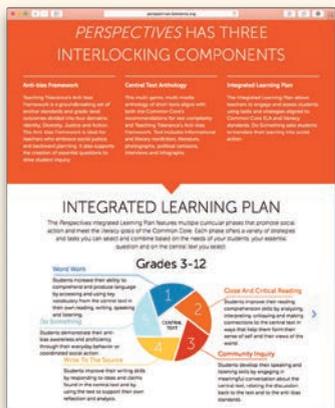
- 📅 Set a follow-up meeting to evaluate how your plan is going.
- 🔄 Adjust your plan as needed.

TEACH FOR JUSTICE. PLAN WITH PERSPECTIVES.

It's online, and it's free. Try it today. perspectives.tolerance.org

I need a tool to help me teach ...

- ✓ diversity
- ✓ social justice
- ✓ literacy
- ✓ college and career readiness
- ✓ identity
- ✓ equity
- ✓ action



You spoke. We listened.

Introducing *Perspectives for a Diverse America*, the first literacy-based curriculum that allows you to backward plan for social justice *and* college and career readiness. *Perspectives* is:



Simple

Create, save and share learning plans in one easy-to-use platform.



Practical

Access Common Core-aligned content that also meets the needs of diverse classrooms.



Powerful

Engage social justice topics, and empower your students to make change.

Don't just take our word for it! Here's what our users are saying...

“Love the ease of lesson planning, the alignment with Common Core, the inclusion of thought-provoking essential questions and the social emotional learning component.”



PERSPECTIVES for a DIVERSE AMERICA

A K-12 LITERACY-BASED
ANTI-BIAS CURRICULUM

perspectives.tolerance.org



Reel Life

CONNECT STUDENTS TO STORIES FROM
AROUND THE GLOBE WITH INTERNATIONAL FILMS.

BY EILEEN MATTINGLY ILLUSTRATION BY JON REINFURT



"I WAS SURPRISED THAT IRAN WAS SO MUCH LIKE US. KIDS ARE PLAYING, HAVING FUN, ADULTS YELLING, A LOT OF WORK WAS BEING DONE, AND KIDS WERE SAD. THIS MOVIE WAS HUMOROUS AND HEARTBREAKING."

—CLISSOLD ELEMENTARY SCHOOL STUDENT, CHICAGO

THERE IS A NATURAL HUMAN TENDENCY, when learning about people of races, ethnicities, religions or nationalities other than our own, to focus on differences. But focusing exclusively on differences can make members of an unfamiliar group seem exotic or even alien (with all the negative connotations of that word).

Teaching with foreign films is one way to help students engage with stories that may be geographically, linguistically or culturally distant but explore themes that connect people across space and time. Consider these descriptions:

➤ A boy with undiagnosed dyslexia is bullied by his classmates, but ultimately becomes a celebrated artist.

➤ A young girl demonstrates her talents and work ethic, but is bypassed for a leadership role in favor of the boys in her class.

➤ A boy feels desperately lonely when his single mother leaves him in the care of his grandmother, but grows to love and appreciate his new caregiver.

These plotlines—from *Like Stars on Earth*, *Whale Rider* and *The Way Home* respectively—give students a close-up view of ordinary people living in different countries and offer opportunities to focus on common human experiences. Children coping with deprivation in Tehran, Iran, may experience emotions similar to children in your classroom who have no winter coats. A boy who struggles in your own school with an undiagnosed learning difference may be inspired by a similar character who becomes a successful student with the right scaffolding.

Pair these connections with the experience of watching a film in class and “the effect can be electrifying,” says Melinda Barlow, writing for NEA Today. “Look around during a screening and you will see everything from nods of recognition to traces of agitation, and hear gasps of fear or delight. Reactions to films are often involuntary, and verbal responses are just as visceral.”

Windows and Mirrors

International films offer wonderful opportunities to implement an instructional approach that Emily Style, founding co-director of the National SEED Project, refers to as using “windows and mirrors”: Students can see themselves and their own lives reflected in these films, gaining a greater awareness of themselves and their relationships with their families and communities; they can also see into other cultures through a scaffolded experience that encourages openness, acceptance and curiosity to learn more. A teacher in Tulsa, Oklahoma, told *Journeys in Film* this story about a young student who watched *The Way Home* and studied the accompanying *Journeys in Film* curriculum.

“He was so touched ... that he earned money to purchase the movie! Money doesn’t come easy for this young man, and he worked hard to buy it. He felt it was the best movie he had ever seen,” she said. “[He] has had a lot of obstacles



to overcome in his life, and a lot of kids this age enjoy tormenting him. I can't explain it really, but watching *The Way Home* somehow changed [him]."

When selected carefully, international films can convey the complex reality of life in other countries and cultures more vividly and memorably than a textbook can. A talented filmmaker uses color, action and sound to communicate meaning. *The Cup* is a great example of how a film can communicate a message about modernization and the technology gaps between rich and poor better than a lecture. Students who watch *The Cup* see the lengths that a teenage Tibetan Buddhist monk goes to in order to bring a television to his monastery and fulfill his dream of seeing a World Cup soccer game: soliciting funds, renting the television and generator, stringing wire and setting up a satellite dish in a centuries-old building.

The characters in a well-chosen foreign film can build an emotional bond with the viewer that leads to positive, open feelings about the culture portrayed in the film and contextualizes the diversity of lived experiences around the world. One sixth-grade teacher in a New York City school commented that teaching foreign films "primed my students to think on a global level and opened their awareness to cultural difference." Her class was studying human rights violations and the refugee crisis in Darfur, Sudan, when they watched *The Cup*. The combination helped her students become more observant and more sensitive to cultural nuances. "My class was determined to get involved. We got in touch with a UN Human Rights Commission officer in Darfur and interviewed him

via email. That dialogue provided an in-depth understanding of the situation, making it extremely real for us."

It can be tempting to use foreign films as a way to highlight problems that students in the United States rarely have to encounter. To avoid establishing an "us-versus-them" viewing dynamic, select films that are not set exclusively in developing countries and do not focus exclusively on topics like poverty and war. *Children of Heaven* deals not only with poverty but with economic diversity; viewers see the wealth and urbanity of downtown Tehran and its upscale housing developments. *Whale Rider* is set in New Zealand, which enjoys a per capita income comparable with Japan's. The main character of *The Way Home* has grown up in Seoul, South Korea; part of his struggle is that he is used to the same video games, Western-style fast food and modern conveniences as U.S. students.

But What About the Standards?

Regardless of the state in which they work, all teachers must design their curricula to meet content and skill

standards. When treated as texts, international films can help meet these standards. The key is setting up the films so students are not simply viewing them passively and moving on. International films lend themselves well to building challenging lessons that prepare students to "read" the films closely; discuss the cultural nuances; interpret the plots orally or in writing; and analyze the storytelling techniques. Films can also be used as a springboard to lessons in other disciplines.

Consider these Common Core anchor standards for reading:

➤ **CCSS.ELA-Literacy.CCRA.R.2** Determine central ideas or themes of a text and analyze their development; summarize the key supporting details and ideas.

➤ **CCSS.ELA-Literacy.CCRA.R.3** Analyze how and why individuals, events or ideas develop and interact over the course of a text.

Social studies teachers can also meet Common Core standards with film. The film may be the carrot that arouses student interest in world history, anthropology or international relations; teachers can follow up a viewing with lessons based on reading, statistics, maps, photographs or other primary sources that will strengthen, enrich or even contradict impressions gained from the film. Lessons based on international films offer opportunities to meet these grade-level standards for literacy in history and social studies:

➤ **CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RH.6-8.7** Integrate visual information (e.g., in charts, graphs, photographs, videos or maps) with other information in print and digital texts.

Journeys in Film offers an array of free standards-based lesson plans created to help students engage deeply with international films and come away with deeper multicultural understanding, empathy and subject area knowledge. journeysinfilm.org.

"I CAN'T EXPLAIN IT REALLY, BUT WATCHING THE WAY HOME SOMEHOW CHANGED HIM. HE FELT IT WAS THE BEST MOVIE HE HAD EVER SEEN."



► **CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RH.6-8.9**

Analyze the relationship between a primary and secondary source on the same topic.

Best Practices for Showing International Films

Educators who want to get serious about using film effectively in their instruction should consider reading one of several excellent books on the topic: *Reel Conversations: Reading Film With Young Adults* by Alan B. Teasley and Ann Wilder and *Reading in the Dark: Using Film as a Tool in the English Classroom* by John Golden are good general works. Another suggestion is to seek out books that address stereotyping in film, such as *Reel Bad Arabs: How Hollywood Vilifies a People* by Jack Shaheen.

Journeys in Film has been selecting and writing curricula for exceptional, classroom-appropriate international films for a decade. Here are some best practices based on educator feedback over the years:

➤ Let administrators and families know before you show the film, and explain briefly how the film enriches your curriculum. (This is particularly important if the film has controversial elements.)

➤ If possible, show the film in the auditorium on a large screen.

➤ If time permits, show the film once in full for students to enjoy and get the general message. Then show clips correlated to each lesson. Consider teaming up with other teachers in your school and have a special showing at an assembly, or divide the film between the English and social studies teachers so each teacher uses only one period.

➤ Prepare students for reading subtitles. Adults watching a subtitled film usually become sufficiently involved in the story that their reading of subtitles becomes automatic. The same will happen with most students as they become absorbed in the story and characters. For students who have difficulty reading or for ELL students, consider having older or more advanced students read the subtitles aloud. Give the readers a chance to preview the film, and be sure to introduce them at the start of the screening.

➤ Use preview lessons to establish the context of the film, and provide the necessary information for understanding so that students do not become confused or distracted. Journeys in Film's preview lesson plans often establish a geographical perspective or provide cultural information.

➤ Use interdisciplinary lessons when possible to address a variety of student interests and learning modes. Team teaching is ideal for this. For

example, if you were showing the film *Whale Rider*, you could ask a social studies teacher to teach about who the Maori are, a science teacher to teach about whales' use of echolocation, a math teacher to present a lesson on methods of estimating whale populations, an art teacher to give a hands-on lesson on Maori tattooing traditions, and a language arts teacher to address character, theme and film-making techniques.

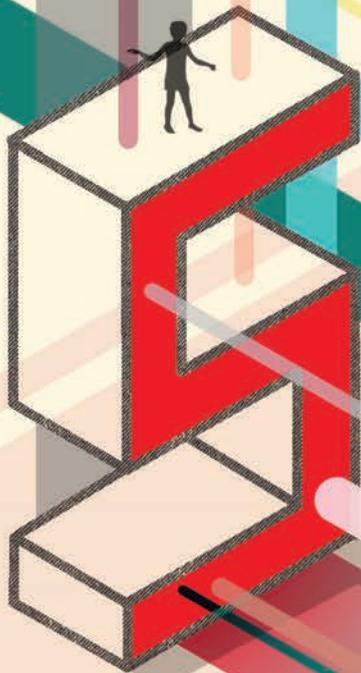
➤ Become familiar with copyright and fair use doctrine as related to curricular use. In general, if you are using a film as part of your curriculum, with lessons based on the film, you meet fair use guidelines; just showing a movie does not. A summary of the law can be found at k12.movlic.com/copyright.

With these practices as your guide, your journey into the world of international films should be an adventure that captures your students' imaginations and challenges their minds. In some cases, the effects can be transformative. The young man who fell in love with *The Way Home* joined an honors course and reports a better relationship with his parents. His teacher now describes him as "a happy young man with a purpose." ♦

Mattingly is the director of education for Journeys in Film.



The New



Ed.

BY ALICE PETTWAY ILLUSTRATION BY MARK MILLER

Educators and parents agree: It's time to move beyond the abstinence-only model.

SEXUALITY EDUCATION.

Those two words are enough to fill educators and parents alike with uncertainty and even dread. That negativity shouldn't be surprising: Three decades of abstinence-until-marriage education have left generations of Americans with limited information and skills for speaking frankly about healthy sexual decisions and relationships.

The good news is the abstinence-only era is slowly coming to an end.

Last October, California passed new legislation requiring all schools to offer comprehensive sexuality education. And California is just one of many states moving toward a more comprehensive approach: 18 states and the District of Columbia now require sex education curricula to include discussion of contraception, and nine states mandate curricula be LGBT inclusive.

This move toward comprehensive sex education is supported by parents. When asked if federal funds should be used to support comprehensive sex education programs, 72 percent of parents of junior high school students and 65 percent of parents of high school students said yes on a survey conducted by National Public Radio, the Kaiser Family Foundation and the Kennedy School of Government.

What's wrong with abstinence only until marriage?

On the surface, abstinence-until-marriage programs might seem beneficial: Not having sex does mean zero percent chance of pregnancy or sexually transmitted infections (STIs), right?

But contrary to what advocates have hoped, abstinence-only sex education has been shown to be completely ineffective at reducing teenage pregnancy and STI transmission. A University of Washington study found that abstinence-only programs are not associated with a reduced risk of teen pregnancy when compared with no sexuality education, and they

do not delay the age at which teens report vaginal intercourse.

The term *vaginal intercourse* points to another reason abstinence education is under scrutiny: It hinges on the idealization of straight, gender-stereotypical relationships. Basing a curriculum on such a narrow definition of sex sustains problematic views of gender and leaves LGBT kids un-included and uninformed, says Jesseca Boyer, vice president for policy and interim president and CEO of the Sexuality Information and Education Council of the United States (SIECUS).

Research conducted by the Gay, Lesbian & Straight Education Network (GLSEN) supports Boyer's stance. In a 2014 study, they found that only 5 percent of middle and high school students reported that their health classes included positive discussions of LGBT-related topics. This isn't surprising given that eight states still prohibit the inclusion of LGBT content in sex education classes; four states mandate explicitly negative messages about LGBT identities. The effects of this exclusion are devastating: Students who report high levels of victimization and discrimination at school based on their gender expression or sexual orientation are at much greater risk than

Break Out of the Binary

Having trouble getting students or colleagues to see identity spectrums? Try discussing intersex identities first. Missy Mae Sturtevant, founder and director of MaeBright, says because most people already understand the concept, it can be a great starting point.

18

states and the District of Columbia require sex education curricula to include discussion of contraception

9

states mandate sex education curricula be LGBT inclusive

8

states prohibit the inclusion of LGBT content in sex education classes

4

states mandate explicitly negative messages about LGBT identities

their peers for missing school, low GPA and depression.

Understanding Comprehensive Sex Education

SIECUS defines comprehensive sex education as including “age-appropriate, medically accurate information on a broad set of topics related to sexuality including human development, relationships, decision-making, abstinence, contraception and disease prevention.” For many educators, understanding this comprehensive definition starts with becoming familiar with two of the pieces that have been most conspicuously absent from previous decades’ sex education curricula: consent and LGBT inclusion. To help bridge the knowledge gap, Future of Sex Education (FoSE) created the National Sexuality Education Standards. The standards cover concepts from decision-making and interpersonal communication to identity and advocacy and have become the bar for sex education curricula across the country. Read the standards at t-t.site/sexedstandards.

The standards offer an important framework, but implementation is key. Missy Mae Sturtevant, director and owner of MaeBright, an organization that helps schools and other groups improve the services they provide to LGBT people, says the first step toward true LGBT inclusion is creating an atmosphere where diversity is acknowledged. “I like to talk

about how we all hold identities that are complex and identities that are simple, and ... to acknowledge that for some people gender identity is super simple, for some people it’s more complex,” she says. “Same thing with sexual orientation. To allow people to hold all of that and to do less comparing, that “This is my experience; it must be everyone’s experience.”

What’s Your pronoun?

Inviting your students to share their preferred pronouns the first day of class is a great way to start building respect.

This kind of inclusive thinking is important, says Sturtevant, because a lot of LGBT teenagers aren’t connecting in sex education classes when there are simple changes that could make them feel included. Saying, for example, “Without hormone treatment, people who have uteruses and fallopian tubes usually menstruate” instead of “Women get their periods and men don’t” speaks to the reality of many cisgender and transgender folks, says Sturtevant. “I hear lots of stories about people hearing from queer folks and queer young people in

sex ed saying, ‘You are not saying anything that is speaking to me about me, and therefore I’m not going to listen to anything at all that you’re saying, even the things that I need to know and that are important for my health.’”

Basically, LGBT inclusion should be more than gender-neutral language. It should run throughout sex education curricula, including through discussions of consent—another topic essential in comprehensive sex education.

In the past, education about consent has often been of the “no means no” variety, which places the onus for halting sexual activity on whoever is unwilling to participate. Affirmative consent can be thought of as “yes means yes.” This concept of consent places the responsibility on individuals to only proceed with an activity after all participants have explicitly expressed their desire to participate.

Some sex educators, however, think even affirmative consent fails to fully encompass the complex responsibility that comes with sexual relationships. Sharon Lamb, a professor of counseling and school psychology at the University of Massachusetts Boston and author of *Sex Ed for Caring Schools: Creating an Ethics-Based Curriculum*, advocates for teaching an even higher standard: mutuality. Lamb defines the concept of mutuality as the idea that “you have to know something about the other person to know about consent. That a yes is more or less than a yes at times.”

SOURCE: GUTTMACHER INSTITUTE



TOOLKIT

Put this story into action! VISIT » tolerance.org/sex-ed

She gives the example of two friends, one of whom has just gone through a bad breakup and is distraught. The two find themselves kissing. The friend doing the consoling asks if it's OK to have sex. Even if the distraught friend says yes, Lamb says it's the other friend's responsibility to think about context. This person is emotionally distraught and may not be fully thinking about the emotional consequences of having sex. Lamb's conclusion is that, even though it would be OK to proceed using the standard of affirmative consent, the friend should stop if they know proceeding could harm the other person.

Making the Transition

There are lots of educators who are eager to teach a more comprehensive sex education curriculum, but either they are afraid to or don't know where to start. Michaelle Valbrun-Pope, the executive director for student support initiatives for the Broward County School District in southern Florida, has advice for these educators: "Be courageous."

Broward County School District's sex education policy was more than 15 years old when members of their sex education team decided the policy was outdated, inaccurate and failed to meet the needs of Broward's students. Working with existing school committees as well as community organizations, they evaluated available resources and curricula for adherence to FoSE's National Sex Education Standards and for relevance to Broward students' needs.

Once Valbrun-Pope's team had chosen their new curriculum, they set about the process of reeducating their community—including the school board and parents—about what sex education should be. This is the part of the process many would-be comprehensive-sex-education advocates fear. But most of the community was extremely supportive, says

Valbrun-Pope. There were people who opposed various portions of the curriculum, primarily the LGBT-inclusion portions and discussion of contraception at younger ages, but even people who objected to certain topics recognized that comprehensive sex education was a good thing overall.

Broward's school board approved the new curriculum unanimously in May of 2014, and the district is well on its way to successful implementation. Sebrina James, an instructional facilitator on Valbrun-Pope's team, says professional development has been a big part of that process. And while

there's been some pushback from teachers, she says more often than not, when teachers leave training sessions, they say they see the importance of the changes to the school's sex education approach.

It comes down to helping people see that part of being a professional educator is responding to students' needs, says Valbrun-Pope. "We know we're doing the right thing for kids," she says. "We're protecting kids and helping kids protect themselves." ♦

Pettway lives and writes in Bogotá, Colombia.

Sex Ed in Elementary School?

Opponents of starting sex education in elementary school often have misconceptions about content. These National Sexuality Education Standards for K-2 students can help everyone understand the value of talking about consent, relationships and differences from an early age.

- ☉ Describe the characteristics of a friend.
- ☉ Identify healthy ways for friends to express feelings to each other.
- ☉ Explain that all people, including children, have the right to tell others not to touch their bodies when they do not want to be touched.
- ☉ Identify parents and other trusted adults they can tell if they are feeling uncomfortable about being touched.
- ☉ Demonstrate how to respond if someone is touching them in a way that makes them feel uncomfortable.
- ☉ Demonstrate how to clearly say no, how to leave an uncomfortable situation, and how to identify and talk with a trusted adult if someone is touching them in a way that makes them feel uncomfortable.
- ☉ Use proper names for body parts, including male and female anatomy.
- ☉ Describe differences and similarities in how boys and girls may be expected to act.
- ☉ Provide examples of how friends, family, media, society and culture influence ways in which boys and girls think they should act.
- ☉ Explain that all living things reproduce.
- ☉ Identify different kinds of family structures.
- ☉ Demonstrate ways to show respect for different types of families.
- ☉ Explain what bullying and teasing are.
- ☉ Explain why bullying and teasing are wrong.
- ☉ Identify parents and other trusted adults they can tell if they are being bullied or teased.
- ☉ Demonstrate how to respond if someone is bullying or teasing them.



Being There for Nonbinary Youth

Sometimes the “T” in LGBT gets overlooked.

BY JEY EHRENHALT ILLUSTRATION BY VALERIA PETRONE

When Eli Sommer came across the term “transgender” in a Tumblr post in high school, everything clicked. “Oh,” he thought. “That’s me.” Attending a Georgia high school, struggling with anxiety and depression, Eli tried to communicate with his parents who were forcing gender conformity and insisting he was a girl. It wasn’t until his psychologist, who is himself transgender, recommended *The Transgender Child* as a resource that his parents realized what Eli needed to thrive.

The family met with his homeroom teacher, who quickly became an ally, even advising the LGBT club Eli established called GLOW (Gay, Lesbian Or Whatever). “He’s cisgender, he’s straight,” Eli recalls, “but he’s passionate about advocating and making sure all of the kids in our club succeed in school and aren’t held back because of how they identify.”

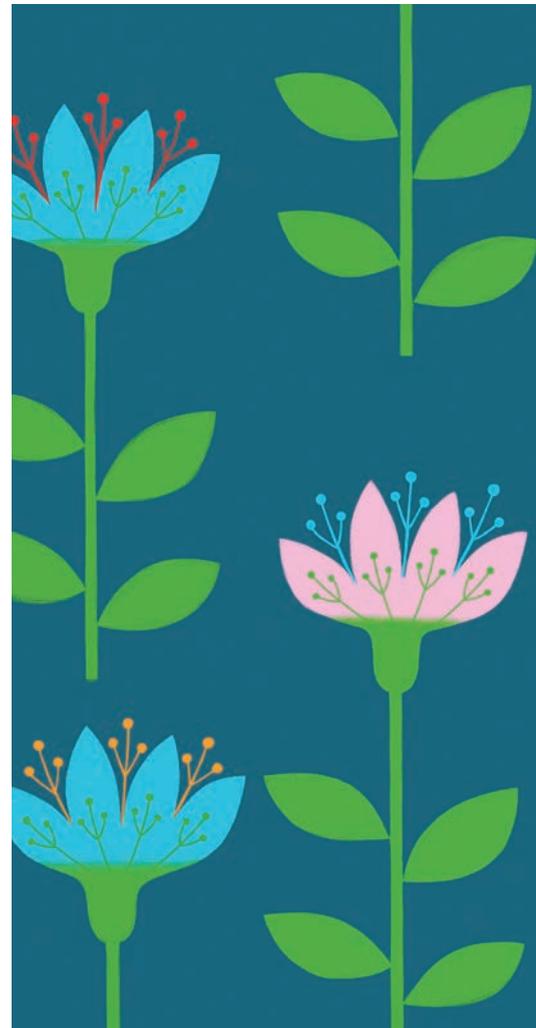
Eli also found an advocate in his school principal, who located a gender-neutral restroom for him to use at school. “I would not have thought that my principal would have been helpful because he drives a big red truck with a gun rack on it,” recounts Eli. “But when all of the transgender stuff came to the table, he was like, ‘I don’t really understand, but Eli’s a good kid and we’ll get him what he’s entitled to.’”

Although it was not without obstacles, the relative ease of Eli’s transition is rare. The 2013 GLSEN National School Climate Survey found that, compared to their LGB peers, transgender and gender-nonconforming students face the most hostile school climates. According to the National Center for Transgender Equality, in 2015, 75 percent of transgender youth felt unsafe at school, and those who did not drop out altogether were more likely to miss school due to a safety concern, have significantly lower GPAs, and were less likely to plan for future education.

The good news is educators are learning more about how to support nonbinary youth at school. One of the most important lessons? The needs of transgender youth remain distinct from those of their LGB peers—and they extend beyond pronoun usage and bathroom access.

“When Kids Like Me Grow Up ...”

Experts cite mentorship as instrumental for trans students’ success, but formal mentors are scarce. Jenn Burleton, executive director of TransActive Gender Center in Portland, Oregon, sought to establish a trans-to-trans mentoring program but failed to locate enough transgender adults for similarly identified youth.



“Right now what these kids do not have is enough of a sense that: ‘When kids like me grow up, there’s an adult version of me doing what everybody else does and getting through the day. They’re there for me to see and know that there’s a place for me to walk when I get older,’” Burleton says. “Not letting kids see that can give them a subliminal sense that there is a dead end to their identity or that hiding is the only way to be.”

Kiera Hansen, a genderqueer-identified social worker in Portland, Oregon, is attempting to fill this void. Hansen—who prefers the pronoun *they*—helps run an afterschool drop-in program where almost everyone identifies as trans or gender-nonconforming. While funding sources have diminished, their team has pooled resources throughout



the city to create a tight-knit group. Outside of the group, Hansen has accompanied mentees to school when they need support, meeting with teachers to ensure access to the right bathrooms, use of the right pronouns, and to address any other issues students might face.

Hansen cites modeling vulnerability as a key to successful mentoring. “I’m surviving a lot of things on a regular basis, just as the youth are,” they recount. “I am genuinely honest with them. We’re transparent about the hurdles and barriers we go through in life and in the program. We do not make everything look perfect and well-put-together. We want them to have the tools to interact with the systems that are often working against them and their voices.”

One of the members of their drop-in group, Cameron, is about to graduate from high school and attributes part of that success to the group. “I have a really bad attendance problem with school,” he confides, recounting frequent bullying, including being compared to a wild animal in sociology class. “Having this group to look forward to every week has been one of the motivations that brings me back to school.”

Gender Identity Competency

When working toward success at school for transgender students, it is paramount for youth to identify an adult with whom they feel safe. Johanna Eager, director of the Human Rights Campaign’s Welcoming Schools program, coaches educators around gender identity competency. She trains

schools to help transitioning students identify a knowledgeable staff member who may or may not be trans but to whom students feel safe going during the day. “Any trans student needs to know who their safe person is,” she says. “You are vulnerable if you are the only one.”

Eager says there is no formula to positive mentorship. Some mentors are passionate and informed based on experience. Some are naturally kind and caring, with no formal training. “I’ve seen educators who don’t have much knowledge tend to the social emotional health for a trans child, and I have seen folks who are trans or LGBTQ be supportive with their knowledge. It can be either and it always has been.”

Above all, quality mentors *trust* that transgender youth know who they are



and what they need. As one father reflected about parenting his transgender son, “There were never any conscious decisions. It was always intuitive, following him. It’s about letting him lead and supporting wherever he is. That line is always moving.”

Transgender youth are looking, first and foremost, for adults to respect their chosen names and pronouns. Making this effort validates young people’s core identity and solidifies their safety. Without it, a trusted relationship cannot be built. As Cameron says, “People using your pronouns and correct name without fail is wonderful. When people do it with no question, you can tell they see you the way you want to be seen.”

Earning the trust and respect of transgender students requires educators to uncover any internalized transphobia and recognize personal biases. Some allies find it takes time to mentally de-align gender and genitalia. Still, adults cannot show up for youth without honestly accepting their feelings and beliefs. If they skip this crucial step, youth will notice. This is the case for Todd, who is genderqueer and can read their teachers’ facial expressions as measurements of acceptance and safety.

Once educators recognize their own behaviors and microaggressions, they’re better equipped to identify microaggressions, bullying and harassment when they happen in schools. Even if it appears minor, these behaviors need to be interrupted in the moment. Too often transgender students expect no assistance from teachers; being ostracized becomes the norm. As one trans middle school student—who is now homeschooled—attests, “As long as it

“PEOPLE USING
YOUR PRONOUNS
AND CORRECT NAME
WITHOUT FAIL IS
WONDERFUL. WHEN
PEOPLE DO IT WITH NO
QUESTION, YOU CAN
TELL THEY SEE YOU
THE WAY YOU WANT
TO BE SEEN.”

doesn’t escalate to a screaming match, they think everything looks fine.”

Furthermore, the interruption does not have to be impeccable. Eager recommends, “Just say something. You may screw it up, it may not feel comfortable, it may not be perfect. But saying something is better than saying nothing, and you need to say it because everyone is watching to see if they are going to be safe.”

If necessary, distinguish between the personal and the professional. Lead author of the resource guide *Schools In Transition*, Asaf Orr, stands behind educators who are “on board” regardless of their personal beliefs. “In their private lives these educators may

not be supportive of gender exploration,” Orr notes. “But when they get to school, they know it’s critical to be 100 percent supportive of a kid’s own gender exploration, and they ensure the space for them to do that.”

Educators can support their trans students by including nonbinary identities in the curriculum. As Cameron asserts, “With every sex ed class we have that’s not inclusive, and every English class where there’s no inclusive literature, there’s another trans kid that feels so alone.”

Recognizing nonbinary gender identities depicted within student work is also important, as youth are likely to reflect themselves most accurately. One agender-identified seventh-grader, Jace, remembers feeling safe after a teacher commented on their agender character drawing, saying they “looked cool.”

Finally, do not assume. Nontransidentified adults, says Cameron, “are never going to be able to fully understand what any trans person is going through. Adults need not question the way a person feels about themselves, because they do not know. They are never going to feel the same way. And we have to figure ourselves out.”

Transgender youth know what they need to feel safe. Strong mentors ask them. ♦

Ehrenhalt lives and writes in Western Massachusetts.

Being a mentor or ally often means working closely with families or explaining why youth need certain types of support. Check out our online sidebar for tips on engaging families who may need support too. tolerance.org/pushback

Why Talk About

WHITENESS?

We can't talk about racism without it.

BY EMILY CHIARIELLO

"I don't think I've ever come across anything that has made me aware of my race. I don't believe there is any benefit of anybody's particular race or color. I feel like I've accomplished what I've accomplished in life because of the person I am, not because of the color of my skin."

These are the observations of a white female participant in *The Whiteness Project, Part I*, an interactive web-based collection of voices and reflections of Americans from diverse walks of life who identify as white. Her statement illustrates why educators, activists and allies doing racial justice work are increasingly focused on the importance of examining whiteness: It's impossible to see the privilege and dominance associated with white racial identity without acknowledging that whiteness *is* a racial identity.

This fundamental disconnect between the racial self-perceptions of many white people and the realities of racism was part of what motivated documentary filmmaker, director and producer Whitney Dow to create *The Whiteness Project*. "Until you can recognize that you are living a racialized life and you're having racialized experiences every moment of every day, you can't actually engage people of other races

around the idea of justice," Dow explains. "Until you get to the thing that's primary, you can't really attack racism."

Dow's work, among other activism and scholarship focused on whiteness, has the potential to stimulate meaningful conversations about whiteness and move white folks past emotions like defensiveness, denial, guilt and shame (emotions that do nothing to improve conditions for people of color) and toward a place of self-empowerment and social responsibility.

Whiteness, History and Culture

Why does whiteness fly beneath the race radar? The normalization of whiteness and the impenetrable ways it protects itself are cornerstones of the way institutions function in the United States. In a 2015 interview, Pulitzer Prize-winning writer Junot Díaz said of the U.S., "We live in a society where default whiteness goes

unremarked—no one ever asks it for its passport."

This poses a challenge for educators committed to racial justice. We know it's important to make space in our classrooms to explore students' cultures and identities, but when it comes to white students, many are left with questions about how to talk about group membership and cultural belonging. These questions stem in part from the fact that, while it's true whiteness is seen as a social default, it is *not* true that whiteness is the absence of race or culture. As one male participant in *The Whiteness Project* puts it, "As a white person, I wish I had that feeling of being a part of something for being white, but I don't."

One place to start is by acknowledging that generations of European immigration to the United States means that our country is home to the most diverse white population anywhere in

Scholars Michelle Alexander (*The New Jim Crow*) and Jacqueline Battalora (*Birth of a White Nation*) both name Bacon's Rebellion as a pivotal event in the historical construction of whiteness in the United States. During the rebellion, disgruntled white settlers, indentured servants and enslaved Africans joined forces to resist the ruling class and local Indian tribes. Their actions worried elites and led them to enact a more rigid racial class system. Read more about Bacon's Rebellion here: t-t.site/baconsrebellion

the world. Differences between Jewish, Irish, Italian, Greek, Polish or German culture matter—a lot—to those who identify as *ethnic* whites. Part of “seeing” whiteness includes caring about these rich histories and complicating our discussions of race by asking questions about the intersection of ethnicity and race.

In her work on white racial identity development, diversity expert Rita Hardiman explains that, as white people become more conscious of whiteness and its meaning, we may simultaneously struggle with two aspects of identity: internalized dominance and the search for cultural belonging. The search for culture draws some white people to multiculturalism and appreciation of other cultures and heritages. Others find roots outside the container of race, woven into proud family histories. A small minority cling violently to their white cultural identity, sometimes with tragic consequences. (In any case, it is important to note that the ability to trace one’s genealogy is an inherited privilege not enjoyed by most African Americans, the majority of whom are descendants of enslaved people.)

Reconciling the meaning of white culture can be complicated by the fact that being white has not always meant what it means now. Whiteness—like all racial categories—is a social construct: Its meaning is culturally and historically contextual. The physical characteristics we now associate with whiteness have been artificially linked to power and privilege for the purpose of maintaining an unjust social hierarchy.

Attorney, scholar and anti-racist educator Jacqueline Battalora of Saint Xavier University studies the legal and historical construction of whiteness in the United States, what she calls the “invention of white people.” In her book *Birth of a White Nation*, she shows that white people didn’t exist—even as a

label, much less as a race—until the end of the 17th century when the elite class enacted anti-miscegenation laws and other laws designed to keep black and white workers separate, both efforts to, in part, divide and control an increasingly ethnically diverse labor force. As students enter middle and high school, teaching about this history and about the concept of racial construction is another way educators can bring discussion about whiteness—and its relationship to racial justice—into the classroom.



Got Privilege? Now What?

In 1988, anti-bias educator Peggy McIntosh published her now-classic essay “White Privilege: Unpacking the Invisible Knapsack.” In it, she describes the phenomenon of white privilege as a collection of “unearned assets that I can count on cashing in each day, but about which I was meant to remain oblivious.”

McIntosh’s essay launched the term *white privilege* into wider academic and activist circles (where the essay is still widely read), but recently the term has gained a mainstream audience. Examples include #OscarsSoWhite, Latina college student Thalia Anguiano asking Hillary Clinton for examples of her white privilege and Jon Stewart challenging Bill O’Reilly to defend why he believes white privilege doesn’t exist. White rapper Macklemore mused about Black Lives Matter in his nine-minute song “White Privilege II,” in which he asks, “Is it my place to give my two cents? Or should I stand on the side and shut my mouth?”

While these examples are positive in that they make whiteness and white privilege more visible, popular discussions of white privilege can also prompt backlash.

“I think it’s very hard in a culture that’s built around this myth of the individual American who makes their own way, to say, ‘Well, you actually have a built-in inherited advantage,’”

Dow points out. “We view ourselves as just people, but that this country was founded on racist white supremacist principles is undeniable. I think people feel implicated because there’s a cognitive dissonance built into how Americans view themselves.”

But even if white students are able to overcome this dissonance and acknowledge their privilege, is that enough? Recognizing white privilege is a necessary but insufficient means for confronting racism and increasing opportunities for people of color. In fact, acknowledging white privilege but taking no initiative to own it or address it can be harmful and counterproductive. Molly Tansey, a member of the Young Teachers Collective and co-author of “Teaching While White,” says, “Early on in doing this work, I was definitely driven by the self-satisfaction.” She talks about the need white people sometimes have to make their non-racism visible, giving the example of someone who takes a “selfie” at a protest to post on Facebook.

We haven’t acknowledged our white privilege if we’re only talking about it with people of color—who are already well aware of white privilege. White allies need to talk to other white people who may not see their privilege. Though it’s less comfortable, Tansey says, naming whiteness and its privileges among white friends, family and colleagues is where the real work needs to be done.

We’re also not adequately engaging the concept of white privilege if we leave intersectionality out of the conversation; doing so has the potential to render other identities invisible and obscures how multiple systems of oppression work. Blogger Gina Crosley-Corcoran made this point in her blog “Explaining White Privilege to a Broke White Person,” in which she describes the difficult process of identifying with her white privilege because of her low-income upbringing. The same could be true for any white person who

has a disability, doesn't speak English, is undocumented or LGBT—or any combination of the above. Intersectionality does not erase white privilege, but may affect a person's experience of privilege.

Acknowledging white privilege must be followed with anti-racist action. As scholar Fredrik deBoer argued in a January 2016 article for *The Washington Post*, “Disclaiming white privilege doesn't lower African Americans' inordinately high unemployment rate or increase educational opportunities for children of first-generation immigrants. The alternative is simpler, but harder: to define racism in terms of actions, and to resolve to act in a way that is contrary to racism.”

Affirming a Positive White Identity

Making whiteness visible, understanding the diversity and history of whiteness, and going beyond white privilege can help educators and students alike find positive answers to the question: What does it mean to be white? For Melissa Katz, who authored “Teaching While White” with Tansey and is also part of the Young Teachers Collective, the answer is central to her self-realization as a white woman and as a teacher committed to social justice.

“The positive sense of whiteness is knowing that you're working towards something bigger,” she says. “By examining your whiteness and by working to dismantle [racist] institutions, you're working towards equity.”

For Dow, exploring whiteness—and inviting others to do the same—was transformative. “I could impact the paradigm because I actually was an active component. I didn't have to do something outside,” he says. “I could do something inside and that would change things. It kind of eliminated guilt for me. It made me feel incredibly empowered and really enriched my world.” ♦

Chiariello is an educational consultant and curriculum writer in Buffalo, New York.

Anti-racist Understandings for Educators

Get fired up about racial injustice! Recognizing that “a threat to justice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere” is the foundation of white allyship. Use these understandings to help you and your students face what can be highly emotional and, at times, uncomfortable work.

These understandings were drawn from the work of Robin DiAngelo (*What Does It Mean to Be White? Developing White Racial Literacy*), Heather Hackman (*Everyday White People Confront Racial and Social Injustice: 15 Stories*) and Jennifer Seibel Trainor (“My Ancestors Didn't Own Slaves: Understanding White Talk about Race”).

1 **Colorblindness denies students' full identities.**

By saying “I don't see race” to indicate we don't hold racial biases about our students, we're essentially saying to people of color, “I don't see you.” Colorblindness upholds the dominant framework of whiteness and invalidates the racial identities and lived experiences of people of color.

2 **Speak out, but also look in.**

It's critical that white allies respond to racial prejudice, bias and stereotypes in our everyday lives. It takes practice and sometimes comes with risk. But pointing to other people's white privilege, without (or instead of) looking at our own, is a distraction from true anti-racist action.

3 **Avoid white noise and white silence.**

It's important to listen when people of color talk about their experiences with oppression and not to dominate conversations about race. But opting out altogether can be just as harmful. “The racial status quo is not neutral; it is racist,” DiAngelo says. “Remaining silent when given the opportunity to discuss race supports the status quo.”

4 **Take responsibility for educating yourself about racism.**

It makes sense to assume that someone who has experienced racism will have a better understanding of it than someone who has not. But when white educators expect students or colleagues of color to teach them about racism, it raises a number of problems, not least of which is people of color doing white people's work for them.

5 **Be down, but stay white.**

75 percent of white Americans say they come in contact with “a few” or “no” black people on a regular basis—a startling fact about race relations. Living an integrated life builds cross-cultural connection and fosters empathy.

Over-familiarizing with people of color—“I hang out with people of color, so I'm not racist”—reduces race to a lifestyle choice and can offer an easy way out of difficult anti-racism work. Appreciating a diverse group of friends or colleagues does not take the place of confronting white privilege, addressing internalized white guilt or responding to the biases of other white people.

6 **Don't take it personally—it's not about you!**

White people have come to expect a level of racial comfort. When that expectation is met with racial stress, DiAngelo explains the result can be White Fragility: “White Fragility is a state in which even a minimum amount of racial stress becomes intolerable, triggering a range of defensive moves. These moves include the outward display of emotions such as anger, fear and guilt, and behaviors such as argumentation, silence and leaving the stress-inducing situation. These behaviors, in turn, function to reinstate white racial equilibrium.”





BY CARRIE GAFFNEY

ILLUSTRATION BY JOHN HERSEY

Teenagers in Arizona wear lettered T-shirts that together spell out a racial slur. Transgender boys in a Wisconsin school are given detention after using the boys' restroom. Male students in a California high school create a "slut page" on Instagram featuring embarrassing photographs of their female peers.

ANATOMY OF AN

IN SCHOOLS ACROSS the United States, students experience oppression based on their race, gender identity, religion, sexual orientation, socio-economic status, ability and other identities. Most educators care about the well-being of these students, but when young people are being targeted, caring isn't enough. Ensuring all students feel respected and protected at school requires educators to become allies: partners in empowerment who speak out against injustice and support marginalized groups and individuals on their own terms. How can educators navigate the complexities of allyship in and out of the classroom? What does it take to become an effective ally?

Allyship Starts With Identity

In the past, being an ally in an educational setting was a role associated with white teachers doing anti-racism work. But allies exist across identity lines: Being an ally means recognizing oppression broadly and standing in solidarity with anyone who experiences oppression—whether or not the ally also belongs to a targeted group.

While any educator can become an ally, the journey might look different depending on identity, experience and familiarity with issues of power and privilege. This means there's no blueprint; being effective requires significant self-reflection, according to Ali Michael of the University of Pennsylvania's Center for the Study of Race and Equity in Education. "A teacher ally is someone who has a strong sense of their own identity, as well as the ways in which their own identities are either privileged or oppressed," she says.

For Billy Travis, a second-year teacher at Center for Inquiry #27 in Indianapolis, becoming a teacher after leaving his first career in finance has been a journey of both professional and personal reflection. "In my old life, I never thought about privilege. But I knew I wasn't making a difference in the world. I became a teacher because I wanted to do something that mattered," he says.

Travis learned almost immediately that developing a sense of his own identity was vital to the process. "Whether or not I wanted it to be the case, my identity as a white male was present in the curriculum. There was a lot of tension in the relationship [with my students] early on, and sometimes there still is," Travis says. "My students come from an experience that is totally different from mine. And even bigger than that, they were distrusting of me at first, which could make things really difficult. One day they were right next

to me, and then, the next day, they shoved me away."

Travis began the slow process of exploring who he was as an individual and how his identity differed from his students'. "The teacher's identity journey is crucial in how he or she establishes relationships with students in the classroom," says Sonia Nieto, professor emerita at the University of Massachusetts Amherst. "Investigating your identity through exploring your values, biases and blind spots helps establish who you are as a cultural being. Knowing these things about yourself will help you connect with your students. The more you can connect with students on a personal level, the better your students will see you as a person instead of someone with no real experiences."

Travis' commitment to learning about himself and his privilege has allowed him to better connect with students and positions him to be an effective ally. It still isn't easy, but he feels optimistic about the process. "When you are trying to connect with students, there is a lot of work to be done," he says. "You just have to dig in and be ready for it to be bumpy."

Allyship Requires Commitment

Becoming an ally is a complex and

Am I Doing It Right?

Even experienced allies aren't always sure what to say or do. These reminders can keep you on the path to being a source of support and empowerment.

- Do listen and ask how you can help.
- Don't expect another person to educate you about their identity.
- Do accept criticism thoughtfully.
- Don't broadcast your qualifications for being an ally.
- Do speak up when you hear biased language.
- Don't apologize for the actions of your identity group.
- Do seek support from experienced allies within your identity group.
- Don't expect credit for being an ally.
- Do acknowledge intersectionality.
- Don't selectively support one group over another.

WANT TO BRING DIVERSE VOICES INTO YOUR CLASSROOM?

Perspectives for a Diverse America offers hundreds of free readings that can help you teach about multiple identity groups. perspectives.tolerance.org

ongoing process that requires courage and commitment. Whether advocating for marginalized students or supporting their fellow educators, teacher allies must accept the responsibility to focus unwaveringly on how power and privilege function in the school environment and beyond.

One important factor: Acknowledging personal privilege isn't enough. "When trying to become a better ally, self-education should come first," says Michael. There is always more to learn about different identity groups and about how others experience oppression; without this knowledge, expressions of allyship can ring hollow. Michael adds that it's also up to allies to break institutional silences about poverty, race, sexual orientation or religion, for example, and begin professional discussions about language, pedagogy, diversity and bias. It can be uncomfortable, but discomfort is a necessary part of the work.

Unfortunately, discomfort isn't the only barrier to being a long-term ally. Experienced teacher allies understand that the goal of ending oppression requires incremental change that can feel exhausting and overwhelming—especially if an ally also experiences oppression. Nieto encourages teacher allies to be patient with their students, their colleagues and themselves. "As teachers, we sometimes enter the profession because we want to change the world," she says. "But we need to remember that we can't do it alone."

Allyship in the Classroom

Advocating for students and colleagues is a critical part of being an ally, but Michael points out that true allyship requires more than that. "If you're a teacher ally, you don't always have to be out in front," she says. "You can be in the background working to bring forth the voices of those who are marginalized." One way to do this is by exploring identity through pedagogy.

Cassandra Alexander, an early childhood educator at PS 130 in Brooklyn,

New York, believes teachers have a responsibility to create a world that affirms all students' identities. Culturally responsive pedagogy does this by bringing multiple perspectives into every lesson. And because such pedagogy explores identity, it can help educators *and* students develop the skills and capacities to become allies while simultaneously challenging assumptions and biases.

"Our first unit of the year is all about who we are," Alexander says. "Working alone and with their families, students create a project to present to the class that describes who they are, what their family looks like, ... what they see themselves doing in the future and how they can help their community." The result of such work, she says, is that not only does she get to know and appreciate her students, but they get to know and appreciate each other.

As a social studies teacher, Travis says he feels as if his most teachable moments come when he is able to use his subject area to discuss injustice with his students. For instance, Travis recently started a unit with his eighth-graders that asked them to use their personal experiences with racism as the starting point for a unit on the history of race in the United States. "At first, they didn't even want to do it," he says. "It was uncomfortable and emotional."

Michael attributes that discomfort to students' internalized "-isms." In such a situation, she suggests giving students a safe forum for turning their frustrations into actions. That's exactly what Travis did.

"We had to do a lot of low-stakes investigating," he says. "But now they're totally involved in the project. They are sharing their thoughts and feelings on an intellectual level, and it's helping frame the discussion of how their experiences inform what happens to them outside of school."

Nieto adds that, when facilitating discussions about identity, even small differences can go a long way when



of exploring the world through their eyes.”

For Alexander, her most teachable moments with pre-K students come when they are reading together on the carpet. “Sometimes I’ll ask my students about the characters in the story, which almost always leads to great discussions of race, gender, religion and family,” she says. “For instance, if a student describes a character in a story as boy or girl, we talk about language in the story that tells us whether or not the author actually identified the character as a boy or girl, or if we as readers made that assumption.” The main thing, she says, is to enter the curriculum with an open mind and listen deeply to what students have to say.

Michael agrees that the most successful teacher allies proactively listen, validate and—when possible—help students take action. “Being an ally becomes

trying to establish relationships. She uses the example of a Spanish teacher she knows who made sure to include the language associated with living in both apartments *and* houses when leading a unit on “home.”

“Something as simple as acknowledging different living situations lets students know you’re aware that not everyone is the same,” Nieto says.

Allyship in the Hidden Curriculum

Many schools require teachers to stick to a set curriculum, but teacher allies seek extra-curricular opportunities

to either challenge or validate the way students see the world and the way the world reacts to them. How adults in schools react to events like the T-shirt incident in Arizona or the “slut page” in California sends powerful messages about who stands with which students. Even in the absence of blatant bias, Travis is very aware that gaps and silences send messages to his students.

“There have been times when I felt pressured to ‘just teach the curriculum,’” Travis says. “Obviously, I realize that ‘just teaching the curriculum’ cheats my middle school students out

a lot less scary when you remember to frame it around how you’re allying against bigger forces of oppression,” she says. Highlighting identity and justice at school not only protects space for targeted students, it can breathe new life into what an educator teaches and inspire new ways to teach it—whether inside or outside the classroom. ♦

Gaffney is a writer, teacher and editor based in Indianapolis, Indiana.



TOOLKIT

Put this story into action! VISIT » tolerance.org/ally

TEACHING AT THE INTERSECTIONS

YOUR STUDENTS ARE MORE THAN THEIR MOST VISIBLE IDENTITIES.

Nicole: An Intersectional Case Study

Ninth-grader Nicole is a mature, creative, hardworking student who gets along well with others. But she's always late for school, frequently misses her first-period class and rarely submits homework in any classes. Needless to say, her grades are suffering. ¶ Nicole's teachers know very little about her life. When they look at her, they see an African-American student who isn't doing well. They also see a typical example of the deep racial disparities that exist within absenteeism and dropout rates nationwide.

But a teacher who took the time to peel back the layers of Nicole's identity would see another characteristic—her socio-economic status—and a more nuanced understanding would emerge. Nicole isn't just a black student; she's also a girl from a low-income family who bears the responsibility of taking care of her two younger siblings. To fully and adequately support Nicole, an educator must see her situation through an *intersectional* lens: recognizing that race-, gender- and class-related circumstances are contributing to her achievement issues.

Legal scholar and law professor Kimberlé Crenshaw, who coined the term *intersectionality* in 1989, explains.

“We know, if we have a gender lens, that girls are more likely to have to engage in caretaking activities,” she says. “They're the ones who often have to pick up the slack when mothers are unable to, either because of work or other circumstances. The girls are the ones who prepare the siblings for school, make sure they get to the bus on time, pick them up from school. That might make it difficult for *them* to get to school on time, contributing to their truancy and ultimately leading to them dropping out.”

Crenshaw introduced intersectionality in her groundbreaking essay “Demarginalizing the Intersection of Race and Sex: A Black Feminist

Critique of Antidiscrimination Doctrine, Feminist Theory and Antiracist Politics.” In it, she examined the ways in which the legal system handled race and sex discrimination claims, observing that black women—historically lacking race, gender and class privilege—consistently had their discrimination claims denied. Her reflections led Crenshaw to describe intersectionality as “a framework ... to trace the impact of racism, of sexism, other modes of discrimination, where they come together and create sometimes unique circumstances, obstacles, barriers for people who are subject to all of those things.”

In Nicole's case, the problems she faces aren't just about her multiple identities, but stem from the multiplied oppressions that accompany *her particular* combination of identities: Her situation reflects the experiences of low-income people more than affluent people, girls more than boys and black students more than white students. Specifically, Nicole must navigate parents who work long hours outside the home *plus* the standard that, as a female, she must care for her siblings *plus* low expectations on the part of her teachers.

➤ **What Is Intersectionality?**
Intersectionality refers to the social, economic and political ways in which identity-based systems of oppression and privilege connect, overlap and influence one another.



Oppression, Power and Privilege in the Classroom

Although the term first entered the lexicon in a legal context, intersectionality isn't just about legal discrimination. In the classroom, educators can use an intersectional lens to better relate to and affirm all students—like Nicole—and to help young people understand the relationship between power and privilege through the curriculum.

For Christina Torres, who teaches seventh- and ninth-grade English at the University Laboratory School in Honolulu, Hawai'i, teaching with intersectionality in mind means “seeing your students as more than just the thing that stands out in the classroom, as far as race or their gender, and understanding that there's a *long* background to all those things.” Understanding context is also key, Torres says. “A woman who is Latina in

L.A. is going to have a very different experience from someone who's in the middle of Arkansas. The place matters, too.”

Torres' ninth-grade class recently read and discussed *To Kill a Mockingbird*, providing the perfect opportunity to dig into intersections of race, gender and place. “We've done a lot of different discussions about femininity and what it means to be a woman,” Torres recalls. “But to push that further, we also

INTERSECTIONALITY IN THE COURT SYSTEM

In 1989, legal scholar and law professor Kimberlé Crenshaw applied retrospective analyses to three discrimination lawsuits, each filed by black women. Presented in “Demarginalizing the Intersection of Race and Sex: A Black Feminist Critique of Antidiscrimination Doctrine, Feminist Theory and Antiracist Politics,” these cases gave rise to her thinking about intersectionality and its importance, not only in the legal realm, but also in feminist and antiracist discourse.

The first case she examines, *DeGraffenreid v. General Motors* (1976), illustrates how the courts at that time interpreted existing anti-discrimination laws, previous legal decisions and plaintiffs' claims to be members of a protected class. In *DeGraffenreid*, five black women claimed that their employer, General Motors, discriminated against black women by laying off employees on the basis of seniority during the 1970 recession. Because GM did not hire black women before the Civil Rights Act of 1964, “all of the [black] women hired after 1970 lost their jobs,” Crenshaw explains.

The U.S. District Court for the Eastern District of Missouri ruled in favor of the defendant, however, stating that, because the layoffs did not also affect white women, there was no legitimate sex discrimination claim; and, because the layoffs did not also affect black men, there was no legitimate race discrimination claim either. “[Black women] should not be allowed to combine statutory remedies to create a new ‘super-remedy’ which would give them relief beyond what the drafters of the relevant statutes intended,” the court stated. “Thus, this lawsuit must be examined to see if it states a cause of action for

race discrimination, sex discrimination, or alternatively either, but not a combination of both.”

Crenshaw argued that the court's failure to see the ways in which sex and race compounded the injustice against the plaintiffs indicated a systemic failure—one that isn't limited only to black women.

Fast-forward 26 years from Crenshaw's 1989 examinations to the case of G.G., a 16-year-old transgender student in Gloucester, Virginia, whose school prohibited him from using the men's restroom. Represented by the American Civil Liberties Union, G.G. took his case to court in June 2015, arguing that his treatment violated Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972, which protects people from sex discrimination in schools. The U.S. Department of Justice agreed with G.G.'s intersectional argument, making this statement in a brief filed in June 2015: “Discrimination based on a person's gender identity, a person's transgender status, or a person's nonconformity to sex stereotypes constitutes discrimination based on sex. As such, prohibiting a student from accessing the restrooms that match his [or her] gender identity is prohibited sex discrimination under Title IX.”

The district court later dismissed G.G.'s Title IX claim and denied his injunction against the school board. But, in April 2016, the Fourth Circuit Court of Appeals reversed the dismissal of G.G.'s Title IX claim and ruled that the district court must reconsider G.G.'s injunction against the school board.

In this case, the school's reaction to the combination of G.G.'s sex assigned at birth, gender identity and gender expression—important elements that make G.G. who he is—directly contributed to the discomfort and stigma he experienced at school when it came to using the restroom.





View your student data through an intersectional lens: tolerance.org/student-data

discussed what that means for Scout, as a little girl who is white, versus Calpurnia, who is black, and what does it mean for both of them to grow up as women in the South. Especially for Calpurnia, who would say [to Scout and Jem], ‘Kids, don’t do that. That’s what Negroes would do.’”

Torres and her class used this passage as a jumping-off point for a discussion about power, internalized oppression and seeing value in one’s culture and community. At the beginning of the year, Torres had assigned her students to consider where and how they fit into their communities and what makes them feel worthwhile there. Recalling that assignment during the *Mockingbird* conversation, Torres asked the class, “If Calpurnia talks about her own fellow African Americans like that, do you think it’s easy for her to see value from her culture?” The discussion offers an opportunity to explore why Scout might think it is OK to act a certain way but Calpurnia does not.

Navigating the Intersections

An identity-based discussion that directly focuses on layers of oppression might seem too difficult to navigate in class. But for Torres, raising these issues is a way of privileging her students’ identities, experiences and stories. She hears students

talking about race, gender and other identity layers outside of class, giving her the green light to bring up these topics *in* class. In fact, the arc of Torres’ course begins with students examining their own identities—including instances in which they’ve experienced judgment and bias—and closes with the ways in which they’ve exhibited bias against others. By emphasizing intersectionality, she equips her students with the skills to examine why they believe what they believe, why their beliefs might differ from others’ and to determine how their beliefs might be influenced by power and privilege.

Khalilah Harris, former deputy director of the White House Initiative

VISIT TOLERANCE.ORG/ ANTI-BIAS-FRAMEWORK

For more on how to talk to students about intersectionality, see the grade-level outcomes for Identity anchor standard three (ID.3) of the Teaching Tolerance Anti-bias Framework: “Students will recognize that peoples’ multiple identities interact and create unique and complex individuals.” Even very young children can learn about intersectionality. For example, the K-2 outcome for ID.3 is, “I know that all my group identities are part of me—but that I am always ALL me.”

on Educational Excellence for African Americans, observes that “adults are responsible for helping students to have a safe space to navigate how they identify themselves and what intersections they see of themselves.” Without this safety, she says, students will struggle to embrace, express and advocate for their multiple identities.

“Not ... viewing yourself as intersectional and human limits your own growth,” Harris warns. “It certainly limits the students’ capacity to make the strongest connections they can to the content.”

For Torres, helping students like Nicole navigate the world—and the way the world responds to them—is fundamental to her responsibility as an educator.

“Everything in a classroom is dictated by me,” she says. “Every day kids enter our class, there’s an opportunity for them to be empowered or oppressed. When I don’t consider intersectionality and what they might need, I run the risk of oppressing my kids. ... When we stop seeing our kids as whole people—as whole, nuanced people, with context to gender and race and class—we stop seeing them as real people.” ♦

Bell is a writer and associate editor for Teaching Tolerance.



TOOLKIT

Put this story into action! VISIT » tolerance.org/intersections



flagler county

A Case for Suspension Abolition

BY JOANNA WILLIAMS ILLUSTRATION BY BRIAN STAUFFER

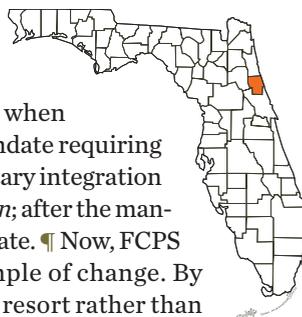
Meet Flagler County Public Schools

In 1970, a district in northeast Florida, Flagler County Public Schools (FCPS), made national news when the U.S. Department of Justice released a federal mandate requiring full integration. FCPS had previously relied on voluntary integration to meet the requirement of *Brown v. Board of Education*; after the mandate, it was one of the last districts in Florida to integrate. ¶ Now, FCPS is in the news again—this time, as a positive example of change. By committing to a plan that views suspension as a last resort rather than a go-to measure, Flagler County has emerged as a pioneer in school discipline reform. Beginning in August 2016, FCPS students will not be suspended for more than three days at a time without the approval of the district discipline and behavior coordinator, reducing the maximum number of days a student can be removed from school by 70 percent. If proper alternatives are established after that, the district will consider doing away with out-of-school suspensions altogether, a model advocates refer to as *suspension abolition*.

A Bumpy Road

Like FCPS's pathway to integration, the road that led the district to the cutting edge of discipline reform was bumpy. The district was, at one point, one of Florida's worst districts for disproportionately disciplining African-American students. According to attorneys for the

Southern Poverty Law Center (SPLC, which is Teaching Tolerance's parent organization), African-American students accounted for only 16 percent of the student population during the 2010-11 school year—but received 31 percent of all out-of-school suspensions and 70 percent of expulsions.



Timothy King, Flagler County's discipline and behavior coordinator, says that FCPS staff followed a system that had been in place too long and that suspension was the only tool they had been given to handle discipline issues. From their view, the only way to maintain order was to punish quickly and severely—a perspective not uniquely held by FCPS.

“If you look at the history of schools and discipline, it was really set in gear to what was best for the adults,” King says. “That was the way that the adults on a campus kept order. Just years, and years, that philosophy continued to be handed down: ‘We’ll be very heavy-handed because that’s how we establish order on our campuses.’ It’s never been about what’s best for kids.”

That system resulted in an environment in which students were punished harshly *and* unequally. In 2012, the SPLC examined all 67 of Florida's school districts and found that FCPS

had among the highest degrees of racial disparity in its suspension data. In the 2011-12 school year, 32 percent of African-American students were suspended multiple times. The disproportionate punishment led the SPLC to file a federal civil rights complaint in 2012 that asserted, “[FCPS] has engaged in an ongoing and systematic pattern of violating Class Complainants’ rights and subjecting them to discrimination in violation of Title VI.”

That is exactly what happened to “K.K.,” a 14-year-old African-American student who attended an FCPS school and became a client in the SPLC case. During the 2011-12 school year, K.K. was referred to the office and “written up” 19 times, suspended from school for 15 days and spent three days in in-school suspension. He also was suspended from riding the bus three times and received five after-school detentions, one Saturday school detention, two in-school detentions, a civil citation and—at one point—zeros on all his classwork at the discretion of the school administration.

K.K. was just one of the thousands of African-American students on whose behalf the SPLC filed the complaint. In June 2015, after years of community and legal advocacy work, the Flagler County School Board unanimously approved a settlement with the SPLC to address the racial disparities and eventually to move toward discontinuing the use of out-of-school suspensions altogether.

What Is Suspension Abolition?

The term suspension abolition is new, but the principles behind it are not. Similar to the movement to end mass incarceration by ending mandatory minimum sentencing and minimizing the use of incarceration as punishment overall, suspension abolition is predicated on the belief that hyper-punitive acts—like removing students from school for minor offenses—deprives citizens of their fundamental right to be educated.

“Suspension abolition is really a shift in the way we view education. We view [education] as a civil right that children should never be deprived of,” says SPLC Staff Attorney Amir Whitaker. “The word suspension should never be associated with education. There should never be a time where a child thinks it’s appropriate to not learn and grow.”

A growing number of educators, advocates, state leaders and education experts are calling for a reduction in the use of suspensions. Some organizations have called for moratoriums.

“When you
only have
a hammer,
everything
looks like
a nail.”

The evidence supports the outcry. The American Psychological Association, the Academy of American Pediatrics, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and the American Association of School Administrators have all provided evidence that out-of-school suspensions contribute to the opportunity gap. In 2014, the federal government even acknowledged the relationship between exclusionary discipline practices and “an array of serious

educational, economic and social problems, including school avoidance and diminished educational engagement; decreased academic achievement; increased behavior problems; increased likelihood of dropping out; substance abuse; and involvement with juvenile justice systems.”

Dr. Angela Mann, an assistant professor of psychology at the University of North Florida and a nationally certified school psychologist, says that suspension ultimately proves counterproductive and confusing to students.

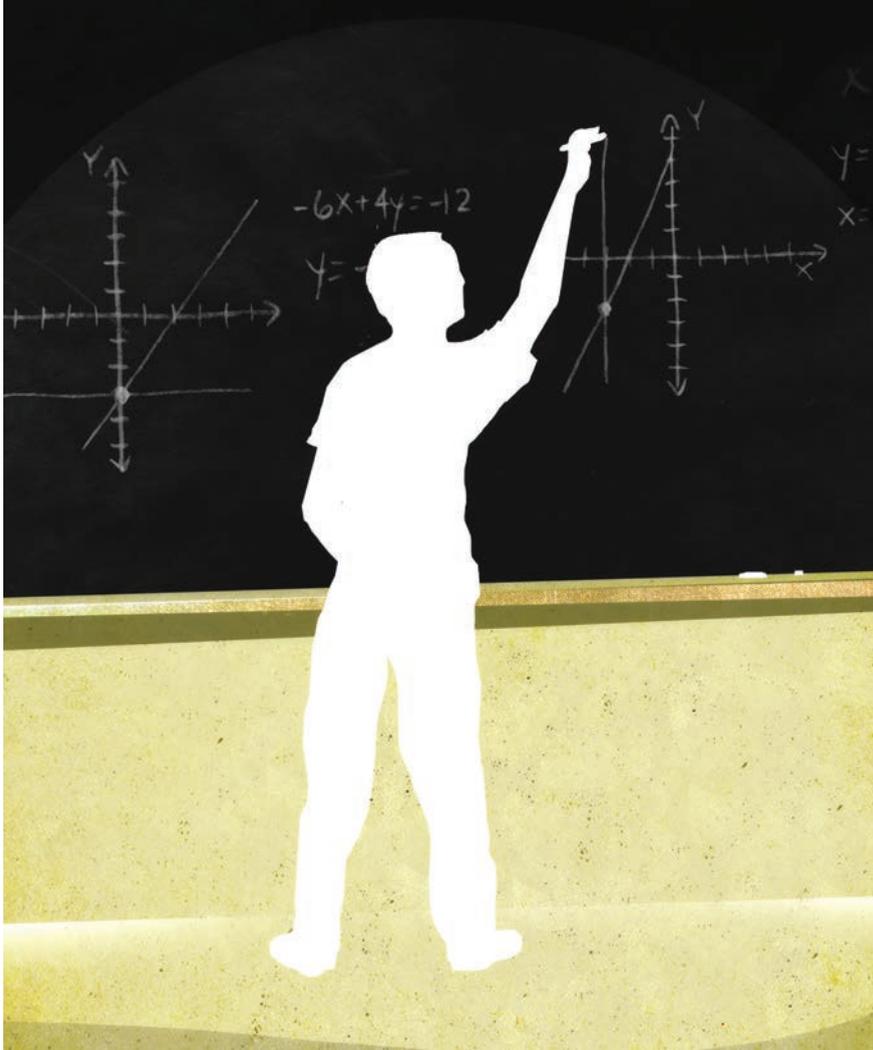
“Suspension and expulsion and school-based arrests are very counter to my own orientation towards discipline in that, first, they’re not effective,” she says. “They’re not effective at reducing the problem behavior, but also, they’re not teaching the child what expectations they should be meeting.”

Even putting aside the academic, social and emotional costs to students, suspension places alarming financial burdens on communities. A 2013 report sponsored by UCLA’s Civil Rights Project found that exclusionary discipline policies cost millions in tax dollars each year based on the correlation with increased school dropout rates, grade repetition, loss of instructional time and delay of student entry into the workforce.

Flagler County Now

As part of its agreement with the SPLC, FCPS now relies on a coalition of key stakeholders to advise its disciplinary policies. The coalition includes representatives from the Florida Department of Juvenile Justice, the Florida Department of Children and Families, the NAACP, the sheriff’s office, school-based mental health professionals, SPLC staff, school district staff and families.

The coalition also represents FCPS’s commitment to accountability. The district has become more transparent and issues monthly reports on the number



of suspensions by race, by infraction and by school. As a result, students, parents and the community are aware of how the district is handling discipline.

“At our last meeting, we looked and saw 80 percent of the suspensions are coming from a single middle school,” Whitaker says. “We’re part of that conversation with helping them move forward. . . . [T]he district is now looking at ways to fix that [number] and we’re having conversations with the principal. There is more accountability for removing an excessive number of students from school.”

King says that he has had complete buy-in from staff, and they are moving in the right direction. Part of his success, he says, was assuring staff that the need for change wasn’t about “personal attacks,” but rather the opportunity to grow and become better.

“It does change the way that we view things and do things because we have had to very publicly say, ‘Our old practices aren’t necessarily our best practices,’” he reflects. “We’ve shifted into a mode of ‘How can I keep a kid in his seat so that he can get everything that that teacher’s trying to give him?’ and balancing that with ‘Is this student being in his seat going to disrupt other students from learning?’ Again, if it’s student-centered and you’re doing what’s best for the kids, I think you come out with pretty good results.”

The results have contributed to a complete change in culture. King says that teachers are now willing to have conversations around discipline. Students have experienced more than 3,000 instructional hours this year that would have been lost to suspensions.

The district has put in place alternative discipline measures centered around growth. They include family and student seminars, community service and substance-abuse programs (if the student was found under the influence on campus); restorative justice will be implemented in the fall of 2016. Suspension is the last resort.

“If [a suspension] has to go over what’s our allotted amount of five days, then I will go to the discipline team to see if we can have an emergency meeting to get together and talk about resources and support for the kid,” King says. “That’s kind of what it is. If you need to remove a kid for more than a week, then you really need to have some people that can say, ‘Let’s talk about why that needed to happen.’”

After the victory in Flagler, the SPLC took the movement to Pinellas County, Florida, where African-American students lost a combined 45,942 days of school over the past five years. Now the maximum number of days the district’s 100,000 students can be suspended is five (reduced from 10). New York City Schools has also reduced its maximum to five days. Whitaker hopes these precedents will encourage other school districts to follow suit and shift their thinking about the purpose of school discipline.

“Our abolitionist movement balances the needs of districts and teachers,” Whitaker says. “We understand students can be disruptive and that there are times where a student should be removed from the classroom. We’re looking at different ways to respond because, with suspensions, we only have one destructive tool. And when you only have a hammer, everything looks like a nail.” ♦

Williams is the new media associate for Teaching Tolerance.



TOOLKIT

Put this story into action! VISIT » tolerance.org/flagler



Browder v. Gayle

The most important civil rights case you've never heard of

BY JONATHAN GOLD

On November 14, 1956, the front page of *The New York Times*, under the headline “High Court Rules Bus Segregation Unconstitutional,” reported that “an Alabama law and a city ordinance requiring segregation of races on intrastate buses were declared invalid by the Supreme Court today.” Three hundred and eighty-one days after the Montgomery Bus Boycott began, the Supreme Court had upheld a lower court ruling in favor of desegregating the buses, effectively overturning *Plessy v. Ferguson* (1896) and the doctrine of separate but equal that had supported Jim Crow segregation in the United States.

It may be surprising that the case in question involved four female plaintiffs from Montgomery, none of whom was Rosa Parks, and that the events it addressed took place before Parks' famous stand ignited the massive boycott. The case, *Browder v. Gayle*, is one of the most significant milestones in American civil rights history, but it



Aurelia Browder was the lead plaintiff in the landmark civil rights case Browder v. Gayle. A lifelong resident of Montgomery, Alabama, her home became a museum after her death in 1971.

has largely been left out of civil rights instruction. The 60th anniversary of *Browder v. Gayle* offers an opportunity to get to know this critical case, the unheralded women behind it, and its

wider relationship to the boycott and the crusade for racial equality.

The Browder in *Browder v. Gayle*

On April 29, 1955, Aurelia Browder, like so many other black residents of Montgomery, was mistreated on a city bus. According to her testimony in the civil case, she was forced by the bus driver “to get up and stand to let a white man and a white lady sit down.” Three other plaintiffs, Mary Louise Smith, Claudette Colvin and Susie McDonald, had reported similar mistreatment. The cumulative effect of these “demeaning, wretched, intolerable impositions and conditions,” as boycott organizer Jo Ann Robinson referred to them, inspired Montgomery’s black community to begin developing plans for a boycott that eventually began after the arrest of Rosa Parks.

If it seems odd that Parks' name is not listed among the plaintiffs', it is because her persona and that of Dr.

Martin Luther King Jr. have dominated the cultural mythology of the boycott (and the movement at large), a fact that poses special challenges to educators who strive to capture the unseen and resist telling a simple story in their teaching about the civil rights movement. It is also a fact that has troubled Butler Browder, Aurelia Browder's son, who laments that the world never got to know the woman behind the lawsuit.

"She believed in the power of unity. She believed in the power of togetherness. But she also believed that she had to be the one to stand because the others wouldn't," Browder says. "Five women had stories to tell: instances of individual mistreatment. They came together to change things for the world. Their concern at the time was not for their own personal thoughts or beliefs, but the beliefs and the theories of a whole. They felt like no price was too great to pay for achieving what they thought they could achieve."

Browder is not surprised his mother ended up as one of the plaintiffs. According to him, after being mistreated on the bus in April 1955, she talked of bringing her own suit, even approaching the NAACP about supporting her. But as Robinson notes in her book *The Montgomery Bus Boycott and the Women Who Started It*, local leaders "hesitated to file the [desegregation] cases because of fear of reprisals they felt the filing would evoke." Browder also recalls an aunt warning his mother that agitating could get her killed. She was undeterred, reportedly reflecting that she had "to die for something. If you live and you haven't stood for anything, you didn't live for anything either."

The Boycott

Jo Ann Robinson sounded the initial call for the black citizens of Montgomery to prepare for a one-day boycott; after Parks' arrest in December 1955, she and other organizers formed the Montgomery Improvement Association (MIA) to formalize their efforts. Their

"If it's worth teaching, it's worth teaching the whole story."

—BUTLER BROWDER



initial goals were limited in scope: first-come-first-served seating, more courteous treatment and the hiring of more black drivers.

About two months in, those goals changed. Negotiations with the city were proving unsuccessful. The city refused to consider hiring "colored" drivers and offered only conciliatory measures that fell short of the MIA's goals. Meanwhile, the support system of carpools and taxis grew stronger, and King's star was rising. Voices within the movement called for a legal challenge to segregation beyond the mass protest; Montgomery attorney Fred Gray had even begun to research potential cases. On January 23, 1956, the mayor called for a "get tough" approach to bring the boycott into check; King's home was

The Montgomery Bus Boycott began in December 1955 and lasted for over a year. Browder v. Gayle was brought by four plaintiffs, including Claudette Colvin (top) Mary Louise Smith (middle) and Susie McDonald (bottom).

bombed by white supremacists a week later. Mounting hostilities within the city convinced boycott leaders that a more robust legal strategy was necessary. As legal scholar Robert Jerome Glennon notes, "the [bombing] incident changed the thinking of the [MIA] leadership, which authorized Gray to commence a federal suit." The boycott continued, but now a parallel legal challenge to bus segregation was fighting its way through the court system.

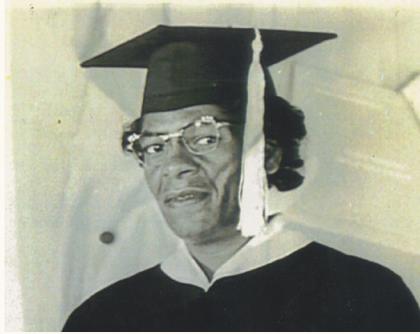
Parks' appeal was also pending in Montgomery court. (She had been

charged and fined in December for refusing the bus driver's orders and for disorderly conduct). However, because hers was a criminal case, it would follow a different path through the court system and prove harder to elevate to the Supreme Court. As Gray later wrote, "I wanted the court to have only one issue to decide—the constitutionality of the laws requiring segregation on the buses in the city of Montgomery." If Browder, Smith, Colvin and McDonald sued the city, they could make the claim that their 14th Amendment rights had been violated by the segregationist practices of the city and the bus company.

The Lawsuit

Gray filed the case on February 1, 1956, with support from the MIA and the NAACP. (The defendant, William A. Gayle, was the mayor of Montgomery at the time.) Because *Browder v. Gayle* challenged the constitutionality of a state statute, it was heard by a three-judge panel, including Frank Johnson, who would overturn Governor George Wallace's 1965 attempts to block the march from Selma. All four women testified to their mistreatment on city buses while the city argued that it had been enforcing the laws as written. In a 2-1 decision, issued on June 5, the panel ruled that "the enforced segregation of black and white passengers on motor buses ... violates the Constitution and laws of the United States," specifically the equal protection clause of the 14th Amendment. The city immediately appealed the ruling, sending it to the Supreme Court for review.

The boycott continued through the remaining months of 1956, capturing attention and igniting passions across the country: Black citizens were finally participating in a mass direct-action movement to resist Jim Crow, but white resistance was still formidable and segregated buses were still the law. In his book *From Jim Crow to Civil Rights*, legal scholar Michael Klarman notes that "rather than making minimalist concessions,



Hear Butler Browder reflect on his mother's role in the civil rights movement at tolerance.org/browder.

Montgomery officials became intransigent, ... arresting boycott organizers on fabricated charges, joining the citizens' council, and failing to suppress violence against boycott leaders." Black taxi drivers had supported the boycott by agreeing to ferry passengers at below-market rates, but the city banned this practice. City officials also arrested King and more than 80 boycott leaders, using a 1921 law that prohibited actions obstructing lawful business—in this case, the private bus company operations. (King was given jail time but did not serve his sentence; he did pay hefty fines.)

By November 1956, Montgomery officials had filed for an injunction that would potentially eliminate the taxi-and-shuttle system altogether, an outcome that could derail—or even end—the boycott. On the 12th of that month, as boycott leaders waited anxiously for the ruling on the injunction, King used a sermon to rally his followers, asking them to "believe that a way will be made out of no way." He says in his memoir that he felt "the cold breeze of pessimism passing through the audience" that day. But, on November 13, 1956, the

Supreme Court upheld the lower court's decision in *Browder v. Gayle*, legally ending racial segregation on public transportation in the state of Alabama.

Selective Memory

The *Browder v. Gayle* ruling would not be made official until December 20, when it was served to city officials. That is also the date history books typically point to when declaring the boycott a success, but there is a problem with that line of thinking. The significance of the boycott as a consciousness-raising, galvanizing experience cannot be overstated, but with segregationist obstruction continuing, black resolve potentially waning and another winter approaching, scholars disagree about whether the boycott would have succeeded without the ruling.

Aurelia Browder's story has been marginalized in most accounts of civil rights history. Most versions of this desegregation story begin with Rosa Parks' courageous stand and end with the Supreme Court's ruling, often failing to mention the case or the names of Browder and the other plaintiffs. Part of this likely stems from our preference for the lone hero standing against injustice. For students studying the movement, the knowledge that the boycott was the carefully planned and meticulously orchestrated work of thousands of largely unknown activists is—in and of itself—a revelation, and has the power to build understanding of the difficult process behind social change. But without a true picture of how legal activism intertwined with grassroots organizing to elicit change, the revelation will always be incomplete. Or as Butler Browder puts it: "If it's worth teaching, it's worth teaching the whole story, not just a portion of it. ... [T]he parts you leave out may just turn out to make your story a lie." ♦

Gold teaches history in Providence, Rhode Island. He also blogs for Teaching Tolerance.



TOOLKIT

Put this story into action! VISIT » tolerance.org/browder-v-gayle



Ask Angy

INTERVIEW CONDUCTED BY ADRIENNE VAN DER VALK EDITED BY MAYA LINDBERG

ANGY RIVERA IS a leading activist for undocumented youth and immigrant rights who lives and works in New York City. She joined the immigrant rights movement in her late teens, went public about her undocumented status at age 19 and started a popular advice column—“Ask Angy”—for undocumented youth at 20. In 2013, she qualified for a U Visa (granted to non-citizen victims of certain crimes). Her story is central to the film *Don't Tell Anyone (No Le Digas a Nadie)*.

Teaching Tolerance spoke with Rivera about growing up without a green card, activism at a young age and what educators need to know about their undocumented students.

Tell us your backstory. How did you become an activist?

My mom and I were born in Colombia. ... We came to the United States and I was four years old. [G]rowing up, I kn[e]w we were undocumented, but I didn't really know the extent of what

that would look like in my life. I knew we were immigrants. We struggled to speak English. We had to navigate different systems with limited resources and access to things. ... It wasn't until I got to high school that I started realizing how my immigration status was going to impact me personally.

More specifically, my senior year of high school, I went to a summer program that was supposed to prepare me for the college application process because I was the first one in my family, so I didn't really know about the college application process. ... In that program, I found out that I wasn't eligible for financial aid. ... I thought, “Well, this isn't true. They will see my grades and everything will be fine.” My whole four years of high school I was told to work hard and to go to school and get good grades and give back to your community and everything should be fine, and I did.

I decided to go to a financial aid office at a college that I wanted to apply to. I

was going to show them that I deserved to be there, basically, and that I should get financial aid. I was 17 and I was so determined. I went with all my paperwork from school, and the financial aid administrator kind of started yelling at me and told me that, if I didn't have the money to be there, I shouldn't be wasting her time.

I had participated in a City Youth Conference prior to that event. At this conference, I met this group of immigrant activists who were facilitating a workshop on immigration in New York. They spoke about the DREAM Act. They spoke about undocumented youth rights. I had never met other undocumented people. I didn't know that there was activism going on, and that's when I met the New York State Youth Leadership Council [NYSYLC]. During this time, where I was trying to figure out what I was going to be doing and how I was going to go to school, they had a “Get Active” training in New York City. I attended the training. ... I

► The New York State Youth Leadership Council (NYSYLC) is a nonprofit organization led by undocumented youth. Centered on youth activism and leadership engagement, Angy Rivera says, the NYSYLC seeks to encourage youth to no longer be afraid of their undocumented status and to organize for change.



**WANT TO LEARN MORE
ABOUT RIVERA'S STORY?**

Check out the Peabody Award-winning documentary film *Don't Tell Anyone (No Le Digas a Nadie)* by Mikaela Shwer at nodigasfilm.com and related educator resources at pbs.org/pov/donttellanyone. (See *What We're Watching* in this issue for how you can view the film for free!)

signed up to get more information, and I got their scholarship program for the first semester of college when I graduated from high school.

It was never my intention to become an immigrant activist. It was just kind of the urgency and facing that head-on in that moment was what motivated me to do something and to get involved. ... I've been involved [in NYSYLC] ever since. I became involved in the organization in 2009. I was an intern, then I was a member, then I became a core member, and that's where I am now. Being a core member means that you get to pretty much run the day-to-day aspects of the organization. [Over] the years, we've had rallies, we've had demonstrations, hunger strikes. ... We've had open mics, civil disobedience actions. All things activism and immigrant rights.

What experiences did you have that people who've always been citizens or had green cards wouldn't understand?

I think people that are born with citizenship have never had to experience having to prove that you're worthy of it. ... You never have to take a test to prove that you are worthy, and that you know history, and that you belong here, and that you've never committed a crime and things like that, you know?

When you're undocumented, there are obviously a lot of things you're not eligible for, but there's also a lot of weight you carry with you. A lot of fear, a lot of silence in your everyday interactions with friends and with partners, and it's something that just doesn't go away because your status is fixed. You still carry that trauma with you and you



The Column

In 2010, at age 20, Rivera started an online advice column called “Ask Angy” for undocumented youth in the United States. The column, the first of its kind, came out of her work with the New York State Youth Leadership Council and provided a space for undocumented youth to anonymously ask questions and to share stories. Over the years, she’s received a wide range of questions, from concerns about getting to work safely without a driver’s license to questions about same-sex marriage.

Rivera says, “I think one of the questions that most impacted me was a young woman who was undocumented and wanted to become a parent. ... For that question, I interviewed my mom and I asked her why she had decided to become a parent in the United States. I’m the oldest of four, so I have three younger siblings who are citizens. ... Through her answers, I was able to respond.”

“When you’re undocumented, there are obviously a lot of things you’re not eligible for, but there’s also a lot of weight you carry with you. A lot of fear, a lot of silence.”

still have nightmares. It’s something that’s always there.

How do you think your age and gender identity play a part in what you’ve been able to accomplish and who you’ve been able to reach?

In terms of my age, it was easy for me to connect with young people. So many of the young people that we work with faced a lot of difficulty from their teachers and from their counselors and college advisers, who would either discourage them from pursuing higher education or just to stay in school altogether.

On the flip side, being young and being a woman makes it harder for people to take you seriously. Imagine, I was 18, 19, trying to tell adults that had careers and years of work that what they were doing could be better, or that they needed us to do something with them, or that we should be invited in their classrooms, or that they should listen to us when it came to legislative things. People already feel like young people don’t have experience. ... Then, on top of that, being a woman, you always have to fight a little bit harder for people to listen to you. It was the mixture of both. I know that whenever we come to spaces, even now, even though I’m 25, you’re still not heard as much.

What do you wish educators knew about working with students who are undocumented and about the immigrant rights movement at large?

In terms of organizing for us, educators are an amazing resource and a tool for

community engagement, too. Through educators, we’re able to meet youth who were in our shoes—who are 15, 16, 17—and we’re able to connect with them and provide resources and support and engage with them in a way that makes them feel empowered at a very young age. That’s something that facilitates itself when we have educators on board.

Now, we’re at a point where we have a lot of Dream Teams in high school. Dream Teams are like school clubs. Through these clubs, the students are able to get resources and information and connect with other programs, mobilizing their schools for change. Most of the high school students, with their teachers, are now fundraising for scholarships for their students regardless of their immigration status. Teachers are a key part of that.

We need teachers [who] are better informed about their rights, about the rights of their students, the students’ families even if they’re immigrants, and about the opportunities that are out there. In my own experience, I would have teachers recommend me for things that I wasn’t eligible for or try to offer me scholarships that I couldn’t apply for. That made me feel a little bit less comfortable with sharing with them why I couldn’t apply. If there had been an atmosphere created where being an immigrant was OK and was normal, maybe things would have been different. ♦

van der Valk is the managing editor and Lindberg is a writer and associate editor for Teaching Tolerance.



A NEW FRAME OF MIND

For decades, parents and professionals have shaped our understanding of autistic children and how to help them learn. Now autistic youth and adults themselves are adding inside knowledge to the discussion.

BY SEAN McCOLLUM ILLUSTRATION BY MASA

SCHOOL WAS NEVER EASY and rarely pleasant for Elly Wong. Their* smarts were not a question. They had learned to read by age 3, and grade school teachers suggested they skip a grade. But social interactions were difficult and classroom settings often battered their senses. “I’m sensitive to noise and get easily overstimulated,” Wong says. “My strongest impressions of elementary school are constant crying in response to being overwhelmed.” As the meltdowns continued into high school, a counselor recommended a psychological evaluation.

By that time, Wong had been doing independent research “through the magic of the Internet” and piecing together clues for a self-diagnosis. The psychiatrist agreed: anxiety, depression and Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD). Wong proceeded to negotiate their own 504 plan; their parents knew little about autism and “the professionals at my school were pretty unhelpful.” The accommodations were relatively minor: Extra time on tests, use of noise-canceling headphones and subtitled videos were among them. Even so, Wong says, “I got constantly challenged over my accommodations.”

*Wong’s preferred pronoun is they.

Last fall, they enrolled as a first-year student at Syracuse University in New York.

Working with and educating students like Wong who are on the autism spectrum has been the subject of much discussion and controversy in the last generation. The narrative has often been that children with these diagnoses are sources of tragedy for families and a drain on schools. Educators unfamiliar with autism and its range of expressions have often been perplexed and intimidated by students in their classrooms. Even as autism awareness has grown, many districts still lack the resources to help their teachers and schools update their practices and become more inclusive of affected students and families. Often, special education teachers must rely on their own research and resourcefulness.

In recent years, however, the neurodiversity movement, characterized by the advocacy of autistic individuals speaking for themselves, has entered the conversation. Advocates and their allies are eager to challenge pessimistic attitudes toward ASD and share insights for helping their fellow autistic people learn, cope and thrive in settings—particularly educational settings—that have often been indifferent, if not unwelcoming, to their needs.

“No one knows more about autism, about what it’s like to be autistic or what autistic people need, than autistic people ourselves,” says Julia Bascom, deputy executive director of the Autistic Self Advocacy Network (ASAN). “We have a unique first-person perspective, and that perspective absolutely has to be centered in any sort of advocacy work focused on our community.”

“PRESUME
THERE’S
A MIND
IN THERE,
READY TO
TEACH YOU
SOMETHING
YOU DON’T
KNOW.”

Old-School Autism Education

Though our understanding has grown significantly in recent years, the first diagnosis of autism as a distinct neurological disorder only occurred in the 1940s. Decades later, British psychiatrist Lorna Wing successfully made the case that autistic behaviors take different forms in different people, from nonspeaking individuals capable of little social engagement to those adept at navigating—or excelling—in society. Building on 1930s research by Austrian Hans Asperger, Wing described an “autism spectrum” and championed its 1980 inclusion in the bible of psychiatry, the *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders*, or *DSM*.

Today, ASD is viewed as a neurological disorder in a person’s ability

to send social cues or process incoming ones. “By definition, autistic people have a language impairment,” says Sharon Rosenbloom, a speech pathologist, founder of Turning Pointe Autism Foundation and mother of Joey, an adult autistic son. “They’re neurologically disorganized.” Along with those issues, many autistics deal with high levels of anxiety and hypersensitivity to sensory stimulation.

Traditional autism therapy has emphasized teaching autistic kids to act as “normal” as possible. “We often see schools focusing on social skills training and behavior modification to make children appear less visibly autistic,” says ASAN’s Bascom. Unfortunately, these therapies have frequently come at the expense of engagement and learning.

Applied Behavior Analysis (ABA therapy) has been the cornerstone of traditional therapy. ABA therapy recommends 40 hours a week of repetitive drills and positive-reinforcement techniques to attempt to replace unwanted behaviors with more socially acceptable ones. For example, the teacher or therapist may work with an autistic child one-on-one to gradually build up his or her ability to maintain eye contact, perhaps rewarded with something like a sip of juice. Reducing

Two recent books, *NeuroTribes* by Steve Silberman and *In a Different Key* by John Donvan and Caren Zucker, offer compelling narrative histories of the scientific and social explorations of autism’s complexities and perplexities.



self-stimulation—the flapping of hands, rhythmic rocking, fidgeting with a favorite object or other repetitive motions associated with autism—is also stressed. ABA works on verbal skills as well, promoting speech fluency in speaking students and having non-speaking students pick out flash cards to develop the association between words and objects.

Critics of ABA therapies express frustration with their concentration on students’ deficits at the expense of celebrating their interests or strengths. Ido Kedar, a nonspeaking autistic teen, expresses his contempt for ABA in his book, *Ido in Autismland*. His deficits are not cognitive, but a self-described neurological disconnect between mind and body. “In school I sat through ABC tapes over and over and added $1 + 2 = 3$ over and over,” he recalls. “I was bored out of my wits. It made me die inside. I was like a zombie inside because I had no hope.”

“Too often we teach autistic students using a deficit model—spending our time trying to fix what they can’t do instead of building out from what they can,” says Leah Kelley, a veteran special education teacher near Vancouver, British Columbia, and mother of an autistic son. “It’s a pathologized and medicalized model.”

It is past time to update and upgrade those models, says Kelley and other autism advocates and allies. More and more, the theories of medical experts and proponents of “cope till you cure” are being overwritten by the lived experiences of autistic kids and adults themselves. They want to share their narratives, and—thanks to new thinking in communication therapies as well as new assistive technologies—more are having the chance to tell them. An emerging theme? Autistics want help but are wary of people trying to “fix” them.

Multiple Methods

In his book, Kedar describes his early life as feeling trapped in an insubordinate body; not even those closest to him knew how to reach him. As a nonspeaking autistic, he had no words to call for help, and dyspraxia blocked him from being able to accurately signal his needs. His movements and actions often appeared impulsive and chaotic.

Kedar indicates the big breakthrough in his ability to express himself came at age 7. While trapped with his own thoughts, he had been learning to read. Now he also began to write, forming words with a letter board and—eventually—by typing. The process was painstaking, but it soon became clear that he was an aware and articulate kid with a strong desire to express himself. With the means to communicate, Ido progressed rapidly, and within two years was being mainstreamed in several of his middle school classes. Now

GLOSSARY OF AUTISM-RELATED TERMS

APPLIED BEHAVIORAL ANALYSIS (ABA)

Therapies targeted to increase or decrease specific behaviors

ASPERGER SYNDROME

A disorder on the autism spectrum, distinguished by relatively intact language and cognitive skills; as of 2013, Asperger syndrome was eliminated as a distinct diagnosis and folded into the autism spectrum

ASSISTIVE AND ADAPTIVE TECHNOLOGY

Devices or equipment used to facilitate functional capabilities of people with disabilities; for autistics, these may include computer tablets and software to aid communication

DYSPRAxia

Difficulty with coordination and motor planning

HIGH-FUNCTIONING/ LOW-FUNCTIONING AUTISM

Terms traditionally used to describe the severity of autism in individuals; autism advocates now reject this usage

NEURODIVERSITY

The concept that neurological differences in people represent normal, natural variations; many autism advocates embrace this term as a way to challenge pathologized models of autism

PROMPT

A cue or hint to assist communication or behavior by autistic students

“STIMMING”

Self-stimulating behavior; repetitive movements or vocalizations common in autistic individuals as a means for calming or entertaining themselves

TACTILE DEFENSIVENESS

Extreme sensitivity to specific textural stimuli

in high school, he is reported to be on a college-bound track.

For many advocates and allies, matching autistic students with the means to communicate to the best of their ability is priority number one. But there is no one-size-fits-most fix, says Rosenbloom. She likens the process to being fitted for eyeglasses. “When I get the right prescription, I can see well,” she says. In the same way, any prescription to aid communication for those on the autism spectrum requires customization.

“Some of us will be able to speak fluently, but our speech may not match what we want to say, while others might not be able to use oral speech as well,” explains Bascom. “Autistic students should have multiple methods of communication made available to use, whether that looks like a dedicated speech-generating device, a text-to-speech app on an iPad, sign language, or a pencil and paper. But it’s not enough to just give someone access to an alternative; autistic students with communication impairments need qualified staff working with us who can systematically teach the *hows* and *whys* of communication as well.”

Presume Intellect

Bascom and Rosenbloom agree on another point when it comes to working with autistic students: Presume intellect. That means not talking about autistic students in the third person when they are present. That means speaking to them in tones and complete sentences appropriate for their age, not baby talk. Rosenbloom says she has witnessed autistic kids respond to a new teacher speaking to them normally with a look that says, “Whoa!”

“I have a mantra: Develop a relationship,” she says. “Presume there’s a mind in there, ready to teach you something you don’t know.”

Relating and communicating are practices that too often have been absent from autism education. Many autistic people are very aware when non-autistic educators are underestimating or patronizing them. Rosenbloom contends that respectful and meaningful interaction has the potential to reduce aggressive and self-injurious behaviors as autistic students learn to trust they can get their needs met without melting down.

Honoring that trust is another part of helping autistic individuals connect with the world. After years of acquiescing to the wills of others, many have developed understandable stores of resentment toward ableist attitudes. They need to be able to say “no” to what is being asked and trust it will be respected, says Kelley, who argues that better treatment for autistic people is a matter of social justice. “We dehumanize people when we don’t let them say ‘no.’ So much of their therapy has been compliance based, which is a real denial of dissent. Unless you allow dissent, whatever ‘yes’ you get is absolutely meaningless.”

This position echoes the motto of ASAN: “Nothing About Us Without Us.” More and more autistic young people and adults—like Elly Wong, Julie Bascom and Ido Kedar—are ready and determined to inform improvements in educational policies and practices that affect them and other neurodiverse students. Their contributions to more inclusive schools can only benefit us all, wherever we live on the neurodiversity spectrum. ♦

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

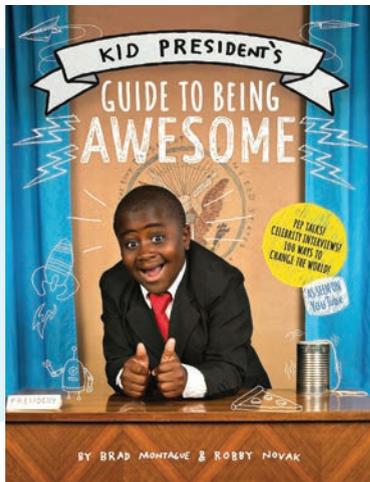


TOOLKIT

Put this story into action! VISIT » tolerance.org/autism

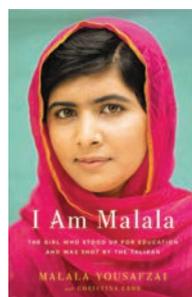
What We're Reading

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



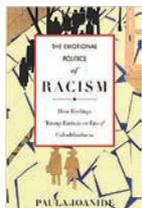
“Treat people like they are people, people.” Those are some closing words of advice from Brad Montague and Robby Novak (aka Kid President) in *Kid President’s Guide to Being Awesome*. In this case, being awesome means making the world a better place. That may sound like a lot for children—and adults!—to chew on, but 100 tips included in this guide focus on using what you have to do what you can.
ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

“A nonstop party that will have kids embracing their awesomeness and changing the world.”
—Monita K. Bell

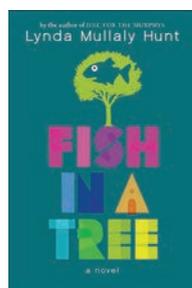


In her autobiography, *I Am Malala: The Girl Who Stood Up for Education and Was Shot by the Taliban*, Malala Yousafzai (with support from co-writer Christina Lamb) reveals the heartache of seeing her beloved Pakistan overtaken by the Taliban. She takes readers on a compelling journey showing how she—an average girl worried about grades, friends and boys—became an international spokesperson for girls’ education. Readers will love Malala’s humanity and sense of humor. Most important, they will see that faith, love and courage are stronger than hate.
MIDDLE SCHOOL

“A powerful story that every young person should read.”
—Jarah Botello

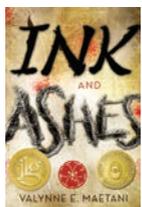


PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT
The Emotional Politics of Racism: How Feelings Trump Facts in an Era of Colorblindness by Paula Ioanide

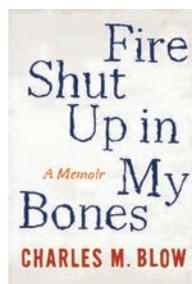


Ally struggles to keep her reading difficulties a secret, but her teacher soon notices that Ally always has an excuse to avoid reading and writing assignments. Once Ally admits her struggle, she gets over her fear and opens the path to conquer it. *Fish in a Tree* by Lynda Mullaly Hunt is an example of hope for students who struggle with learning differences and a lesson for all students: With patience and hard work, you can do anything.
MIDDLE SCHOOL

“Ally shows that the ‘impossible’ is possible.”
—Cecile Jones

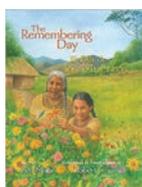


MIDDLE & HIGH SCHOOL
Ink and Ashes by Valynne E. Maetani

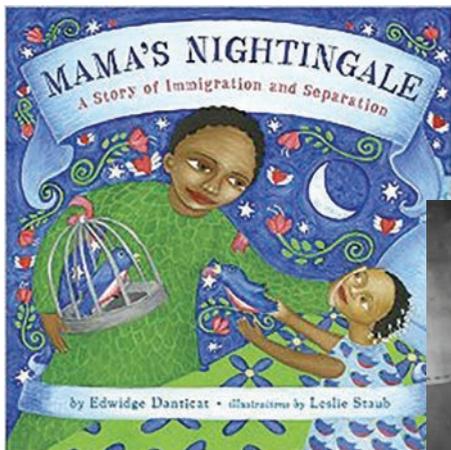


In *Fire Shut Up in My Bones*, Charles M. Blow recounts a life of dramatic highs and lows that led him to a successful career with *The New York Times*. While Blow’s past was often painful (among other obstacles, he endured grinding poverty, abusive relatives and brutal hazing while pledging a fraternity), it was also filled with inspiration and the love of a tireless mother who never allowed the world to underestimate him. The resulting tale is a beautiful story about coming into oneself.
HIGH SCHOOL

“Honest, raw and so inspiring!”
—Sara Wicht

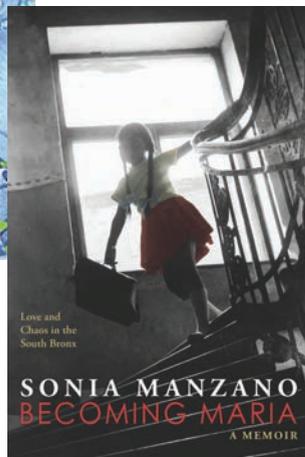


ELEMENTARY
The Remembering Day / El Día de los Muertos by Pat Mora, illustrated by Robert Casilla



“A brave tale for children about the real-life struggles many families face.”

—Margaret Sasser

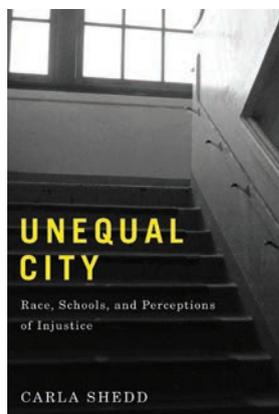


“An important discussion of racism, Islamophobia and xenophobia in post-9/11 America.”

—Maya Lindberg

“Whether or not students watched Sesame Street, they will fall in love with Manzano’s storytelling. A cover-to-cover read.”

—Adrienne van der Valk



“Shedd writes about Chicago, but the borders and contrasts exist in every city.”

—Maureen Costello

Urban educators eager to understand their students’ lives will do well to grab a copy of **Unequal City: Race, Schools, and Perceptions of Injustice**. Sociologist Carla Shedd studies how race and place—schools, neighborhoods and gang turf—interact in Chicago high school students’ lives to produce either opportunity or reinforce inequality. By including student voices, she puts heart and life into this informative book. The result is a richly drawn picture of how students’ experiences with police, neighborhood and gang borders, and “carceral” schools teach them to see the world as either unjust or full of possibilities.

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Saya’s Haitian mother is imprisoned for being “without papers” in Edwidge Danticat’s **Mama’s Nightingale: A Story of Immigration and Separation**. Saya misses her mother terribly and listens to her voice on the family answering machine to feel close to her. But soon, Saya receives cassette tapes in the mail of her mother’s recorded stories. Inspired to act, Saya decides to send her own story to every news outlet she can find, garnering media attention and a hearing that changes the course of their lives.

ELEMENTARY

In **Becoming Maria: Love and Chaos in the South Bronx**, Sonia Manzano remembers a childhood marked by poverty and uncertainty that—while often frightening—fed her creative development as an actress and writer. The memoir is both heart-wrenching and hilarious, offering a crystal-clear window into the life of a young Latina woman struggling with identity, friendship and a family that could be at once nurturing and terrifying.

HIGH SCHOOL

Deepa Iyer’s **We Too Sing America: South Asian, Arab, Muslim, and Sikh Immigrants Shape Our Multiracial Future** is a timely read. Iyer writes that the United States “has yet to fully confront the scope and effects of racial anxiety, Islamophobia, and xenophobia that have permeated our national narratives and policies in the years since 9/11.” Iyer addresses the *scope* and *effects*—and she brings the experiences of her titular subjects, particularly young activists and leaders, to the forefront.

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT



What We're Watching

Dim the lights and get ready to learn with these TT-approved films!

Director Stanley Nelson spent seven years making *The Black Panthers: Vanguard of the Revolution*, years he says allowed him to “sift through the fragmented perceptions and find the core driver of the movement: the Black Panther Party emerged out of a love for their people and a devotion to empowering them.” The documentary unpacks the erroneous—but often-held—belief that the Party promoted violence as a means of resistance. Instead, it tells a more nuanced story about social movements, the realities of standing up for human rights and the consequences of challenging state institutions. The story pulsates with relevance in 2016, offering students a clear example of why understanding the present requires us to acknowledge the past. (116 min.)

theblackpanthers.com/home
HIGH SCHOOL

He Named Me Malala tells the courageous and inspirational story of Malala Yousafzai’s journey from advocating for girls’ rights in Pakistan and being shot by the Taliban to winning the Nobel Peace Prize. The film centers on her relationship with her father, an activist himself, who named Malala after the Pashtun heroine

Malalai of Maiwand. Interspersed with whimsical animation and comical interviews with her younger brothers, *He Named Me Malala* shows the teenage and “real life” sides of this respected hero; both sides are sure to inspire students and teachers. A curriculum guide and discussion guide created by Journeys in Film can be downloaded for free at journeysinfilm.org/films/he-named-me-malala. (88 min.)

henamedmemalalamovie.com
PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Students and staff alike can take inspiration from Lizzie Velasquez, the woman behind the documentary *A Brave Heart: The Lizzie Velasquez Story*. Born with an undiagnosed syndrome that affects her appearance, Velasquez endured both schoolyard and cyber bullying—experiences that hurt her emotionally but ultimately motivated her to take back her self-esteem, voice and destiny. The film chronicles Velasquez’ rise from YouTube video blogger to sought-after public speaker and anti-bullying advocate. It also addresses Velasquez’ quest for an accurate diagnosis, which she received during filming. An accompanying discussion guide and tips for taking action

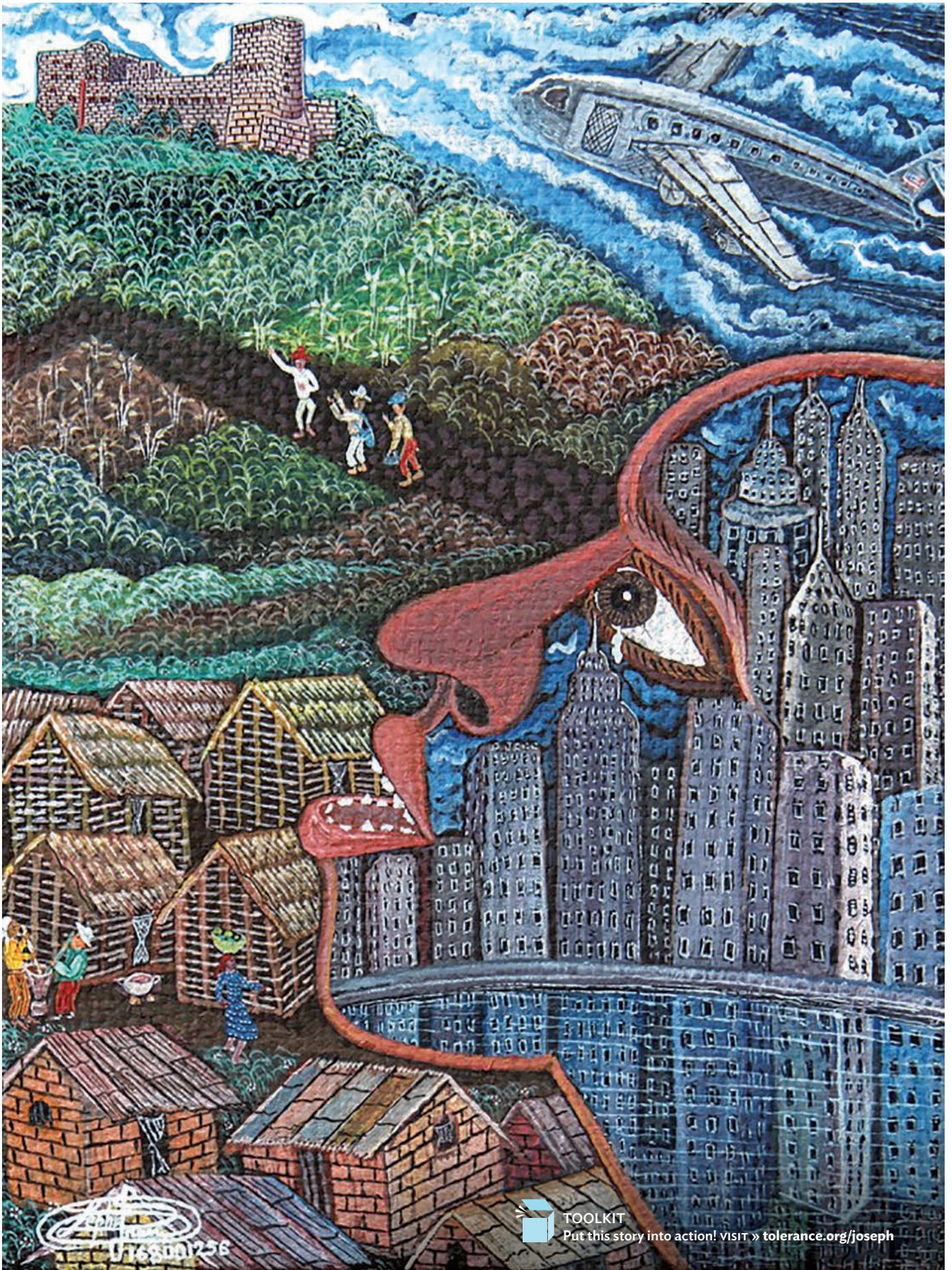
can help your students join in the quest to make schools safer for all kids. (78 min.)

imwithlizzie.com
MIDDLE AND HIGH SCHOOL AND PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Have you heard of POV’s free lending library of DVDs for educators and community organizers? This library lends over 80 independent, nonfiction films for screenings in local communities. You can search for films by title or by topic, such as education, indigenous issues, LGBT and youth views. The library also offers a downloadable discussion guide, a “Further Reading” list and a lesson plan for most films. Browse this e-library today—and begin borrowing by joining the POV Community Network!

Note: One of POV’s lending library titles is *Don’t Tell Anyone (No Le Digas a Nadie)*, featuring immigrant-rights activist Angy Rivera. Read our interview with Rivera in this issue!

amd.org/outreach_filmlibrary.php
HIGH SCHOOL AND PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT



Joseph
0168001256

 **TOOLKIT**
Put this story into action! VISIT » tolerance.org/joseph

Joseph's Castle in the Sky

BY MARGARET AUGUSTE

As the plane descended, Joseph could not tear his eyes away from the palm trees rapidly getting closer. He pressed his nose against the window to get a better view.

Joseph, who was adopted, was traveling to Haiti, the country of his birth.

He had wanted to visit Haiti ever since his fourth-grade teacher gave his class an assignment: Share an important landmark from your culture of origin. Joseph could still hear his classmates excitedly shouting, "I choose the Eiffel Tower!" and "I choose the Taj Mahal!"

The assignment had put Joseph's stomach in knots. He didn't have any ideas about what his landmark should be. He wasn't even sure he wanted to remind his classmates that he was adopted. It made him feel different. He still remembered embarrassing questions like, "Why is your dad white?" and "Do you miss your real parents?"

But now he was here, and Joseph and his father boarded a bus called a "tap-tap," meaning "quick quick" in Haitian Creole. They laughed as they were greeted by a bleating goat and squawking chickens that passengers were either holding in their laps, like babies, or carrying in crates.

"I am Louis. Where are you going?" asked the driver with a wide grin, shouting above the noise.

"To see the Citadelle!" Joseph's father shouted back.

"Ah, the Citadelle Laferrière," Louis said happily. "The unknown eighth Wonder of the World."

"Why is it called 'unknown'?" Joseph asked curiously.

Louis explained that Haiti has experienced many bad times—including a recent earthquake—and that it is often hard for people to see the beauty and promise that exists on the island and within the Haitian people.

"To the Haitian people," Louis said, "the Citadelle is a symbol of the sacrifice that we were willing to make for our freedom, showing our strength and our resilience."

Suddenly in the distance, they saw it. Joseph gasped with delight. "There it is!"

They stood at the foot of the mountain, with its steps winding high up into the sky, where the Citadelle loomed majestically above them. Its diamond-shaped front extended so far, it looked like a pirate ship that was somehow part of the surrounding mountains.

"It's incredible," said Joseph's father. Joseph agreed. He had thought these kinds of magnificent buildings existed only in cities, surrounded by noise and people, with only other tall buildings for company.

The Citadelle, by contrast, stood alone in the middle of a forest of palm trees and wild flowers, surrounded by quiet, with the silence broken only by the sounds of birds chirping and the distant crashing of waves.

Louis explained that Haiti was a French colony and that the colonists had forced many thousands of enslaved people to come to the island from Africa and labor in the plantations. However, in 1791, the enslaved Haitians began the fight for their independence, defeating the French in 1804 after many heroic battles. Under King Henri Christophe, formerly enslaved Haitians built the Citadelle into the side of Haiti's tallest mountain to defend their home against future attacks and to serve as a symbol of liberty, completing it in 1820.

Inside the Citadelle, Joseph looked up and realized there was no ceiling but, instead, a series of crisscrossed stone walkways that looked like lace. Looking through them at the sun above was like looking through a kaleidoscope and seeing many colors and shapes.

As they made the long trek back down the mountain, Joseph thought about the thousands of Haitians walking along that same path so long ago. They may have been scared, but they had succeeded against all odds to build the mightiest fortress in the Caribbean.

Joseph no longer felt afraid, but tall and strong, like the Citadelle. For the first time, Joseph felt glad to be different and special. He could not wait to tell his classmates the incredible tale of his landmark, the unknown wonder. ♦

Questions for Readers

RIGHT THERE (IN THE TEXT)

Why was the Citadelle built?

THINK AND SEARCH (IN THE TEXT)

Why is it sometimes hard for non-Haitian people to see beauty and promise in Haiti?

AUTHOR AND ME (IN MY HEAD)

What does Joseph think about during his trek back down the mountain?

ON MY OWN (IN MY HEAD)

What does it mean for people to "fight for their independence"?

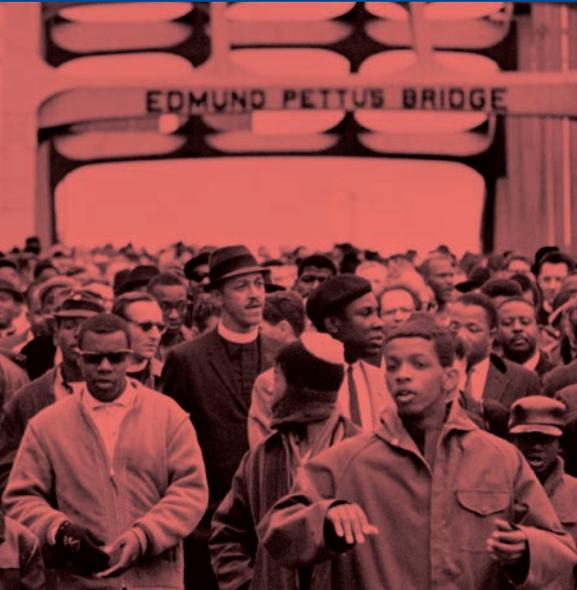
We Have To
Embrace Our
Differences To
Create Freedom
& Acceptance
For All

- Jazz Jennings

sewell

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!





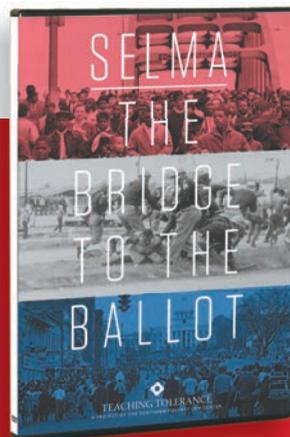
SELMA: THE BRIDGE TO THE BALLOT

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

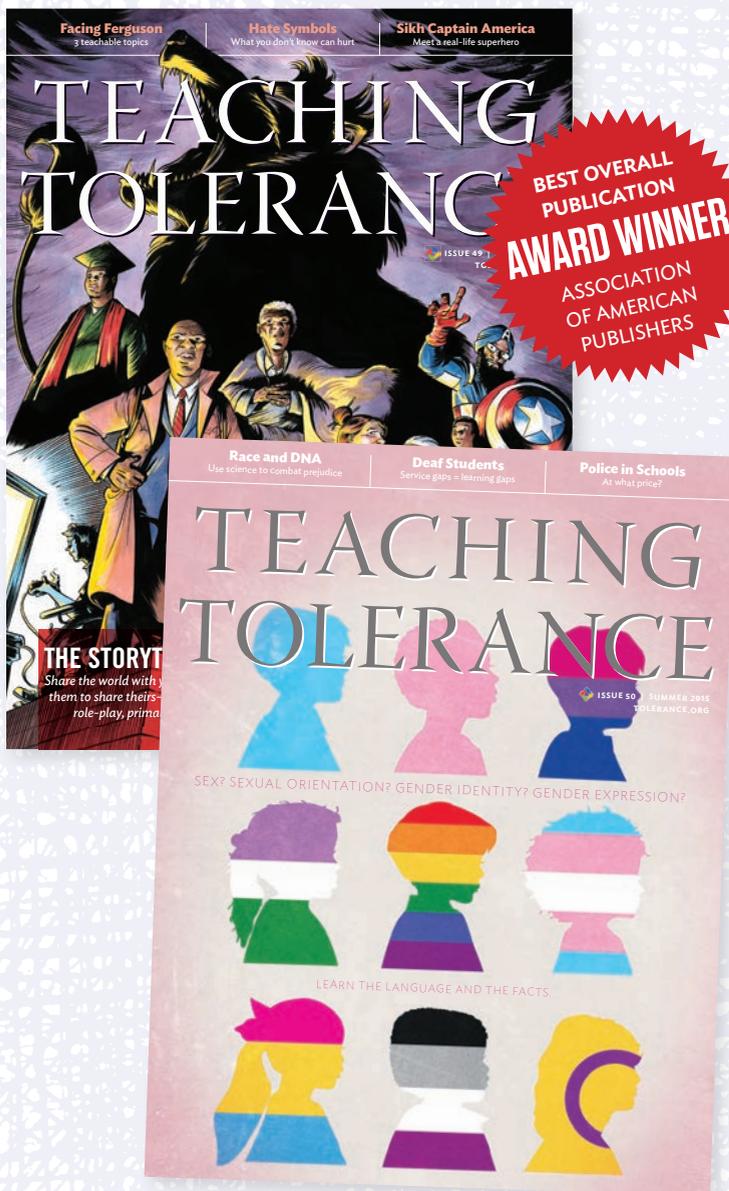


Order *Selma: The Bridge to the Ballot* today!

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

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

GET YOUR FREE SUBSCRIPTION TODAY!



IS YOUR
TEACHING
TOLERANCE
SUBSCRIPTION
UP-TO-DATE?
ARE YOU SURE?

Update your information at tolerance.org/subscribe, and never miss an issue. PLUS remain eligible for special promotions and giveaways!

DON'T FORGET TO TELL A COLLEAGUE
about the best-kept secret in education!
TOLERANCE.ORG/SUBSCRIBE