

Facing Ferguson
3 teachable topics

Hate Symbols
What you don't know can hurt

Sikh Captain America
Meet a real-life superhero

TEACHING TOLERANCE

ISSUE 49 | SPRING 2015
TOLERANCE.ORG

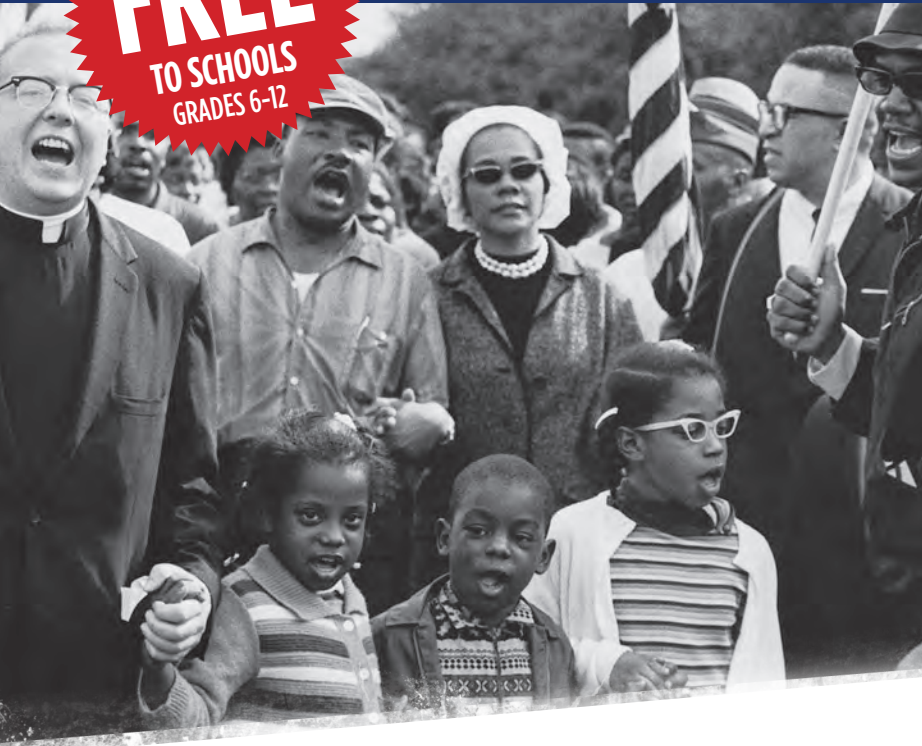
THE STORYTELLING ISSUE

Share the world with your students—and invite them to share theirs—through graphic novels, personal narratives, primary sources and more!

NP
2014

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

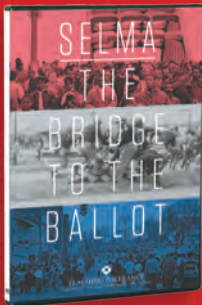


LOT

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 pre-order *Selma: The Bridge to the Ballot* at tolerance.org/selma-bridge-to-ballot.

The film kit and teacher's guide will be available this winter. Observe the 50th anniversary of the Selma-to-Montgomery marches with your students! Recommended for grades six and up.

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



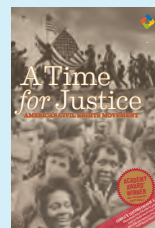
ONE SURVIVOR REMEMBERS

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



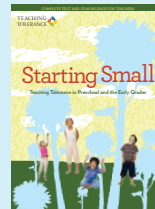
A TIME FOR JUSTICE

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

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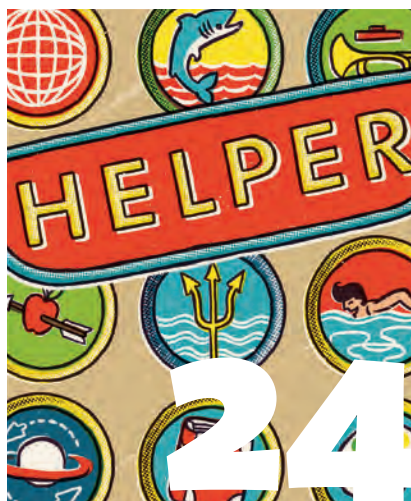
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ILLUSTRATION BY **NATE POWELL**



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Congressman John Lewis talks to *Teaching Tolerance* about writing graphic novels!
tolerance.org/john-lewis-video

TEACH FOR JUSTICE

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TEACHING
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**“Stories can conquer fear, you know.
They can make the heart bigger.”**

—BEN OKRI



For quite some time, *Teaching Tolerance* has subscribed to Emily Style’s view that students need texts that are both “mirrors”—works in which they see themselves reflected—and “windows”—opportunities to look into the lives of others. Students who encounter a diverse mix of stories that are real and told from experience can learn to turn mirrors into windows and windows into mirrors.

In other words, stories reflect the essence of human experience in all its variety.

About a year ago, I had the honor of sitting across from Representative John Lewis in a St. Louis hotel and hearing him tell his story. It was one I’d known, of course, from history books and from having read his newly released graphic novel, *March: Book I*. But listening to him describe his first nonviolent sit-in at a lunch counter, followed by his first arrest, added layers to my understanding. (You can see the interview online at tolerance.org/john-lewis-video.)

Soon after, the story of a costume player taking on the role of Sikh Captain America came to our attention. The costume and the cartoon based on this character was a way Sikh American Vishavjit Singh could talk about his own experiences with intolerance and explain how the world looks through the eyes of someone many Americans consider to be an outsider.

Since *Teaching Tolerance* has been focusing on literacy—it’s the basis of

our new curriculum, *Perspectives for a Diverse America*—we decided to explore how using texts like graphic novels, cartoons and comics in the classroom can do more than provide high-interest material to struggling readers. This practice can also promote social justice by providing counter-narratives to traditional stories and privileging the voices of protagonists who are rarely depicted as heroes.

Starting with John Lewis and Vishavjit Singh, this issue began to take shape as a collection of features focused on the benefits of storytelling. Virtually every article shows how reading, hearing and telling stories can increase understanding, spark empathy, reduce the stress of oppression and kindle a passion for justice.

I’m proud of every issue of *Teaching Tolerance*—but this one seems, to me, to embody the essence of TT more than most. Storytelling is the closest thing to walking in another’s shoes if you want to see the world from someone else’s point of view. And that is, after all, what we at *Teaching Tolerance* encourage every day.

Today, fostering tolerance and understanding feels especially critical. I am writing this on Dec. 21, just hours after two police officers were killed in New York City, executed by a horribly misguided individual who thought he was avenging the deaths of Eric Garner, Michael Brown and others. Already, my social media feeds are freshly abuzz with recriminations, finger-pointing and hate.

Too much of what is being said amounts to fabricated narratives that demonize young men of color, the police, demonstrators and even our president. We desperately need to move beyond this fearful, inauthentic storytelling and work together to see how we all operate within social systems that still, unfortunately, reflect the legacy of racism.

If we are to confront and heal the wounds that divide us as a society, we must be willing to listen to stories that are not like our own, and truly hear and believe them. We must do it for *all* students, regardless of color, income bracket, national origin, religion, language proficiency, ability, LGBT status or place on the gender spectrum. We must do it for our students whose parents’ work in law enforcement and for our students whose parents might be behind bars. We must learn and teach them to ask each other, “What is it like to be you?”

Howard Stevenson says that our fears “are rooted in how little we know about families and individuals who are different from us.” Educators can begin to erase these fears by helping the children of this incredibly diverse generation speak their truths while also acknowledging the truths of others.

—Maureen Costello



THERE'S NO TIME.

We get it. When you're an educator, it's hard to find the time to stay up on social justice issues—so let us do the work for you.

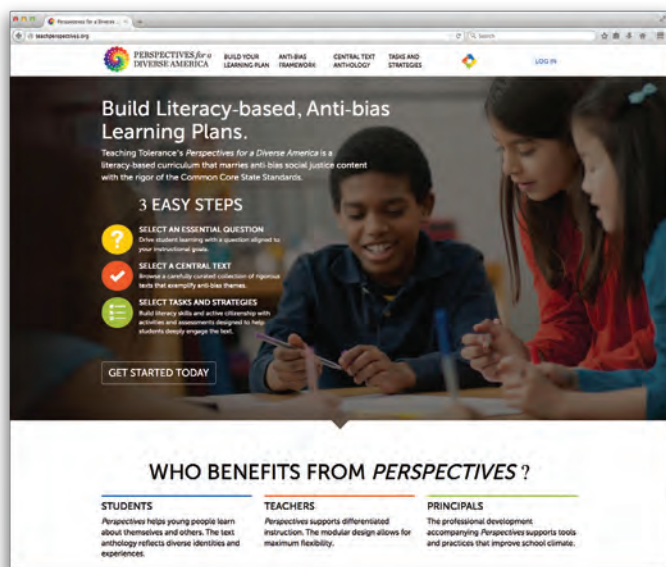
Join the Teaching Tolerance community, and we'll keep you plugged in to anti-bias education news, resources and tips. That way when you have the rare spare minute, you're all set to join the conversation with like-minded educators.



subscribe to our weekly newsletter at tolerance.org/signup

FIRST BELL

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Reader Exchange

The launch of TT's new anti-bias curriculum, *Perspectives for a Diverse America* (PDA), got educators excited!

I have already been building and using lessons; it's great! PDA is very customizable to your diverse needs in your school and your classroom. As a teacher of diverse students in so many ways—including multiple disabilities—I have really been able to connect to so many of the resources from Teaching Tolerance. PDA is another great one.

—SUBMITTED BY ROBIN GRAY KING

An exciting time for educators, Teaching Tolerance and students. How wonderful!!! Congratulations.

—SUBMITTED BY CATHY SMITH-WENSKA

Many readers shared opinions about TT materials—from praise for *Perspectives for a Diverse America* to criticism of our latest immigration story.

READY FOR FALL

My name is Emily Major and I am a middle school social studies teacher in Denver, Colorado. As I [got] materials ready for this upcoming school year, I stumbled across your website and the wealth of free lesson plans that you have made available.

I am bookmarking many of these and am so excited to teach them to supplement my social studies content. All of these are

excellent resources for students to learn tolerance and civil rights, as well as build on their strong character qualities.

Thank you so much for your work; it is very much appreciated.

EMILY MAJOR
VIA EMAIL

IT'S OK TO BE SAD

[On "Create Safety by Modeling Vulnerability"] I love this article and agree 100%! My mom recently

moved away and I miss her so much I started crying in class. My children saw me and we talked about missing people who go away and they told me stories of how they handled it when they felt the same way and gave suggestions as to how I can handle it better. It was endearing and definitely brought us closer and strengthened our trust in each other. I hope it also showed them that adults don't have all the answers

and that even the littlest kid has something of value to offer in a time of need.

ASHLEY SCHWARTZ
VIA FACEBOOK

REMEMBER THE ROMA

It would have been extremely welcomed if Teaching Tolerance would have brought awareness to August 2, the day which the international Roma (Gypsy) community commemorates the Holocaust and the genocide of the Roma that took place during WW2. ... Roma were gassed at the ‘Gypsy Family Camp’ housed in Auschwitz. Close to 250,000 Roma were killed in death camps. ... There are numerous sources that you can share regarding the 1,000 Roma youth that attended the ceremony in Krakow this year. Please help us educate.

GINA CSANYI-ROBAH
VIA FACEBOOK

WRONG PRIORITIES FOR TT

[On “Teach for (a Diverse) America”] While TFA is certainly entitled to toot

its own horn, this blog entry shows misguided priorities on the part of “Teaching Tolerance.” ... Teaching Tolerance should be focused on real issues around promoting tolerance and not giving more PR for TFA.

ANONYMOUS
VIA TOLERANCE.ORG

OFFENSIVE IMAGE?

The picture on page 8 of your last magazine—for me—is not a “teach tolerance thing.” Women covering their heads is so un-tolerance. It has nothing to do with religion. ... I am offended.

GARY L. COBB
McKinleyville, CA

TT RESPONDS

We use the image you referenced frequently because we hear from teachers that anti-Muslim sentiments are common in schools. Tolerance in schools must extend beyond breaking down barriers between those of difference races. Our hope is that Teaching

Tolerance magazine can help educators understand the importance of honoring religious diversity as well.

IMMIGRATION OVERSIGHT

[On “An Educator’s Guide to the Immigration Debate”] This is good, but one important perspective excluded is how immigration policy is experienced by Native Americans. Since native communities were here long before the border, some native lands exist on both sides of the fences. People living in those communities have been subjected to increasing militarization and surveillance, as well as ongoing harassment from law enforcement and militia members who can’t differentiate ... Native Americans and indigenous people from Central America[n] or Mexican citizens. These communities,

Amelia T. Grabowski
@AmeliaTGrabow
[On “On This Day”] In times like these, I’m esp. grateful to orgs. like @Tolerance_org who help us understand the world and improve it.



despite being disproportionately affected by immigration legislation, are often entirely overlooked and excluded from the decision-making process. It would be great if this site fought against that injustice by including Native American experiences in immigration teaching resources.

ANONYMOUS
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.

Marti Molitor

Teaching Tolerance has been such a positive step toward helping us, any of us, all of us, to see ourselves, others, and the world in general. As I worked with students, I learned as well.

[facebook.com/teachingtolerance.org](https://www.facebook.com/teachingtolerance.org)



JIM WEST

Ask Teaching Tolerance



Q. How can I teach about gender equity when my students insist it is no longer an issue? They point to “women in science” programs and other initiatives as evidence that this problem has already been addressed.

Ask your students what they would expect to see in a society that is completely equitable. Prompt them, if necessary, to consider wages, political and business leadership and childcare responsibilities. Be prepared with data to show that gender equity has, in fact, not been achieved. Or, if your students are old enough, ask them to research and report back on these topics. Be ready to acknowledge a

shifting paradigm, though: Today, women outnumber men in college, and the gap is especially wide in communities of color.

Try to offer honest opportunities for students to reflect on the gender inequities they’ve seen in their own families and communities, and help them to focus on the need to ensure equity for all people who have been historically disadvantaged.

Remember, too, that most students have been exposed to limiting messages about what it means to be a woman or what it means to be a man. See our publication, *Gender Doesn’t Limit You*, at tolerance.org for ideas on how to enter into the discussion.

Does the fact that Teaching Tolerance aligned *Perspectives for a Diverse America* to the Common

Core mean that you endorse the Common Core?

No. Teaching Tolerance provides practical and useful tools that teachers need. With the Common Core adopted by more than 40 states, millions of teachers need their materials aligned to these standards. By aligning *Perspectives* to the Common Core, we’re meeting teachers where they are and making it easier for them to use the curriculum.

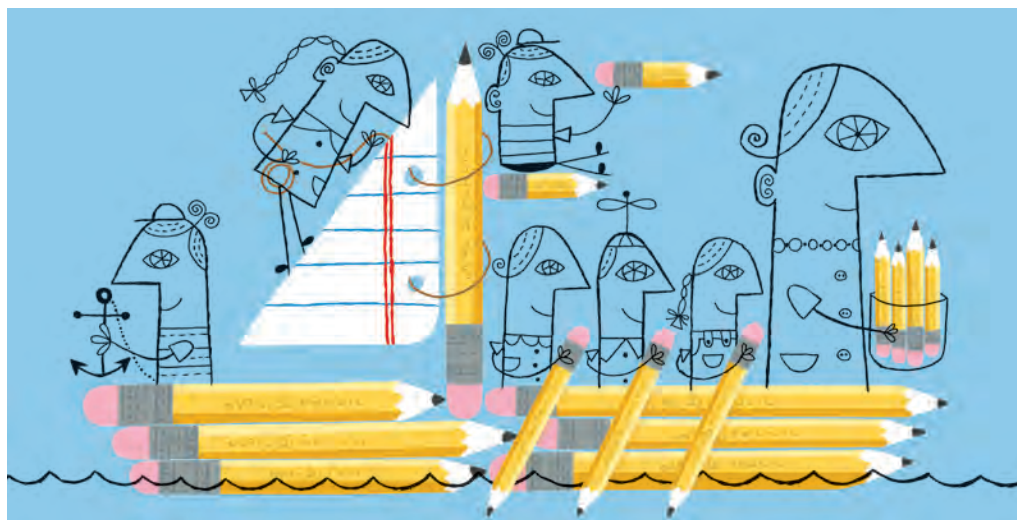
We built *Perspectives* using backward planning to meet the goals and objectives of solid literacy instruction. The modular design allows all educators to incorporate sound, research-based practices into their curricula. *Perspectives* provides options for instruction in writing, speaking and listening skills, vocabulary development, reading comprehension, civic engagement and social action. The broad literacy underpinnings of the curriculum make it useful for any teacher, anywhere, regardless of Common Core adoption.

For more information about *Perspectives*, see “3-2-1-LAUNCH!” in the Fall 2014 issue of *Teaching Tolerance*. You can find it in the magazine archives at tolerance.org.

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.

Give the Kid a Pencil



I recently taught a university course in Seattle for graduate students seeking master’s degrees in teaching. In

one lesson, our focus was on creating a psychologically safe learning environment for students. It was an issue of managing students and supplies. I posed a question:

If a student shows up to class without a pencil, how should the teacher respond?

Small groups collaborated for a few minutes. Ultimately, they came up with plans involving taking something (a shoe?) from the student as collateral to remind the student about the importance of having supplies, notifying parents and even assigning classroom cleanup duty or lunch detention.

“What about you, Prof?” they asked.
 “I would give the kid a pencil,” I said.
 “You mean the first time?” someone asked.
 “Every time,” I said.



Reader-Writer Exchange:

“I respectfully, yet wholeheartedly, disagree. This makes me think of the Chinese proverb, ‘Give a man a fish and you feed him for a day. Teach a man to fish and you feed him for a lifetime.’ I believe that you are giving your students fish. You are not teaching them to fish. ... Helping students to become self-sufficient and intrinsically motivated leads to the creation of happy and contributing members of society.

“I think it’s also important to point out that the article isn’t saying we shouldn’t strategize with kids about how to hang on to their supplies. Such conversations, however, should not be made public, should not involve collateral, should not include eye-rolling and huffing [and] puffing. ... The key is to avoid the need to shame or call out for things like this. Kids don’t have it all together. We’re the adults.”

GET THE FULL DISCUSSION HERE:

tolerance.org/blog/give-kid-pencil



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.



Talking Circles: For Restorative Justice and Beyond



“You Guys”?



When Educators Understand Race and Racism



The Revolution Will be Tweeted



55 percent of teachers allow students to play digital games in the classroom at least once a week.

— GAMES AND LEARNING PUBLISHING COUNCIL



Chad A. Donohue teaches English language arts and social studies at a middle school in Monroe, Washington.

Radical Optimism

OPTIMISM IS THE BELIEF that the future holds possibilities. When juxtaposed to the more popular cynicism, pessimism and sarcasm, optimism appears positively radical. But despite the fact that smiling people are often viewed with caution, radical optimism is part of why I teach.

Radical optimism requires that I bolster my beliefs with actions. As a teacher, being radically optimistic means I acknowledge my students and their individual identities. I put out a vibe that says I love what I do. I introduce myself to students I have never met and tell them I'm happy to see them. I introduce students to other students. I prepare a seat for each student before the school year even begins.

My seat-preparation method is unoriginal, unremarkable and particularly effective in middle school. Using sticky notes, I number every seat. I then distribute a duplicate set of numbered sticky notes as I welcome each child to the classroom for the first time; students must find the seats that match their numbers. In doing this, I protect student dignity by preventing the potential for embarrassment or rejection. Imagine the scene in *Forrest Gump* in which a young Forrest climbs onto the bus and begins the slow and terrifying search for a place to sit. As he hears the cruel word "taken" again and again, he continues to walk, wondering if there will ever be a place for him.

A child shunned by a cruelly delivered "taken" on the first day of my class has been wounded from the start. I refuse to let this happen because I am optimistic that helping each student feel welcome will contribute to everyone's success.

"Welcome to room C-8, Alejandra. I'm Mr. Donohue. I'm excited you are here. Seat 7 is yours. It has been waiting all summer for you."

In the end, optimism is a choice I make for the sake of my students. But is it really such a sacrifice to be optimistic? In more than 20 years of teaching, optimism has helped me at least as much as it has helped my students.

Love is the other reason why I teach, and it relates to my optimism. As a person of faith, I see beauty in

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@teachingtolerance.org.

PHOTOGRAPHY BY JORDAN STEAD



Jesus' call to "love your neighbor as yourself." I have been the fortunate recipient of such love. The significant adults in my life sacrificed much for me, showed me grace when I did not deserve it and took the time to invest in me. They would not give up on me. Teaching is my way of trying to do the same for others.

In high school, I wasn't sure if I was "college material." I enjoyed school but was generally considered a class clown with "potential." Every report card said, "Sense of humor is enjoyable, but interferes with classroom control." However, my teachers were kind and patient with me.

In English class my junior year, we had to write a final essay on the true meaning of growing up. I am certain my teacher, Mrs. Cedargreen, expected something half-hearted and humorous from me. For this assignment, however, I really tried. I sweated over the paper, writing and revising, starting over several times. I was very nervous. I worried my teacher wouldn't like it or that she might not take it seriously. I had uncharacteristically made myself vulnerable, and I didn't know what would happen.

A few anxiety-filled days later, I got my essay back. A short note was scrawled in red cursive on the cover. I stared at it for a long time. At first I thought I had someone else's paper.

The note read, "This is beautiful! What a gift you have given me to end the year." Then a large circled "A" nearby.

I still remember the emotional response that came over me. I kept the paper close to me for the rest of the day. I kept taking it out of my folder and looking again—checking to see if the note had changed. I didn't let it get wrinkled. I didn't fold it.

That was 27 years ago, and I have never forgotten it. Her sincere, caring words strengthened my belief in myself. It made me optimistic about my own future. That's what I try to do for my students. That's why I teach.

BLOG 8.15.14 // ACTIVISM, PREJUDICE REDUCTION, RACE AND ETHNICITY, AND TEACHING

#dontshoot

Michael Brown could have been my student. Some years ago, I taught at Normandy Middle School in the school district from which "Big Mike" graduated. Students in the Normandy School District confront a host of issues and concerns that directly impact student achievement, including woefully inadequate resources and high rates of poverty and crime in their neighborhoods and municipalities. ...

This should have been a time of celebration for Brown, a young man who overcame the obstacles inherent in this flawed educational system. Despite being a credit short when he walked in May, he received his high school diploma on August 1 and was scheduled to enroll at Vatterott College on August 11. Instead, he lay dead in the middle of a city street, shot down between an auspicious end and a bright beginning. ...

Healing can begin in our schools. Perhaps next year, returning students will be using the hashtag #togetherwecanchange.



... and readers replied:

"I am starting my 41st year teaching high school on Monday. I pray [author] Ms. Christian is right with the #togetherwecanchange. I needed to read a positive article and thank her for this. We teachers have a lot of work to do and must remain hopeful."

"Adults need education on understanding racism too. Just because one is grown does not mean that he or she totally understands the concept of racism and its various hues. Every public agency should have professional development sessions on racism, not just the children/students in K-12. ... We all need it."

GET THE FULL DISCUSSION HERE:

tolerance.org/blog/dontshoot



Becca Valdez is the media specialist and Web administrator at Griffin High School in Griffin, Georgia.

A Place for Everyone

Becca Valdez has worked in a variety of library settings, but she's particularly drawn to working with teens. Three years into her position as a high school media specialist and Web administrator, Valdez has cultivated a space in the school's media center that welcomes all students and keeps them coming back for more challenges, resources, technology and fun!

How do you see your role as a media specialist fitting into the lives of high school students in particular?

My principal and I just wanted to create the media center as the hub of the school, a place where—whenever you

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

need help—that's where you go. That's what I enjoy about it. It's an information resource for whatever, whether it's academic or social. I wanted to make it a place where students can come whether they have a question on what counselor to go to; or if they're being picked on, who to go to; or what courses they need to take or how to turn a project in.

How do you make the media center a lively place where students want to be?

I try to make sure that it's a welcoming atmosphere. It's not only learning the students' names that makes a difference; it's having a genuine interest. Knowing a little bit about them and being able to gauge how they're feeling that day, remembering to ask if they passed their driver's test,

asking what they made on the project you helped them with, or knowing their taste in books so that you can find something they'll like. I feel like it's a mutual relationship, that if you respect them, they'll respect you.

How do you know that approach is working?

I had a very close relationship with two Pakistani [sisters], and they were both in my book club. One of them had recently become vegetarian, and she knew I was vegetarian, so she said that she would try to make this traditional dish with tofu. [She] brought me some to taste, and then I was like, "Oh, that was so great! I'd love to learn and have you give me the recipe." Then she offered to show me. She checked with her mom and I checked

My principal and I just wanted to create the media center as the hub of the school, a place where—whenever you need help—that’s where you go.

with my principal that it would be OK to come over. We arranged for a night, and it was so fun! The sisters were showing me how to make it, and their mom was also there offering all kinds of foods and telling me about them. The students were teaching me a few little words here and there in Urdu, and of course the first word I learned was *book!*

How do you engage the teachers in your school around learning and using technology?

I think it’s the same as with students, just trying to make sure that we’re inviting so that they actually want to come to the media center and actually want to know what we have, and building a relationship with teachers. I think forming that relationship to make sure that they feel comfortable and then trying to make sure to reach out, just being aware. Try and gauge where they’re at so that

you’re there to help them with exactly what they need.

What’s the most important part of your role as the school’s Web administrator?

That’s another way I’ve been able to know students, getting to see their successes, getting to see them taking pictures and trying to highlight it on the [school] website or Facebook—or even just trying to find some reason to take a picture. It’s been neat being able to be out in the school and getting to see everything. The website is a beast of a project to stay on top of, and there are so many more things that could be out there, so much cool stuff that our students do. It is enjoyable being able to spread everything they do.

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

Lessons Learned

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

The Sounds of Change—Action
(Elementary, Middle and High School)

Explore the relationship between music and culture with students—and challenge them to consider how music can communicate ideas and effect change.

Maya Angelou—Identity
(Middle and High School)

Use Maya Angelou’s poem “Still I Rise” to encourage students to reflect on their own resiliency and the power that lies within their voices.

Reshaping Body Image—Justice
(High School)

Engage students in a conversation about where we get our ideas about body image, the impact of size bias and the value of focusing on internal qualities.

Place as a Mirror of Self and Community—Diversity
(Elementary School)

Ask students to identify which places have prominence in their lives and their families’ lives and to find common threads across these places.

FREE STUFF!

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

The King Center—Digital Archive features more than a million primary-source documents connected to the life of Martin Luther King Jr. Documents are searchable by theme (economics, global visions, integration of schools, letters from children, nonviolence) or type (articles, education, oral histories, pictures, telegrams). thekingcenter.org/archive

The Google Cultural Institute—The Civil Rights Act of 1964 is an interactive timeline that includes narrative descriptions, photographs, letters and short videos that progressively unveil political and social actions that led to the Civil Rights Act of 1964. google.com/culturalinstitute/exhibit/the-civil-rights-act-of-1964/wRSRa8FV?hl=en

The Critical Media Project provides a wealth of tools curated to help students learn to deconstruct media messages about identity and experience. Visitors may browse media artifacts as well as classroom activities and suggestions for aligning the content to the Common Core. criticalmediaproject.org

The Langscape website includes an interactive map that supports learning about the world’s 7,000 languages and the people who speak them. The resource includes a K-12 teacher’s guide to the platform, complete with standards-aligned classroom activities. langscape.umd.edu



Role-playing enlivens the classroom.

“I’m curious about other people. That’s the essence of my acting. I’m interested in what it would be like to be you.”



—MERYL STREEP

LIGHTS! CAMERA! LEARN!

Why role-play? Role-playing stimulates and deepens authentic learning by asking students to adopt another person’s identity and experience while increasing their own self-awareness. The verbal, physical and intellectual demands of role-playing sharpen communication skills and foster development of the psychomotor, cognitive and emotional learning domains. Best of all, students are likely to remember the content knowledge they learn through role-playing because they’re having FUN!

DID YOU KNOW?

Graphic novels make up less than 5 percent of school library collections.

—JOURNAL OF EDUCATION

Put role-plays to work!

Role-playing isn't just about simulating scenarios. This interactive strategy can be tailored to meet a variety of classroom needs.

Model Behavior

Role-play can help establish classroom patterns and routines. Use role-play to model ...

- ➔ how to use classroom resources (check out a library book, walk to the restroom, use technology).
- ➔ how to respond to conflict.
- ➔ how to take turns.

Develop Skills

Role-play can promote social emotional skill development by ...

- ➔ exposing students to different interactive scenarios.
- ➔ encouraging students to practice a variety of verbal response skills.
- ➔ emphasizing problem solving and teamwork.

Involve Observers

Role-play can be a valuable learning experience for those looking on, too. Be sure to ...

- ➔ provide context for the observers as well as the role-players.
- ➔ discuss observers' reactions, and note the diversity in responses.



LOOKING FOR WAYS TO INCORPORATE ROLE-PLAY OR STORYTELLING IN YOUR CLASSROOM? *Perspectives for a Diverse America* offers several tasks and strategies that can help your students find their voices—at any grade level. Look for Reader's Theater, What Would They Say?, Poetry and Storytelling Cafe, Oral History Project and Drama for Justice, just to name a few!
perspectives.tolerance.org

Use Simulations Safely

Stepping into someone else's shoes can be transformative, but it can also be scary. Consider the emotional safety of all students before jumping in.

DO

provide relevant instruction for a factual or hypothetical scenario.

allow students to respond authentically to the scenario—no acting necessary!

enable students to independently make meaning from their experiences.

DON'T

simulate traumatic historical events or situations like the Holocaust or slavery.

provide a script or direct student reactions during the role-play.

expect students to draw from experiences, attitudes, beliefs or skills they don't have.

Storytelling honors student experience.

WHY INVITE STUDENTS TO TELL THEIR STORIES?

Storytelling invites students to bring their identities and expertise into the classroom. This practice upends the traditional “sage on the stage” dynamic, interrupts stereotypes and fosters intergroup awareness. Giving students space to talk about personal experiences can also help them alleviate stress—whatever the source.

Stories are windows and mirrors.

“The window becomes a mirror! And it is the shared humanity of our conversation that most impresses us even as we attend to our different frames of reference.”

—EMILY STYLE





Bring storytelling into your classroom three ways.

- ➔ Create regular mini-opportunities for students to share their experiences with classmates.
- ➔ Encourage students to tell stories that counter existing narratives.
- ➔ Facilitate Serial Testimony, a sharing method developed by Peggy McIntosh. *(To learn more about Serial Testimony, see the toolkit for “Unpacking the Knapsack” in our Spring 2014 issue.)*

Stories encourage understanding.

“Conversations about human sameness and difference can take place during many teachable moments throughout the day.”

–LOUISE DERMAN-SPARKS
AND JULIE OLSEN EDWARDS

Stories break down barriers.

“Listening to the stories of those who see the racial dynamic and talking about it is healing and represents a greater demonstration of ethical civility.”

–HOWARD STEVENSON

Read More About Storytelling

Lee Ann Bell.
Storytelling for Social Justice: Connecting Narrative and Arts in Antiracist Teaching.

Howard Stevenson.
Promoting Racial Literacy in Schools: Differences that Make a Difference.

Louise Derman-Sparks & Julie Olsen Edwards.
Anti-Bias Education for Young Children and Ourselves.

Emily Style.
“Curriculum as Window & Mirror.”

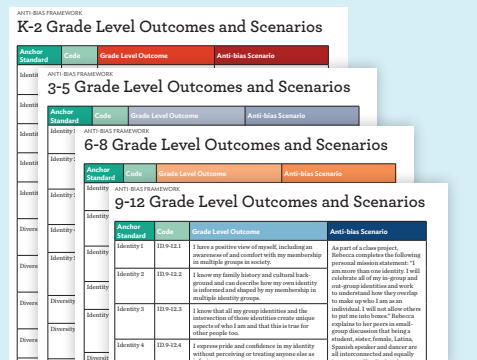
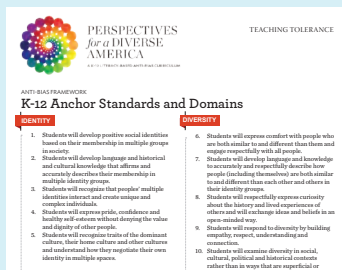
THE TEACHING TOLERANCE

ANTI-BIAS FRAMEWORK



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

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



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

Anchor Standards provide a common language and organizational structure.

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

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

—AMY BINTLIFF, Oregon, Wisconsin

TEACHING TOLERANCE



A PROJECT OF THE SOUTHERN POVERTY LAW CENTER

tolerance.org/anti-bias-framework

FERGUSON, U.S.A.

HARDSHIPS FACED BY COMMUNITIES
IN CRISIS ARE NATIONAL ISSUES
WORTH TEACHING.

THE AUGUST 2014 police shooting of Michael Brown upended the suburban town of Ferguson, Missouri, and sent ripples of shock, fear, pain, anger and uncertainty across the country. Many educators and students learned of the tragedy as they were preparing to start a new school year—a school year delayed by over a week for K-12 students in the Midwestern suburb.

Since last summer, three other police-related deaths (John Crawford, Eric Garner and Tamir Rice—all men or boys of color), two controversial grand jury decisions and countless demonstrations across the country have collectively signaled a need for national dialogue about how identity affects outcomes when African Americans encounter law enforcement.

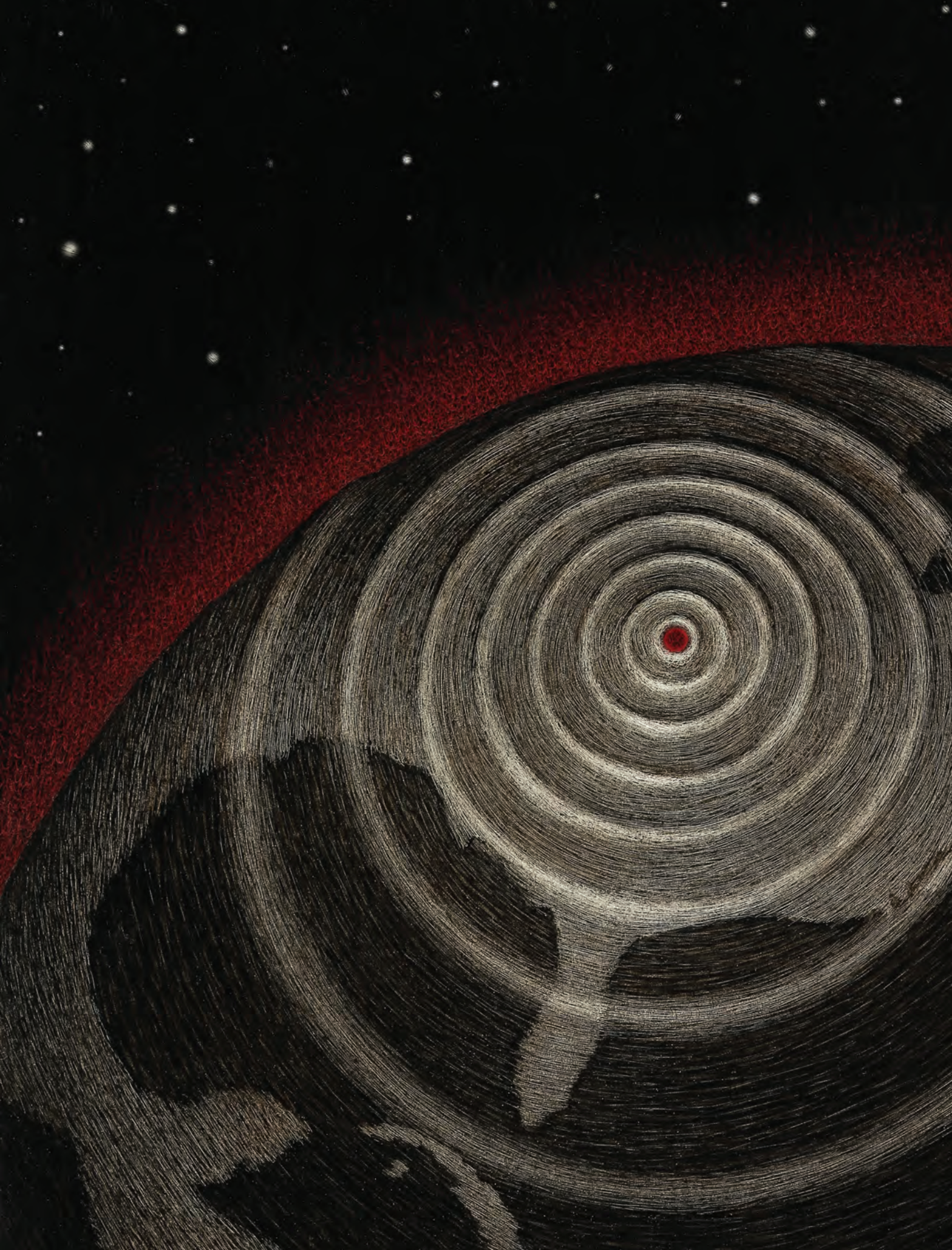
Despite sharp differences of opinion surrounding these high-profile deaths—and the outcomes of the subsequent legal proceedings—one thing is clear: U.S. schools were radically unaligned in their responses. Some districts supported teaching about the incidents; others ordered educators not to discuss the events at all.

Regardless of the support or obstacles they encountered, teachers all over the country searched for resources to help themselves and their students make sense of what was happening. These educators recognized that Ferguson, Dayton, Staten Island and Cleveland are American cities, and that the inequities and violence that occurred there reflect biases and systems of oppression that harm citizens across the country every day—including the children of color sitting in their own classrooms.

Moreover, the deaths of these men and boys remain moments ripe for teaching: about how media outlets cover clashes between civilians and law enforcement; about the criminalization of communities of color; about contrasting definitions of civil liberties; about the tensions that exist within our national dialogue about race; and about how all of these issues influence the long march for freedom and equality.

Teaching Tolerance selected three approaches to thinking and talking about the events of summer and fall 2014 that are particularly relevant to educators—as practitioners in

BY JAMILA BEY
ILLUSTRATION BY MATT DUFFIN



the classroom and as citizens who care about *all* communities.

Supports and Silences

Between the mainstream news and social media coverage, it has been almost impossible for schools not to respond in some way to the tensions surrounding the Brown, Crawford, Garner and Rice cases. Many educators immediately responded to the need for materials that could help break through the confusion and pain and allow teachers to understand and explain the systems and dynamics surrounding each loss and the subsequent reactions.

After Michael Brown was killed, Dr. Marcia Chatelain, an assistant professor of history at Georgetown University, created the #FergusonSyllabus Twitter campaign. Educators, activists, social commentators and other contributors used the hashtag to build a crowdsourced set of suggested readings, discussion topics and classroom activities related to Brown's death and the subsequent protests.

In District of Columbia Public Schools (DCPS), the development of teaching materials focused instead on preparing teachers to take on such painful topics. Chancellor Kaya Henderson recognized that many educators needed support, particularly when discussing race and racial hierarchy with students, so she asked Dr. Robert Simmons, chief of innovation and research for DCPS, to write a teacher's guide. The result of his work is a publication titled "Preparing to Discuss Michael Brown in the Classroom."

As Simmons explains, "There are multiple levers in this document that really help teachers think critically, but also think through their own bias, their own perspective around identity [and] police brutality." These levers include suggestions for framing classroom conversations using democratic principles, techniques for gauging students' emotional responses and steps to encourage informed social action.

► FACT ◀

The protests in Ferguson erupted on the 49th anniversary of the Watts Riots.

Yet, in many classrooms, the response to the deaths of Brown, Crawford, Garner and Rice was silence. Educators who shied away from these events often did so because they didn't have the kind of professional support that Henderson and Simmons offered their colleagues—training in how to address systemic racism and privilege. Many teachers became stymied by conflicting viewpoints offered ubiquitously on news programs and social media. In one version of the narrative, the victims bore responsibility for their deaths by virtue of their questionable behavior, and race was irrelevant to the outcome. In the other, law enforcement is a component of a larger system that criminalizes black Americans and routinely devalues their lives. The fact that both viewpoints are held so strongly in the United States is, in and of itself, a critical conversation for educators to engage in with students—and an ideal opportunity to practice perspective-taking.

Civil Discourse About Civil Unrest

Many of the resources shared with the #FergusonSyllabus hashtag address

the events through a constitutional lens. As captured by the news media and civil liberties groups, actions taken by local law enforcement and officials in response to civil unrest in Ferguson trampled on three First Amendment principles: (1) the right to assemble peaceably, (2) the freedom of the press and (3) the right to petition the government for a redress of grievances. In Ferguson, New York City, Berkeley and hundreds of other communities around the country where citizens gathered in solidarity, protesters and the media reported mass arrests of civilians and journalists, the imposition of nighttime curfews, embargos on cameras and cell phones, and the excessive use of tear gas and rubber bullets. These experiences also raised alarm about violations beyond First Amendment rights.

Even protests that occurred off the streets have been highly scrutinized and, in some cases, put individuals at risk. In Cleveland, the police demanded an apology from the Cleveland Browns after player Andrew Hawkins wore a shirt calling for justice for Tamir Rice and John Crawford. Other athletes have been criticized for wearing "I Can't Breathe" T-shirts in protest of the lack of indictment in the choking death of Eric Garner. Similar critiques were levied

Living History

Several parallels can be drawn between the recent protests and moments in the U.S. civil rights movement, a fact that can help educators address this difficult material in the classroom.

Consider how these approaches to thinking about contemporary civil unrest are relevant in the context of civil rights history. How did segregation and violence affect schools and students in the 1950s and '60s? How did civil rights leaders use the Constitution to further their legal battles? How did protesters communicate? What role did state-enacted violence play in the events? What role did the media play? Educators can use questions like these to connect the past to the present and show students that social movements are possible in today's world.

To learn more about teaching the civil rights movement—past and present—see our publication *The March Continues: Five Essential Practices for Teaching the Movement*, and our professional development resource *Civil Rights Done Right: A Tool for Teaching the Movement*.

against teachers in Staten Island who wore T-shirts expressing support for the New York City Police Department on the first day of school. That a debate arose questioning the right of these individuals to publicly express their views makes it clear that the United States does not have a cohesive perspective on the concept of free speech.

In the context of a classroom, using civil liberties and the judicial system as lenses allows students to unpack questions raised by the deaths, the courts and the widespread civil unrest. It also challenges students to grapple with the fact that the most basic liberties can come under assault by the very people tasked with protecting them: elected officials and law enforcement. It's an opportunity that David L. Hudson Jr., a Vanderbilt University law professor and First Amendment Center Scholar, believes could galvanize an entire generation of civil and human rights advocates. He called recent events a "perfect blueprint for teaching the Bill of Rights."

Chatelain agrees. "Educators can play a role in helping students to understand the world around them," she said. "The role that policing plays in their day-to-day lives, the role that disenfranchisement and economic instability often may play. Understanding these things through the lens of our American democracy absolutely belongs in the classroom."

New Media and Collective Action

- #BlackLivesMatter
- #DontShoot
- #IfTheyGunnedMeDown
- #ICantBreathe
- #ShutItDown

These are just a few of the most visible examples of hashtags that gave social media a central and powerful role in the action and dialogue surrounding the deaths of Brown, Garner, Rice and Crawford. Beginning just hours after Brown's death in August, when cell-phone video of his body began to circulate, activists on the ground in Ferguson—operating largely in a

"I could be Mike Brown. Any one of us could be."

news vacuum—were using communication platforms such as Twitter and Facebook to coordinate their efforts. Social media were again central to the debate when footage of police holding Eric Garner in a chokehold surfaced online, allowing the country to hear him utter the now-famous chilling statement, "I can't breathe."

Protests and vigils calling for acknowledgement of police brutality and immediate reforms in policy and training occurred continuously throughout fall 2014, peaking with the grand jury decisions in the Brown and Garner cases. Some were spontaneous; others—like the "die-ins" that occurred in countless locations nationwide—were highly coordinated. But a subset of every group of protesters broadcast its message via social media and received messages of support back. Expressions of solidarity came from coast to coast and beyond. Reform-minded individuals from as far away as Asia and Europe expressed support and outrage, and even offered advice on how to survive being tear gassed.

Dr. Kimberly C. Ellis, author of the forthcoming book *The Bombastic Brilliance of Black Twitter*, explains how these online tools made it possible for events that happened in a small, little-known town like Ferguson to rise to international attention almost instantly.

"Allyship—particularly white allyship—along with global engagement made this issue of police brutality a global phenomenon," she said.

Even young people who were not directly involved in protests used social media to express how the incidents affected them. Teachers like Xian Barrett used Twitter to encourage their students to practice succinct communication about their emotions following the Garner decision. "I think most of the youth can

see that an essay they write gets seen by one or maybe 30 people if you do peer sharing, but a tweet can be seen by thousands," said Barrett. "That motivates them."

The ongoing virtual commentary angered some people and empowered others. But regardless of the feelings it provoked, the prevalence of social media as a tool for logistical communication, solidarity and collective action-taking is a force that educators, media researchers and activists alike acknowledge as game-changing.

Although they bear startling resemblances to moments of the past, such as the protests in Watts in 1965 and in Los Angeles in 1992, after the acquittal of the four police officers tried for beating Rodney King, many moments of the summer and fall of 2014 could be described as game-changing. These moments sparked an urgent desire for change in a generation often described as apathetic, and demanded conversations about race in an era many describe as post-racial.

For educators, these moments brought intense challenges as well as vital opportunities. For many young people, it changed the way they saw the world.

T.J., a teenager currently living and attending school in Ferguson, feels that the events in her community have fundamentally changed her life. "I could be Mike Brown. Any one of us could be," she says. "And that he didn't just die in vain, that people all over the world are speaking out against the way we get treated, shows me that people care." ♦

Bey is a journalist and speaker based in Washington, DC.



Toolkit

Use the U.S. Constitution to spur discussion about the events in Ferguson.
VISIT » tolerance.org/ferguson



Learning to Be “Good”

BY JOE HANSEN ILLUSTRATION BY JOE SNOW

AFTER 20 YEARS as a teacher and counseling aide at Ala Wai Elementary School in Honolulu, Hawaii, Thomas Yos carries with him something a parent once said. ¶ “He put it really nicely,” Yos recalls. “He said, ‘Us parents want our kids to be smart. But even more than that, we want them to be good.’”

Adam Grant, a professor at the University of Pennsylvania and author of *Give and Take: Why Helping Others Drives Our Success*, echoed this thought in an opinion piece he wrote for *The New York Times*, “Raising a Moral Child.” In this pivotal essay, Grant pointed to global surveys showing that people tend to value caring more than achievement. Grant was writing about parenting, but facilitating the

development of strong moral and ethical foundations—what some call character education—is not the purview of parents alone, Grant says; early educators play a role too. Moral education is often unintentionally neglected, however, as teachers must increasingly focus on mandates related to standards alignment and standardized testing.

“You know when your students can read and write,” says Grant. “When you

try to teach character, truly, you feel like you’re not even moving the needle a little bit. You think you’ve gotten through a really important message about ‘don’t hit your classmates,’ and then the next day they start hitting each other.”

It’s clear that the public wants schools to focus on moral education. In a recent PDK/Gallup poll, 76 percent of respondents agreed with the statement: “Today’s schools should build students’ character.” And educators want the same thing. As Yos points out, teaching children academic and professional skills without giving them a moral compass is a good way to produce clever criminals.



But how can early educators aid moral development?

It's a question that requires a caveat: Moral education is not social indoctrination. Trying to hammer specific moral *opinions* into children's minds does not help them make moral *decisions*, notes Elliot Turiel, professor and Jerome A. Hutto chair at the University of California, Berkeley Graduate School of Education.

"It's not a matter of being taught values by parents or teachers, but rather that children come to understand basic ideas about fairness, justice, rights and people's welfare," Turiel says.

Most experts agree that by the age of 2 or 3, children start to experience emotions relating to events they perceive to be right or wrong. By age 4 or 5, those nebulous feelings start to crystallize into a fundamental sense of fairness, says University of Maryland developmental psychologist Melanie Killen.

"That doesn't mean that they

understand everything there is to the concept of fairness," Killen says. "So what we say is that a notion of fairness evolves throughout childhood and adolescence."

This means that the preschool and elementary years are times when educators can make a difference. Conflict resolution is a good area of focus during the younger end of that spectrum, Killen says, noting that a child's first brushes with fairness often involve an object conflict or turn-taking issue: a child has taken a toy or is hogging the swings.

The instinct for teachers may be to resolve the conflict quickly and move on, but Killen advocates that these incidents offer learning opportunities. Explaining why an action was fair or unfair and starting a discussion where the child can arrive at a fair outcome on his or her own is a simple but powerful approach. Another is discussing intentions. Conflicts among young

children commonly occur because they don't understand the concept of positive intentions with negative outcomes (e.g., a toy being broken accidentally). With age and explicit discussion, children can come to see the difference between intent and outcome and adjust their behavior accordingly.

"Educators need to help children think about issues of fairness in the context of their peer interactions and everyday life," Killen says. "It's not punishment and removing kids from situations—time-outs. Those kinds of strategies are just not effective."

Nadia Chernyak, a researcher at both Brown and Harvard University, conducted an experiment in which preschoolers could share stickers with a "sad" puppet in one of three situations: children were given a costly choice (they could either give up the sticker or keep it); a non-costly choice (they wouldn't get to keep the sticker either way); or no choice (they were

“It’s not a matter of being taught values by parents or teachers, but rather that children come to understand basic ideas about fairness, justice, rights and people’s welfare.”

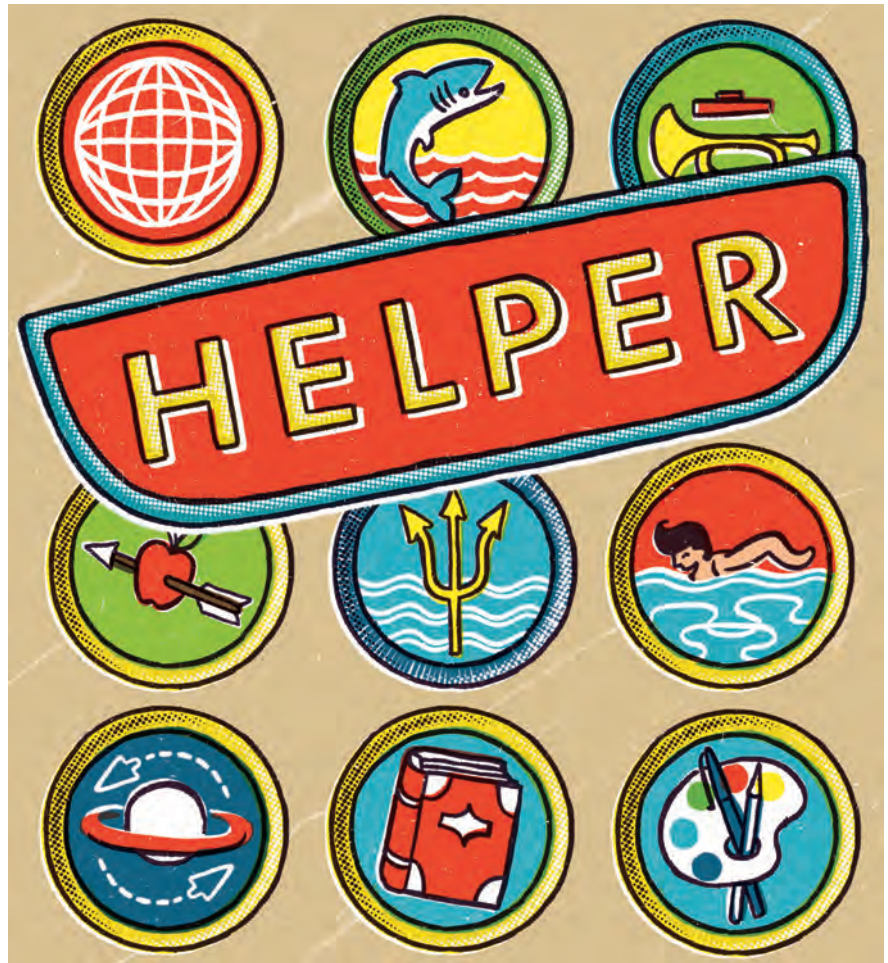
told to give it). The children were later given the choice to share again in the experiment’s second phase.

“It was the children who actually got the difficult or the costly choice in the first phase who were more likely to share or shared more in the second phase,” Chernyak says. “It’s in these kinds of high-cost situations that a lot of learning can happen.”

Chernyak says that educators are in a unique position to provide children with opportunities to make tough choices about sharing, and to guide their learning from these choices.

“One of the things I think teachers and parents are particularly good at is knowing exactly what the child is capable of,” Chernyak says. “Once a child is at that point where they’re capable of making that difficult choice, probably parents and educators can take advantage of that.”

The manner in which caring behavior is discussed also matters, even down to the use of nouns versus verbs. A recent study published in *Child Development* found that, with 3- to 6-year-olds, conversations about “being a helper” yielded significantly more helpful behavior in future tasks than conversations about “helping.”



“A really important distinction is that being a helper is something about the kind of person who you are,” says University of Washington researcher Allison Master, one of the study’s authors. “It changes it from a behavior that you do or you don’t do into something that has implications for who you are or who you are not.”

Nearly 30 years ago, Joan E. Grusec of the University of Toronto found similar results in a study comparing 7- to 10-year-olds who were praised for sharing. The children were complimented with either a noun or a verb structure, then given a later opportunity to donate to a canned food drive.

“We found that the children who had been told they were helpful people brought in a lot more than the children who had simply been rewarded for

sharing. What we take away from that is that reinforcing or saying ‘that’s a good thing you did’ is much less effective—it can even be harmful—than making the child see themselves as just the kind of person who helps others,” Grusec says.

Grant advocates an opposite approach for dealing with *uncaring* behavior. He suggests the best approach is to express disappointment in the action rather than the person, explaining why the action was wrong and how it affected others.

“If you criticize bad behavior along with praising character, then when you express disappointment you will have these kids who say, ‘I am a helper, but I did not help in this situation. I need to repair it. I need to fix it. I need to do something different in order to regain my identity as a helper.’ Those

two opposites are really important,” Grant says.

Grant notes that praise of character appears to be most effective around age 8, when children are developing a stronger sense of individual identity. But children begin to separate themselves into groups based on identity characteristics like gender, race, ethnicity and school activities beginning as early as preschool. This fact makes it critical that early childhood educators be aware of how moral judgments related to fairness, equality and group identity develop.

In-group preference (preference for the group to which one belongs) is not in itself a negative thing, says Yarrow Dunham, a Yale University professor and researcher on inter-group social cognition.

“It’s initially more about ‘I like my group more’ and less about ‘I like the other group less.’ It doesn’t immediately become dislike for the out-group,” Dunham says.

Out-group dislike—the basis for bias and intolerance—can develop due to polarizing factors like competition,

Dunham says. Killen adds things like explicit prejudice, lack of inter-group contact and hierarchical unfairness to that list, but notes that when children are given the choice between basic fairness and in-group preference, they will typically choose fairness.

“It’s very important for educators, teachers, parents to be talking about [stereotypes and exclusion] explicitly,” Killen says. “There are a lot of ways you can do it; you can set this up as a discussion. Present it as, ‘Hey, I’m a reporter. Something happened, let’s talk about it.’... Kids will talk about these things; it’s just that they’re never asked.”

Grant suggests a twist on the common classroom activity of storytelling to make children think about exclusion.

“A common classroom activity that is often used in the studies in this area would be something like ‘We’re going to read a story about a child who is not inviting another child to a birthday party,’” Grant says. “Instead of just reading the story, the class discussion should focus on ‘How do you think the child who wasn’t invited felt? What’s it like to be that child?’”

In-group/out-group identity, he says, can be a significant moral obstacle and an area that needs more focus from researchers and educators.

“I would love to see more educators focus on the circle of concern. A lot of parents, particularly in the U.S., tend to be very parochial and provincial in the way we teach caring values. You basically learn to care about your family unit and your friends and neighbors, and that’s about it. That creates a really stark ‘in-group/out-group’ divide, where children don’t learn to care about those who are different from them. That’s where most of our problems occur in the world.” ♦

Hansen is a freelance writer based in Portland, Oregon.



Toolkit

Ask your students the moral of their story.

VISIT » tolerance.org/learning-to-be-good

Learning Aloha

For two decades, Thomas Yos has taught students at Honolulu’s Ala Wai Elementary School to think and act morally, but he’s never relied on a list of virtues or simplistic allegories like those found in old-school character education resources. Instead, Yos uses the power of the school environment.

“It’s a place where people care about each other and show that they do,” Yos says. “When I explain it to my elementary-school students, a lot of times I use the Hawaiian word *aloha*, which, in addition to meaning ‘hello’ and ‘goodbye,’ also means ‘love’ and a deep connectiveness between people.”

Yos holds a doctorate in philosophy and does outreach through the University of Hawaii’s Uehiro Academy, working with the “community of inquiry” developed by Philosophy for Children, an international reasoning skills program. Now in

the counseling department after years of teaching, he facilitates student-led discussions about moral challenges. Generally kids set the topics: bullying, playground indiscretions or why their parents yelled at them. Yos serves as a guide but is careful to allow students to come to their own conclusions about what happened and the right way to respond.

“You kind of get a double-dose of character education. You’ve got the kids talking and reflecting on questions like bullying or how we should treat each other. So you have character education that way, and you’ve also got it by creating this community of *aloha* where people care for each other,” Yos says. “My approach is less telling kids how they should behave—saying ‘OK, these are the virtues, you should act like this’—but rather creating an environment where these things are lived and practiced.”

HEARING THE *Lion's Story*

BY HOWARD STEVENSON ILLUSTRATION BY GRACIA LAM

MANY CITIZENS OF our country—including many educators—wish to believe that major symbolic societal changes (election of a black president, growing numbers of upper-class families of color) demonstrate racial progress in our nation. This is far from the truth. We have not progressed as much as we would like to believe—not for all people of color, or for those who are poor.

The crippling state of American race relations is not simply a matter of morality or decay of civil rights motivation. It is mostly a matter of knowledge deficits, of skill deficits and of fear. Moral people or people who become enlightened don't suddenly become knowledgeable. Even if we awaken to the struggles of the world, we still require practice, teaching, learning and more practice over much time before claiming to be talented, knowledgeable or competent. This is true for anything we wish to be good at, and it is true of race relations.

The Monster of Racial Stress

Our deficits and fears are rooted in how little we know about families and individuals who are different from us. This racial ignorance becomes like a monster that terrorizes the daily lives of people of color. People of color may not even be aware of the racial stress they experience or of their triumphs in spite of the monster. It is human to not want to see or feel our past hurt and pain—but can healing take place without such an examination?

A West African proverb tells us, “The lion's story will never be known as long as the hunter is the one to tell it.” This proverb serves as the thematic cry for my work. How



does a lion learn to tell a story that isn't filtered through the distorted stereotypes about lions or the subtle heroic supremacy of the hunter? Why do the hunters get the press coverage and the lions live in zoos?

It takes practice for children of color to emotionally remember, process and appreciate their own life experiences, both personal and racial. The energy these young people expend to repress, avoid or manage racial encounters may make it impossible to recount them. In a country where black students are disproportionately suspended and expelled



“The lion’s story will never be known as long as the hunter is the one to tell it.”

from school without due process and where research tells us we view black boys as less innocent than white boys, telling these stories is often just too painful.

Not knowing how racial relationships stress us or how we consciously or unconsciously cope during race relations leads to a kind of racial illiteracy. But knowing these aspects of ourselves allows us to change and grow.

Racial storytelling allows us to identify what stresses us, how we cope with and react to racial stress and how we hide emotionally. It undermines the tendency to question one’s own experience, to belittle the experience of someone else, to walk arrogantly in spite of another’s pain, to deny the racial disparities of health, justice and compassion all around us, and to pretend that

all of our life experiences are universal. Racial storytelling is the first step to healing racial fear, its accompanying shame and its morbid influence. Without racial storytelling, educators, politicians, parents, law enforcement and children are stuck tolerating differences, acquiescing to levels of racial avoidance rather than committing to the higher ground of racial literacy and competence—of humanity.

My Mother’s Story

I grew up in a multicultural household even though both of my parents were

African American. My mother was a connoisseur of contemporary and historical knowledge, music and literature of the highest order, and she read voluminously. She made sure that our childhood was full of reading and music from various cultural sources, and our second home was the local library in Milton, Delaware. We were exposed to *Jet*, *Ebony*, *Time*, *Look*, *Life*, *Reader's Digest* and weekly newspapers. If we had little money available, you could bet that books would still be on the priority list of

While parenting racial matters is stressful for all parents, there are different health consequences for parents of color, and thus there are different levels of stress that these parents experience.

things to buy. My mother's musical exposure covered classical, jazz, gospel, blues and soul, broadly defined. Stevie Wonder was a musical staple in our house, and my brother and sister and I could recite most of the words from (and dance feverishly in rhythm to) the entire *Songs in the Key of Life* album. Stevie Wonder's music was a racial socialization watershed, as both racial calamity and racial triumph were dealt with throughout his lyrics and music. That album remains as a healing artifact of my existence.

I witnessed with great sadness the assassination and funeral of John F. Kennedy, whose reputation had previously made no impression on me and my siblings, as we were children at the time. But our mother's sadness struck me powerfully. At five, I knew his death was a monumental event because I remember her words of sorrow and tears of pain and fear that if they could shoot the president over his efforts to fight racial injustice, then no black child was safe. Her black children were not safe. She worried constantly about the insidiousness of and acquiescence to racial disparity and hierarchy. This was stressful.

In our travels to supermarkets, libraries and other public establishments, my mother was keen on teaching

us about the attitudes of whites who could not hold back their disgust at our presence. She frequently challenged the police when they stopped our car (which frightened my brother, sister and me), and while nothing negative happened as a result of her standing up for herself, that doesn't mean it wasn't stressful. When she would come to school, teachers would run to the corners of the school hoping not to have to deal with her. She did not play when it came to school if her children were being mis-

treated or perceived as not talented. We were often shielded from racial injustice at school because my mother hovered over the place like a hawk, waiting to pounce on any teacher who didn't get it. Along the way, she made some amazing allies among teachers who were serious about teaching black children with an understanding of the stormy racial climate of the 1960s.

As I grew older, I began to understand her burden of being the one who called out the injustices of the world, of the country, of the local school system. While parenting racial matters is stressful for all parents, there are different health consequences for parents of color, and thus there are different levels of stress that these parents experience.

Hearing the Lion

My mother's story is both unique and common. Many parents struggle with the stress of parenting children within hostile neighborhoods and surroundings, where their stress compounds because others don't know about it. Not everyone has to worry whether police officers will view them, their friends or their children as menaces to society—or shoot them without due process—because of the color of their skin. Not

everyone has to be aware of the fear in the eyes of authority figures as a sign that they should change their behavior or else risk unjust treatment, threat to their future or physical harm. Not everyone has to manage unconscious bias that comes from well-meaning educators who hamper achievement and career opportunities and outcomes for children of color.

Healthy racial storytelling means sharing what those realities mean to us emotionally. It's an emotional sharing moment that affects our physical well-being. Stereotypes are stories of static identities. Healthy racial storytelling is about fluid identities and meaning-making. It encourages meaning-making and emotional reattachment to a painful past, but also to a promising future relationship. Healthy racial storytelling builds compassion. It reveals weakness and humility and provides the opportunity for forgiveness of the former and expression of the latter—expressions rarely seen in today's debate on racial progress.

By placing ourselves at the center of the story of racial stress and socialization, where weaknesses and strengths can be excavated, administrators, teachers, parents and students can bring a story of their own to multicultural conversations. Instead of feeling helpless in a multicultural context, individuals can learn how to locate racial shame without pretense and choose to share rather than be devastated by feelings of shame and reticence.

By telling our racial stories, we can observe and silence the monster within us and engage rather than avoid racial difference—and begin to hear the lions. ♦

Stevenson is a professor of urban education and Africana studies at the University of Pennsylvania.



Toolkit

Reflect on your own racial story.
VISIT » tolerance.org/hearing-lions



HATE IN THE HALLWAYS

RECOGNIZING THE HISTORY OF DEFAMATORY SYMBOLS
CAN HELP SCHOOLS SEE FEWER OF THEM.

BY **MARILYN ELIAS** ILLUSTRATION BY **LINCOLN AGNEW**

Two pink swastikas and a racist epithet are painted on the entrance to Martin Avenue Elementary School in Bellmore, New York. ¶ Students at a Springfield, Missouri, high school defy school policy by wearing T-shirts bearing the Confederate flag to memorialize a recently deceased classmate who had embraced the flag as part of his Southern heritage. ¶ A private Islamic school in Bellevue, Washington, is vandalized repeatedly with hateful graffiti, leading some parents to feel their children are not safe on campus.

IT IS IMPOSSIBLE to know exactly how many incidents of hateful graffiti and other defamatory behavior occur in schools every year—but they do, in schools and communities of every size, location and description. Whether it’s someone scrawling a swastika on a locker or kids coming to school in blackface for Halloween, school leaders struggle with how to react constructively when students denigrate or vilify the identities of other students through images or symbols.

Disagreement over how to respond to hateful symbols often stems from ignorance about how much children are really affected by these incidents. The fact is, encounters with hostile graffiti in the school environment can significantly hinder students’ mental health and academic progress, reports child psychologist Lori Evans, Ph.D., of the Child Study Center at New York University Langone Medical Center. If a student identifies as part of a targeted group—be it racial, religious or LGBT-identified—these experiences can trigger anxiety and depression, even in children with no prior mental health issues, says Evans. “We’ve seen these kids here. Unless the school reacts in a way that ensures the school community is behind him and he’s safe, he can feel very intimidated.”

Some school staff may wish to keep hateful graffiti incidents as low profile as possible, disciplining the offenders (if they can be found) and moving on quickly. The choice to respond this way means that the adults responsible for the safety of *all* students never acknowledge the role identity played in the incident.

The targeted students—and others belonging to targeted identity groups—receive the message that returning to business as usual is more important than providing them a safe place to learn. In addition, the opportunity to educate the offending students is lost.

But many educators and students realize neither the horrific origin of some of these symbols and words, nor how they’re used now to sow hatred and intimidation. Here are some examples of hate symbols that commonly appear in schools, with a descriptions of their history and current usage.

Lightning Bolts

Two slanted vertical bolts, popular emblems of current white supremacist groups, originally were the symbol of Hitler’s bodyguards. They grew to represent “an unholy trinity, the worst aspects of Nazism,” according to Mark Pitcavage, Ph.D., director of investigative research for the Anti-Defamation League. The emblems were worn by concentration camp guards, Waffen-SS (the elite military units) and the Gestapo (Hitler’s secret police).

Swastika

Linked historically to many different cultures and religions—Buddhist, Hindu, Native American—with varied spiritual meanings, the swastika became the insignia of right-wing German nationalists in the early 20th century. Nazis then embraced it in the 1920s, and it became the major symbol of Nazi Germany. It’s a trademark of neo-Nazi groups worldwide.

Fighting Hate With Love

Tracy Hobbs tells of an incident at Lake Orion High School in Lake Orion, Michigan, that illustrates how a whole school can be marshaled in healing from hateful acts. He was a faculty advisor for the school’s gay-straight alliance when someone broke into the club’s campus showcase and stole its rainbow flag. Later that day, the flag appeared in a common area, shredded, and marked with the words “Fags must die.” The principal had it removed immediately and then met with concerned students and the faculty advisers. They set up a table in the commons the next day, decorated it with rainbow balloons and distributed pledge cards reading, “I do not tolerate hate at my school.” More than 700 students signed the cards. The two students who defaced the flag were caught and suspended, but the bigger lesson was that their classmates overwhelmingly rejected their bigotry.



Responding to Hate

Don’t wait to find hateful graffiti before making a response plan. Teaching Tolerance’s publication *Responding to Hate and Bias at School* can help you be proactive before, during and after such an incident. Look for it on the Publications page at tolerance.org.



LIGHTNING BOLTS



SWASTIKA



CONFEDERATE FLAG



CELTIC CROSS

Confederate Flag

One of many flags used by Southern soldiers during the Civil War, the flag known as the Southern Cross emerged as the most popular and became the key symbol of the Confederacy. After the war, it was an icon of Southern pride. At the 1948 breakaway Dixiecrat political convention favoring segregation, the flag became the group’s informal banner and then became linked with the battle against racial integration, according to *The Confederate Battle Flag: America’s Most Embattled Emblem* by John M. Coski. Some Southern residents still use the Confederate flag to honor their heritage, says Pitcavage, “but they may not understand the offensive effect this flag has on people. The Confederacy was formed in order to protect and maintain the institution of slavery.” The flag is currently used by the Ku Klux Klan; the white supremacist Council of Conservative Citizens (which has referred to African Americans as “a retrograde species of humanity”); and the League of the South (which advocates for a second Southern secession and a Christian theocratic society dominated by European Americans).

Nooses/Lynching Re-enactments

After the Civil War ended slavery, lynching became a key tactic whites supremacists used to intimidate and attempt to control African Americans, especially in southern and border states. Lynchings were ostensibly perpetrated against individuals who had committed crimes, although the charges were largely fabricated. The true intent of these often public acts of torture and murder was not to pursue justice but to send the message that African Americans were unsafe and unprotected in their communities, and that just being black was punishable by death. Between

1882 and 1951, an estimated 4,730 people were lynched in the United States (many sources argue that the actual number is much higher); the vast majority were African American. White individuals were rarely sentenced for their participation in lynchings and, if so, were usually pardoned. Lynchings peaked in 1892, but continued well into the 1980s.

Blackface Costumes

An outgrowth of European shows and carnivals featuring masked characters, minstrel shows were a mainstay of 19th-century entertainment in the United States. White performers used burnt cork to blacken their faces and mockingly portray slaves or rural blacks. They performed caricature-packed comedy skits, music and dancing that ridiculed African Americans as lazy, stupid buffoons. Blackface costumes today evoke bitter memories of the once-celebrated humiliation and degradation of African Americans.

Celtic Cross

Originally an ancient symbol of Irish Celtic pride, the Celtic Cross is shaped like a rectangular cross over a circle. A modern version featuring a square cross over a circle is a prominent emblem of white supremacy. It is the logo of Stormfront, the oldest and, for years, most heavily trafficked white supremacist website.

The sudden appearance of hateful graffiti or symbols can present a learning opportunity for the whole school community. Clear information about how to identify the symbol and what it means promptly given to staff, students and parents—perhaps even posted on the school website—can quell rumors and speculation.

Recurrent or particularly dramatic incidents may merit a press conference.

Even very young children should understand what has happened the wake of a symbolic hate incident, says Frances Bennett, principal at Martin Avenue Elementary. Teachers should assess how much the students already know and explain why what they saw was inappropriate. “We go into the historic aspects for older kids,” says Bennett. She talks to the child who created the symbol, explaining why it’s hurtful, and always calls in parents. “They may say, ‘Oh, he didn’t mean it in that way.’ But I make sure parents know the seriousness of this, and that as the child moves on, it could get more serious.” The North Bellmore Public Schools district has a character education program that focuses on a different character trait each month; Bennett points out that hate symbol incidents can often prompt “teachable moments” anchored to a character trait the students have studied.

School psychologist Tracy Hobbs agrees that, when hate symbols surface, capitalizing on teachable moments in the short term translates into prevention in the long term.

“If you discipline a kid, it’s affecting that kid,” says Hobbs. “If you turn it into a teaching moment and educate the whole student body about something, you can affect everyone.” ♦

Elias is a freelance writer in Los Angeles, California.



Toolkit

Help your students counteract hate with symbols that express compassion and justice.
VISIT » tolerance.org/hate-in-hallways



BEHIND THE SHIELD

***Vishavjit Singh** is an engineer, writer, educator, activist, costume player and the artist behind Sikhtoons.com. A crusader for cross-cultural understanding, this real-life superhero spoke with *Teaching Tolerance* about using his powers to dispel myths about Sikhs and to encourage a new generation of comic book artists to share their stories.*

How did you come to cartooning?

For me cartooning really came out of a tragedy: 9/11. For America it was life-changing, and for me, I was the target of so much hate and bias. One of the first victims killed in a hate-crime wave after 9/11 was a Sikh out in Arizona. And I personally know friends who were taken out of trains, who were chased off highways by people, so it was a rough time.

And I remember a few weeks after 9/11 there was this cartoonist, Mark Fiore. He created a cartoon called “Find the Terrorist,” and it was basically these rotating animated images where he was trying to make the point that you have Muslims or Hispanics or Sikhs, a lot of different shades of brown people in the U.S., [who] are not terrorists.

Something just got inside my head, and I said, “OK, Mark did it once, but he’s probably not going

to create too many other cartoons with Sikhs or somebody who looks like me. Maybe I should start doing it!” So I started creating cartoons, and months later created a website, Sikhtoons.com, to house all my work.

Since then, I have been creating cartoons inspired by the news or my own experiences focusing on Sikhs in America, Canada, wherever. And I got a global fan base because it’s just one of those art forms that hasn’t really existed within certain communities. Most people don’t see turbaned, bearded characters in cartoons.

Tell the story of how you transformed yourself into Sikh Captain America.

It was a purely accidental journey. Three years ago, I made my first trip to New York City Comic



“I WANT YOU TO THINK ABOUT PEOPLE YOU LOOK UP TO. CREATE SUPERHEROES OUT OF THEM.”

Con as an exhibitor. I knew I had this brand-new audience; most of them probably don't know who I am. They presume, as many people do when they see me with my turban and a beard, [that] I'm not American, I'm not from here.

So I thought, I have to create a marketing kind of poster that is going to sit behind my booth to somehow visually tell people, “Hey, look at my work, come over and let's have a conversation.”

This is the summer when the first *Captain America* movie came out, and I was like, you know what? There's not a more American superhero than Captain America. I'll create this illustration of a Sikh Captain America, a guy with a turban and beard, and a really catchy caption: “Let's kick some intolerant ass!”

People loved it. I had tons of people taking photos and coming over to ask me, “Hey, so who are you? What are you doing?”

A photographer was passing by and she was working on photography project to capture Sikhs in America just doing normal things, [being] farmers, mothers, fathers, whatever they do. In passing she mentioned to me, “Maybe next year you should come back to the comic con in the costume.” And I flat out said, “No way.”

I've been bullied as a skinny boy all my life, so I could not envision myself wearing a costume. Then a year passed by, and the Milwaukee massacre happened at a Sikh temple. I wrote an op-ed piece in *The Seattle Times* making the argument that we need a superhero in comic books who fights hate crimes.

And the photographer happened to read that piece and she came back to me by email and said, “This is a wonderful piece—would you reconsider your decision?” And then

at this point, I was like, “Well ...” I was still uncomfortable. I have body-image problems, which we usually don't associate with men. But I just felt circumstances had changed, so I said “Sure, why not.”

The photographer bought this costume for me. I was so uncomfortable; I was like, “Man, this is not going to work.” I actually went to Sports Authority to buy padding that they use for baseball and football to see if I could somehow stuff it under my costume and make myself look big.

My wife [said], “If you're going to do Captain America, you go out as who you are.” So I stepped out. I was super nervous because I'm thinking, “OK, I'm skinny and I'm wearing this skintight costume, and on top of that, I am turbaned and bearded. I don't know how people [will] respond to it.”

As it turned out, I was just amazed how well people received me. It blew me away. I had police officers that came up to me to take photos. I got pulled into weddings, wedding parties, professional photo shoots, people being like “Hey, can we take a photo with you?” So there was a transformation that I've never experienced as a turbaned and bearded man because people usually act sort of scared, or apprehensive. So this was like somebody had flipped a switch, and suddenly—I mean, people were hugging me! So yeah, it was quite a transformation.

Why do you think people are so drawn to Sikh Captain America?

I think it's a couple of elements. One is comics are a very American creation. They do exist in other parts of the world, but we are a young nation; we don't have our own mythology. A lot of us grew up with comics and, in many ways, for us comic books are an essential mythology that we have. And a lot of comic books and superhero characters were created by immigrants who were Jewish, who were escaping persecution in Europe. I think there's a certain fascination we have with these superhero-like characters who single-handedly go do amazing things and fight bad guys and bad voices.

So that's one element. And then, of course, it's Captain America, who is the quintessential American superhero. And when [people] see me, they don't expect a turbaned little guy in the Captain America costume. They realize that they perceive me on the negative side of the spectrum—and then, suddenly, when they see Captain America, they are forced

to kind of see, “Hey, maybe this is his expression of patriotism: He is as American as we are!” And I guess people also see the point that “American” is not defined by looks. There is no such thing as an American look. We come in all hues and shapes and sizes.

Why do you think young kids at your workshops react so well to you?

All kids are a little different, [but] they’re just absolutely mesmerized by the fact that I have a shield with me. And they’re so honest—they’re like, “I don’t have a problem with the turban, I don’t have a problem with the beard, he just needs to kind of bulk up, and maybe have better shoes.”

One thing that I do with kids is I usually ask them, “Where do you think I’m from?”

And most kids, they don’t say I’m from here, they all have different ideas. “Africa!” “Asia!” And when I tell them that I was actually born here, they’re like, “Really?” And the amazing thing is that this comes from kids who are of all ages and backgrounds, some of them not even born here in the U.S. Unfortunately, we live in that reality where being turbaned and bearded is kind of seen as this ultimate other.

I do interactive workshops where I showcase some of my work, and then I ask the participants, anywhere from 3- or 4-year-olds to teenagers, “I want you to create cartoon illustrations. I want you to use your imagination and I want you to personalize it, meaning I want you to think about your sphere of circles: family, friends, teachers, people who inspire you or who you look up to. Create superheroes out of them, create comic characters out of them.”

I want them to [know], “If I can do cartooning, certainly you can do it too.” And then I also showcase my work, which is very personal at times in my own life. My message to these guys is, “Create work in words or in pictures that are informed by your life. Bring your story into it.”

How does the style of art you do work with the messaging you put out there?

I think for a lot of kids and even adults, they might not realize it, but just by seeing [an] image on a poster or on a computer screen, it goes in our subconscious and it’s like this new data point that creates a new universe where now we can envision a

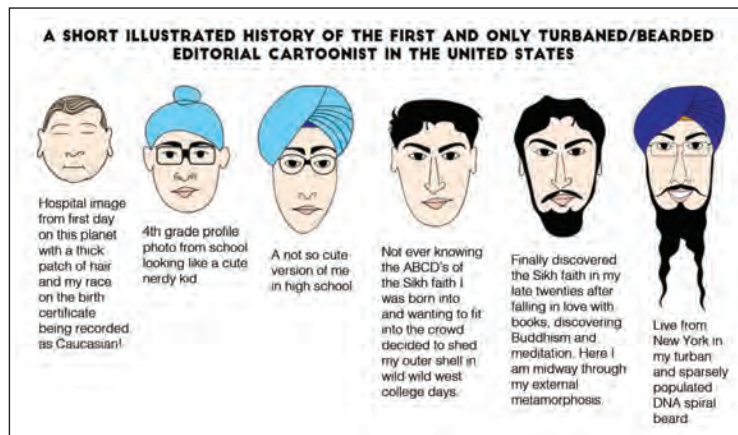
black Captain America or a turbaned, bearded Captain America.

Captain America is an imaginary character; he’s fictional, right? And yet when I don that uniform and I go out, it becomes this real thing where I am breaking people’s stereotypes and it’s creating these stories. It’s a fictional image, but when we see it [there’s] a real-life transformation. And then tomorrow if you see a cop who happens to have a turban and beard after having seen the cartoon, you’d be like, “Yeah sure, why not?” And this is not something you necessarily verbalize, but subconsciously you make that connection.

[So], it’s the power of images of course, but I think it’s also that behind those images is the shared experience. Because if you look beyond and—I like to call it a story, right?—if you asked somebody where you are from, they will give you an

answer. If you ask me, “Just tell me a little bit about yourself,” I’ll say, “My name is Vish, I’m a cartoonist.” But if I tell you my life story, then you’re going to make a lot of connections.

And so the key is sharing those stories. And sometimes you can do that in a single image. And people connect to that.



How would you like to see your art and activism change the world?

One message I have for people is that we can all be superheroes and we can all get out of our comfort zones. There are moments in life when you have to get out on a limb, and I think it’s important that we take the opportunities.

And that’s what I tried with my art. My hope certainly is that my work—my cartoons, my costume play performance, social experiments—can inspire others to realize that there’s a lot of potential they have. Perhaps they can get out of their comfort zone and they can create something, they can make change.

But in shifting people’s perceptions, you might disagree with them, but at the same time you realize, “Wow, they’re able to tell a story through their cartoons.” And my hope is that down the horizon that we can at least say, “Even if you don’t agree with the perspective, that it can exist there and it’s OK for it to exist.” The key for us is to be able to express ourselves and listen to each other. ♦

Use Sikhtoons to discuss religious diversity and identity with your students! You can find a selection of student-friendly ’toons in the *Perspectives for a Diverse America* Central Text Anthology, available at perspectives.tolerance.org.





A BLACK FLAG emblazoned with stark white letters that read, “A MAN WAS LYNCHED YESTERDAY.” A newspaper article written by a suffragist on hunger strike describing being force-fed by her jailers. Photographs of weary children on a poster underneath the title “Nearly Two Million Child Workers Under Sixteen Years To-day.”

All of these objects are powerful records of some of the country’s great social justice movements. They are *primary sources*, the raw materials of history.

Primary sources are documents or objects that were created during the time under study, often by participants in or eyewitnesses to historic events. These windows into the past are excellent teaching tools for engaging students with complex subjects, while also supporting the development of higher-order thinking skills.

By preserving evidence of the actions, voices and daily lives of social justice advocates and everyday people,

primary sources represent history at its most personal. Engaging with these unique artifacts in an informed and critical way empowers students not only to grapple with the richness and complexity of history, but also to bring the voices of the past to bear on the issues of today.

Discovering Primary Sources

One of the world’s richest sources of primary source documents is available at students’ and teachers’ fingertips: the website of the Library of Congress, loc.gov. The Library’s online collections span centuries of human history

Unlock the history of struggle and progress with primary sources from the Library of Congress.

BY STEPHEN WESSON

and include millions of items in a wide variety of formats: handwritten letters, sheet music, photographs, oral histories, maps, films and more.

Rebecca Newland, the Library of Congress 2013-14 teacher in residence, has placed primary sources at the core of her instruction in multiple settings, from the English classroom to her middle school library. “Engaging students with primary sources immerses them in historical study in a way that nothing else but a time machine could achieve,” Newland says.

The “time machine” offered by primary sources invites students to ask questions that beg answers—and motivates them to seek those answers. In this mode of inquiry, many students will:

ENGAGE WITH CONTENT. Examining materials from the past personalizes

history, establishing a connection that allows students to navigate distant or challenging subject matter.

DEVELOP CRITICAL THINKING SKILLS. By analyzing primary sources, students move from making concrete observations to questioning and making inferences about the materials and the role they played in history.

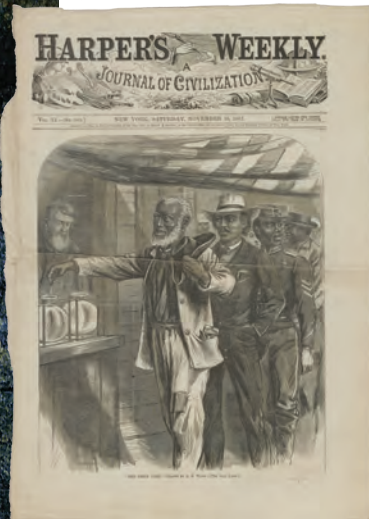
CONSTRUCT KNOWLEDGE. Including primary documents in the curriculum encourages students to discern the context in which they were created, synthesize information from multiple sources and form reasoned conclusions based on a variety of evidence.

Primary Sources and Social Justice

The types of higher-order skills supported by working with primary sources are critical to participation

in civic life and have particular relevance for students investigating social justice issues and movements across disciplines.

The United States is the country it is today only because of the concerted efforts of engaged, informed citizens. Through the study of materials they left behind, students can really learn how it came to be. Analyzing primary sources requires students to observe and question each document or artifact, applying an informed skepticism about its purpose and the perspective of its creator(s). No single document tells the entire story of any event, and students seeking a definitive account will quickly find themselves weighing multiple, often contradictory, points of view. At the same time, many historical movements, events and even entire



Beginning this month, Teaching Tolerance and the Library of Congress are offering a new FREE webinar series! Register now for great suggestions on teaching with primary sources that illuminate unjust laws and practices prior to the Civil Rights Act of 1964. <http://bit.do/civilrights>

populations are woefully underdocumented; the few firsthand accounts or traces that do exist invite students to draw lessons from the silences as well as from the artifacts themselves.

Working with primary sources reveals the partial and incomplete nature of history and helps students

see the power that they themselves have to complicate and expand current understanding of the past. In addition, close examination of the documents left behind by social justice advocates from history, such as crusaders for women's suffrage or the anti-lynching movement, makes concrete the debates, tactics and personalities of earlier struggles. These traces and testimonies

of activists from the past also empower students, reminding them that substantive social change is possible, however daunting the task may seem.

SKILLS AND TECHNIQUES

Primary Source Analysis

A good way for educators to launch students into the exploration of primary sources is with a simple primary source analysis. The Library of Congress' Primary Source Analysis Tool (loc.gov/teachers/primary-source-analysis-tool/) is a graphic organizer that helps students engage with any kind of primary source (e.g., a photo, map, movie or manuscript) and record their responses in a way that helps them build understanding.

When students analyze a primary source, they respond to it in a number of ways: **observe** the item, identifying

and noting details; **reflect** on the item, generating and testing hypotheses about what they see; or, ask **questions**, leading them back to the item or launching new investigations and further research.

These responses don't need to come in a particular order. A reflection leads to an observation, which might prompt questions, which could drive the student back to make more observations or reflections.

Encouraging student analysis through the lens of social justice invites them to reflect on point of view—not only that of the item's creator but also of other individuals who interacted with the item. For example, consider questions a student might ask in response to this exhibit panel.

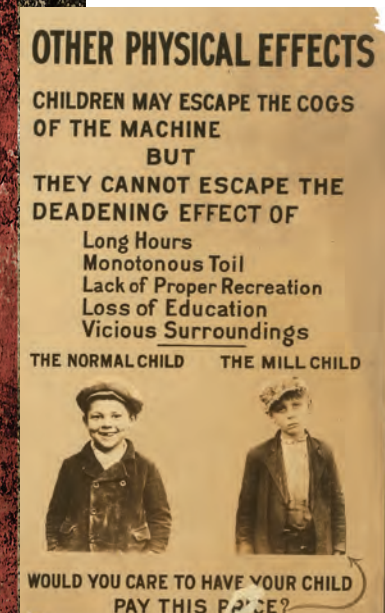
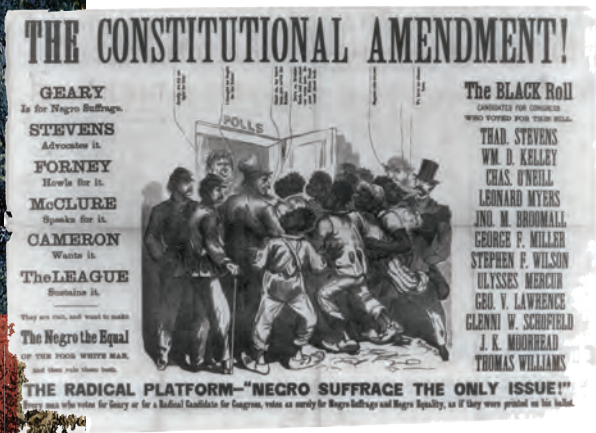
- Who are the children in this poster?
- Why do they look the way they do?
- What points were the creators of this poster trying to make?
- Why did they select the images they did?
- Why did they add the words they did?
- Who were they trying to reach with this poster?

By recording their thinking, generating a set of reflections supported by concrete observations and posing questions, students will create an intellectual foundation and a blueprint to guide further research.

Sourcing and Contextualizing

After students become familiar with primary source analysis, they can explore primary sources more deeply to seek answers. Two important strategies for engaging critically with a primary source are *sourcing* the document—thinking about the document's creator—and *contextualizing* the document—situating it within time and place.

Working with primary sources carries with it the risk that students will



assign the authoritative version of an event or situation to a single artifact or account. Even though primary sources were often created by participants in or eyewitnesses to significant events, each item still comes with its own context and history and requires students to evaluate it carefully in light of background information and other accounts.

Students can ask a series of questions to help them source and contextualize:

- ➔ Who created the item?
- ➔ What role did the creator have in the event(s) referenced by the item?
- ➔ Who else played important roles in the event(s)?
- ➔ Who was the item's intended audience?
- ➔ What was the item's intended purpose?
- ➔ What was happening when the item was created?

The primary source itself and the bibliographic record may offer answers to some of these questions. (Most items in the online collections of the Library of Congress are accompanied by a bibliographic record. Look for the "About This Item" link.)

Consider this example of a sourcing and context exercise, based on the poster "The Constitutional Amendment!"

Educators could begin by inviting students to analyze the poster and asking how it adds to their understanding of the struggle for African-American suffrage in the years following the Civil War. Students could then apply the sourcing and contextualizing questions, and consult the poster's bibliographic record to address any that remain unanswered.

Students could then compare "The Constitutional Amendment!" to a contrasting document, the engraving "The First Vote." They could begin the comparison by applying the same sourcing and contextualizing questions to "The First Vote" that they applied to "The Constitutional Amendment!"

What additional details might students discover when answering questions about source and context? How does thinking about source and the

context influence possible responses to the portrayals of African-American voters seen in the two images? What biases might they identify in both images? How could students use each of these documents as evidence to support their conclusions?

Sourcing and contextualizing historical artifacts that express a wide range of viewpoints help students deepen their understanding of an event or era. The questions that arise can also help them identify topics for further investigation across subject areas and disciplines.

Inspiring Research Questions

Historical primary sources often include long-forgotten language, attitudes and arguments, fostering curiosity among students that can be harnessed to direct and focus research.

After students analyze primary sources and investigate the sources and contexts of each, they will be prepared to formulate hypotheses and identify research questions to help drive their investigations. For example, students working with "The Constitutional Amendment!" and "The First Vote" could begin by asking how each document advances a different position. They could also speculate about other possible positions in the debate over the rights of black citizens to vote and identify strategies for finding other primary sources that deepen their understanding of a complex period in U.S. history.

By developing research questions based on primary source analysis, students not only build their critical thinking and inquiry skills, but they may be inspired to apply what they've learned to social justice pursuits of their own. This is yet another way the "time machine" of primary sources can positively affect young people. Teaching with primary sources today may inspire the social justice leaders of the future. ♦

Wesson is an educational resource specialist at the Library of Congress.

Find tools to help unlock the potential of primary sources on the Library of Congress website for teachers, [loc.gov/teachers](https://www.loc.gov/teachers). This page brings together primary source analysis tools, lesson plans, primary source sets, professional development and interactive e-books in one place—and all for free.



Toolkit

Give your students the skills to read primary sources and better understand change throughout history. VISIT » tolerance.org/national-treasures

DOING HISTORY



BUNCOMBE

·COUNTRY·



a North Carolina community
looks backward—and inward—after
discovering a collection of slave deeds.



By Trey Adcock



Each year, thousands of North Carolina students study slavery as part of the North Carolina and U.S. history curriculum. It's not an easy topic—in fact, many educators shy away from teaching about slavery beyond the bare minimum requirements. But in Buncombe County, North Carolina, the chance discovery of a cache of slave deeds led to an opportunity for students to move beyond textbooks and worksheets and connect with individuals who lived in their own community during slavery. It didn't make the topic any easier, but it did lead to a community-wide collaboration that has connected Buncombe residents more deeply to their past and made them participants in history.

The Buncombe County Slave Deeds Project

Fostering agency is a central component of social justice education. But before students can see themselves as agents, they must see themselves as creators of history and connect with historical struggles—and peoples—of the past.

Deborah Miles, director of the University of North Carolina at Asheville's Center for Diversity Education, knew that primary sources are an excellent vehicle for promoting

historical empathy and agency. So in 1997, when local real estate attorney Marc Rudow told her he had stumbled on a collection of slave deeds while researching a parcel of land at the Buncombe County Register of Deeds, she was eager to use them with students. Slave deeds are bills of sale. Enslaved people were considered property, and any transfer of property was recorded between 1792 and 1865 when slavery was abolished. The cache Rudow found included more than 350 deeds.

With support from the Z. Smith Reynolds Foundation, Miles organized a summer internship project for 10 high school and college students. The students worked long hours poring over the records, digitizing the documents and providing an initial analysis of each deed. Through this process they began to better understand both the human face of slavery and the *dehumanizing* practice of treating people as property, all while developing the skills of professional historians. “[They] became the diggers of history, not just passive recipients,” recalls Miles. “They made history and set in motion a chain of events that is still unfolding.”

It wasn't long before Eric Grant, a curriculum specialist for the Buncombe County Schools district, took note of the project and extended its reach. Grant,



MEETING SARAH GUDGER

The power of the deeds project can be seen in the story of Sarah Gudger. She was born into slavery in 1816 near Old Fort, North Carolina, and lived to be 122 years old. One of the most compelling discoveries in the Buncombe County Register of Deeds office was the original deed documenting her ownership, allowing for new possible narratives and perspectives of her life. (More of her story can be found at the Slave Narratives from the Federal Writers' Project.)

Drew Reisinger reflects, “Finding Sarah Gudger's bill of sale was significant for me because I've seen Sarah's picture, and I have read her interview in the Library of Congress Slave Narratives. It is her story that shows me what life was like in Buncombe County for a slave, and the connection between that story and the documents recorded in this office brought home to me the magnitude of history that sits on our shelves.”

working with students at a local alternative program for high school juniors and seniors, used an array of Google tools to magnify and manipulate the digitized deeds for transcription. Grant's students begin to recognize names: Woodfin, Merrimon and Vance. These names mark the roads the kids travelled on their way to and from school every day—and they were the names of slaveholders. The connection flipped a light switch: Students began to realize how entwined the history of the region really was with their everyday lives.

Then, in 2012, Drew Reisinger, the newly elected Buncombe County register of deeds, learned of the students' work and immediately saw the ethical and practical value of placing the deeds online. This act of transparency led Buncombe County to become the first in the country to make such deeds available to the public. These primary source documents could now be accessed not only by historians but also by family genealogists, who had once been locked out of the historical narrative of slavery in every former slave-holding county from Maine to Texas.

As word of this remarkable project spread, more community partners began to express interest. These partners now include state officials, professional and amateur genealogists, other local educators and nonprofit agencies. Faculty at a local university began using the online slave deeds with preservice teachers, many of whom plan to teach in Buncombe County. In one social studies methods course, students transcribed deeds, reviewed previously transcribed deeds, wrote lesson plans based on the documents and created 30-second public service announcement videos to broaden support for the project. The project was enthusiastically embraced. Preservice teachers gained a deeper understanding of the ways in which social justice education can work in the classroom, and, at the same time, became part of a larger community story about slavery, identity, reconciliation and the struggle to more accurately understand local history.

“I am holding
someone's life
in my hands.”

Teaching Transformation

Teaching the topic of slavery at any level can be both emotionally charged and confusing, so the educators behind the Buncombe County Slave Deeds Project took steps to prepare their students. While most of the high schoolers knew basic information about the institution of slavery, many had no real depth of knowledge about the experiences of enslaved people or slaveholders. Miles, Grant and other participants provided students with content knowledge and background information so that the deeds could be appropriately sourced and contextualized—a necessary step if students were going to formulate deeper research questions. Preservice teachers spent time discussing developmentally appropriate ways to address the topic of slavery in their future classrooms.

Working with the primary materials of the past has brought about countless transformative moments for the young people participating in the project. Ashland Thompson, a member of the original cohort of interns and now a Ph.D. candidate, reflects, “What was shocking to me was that so much documentation still existed in our community. I saw the relevance of tracing ancestry. I learned that summer, at a young age, that if I wanted to look at my past here is a way to do it—it can be done.”

“History has always been so distant from [students], both in time and space, but the deeds hit home for many of them,” Grant observes. “They also are

confronted with some grotesque facts—the relative price of a young man versus a young female, the sale of an entire family, that some of the names are listed on wills alongside the exchange of furniture. Recognition of this is powerful and becomes personal.”

He recalls a time when one of the students, who had often struggled in school, looked up from a deed he'd been working on and marvelled, “I am holding someone's life in my hands.”

Future Pathways

As word about the project has spread and educators have seen the value of students working firsthand with the Buncombe County slave deeds, other partners have come forward. Pam Smith with the Smithsonian Institution's National Museum of American History contacted Reisinger and Miles and soon the project spread to Clemson University and the University of Georgia, evolving into a collaborative project entitled People Not Property (peoplenotproperty.org). Historians, database experts and community advocates are now partnering to create a national slave deeds database using the investigative work of students throughout the country as they too become “diggers of history” in their own communities. In Buncombe County, the YMI Cultural Center will soon host a conference to provide an overview of the project and professional development for 50 teachers who want to use the deeds in their classrooms.

Says Smith, “We want teachers, students and family historians to be able to sit at their computers and access local county records for free—bills of sale, wills, inventories and more—some of the best historical documents available for connecting the dots and more easily finding the enslaved. This is cutting edge. It's never been done before, and it's time.” ♦

Adcock is an assistant professor in the education department and director of American Indian Outreach at the University of North Carolina, Asheville.





A HAND *to* HOLD

BY KEVIN BAXTER ILLUSTRATION BY CHRISTOPHER BUZELLI

ON A NORMAL DAY, Ronnie sweeps into the classroom wearing a Cinderella gown, ballet shoes and a tiara.

This morning, however, she drags herself to her seat with her mismatched shirt and jeans a wrinkly mess, and no socks to protect her tiny feet from the old, torn sneakers she is wearing. Ronnie's normally bright and playful brown eyes seem

flat and dull. They remain fixed on me as I move around, preparing the classroom for the day's activities. I assume by the way she is hovering so close that she has something to tell me.

I am a 25-year-old, male kindergarten teacher early in my career. And nothing in any teacher's manual has prepared me for what I am about to learn.

When my classroom setup is finished, I squat down low to face her. "What's going on, Champ? Something on your mind?" Her eyes drop to the floor as she leans forward to whisper in my ear. "My mommy's in her bedroom and won't get up."

Her words take a moment to register. When they finally do, a chill runs through my heart. "Ronnie, what do you mean,

she won't get up?" Looking back down at her hands, she says, "She just won't." As her eyes stay focused on her tiny fingers, I sense what this little girl is desperately trying to say but just cannot. Her mother is dead.

I pull Ronnie close, enveloping her suddenly quivering body in my arms. I can only choke out, "It's OK sweetie. You are going to be all right."

Earlier that morning, for whatever reason, Ronnie's mother had reached her limit. I will never know what final event caused her to hit that breaking point, but whatever it was left her with what she perceived to be only one option, and she had exercised it.

Ronnie's mother had always seemed like a bit of a flake. On the few days she visited the school, she was usually disheveled and smelled of alcohol. But she was not a problem parent. She seemed caring and conscientious. Ronnie appeared to be well cared for, and she and her mother had a very loving relationship. A social person, her mother liked to chat with me and the other teachers when she came in for conferences or school events. Her drinking habit did not appear to be affecting Ronnie adversely. If she was in some kind of trouble or was dealing with severe problems, she was doing a good job of hiding it.

Today, though, I know I must focus on Ronnie, not her mother. I try to imagine what the morning must have been like. I don't know how Ronnie managed to get to school. I suppose she knew she had to get here, that this was where she should be. Everything seems a blur as I try to piece it all together—what has happened and what needs to happen now.

Obviously this must be reported, so I take Ronnie by the hand and head to the principal's office, leaving my class

with an assistant. As Ronnie explains her story to my principal and emergency services are called, I know from the look on Ronnie's face that she will be loathe to repeat her dreadful secret.

When the Child Services workers arrive, they tell me that Ronnie will end

instinctively that she has been hurt somehow.

Throughout the day Ronnie runs and skips on the playground and holds hands with another little girl as they sit and talk. I linger behind them to listen. Giggling and smiling, they discuss a favorite cartoon show. Every so often Ronnie walks over and leans on me or touches my hand. She sits next to me during snack time as we share some crackers, not talking. Occasionally I'll rub her back or smooth her hair. For the remainder of the day she is my little satellite, orbiting around me, wandering off and then returning, looking up into my face, seeking my hand.

At the end of the day, Child Services returns for her. I am allowed a final goodbye and when I kneel down in front of her, Ronnie wraps her tiny arms around my neck and squeezes, but she does not cry. Then, with nothing more for me to offer, she is gone.

When Ronnie told me what she'd seen at home that morning, the awesome responsibility of what it means to really care for children came crashing down on me. Years later, it is a lesson I have not forgotten. In Ronnie's case, it wasn't a matter of what I did for her that day, but what more I could have been doing all along. Listening harder? Looking for signs of trouble?

Even if there was nothing more I could have done, Ronnie made me realize that my job as a teacher is not simply to fill young children's heads with facts and ideas, but also to protect them. And—when I can't protect them—to be there, a hand to hold when their fragile hearts are broken. ♦

Baxter is an early childhood specialist based in Asheville, North Carolina.

FOR THE REMAINDER OF THE DAY SHE IS MY LITTLE SATELLITE, ORBITING AROUND ME, WANDERING OFF AND THEN RETURNING, LOOKING UP INTO MY FACE, SEEKING MY HAND.

up living with either her aunt or grandmother, neither of whom Ronnie knows well. I convince them to let Ronnie remain in my classroom for the rest of the day. I want her to have one more day of routine. Wherever she ends up, Ronnie won't be getting the familiar love that she needs right now.

Ronnie's classmates do not know what has happened, but they know



Toolkit

Prepare for the moments when students need you most.

VISIT » tolerance.org/hand-to-hold

Shelter from the Storm

BY **TERI CETTINA** ILLUSTRATION BY **JON KRAUSE**

MARIA GARCIA teaches second grade at a dual Spanish-English immersion school in San Francisco's low-income Bayview neighborhood. Many of the school's families live on very little; Garcia is accustomed to her students coming to school in the same clothing day after day or complaining of empty stomachs.

Many low-income students take their circumstances in stride, but Garcia knows others aren't so lucky: Some kids are actually traumatized by daily experiences directly and indirectly related to living in low-income circumstances (unstable housing, food insecurity, loss of utilities, lack of access to health care, school disruption, and exposure to community hardships like theft or violence). That was the case with Luciana.*

Luciana was a transfer student from nearby Oakland. Garcia suspected Luciana might be experiencing poverty-related trauma because she often shared worries about her home life and the family's constant food shortage. And while she was initially affectionate and talkative with her teacher, over the course of the school year, Luciana's behavior changed. She spaced out in class and sometimes fell asleep. She stopped participating in group activities. Most significantly, she was no longer open and chatty when Garcia pulled her aside to ask how she was doing.

Fortunately for Luciana, the teachers, counselors and administrators at Garcia's school had received training that expanded their understanding of



trauma to include the potential effects of living in different types of poverty. They engaged a project called UCSF Healthy Environments and Response to Trauma in Schools (HEARTS), co-sponsored by the University of California-San Francisco and San Francisco General Hospital. The goal: to help teachers and administrators understand how all kinds of trauma—including trauma induced by poverty—affect children and their ability to succeed in school. This understanding helps inform classroom-level responses, a critical piece of the puzzle because punitive discipline is not an effective intervention for poor behavior or school performance related to trauma.

Sharon Lacay, a clinical social worker with the HEARTS program, explains the need to extend the scope of trauma response beyond trauma caused by grief, loss or abuse.

“Kids really can’t learn efficiently if they’re anxious or sad—to the point of being traumatized—about where they’re going to live, or whether they’ll have dinner that night,” she says.

Through her participation in HEARTS, Garcia learned that all kids respond to trauma differently: While some students push their frustration and fear *outward*—lashing out at teachers or classmates—Luciana became withdrawn. “It’s her own, quieter way of

dealing with her anxiety related to her living situation,” says Garcia.

Reaching Those in Need

The first step to helping poverty-traumatized kids is identifying them. The outward signs of poor living conditions are obvious in some cases: worn clothing, inadequate hygiene due to lack of electricity or running water, or attempts to sneak lunch food for later. But not all types of poverty look the same, and not every child who appears to be living in poverty is traumatized.

Robin Zorn, 2014 national school counselor of the year, says kids experiencing *severe* anxiety, sadness or anger

Taking Trauma Sensitivity School Wide

BY JASON DRWAL

When addressing the trauma of poverty, a school-wide response offers the greatest opportunity for creating meaningful and sustainable changes that will help students succeed, says Susan Cole, director of the Trauma and Learning Policy Initiative, a joint program of Massachusetts Advocates for Children and Harvard Law School.

Speaking about how the Initiative helps schools become trauma-sensitive, Cole states, “Becoming trauma sensitive is not a program. It’s a process.” Trauma sensitivity is not a generic agenda or set of policies to be implemented across every school. The process Cole describes as lead author of the resource *Helping Traumatized Children Learn* is a school-specific culture shift in which the entire building, from cafeteria workers to principal, is guided by the knowledge that trauma affects students’ learning, behavior and relationships. Through the lens of trauma sensitivity, academic programming, counseling and special education can work together to honor students’ strength and address their interconnected challenges related to academics and emotional health. The goal is to make trauma sensitivity a regular part of the way schools are run.

Jason Drwal is a psychologist for the Veterans Affairs Health Care System in Iowa City, Iowa.



over their situation will show a range of symptoms similar to those associated with shock or abuse.

“They may have trouble making friends, since they don’t trust those relationships will last,” says Zorn, who works in Duluth, Georgia.

Lacay adds, “Some traumatized kids act out toward other students or their teacher—an attempt to show that they are in control of those relationships since they aren’t in control of much else in their lives.”

Another telltale sign is hypervigilance. Traumatized kids often startle easily or overreact to minor events. They may also become perfectionists in their schoolwork.

“This is a ‘survival-brain’ type of coping mechanism,” explains Lacay. “The child thinks, ‘If I do everything perfectly, we won’t have to move again, I won’t have to leave this school.’”

Classroom Strategies

Recognizing poverty-induced trauma is only the first step toward making a difference. Garcia knew that children in unstable circumstances could benefit from having trusted adults in their lives, so she began inviting Luciana to special, small-group lunches with her and a few other students. She also connected Luciana with a volunteer school mentor who met with her monthly at lunchtime.

Another arena in which schools can help is access to basic needs. Although technically not the responsibility of the staff, many educators feel compelled to help; one approach is school-level collaborations with community agencies. Zorn helped her school partner with a nearby church to put together weekend food bags for kids in need. Her school also refers parents to organizations that can help them find temporary housing, food vouchers and other services.

Making calls or scheduling meetings with families whenever possible can also help, suggests Monica Dominguez, a school counselor in El Paso, Texas. Opening the lines of communication

WORKING TO ALLEVIATE OR BUILD AWARENESS OF POVERTY

in the community can be an empowering experience for students and staff alike.

Consider picking a local issue, cause or organization and incorporating a service project in your curriculum. Taking action can be an engaging learning experience and a way to address poverty on both systemic and individual levels. Explore the Do Something tasks in Perspectives for a Diverse America for a selection of grade-level appropriate options. perspectives.tolerance.org

informs teachers of what they can do at school to better support the student in extenuating circumstances that might otherwise go undetected.

“Maybe a student can’t finish certain assignments because he rarely has electricity for reading at night,” notes Dominguez. “Teachers can work with school officials on special accommodations like extra periods for the student to finish schoolwork or after-school tutoring.”

Young people experiencing trauma also may need some strategies—and spaces—to calm themselves when they’re too anxious to focus on classroom work. Dominguez advocates making peaceful spaces available within each classroom or in another supervised areas of the school. Younger kids benefit from sensory toys like a box filled with rice, simple puzzles and calming music heard through headphones. Older students can journal about their stress and fear, listen to music or practice deep-breathing exercises. Lacay notes that leading classes in simple body stretches or an eyes-closed visualization of a calming scene can take as little as two minutes and benefit *all* students without singling out those living in particularly tough circumstances.

Adopting a Trauma-Sensitive Lens

At Dominguez’s school, teachers share stories and observations with the school’s Response to Intervention (RTI) committee. Administrators and teachers, along with a social worker, a nurse and Dominguez, collaborate on how best to help poverty-traumatized

students. The team brainstorms ways to support students in school and refers children and families to outside counseling when needed.

As for Garcia, she says she’s learned—with the help of her school’s HEARTS counselor—that helping her students manage poverty-related trauma is necessary if she’s going to succeed in teaching them their letters and numbers. But perhaps even more important, she understands that children living with trauma need the support and the confidence of their educational community—often their main emotional resource outside their family.

Dominguez agrees. In addition, she says, when a teacher steps in to help individual students at risk, the entire classroom benefits. “You’ll have a more calm, focused class with fewer distractions and outbursts,” she says. Both kids and teachers will also have the chance to get to know students who might otherwise have been written off as discipline problems or kids who can’t learn. That would be a mistake, says Dominguez. “You shouldn’t underestimate these kids.” ♦

** Name changed to protect privacy*

Cettina is a freelance writer specializing in parenting and education topics. She lives in Portland, Oregon.



Toolkit

Need strategies to support young people experiencing trauma?

VISIT » tolerance.org/shelter-from-the-storm



AVATARS AND ACTIVISTS

Digital gaming offers a new frontier for social justice educators.

BY MAYA LINDBERG ILLUSTRATIONS BY CHRISTINA UNG

IT'S JUNE 7, 1995. COLLEGE STUDENT Kaitlin Greenbriar returns to her family home after a yearlong trip abroad and finds a foreboding letter taped to the front door: “Katie, I’m sorry I can’t be there to see you, but it is impossible. ... —Sam”

This is the opening scene of *Gone Home*, a widely acclaimed digital game by The Fullbright Company. At first glance, *Gone Home*, with its ominous opening, stormy skies and suburban home full of flickering lights, appears to be an interactive horror story. But in fact, it’s an LGBT-inclusive game that belongs to a category of digital games that engage players in social issues and social impact: “games for change.”

The gameplay of *Gone Home* involves stepping into Kaitlin’s shoes and finding clues about Sam’s disappearance in quite ordinary objects—journal entries, letters and homework assignments. Kaitlin pieces together that her sister Sam, a 17-year-old high school junior, came out to their parents as a lesbian. Sam’s journal entries reveal they wrote off her sexual identity as a phase. “I was prepared for them to be mad, or disappointed, or start crying or something,” Sam writes, “but they were just in denial. [T]hey wouldn’t even respect

me enough to believe me.” The game prompts players to grapple with the story as it unravels.

The idea that digital gameplay can raise awareness about real-world issues, such as the alienation endured by LGBT youth, has caught the attention of K-12 educators. But they encounter an industry in which the vast majority of digital games are not developed with social issues, civic action or curricular standards in mind. Nicholas Fortugno, a game designer and co-founder and chief creative officer of Playmatics, says the commercial game industry knows very little about the education field.

That’s where organizations like Games for Change, the leading global advocate for digital games for social impact, come into play. Founded in 2004, Games for Change works to build popular interest in social-impact games, as well as to facilitate crucial partnerships between game developers who hold design expertise and social entrepreneurs, government agencies and researchers who hold the content expertise.

Half the Sky Movement: The Game, a hugely popular Facebook game with over 1.3 million players, is one example

that stemmed from corporate and public partnerships facilitated by Games for Change. Drawing from the book *Half the Sky: Turning Oppression into Opportunity for Women Worldwide* and the PBS series by the same name, the game involves an “empowerment journey” across the globe. Each player takes the perspective of Radhika, an Indian woman who navigates a series of quests that reflect the real-world hardships experienced by women and girls, including poverty, domestic violence, genital mutilation and sex trafficking. Through the gameplay, players “empower” Radhika and also unlock real-life donations from corporate sponsors—such as books published by Pearson and fistula surgeries funded by Johnson & Johnson—for communities in need.

Emily Treat, vice president of production services at Games for Change, says, “We knew that a lot of our players would be young teenagers. ... [W]e don’t expect them to have money to make big, significant donations, but we wanted them to still feel that their gameplay was being a contribution.”

Games for change can effectively take on relevant and serious topics and offer unique possibilities for educators. The digital format means these games



“can be gauged to be self-paced, to be adaptable, and quite an engaging experience,” Treat observes.

Yet, educators aren’t lining up to buy them—or even *not* buy them

(many are free). “A lot of what you’re seeing are what I call pioneers,” Treat says, “teachers who are basically taking it upon themselves to look at these games, think about when to use them,

adopt them into their curriculum, be creative about how they’re using them.”

One of these pioneers is Chad Sansing, an eighth-grade teacher at Shelburne Middle School in Staunton, Virginia. He uses digital games in his classroom as an access point to the curriculum. He says, “There are times when you want to use scenario-based [digital] games, games that are really intentional and purposeful to help students *really* understand what it’s like to have an experience outside of their own, or where a person is coming from, or how much help or hurt can be given in a situation.”

Sansing sees digital play in the same light as freewriting, filmmaking or art making: as a democratic pedagogical tool. By removing some of the scaffolding around learning, Sansing says, new opportunities arise. “When you open up to role-play, you’re searching for a lot of things schools don’t often search for, such as emotional truth, the kind of naked honesty students are sometimes discouraged from showing in their relationships with one another and the teachers in the building.”

Michael Baran, a cultural anthropologist and president of Interactive Diversity Solutions, offers another

Vetting Games for Change

To effectively and equitably use games for change, educators highlight the importance of vetting a game prior to using it in the classroom. They point to these considerations:

Make sure the game is fun. Without engagement, the impact of a game will be significantly lower.

Identify misrepresentation and biases in the game. These could be found within the story arc or the characters.

Weigh the pros and cons of role-playing. Role-playing allows students to test out decisions, experiences and consequences without real-world repercussions—and learn through trial, mistakes and repetition. But there are caveats: Role-playing is not a substitute for or a perfect mirror of lived experiences and should never ask students to endure directly simulated trauma.

Aim for a hybrid of free digital play and scaffolded learning. Sansing says, “You would not leave students to experience the game world on their own, disassociated from whatever else is going on and then expect change.”

Don’t choose a game because it’s a game. Just because a game deals with a social issue, doesn’t mean it’s high quality. Evaluate any digital game as a media form and see if it might be more advantageous to use a documentary, novel or another resource.

Involve your administration. The genre of digital games for social impact is new enough that some territory remains uncharted. Bring questions to your colleagues and school leaders as they arise.



take on role-play. Baran co-created two quiz-based games with game designer Michael Handelman—*Who Am I? Race Awareness Game* and *Guess My Race*—that *don't* place players in someone else's shoes. Baran says, "I wanted people to stay in their own shoes ... to develop a more thoughtful, critical perspective on the world around them, and not think of it like a temporary change and perspective. I want you to feel a little unsafe and a little more critical in your own shoes permanently."

With these kinds of possibilities, why aren't games for change in more classrooms? Limited technological infrastructure and resources, the parameters of curricular standards and standardized testing, and the trend toward pushing out playtime are easy suspects. But many educators dismiss digital games without asking a crucial question.

"I think a lot of people don't think about *why* use games," says Treat. "A lot of people hear, 'Well, it's fun—it's games ... therefore, it's not as serious as the stuff I'm teaching. It's not going to be as effective as direct instruction or peer-to-peer [learning].'"

Research, however, is slowly debunking the myth that all digital games are socially isolating, desensitizing

or meaningless. *Learning by Playing: Video Gaming in Education*, edited by Fran C. Blumberg, is one piece of recent scholarship that explores the idea that digital games can actually enhance student-centered experiences by allowing them to exercise agency, problem-solving skills and social responsibility.

Kurt Squire, a professor of digital media at the University of Wisconsin-Madison and the co-founder and current director of Games+Learning+Society, offers a piece of advice for approaching digital play in the classroom. "Games are being built about a variety of topics now, including things like racial bias or non-violent conflict resolution, and they're actually getting pretty decent and we're starting to see results that they're often times better than other [pedagogical] techniques." But ultimately, he says, the potential impact of digital play is highly contingent on the quality of games and how they're implemented. ♦



Toolkit

Learn about free games your students can use to make change.
VISIT » tolerance.org/avatars-activists

Get Gaming!

Games for change cover a wide spectrum of social issues. Here are some examples:

Spent

An unbeatable game that addresses poverty and homelessness.

MISSION 3

A Cheyenne Odyssey

A portrayal of the detrimental effects of white settlers' encroachment in the 1860s and 1870s from a Northern Cheyenne perspective. The third installment of a multimedia project, Mission US.

Papers, Please

A single-player game in which players take on the role of an immigration inspector in Arstotzka, a fictional country.

Guess My Race

A quiz-based game that shows players photos of people's faces—and asks them to guess how each person racially self-identifies. Once the player guesses, information on how the person self-identifies appears—challenging biases and assumptions.

WHO AM I?

Race Awareness Game

A fun and educational guessing game that encourages parents and educators to communicate responsibly about race and diversity issues with young children (ages three and up).

The Migrant Trail

Examines the experiences of migrants and border patrol agents on the U.S.-Mexico border. The gameplay draws upon the popular game *The Oregon Trail*—and addresses undocumented immigration from a humanitarian perspective.

THE SOCIAL JUSTICE LEAGUE

GRAPHIC NOVELS have come into their own in the publishing world—and from a critical literacy standpoint, it's well deserved. Unlike their more traditional text-only counterparts, contemporary graphic novels trend toward diverse voices and stories, and in the past 10 years the market for these stories has skyrocketed. Nearly every traditional publishing house is seeking to add graphic novels to its list. As a result, publishers are seeking a greater variety of stories and voices from talented but lesser-known authors who might not have been picked up otherwise. This trend is good news for educators who care about social justice. A teacher wanting to expose her students to diverse perspectives and narratives could do no better right now than to look toward graphic novels.

Graphic novels are also slowly escaping the stereotype that they are picture books with no value to literacy instruction. Their new status opens avenues for more educators to realize that these texts can be taught using nearly the same approaches as any other book, fiction or non. Even most state and Common Core English Language Arts and literacy standards can be taught via graphic novels. They can be used in

includes them as part of her curriculum in a masters of fine arts program.

"The discussions contain a lot that we'd consider during discussions of prose," McCaffrey says. "We examine character development, aspects of plot, theme and real-world relevance. Even the discussions of style and tone relate to style and tone as these are expressed by prose writers."

can be either dialogue or narration. Images are divided into panels, which are separated by gutters laid out strategically on the page.

McCaffrey also notes several examples of opportunities graphic novels offer to focus on visual literacy. "We might discuss repeated images that become symbols over the course of a story. We might also discuss visual style. What is the difference between the style Gene Luen Yang uses and [that of] Marjane Satrapi or Art Spiegelman? We might discuss stylistic contrasts within a text. In addition, we discuss the relationships between aspects of the story that are relayed through words and aspects relayed through images."

The narrative of a graphic novel is carried by images instead of words. Readers often have to infer what has happened during the transition from one panel to the next, a cognitive leap referred to as "closure." Effective use of graphic novels in the classroom helps

GRAPHIC NOVELS ARE THE NEW SUPERHEROES OF LITERACY INSTRUCTION.

BY PAM WATTS ILLUSTRATION BY HOPE LARSON

nearly every subject and are particularly valuable as counter-texts in social studies and ELA classrooms.

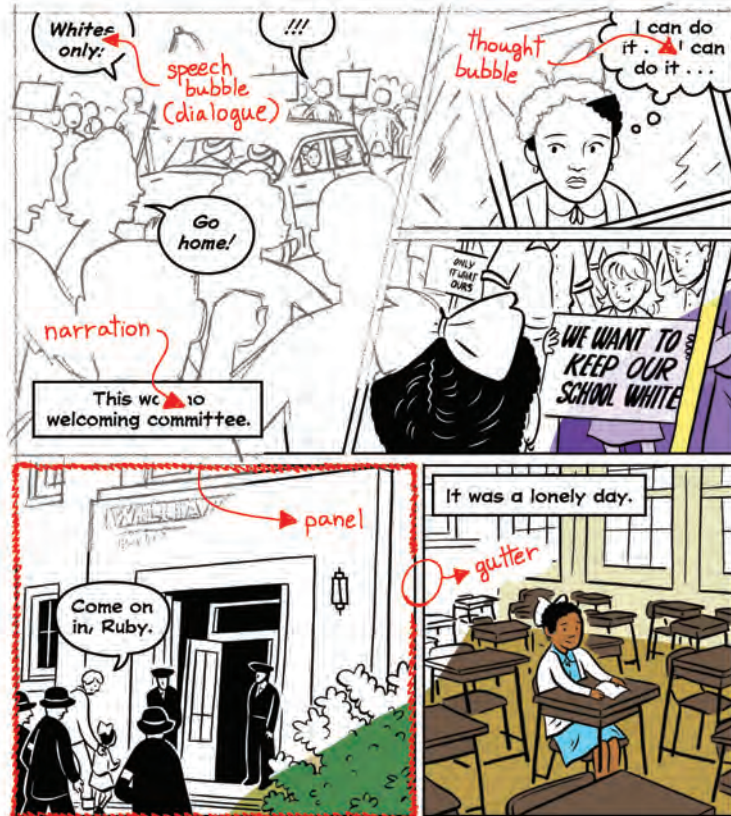
Young adult author Laura Williams McCaffrey teaches graphic novels as texts in her ELA classes at an alternative middle and high school in Vermont and also

Using graphic novels does, however, require a sophisticated set of skills and understanding of a few basic differences between illustrated and all-text narratives. Setting, pacing, and story structure are largely the same, but the units used to tell the story differ. Words



Worth a Thousand Words

One of the main difficulties with teaching literacy standards to English language learners and other students who are not reading at grade level is that the texts they can read are generally not complex enough to meet the appropriate standards. But these students can read much more sophisticated graphic novels because the brunt of the storytelling burden lies in the pictures. A high school student, for instance, with no written English proficiency at all can analyze theme, structure, character and point of view in a complex graphic novel like Shaun Tan's critically acclaimed *The Arrival*. In fact, the only Common Core ELA-Literacy standard he could not study with that book is standard RL.6.4: "Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in the text." *The Arrival* is wordless. And because there are so many quality international narratives and stories from different cultural perspectives, they are often more directly relevant to the experiences of English language learners.



EXPOSURE TO DIVERSE VOICES AND EXPERIENCES CAN REDUCE IN-GROUP/OUT-GROUP PREJUDICES, EVEN WHEN THE EXPOSURE OCCURS THROUGH READING.

students analyze how authors juxtapose images to create moments of closure.

Because closure requires a high level of reader participation, the emotional impact of graphic novels can be quite high. Particularly if the student is reading about something outside his realm of experience, such as the civil rights movement, closure can generate reader empathy for the characters in the story. This makes graphic novels especially valuable to social justice educators who want to provide their students with windows into multiple identities and experiences. This approach is an extension of contact theory: Research indicates that exposure to diverse voices and experiences can reduce in-group/out-group prejudices, even when the exposure occurs through reading.

As with comic books, graphic novels' smaller cousins, the dramatic impact of these visual texts lends itself to subject matter related to

struggle, conflict, injustice and other highly emotional topics. (See examples like *Maus* by Art Spiegelman, *The Wall* by Peter Sis, *American Born Chinese* by Gene Luen Yang and *Persepolis* by Marjane Satrapi.) Depending on the artist's intent, the story might be depicted literally or veiled as an allegory or a counter-text alternative to more traditional narratives. In any event, social justice content may be both empowering and unsettling for young readers.

"[Graphic novels] contain powerful images, some of which have been used in the past as stereotypes or slurs," says McCaffrey. "The presence of these images in the stories forces readers to confront them and discuss them. ... The stories also include visual representations of protagonists we don't always see represented as protagonists."

Reading and teaching graphic novels through a critical literacy lens offers opportunities for

Check out our exclusive online extras!

- Read *March* author Andrew Aydin's essay about how *Martin Luther King and the Montgomery Story* changed history. bit.do/montgomery
- Watch Congressman John Lewis explain why he wrote his memoir as a series of graphic novels. tolerance.org/john-lewis-video

students to question the text and make meaning of images and of characters who, as McCaffrey points out, they may not be used to seeing as protagonists. In this way, the genre draws on the history of zines, historically created and distributed through grassroots efforts to inform and empower specific audiences. In some cases zines—and even commercial comic books—have been used to spread subversive images and messages aimed at undermining powerful or unjust entities, as in the case of the classic underground comic book *Martin Luther King and the Montgomery Story*, which served as a non-violence primer for African Americans in the deep South during the 1950s. This

text is also a primary source, an artifact of history that played an active role in furthering the civil rights movement.

Another way to extend the learning benefits of teaching graphic novels is to let students create their own. This is the approach that Chris Slakey, an ELA teacher at De Vargas Middle School in Santa Fe, New Mexico, takes through a partnership with the Santa Fe Art Institute (SFAI). According to Nicole Davis, an education program associate with SFAI, the project started to help students become more aware of the issues that affect their own lives and neighborhoods.

“A large majority of De Vargas kids deal with a lot of everyday racism,” says

Davis. “Last year, we had a student who wrote his entire graphic novel about a man who lives in his neighborhood and yells racial slurs at the children when they play outside. When this student shared his project with his peers, a majority said they had their own stories of racism or xenophobia.”

The potential for transformation is not lost on Slakey. Although many of his students are reluctant to talk about their own experiences with injustice, the opportunity to tell their stories through graphic art allows them to change the power dynamics surrounding their negative experiences. “They can ... talk about things they’ve been through, but through the creation of these other characters,” says Slakey. “It allows them a shield.” ♦

Watts is a writer and educator based in Santa Fe, New Mexico.

A Modern Classic

In August of 2013, Congressman John Lewis, a lifelong human rights advocate and civil rights activist, released *March: Book One*, the first volume in a trilogy of graphic novels detailing Lewis’ experiences at the forefront of the civil rights movement. It was a surprise smash hit, debuting at number one on both *The New York Times* and *The Washington Post* bestseller lists.

More importantly, however, *March* has quickly captured the imaginations of thousands of young readers and become a critical resource for educators seeking creative and engaging materials to deliver the history of the civil rights movement into the hands of students.

March: Book One spans Lewis’ youth in rural Alabama, his life-changing encounter with Martin Luther King Jr., the birth of the Nashville Student Movement, his arrest at a nonviolent sit-in protesting a segregated lunch counter and builds to a stunning climax on the steps of Nashville City Hall. In its creation, Lewis drew from his memories of *Martin Luther King and the Montgomery Story* and how it helped prepare his own generation to study nonviolence and join the struggle for civil rights.

Lewis intentionally continues this legacy by using graphic art to bear eyewitness to one of our nation’s most historic struggles. His writing is personal, the drawings are vivid and dynamic, and the message powerful and provocative. Says Lewis about his motivation for writing *March*, “We wanted to make it plain, clear

and simple for another generation to understand, not just my story, but a story of a long and ongoing struggle to bring about justice in America.”

The Washington Post declared, “Lewis’ gripping memoir should be stocked in every school and shelved at every library.” It is well on its way. *March: Book One* has already been taught in over 30 states at the postsecondary level with several schools adopting it as common reading for all students. Teachers at the middle- and high-school levels also report that their students eagerly dive into the visual narrative of *March* and learn critical literacy skills and civil rights history at a level of depth and sophistication not offered by most traditional textbooks.

As identified by Teaching Tolerance, all nine of the essential areas for civil rights education (events, leaders, groups, history, obstacles, tactics, connections to other movements, current events and civil participation)

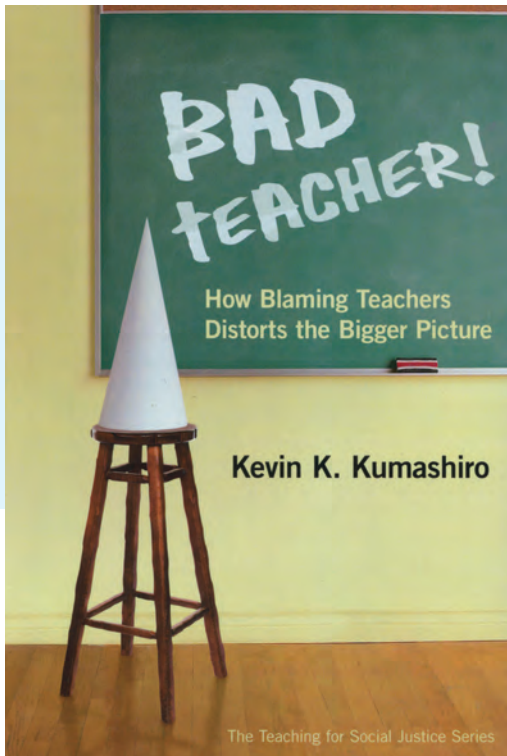
can be found within the pages of *March*. The book’s themes—equality, citizenship, agency and collective action—are more than just lessons of history. This vivid rendering of Lewis’ story stimulates both robust learning about the past and critical thinking about current and future events, making *March* a powerful and urgently relevant title for today’s classrooms.

March: Book One was co-authored by John Lewis and Andrew Aydin and features the art of Nate Powell. A free teacher’s guide is available at the Top Shelf Productions website. Look for the release *March: Book Two* this month!



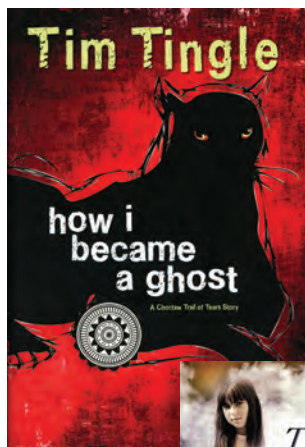
What We're Reading

The Teaching Tolerance staff review the latest in culturally aware literature and resources, offering the best picks for professional development and teachers of all grades.



In *Bad Teacher! How Blaming Teachers Distorts the Bigger Picture*, Kevin Kumashiro examines many of the faulty “common sense” ideas that have guided the educational reform movements of the last several decades. If we wish to make schools more equitable, Kumashiro argues, we must move past the current flawed framework for talking about reform.

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT



“Places families and communities at the heart of the Trail of Tears discussion.”

–Monita Bell

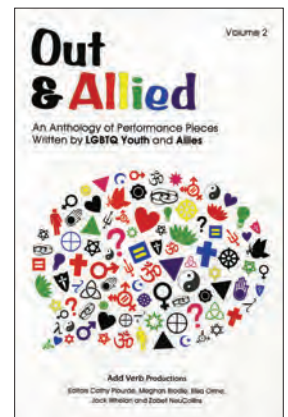
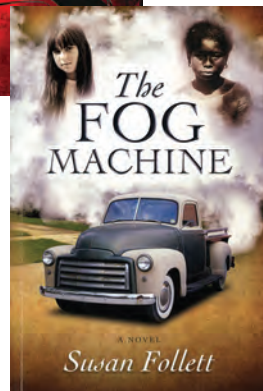


“A great example of speaking up to make change.”

–Bridget Strength

“A poignant civil rights era coming-of-age story.”

–Steffany Moyer



“Sets the stage for moving from discussion to dialogue in all communities.”

–Sara Wicht

“An incisive look at the motives behind contemporary education reform movements.”

–Steffany Moyer

Three Years and Eight Months, written by Icy Smith and illustrated by Jennifer Kindert, is about two courageous boys in Hong Kong who put their lives on the line to join the Chinese resistance effort during World War II. While this story depicts how badly the people of China were treated at the hands of Japanese forces, it also points out that some of the occupiers showed humanity and compassion.

ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

Waking Up White and Finding Myself in the Story of Race tells of author Debby Irving’s wake-up call: realizing that an inherited legacy of white privilege had tainted her with injustice and kept her from really understanding the racism around her. In time, she learns how to use her privilege to speak up fearlessly against wrong.

HIGH SCHOOL

Out & Allied: An Anthology of Performance Pieces Written by LGBTQ Youth and Allies is a collection of both

student voices and action steps for facilitating dialogue within families, schools, organizations and faith-based communities about LGBTQ youth and allies.

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Narrated by Isaac, a 10-year-old American Indian who has recently become a ghost, Tim Tingle’s **How I Became a Ghost: A Choctaw Trail of Tears Story** explores the tragedy and heartbreak of the Trail of Tears while also presenting the pride of Choctaw traditions. Students will find humor and horror, levity and weight in this engaging piece of fiction about one of our nation’s darkest hours.

MIDDLE SCHOOL

Susan Follett tells the story of C.J. Evans, a young white woman who grows up believing that if she wishes to protect herself, she must always follow society’s rules. When a new friend, a young black man, enters her life, she begins to hope that someday these rules can change. Never patronizing, **The**



PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

This Is Not a Test: A New Narrative on Race, Class, and Education by José Luis Vilson



Race, Empire, and English Language Teaching: Creating Responsible and Ethical Anti-Racist Practice by Suhanthie Motha



MIDDLE & HIGH SCHOOL

The Blossoming Universe of Violet Diamond by Brenda Woods



Push Girl by Chelsie Hill and Jessica Love

ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

Exclamation Mark by Amy Krouse Rosenthal, illustrated by Tom Lichtenheld



The Girl Who Heard Colors by Marie Harris, illustrated by Vanessa Brantley-Newton

Fog Machine paints an honest picture of Jim Crow and Freedom Summer while emphasizing that our lives, our ideas and our worlds are shaped by the people we love.

HIGH SCHOOL

Most people know about the incredible transformations Malcolm X made during his adult life, from prisoner to activist, family man, minister and humanitarian. Now, in **Malcolm Little: The Boy Who Grew Up to Become Malcolm X**, written by Ilyasah Shabazz and beautifully illustrated by AG Ford, the activist’s daughter gives us a glimpse into the tender and trying childhood that shaped her father.

ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

What We're Watching

America by the Numbers With Maria Hinojosa* examines dramatic demographic shifts across the United States and what they mean to our national identity. With award-winning news anchor and reporter Hinojosa at the helm, this eight-part documentary series captures how “a new American mainstream” composed of people of color, immigrants, women, youth and LGBT individuals is changing social, political and cultural landscapes. Each episode employs a combination of interviews, reporting, infographics and statistical analysis to tackle topics ranging from the high dropout rate among Cambodian-American youth to the inadequate health care services provided to Guamanian veterans. As suggested by the series tagline—“Behind every number, there’s a story”—**America by the Numbers** focuses on the human face of demographic change, offering educators a dynamic way to address modern currents of inclusion, equity and diversity with students. (eight 30-min. episodes)

video.pbs.org/program/america-numbers/episodes/

MIDDLE AND HIGH SCHOOL

On August 5, 2012, a white supremacist named Wade Michael Page walked into a Sikh temple in Oak Creek, Wisconsin, with a loaded gun and murdered six people. **Waking in Oak Creek**, a film from Not In Our Town,

documents the aftermath of this harrowing event as the Sikh community and their allies grieved the attack and found solace in standing together against hate. At the time of the massacre, the U.S. Justice Department did not track hate crimes against Sikhs, prompting Sikh activists to push for greater visibility. In one scene, Harpreet Singh Saini, a young man who lost his mother in the temple shooting, speaks at a congressional hearing. “Senators, I came here today to ask the government to give my mother the dignity of being a statistic.” His voice—along with those of fellow community members in **Waking in Oak Creek**—highlights the role everyone can play in building safe, inclusive communities. (34 min.)

niot.org/cops/wakinginoakcreek

MIDDLE SCHOOL AND HIGH SCHOOL

Laverne Cox Presents: The T Word, an MTV and Logo TV documentary, details the lives of seven transgender youth ranging in age from 12 to 24. Actress Laverne Cox is best known for her role in *Orange Is the New Black* and is the first transgender woman to be honored with the GLAAD Stephen F. Kolzak Award and an Emmy nomination. Her narration weaves together the stories of how these youths navigate school, love, friendships, discrimination, identity, sexuality and day-to-day life. **The T Word** brings much-needed visibility

to young transgender individuals, who are not only excluded from the mainstream media but also experience harassment, violence and economic hardship at overwhelmingly disproportionate rates. **The T Word** is a call for action—a call for complete justice, respect and inclusion. (41 min.)

mtv.com/shows/laverne-cox-presents-the-t-word/

HIGH SCHOOL AND PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

American Promise* follows 13 years in the lives of two African-American boys: Idris Brewster (son of directors Joe Brewster and Michèle Stephenson) and his best friend, Oluwaseun “Seun” Summers. The film documents Idris and Seun’s first steps into a kindergarten classroom at the Dalton School, an exclusive private school in New York City, and takes viewers all the way to their respective high school graduations. As black males, Idris and Seun encounter barriers and biases inside and outside of their elite, college-prep classrooms. Seun eventually transfers out of the Dalton School, while Idris remains. **American Promise** situates their divergent stories in a larger conversation about how boys and young men of color are systematically pushed out of the U.S. education system. (120 min.)

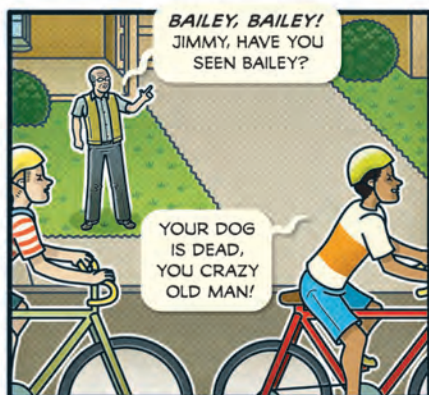
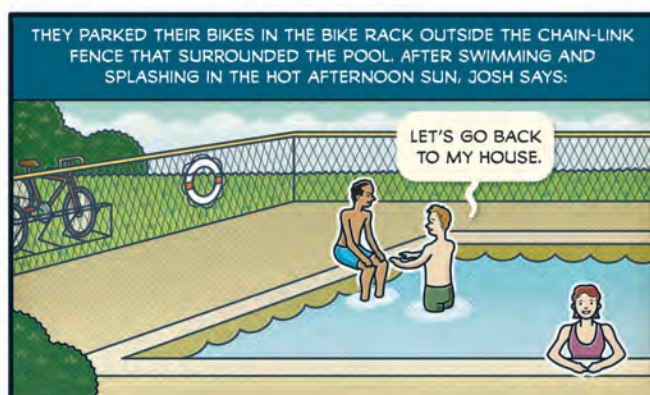
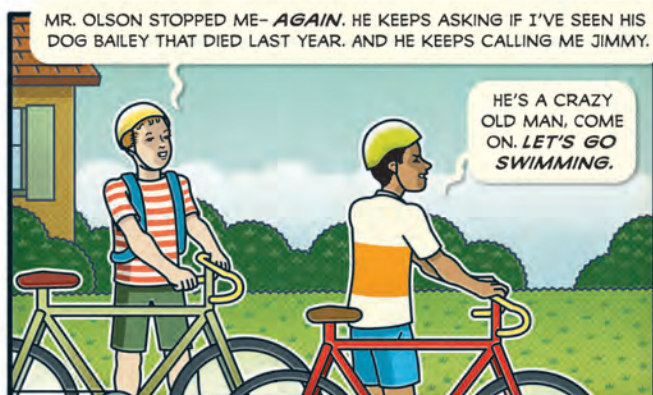
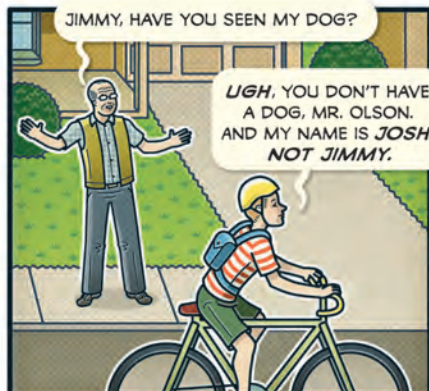
americanpromise.org

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

*Teaching Tolerance has developed professional materials to help educators make the most of these documentaries. Find them at tolerance.org/lesson/america-numbers and tolerance.org/american-promise.

JOSH, BRANDON and the GRUMPY OLD MAN

by Sue Carloni



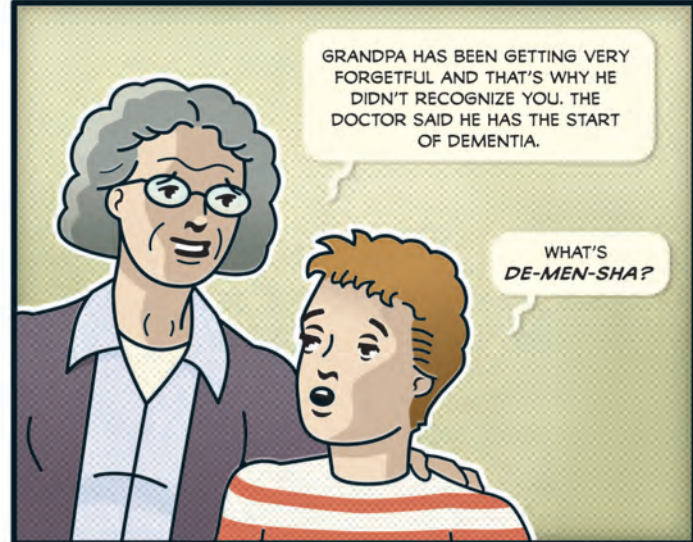
QUESTIONS FOR READERS:

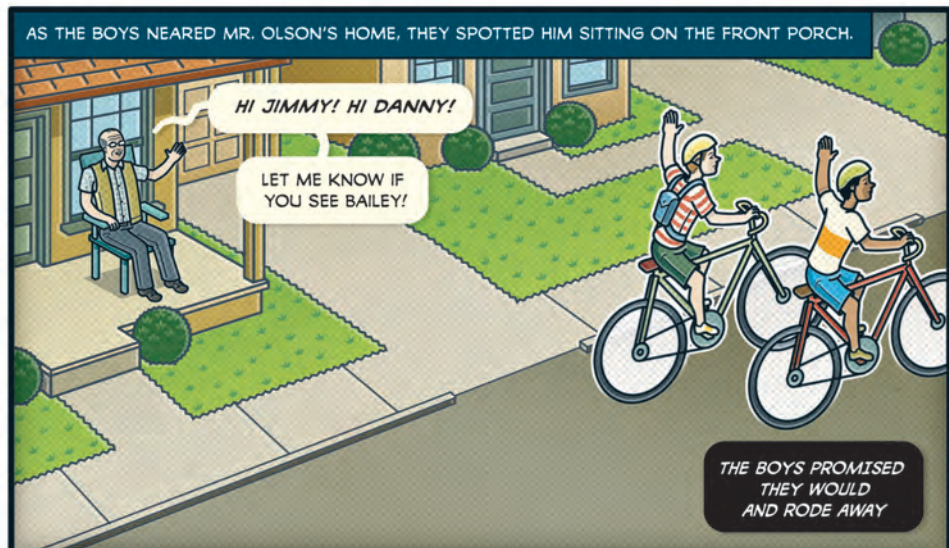
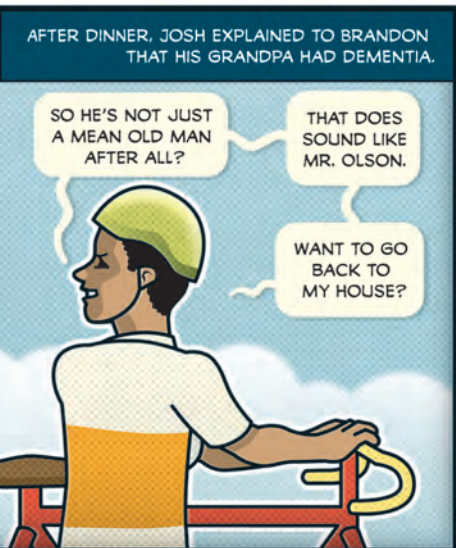
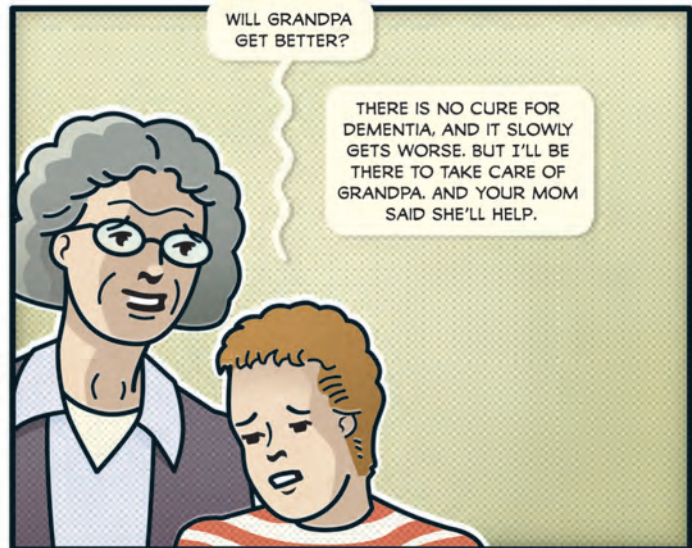
RIGHT THERE (IN THE TEXT)
What is dementia?

THINK AND SEARCH (IN THE TEXT)
Describe how Josh's feelings change towards Mr. Olson over the course of the story.

AUTHOR AND ME (IN MY HEAD)
What other titles might you give this story? Why?

ON MY OWN (IN MY HEAD)
Describe an experience you have had with someone of a different generation. Did your age difference affect your attitude and behavior? How?







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!

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identity ... action ... social
justice ... college and
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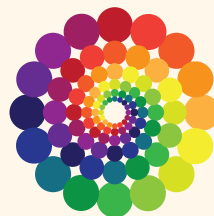
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*vice president and chief program
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PAUL C. GORSKI

*founder of EdChange and associate
professor at George Mason University*

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“*Perspectives for a Diverse America* has such a wealth of resources all in one place. It has saved me a great deal of time searching for appropriately engaging literature. Thank you.”

“The greatest asset to this curriculum is its focus on making visible those things that often are not acknowledged. Students need to ‘see’ themselves, their families, their communities in their schools. *Perspectives* begins to provide more opportunities for more students to be seen and see ...”

“I love this resource, it is highly engaging for both teachers and students. Articles, information and activities are relevant and engaging. ... I would pay for this!”

“This is one of the most impressive tools I’ve found for incorporating literacy and 21st century skills into the classroom.”

TEACH FOR JUSTICE. PLAN WITH PERSPECTIVES.

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