

TEACHING TOLERANCE



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Teaching Tolerance Offers New Curriculum to Schools Nationwide

Curriculum Developed to Match Rigor of Common Core Language and Literacy Standards with Relevance for Diverse Students

MONTGOMERY, Ala. — Today the Southern Poverty Law Center’s Teaching Tolerance project released a first-of-its-kind literacy curriculum, *Perspectives for a Diverse America*, to help teachers across the country better engage their diverse students.

The release comes just days after the U.S. Department of Education projected that, beginning this fall, children of color — Latino, African-American and Asian students — will occupy a majority of seats in American public school classrooms.

Perspectives focuses on K-12 literacy instruction by offering a free web-based anthology of texts, teaching strategies and student tasks to promote academic achievement as well as social and emotional learning. Although the curriculum is aligned to the Language Arts and Literacy standards of the Common Core State Standards, it is compatible with any college- and career-readiness standards.

“*Perspectives* offers teachers a wide selection of texts — some that reflect their students’ identities and others that give them windows into the experiences of those whose lives are different than their own,” said Teaching Tolerance Director Maureen Costello. “Our pilot showed that *Perspectives* makes a difference — pilot teachers reported a positive impact on student literacy development, engagement, empathy and behavior.”

Perspectives is supported by the Teaching Tolerance Anti-bias Framework, which draws upon the education goals identified by Louise Derman-Sparks and Julie Olsen Edwards in their work, *Anti-Bias Education for Young Children and Ourselves*. These “primary goals of anti-bias education in early childhood,” include identity, diversity, justice and action. The framework extends them through grade 12, with a set of anti-bias standards and grade-level outcomes.

“You’re creating an environment where real democracy and real equality is being practiced,” Derman-Sparks said of *Perspectives*. “It means that children are learning how to understand who we are and understand different perspectives and learn how to deal with different situations that come up that are not fair.”

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Teaching Tolerance is dedicated to reducing prejudice, improving intergroup relations and supporting equitable school experiences for our nation's children. The program reaches hundreds of thousands of educators and millions of students annually through its Teaching Tolerance magazine, multimedia teaching kits, online curricula, professional development resources and classroom-friendly social justice documentaries. These materials are provided to educators at no cost.

The Southern Poverty Law Center, based in Alabama with offices in Florida, Georgia, Louisiana and Mississippi, is a nonprofit civil rights organization dedicated to fighting hate and bigotry, and to seeking justice for the most vulnerable members of society. For more information, see www.splcenter.org.