

Race and DNA
Use science to combat prejudice

Deaf Students
Service gaps = learning gaps

Police in Schools
At what price?

TEACHING TOLERANCE



ISSUE 50 | SUMMER 2015
TOLERANCE.ORG

SEX? SEXUAL ORIENTATION? GENDER IDENTITY? GENDER EXPRESSION?

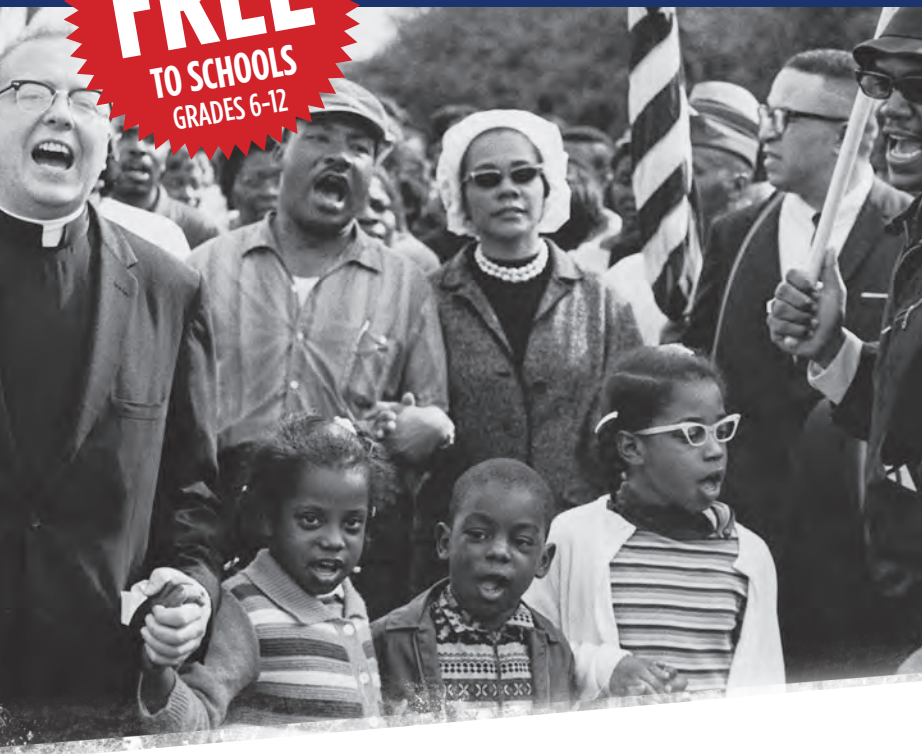


LEARN THE LANGUAGE AND THE FACTS.



FREE
TO SCHOOLS
GRADES 6-12

A NEW FILM KIT AND VIEWER'S GUIDE



SELMA THE BRIDGE TO THE BALCONY

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



E FROM TEACHING TOLERANCE

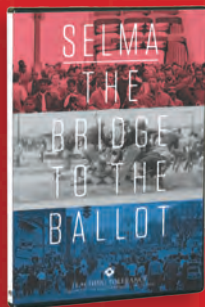


LOT

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.

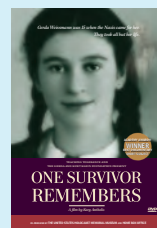


The Selma-to-Montgomery legacy includes the sacrifices of young people whose history is seldom told. Share their stories with your students.

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

Observe the 50th anniversary of the passage of the Voting Rights Act with your students this year! 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

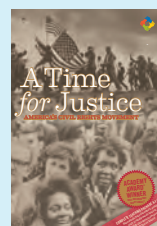
STREAMING ONLINE



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

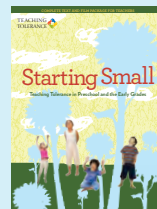


MIGHTY TIMES

THE CHILDREN'S MARCH

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

Grades 6-12



STARTING SMALL

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

Professional Development



BULLIED

A Student, a School and a Case that Made History

One student's ordeal at the hands of anti-gay bullies culminates in a message of hope.

Grades 6-12

FREE TO EDUCATORS

All kits include film and teacher's guide.

ORDER ONLINE!

tolerance.org/material/orders

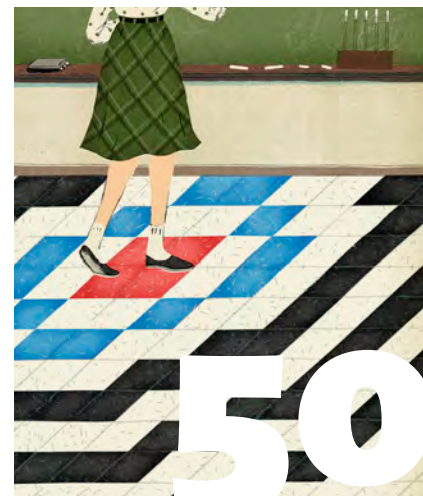


TEACHING TOLERANCE

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on the cover

Sex? Sexual Orientation? Gender Identity? Gender Expression? Many educators don't know the differences. Our downloadable poster can help.
tolerance.org/sex-gender-poster

ILLUSTRATION BY **MARK MCGINNIS**



STORY CORNER
 Story Corner has come to
 life! Listen and read along
 with your students.
tolerance.org/swam-new-world



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TODD BIGELOW



Online Exclusive!

Watch our first-ever video
 feature story, and learn how
 young people from coast
 to coast are stepping up to
 change the world!

tolerance.org/youth-united

TEACH FOR JUSTICE

FREE

professional development
materials from Teaching Tolerance



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

[tolerance.org/publication/
project-appendix-d](http://tolerance.org/publication/project-appendix-d)

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

tolerance.org/anti-bias-framework

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

[tolerance.org/publications/
civil-rights-done-right](http://tolerance.org/publications/civil-rights-done-right)

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

[tolerance.org/publication/
teaching-new-jim-crow](http://tolerance.org/publication/teaching-new-jim-crow)

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

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TEACHING
TOLERANCE



A PROJECT OF THE SOUTHERN POVERTY LAW CENTER

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Perspectives

“[T]he chance to shape one’s story is essential to sustaining meaning in life”

—ATUL GAWANDE

BEING MORTAL: MEDICINE AND WHAT MATTERS IN THE END



Parents struggle with decisions every day about how to keep their children safe while encouraging them to grow. Is it too soon to remove the training wheels from the bike? To let him cross the street by himself? To let her drive without supervision? It’s the greatest challenge parents face: fighting that urge to protect their young ones at all costs, yet giving them wings to fly.

and began imagining where each story would fit.

Some are easy: Locked educational facilities, for instance, land in the upper left.

For some students of color, on the other hand, attending a school named for a founder of the Ku Klux Klan might feel distinctly unsafe. Put that one on the bottom half.

Donning stereotypical cultural costumes in the name of school spirit nudges a school into the bottom, too, but what about dressing in solidarity to show support? Move it up.

And what about schools where police are omnipresent? They’re secure, but at what price?

Where do the experiences we offer our students land on the square? Schools must, of course, be safe. But our

duty is to help young people grow, make decisions, feel free and figure out how to shape their own stories.

Do our schools allow that? Does your classroom?

—Maureen Costello

The hunger for autonomy—or agency, empowerment, independence—starts early in life and continues to the very end. How often, though, do those of us charged with the care of others make autonomy our first priority?

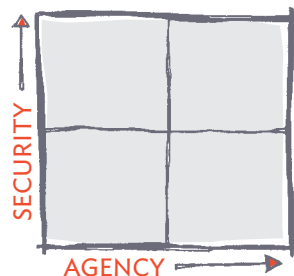
While reading Atul Gawande’s *Being Mortal* recently, I was struck by the irony that, once grown, children face the same dilemmas in caring for their aging parents that parents faced in caring for them. Sadly, few of us put much premium on autonomy for the elderly. Gawande argues that most assisted-living facilities and nursing homes rob senior citizens of their right to “shape their own lives,” prioritizing instead the goal of keeping them from harm.

Parents, grown children and educators all face a balancing act that keeps vulnerable lives safe while, to use Gawande’s phrase, sustaining their meaning. Thinking about the choices, I drew a square with two axes—security and agency—and divided the box into quadrants.

In the lower-left quadrant, there is neither security nor the ability to freely make individual choices. Being a foot soldier in a war might belong here. Moving right, autonomy increases but security doesn’t. Think of drunk drivers. Safety is maximized in the upper left, but there’s little autonomy. That’s the quadrant in which Gawande would place the experience of living in many nursing homes.

Of course, we all want to live in that upper-right quadrant, where both security and agency are greatest. So do our students. The job of educators is always to move students further up *and* further to the right and, of course, to create learning environments that occupy that north-east quadrant.

I had this drawing in front of me as I reviewed the final proof of this issue,



CORRECTION

Our Spring Staff Picks review of *The Fog Machine* incorrectly identified one of the book’s protagonists, C.J. Evans, as a young white woman. In fact, C.J.’s character is African American.



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.

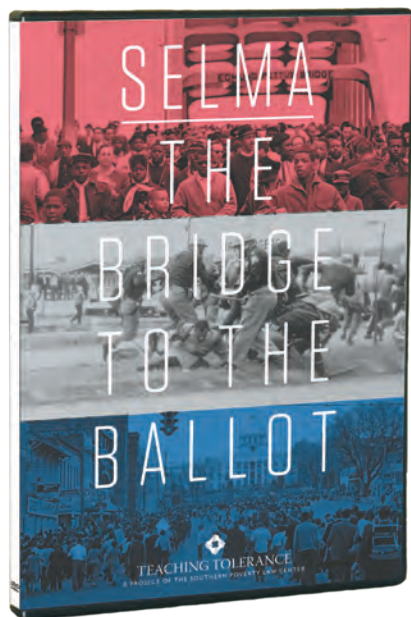
Join the Teaching Tolerance community, and we'll keep you plugged in to anti-bias education news, resources and tips. That way when you have the rare spare minute, you're all set to join the conversation with like-minded educators.



subscribe to our weekly newsletter at tolerance.org/signup

FIRST BELL

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Reader Reactions

Teaching Tolerance's new film kit, *Selma: The Bridge to the Ballot*, generated excitement among educators.

I received an email today about a Teaching Tolerance toolkit related to the Selma march. I cannot express to you how happy that email made me feel. ... Most of my students have never and probably will never visit Selma, Alabama, in their lifetime. ...

My college advisor and mentor, Charles Burke, took me and around a dozen other students through the South in order to visit and learn about the American Civil Rights movement. ... I can remember how proud he was to take us to the [Edmund] Pettus Bridge, to meet activists like Farmer, Lewis, Nash. ... Teaching Tolerance & the SPLC were big parts of those journeys. Thank you, and keep up the good work.

—SUBMITTED BY JAMES LAUTZENHEISER

There are no words that can accurately describe the profound effect your films, lesson plans and articles have had and continue to have with my students. Our community has very limited diversity, and this makes me believe I have a responsibility to bring a knowledge of our history of civil rights. ... [I] am so very excited about viewing this new film with my students.

—SUBMITTED BY KAREN MITCHELL

Readers had a lot to say about our Spring “storytelling” issue, the new film kit about Selma and much more.

MANY FOOT SOLDIERS

[On “Online Exclusive! Martin Luther King and the Montgomery Story”] I have seen photos from the comic book about King and the Montgomery Bus Boycott. It was amazing! I had one criticism, however; little was mentioned about the many people who helped to make this a success. In the storyline, it appeared that King, single-handedly, ended the boycott. This is

not to take away from the information provided in the comic book. Dr. King was a “Man for All Time” who did indeed change the world!

ANONYMOUS

VIA [TEACHING TOLERANCE MAGAZINE ONLINE](#)

PRAISE FOR FELLOW EDUCATOR

[On “Get Where You Need to Go”] What a wonderful administrator, [t]o see such joy in diversity. ... I work

in an elementary school, but I gleaned some ideas about conversations with students from this interview. Thank you, Manuel J. Fernandez and TT.

ANONYMOUS

VIA [TEACHING TOLERANCE MAGAZINE ONLINE](#)

SHARING OUR STORIES

[On “Student Voices Are Clear. Listen.”] I am an immigrant, and I just recently discovered how

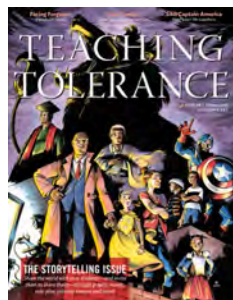


@Tolerance...org



[teachingtolerance.org](#)

SUMMER 2015



Peter Avirom

Now, this! This is my jam.

VIA FACEBOOK

powerful it is to share that part of my identity with students. When we are authentic and openhearted about our stories, our students will feel safe and empowered to share theirs.

REGINA SANTIAGO



OBEYING THE LAW

[I] think there is one vital point that was not discussed [in “Ferguson, U.S.A.”] that should have been. ... [T]here are consequences to breaking the law and laws are not specific to any nationality or ethnicity. ... That person decided to go from committing a minor infraction to a felony by deciding to take the actions he did. He would still be alive today had he obeyed the law. None of that was brought out in your article. Too bad you missed a teachable moment.

BROOKES SPENCER

VIA EMAIL

HATE SYMBOL?

I just wanted to point out that what you refer to [in “Hate in the

Hallways”] as a “Celtic cross” ... would probably be more accurately called “Odin’s cross.” I have a beautiful Celtic cross necklace from my time teaching in Scotland and an Irish one hanging in my home with a lovely blessing on it. I hate to have something I associate with my own culture and pride associated with something as hateful as the group mentioned in your article. Thank you[.]

HEATHER ROMANO

VIA EMAIL

EDITOR’S NOTE

You raise an important point; renditions of this symbol are used and appreciated by non-extremists. We should have noted this explicitly in “Hate in the Hallways.”

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.

STELLAR
TWEET



@iChrisLehman

Now these are gorgeous standards @Tolerance_org Anti-Bias Framework

BLOG 1.15.15 // RACE AND ETHNICITY

The Value of Ethnic Studies—For All Students

As a discipline, ethnic studies in public schools has seen its share of highs and lows. With a great deal of organizing and hard work by students, parents and activists,

the Los Angeles Unified School

District now requires ethnic studies classes as a high school graduation requirement. Just months

prior to the Los Angeles decision, a move in Texas to add a Mexican-

American course as a high school elective failed—in a state where Hispanics are the largest ethnic group in public schools.

The conflict over ethnic studies is equal parts xenophobia and political ideology, with white resentment and anxiety stirring the pot. While opponents target ethnic studies courses as divisive, they disregard how classes, textbooks and materials oversaturated with European and Anglo-American viewpoints are polarizing for nonwhite students.

And readers tweeted...

@GregoryMichie

@mdawriter I’m teaching my entire social studies class this yr as an ethnic studies class. A friend, @maera_me (HS tchr in Chi) inspired me.

@Lori_Jablonski

This is good: “The Value of Ethnic Studies for All” @mdawriter. Our school has offered Ethnic Studies for >10 yrs+

GET THE FULL DISCUSSION HERE:

[tolerance.org/blog/
value-ethnic-studies-all-students](http://tolerance.org/blog/value-ethnic-studies-all-students)

Ask Teaching Tolerance



Q. Can we just *stop* talking and teaching about religion in the classroom? These are beliefs and should not be taught in any public school.

It is certainly true that public education has a checkered history when it comes to adhering to the separation of church and state. However, it is also true that religious intolerance lies at the heart of countless interpersonal and intergroup conflicts—even hate crimes. The upshot? Not talking about religion is *not* an option if U.S. schools are to succeed in preparing students to interact with the larger world. The more students understand about the diversity of beliefs held

around the country and the globe, the less likely they are to develop biased or hateful behaviors.

The key distinction educators must understand is that teaching religion and teaching *about* religion are two very different things. One is illegal in public schools; the other is both legal and important if we are to foster understanding and tolerance of *all* religious and nonreligious beliefs.

Not sure which is happening in your school? Ask yourself this: Is the

material focused on influencing students' beliefs or on what students should know *about* the beliefs (or nonbeliefs) of others?

It may not always be clear, which is why Teaching Tolerance and the Tanenbaum Center for Interreligious Understanding have teamed up to deliver a series of webinars on how to make sure this teaching happens in a safe, respectful way. You can find them at tolerance.org/seminar/religious-diversity-classroom.

Are the texts in the *Perspectives for a Diverse America* Central Text Anthology leveled?

Each text in the Central Text Anthology was quantitatively leveled using a range of tools including Lexile, Flesch-Kincaid, ATOS and DRP. But that's not all! The text's complexity was also evaluated using qualitative dimensions: meaning/purpose, structure, language and knowledge demands.

To determine the level of each text, use the advanced filter to locate texts in your desired grade band. From there, each text is labeled with the Common Core State Standards text level and an exact Lexile score in gray just above the title.

Did you know you can replicate the process we used to level the texts in *Perspectives* with our new tool, *Appendix D*? This interactive PDF walks you through both quantitative and qualitative leveling considerations. You can even share your leveled text with other TT readers by submitting it to appendixd@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.

“That’s So Gay”: From a Teacher’s Perspective

“That’s so gay!”

“He called me gay.”

I’m an elementary school teacher, and back when I was a closeted lesbian, hearing these words from my students immediately caused me to shudder. I hated dealing with those situations and the conversations that ensued. I certainly did not want to say anything that would cause my students (or their parents) to question my sexuality. I feared that my response would be misconstrued and my professional integrity would be cast into doubt.

I was unsure how best to respond and was scared to respond in a way that would be uncomfortable for everyone. My typical response when I heard those types of statements was to try to find out exactly what was said, and tell the student who said it, “We don’t use those kinds of words.”

“Those kinds of words.”



... and readers replied:

“I’ve been having these conversations for years. And with students with disabilities to boot. My response usually starts like... ‘Really? I’m gay too! That’s great!...’ When I would get the confused stare I ask them if it would be OK to say, ‘That’s so Jewish or black...’ It gets the point across.”

“I had this happen, today, and responded by asking the student if he thought that it was happy or if it preferred to date things of the same gender. It was great to hear the student respond by saying that it was a dumb insult, he guessed. Great teachable moment.”

GET THE FULL DISCUSSION HERE:

tolerance.org/so-gay-teacher-perspective



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.



Eyes Wide Open



Talking With Students
About Ferguson
and Racism



How Does the TT
Community Teach
Thanksgiving?



The Danger of
Censoring Our History

FREE STUFF!

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

Storybird is a story-making and publishing platform that curates illustrations and artwork from around the world. Users select art, add text and turn it all into a story that can be shared. The site can ignite K-12 students’ creativity and amplify their voices, all while building literacy skills.

storybird.com/educators

The **Coalition to Support Grieving Students** offers specific resources aimed at educators, administrators, support personnel, and family and community members working with children experiencing grief and loss. The Coalition’s work elevates the cause of childhood bereavement and recognizes the importance of trauma-sensitive schools.

grievingstudents.scholastic.com

Library: LGBT Youth & Schools Resources and Links from the American Civil Liberties Union is a round-up of information on school-specific issues facing LGBT youth. This digital library is a great place to learn more about how schools can become safer, more welcoming places for LGBT students.

aclu.org/library-lgbt-youth-schools-resources-and-links

Project H Toolbox is an academic resource that grew out of the project-based Maker Movement. In this “toolbox,” you will find dynamic lesson plans, activities and project briefs that educators can use to involve students in hands-on projects with real-life applications.

projectdesign.org/toolbox

Viva la Conexión

SOME DAYS IT'S REALLY HARD to be a middle school Spanish teacher. Balancing multiple levels of proficiencies in multiple classrooms with minor doses of pre-teen hormones can lead to a bit of *la vida loca*. Yesterday, however, was not one of those days. Instead, it was the kind of day that reminded me of why I love this job.

It started with the weather forecast: sunny, highs in the 50s with moderate wind. *Perfecto*, especially since it was the day to fly *barriletes* in Spanish 7. We are in the middle of a semester-long study of Guatemala and have been learning about a unique way of celebrating *El Día de los Muertos*. Guatemalans—especially in two small villages of Sacatepéquez—create giant kites to fly every year in early November. With these barriletes, participants invite their ancestors back to Earth for the day. Barriletes are immense and filled with beautiful colors, symmetrical patterns and messages of peace, hope and connection.

Our seventh-grade students study the history and meanings of these barriletes and then get to work on creating their own miniature versions. Collaborating in small groups, they choose *colores, formas y mensajes* for their barriletes. They conjugate verbs for cut (*cortar*), glue (*pegar*) and fly (*volar*). (Watch out! *Volar* is stem-changing!) They practice how to sound out Sa-ca-te-pé-quez and how to roll the double “r” in barrilete so they can present to their classmates. They make predictions (*¿sí o no?*) about whether the kites will fly. I love this unit: It’s authentic, it’s fun, and it



Tricia Kelly is a Spanish teacher at The Gordon School in East Providence, Rhode Island.

helps students feel a personal connection to this language they are learning.

Yesterday, as I headed through the hallway, that connection started to run even deeper. Frances, our spectacular lower-school librarian, asked me if I still had all the Guatemalan picture books I had checked out in September.

I did. “Could you run them down to Lindsay’s second-grade classroom?” she asked me. She explained that one of Lindsay’s students was, on that very day, celebrating the anniversary of his adoption from Guatemala.

I went to speak with Lindsay, and right away she adjusted her schedule

SHARE YOUR STORY

What motivates you to get up each morning and serve students in our nation’s schools? We want to hear from you. Send your 600-word submission for the “Why I Teach” column to editor@tolerance.org.

PHOTOGRAPHY BY JESSICA SCRANTON



Down the Hall

so I could come and share some information on Guatemala with her class. I brought a few books, a flag and a small gift of Guatemalan worry dolls. Her student stood next to me and beamed as he shared impressive knowledge about his birth country. He knew about active volcanoes, Lago Atitlán and traditional Mayan clothing. He opened up the book his family had sent in with him and pointed out how “most people in Guatemala look like me.” When I brought out a bar-rilete, he quickly flipped to the back of his book and showed the photo of Sumpango, Sacatepéquez, with barriletes *gigantes* dancing in the air.

We invited Lindsay’s class to come outside with us that afternoon. Amid the excitement, I happened to catch this moment: Two seventh-grade students—one whose mom is from Ecuador, the other whose mom is from Perú—are standing with this second-grader from Guatemala. They are laughing, chatting and getting ready to fly a kite.

This was a great day to be a teacher. It was a great day to witness the kind of global connection we get to celebrate on a sunny, perfectly windy day.

Next unit: MayaWorks and fair trade. *Viva la conexión.*



Miguel A. Salinas is a behavior specialist at Jane Addams Middle School in Bolingbrook, Illinois.

It’s Heart Work

Meet Miguel A. Salinas, a middle-school behavior specialist who works with the most-referred students in the building. Salinas describes his day-to-day practice as “heart work,” and is unrelenting in his commitment to ensuring that all students feel valued and see themselves reflected at their school.

What first steps did you take to build relationships with the students on your caseload?

This position gave [me] an opportunity to rebuild relationships with families in the school setting, where

the parents can start to trust that the building [staff are] doing their best to support their son or their daughter. The first thing I did at the beginning of the school year is I made home visits. From that point, I got to hear what the families needed.

“What do you need from us? What do you need from me personally? I want to make sure that your son or daughter is extremely successful here. Tell me what that is.”

“I work from 6:00 [a.m.] to 6:00 [p.m.]. I need my son involved in something.”

“Let me find out about your son’s interests. What is he into?”

Then I was able to connect maybe three or four students on my caseload with the boxing program here

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

DID YOU KNOW?

2 to 3 out of every 1,000 children in the United States are born with a detectable level of hearing loss in one or both ears.

—CENTERS FOR DISEASE CONTROL AND PREVENTION

17 percent of high school biology teachers do not cover human evolution in their classes.

—ASSOCIATION OF RELIGION DATA ARCHIVES

in the community. It was just for those students to know that they had somebody in the school building who had their back, who was their mentor, who really cares about what goes on in their daily life.

How do you support students who feel disengaged and disinterested in school?

I see myself having been that student on the other side who was disinterested in school. Growing up, I didn't have models in my classroom that looked like me. I went through all my schooling and I never really knew any powerful Latinos, minus like César Chávez. It's like looking at myself in the mirror because some of this I can connect with.

In 10 years, I haven't had one student tell me, "I don't want to be successful. I want to have a miserable life." A lot of time with students who are disengaged, who don't put pencil to paper all the time, we have to change our processes. I [use] lyrics versus talking about feelings, which is traditionally what you learn in your training. "What is this lyric talking about? Let's go into it. Now let's identify emotions within the lyrics that you hear." Now I have students who are engaged, who are excited, who want to read the lyrics, say the lyrics. They want to do stuff that they would do in language arts but in a different way within that setting.

What recommendations do you have for other behavior specialists and school psychologists?

Get to know the families. Meet them where they're at. If I need to pick up a student from their house because they didn't come to school, that's what I'm doing. Let's say we had to repair a relationship between student and teacher. Then I can at least be the mediator in the conversation, because the student trusts me.



The other part is we just teach skills. How to recognize, "I'm getting upset but now what can I do? How can I be proactive and not be reactive, where I'm lashing out against other students, against my family, against my teachers?" I [also] always look at resources. For me, again, getting connected with the community, knowing the resources within your community and connecting parents, connecting students with those resources.

What's one of your successes this year?

There's a student I have on my caseload. He told me when he met me this year, he said, "When I first met you, I thought you were talking only because you have lips." Meaning, "You really don't care. You're really not invested in me or want me to be successful." It took work for me to gain his trust, [for him] to be able to be like, "All right, I can open up to Mr. Salinas about what's going on in my life." Really, that has been one of my biggest successes.

This is heart work. You got to show that you care. These aren't *those* students; these are *our* students.

DOWN THE HALL

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

Publication Spotlight

These popular resources support educators striving to create robust, inclusive lessons and learning experiences. Find them at: tolerance.org/publications.

Civil Rights Done Right

Curriculum improvement strategies for building robust, meaningful civil rights lessons.

Appendix D

A unique model for culturally responsive text selection.

Teaching *The New Jim Crow*

A literacy-based teacher's guide that accompanies Michelle Alexander's groundbreaking book.

Teaching Tolerance's Anti-bias Framework

Standards for anti-bias education at every grade level.

THE TEACHING TOLERANCE

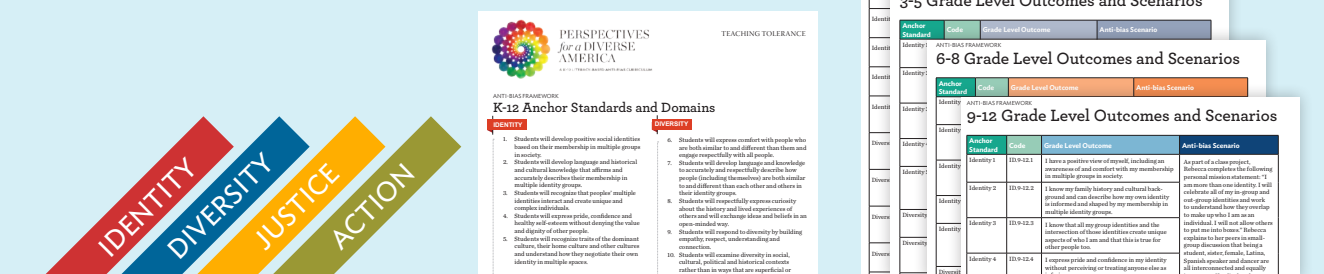
ANTI-BIAS FRAMEWORK

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.

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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

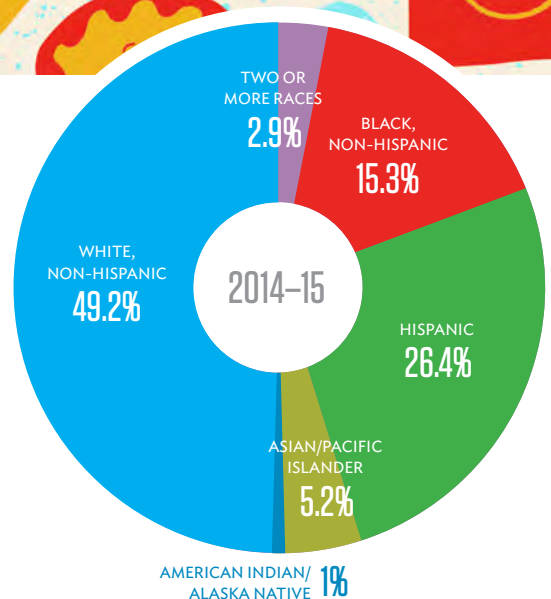
tolerance.org/anti-bias-framework



Who's in My Classroom?

2014–15 was the first school year during which no single racial or ethnic group made up a majority of the student body in our nation's public schools.

U.S. Public School Enrollment Demographics



RACE AND ETHNICITY

are just two facets of our students' identities. The statistics below reveal more about the diversity in our public schools.

22%

OF PUBLIC SCHOOL STUDENTS OVER THE AGE OF FIVE SPEAK A LANGUAGE OTHER THAN ENGLISH AT HOME.

FORUM ON CHILD AND FAMILY STATISTICS

51%

OF PUBLIC SCHOOL STUDENTS ARE LOW-INCOME.

SOUTHERN EDUCATION FOUNDATION

35%

OF STUDENTS LIVE IN SINGLE-PARENT HOUSEHOLDS.

KIDS COUNT DATA CENTER

13%

OF STUDENTS HAVE IDENTIFIED DISABILITIES.

NATIONAL CENTER FOR EDUCATION STATISTICS

Reflect and Research

Begin with yourself. Write down six words or phrases that define your identity. Now select the one you consider least essential to who you are and take it off the list. Continue to remove “less essential” aspects of your identity one at a time until only one is left.

- ➔ How did you choose the original words or phrases for your list?
- ➔ How did you decide which to eliminate first?
- ➔ How did the process make you feel?
- ➔ Does the remaining word or phrase represent all of who you are?

Follow up your reflection by trying this activity with colleagues.

Think about your students. Ask yourself, “How many children in my school community...”

- ➔ speak a language other than English at home?
- ➔ were born outside the United States or have parents who were?
- ➔ live in intergenerational households?
- ➔ are members of families who actively practice a religion?
- ➔ live with caregivers other than their parents?
- ➔ live with single or same-sex parents?
- ➔ identify as LGBT?
- ➔ live at or below the poverty line?
- ➔ have physical or cognitive disabilities?

Some of this information may be available via school records or data-gathering systems. Start there. Then use a classroom strategy like a Community Action Board to become more familiar with other aspects of your students' identities and the issues that matter to them.

DID YOU KNOW?

61 percent of workplace bullying occurs between individuals of the same gender.

—WORKPLACE BULLYING INSTITUTE

Create a community action board.

Encourage students to post articles, illustrations, comics, poems or quotations that capture what's happening in their homes and neighborhoods.

➔ Choosing from the issues that emerge on the Community Action Board, adopt an issue facing your local community. Have students work with local allies or advocates to generate ideas for how to address the issue. Invite community members to your class or attend a community gathering and present the class findings along with a suggested course of action.

➔ Invite your students to reflect on the experience, by themselves and in groups. Talking about community issues can bring students together despite gaps and differences.

➔ Finally, reflect on the experience yourself. What did the Community Action Board teach you about your students' identities?

Audit your classroom. Take a look around and ask yourself, "Whose identities and voices do I invite into my

VOCABULARY BREAKDOWN

What is intersectionality?

Intersectionality is the social, economic and political dynamic of identity categories and systems of oppression connecting, overlapping and influencing one another.

classroom?" Record your thoughts in a professional reflection journal.

➔ Complete a classroom and curriculum audit to review the diversity represented in your classroom décor and curricular materials. Use the chart below to list examples and where they are found. How do they compare to what you wrote in your journal? How do they compare to the diversity that you know exists among your students?

Put It All Together

What is identity? How is identity developed? How does identity affect our relationships?

➔ Complete a [professional development module](#) (based on the Teaching Tolerance Anti-bias Framework) to learn more about the many characteristics of identity and how they affect relationships within the school building and the classroom.

➔ Watch [Giovanni Blair McKenzie](#) at the 2015 Human Rights Campaign Foundation's Time to THRIVE Conference speak about the experience of growing up in Jamaica and fighting for equality for LGBT youth of color.

CLASSROOM AUDIT

IDENTITY GROUP	WHO'S ON THE WALLS?	WHO'S IN THE CURRICULUM?
Ability		
Age		
Ethnicity		
Family structure		
Gender		
Geographic region		
Race		
Religion		
Sexual orientation		



DRESSING IN Solidarity

BY JILL E. THOMAS ILLUSTRATION BY DANIEL FISHEL

THE FATAL ATTACK on Deah Shaddy Barakat, Yusor Mohammad Abu-Salha and Razan Mohammad Abu-Salha in North Carolina in February is widely viewed as a hate crime against Muslims. For Katebah Al-Olefi, a high school senior at Life Academy of Health and Bioscience in Oakland, California, the tragedy hit a deep nerve. “Katebah was not okay,” recalls Amanda Issa, the teacher-advisor for the Muslim Student Association (MSA) at the school. “I’ve never seen her cry so much.” Al-Olefi told Issa, “I’m afraid to be Muslim. I can’t hide it. It’s all over me.”

Hiding is not something Al-Olefi does well. She is ambitious, outspoken and a performer. She emcees school

assemblies, speaks out as the student director of the All City Council Student Union School Board and is the youth coach for the Civic Engagement Club. You might even see her skateboarding across campus. She fits none of the stereotypes of a demure Muslim woman. She is a go-getter, like the late Barakat, already campaigning for the greater good. While Barakat was actively raising

money to bring dental aid to war-torn Syria, Al-Olefi has plans to study public health with an international focus. Her ultimate goal is to open a community hospital back home in Yemen. She has already drawn up the designs and plans for operations. “Paul Farmer is my ultimate hero,” Al-Olefi says of the anthropologist and physician known for his humanitarian work.

So when Issa, who is the only Muslim teacher on campus, was confronted not only with her own grief over the slayings in North Carolina, but also the grief of Al-Olefi and the small group of students who meet weekly as part of the MSA, she said, “Okay, let’s wear the hijab so that we can say

Can clothing inspire
collective action?

Yes!

“I felt like there are people who care and that support Muslims. I felt more powerful.”

we aren’t afraid to show our beliefs.” What resulted was a one-day action to show solidarity with the victims: “Hijab Solidarity Day.” Nineteen female students, two female staff members and one male teacher joined Al-Olefi and Issa in wearing hijabs for the day.

A few participants needed to do nothing but show up wearing a hijab as they always do. But for their friends and allies, wearing a hijab was a new experience. According to math teacher Rich Boettner, “Students obviously wondered why I was wearing a hijab, which encouraged them to ask questions, thus, promoting a discussion, one which would not normally have occurred.”

While 19 students is a small percentage of the student body, on this day students like Shaima Omar said she saw more people “who looked like her” than she’s ever seen. There are fewer than 10 female Muslim students at the entire school of about 450 students. She reflected, “After seeing all my classmates wearing the scarf (hijab) ... I felt like there are people who care and that support Muslims. I really appreciate what they did. I actually felt more comfortable ... and more connected to them. I also felt more powerful.” Similarly, before the event, Marwat Al-Olefi, the younger

sister of Katebah Al-Olefi, often felt misunderstood. “Sadly whenever I talk, the first thing that comes in my mind is, ‘Will they judge me because of my hijab? Should I even be here?’” Marwat says.

Al-Olefi has never let her hijab keep her from speaking up, and yet Hijab Solidarity Day empowered her further. In reflecting on the experience, she wrote, “As a hijabi ... I felt so happy to see my classmates so excited to join us. It reminded me that there are people in the world who are not hateful and who don’t want to attack Muslims for wearing the hijab or practicing the Islamic faith. ... I feel truly inspired by my classmates and I know that—as long as there are people like them—the world is a better place, not only for Muslims but for everyone.”

This sentiment was shared by non-Muslim students, too. Jamie Ortega said, “With the hijab I felt like I was standing up to the ignorance in our society.” Another non-Muslim student wrote, “Wearing the hijab made me feel really good because I was able to show that, even though I am not Muslim, I still support Muslim people.”

The deaths of “Our Three Winners,” as they’ve become known, are tragic, not only because of the hatred underlying

the crime but also because Deah Shaddy Barakat, Yusor Mohammad Abu-Salha and Razan Mohammad Abu-Salha were clearly making the world a better place. May their memory be lifted up in the knowledge that young people like Al-Olefi meet to talk about issues facing American Muslims today—young people who will not be stopped by grief but are buoyed in their ambition to change the post-9/11 perceptions of Muslims in the United States and around the world.

Appropriation or Appreciation? How to know where the line is

In this story, only four of the participants were Muslim and only three wore the hijab on a regular basis. At first glance, it could seem that Hijab Solidarity Day was yet another example of young people appropriating someone else’s culture. Over the last year, many social-media news feeds have been saturated with offensive photographs taken at African- and Mexican-themed costume parties (among others), featuring students in blackface and brownface wearing ponchos or holding spears. But there are key differences between appropriating a culture and appreciating a culture or acting in solidarity with

an identity group. It is worth spending some time on the differences.

First, solidarity. Hijab Solidarity Day was initiated by a student from within the Muslim culture. It was done in reaction to an act of prejudice to raise awareness of discrimination against people of the Muslim faith, including those who wear hijabs.

But is it OK to wear the clothing of a culture not your own when you're *not* deliberately expressing solidarity? There is a thin line between celebrating and exploiting another culture. The media consulting group [Browntourage](#) offers some guidelines in the form of questions to ask yourself to recognize if you've crossed the line:

- ➔ What culture does this style reference, and what is my relation to that culture?
- ➔ Why am I wearing it?
- ➔ Who made the product, and who's selling it?
- ➔ How accurate/respectful is it to the source?

If the answer to any of these questions does not honor or give back to the culture in an authentic way, has the label of a mass manufacturer sewn on it or gives you pause, then you have crossed the line into appropriation. Examples of cultural appropriation currently stocked at many stores near you include American Indian headdresses, "Navajo hipster" underwear, keffiyeh scarves, bindis and henna tattoos.

Cultural appropriation is the same thing as treating someone else's culture as a fashion statement or a game, and it's no coincidence that the culture being stolen is one that has already been exploited and marginalized in U.S. society. To be on the safe side of celebrating a culture that is not your own versus appropriating it, educate yourself but do not play "dress up." ♦

Thomas is an English teacher in Oakland, California.



FALSE SENSE OF SECURITY

Police make schools safer—right?

BY MAYA LINDBERG

ILLUSTRATION BY TRACI DABERKO

As I walked down the hall, one of the police officers employed in the school noticed I did not have my identification badge with me. Before I could explain why I did not have my badge, I was escorted to the office and suspended for an entire week. ... Walking to the bus stop, a different police officer pulled me over and demanded to know why I was not in school. As I tried to explain, I was thrown into the back of the police car.

—MICHAEL REYNOLDS, 17, testifying before the President's Task Force on 21st Century Policing

For not having an identification badge, Michael—a high school student in Detroit, Michigan—faced two instances of police involvement in one day and a lengthy suspension. His experience is alarming, but not unusual. It reflects the widespread use of zero-tolerance disciplinary practices—practices more likely to be found in schools with higher percentages of students of color—that can push students out of classrooms and into the juvenile justice system. This phenomenon, known as the school-to-prison pipeline, hinges on federal, state and local education and public safety policies that include school-based policing and the presence of school resource officers (SROs).

Everyone wants schools to be safe, and to many stakeholders and policymakers having police on site seems like a logical step toward reducing building-level crime or preventing a school shooting. But while the intention may be to provide a firm-but-kind role model to watch over the school, officers in schools frequently wind up enforcing zero-tolerance policies related to behaviors like cell phone use, being out of uniform or—as in Michael's case—not carrying an identification badge.

The U.S. Department of Education (DOE) reports 260,000 students were referred to law enforcement and 92,000 were subjected to school-based arrests during the 2011–12 school year. While

there is no national data on the nature of the offenses in these cases, community-level reports out of Colorado, Ohio and New York indicate that the presence of police directly resulted in larger numbers of arrests for disorderly conduct. One study out of the southeastern United States places the number of such arrests at five times higher than at schools without SROs.

Research also shows that in addition to increasing school-based referrals, ticketing and arrests, policing students for minor disciplinary infractions contributes to feelings of alienation and disengagement, distrust of authority and lower educational outcomes. And

these collateral consequences are not experienced equitably. The DOE notes that, across all school settings, students of color and students with disabilities are among the most likely to be policed and referred to the juvenile and criminal justice systems. The Advancement Project has found that the same is true for gender non-conforming students and LGBT youth.

The takeaway? Experts and advocates who study school climate and the school-to-prison pipeline are raising serious equity and safety questions about school-based policing programs that put officers in the role of disciplinarian rather than protector.

Safety Enforcers or Disciplinarians?

SRO programming grew rapidly toward the end of the 1990s. Despite the fact that reported incidents of violence and crime in school were in decline at the time, the National Center for

A Brief History of School-based Policing

SRO programs first appeared in the 1950s, but did not become widespread until the late 1990s. The federal impetus came in the form of the U.S. Department of Justice's Office of Community Oriented Policing Services program, which heavily subsidized the hiring of SROs.

Zero-tolerance school disciplinary policies also spurred SRO programs. Peter Price, author of *When Is a Police Officer an Officer of the Law: The Status of Police Officers in Schools*, writes that zero-tolerance policies proliferated years before the infamous 1999 school shooting in Columbine, Colorado, in response to the perceived threat that school-based crime was on the rise. These fears centered particularly on violence and drug use, which data show were not actually increasing. According to a report by the Advancement Project, this disconnect can be traced to the 1980s, when a "get tough" mentality fueled the War on Drugs and later expanded to public education in the form of crackdowns on "failing schools," high-stakes testing and punitive disciplinary consequences. Surveillance, metal detectors and other security measures increased in public schools, paving the way for SRO programs.



Education Statistics' *Indicators of School Crime and Safety: 2013* report states that the percentage of students age 12 to 18 reporting the presence of security guards and/or police officers in their school increased from 54 percent in 1999 to 70 percent in 2003.

Recent calls for more SRO programs came after the Sandy Hook tragedy, according to Dignity in Schools Campaign (DSC) Communications Coordinator Nancy Trevino. The DSC—a coalition of local grassroots and advocacy groups in 24 states—is at the forefront of efforts to find local and national alternatives to zero-tolerance policies and school-based policing.

“After the Sandy Hook shooting in 2012, we saw a big increase ... of representatives in different states wanting to increase police in schools to make schools safer,” Trevino says. “Time and time again, members of our coalition have stated that it’s not the best response [for] creating safer school climates.”

Sarah Camiscoli, an educator at a 6–12 public school in the Bronx, serves on the organizing council of Teachers Unite, a DSC member organization made up of public school educators in New York City focused on reforming inequitable discipline practices. “What we’ve seen is that when ... school shootings happen, they happen predominantly in communities that are more affluent,” she says. “It’s not in schools that have a high demographic of young people of color. But when these conversations start, the first schools that they want to increase security in or put these officers in are low-income communities where the demographic [is] people of color.”

Camiscoli is right. According to the Justice Policy Institute’s *Education Under Arrest* report, children of color are more likely to attend schools with SRO programs. Other factors that increase student-SRO interaction include attending a large school (1,000+ students) or attending a school in an urban or high-poverty area. A policy



report by the Congressional Research Service states that schools with SRO programs are more likely to have patrolled grounds and security inspections. While not a universal experience, a distinct pattern emerges: Youth who attend schools with SROs are more likely to be black or Latino, to be poor, to experience highly restrictive and monitored learning environments *and* to be arrested for minor infractions.

When she asked students (organizers for the advocacy group IntegrateNYC4me) how it felt to attend a school that was patrolled by police, Camiscoli received answers like “They’re always looking at us,” “Just because we are in a school with lots of black and Latino students doesn’t mean we need police” and “Police can help us, but cops being around too much feels like something is wrong.” And on the subject of passing through a metal

detector: “It’s very uncomfortable to go through that experience.”

Arrests and school climate aren’t the only concerns. The Southern Poverty Law Center found that SROs in the Birmingham City Schools district in Alabama used a pepper spray/tear gas combination to discipline hundreds of mostly African-American high school students from 2006 to 2011. When bystanders are included, the number of students affected exceeds 1,000.

Recipe for Success?

Given all the potential pitfalls, what practices will put SROs in the best position to truly help students and schools? Deputy Chris Burke, a highly trained SRO in Durango, Colorado, says, “With me being in uniform, I try to make myself approachable, if a student’s going to have a problem, to feel safe and to come up and approach me about that.” Burke recognizes that his relationships with students may be influenced by negative experiences with law enforcement *outside* of school, so relationship building is crucial. He connects with students over lunch, helps coordinate Teaching Tolerance’s Mix It Up at Lunch Day, reads to students and counsels them on legal issues only if he receives permission from parents or guardians.

Maurice “Mo” Canady, executive director of The National Association of School Resource Officers (NASRO), emphasizes that SROs should *not* handle routine disciplinary matters. “When it comes to formal discipline, especially suspensions and expulsions, there’s no place for law enforcement,” Canady says. “We’re very clear on that.” He adds that effective SRO programs should be an ongoing collaboration between the school, the law enforcement agency and properly selected officers who receive comprehensive training tailored for the school setting. “It’s almost like a three-legged stool,” Canady says. “If you remove one of these legs, the program is bound to fail.”

In many school districts and schools, however, one or more of the “legs” in

What Is an SRO?

There is no definitive job description for all school resource officers, but the Congressional Research Service offers this aggregate description: “Law enforcement officers who engage in community-oriented policing activities and who are assigned to work in collaboration with schools and community-based organizations.” In some localities, SROs—also called school safety officers, school police officers or school liaison officers—are employees of the local police department; in others, they are employees of the school district’s independent police department.

Canada's analogy is unstable or absent, creating fractured, hostile relationships. Problems multiply in the absence of mandatory, codified standards to guide school-police partnerships and detail *how* SROs should respond to student misconduct. These issues—and calls for improvement—are in the national spotlight: In January 2014, the U.S. Departments of Justice and Education issued a joint “Dear Colleague” letter and school discipline guidance package reminding stakeholders of the obligation to avoid discriminatory discipline practices and to work to improve school climate. These resources also mention that schools may be held liable for discrimination enacted by school police and security staff. In December 2014, President Barack Obama created the President's Task Force on 21st Century Policing, which is working to find best practices for police-community relationships, including those in public schools. The Task Force gave students like Michael an opportunity to relay their experiences of winding up in the back of a police car for basically being a kid.

In 2012, DSC released *A Model Code on Education and Dignity*, which presents a human rights approach to school-based policing. Key recommendations include safety and discipline policies that ensure minimal involvement of police officers; clear guidelines on limiting school-police partnerships; mechanisms for accountability and transparency (including an articulated SRO-related complaints process available to students, parents and guardians); and SRO trainings in de-escalation, adolescent development and psychology, conflict resolution and restorative justice.

While the collateral consequences of school-based policing are clearly systemic, there are communities around the country taking steps toward building safer and more nurturing models of school safety:

In **CLAYTON COUNTY, GEORGIA**, the chief judge of the juvenile court, Steven C. Teske, initiated a county-wide process in 2003 to end zero-tolerance

disciplinary practices in schools. Teske facilitated a cooperative agreement—in the form of two memoranda of understandings (MOUs)—between schools, law enforcement and other stakeholders to limit school-based suspensions and arrests for “misdemeanor type delinquent acts,” including disorderly conduct. According to Teske, by the 2011–12 school year, the number of students referred to the juvenile court for school offenses dropped by 83 percent.

The **SAN FRANCISCO UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT** and that city's police department redefined their relationship as of January 2014. An MOU, effective through the 2018–19 school year, stipulates that SROs should not be involved in school discipline issues (unless absolutely necessary) and will receive at least one free training annually in restorative justice practices. The MOU also mandates the use of a graduated-response system, starting with a warning for low-level offenses. These significant steps were driven by a community-based effort that included DSC member organizations Public Counsel and Coleman Advocates for Children and Youth.

DENVER PUBLIC SCHOOLS and the Denver Police Department signed an intergovernmental agreement (IGA) in February 2013 that redefines the role of SROs in public schools. This agreement grew out of negotiations between district leaders and Padres y Jóvenes Unidos, a community organization committed to ending the school-to-prison pipeline. Key mandates of the IGA include that SROs differentiate between disciplinary matters and criminal issues; that SROs be versed in the school district's discipline policy, which emphasizes restorative approaches; that administrators and other educators handle disciplinary matters without involving SROs (unless necessary); and that SROs receive training in school-specific topics such as child and adolescent development and psychology, best practices for improving school climate and how to create safe spaces for LGBT youth.

Best Practices for School-based Policing

If past is prologue, the unexamined presence of SROs in schools will continue to raise concerns about school climate and criminalization of youth. These recommendations—drawn in part from DSC's *A Model Code on Education and Dignity* and *The School Discipline Consensus Report* issued by the Council of State Governments' Justice Center—can help school personnel build safer and more just and equitable schools.

- ➔ Connect with advocacy organizations under the Dignity in Schools Campaign umbrella or other groups focused on school discipline.

- ➔ Establish a working group to amplify your concerns around school-based policing.

- ➔ Gauge perceptions of school safety held by students, staff and community members.

- ➔ Share research on why school-based police should not engage in routine discipline.

- ➔ Advocate for the creation (or revision) of a memorandum of understanding that clearly defines the school-police relationship.

- ➔ Advocate for the school administration to collect and publish data annually on school-based policing.

- ➔ Invite SROs to staff meetings, especially when discussing topics related to student behavior and school climate.

- ➔ Adopt positive, evidence-based approaches to school discipline, such as restorative justice and school-wide positive-behavioral interventions and supports.

- ➔ Actively improve school climate and work toward building (or sustaining) a trauma-sensitive school.

- ➔ Leverage the knowledge of counselors and support staff when determining how to address minor misconduct. ♦



TOOLKIT

Put this story into action! VISIT » tolerance.org/false-sense-security

RACE ≠ DNA

*IF RACE IS A SOCIAL CONSTRUCT,
WHAT'S UP WITH DNA ANCESTRY TESTING?*

BY JOSEPH L. GRAVES

ILLUSTRATION BY KEN ORVIDAS

THE CONCEPT OF RACE is the elephant in the collective American living room. It affects how we think about virtually every aspect of our society and culture—and yet we struggle to talk about or even define it.

Numerous studies demonstrate that members of socially defined racial groups in the United States experience the realities of life differently. For example, a recent public opinion survey showed that while 80 percent of European-American (white) individuals

hold positive views of the police, only 52 percent of African-American individuals and 51 percent of Mexican-American individuals share that view. In addition, when asked the question of whether the police use lethal force only when necessary, 59 percent, 16 percent and 23 percent of European-American, African-American and Mexican-American individuals respectively responded in the affirmative.

Often, when we try to describe the elephant in the room, our attempts

make it sound like we're examining the elephant while blindfolded. Some of us describe the trunk, while others the tail and still others the feet. Our descriptions and definitions are different, and without understanding how they fit together, we cannot ascertain a complete picture of the elephant.

To speak meaningfully about race, we need to truly understand how different people perceive and define it and how these definitions fit together. This includes understanding socially defined



ORVIDAS

race, biological race, human variation and ancestry. Unfortunately, most Americans do not, with the result that many racist beliefs are passed along as scientific fact. Have you ever heard the stereotype “African Americans are lazy”? Someone who understood how human behavioral variation relates to socially defined race would know this statement is not logically possible—and yet it has been used for centuries as one of a number of scientifically impossible justifications for the subjugation of African-American individuals.

Taking Off the Blindfolds

The majority of Americans still operate on the assumption that there are legitimate biological races within the human species, and that these racial categories align with physical features—in other words, the way that race is socially defined in the United States. To debunk this misconception, it is important to understand two often-conflated definitions of race.

➔ **BIOLOGICAL RACE** has been defined by combinations of physical features, geographic ancestry, frequencies of genes (alleles) and evolutionary lineages. Biological races exist within some species. This is why we know they do *not* exist within our species, modern humans.

➔ **SOCIALLY DEFINED RACE** has been defined by an arbitrarily organized combination of physical traits, geographic ancestry, language, religion and a variety of other cultural features. Social definitions of race differ depending on context and *always operate in the service of social-dominance hierarchies*.

The modern consensus of evolutionary biologists is that our species does not have enough genetic variability among its populations to justify either the identification of geographically based races or of evolutionarily distinct lineages. This is because we are a relatively young species (150,000–200,000 years old) that has always maintained significant amounts of

gene flow among its major population centers (or regional clusters of inhabitants). Indeed, all modern humans living today are descended from people who once lived in East Africa. (The oldest modern human fossils come from Omo Kibish in Ethiopia.) Humans did not begin to populate the rest of the world until about 60,000 years ago. Some of the first recorded civilizations were located in Ethiopia (prior to 3,000 B.C.E.) and then moved up the Blue Nile to modern-day Egypt. Thus many of the biological traits *not* found in sub-Saharan Africans are relatively new; fair skin and the blue-eye allele are—at most—6,000 years old. Finally this also means that when most people think of biological ancestry, they are really envisioning recent ancestry relative to our species’ existence (within the last 50,000 years or so).

This is where our understanding often gets fouled up. How is it possible that geographically based genetic and physical variation can tell you something about an individual’s recent biological ancestry, and yet that variation is not useful in identifying an individual’s biological race? Isn’t it true that Norwegians have fair complexions and Nigerians are dark?

It is true that all modern human populations have genetic differences that reflect adaptation to the environments their “recent” ancestors inhabited. There are also genetic changes that resulted from simple chance events. Have you ever heard the term “genetic drift”? This refers to chance events that alter gene frequencies in populations. This happened when human groups migrated out of Africa at different times and in different directions. Members of a given group carried a unique subset of all human genetic variation with them. For all these reasons, there is no single physical trait or gene that can be used to unambiguously assign people to racial groups. Here’s an example: The sickle cell allele is found in high frequency

wherever malaria is found, including West Africa, the Arabian Peninsula, the Mediterranean Basin and in India. It is not found among Kenyans whose ancestry is from high-altitude regions of that country. Therefore the sickle cell gene can’t be used to define races.

Another relevant example is skin color. Skin color variation is associated with solar intensity, and thus all populations with tropical ancestry have darker skin than those whose recent ancestry is from the temperate and arctic zones. Solomon Islanders, for example, have physical traits very similar to sub-Saharan Africans, yet these Pacific Islanders are much further apart on overall gene frequency (the percentage of genes of a given type) from sub-Saharan Africans than from Europeans. A less visible evolutionary trait is the ability to tolerate milk beyond the age of weaning, which evolved both in Europeans and in some Africans (Masai tribe) due to the domestication of cattle. It stands to follow that if we attempt to infer relatedness between human groups based only on physical traits like dark skin and milk tolerance, we consistently incorrectly assign groups of people together.

Physical factors fail to correctly cluster humans and thus cannot be used to assign people to racial groups—a fact scientists have known since the 1940s!

Yet today, most Americans still utilize physical features to judge the racial alignment of individuals. This mistake is understandable in the context of American history, since physical features were a reliable indicator of ancestry for much of the nation’s history. Western Europeans (mainly from England) founded this country. They invaded the territory of the American Indians (whose recent biological descent was from Central and Northeast Asia), and then captured, transported and enslaved people from West and Central Africa. This meant that the original inhabitants of our country were drawn from

geographically disparate portions of the human genetic spectrum. However, soon after these populations were brought together they began to amalgamate (sometimes willingly, sometimes by force). Soon physical appearance was no longer a reliable determinant of ancestry.

Genetics of Race and Ancestry

We've determined that "biological races" in the human species do not exist. They cannot be determined by either physical or genetic measures; what we think of as "races" are socially assigned sets of characteristics that change depending on context. This does not mean that there is not geographically based genetic variation found in our species. It simply means that this variation is not sufficient to describe biological races within the species. How then is the concept of ancestry different from that of race? Understanding the difference requires understanding these two definitions:

➔ BIOLOGICAL/GENETIC ANCESTRY

is the proportion of recent ancestry displayed in an individual via genetic material inherited from one's ancestral geographic origins.

➔ SOCIAL/CULTURAL ANCESTRY

refers to the origin of attitudes, beliefs and behaviors displayed by an individual.

To understand biological/genetic ancestry you must recognize that the number of biological ancestors you have doubles each generation into the past and rapidly becomes a very large number. Every living person has two parents, four grandparents, eight great-grandparents and so on. A standard calculation of a human generation is 30 years. If your family arrived in North America at the time of the Jamestown landing of Africans or the arrival of the Mayflower, that means your

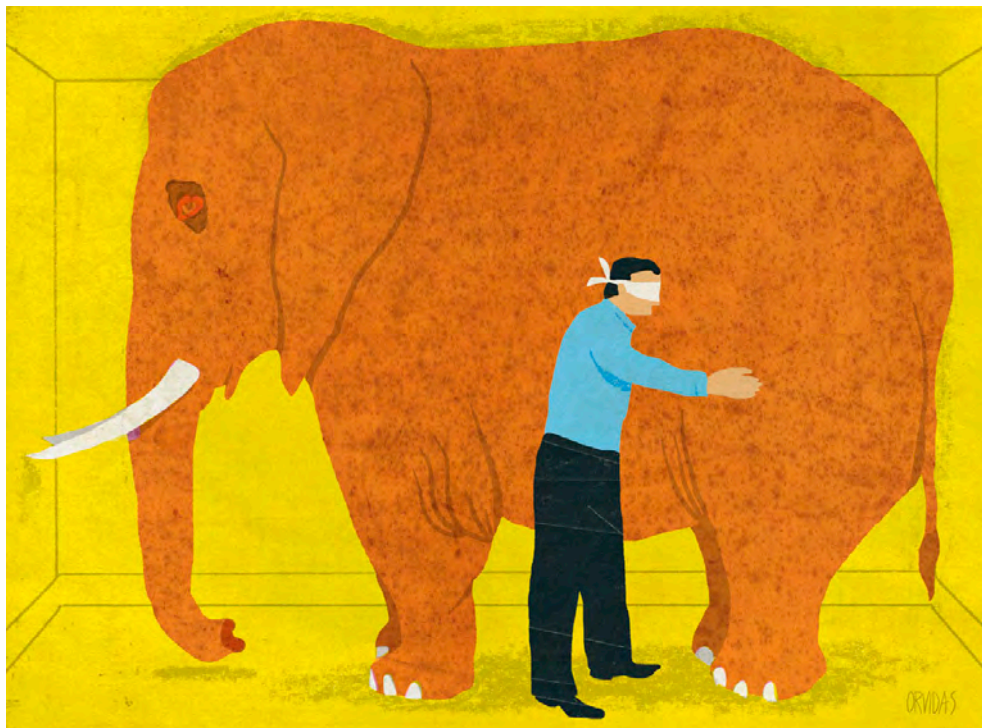
ancestors have been on this continent for 13 generations. This also means you contain—from that time to now—the genetic material from as many as 8,192 individuals! And that estimate doesn't even begin to touch the number of ancestors who came before your genes arrived in North America.

Although it is not possible to determine someone's socially defined race by examining their DNA, it is possible to estimate the continental origin of different segments of an individual's DNA. Remember that all of us have deep ancestry in East Africa; the proportion of our variable DNA that falls into that category is about 85 percent. This means that about 15 percent of our "recent" DNA could potentially be differentiated by continent or region within a continent. No single genetic marker is going to be a reliable estimate of ancestry, so statistical methods, such as maximum likelihood, are used to make estimates of a person's ancestry.

Ironically, ancestry studies have revealed a great deal about the history

➔ LEARN MORE ◀

History reveals many instances in which institutional racism influenced science and vice versa. Learn how one physician's theories—which we now know to be deeply flawed—were used to justify chattel slavery. Visit our sidebar at tolerance.org/samuel-morton-wrong



TOOLKIT

Put this story into action! VISIT » tolerance.org/race-does-not-equal-dna

of American racial subordination. We know from ancestry genetic studies, for example, that the flow of European genes into African Americans occurred mainly during slavery, primarily through European men forcibly impregnating enslaved African women. This is because the genetic code on the Y chromosome is inherited intact from father to son. Numerous ancestry studies have found large numbers of “European Ys” circulating in the African-American and other formerly enslaved communities, but not vice versa.

Finally, there has been much interest in using ancestry testing to try to reconstruct lost identities. This was part of the motivation behind the very successful PBS series *African American Lives* and *Finding Your Roots*, conceived

of and hosted by Professor Henry Louis Gates Jr. of Harvard University. DNA ancestry testing has some ability to achieve that goal, so long as one is cognizant of the limitations of the methods, specifically the population assumptions underlying them.

However, it is also important to realize that our genetic composition is not ultimately the determinant of variations in our complex behavior! The behavioral repertoire of anatomically modern humans was already in place before anyone left Africa. Thus, the variations we see in the manifestation of these behaviors are mainly driven by cultural evolution. Cultural evolution is the transmission of ideas across groups of varying degrees of genetic relatedness. Thus, each person’s social and cultural identity is contributed to

by ancestors from all over the world.

So, why should we teach about human genetic variation and the difference among socially constructed race, biological race and ancestry? Everything we know about our genetics has proven that we are far more alike than we are different. If more people understood that, it would be easier to debunk the myth that people of a certain race are “naturally” one way or another. And it would be easier to teach and live tolerance. ♦

Graves is the associate dean for research and professor of biological sciences at the Joint School of Nanoscience & Nanoengineering, administered by North Carolina A&T State University and the University of North Carolina, Greensboro.

How Did We Get Here?

How is it that our collective understanding of race is so flawed and incomplete?

Our ignorance surrounding the meaning of socially defined race, biological race and ancestry is not accidental. Like many misconceptions, it results from a perfect storm of incompetence, indifference, denial and design. This perfect storm affects our K-12 and university education systems and—to some extent—originates from them as well. This is not surprising considering that our education system evolved alongside other social, legal and economic systems designed to privilege European Americans.

One factor that contributes to our confusion is that the preconditions necessary to design and teach a curriculum that would help our students understand the biological basis of physical human variation (and its lack of concordance with biological races) would be based in evolutionary science. In many areas of the country, administrators and teachers fear the topic of evolution and are often inadequately prepared to teach it.

Another factor that interferes with our understanding is the manner in which unnamed and unaddressed racial bias disrupts serious and factual discourse concerning the history of racial injustice in the United States. Implicit bias—as opposed to overtly aggressive, hateful racism—is a form of prejudice that characterizes a person’s thoughts,

feelings and behaviors toward a racial group. It manifests itself in several ways, including bias and prejudices in many European Americans toward African Americans, viewing them as aggressive, impulsive and lazy.

These prejudices have real consequences for socially subordinated racial minorities. For example, African-American children are far more likely to be seen as adults in criminal justice proceedings. As a result, African-American children are 18 times more likely than European-American children to be sentenced as adults, and represent 58 percent of children sentenced to adult facilities. European-American police officers are also far more likely to misjudge the age of African-American adolescents. This type of prejudice was largely speculated to be a factor in the shootings of Tamir Rice, Michael Brown and Trayvon Martin.

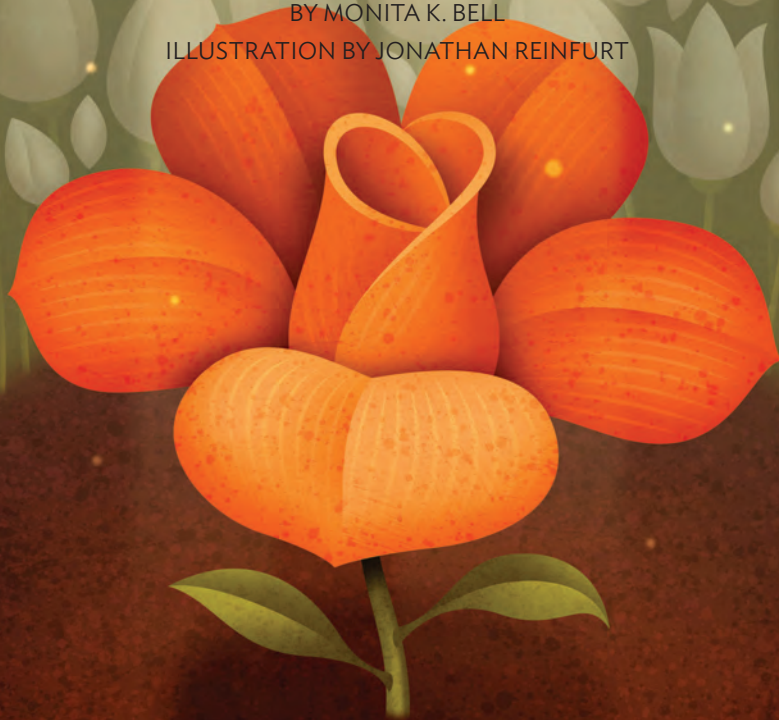
Implicit bias is supported by faulty science manufactured and reproduced to maintain a racially defined social order. Without a robust national dialogue about the realities of aversive racism, we will not move past it. And a robust dialogue cannot happen as long as we labor under false beliefs about fundamental biological divisions defined by skin tone.

MAKING SPACE

Affinity groups offer a platform for voices
often relegated to the margins.

BY MONITA K. BELL

ILLUSTRATION BY JONATHAN REINFURT



ROSH HASHANAH, YOM KIPPUR and Good Friday have long been on the calendar at Madeira School in McLean, Virginia; no major tests are given on those days. But it wasn't until students in the school's Muslim affinity group were discussing the dilemma of choosing between taking tests or attending Eid services that the lack of inclusion on the calendar became apparent.

"You really shouldn't be having tests on a major holiday. We can communicate this up to the teachers and the administration," math teacher and affinity group leader Jeannie Rumsey told the students. "We can find another time for you to make that up, but this is a major holiday for you and you should be able to celebrate it." After organizing and communicating with their administration, the group succeeded in adding the major Muslim holy days to the following year's school calendar. The dates were given the same treatment as the Christian and Jewish holidays: no tests.

This example of collective action is one of the purposes of affinity groups in schools: They allow students who share an identity—usually a marginalized identity—to gather, talk in a safe space about issues related to that identity, and transfer that discussion into action that makes for a more equitable experience at school.

Dylan Posos, a student at John F. Kennedy High School in San Antonio, Texas, attests to the power of affinity groups to create safer learning environments. Dylan joined Kennedy's LGBT club in November 2014 after being disturbed by anti-LGBT bullying happening at school. He had not yet come out as transgender and was nervous about being judged. With the LGBT club, though, he found he could just be himself.

"The club motivated me to email my teachers. I came out with all my teachers, and now all my teachers call me Dylan," he says. "I'm more comfortable in school instead of being uncomfortable, not paying attention. It's like

a weight off my back. The club gave that to me. It makes learning easier, really. It just gives me more confidence."

Having confidence in their identities is not always a given for students. Schools, like other institutions, are spaces in which those outside the dominant culture can feel disregarded, whether the disregard is intentional or not. Trying to negotiate and learn in such spaces makes the process of going to school stressful. Students of color, for example, may be dealing with what education professor Howard Stevenson calls racial stress: anxiety or fear that stems from racial encounters with individuals who are unaware or uncaring about the experiences of people of color. This kind of stress can contribute to feelings of loneliness and being "unseen" at school.

Affinity Groups Gone Right!

Keep these guidelines in mind when supporting an identity-based student group.

➔ **Put students in charge.** Arriving with an adult agenda will not serve students' needs. Go where they want to go. "You should be a facilitator, not a ventriloquist," Fine warns.

➔ **Go beyond celebration.** An affinity group should not be simply an "identity pride" space. Ensure that your group translates conversation around identity-related issues into action that helps mitigate those issues at your school.

➔ **Focus on empowerment or allyship.** Effective affinity groups serve the needs of marginalized students—those outside the dominant culture—to undermine systemic inequities. A group that is *only* about the identity of whiteness, without acknowledging the dominance of whiteness as a source of inequity, will fail to meet this goal.

Darnell Fine, a seventh-grade English teacher and middle school diversity coordinator, speaks to the predispositions of many schools to overlook the needs of students outside the dominant group. "I think [school] can be a place that relegates students, especially students of color, especially students of marginalized groups, to silence," he explains. "It strips them of their voice. The students aren't voiceless, but due to the parameters of schools and how schools can marginalize students, they are at times not a place ... where students can express themselves."

Students need to be able to be themselves at school—and that's where affinity groups come in. A group of students who share an identity are going to relate to each other in ways they can't with peers who can't or don't understand their experience. It's about safety and, in some cases, about fundamental issues of injustice.

"The reason why affinity groups exist in the first place isn't because students want to segregate themselves from the rest of the population," Fine points out, "but because the population is excluding them to begin with." Gathering in safe spaces around shared identity allows students to engage in conversations about how they can subvert the structures that push them to the margins. In turn, these conversations "push the school to be more social-activist-oriented and less assimilationist-oriented," says Fine.

First Things First

Before a school can become more social-activist-oriented through affinity groups, someone has to get the ball rolling. Mike Ackerman, a counselor and affinity groups coordinator at Nashoba Brooks School in Concord, Massachusetts, suggests starting by assembling a task force to get the initiative off the ground; this group should absolutely include students. Early collaboration can also involve soliciting the

THE CLUB MAKES LEARNING EASIER. IT JUST GIVES ME MORE CONFIDENCE.

experience of other schools that have gone through the process of launching affinity groups, Rumsey noted.

In the idea-generation stage, an important step is to assess the attitudes and needs of the school. Fine recommends an anonymous diversity or multicultural survey of students, parents and school staff. Learning about concerns within the school community provides a springboard. “Let’s say students of color don’t feel comfortable going to their teachers,” Fine illustrates. “You need to create a safe space for those students to voice those concerns and to start to organize.”

Getting backing from the school’s administration is also key, says Rumsey. “If your administration isn’t in support of [forming affinity groups], it’s not going to be successful. And, for that matter, the group’s impact on your students will be severely limited,” she says.

“I needed to have my principal and my admin on board with this because the conversations that we were having [in the affinity group] were very hard conversations. They were conversations that threatened the power structure,” Fine says. “I knew my principal and the dean of students had my back. I wasn’t tip-toeing around the conversation. I was allowing kids to voice their concerns and then propose initiatives to effect change in the school.”

Launching a Successful Group

Once the higher-ups are on board, the task force can begin determining (based on the needs assessment) what groups are most necessary and finding

facilitators. Another survey can be useful here, this time to find out how the adults in the school identify and what groups they’d be interested in leading. Rumsey and her team were careful to look for facilitators whose identities fit with the groups in question. Otherwise, the authenticity of the group’s work could be in jeopardy. Fine puts it this way: “I can be an all-out advocate for my female students. It still doesn’t erase the male privilege that I’m bringing into that affinity group.”

But sometimes students need a group for which there is no appropriate adult leader. In that case, ask the students what they want to do. At Rumsey’s school, Muslim students showed strong interest in having an affinity group for a couple of years, but no adults in the school identified as Muslim. She asked the students if they wanted to look for someone from the wider community or if they wanted her to lead it; they were comfortable with her and chose her.

In the case of the LGBT group at Dylan’s school, an LGBT student approached math and debate teacher and newspaper advisor Matthew Lynde Chesnut about starting the group. Chesnut, who identifies as straight and cisgender (someone whose biological sex aligns with their gender identity), accepted reluctantly. He teaches in a district where there are no protections for LGBT employees, which means his LGBT colleagues might endanger their jobs by stepping forward. He looks forward to the day when an LGBT teacher can fill his role as facilitator without fear.

Preparing for Pushback

A common argument against hosting affinity groups is that they’re separatist and racist. Rumsey explains her approach with a colleague who opposed the groups: “We were really just providing a space for kids to have conversations that they felt *they* needed. It wasn’t about what we as adults were wanting.”

Another common form of opposition: “Why don’t we have affinity groups for white students?” Some schools do have affinity groups for white students that focus on allyship; others host groups only for students of color. One affinity group leader, who asked to remain anonymous, says he has been challenged by white students on this issue. “We make every effort here to help people understand different perspectives, but there’s only so much we can do to help,” he explains. “I say to students, ‘You can’t fully understand the experience or the perspective of being a minority student in this population. That’s why we have to offer these students those groups.’”

Still another source of conflict might arise with disagreements around the purpose of an affinity group. In Fine’s experience, that has happened when adults in the building learned that a group’s conversations weren’t about mere celebration of identity but about social action. “If you’re pushing to make changes with your school status quo, there probably will be some pushback,” he says.

Until a school is so inclusive that a student doesn’t feel silenced in any school space, affinity groups can be an important tool for change. Their purpose is to make schools better, safer places where every student feels heard. But that takes work. “It doesn’t happen by accident,” Chesnut says. “It’s something that a teacher has to be very deliberate about.”

Meanwhile, Dylan wants teachers to know that affinity groups can positively affect students’ well-being. He says with certainty, “It’s made me happier as a person.” ♦



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SEX?

SEXUAL ORIENTATION?

GENDER IDENTITY?

GENDER EXPRESSION?

Knowing the difference can make *all* the difference to students who do not conform to binary norms.

By Joel Baum and Kim Westheimer

Illustration by Mark McGinnis

IF YOU'RE AN EDUCATOR, chances are you have struggled to support students who question their sexual identity or don't fit neatly into social expectations of what it means to be a boy or a girl. Perhaps you can relate to situations like these:

One of my students wants to be referred to as a boy. The student's mother is adamant: "My daughter is a girl!"

My 7-year-old is tired of students constantly questioning why he plays with dolls. I am supportive of him, but I don't know what to do.

Two colleagues in the teachers' room discussed a boy who is sensitive and not into sports. One of them said, "He's going to be gay for sure."

At the heart of these scenarios lies confusion about the nature of gender,

sex and sexual orientation. When adults don't understand the complexity of these concepts, young people must navigate these and other challenging situations by themselves.

In a recent blog post titled, "I'm An 18-Year-Old Boy Who Wears Blue Nail Polish—Get Over It," blogger Nasir Fleming wrote: "Enforced gender roles do not only affect those who break them,

Spectrums make room for anyone whose experiences do not narrowly fit into binary choices such as man/woman, feminine/masculine or straight/gay.

but also those who give their blood, sweat and health just to fit in with them.”

Fleming’s choice of words is not an exaggeration. Imagine being a transgender student who dehydrates himself to avoid using the girls’ bathroom all day, or a student who is ready to drop out of school because she is bombarded with verbal or physical abuse about her perceived sexual orientation. Imagine being one of the nameless students represented in studies that document the disproportionate risks for assault, rejection and self-harm in schools that are not accepting of fluid gender identity, gender expression or sexual orientation.

A Binary System

A significant barrier to creating fully inclusive schools is the presumption that sex, gender and sexual orientation fit neatly into a binary model.

This binary world is populated by boys and girls who are viewed as polar opposites. This world conflates biology, gender expression, gender identity and sexual orientation, relegating people to rigid categories: male or female, gay or straight.

Schools have a history of reinforcing binary perceptions of sex and gender. Even before children enter most schools for the first time, parents or guardians are asked to check *male* or *female* boxes on registration forms. On the first day of school, teachers might shepherd students to class in boy and girl lines. Restrooms are designated for boys and girls. Everywhere there are expectations about what kind of imaginative play and dress-up is appropriate for whom, about who is naturally

rambunctious and who is predestined to quiet studying. As students get older, they are subjected to gendered expectations about extracurricular activities, dating and dress—even what colleges and careers they’re encouraged to pursue after graduation.

If we truly want to include all students, we need to look beyond binaries to create practices that include school communities’ diverse representation of biological sex, gender identity, gender expression and sexual orientation.

Biological Sex

Sex refers to a person’s anatomy, physical attributes such as external sex organs, sex chromosomes and internal reproductive structures.

For most people, the anatomical indicators of sex line up in a way that is typically understood as male or female. However, intersex conditions also occur naturally in all species, including humans. *Intersex* refers to a variety of conditions in which an individual is born with reproductive or sexual anatomy that doesn’t fit the typical understanding of female or male bodies.

In the past three decades, more than 25 genes have been identified that were once believed to be associated solely with male or female biology, but in fact exhibit more complex, non-binary variations. With the advent of

new scientific knowledge, it is increasingly evident that biological sex does not fit a binary model. Intersex conditions are increasingly being recognized as naturally occurring variations of human physiology.

Following years of organizing by intersex activists, momentum is growing to end what was once a standard practice of “gender-normalizing surgery” performed on intersex infants with ambiguous genitalia. In 2013, the United Nations condemned the use of this unnecessary surgery on infants, putting it in the same category as involuntary sterilization, unethical experimentation or reparative therapy when enforced or administered without the free and informed consent of the person receiving the surgery.

Gender Identity

Gender identity is an individual’s deeply held sense of being male, female or another gender. This is separate from biological sex.

Some children become aware at a very young age that their gender identity does not align with their physical sex characteristics, even expressing the disconnect as soon as they can talk. Other transgender and gender-expansive people recognize their gender identity during adolescence or adulthood.

► DID YOU KNOW? ◀



The rainbow flag is a widely recognized symbol of gay pride, but did you know that the purple, white and green striped flag represents non-binary pride? Visit this [blog post](#) to learn more about flags and symbols embraced by individuals from across spectrums of sex, sexual orientation, gender identity and gender expression.

Individuals whose biological sex and gender identity “match” rarely think about the alignment of biology and identity because they have the privilege of being considered normal by society. People whose gender identity and biological sex align are called *cis-gender*. Cisgender is an important word because it names the dominant experience rather than simply seeing it as the default.

Individuals living comfortably outside of typical male/female expectations and identities are found in every region of the globe. The *calabai* and *calalai* of Indonesia, the two-spirit Native Americans found in some First Nation cultures, and the *hijra* of India all represent more complex understandings of gender than a binary gender model allows. At least seven countries—including Australia, Bangladesh, Germany, India, Nepal, New Zealand and Pakistan—recognize a third gender for legal documents. As people around the world use a growing variety of terms to communicate their gender identities, Facebook now offers its users 52 options with which to define their gender.

Gender Expression

Gender expression can be defined as the way we show our gender to the world around us. Societal expectations of gender expression are reinforced in almost every area of life. Even very young children are clear about the gendered choices that boys and girls are “supposed to” make in relation to toys, colors, clothes, games and activities.

Girls whose gender expression is seen as somewhat masculine are often considered tomboys. Depending on the context and the degree to which they transgress norms, tomboys might be seen positively, neutrally or negatively. For example, a girl who identifies as a gamer geek, cuts her hair short and wears clothing perceived as masculine may be labeled as a “cute tomboy” or met with words intended to hurt, such as *dyke* or *freak*.



SEX is biological: internal and external reproductive organs and sex chromosomes.



SEXUAL ORIENTATION is our physical, emotional or romantic attraction to others.



GENDER IDENTITY is a deeply held sense of being male, female or another gender. Gender identity is not related to sexual orientation.



GENDER EXPRESSION is the way individuals show their gender to the world. Gender expression is not related to sexual orientation.

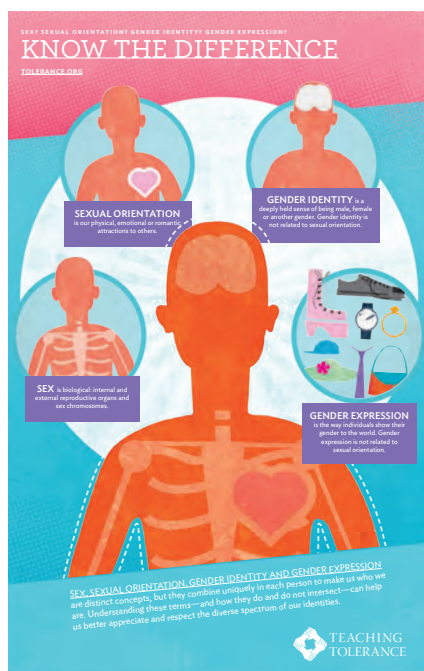
Positive or neutral labels are harder to come by for boys whose sex and gender expression are seen as incongruent. Common words used to describe such boys tend to be delivered with negative—sometimes hateful—intentions, words like *sissy* and *faggot*. There also is little room for boys to expand their gender expression. Just wearing a scarf or walking in a stereotypically feminine way can lead to abuse from peers, educators or family members.

Bias related to race, economic status, religion and other identities also influences responses to young people who break out of gender constraints. School-discipline data provide a disturbing example of this, as seen in the report *Black Girls Matter: Pushed Out, Overpoliced and Underprotected*. The report reveals that African-American girls who act in ways considered stereotypically masculine are far more likely to be disciplined by their teachers than white girls who exhibit similar behaviors.

Sexual Orientation

Sexual orientation is about our physical, emotional and/or romantic attractions to others. Like gender identity, sexual orientation is internally held knowledge. In multiple studies, LGBT youth reported being aware of their sexual orientation during elementary school, but waited to disclose their orientation to others until middle or high school.

Students might identify as bisexual, pansexual, queer, asexual or use a host of other words that reflect their



SHARE THE KNOWLEDGE!

Download and print this poster on 11x17 paper and hang it in your classroom or teacher's lounge.

capacity to be attracted to more than one sex or gender or not to feel sexual attraction at all. This emerging language illuminates a complex world in which simple either/or designations such as gay or straight are insufficient.

The overlap and conflation of gender identity and sexual orientation can be confusing for individuals trying to make sense of their own identities as well as for those who are clear about their identities. It can also be

complicated for anyone seeking to support them. In her book *Gender Born, Gender Made*, psychologist Diane Ehrensaft describes a teenage client who, over the course of a few weeks, identified in seemingly contradicting ways, including as androgynous, as a gay boy and—eventually—as a heterosexual transgender female. This young person was involved in a dynamic process that illustrated both the way sexual orientation and gender identity are intertwined and how they are separate.

Embracing a Spectrum Model

As we have seen, binary notions of gender, biology and sexual orientation exclude large swaths of human diversity. This diversity can be better understood by using spectrum-based models. Spectrums make room for anyone whose experiences do not narrowly fit into binary choices such as man/woman, feminine/masculine or straight/gay.

Gender-expansive and *genderqueer* are two of many terms used by people to describe themselves as somewhere on a gender spectrum—outside of the either/or choices relating to sex and gender.

A spectrum model not only makes room for people who are gender-expansive but for those who are perceived to be more typical as well. A spectrum provides an avenue to a deeper understanding of the separate yet interrelated concepts of biological sex, gender identity, gender expression and sexual orientation. For educators, this understanding is a critical first step toward changing school-based practices and toward being advocates for *all* students—regardless of where they fit on any spectrum. ♦

Baum is the senior director of professional development and family services, and Westheimer is the director of strategic initiatives at Gender Spectrum, an organization that provides education, training and support to help create an inclusive and gender-sensitive environment for children of all ages.

Won't Students Get Confused?

Studies show that children of any age are able to understand that there are more than two gender categories when the concept is explained to them in a simple, age-appropriate manner. The same is true of diversity related to biological sex and sexual orientation.

Wondering how YOU might answer questions that parents and colleagues might have? See Gender Spectrum's [responses](#) to Common Questions and Concerns from Parents and Guardians.





CLEAR CONNECTION

Deaf and hard-of-hearing students can effectively miss class, even if they attend every day. Learn to spot this phenomenon and help reverse it.

BY **MARILYN ELIAS** // ILLUSTRATION BY **GRACIA LAM**

ALISSA, 17, RECALLS A DAY THAT EXEMPLIFIED her sad, disconnected year as the only hard-of-hearing student in a mainstream middle school classroom. The teacher was dividing the class into groups to work on a project. “When he came to me, he said, ‘You can work alone.’” She felt sentenced to invisibility all year. “The teacher and the other kids just didn’t bother talking to me,” Alissa says.

A recent shift toward mainstreaming deaf and hard-of-hearing (D/HH) students in public schools has created both opportunities and challenges for students like Alissa and her teachers.

MORE THAN
75%
OF D/HH STUDENTS
IN THE UNITED STATES
ATTEND MAINSTREAM
PUBLIC SCHOOLS.

—RAISING AND EDUCATING
DEAF CHILDREN

While mainstreaming may offer D/HH students the chance to attend schools that are closer to their homes (as opposed to residential or day schools for the deaf) and prepare them for life in the hearing world, many educators feel ill-equipped to help this student population or even to know if they are reaching them at all.

D/HH children comprise 1 percent of the overall population of school-age students, so they tend to be widely distributed among neighborhood schools; many classroom teachers have little experience with D/HH students because they encounter these students in such small numbers. As a result, teachers in general education settings—while often well-meaning—are rarely trained on how to identify when D/HH students are faltering or how to access the services these students need.

This reality carries grim consequences for many D/HH students. Without the proper supports, these students may adapt to the patterns and expectations of a mainstream classroom—including using their voices to communicate—but miss out on critical academic content and social experiences.

Seen But Not Heard

In their book *Turning the Tide: Making Life Better for Deaf and Hard of Hearing Schoolchildren*, researchers Gina A. Oliva and Linda Risser Lytle found that D/HH students often felt isolated on mainstream campuses and wished they had benefited from special services like sign-language interpretation, tutors or amplification technology. Unfortunately, nobody seemed to realize they needed these services—and they didn't ask.

If a child's hearing loss adversely affects educational progress, she can qualify for special services under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). Some 1.2 percent of students served under IDEA have hearing impairments, reports the U.S. Department of Education. These young people typically have an Individualized Education Program (IEP), with accommodations decided on by an IEP team that meets periodically. An array of special services is supposed to be tailored to the students' needs.

But the federal data doesn't track the extent of services or their effectiveness over time. Lisalee Egbert, associate professor of deaf studies at California State University, Northridge, notes that D/HH students are "entitled to [a free, appropriate public education], but too often they're not receiving it." Sometimes students don't have IEPs, or their IEPs aren't adequately updated as they progress to secondary school. Students may need tutors or specialized speech and language instruction, but the help never appears.

The potential for academic delay is huge. Lags tend to begin early; hearing is critical to speech and language development, and many preschool kids aren't taught full communication through signing or oral methods. By secondary school, the majority of D/HH students fall behind academically.

Making the Connection

In their research, Oliva and Lytle found one variable that made a positive difference for D/HH students was the presence of caring teachers who were also well-informed on issues related to hearing loss.

Cheryl Kaler, a guidance counselor at Mississippi School for the Deaf in Jackson, spent 15 years consulting in mainstream settings. She encourages all teachers to become familiar with common indicators that a D/HH student may need services or isn't fully grasping what's being taught in the classroom: barely participating in class discussions; frequently appearing disengaged or "glazed-over"; nodding and smiling but rarely speaking; not turning in homework; and appearing to "get it" in class, but scoring low on tests. It's also dangerous to assume that a student who talks a lot understands everything that happens in class.

So, if students appear to be missing content, what are their options? Larger campuses may have resource rooms where the D/HH students can attend classes with special education teachers trained on teaching youth with hearing loss. Some districts employ deaf-education specialists who travel between schools to supplement academic instruction and consult with general classroom teachers, if needed. But in the absence of these services, it is critical that adults throughout the school know how to teach and advocate for D/HH students.

Connect early and often. Deaf-education experts advise teachers who know a D/HH student will be entering their class to schedule a private conference with the student and, ideally, her family. A conference can help identify where the student will be most comfortable sitting and offers the



opportunity to make some strategic agreements, such as using a secret signal to indicate that the student has gotten lost or needs further explanation. Most importantly, a meeting can establish trust early on. If a teacher understands the student's interests, enthusiasms and preferences for communication, she maximizes the chance the student will feel comfortable communicating about successes and challenges throughout the year.

Create a D/HH-friendly classroom. At the classroom level, some best practices might seem obvious but—as Alissa's story illustrated—are often overlooked. Marcia Kolvitz, a program specialist at pepnet 2, an agency focused on post-secondary transition for D/HH students, encourages simple adjustments to make the classroom a welcoming and accessible environment. For example, teachers should make sure D/HH students can see their faces while they lecture and pause speaking when they turn to write on the board; standing in front of a window where they could become backlit should be avoided. Ideally,

educators should seat students in a semicircle so all students can see one another's faces. Video presentations should always have captioning, and assignments should be given in writing or via the Internet. It is much easier for D/HH children to follow class discussions when students consistently raise their hands before speaking; it also helps if the teacher repeats or restates classmates' questions. Finally, it's best to list any new or specialized vocabulary before class starts, as D/HH kids may have trouble catching unfamiliar words.

Know the available supports. While some D/HH students may resist accommodations out of a desire not to appear "different," others may just need some help accessing the supports they are entitled to. Some of the most common accommodations in public schools include:

- ➔ amplifying systems that transmit sounds from a microphone attached to the teacher directly into students' ears;
- ➔ live-captioning technology that displays classroom dialogue on a screen or laptop;

- ➔ note-takers or sign-language interpreters who attend class with the student; and
- ➔ tutors.

Interpreters pose special issues. Quality standards and pricing for sign language interpreters vary greatly from state to state, note Oliva and Lytle. At the secondary-school level, interpreters need subject-matter language expertise (e.g., chemistry or history) as well as sign-language skills. If a student is working with a sign-language interpreter, teachers should check in frequently (and privately) to see if the student feels she is understanding the work and keeping up, recommends Heidi Corce, a deaf-education specialist in Eugene, Oregon.

Having a teacher advocate can be the difference between deep engagement and just getting by for students who need accommodations but aren't getting them. Teachers can enlist the support of the district's special education coordinator, deaf-education specialist (there is often one based on campus at larger schools) or contact the traveling deaf-education specialist associated with the district. Enlisting

“WE WANT THEM TO KNOW DEAF PEOPLE CAN DO INCREDIBLE THINGS.”

the help of parents or guardians can also strengthen the case for aides, services and technology that can help a D/HH child.

Funding Fundamentals

Unfortunately, accommodations equal dollars, and tight budgets are one reason D/HH students can end up falling through the cracks. Kolvitz sympathizes with school officials strapped for funds and struggling to get mainstreamed D/HH children the education they deserve, but says the bottom line is clear: “We have to make a commitment to meet these kids’ needs.”

One important development that affects services for D/HH students is the Workforce Innovation and Opportunities Act (WIOA), recently signed into law by President Obama. Under WIOA every state is required to invest in the connection between education and career preparation. This means the partnership between schools and Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) programs must start earlier (as early as 14), where previously these services would become available the summer before a student’s senior year. Fifteen percent of every VR budget is now dedicated to pre-employment transition services, which can include ACT preparation, apprenticeships and “soft skills” development opportunities, and are available to students through their 21st year.

Bedarius Bell Jr., state coordinator of Deaf and Hard of Hearing Services for the Alabama Department of Rehabilitation Services, notes, “It’s up to VR and the schools to put the ‘innovation’ in WIOA.” He points to programs like the Oregon Youth Transition Program, jointly managed by VR, the Oregon Department of Education and the University of Oregon College of Education (among others), which places VR counselors in classrooms to team teach career-exploration activities and help with individualized transition and career-development planning.

Understanding the bigger picture of what VR and other state-level programs and legislation can offer is another important step educators can take in supporting D/HH students, both during their K-12 careers and beyond. In most states, for example, VR will pay for some or all college expenses. Many VR programs will send students out of state to historically deaf schools like Gallaudet in Washington, D.C., or National Institute for the Deaf on the campus of the Rochester Institute of Technology in New York. Legislation in Texas allows D/HH students to go to in-state colleges for free.

An Emerging Practice in “Mainstreaming”

Alissa is now a college-bound senior attending University High School in

Irvine, California. After a demoralizing middle school experience, she is now happily integrated at an unusual campus lauded by deaf-education experts as an example of secondary school mainstreaming that fully meets the academic and social needs of D/HH kids and benefits *all* students by building a culture that respects differing abilities.

University High School is an example of a mainstream program that clusters D/HH kids from multiple schools into one regional secondary school. While not a widely used model, many deaf-education experts wish more districts would follow suit and combine strengths—and dollars.

All school announcements at University High are video-captioned on overhead boards, and D/HH students participate in nearly every extracurricular sport and activity. Interpreters support almost every school function and American Sign Language is offered as a language elective (a popular class that enrolled many hearing students too). When deaf athletes make a great play or are acknowledged with honors at assemblies, hearing students wave their arms overhead, demonstrating the deaf version of applause. This supportive acceptance from classmates reflects mainstreaming that supports the identity of D/HH students. The school also brings deaf artists, lawyers, auto mechanics and college officials to speak to all students on campus—hearing or non.

Says Principal Jon Levy, “We want them to know deaf people can do incredible things.” ♦

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Girls, Interrupted

THE FASTEST-GROWING GROUP OF YOUNG
PEOPLE IN THE JUVENILE JUSTICE SYSTEM
IS ALSO THE LEAST TALKED ABOUT.



BY ALICE PETTWAY ILLUSTRATION BY YAO XIAO

“WISH FOR THE BEST; EXPECT THE WORST.”

That’s the mantra of girls in the juvenile justice system, says Liliana Gaitan, a young woman who entered the system at the age of 12. She says it’s “a reminder to us we aren’t handed the best things in life, and rather than try to figure out why, we expect it.”

Gaitan is one of the growing number of young women who have been funneled into U.S. juvenile detention halls and then ultimately on to the adult justice system. According to the National Council on Crime and Delinquency’s (NCCD) Center for Girls and Young Women, girls now account for 30 percent of juvenile arrests and 15 percent of juvenile incarceration—making them the fastest-growing demographic in the juvenile justice system.

What’s worse, girls often fail to receive the support they need in school, while in the system and after they are released. This happens because girls still make up a relatively small portion of the general juvenile justice system population and because they are still perceived in schools as being at less risk than their male counterparts, which is partially due to the important—but often gender-limited—light currently being shone on the school-to-prison pipeline.

Educators have an essential role to play in righting this situation, primarily through gender-responsive education strategies that address the specific needs of at-risk girls.

Who Is “At Risk”?

Understanding which girls are at risk and what their specific needs are can

be complex, says Gabriela Delgado, who oversees the Gender Responsive Services unit at the San Diego County Office of Education. For her, the first step is asking the girls themselves. “They may not always articulate their needs the way we would,” says Delgado, “but if you listen, the information is there.”

Gaitan could have benefited from this kind of personal interest. She remembers her childhood as one of apprehension, trauma and avoidance. “I recall being young and going to school worried that we would end up having no house,” she says. “My mother was always worried about how we were going to pay the rent.” She avoided her classmates and teachers, hiding in the restroom during recess and breaks between classes. Eventually she began using drugs.

Asking the right questions is necessary, but it’s also important for educators to understand the big picture. According to the NCCD, 70 percent of girls in the juvenile justice system have been exposed to trauma; 60 to 80 percent need substance abuse treatment. And three out of four detained girls receive mental health disorder diagnoses.

The Tipping Point

After confiding in a middle school counselor that she had been sexually abused by an uncle and was cutting herself, Gaitan was briefly placed in an out-of-home treatment facility. Disillusioned with the support her school could provide and determined to protect herself, she began carrying a knife. When police stopped her and a friend for smoking marijuana

and found the knife, she was arrested and taken to a juvenile justice facility.

“I remember so many emotions running through my head,” says Gaitan. “I was scared of what might happen. ... I felt like a bad person for always making my mom cry. ... At the same time, however, I was excited since I had heard about juvenile hall before and knew kids who went there were looked at with respect.”

Gaitan’s story is not an uncommon one—many girls’ first experiences in the justice system are initiated by nonviolent offenses. “A lot of girls living with scrutiny and self-doubt are not necessarily performing well, are often outspoken,” says Monique Morris, co-founder of the National Black Women’s Justice Institute, “and it often conflicts with what society expects ‘good girls’ to be doing.” When those societal expectations play out in the juvenile justice system, it results in harsher prosecution for less-serious offenses for girls than boys, according to research by the NCCD.

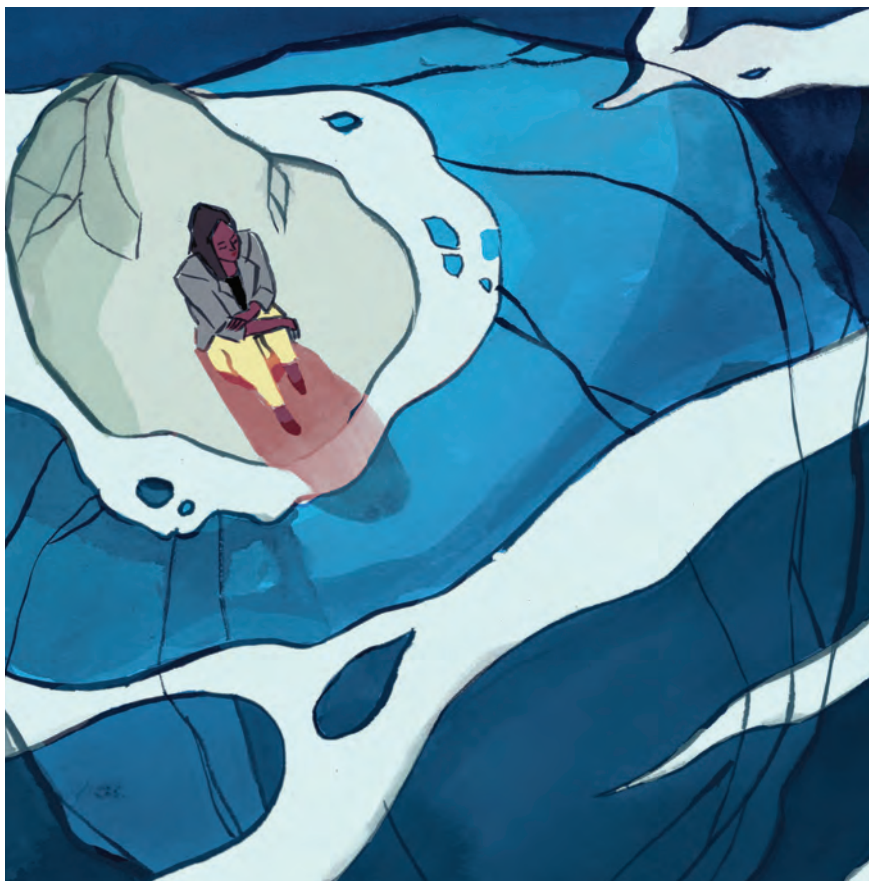
These societal definitions of “appropriate behavior” are often applied even more heavily to girls of color because of cultural disconnects between them and authority figures. In her research, Morris found that black girls report being reprimanded for being “loud” and “defiant” when they felt they were simply expressing themselves naturally. “These girls may react to conditions around them in ways that many educators are not able to handle so well because they see it as an affront to their authority,” says Morris. “When [girls]

step forward and want to engage critically, depending on how they represent femininity, they're sometimes removed from the classroom all together."

A Continuum of Care

Most educators aren't in a position to directly affect what girls are experiencing inside the walls of juvenile detention halls, but providing prevention and transition support can mean the difference between a girl entering a cycle of incarceration and poverty or escaping the system—as Gaitan did when she was 19.

Delgado uses the analogy of an iceberg to explain the experiences of girls



THE NUTS AND BOLTS OF

Gender-Responsive Education

Gabriela Delgado (who leads San Diego County's Gender Responsive Services unit) offers some concrete and immediately implementable strategies for becoming a more gender-responsive educator.

Know Her Name

Calling a girl by her first name is powerful, says Delgado. "It tells her you see her, that she's worth remembering." And for girls coming out of the system, it's especially important—institution staff often

call girls by their last names only.

Be Yourself

Being genuine creates trust. Kids need to see that you're not perfect, says Delgado, "that you don't have it all figured out and that along the

way you too were looking for guidance. Girls aren't looking for someone who has the exact same experiences as them. They're looking for someone they can trust."

Provide Role Models

Whether you invite guest

speakers or create a [Wall of Influential Women](#), "girls need to see that there are women who have laid down a path, and we can probably learn a thing or two from them," says Delgado.

Ask About Content

Let girls tell you what they want to learn. Once you know what they're interested in,

you can begin to build lessons and curricula that meet their needs.

Bring Girls Together

Sometimes schools separate girls into groups based on ethnicity, risk level or other factors. But allowing girls of all backgrounds to share experiences and empower each other can be even more effective.

Inequities in the Pipeline

Non-heterosexual youth, particularly girls, have greater odds than their peers of experiencing school and criminal justice sanctions.

—PEDIATRICS

Hispanic girls are detained almost twice as often for violent, public order and technical violations as their white peers.

—NATIONAL COUNCIL ON CRIME AND DELINQUENCY

Transgender youth are often placed by birth sex rather than gender identity ... [which leaves] them vulnerable to physical and sexual abuse.

—CENTER FOR AMERICAN PROGRESS

Thirteen to 15 percent of the juvenile justice population self-identify as gay or transgender, as opposed to only 5 percent to 7 percent of youth in the United States.

—CENTER FOR AMERICAN PROGRESS

Compared with their white peers, American Indian girls are detained nine times as often and committed five times as often for status offenses—those which are illegal due to age.

—NATIONAL COUNCIL ON CRIME AND DELINQUENCY CENTER FOR GIRLS AND YOUNG WOMEN

Delgado uses the analogy of an iceberg. “If you take that and apply it to a kid’s life, on the surface level you’ll see destructive behavior and thought processes. But in order for us to work with her effectively, we have to see what’s underneath it all—the trauma, abuse, not feeling connected to people.”

like Gaitan. “You really see the tip, but underneath the water level, there is a massive amount of ice. If you take that and apply it to a kid’s life, on the surface level you’ll see destructive behavior and thought processes, truancy and low self-esteem,” she says, “but in order for her to feel whole again and for us to work with her effectively, we have to see what’s underneath it all—the trauma, abuse, not feeling connected to people.”

According to both Delgado and Morris, that lack of connection is one of the first challenges individual educators need to face. “The important thing is to construct a learning environment that has a foundation of trust,” says Morris. “A lot of these kids aren’t engaged in materials because they don’t see themselves in them.”

Creating culturally inclusive classrooms that respect girls’ diverse methods of engaging can change that, says Morris. “There are many ways in which classes are reproducing society’s norms, and part of what educators can do is to actively engage these norms and then actively disrupt them.”

That disruption is no small task—and it’s not one that can be accomplished solely in individual classrooms. “There shouldn’t be just one person supporting gender-responsive groups,” says Delgado. “The whole school staff should be building that school climate.”

She calls it a continuum of care, and it includes facets as diverse as

anti-bullying policies that include specific language addressing covert bullying (also known as relational aggression) to regular professional development on gender-responsive education strategies.

She also emphasizes the need for wrap-around services. The first thing an educator should ask herself, says Delgado, is “Are we properly assessing this student? Did someone meet with her one-on-one? Did someone who knows her well meet with her?”

These questions are even more important for students re-entering school after time in the juvenile justice system. Those girls need the support of many people, Delgado says. “It’s not just one agency; it’s multiple agencies. That requires communication to make sure no one falls through the cracks.”

Even in the best of circumstances, the harsh reality is that no school will have the perfect support system for every individual girl’s needs. That’s no excuse for giving up, though, Delgado emphasizes. “There may not be a perfect fit, and that’s hard for us counselors or teachers because you want it to be the best thing, but the reality is you may not have exactly what you want. You have to ask yourself, ‘Within the context of what I have, what can I offer her that will be meaningful for her?’” ♦

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TOOLKIT

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NAME CHANGERS

The names of Confederate and segregationist leaders label the landscape of the South. What are the consequences when these names belong to schools?

BY SEAN McCOLLUM

ILLUSTRATION BY SEAN McCABE



UNTIL 2013, Omotayo Richmond didn't consider himself an activist. But he could not stomach the idea of his African-American daughter becoming a Rebel at Nathan Bedford Forrest High School in Jacksonville, Florida.

The more he delved into the history of Forrest, the more astonished Richmond became that the school still had the man's name above its doors. Forrest may have been one of the great cavalry commanders of the Civil War, but he had also made his living as a slave trader before enlisting; furthermore, he was a founder of the Ku Klux Klan. Soldiers under Forrest's command were also stained with one of the most notorious atrocities of the war, the 1864 massacre of surrendering Union troops—many of them black—at Tennessee's Fort Pillow.

Naming the school after Forrest may not have raised any eyebrows at the 1959 opening of the whites-only school, but times had changed. By the time Richmond was looking ahead to his daughter's enrollment, the student body was nearly 60 percent African American.

Richmond was not the first to propose the school change its name. However, he was the first to effectively harness the power of social media. He posted a petition on Change.org: "Duval Public Schools: No More KKK High School." National and international media outlets quickly picked up the story.

Names That Send a Message

School names can be subtle yet powerful symbols, say sociologists who have studied the place of school names in community culture. As a rule, communities seek to honor historical figures as a way to communicate identity and values to the students inside, the surrounding community and even outsiders.

This has often presented jarring cultural and social rifts in states of the former Confederacy. As the civil rights movement gained momentum in the 1950s, many white-controlled communities consciously named public buildings after (usually) men who held

segregationist beliefs and ties to white supremacist groups. Due to the timing, the intent can be interpreted as both an effort to reassure white supremacists and remind African Americans of their "proper place" in the social hierarchy.

"When you choose a name like Nathan Bedford Forrest for a school, it's clear what value you're wanting to uphold at that particular moment in time," says Leslie Harris, associate professor of history and African American studies at Atlanta's Emory University. "You're sending a message—it's not even a subtle message."

For students and staff of color, the lasting message has been that they must accept a culture that disrespects and denigrates them, that they are second-class citizens. Citizens like

Richmond, though, are no longer willing to leave that message unchallenged, especially in places of education. They want their children to attend schools with values and symbols that safeguard their kids' sense of self, safety and inclusion rather than reinforce exclusion and subjugation. Updating a school's name can be a step toward that goal.

What's in a Name?

To many Southern whites with Confederate roots, the men honored by these school names were nothing less than founding fathers, whether they distinguished themselves in the war, led their communities in the decades afterward or both. Criticisms based on the fact that these individuals owned slaves or participated in the Ku Klux Klan have

Teaching and Learning the Controversy

Throughout the United States, thousands of public schools, parks, streets and university buildings carry the names of prominent figures in local, state and national history. These places can be here-and-now opportunities for educators and students to connect the past to the present in their communities. Done as multimedia presentations, such projects can become inspiring, hands-on, real-world lessons in the relevance of history in students' lives.

For schools named for racist or otherwise problematic individuals, such history projects can support campaigns to bring about change. Here are suggestions to guide educators and students as they investigate controversial figures and events.

1. Start with the facts. Encourage students to suspend judgment and assemble the facts—the who, what, when, where and why surrounding the original naming and the name-change debate. Have them pay special attention to words that signal bias, in their own analysis as well as in research materials. Be alert to the tendency—especially in young people—to jump to judgment on emotionally charged subjects, then assemble anecdotes and evidence to support their position.

2. Anticipate opposing points of view. The ability to take the perspective of another person builds empathy and makes for a more honest, sophisticated investigation and final product.

3. Pay attention to rhetoric when making a case. Conviction is important in activism. However, best practices in conflict management indicate opponents and decision-makers are less defensive when presented with firm, reasoned appeals instead of passionate demands and accusations.

"Learning this history [of slavery and segregation] doesn't have to be disempowering," says Professor Leslie Harris. Harris directed a five-year program called the Transforming Community Project in which Emory University students, faculty and staff confronted the Atlanta school's own race history. "One of the fears was that if we talked about this, it might cause participants to disconnect from the institution. We found the opposite was true."

routinely been dismissed as irrelevant since the men were “products of their time.” In the 1920s, for example, it would be difficult to find a white Southerner of means *without* some link to the Klan—its membership was estimated at some 140,000 in Alabama alone. The “Invisible Empire” was a primary source of political power, and its influence reached into every strata of white society.

However, that does not mean the names of Confederate colonels and Klan leaders are some romantic leftover of the “Lost Cause.” Like the popularization of the Confederate battle flag in the 1950s, the names were often proposed and approved in response to 20th-century challenges to Jim Crow policies. Nathan Bedford Forrest High, for exam-

changes, students of color are likely to experience harm if it doesn’t. That is the conclusion of sociological research into the effects of school environments replete with symbols devaluing one group. “The naming of a school in honor of an individual has a special significance, creating an overt association between the person and the community,” writes Roger Stump, professor emeritus of geography at the State University of New York at Albany. “The act is essentially hortatory, calling on the community to follow the path set by the school’s namesake.”

For African-American students attending a school named for a Klansman, following “the path” is unspeakable. “When students of color

Bedford Forrest High was years in the making. In 2007, the Duval County School board rejected a petition to replace the name, voting 5-2 along racial lines. Six years later, the board’s makeup had changed, and Richmond’s Change.org petition began racking up signatures, eventually exceeding 160,000 from around the world.

A large majority of the school’s alumni disapproved of changing the name of their alma mater, and the school board made it clear that Richmond’s petition had no official sway. However, more than half of the surrounding community did support the change. Their position was ironically bolstered by a public letter from a Missouri chapter of the Ku Klux Klan encouraging the board to retain the name. Siding with an active Klan group wasn’t a position the board was enthusiastic to take. In the end, they voted unanimously to give their school a new name and the beginnings of a new identity.

“We recognize that we cannot and are not seeking to erase history,” board member Constance Hall said in a statement. “For too long and too many, this name has represented the opposite of unity, respect and equality.”

The school is now known simply as Westside High School, with Wolverines replacing Rebels as their mascot. Still, the Confederacy’s legacy in the district and community is at no risk of being lost. One feeder middle school is named for Confederate cavalry commander J.E.B. Stuart, the other for Confederate President Jefferson Davis.

Mississippi native and Nobel Laureate William Faulkner once wrote, “The past is never dead. It is not even past.” In former Confederate states, there may be no clearer example than the controversies that swirl around the names of schools and other public places. In a region that takes pride in never surrendering its past, though, the voices of the present and future are slowly having their due. ♦

McCollum is a freelance writer who specializes in education and justice-

“WE CANNOT AND ARE NOT SEEKING TO ERASE HISTORY.”

ple, was named following *Brown v. Board of Education*, the 1954 Supreme Court ruling that signaled the ending of sanctioned school segregation. This record casts doubt on apologists’ claims that the names were chosen solely for their contributions to Southern heritage.

“The question becomes: What do we do with these figures?” says Harris. “They are historically important, but we don’t uphold their values anymore.”

Values may have shifted, but the controversy exists now; and it is a debate that different sides see through vastly different cultural prisms. For many white Southerners, efforts to change place names honoring their forefathers are viewed as attempts to revise the past, erasing the good along with the regrettable in the region’s complex, contentious history. For many African Americans, changing the names is a chance to close one more wound from a history of mistreatment and brutality.

Offense vs. Harm

While some white people may be saddened or offended if a school’s name

walked through those doors [at Nathan Bedford Forrest High School], they entered an inherently hostile environment,” says sociologist Robin DiAngelo. DiAngelo is an associate professor of critical multicultural and social justice education at Westfield State University in Massachusetts. She also leads anti-racism workshops across the country. “It triggers internalized oppression for students. That is the bottom line.”

In fits and starts, activists for racial justice have been working to change that dynamic by replacing names burdened with racist connotations. In the 1990s, for example, public school officials in New Orleans—where student populations are overwhelmingly African American—made a sweeping decision to rename buildings honoring former slaveholders “or others who did not respect opportunity for all.” This included a controversial choice to change George Washington Elementary to Dr. Charles Drew Elementary to honor the pioneering African-American surgeon and blood specialist.

In contrast, the renaming of Nathan



TOOLKIT

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UNDER ATTACK

The bullying of teachers is slowly entering the national spotlight. How will your school respond?

BY ADRIENNE VAN DER VALK

ON NOVEMBER 1, 2013, Teaching Tolerance (TT) posted a blog by an anonymous contributor titled “Teachers Can Be Bullied Too.” The author describes being screamed at by her department head in front of colleagues and kids and having her employment repeatedly threatened. She also tells of the depression and anxiety that plagued her following each incident.

To be honest, we debated posting it. “Was this *really* a TT issue?” we asked ourselves. Would our readers care about the misfortune of one teacher? How common was this experience anyway?

The answer became apparent the next day when the comments section exploded. A popular TT blog might elicit a dozen or so total comments; readers of this blog left dozens upon dozens of long, personal comments every day—and they continued to do so. “It happened to me,” “It’s

happening to me,” “It’s happening in my department. I don’t know how to stop it.”

This outpouring was a surprise, but it shouldn’t have been. A quick Web search revealed that educators report being bullied at higher rates than professionals in almost any other field. (Nursing is also at the top.) A second search put us in touch with the Workplace Bullying Institute (WBI) and its cofounder, Gary Namie, who for years has worked with teachers seeking support and relief from bullying. Namie and WBI offer a theory for the high concentration of bullying in education and nursing.

“The professionals who get into these fields [have] a pro-social orientation,” he says. “They’re helpers, right? For teachers, they’re really development specialists. ... They’re not political animals. They have their back turned to the politics, which of course, then opens them up to this attack. Because of their goodness in a way, because of their motivation. This is why they get targeted.”

Namie’s description of who gets targeted matches up with the identity of our anonymous blogger and with many of the commenters: veteran or high-achieving teachers who cultivate strong relationships with students and families. So why *these* teachers, we asked? Wouldn’t they be the ones colleagues and administrators would want to keep around?

Motives

“Bully targets are threatening to a perpetrator. They pose a threat in some way, usually because of teaching excellence or focus on children, or adherence to the mission or their principles,” Namie explains. “This just agitates the crap out of somebody who is unscrupulous and sadistic. They can’t stand it.”

Karen Horwitz was an award-winning English teacher who experienced a stress-related health crisis and left education after suffering alleged bullying by her principal. After fighting an extended court battle (her case went all the way to the U.S. Supreme Court, where it was dismissed), Horwitz founded an organization called the National Association

for the Prevention of Teacher Abuse (NAPTA). Based on over a decade of work supporting bullied teachers, she asserts that the motives behind teacher abuse fall into two camps.

“[Some people] are doing it because they’re power hungry and they like the feeling that they can come in there ... and torment a bunch of people. It makes them feel good,” she says. “Some of them are doing it because they’re making a lot of money.”

Horwitz believes that a significant percentage of teacher bullying is related to school reform or privatization agendas (forcing out teachers who “won’t play ball”) and to attempts to cover up financial impropriety, a phenomenon she calls “white chalk crime” (also the title of her book). Low-income communities and communities of color, she says, are particularly vulnerable.

“That offends me more than anything,” Horwitz says. “That they would take these really good, solid ... teachers and abuse them out of teaching when those kids need them more than anything.”

While experts may debate the motives, one thing is clear: The hierarchical structure of many schools and districts combined with the isolation many teachers experience due to the nature of the job can create an environment where bullying behavior can easily go unchecked—with devastating consequences for the target of the behavior and for the kids they teach.

Tactics and Effects

According to the numerous experts we spoke with and many of the commenters on our blog, the experiences of targeted teachers are, to use Namie’s words, “almost prototypical.” The teacher-bully relationship is often a new relationship or one that experienced a recent shift in power dynamics. The more powerful individual may single out the targeted teacher for ridicule in meetings or belittle her in front of students or parents. Other tactics include sending confrontational or accusatory emails, writing up the target for violating vague or undocumented rules, “icing out” the target,

repeatedly videotaping the target’s class without explanation and suspending the target for insubordination if she attempts to report the situation.

Another strong theme among workplace bullying experts is the acute need to reduce the amount of harm and collateral damage to the target that’s inherent in any bullying situation.

First, there is the professional harm. Workplace bullying is among the top reasons trained professionals leave education. Walking away from any job is not a decision most people can make without emotional or financial consequences and, in many communities, finding another teaching position may be prohibitively difficult. On top of that, education degrees aren’t particularly flexible, making career changes harder to pursue.

Then, there are the physical symptoms. According to Matt Spencer, a former superintendent and author of the book *Exploiting Children: School Board Members Who Cross the Line*, victims of bullying might experience anxiety attacks, loss of sleep, loss of appetite, throwing up before work, inability to focus, depression and post-traumatic stress disorder. “[The symptoms] are very, very real,” Spencer says.

And, sadly, teachers are not the only ones who suffer when bullying behavior happens between adults.

“[Adults who bully] are modeling the behavior for [student] bullies,” says Namie. “They are actually undermining any moral authority to stop the child bully when the principal comes in and berates the teacher in front of the classroom. ... That teacher now cannot tell a bully to knock it off, because the bully can say, ‘Yeah, well, you couldn’t stop Mr. Smith, why should I listen to you?’”

Responses

It was clear from the many personal accounts we researched that attempting to expose or stop a bullying co-worker was never easy and rarely effective. But it wasn’t entirely clear why—until we looked closely at the types of protections and policies most schools have

in place. It is true that an increasing number of schools have anti-bullying policies, but they apply almost exclusively to students. Workplace harassment policies seem like they should protect targets, but most can only be enforced when the harassing behavior is linked to discrimination based on gender or race. If the target is not a member of a protected class or is unable to draw the line between discriminatory intent and behavior, “discrimination and harassment policies are just not the right mechanism to use with workplace bullying,” according to Spencer.

As an educator who was targeted himself, Spencer is all too familiar with how limited protections for bullied teachers really are.

“When you look at an action as perpetrated by a workplace bully, you can see that it just doesn’t fit in the harassment law. The HR person who witnesses these kinds of behaviors ... and is trying to use the lenses of harassments and discrimination [might say], ‘Yeah, they’re mean and rude and nasty and uncivil but they’re not ... discriminating against you. So I’m just telling both of you to stop it and be nice and play nice in the same box.’ That’s what happens, because it’s such an ineffective tool.”

So what is an effective tool? Sociologist Alan McEvoy of Northern Michigan University studies workplace bullying and encourages talking about the problem as a first step.

“Most academic departments in most schools do not devote any staff meeting time to discussing ... bullying behavior among colleagues,” says McEvoy. “It is outside the comfort zone of many, and it’s difficult to change something unless you know how to name it. ... As a consequence, the most common response is to do nothing, which is the worst response.”

McEvoy recommends that educators begin by assembling a task force or partnering with their local union.



The Workplace Bullying Institute defines workplace bullying as repeated, health-harming mistreatment of the target that is: **threatening, humiliating or intimidating; disruptive of the target’s work; and verbally abusive.**

Preliminary discussions should focus on identifying a range of behaviors that are considered noncollegial—understanding that the list will include gray areas that will require discussion. Through this discussion, McEvoy suggests capturing descriptions and statements that can become “a broad definition [including] not only what people do, but what they fail to do as part of noncollegial conduct.” This definition, he says, should ultimately inform a collegiality policy that ties to *all* faculty evaluations.

“What the evidence suggests is that noncollegial workplace conduct will persist in the absence of policies and in the absence of consequences,” McEvoy reports. “They have to deal with it. They don’t feel comfortable doing it.”

Namie agrees with the power of school-level policies, but would like them to carry more legal weight. He has been working for years to further a state-level bill called the Healthy Workplace Bill (HWB), legislation that defines workplace abuse and outlines the exact circumstances under which it can be pursued as a civil offense. In other

words, to quote the WBI’s website, the HWB “plugs the gaps in current state and federal civil rights protections.”

“The bill is drafted in a way to incentivize employers to take voluntary action that they don’t do now,” Namie explains. “We’re saying, if [a school] want[s] to escape vicarious liability as an employer, what you need to do is you need to take reasonable steps. ... Create a policy and procedures and enforce them. Make them available. If you’ve done all of that, then only the individual [who bullies] can be held liable.” To date, 29

states and two territories have introduced the HWB; 10 states introduced it in 2015 alone. Although it has yet to pass, encouraging developments in Utah (which now mandates abuse-prevention trainings for state workers) and Minnesota (which passed a statewide workplace bullying policy under pressure from the state employees’ union) are pushing the issue into the spotlight, paving the way, Namie hopes, for more states to take action.

Eighteen months after we published “Teachers Can Be Bullied Too,” the still-growing string of comments indicates that action is absolutely necessary. But while our research revealed a discouraging number of sad stories and statistics, it also revealed examples of people like Phyllis Runyon, a targeted teacher who worked first with the WBI and then with her local union to train members on the concept of workplace bullying. Just having more information and being a resource for others, she says, has helped her personally and made her teaching community more humane.

“[Adults who bully] really do have a certain profile,” Runyon points out. “I think once people recognize that the person who’s making their life miserable fits that profile, then that answers a lot of questions. It gives them more vocabulary to use in standing up for themselves. This is the definition. They’re not making it up.” ♦





Learning From the Inside

EDUCATORS WORKING IN LOCKED FACILITIES HAVE A LOT TO OFFER—TO THEIR STUDENTS AND TO THEIR PUBLIC-SCHOOL COLLEAGUES.

IN FEBRUARY 2015, Matt Hennick, a teacher at the Hillcrest Youth Correctional Facility in Salem, Oregon, learned that one of his former students had committed suicide while being pursued by police.

“Those are the tough ones,” Hennick says of the sometimes-crushing realities of teaching in the juvenile justice system. “It’s happened more often than I care to remember. But we also have success stories. When I see a young man on the outside and he’s working, that’s a success story for me. I’m like, ‘OK, that one made it.’”

Hennick has a challenging job, as do all educators working in confined

environments: juvenile detention facilities, residential treatment centers, group homes and mental health facilities, among others. All confined schools are not equal, but they share similar challenges—varying student ages, abilities and credit levels; many youth with special needs; difficulty accessing school records; varying (often short) lengths of stay; students who have experienced trauma; inadequate

funding; and the daily disruptions associated with confinement.

Given these obstacles, it’s not surprising that—according to the Annie E. Casey Foundation—just 25 percent of juvenile offenders make a full year of academic progress per year of confinement; only 1 in 10 will earn a high school diploma. Outcomes for foster children are equally bleak: Seventy-five percent of students are below grade-level for their age and less than half will graduate high school by age 18.

The fact that confined youth aren’t receiving adequate education is both a

BY **JOE HANSEN**

PHOTOGRAPHY BY **LEAH NASH**

legal problem and an equity issue.

“Legally, children who are held in county or state facilities are entitled to an equivalent education to what they would get outside,” says Mark Soler, executive director of the Center for Children’s Law and Policy. “That’s clear law.”

It’s a law that affects a significant number of young people. The federal government estimates there are 60,000 youth confined to 2,500 juvenile justice residential facilities in the United States every year. Other estimates are higher. But although current performance statistics reflect some grim realities, a collection of innovative educators around the country is actively working to raise the bar for teaching and learning on the inside. These programs are achieving outcomes that support student success after custody or care *and* are serving as models for educators in traditional settings.

MAYA ANGELOU ACADEMY

Emphasis: A Culture of Achievement

At Maya Angelou Academy in the New Beginnings Youth Development Center near Laurel, Maryland, students are called “scholars.”

Founded in 1997 by James Forman Jr. and David Domenici, the Academy replaced the District of Columbia’s notorious juvenile detention school, Oak Hill Academy.

The founders quickly covered the dour prison school with scholar art, plaques and certificates and turned the auditorium, once nailed shut, into a center for awards ceremonies and gatherings. The staff members use a modified version of a Positive Behavioral Incentive Program to instill values: safety, respect, responsibility, integrity, self-determination and empathy. Scholars receive awards and recognition for academic achievements and for demonstrating values.

“You want to change the cultural norms,” says Domenici, now executive director of the Washington D.C.-based Center for Educational Excellence in Alternative Settings. “Ultimately what you want is the culture to be dominated by



Frank Martin of the Oregon Youth Authority supports incarcerated youth becoming digital citizens.

achievement by kids who are trying hard.”

Domenici learned to be flexible with curriculum; for example, the short duration of scholars’ stays meant a semester system didn’t work. So the school restructured its curriculum into a series of eight, month-long units, allowing scholars to finish credits. To account for the wide variation in abilities, materials are customized with substitute vocabulary and paraphrasing, allowing all scholars to participate.

When executed by a dedicated and skilled teaching staff like the Academy has, the approach works: Academy scholars earn credits and achieve grade-level gains in math and reading at rates almost three times what they experienced before entering the facility.

“Sometimes there’s a need to convince youth of the importance of education first, before you can actually get into the work of doing it,” says longtime Academy teacher and Special Education Case Manager Quincy Roberts. “You’re overcoming a lot just to get to the point where you can get into completing some work.”

THE MISSOURI MODEL

Emphasis: A Holistic Approach

Missouri’s juvenile justice system was once the stuff of teenage nightmares, but—after decades of reform—today’s Missouri Model is synonymous with small, residence-like facilities, individual care, partnerships and aftercare.

Education is an integral part of the Missouri Model’s success. Each student has an individual learning program (including special needs Individual

Education Plans) integrated into a treatment plan.

“Within that plan, they have an academic goal, a treatment goal and a transition goal,” says Scott Smith, education coordinator for the Missouri Department of Social Services.

Continuity and relationships are key; teachers and front-line youth specialists (treatment staff certified as substitute teachers) work as a team in classrooms of 10–13 students, essentially providing two specialized instructors per class.

Gwen Deimeke was a Department of Youth Services (DYS) teacher for 12 years (she’s now the statewide special education supervisor). Having previously taught at a private Catholic school, Deimeke found she could give more individual attention working for DHS, particularly with special needs students.

“In my math classroom, you’d come in with 11 kids, and typically they’re all in a different place in a different book. So I’m teaching anywhere from basic math to college algebra. It kind of runs the gamut, but they each get individual lessons,” Deimeke says. “The special needs kids have to have a little more direct instruction time, but we’re able to do that.”

In Missouri, 77 percent of youth make academic progress while confined to residential treatment programs.

A service coordinator creates a post-confinement plan for school re-enrollment, employment, community service and extracurricular activities. Those coordinators stick with the kids during a four- to six-month after-care period, often collaborating with an assigned college student mentor. The result? Missouri DHS reports that 89 percent of youth are “productively involved in school or work” at the time of discharge.

OREGON YOUTH AUTHORITY

Emphasis: Appropriate Use of Technology

Oregon Youth Authority (OYA) Education Administrator Frank Martin is hawkish on tech.

“One of the major goals is that the youth need to be digital citizens,” Martin says. “When they leave, they are going to be online.”

But allowing kids in juvenile justice facilities to roam the Internet freely is the equivalent of a digital jailbreak. Wasting time and engaging in online illegal activity are concerns, but the greatest concern is that a youth offender might contact a past victim. So Martin and OYA worked with Oregon’s attorney general to change rules to allow student access to an enclosed network and use email for educational purposes.

Now students known as the “OYA Geek Squad” refurbish computers that are then loaded with educational content. Offenders in Oregon can stay in youth facilities until age 25, so OYA campuses are drawing on the Massive Open Online Course movement and becoming College Level Examination Program centers.

Working with a grant from Study.com for digital content and textbooks,

OYA also offers extensive online credit recovery and blended learning, a combination of brick-and-mortar instruction and digital learning.

Next, Martin plans to network OYA’s schools together using Google platforms and education applications. OYA is also implementing a closed-circuit wireless system that only broadcasts educational content from a contained server, allowing kids to take their studies back to their sleeping quarters.

“What I’ve learned is these kids are hungry for a keyboard. Even if it’s just education content, they’re good for it,” Martin says.

Is Confinement an Opportunity?

In a chapter he wrote for *Justice for Kids: Keeping Kids Out of the Juvenile Justice System*, Domenici of Maya Angelou Academy notes that many scholars say it’s the best school they’ve attended.

This may seem like a sad fact, but it also presents an opportunity: For

many children who wind up confined—disproportionately youth of color and youth with learning disabilities—education in confinement may offer the individual attention they need to succeed. However, sustaining their success once they leave is another story, one that requires reform and responsiveness on the part of public schools.

For Roberts, the fact that some students do better at the Academy than in the public school system represents a conundrum. He can make progress with students if he had more time with them. But that would mean longer sentences.

“You’re not in favor of incarceration. Of course, that’s not the goal,” Roberts says. “It’s just that this kind of intensive work needs to be being done in the community. ... It’s rare that we have a student here that, on a consistent basis, was attending school regularly.” ♦

Hansen is a freelance writer based in Portland, Oregon.

Wisdom From the Inside

Approaches used by teachers working in confinement settings are useful elsewhere too.

➡ **Prioritize culturally responsive teaching.** Quincy Roberts, a teacher at Maya Angelou Academy, sees his classes every day filled by children of color. Most of his students have never had much success in school. Roberts wishes the youth in his program had come from school settings that honored their identities and offered topics and texts that were more relevant to their lives. “It’s essential for [students] to see that you have some recognition of who they are,” Roberts says.

➡ **Look for unidentified special needs.** Disruptive students are often acting out because they’re frustrated by an undetected learning disability.

“In shorthand, it’s easier to be bad than to be perceived as stupid,” says University of Maryland Professor Peter Leone, who

specializes in behavioral disorders.

The answer? Instead of immediately punishing disruptive students, consider whether they might need targeted academic services.

➡ **Utilize behavior management other than discipline.** La Crosse (Wisconsin) School District juvenile detention teacher Tamara McRoberts works with students she knows are dealing with tough problems and—often—trauma; students in public schools might be going through similar issues that are unknown to educators. McRoberts has learned to recognize when a student needs compassion rather than discipline. “I’m good at reading if someone needs to take a break, or I just throw a piece of paper at them and tell them, ‘Just write.’ They’re really mad, and

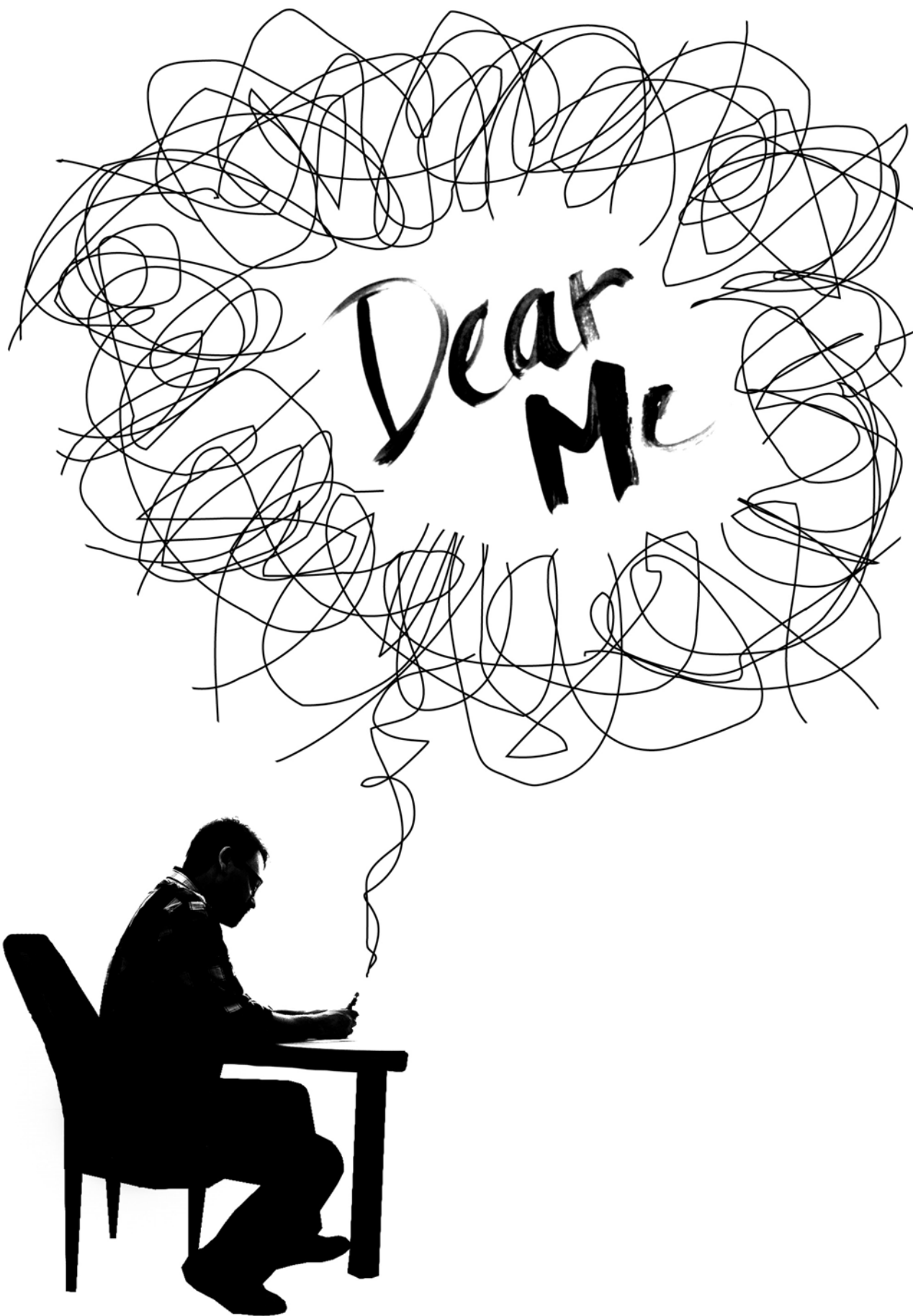
they need to just get it out,” McRoberts says. Seeking professional development in trauma responsiveness and behavior management is one way educators can expand their toolboxes.

➡ **Keep things moving.** At Maya Angelou Academy, class activities are scheduled and timed to keep things moving and minimize disruptions. Each class starts with students grabbing their subject binders and doing a “warm-up” exercise (an approach partially borrowed from Doug Lemov’s practices outlined in his book *Teach Like a Champion*). Each class ends with a final quiz or problem, and then binders and materials are returned. Keeping the pace predictable and swift also keeps the students focused.



TOOLKIT

Put this story into action! VISIT » tolerance.org/learning-from-inside



A LETTER TO MY TEENAGE SELF

BY JEY EHRENHALT

DEAR ME, I know you're having a rough time of it. It's not easy being trans at a time when few people believe trans individuals exist.

I know of your sadness in being told not to get too close to the other boys, your shame in the incessant reminders to act more like a girl. I remember your pain in the other boys growing taller around you, dwarfing your five-foot frame; when they sprouted muscles and stopped giving you the time of day.

I know as a trans person you think you should bury your feelings, stay quiet and try not to bother anyone with your unnatural thoughts. With no glaring injustices, or substantial abuse, this is a confusing kind of pain. As the school administration frowns upon bullying, the ghost of discrimination haunts you. You bear no battle scars as visible proof. Yet I recall bigotry's sharp scrape against your insides, its coldcocking heartbeat, its strangled sips of shallow breath.

A few stories arose worth retelling; those kids who yelled "faggot," or those football players who tried to run you over as you crossed the street. But it didn't seem to matter much. Mostly life at school hummed along quietly.

When you heard "no homo" for the thousandth time, what was there to say? Yet those scenes stacked up steadily, and you were left with shaky ground on which to stand. There was that sideways gaze as you held a girl's hand; no big deal, just push it down. Another whisper, another stare. No big deal, all over again. Until a creeping suspicion whispered in your ear: This is all happening because of who I am.

Your confidence learned to tremble, shaking your basic sense of safety in the world.

I want to call out these confusing phenomena to you, once and for all, as microaggressions. Microaggressions enact commonplace indignities, targeting any member of a marginalized group. Often they are subtle. The perpetrator may or may not be aware of them.

That classmate chuckling at a transgender person on TV? Microaggression. Your best friend offering you \$10 to come to school dressed like a girl? Microaggression. Misusing

pronouns; family forgetting to say the right name; peers dodging you in the locker room; friends asking, “Have you always been like that?” Microaggressions. The list rattles on, infinite.

These jarring moments are easy enough to shrug off, to bury somewhere deep down. But the cumulative effect of attending school in this environment is humiliating and all too real.

It’s true your school did not condone violence or open hostility. Most schools don’t. But more than 90 percent of LGBT students hear homophobic slurs like *faggot*, *dyke* and *queer* at school. This type of verbal abuse correlates with peer rejection, harassment and poor relationships with family members. It elevates the risk for depression, anxiety and suicidality. Afraid to come to school, many of your gender-nonconforming peers drop out and suffer from a marred sense of their own self-worth.

You got out, but it could have been better. More could have been done. Your teachers could have considered the complexities of privilege and oppression, or their own experiences of gender. Your kindergarten teacher could have asked the class, “Why is it that Prince Charming easily takes care of himself and others, but Cinderella seems to need so much help?” or “How come all of Cinderella’s sisters have long hair and want to marry a man?” Although, as a teacher now myself, I know sometimes there’s just enough time in the day for a lesson plan like this.

Your school could have accessed books like *Supporting Transgender and Transsexual Students in K-12 Schools*, with its research-based strategies, anecdotes and authors who are trans. But reading takes time, dedication and patience, and the resulting changes happen slowly. You needed change immediately, when walking to school every morning felt like tunneling through mineshafts of worthlessness and shame.

Do not give up. You are strong enough to live in the present. You haven’t learned this yet, but running away from your feelings will only heighten the intensity of the pain. Believe it or not, at the heart of your trauma lies the effort to control or change your experiences. The present may feel painful, overwhelming or numb, but ultimately, reality is the securest place to be. Stay here for a change. Safe is not always so far away.

Love,
Me

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

Peace of Mind

As an adult, Ehrenhalt found hope in mindfulness and meditation. Meditation has been shown to increase resilience and help individuals who suffer from post-traumatic stress disorder to manage their symptoms and deny the unpleasant thoughts that interfere with their lives.

Even very young children can practice meditation; it can be as simple as counting one’s breaths.

A meditation practice encourages focusing on one’s body and emotions “right now, right here.” Becoming grounded in the moment reveals that thoughts and feelings are always changing. What seems unbearable in the moment will inevitably pass.

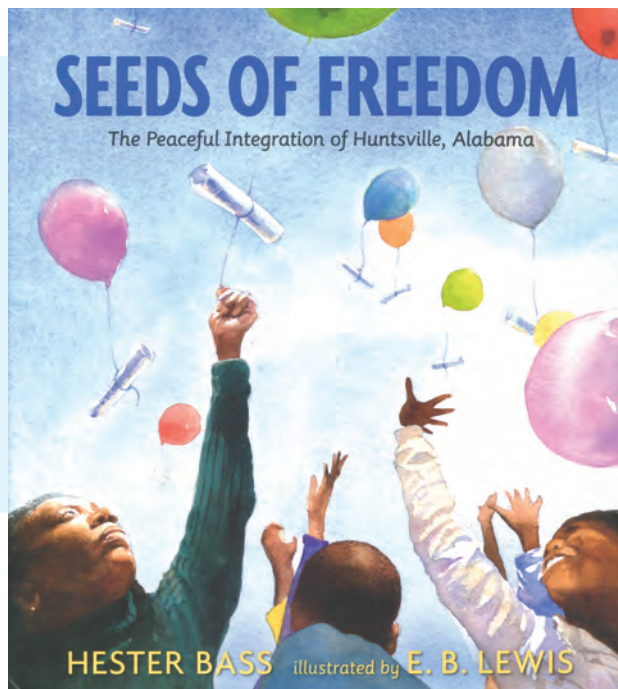
With practice, negative memories and feelings—like the ones Ehrenhalt carried from their childhood—become less overwhelming and easier to accept.

Meditation cannot end suffering, but it offers a way to meet the challenges in one’s life and face difficulties instead of suppressing feelings or running away. It offers a tool for replacing the painful inner chaos of being different with knowing this: It’s OK to be who you are.



What We're Reading

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



Seeds of Freedom, written by Hester Bass and illustrated by E.B. Lewis, reminds us that the fire hoses in places like Birmingham meant that change could come peacefully in cities like Huntsville. Well-chosen details—like how black children got shoes that fit when they weren't allowed to try them on—and graceful watercolor illustrations immerse the reader in a different time and place.

ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

“A great addition to the civil rights movement bookshelf.”

—Maureen Costello

Isabel Quintero's debut novel, *Gabi: A Girl in Pieces*, is a collection of Mexican-American high school senior Gabi Hernandez's journal entries. Gabi's world includes a mother who constantly worries that her daughter will be “bad,” an absent father with a meth addiction, a pregnant best friend and another best friend who comes out as gay, along with the pressures of body ideals, college applications and so much more. In the midst of this whirlwind, Gabi finds

a creative outlet—and forges her identity—through writing and poetry.

HIGH SCHOOL

“A must-read! This novel deserves a spot in every high school library.”

—Maya Lindberg



In *Burning Down the House: The End of Juvenile Prison*, Nell Bernstein documents the shame and the failure of juvenile prisons, where thousands of children are isolated, punished and dehumanized every day. With reasoned evidence and empathic prose, Bernstein makes the case for why and how to end the practice of incarcerating juveniles.

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

“Learning from the world is the greatest learning.” The words of Muhammad Yunus' father inspired him to become a leader to thousands of impoverished people around the world. Use Paula Yoo's *Twenty-Two Cents: Muhammad Yunus and the Village Bank* with your elementary readers for another example of a great role model who should be celebrated.

ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

“This book gives a voice to the voiceless.”

—Emily Chiariello

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

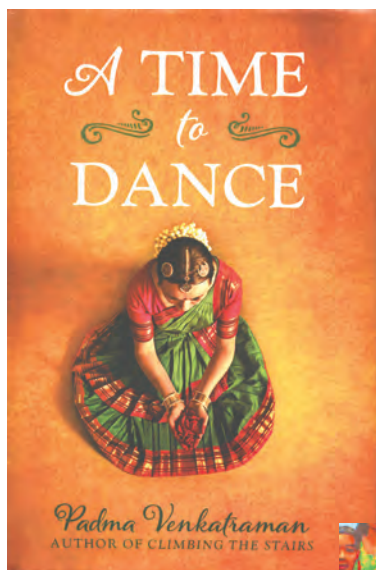
Speaking of Fourth Grade: What Listening to Kids Tells Us About School in America by Inda Schaeen

MIDDLE & HIGH SCHOOL

The Bill of the Century: The Epic Battle for the Civil Rights Act by Clay Risen

ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

Penny and the Magic Puffballs by Alonda Williams, illustrated by Tyrus Goshay



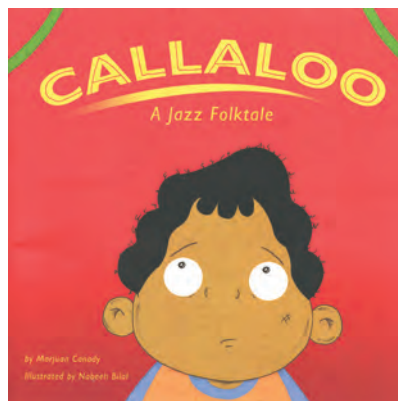
“Affirms the power of a supportive community to lift up those who feel lost.”

—Monita Bell



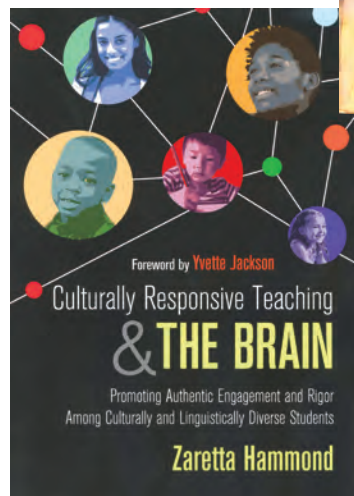
“Students will find a detailed and enriching story of the immigrant’s journey, as well as the struggles and triumphs that come with it.”

—Joanna Williams



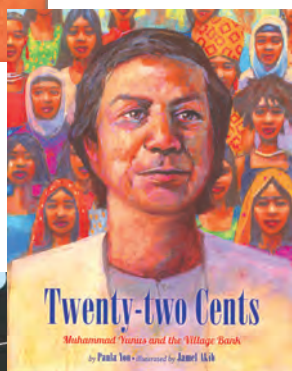
“A fresh and fascinating look into Caribbean culture.”

—Margaret Sasser



“Brain science meets the art of teaching.”

—Adrienne van der Valk



“Paula Yoo takes an inspirational story from the complicated world of economics and boils it down to principles even a child can understand.”

—Annah Kelley

Drifting, by Katia D. Ulysse, is a superb novel in the form of interconnected short stories that follow Haitian families as they move between time and place, before and after the devastating earthquake of 2010.

HIGH SCHOOL

In *Culturally Responsive Teaching and The Brain: Promoting Authentic Engagement and Rigor Among Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Students*, Zaretta Hammond has crafted a professional development resource that is at once philosophical and practical, accessible yet sophisticated in its expectation of readers. Dip in for tips and strategies,

or dive deep for an opportunity to shift thinking and practice.

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Veda is a teen with a bright future in classical Bharatanatyam dance. But when a terrible car accident results in the loss of one of her legs, it takes all her strength—along with the love and support of family, friends and teachers—to prove to herself and her doubters that she will dance again. In *A Time to Dance*, Padma Venkatraman uses moving pieces of free verse to provide insight into the depths of Veda’s despair and anger, as well as her hopes and triumphs.

MIDDLE AND HIGH SCHOOL

When young Winston’s eyes are bigger than his tummy for his grandmother’s callaloo, a Caribbean spinach dish, he is magically transported to Tobago, where mythic creatures teach him not to take more than he needs. Marjuan Canady’s *Callaloo*, illustrated by Nabeeh Bilal, includes a fun folktale glossary from Trinidad and Tobago.

ELEMENTARY SCHOOL



What We're Watching

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

A Place in the Middle: The True Meaning of Aloha, a documentary short by Dean Hamer and Joe Wilson, tells the story of a school in Honolulu, Hawaii, that is demonstrating respect for and inclusion of gender-fluid students. The film centers on 11-year-old Ho'onani, who embodies *māhū*, a Hawaiian term that refers to people who embrace feminine and masculine spirits. Ho'onani occupies "a place in the middle" on the gender spectrum and leads her school's hula troupe, typically for boys only. Ho'onani's teacher Kumu Hina—a transgender woman—tells the troupe, "I want every student to know that if you are my student, you have a place to be—in the middle." *A Place in the Middle* documents some of the positive outcomes that can occur when schools welcome students with love, harmony and respect (the deeper meaning of *aloha*). The film also makes the point that this welcome should not be extended despite students' gender identity or expression, but precisely because of who they are. (25 min.)*

aplaceinthemiddle.org

MIDDLE AND HIGH SCHOOL

*Clips from *A Place in the Middle* can be found in Teaching Tolerance's literacy-based, anti-bias curriculum, [Perspectives for a Diverse America](#).

Teaching Tolerance's new film, ***Selma: The Bridge to the Ballot***, tells the story of the historic struggle for voting rights through the voices of the Alabama high school students and teachers who were the backbone

of the Selma movement. They confronted a violent sheriff and a defiant governor determined to protect white supremacy at any cost. By organizing and marching bravely in the face of intimidation, violence, arrest and even murder, these activists helped to achieve one of the most significant victories of the civil rights era—passage of the Voting Rights Act of 1965. The film kit is free and includes a viewer's guide and poster that reflect essential practices for teaching the civil rights movement. (40 min.)

tolerance.org/selma-bridge-to-ballot

MIDDLE AND HIGH SCHOOL

Documented, a film by Pulitzer Prize-winning journalist Jose Antonio Vargas, captures Vargas' experience as an undocumented immigrant in the United States. Vargas left the Philippines at age 12 to live with his grandparents in California. At 16, he found out that he was undocumented when he tried to apply for a driver's permit. Years later, finding his own silence unbearable and driven to influence immigration reform, Vargas returned to his high school's journalism class and told students, "So I'm actually an undocumented immigrant." He also told them that he was about to come out nationally as undocumented, which he did—in *The New York Times Magazine*. *Documented* captures all of these moments, and others. The message is loud and clear: Too often, undocumented immigrants are treated as, in Vargas' words, "abstractions, faceless and nameless, subjects of debate

rather than individuals with families, hopes, fears and dreams." (90 min.)

documentedthefilm.com

HIGH SCHOOL

A curriculum guide based on the film is available with purchase. The guide is mapped to the Teaching Tolerance Anti-bias Framework.

Anne de Mare and Kirsten Kelly's documentary ***The Homestretch*** opens with the voices of youth experiencing homelessness in Chicago. "It puts you in a predicament where you gotta grow up real, real fast," says one young person. "Is this like the life I'm going to live for the rest of my life?" asks another. *The Homestretch* amplifies the voices and experiences of three homeless youth: Kasey, Anthony and Roque. The film makes visible what is often an invisible population in schools and communities. It also dispels pervasive stereotypes by showing that homelessness is a situation, not a character flaw. Of particular relevance, *The Homestretch* portrays the crucial roles that homeless liaisons, educators, administrators, counselors and other staff play in the lives of homeless youth in the public school system. But the systematic issues at the heart of youth homelessness extend far beyond school walls—a fact that compels some school staff to become advocates for change. (90 min.)

homestretchdoc.com

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

The Day I Swam Into a New World

BY MARGARET AUGUSTE

“FRANCES, FRANCES,” DISTANT voices sang out, “come on, before we’re late for school *again*.”

But Frances remained still, eyes closed, lost in an imaginary world where she darted quick as fish through crystal clear blue water.

She’d been daydreaming like this since she first heard about the new public swimming pool, the first in the small Midwestern town where she lived. A giant banner, swinging proudly in the fresh morning breeze, confirmed it.

“Grand Opening June 20th! Everyone is invited!”

Everyone, thought Frances longingly. *Does that include me?*

“Frances, stop daydreaming about that pool,” her friend John said as he, Frances and their friend Emily set out for school. “You know colored people will never be allowed to swim in it.”

“I can dream, can’t I?” she said, defiantly. “After all, it is 1952. My daddy says that anything is possible and I believe him! He and the other colored soldiers fought so bravely that President Truman decided to integrate the Army—something no one ever thought would happen.”

“I guess,” John said, rolling his eyes, “but they are soldiers—they’re important!”

Frances’ face grew hot and she frowned, looking down, feeling silly and wishing she had never said anything. Then Emily piped up.

“I think Frances is right. My father says it’s a new day.” Frances smiled gratefully at her.

They arrived at the white children’s elementary school and said goodbye to Emily as she ran to the front door. But suddenly, Emily stopped and turned back to look at them.

“Maybe someday we will even go to school

together.” John and Frances burst out laughing and walked on.

After school, when Frances got home, she sat, staring out the window.

“Frances, what’s on your mind?” her father asked.

“Well,” she said, her voice barely a whisper, “do you think that colored people will get to swim in the new pool?” Her father simply hugged her but remained silent.

That night, Frances dreamed once again of the pool. This time she was a mermaid slicing through the water.

The following Sunday, Frances’ family went to church. After his sermon, Frances’ father looked down at her and smiled.

“Our children want to swim in the new public pool and they should, even if we have to face trouble,” he said, smiling at her. “This is about their future.”

Trouble? Frances breathed in sharply as she suddenly remembered the “Whites Only!” signs on drinking fountains she saw when visiting her grandmother in Alabama and hushed voices telling stories—when they thought she wasn’t listening—about black people who were hurt simply trying to vote. Was she being selfish? Swimming in the pool, she realized, was about much more than what she wanted.

The day came. Frances and her neighbors stood outside the pool’s entrance, gathering their courage. “Let’s go,” her father said briskly, and with that, they entered.

“Welcome to the Community Pool!” the cheerful banner declared.

Frances’ eyes lit up. It was even more beautiful than she expected. The bright blue water sparkled under the sun, and the waves

Questions for Readers

RIGHT THERE (IN THE TEXT)

What kinds of things does Frances dream about?

THINK AND SEARCH (IN THE TEXT)

In addition to the community pool, what are two other examples of segregation in the story?

AUTHOR AND ME (IN MY HEAD)

What do you think the title of the story means?

ON MY OWN (IN MY HEAD)

What are some ways children can inspire adults to do the right thing?



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rippled and shone. However, the silent eyes that met their entrance cast a dark shadow. She began to turn away, but then her father calmly walked to the edge of the pool, climbed into the still blue waters and held out his hand to her.

She breathed out slowly, put her hand in his, closed her eyes and jumped in. The cool water surrounded her. When she rose to the surface and opened her eyes, she was shocked to see most of the townspeople leaving. It did not feel special or welcoming. That night, Frances did not dream of mermaids or bathing beauties.

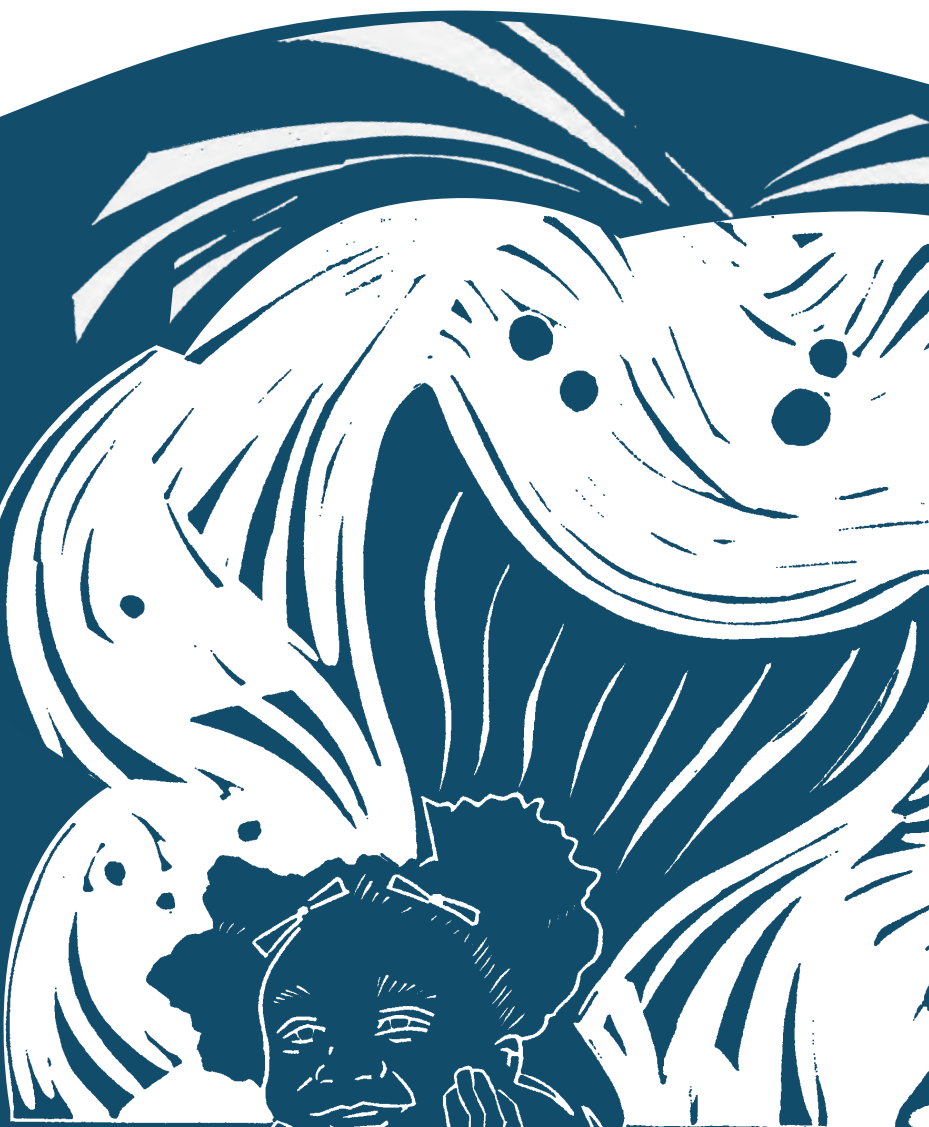
The next day, the air felt stale, like day-old bread. When Frances and her father walked back to the pool, they saw the welcoming banners and balloons were already torn down. The townspeople stood, arms crossed, frowning and whispering. Suddenly, a hush fell across the crowd.

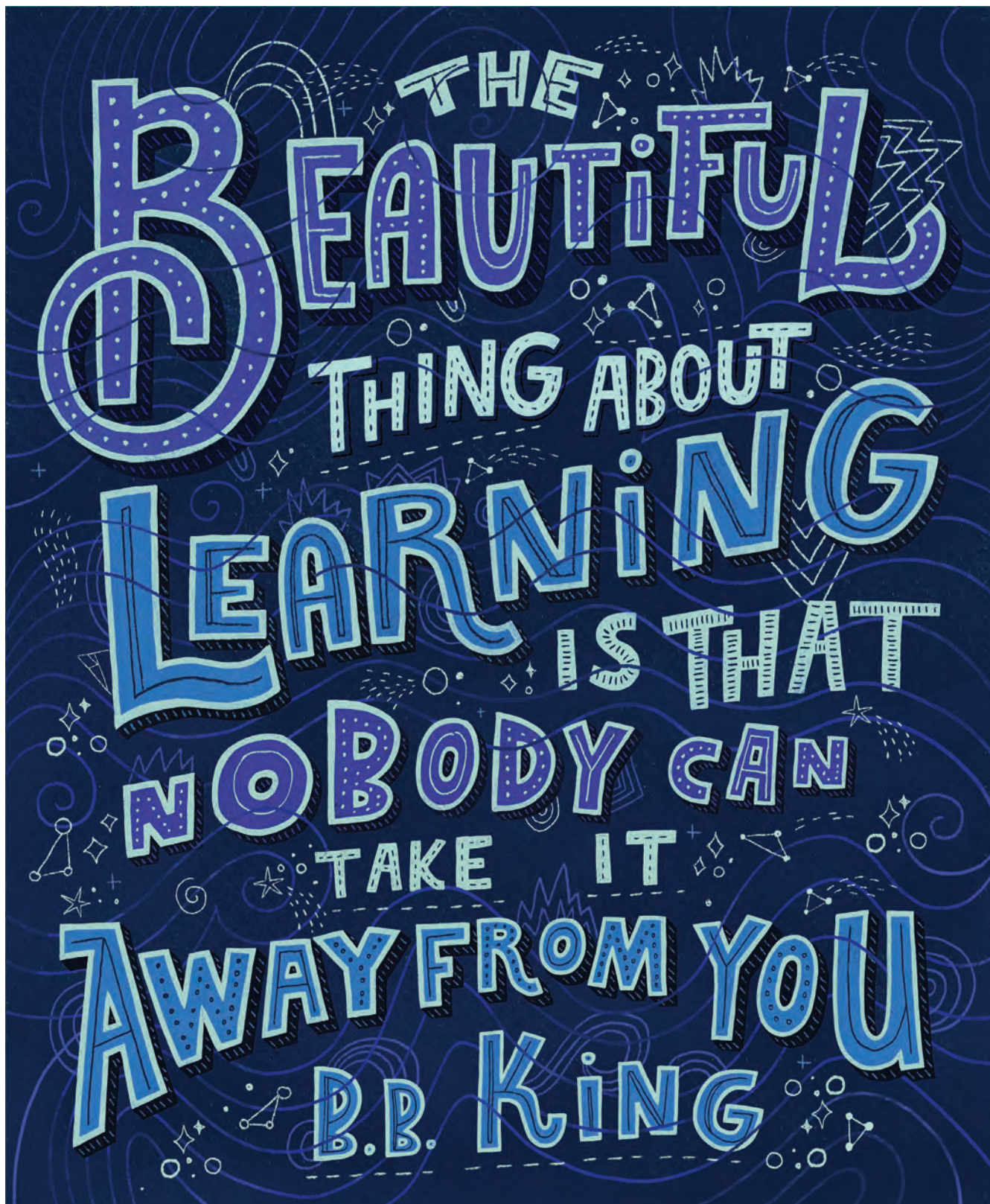
Frances' eyes widened as she saw four police officers approach; her father left her side and went on to face them alone. But then her heart soared! Walking toward them was Emily, Emily's father and a group of other veterans, black and white! The men joined her father and began talking to the police officers.

The next thing Frances knew, her father was coming toward her, smiling. "Let's swim!" he shouted.

The water once again sparkled like diamonds. Frances and Emily joined hands and jumped in. Their fathers shook hands and stood together watching their daughters. The police and the townspeople looked uncertain at first and then relieved.

Frances was relieved, too. "*Everyone?*" she thought, happily, "*does include me.*" ♦





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