

TEACHING TOLERANCE



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WEBINAR TRANSCRIPT

How To Build a Learning Plan

SARA WICHT

Welcome and thank you for joining Teaching Tolerance as we demonstrate how to build a learning plan with *Perspectives for a Diverse America*. The objectives of this webinar include: To learn how to access central texts, instructional strategies, and student assessment tasks found in the online curriculum *Perspectives for a Diverse America*. To combine the elements of PDA in building a learning plan that allows for differentiation. And, to understand how a learning plan is different from a traditional scripted lesson.

Before we begin, there are a few things we want to tell you about your screen. There is a widget dock at the bottom that includes related resources, “share this,” “contact us” and a certificate of completion. Additional materials related to today’s webinar are found in the related resources folder. We encourage you to share this event with your network via the options within the “share this” icon. If you have questions following today’s event, we encourage you to use “contact us.” Lastly, once you have completed a minimum of 30 minutes of our time together, you will be prompted to download a certificate of completion for your professional portfolio within the certificate folder.

At the end of the event, you will be asked to complete a post-event survey. We appreciate you taking the four to five minutes to give us this feedback, as it helps us make programmatic decisions, and improve our offering. With that, I introduce June and Emily.

June and Emily both teach eighth grade in an increasingly diverse, suburban district. Emily is a social studies teacher, and June teaches English language arts. Their middle school reflects the demographic changes of the community, with 50 percent of students white, 15 percent black, 25 percent Hispanic and 10 percent identifying as multiracial. Twenty percent of their students come from immigrant households.

Many of the students from recent immigrant families are learning English as a second language. June and Emily want to build a culturally inclusive classroom where all of their students and their students’ families feel welcome. Though a large proportion of their students are behind grade level in reading and language, they are motivated and often talk about going to college. June and Emily want to provide their students with a challenging curriculum, one that speaks to their experiences and helps them achieve their dream. They find that their students are more engaged when they use an interdisciplinary or humanities-based approach, and so they co-plan whenever possible.

Emily integrates lots of writing into her social studies lesson, and June focuses on teaching more content-rich, informational text in her English class. They are both passionate



about presenting American history in a way that includes their students' stories. June has been introduced to the *Perspectives for a Diverse America* curriculum through the Teaching Tolerance weekly newsletter she received. She registered for a free account and has briefly perused the website. She likes the little bit she saw and suggested to Emily that they check it out as they plan their next unit. Today, we're meeting to discuss that upcoming unit. Let's listen in.

JUNE

Hey, Emily, did I tell you about the new online curriculum that I found?

EMILY

No.

JUNE

It's called *Perspectives for a Diverse America*. It's so cool. As soon as I saw it, I knew that it would be perfect for our planning. There are so many texts, and you can filter them in a variety of ways, including race, ethnicity, class, ability, religion. These texts can really help us add a variety of voices and experiences for a lesson. They have fiction, nonfiction, multimedia and visual texts, so we can even share teaching the text, or perhaps, a lens together. Did I mention that they also list modifications for ELL students? I think this would really work for us. Before I go any further, let me show you the brief video about the curriculum that I saw.

EMILY

Okay. Let's check it out.

STUDENT 1

"I recognize injustice when I see it."

STUDENT 2

"I can describe how I aim to change indifference in other people."

STUDENT 3

"I know who I am."

NARRATOR

"Identity, diversity, justice, action. These are the heart of *Perspectives for a Diverse America*, an anti-bias curriculum for grades K-12. It's designed to help teachers deliver culturally responsive instruction and meet the requirements of the Common Core State Standards. Because your students deserve rigor and relevance. All students engage in learning because *Perspectives* provides educators with tools to design and differentiate lessons. Our framework provides a first-ever road map for anti-bias education at every grade level."

"Teachers select from hundreds of diverse voices in the Central Text Anthology, carefully curated to meet the Common Core staircase of text complexity. It all comes together in the Integrated Learning Plan, with grade-level standards-based literacy, strategy and assessments. Get started now with the curriculum sure to transform your teaching and your



student learning.”

EMILY

Wow, June, this really sounds promising. I definitely want to check out the curriculum. I feel like we might be able to find some useful things for our upcoming unit on the civil rights unit ... movement.

JUNE

Let’s see what we can find. I’m hoping that I can find some interesting informational texts. My students are tired of reading about the usual suspects.

SARA WICHT

Okay. Timeout. In a moment you will see Emily and June model how to build a learning plan. Before that, I’d like to briefly draw attention to another option users have. If you are not yet ready to build a full learning plan, but would like to explore the range of materials, you can do so by clicking on any of the three components listed here in the top navigation bar. You can explore the Anti-bias Framework, Central Text Anthology, and tasks and strategies individually. Okay. Let’s return to our teachers.

EMILY

It looks like we can just click here to get started. How cool, look at that, it’s asking what our grade level is, so I’ll click 6-8. That’s my essential question.

SARA WICHT

Let’s pause again to briefly review essential questions and backward planning. Backward design relies on identifying desired results, and then working backward to plan instructions. There are three main stages. First, identify desired outcomes and results. Second, determine what is acceptable evidence and how learners will demonstrate their learning. Three, plan instructional strategies and learning experiences.

An essential question is important in backward planning. Instead of measurable objective, key questions are presented to students at the beginning of instruction. Essential questions are (a) important questions that reoccur throughout one’s life; (b) key inquiries within a discipline; and (c) helpful for students to make sense of important but complicated ideas. PDA includes dozens for you to choose from or the space for you to create your own.

EMILY

All righty. Here we’re being prompted to create an essential question. Directions tell me that an essential question drives our learning plan. Write your own or start with a question aligned to one of the anti-bias domains—identity, diversity, justice or action. Open the domain to review its outcomes and select the question.



I don't really have an EQ in mind yet, but one thing I definitely know is that I want our students to make connections between the civil rights movement and today. I want them to walk away feeling empowered to make a difference in our community.

JUNE

That works for the unit that I'm planning right now. The unit for the English department is overcoming challenges. I told you a bit about it yesterday. I think it's a really good fit with the work you're doing around the civil rights movement. Maybe we can choose an essential question that we can both use in our respective classrooms. Let's take a look at the essential questions that they provide. We can either create our own or use the Anti-bias Framework. There are identity, diversity, justice and action-based questions, but what's the Anti-bias Framework?

EMILY

I don't know.

SARA WICHT

Great question. Now is probably a good time to briefly explain the ABF. The ABF is a set of anchor standards and age-appropriate learning outcomes divided into four domains—identity, diversity, justice and action. The standards provide a common language and organizational structure that teachers can use to guide curriculum development, and administrators can use to make schools more just, equitable and safe. The Anti-bias Framework is leveled for every stage of K-12 education, and includes school-based scenarios to show what anti-bias attitudes and behavior may look like in the classroom.

EMILY

I'd like to look at justice-based questions first. I think this is the right place to start for a unit on the civil rights movement. Take a look. I like this one. "How have people advocated and fought for justice throughout history?" I don't know; I worry that that focuses too much on the past.

JUNE

These questions are really cool. In addition to the essential questions for the domain, they've also listed thematic EQs by domain. How cool is this?

EMILY

Yeah.

JUNE

See the theme, struggle and progress?

EMILY

Yeah.



JUNE

That fits perfectly with our overcoming obstacles unit. Would any of these questions work?

EMILY

For sure. Check out this one. “What additional progress toward a just society still needs to happen?” This question would force our students to think about justice on a spectrum, and reminds us that the struggle for equality continues today. What do you think?

JUNE

Excellent. Let’s select it.

EMILY:

Great.

JUNE

Whoa. There are 109 texts, and even the EQ is following us.

EMILY

Wow, but how can we possibly decide from all these choices?

JUNE

Look, there’s an advanced filter. Let’s see what that is. The grade level and the domain have already been selected for us. I’m always looking for more quality informational texts, and they’re the focus of our overcoming obstacles unit. Let’s check informational text and see what we get.

EMILY

Sounds good. I also love to see what kinds of multimedia texts are available. It always helps keep students engaged when I can introduce a film clip, song or podcast to bring up a topic or break up some really dense reading. Cool, it narrowed it down to 75 texts. That’s better. Let me start taking a look. Cool, the 14th Amendment. Check that one out. I’m really glad to see that here in this curriculum, because the Equal Protection Clause of that amendment has been so important in civil rights victories. Of course, it’s in our textbook. The Constitution is in the classroom already but I’m going to still favorite it so I remember it later. I want to take a look though, go back. I’ll re-filter.

There’s lots of different kinds of texts. *Brown v. Board of Education [of] Topeka. Of Topeka, Kansas.* Let’s click on that. I planned on covering this anyway, it’s in our eighth-grade U.S. history standard. That’s what I was worried about, look at that, it’s an 11th-grade text. They leveled it. My kids, they can do it with some support. I worry about it being the entire ruling because it’s 10-pages long, I think, and it’s really dense. Good, it looks like it’s an excerpt. That’s perfect. I wonder what this is, Tier 2 and Tier 3 words. Whoa, there are so many. I’ll



click on a couple; I don't understand really how this works. Wow, they get highlighted. How are we possibly going to teach all of these?

JUNE

I'm sure we've taught some of these words. I think we can pick the high-needs words that students need to understand the text. I can teach the Tier 2 vocabulary in English and they can learn the Tier 3 words in your social studies class. What do you think? That could work, right?

EMILY

Yeah, sounds like a plan. Should I select it now?

JUNE

Not yet. I'd like to continue looking at the list. I'm really excited about a large variety of informational texts that don't mention a Tyrannosaurus Rex.

EMILY

I hear you. Let's return to the list.

JUNE

We've identified *Brown v. the Board of Education* Supreme Court decision, and the 14th Amendment as applied in that case. I'd like to see what other texts could pair well with those, and maybe find a personal memoir or a piece of literary nonfiction. Let's see. *Always Running* by Luis J. Rodriguez. This is a possibility. I think it's an excerpt from his memoir; let's see what it says. "In this excerpt from his memoir, Rodriguez provides a stirring recollection of his adolescence. The first time he experienced racism as a result of being an immigrant in America." This is a good text to use with our students. I think that some of our students would really enjoy reading it, but I'm not sure that it's right for this unit. Let's see.

Look, it's bell hooks' *Bone Black*. This is from her memoir where she remembers what it's like to leave her all-black school for an integrated school. Let's read more about this one. Let's look at the first paragraph. "We cannot believe we must leave our beloved Crispus Attucks and go to schools in the white neighborhoods. We cannot imagine what it will be like to walk by the principal's office and see a man who will not know our name, who will not care about us. Already the grown-ups are saying it will be nothing but trouble, but they do not protest. Already we feel like the cattle in the stockyard near our house, herded, prodded, pushed."

I think this would really work with this unit. I like the fact that it's written from the point of view of African-American students. It's really important for our students to see themselves reflected in the curriculum as well as into the lives and experiences of those who may be different from them. Plus, this text provides the personal experience of the legal aspect of desegregation. It's a good opportunity for our students to connect the experiences of youth near their ages from a period past.



EMILY

I totally agree and I'm really intrigued about what those anti-bias standards are doing over there on the right. I remember we chose an essential question from the justice domain. What happens if we click on those justice standards? Oh snap, look at that, June, the text is annotated for us already. It looks like this text is illustrating the anti-bias standard through the voice of bell hooks, through her retelling of her experience. You could totally use those annotations in a close reading of this text.

JUNE

You're absolutely right, but I still want to keep looking. I'm clicking the star and making this a favorite. You said you wanted to search for a multimedia text?

EMILY

Mm-hmm (affirmative).

JUNE

Let's scroll and see if we can find a good one.

EMILY

I can tell that the multimedia texts are indicated by that little play button, so let me scroll through. Looks like that was some things from NBC. What else they have? News clips.

JUNE

This is a really wonderful clip.

EMILY

I recognize the name of that, I think I've seen that film. What else? Oh my goodness, StoryCorps. Look at all these StoryCorps podcasts. I love these stories, they're so personal and emotional. It's amazing that they have them here. Look at these topics. The Holocaust, growing up poor, being gay in the Marines. I recognize this one, "Fighting to Stay in School." I think this is about the *Mendez v. Westminster* case. It's a lesser-known desegregation case that involved Mexican-American students in California years before *Brown v. Board of Ed*. Let's listen. Let's listen to it.

SYLVIA

"I remember being in court every day. They would dress us up really nice (giggles) and we'd be there sitting very quietly, not really understanding what was going on. And it wasn't 'til I was 10-years-old that I really discovered what they were fighting. And I remember this so vividly. I go to school and the school bell rings and we go out to play and this little white boy comes up and he says, 'What are you doing here? You don't belong in this school. They shouldn't have Mexicans here.' And I started crying cause I've always been that way (chuckle). So I go home and tell my mother, 'I don't want to be in that school.' And she says, 'Don't you realize that this is what we fought for? Of course you're going to stay in that school and prove that you're just as good as he is.' When did you first learn of the suit?"



SANDRA

“I was in college and I happened to be assigned a book called *North from Mexico*. Studying, I just opened the book and I saw Mendez. And when I read my dad’s name, Gonzalo Mendez, I knew it couldn’t be a coincidence. And then I start reading the story and I’m awed by it. And I called my mother and I said, ‘I’m reading this book and it’s talking about this case and its got Sylvia’s name in it.’ And my mom said, ‘Oh yeah, that was us. We did that.’ When I asked, ‘Why didn’t you tell me?’ She said that nobody wanted to hear about it. People would accuse them of bragging, so they decided not to talk about it. And I took the book to the professor and I said, ‘This is my mom and dad.’ And I so wanted him to be excited and he looked at me and said, ‘Oh, really?’ That was it. Here he was a Chicanos studies professor and he didn’t care about it. But, to me it was something amazing. Here I was a piece of history and just discovering this story, it was like discovering gold.”

EMILY

That’s precious. This would pair so well with our reading of the *Brown* decision. Our students would get a first-person perspective and a broader context for understanding the struggle for civil rights in the U.S.

JUNE

I agree, this is a really wonderful lesson. Let’s add this one to our favorites too, then we can take another look at the list. Look at that, there are our favorited texts. I think out of all the texts that we’ve favorited, it seems to me like the *Brown v. Board of Education* should be our central text. Students can do a close read of it in social studies and also support it with a personal narrative about desegregation from the point of view of a Mexican student in the StoryCorps text, and African-American students in the hooks’ text. Let’s select it, and it is confirmed. We’ve chosen *Brown v. Board*.

The next step is Write to the Source. For this task, students use argumentative, explanatory and persuasive writing to respond to ideas and claims found in the central text, using the text to support their own reflection and analysis. There’s our EQ, and now the central text has been added at the top too. It appears as though these are writing tasks, but I’m not quite sure how to choose one. Let’s see what the advanced filter identifies. Look at that, it identifies Common Core Standards.

The English department is focusing on persuasive writing, so let’s select Writing Standard One. What does that do? It narrows it down to four tasks. Where I Stand allows me to customize the task; that’s exactly what I’m looking for. Let’s take a look at this one. You have to follow these steps to customize this argument/analysis text. The first step is to review the steps in the Plan for Write to the Source. Two, fill in the task template to customize your own Where I Stand task. Three, review the Argument Writing Rubric. And four, share the customized task, rubric, student checklist and central text and any other relevant material with students. Seems simple enough.

The EQ. “What additional progress toward a just society still needs to happen?” “After



reading the *Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka, Kansas*.” Oh cool, so the central text is already filled in. “Write a/n review, essay, speech, letter to the editor, expert testimony or legal argument that argues your position on the questions.” “Defend your position using evidence from the text.” “Develop your arguments by,” it says, “selecting an additional task.” So what are the additional tasks? I think, since we’re working on persuasive writing, I think it’s a good idea to have students write a letter to the editor, persuading their peers about the actions they can take to move toward a more just society.

Let’s look at the additional tasks. There’s “mild,” which asks students to include “relevant, personal experience.” “Medium,” which asks for the “relevant personal experience and anticipating counterclaims or competing views.” “Spicy” calls for “relevant personal experience, anticipating counterclaims, the competing views and asks students to give examples from history or current events.” This coincides with both of our units. I think this is a great way for us to differentiate instruction for our students. I think medium will work for most of my students. There are a couple of students, though, I think who will need the mild task. I’m really happy to have the spicy task because I know that Maureen, Monita and Richard will really appreciate a challenge. Look, on the side there’s a rubric, an argument-writing rubric. Let’s see what it looks like. This is brilliant, this is absolutely brilliant. I want to select this task.

EMILY

Let’s do it. Select the task. Now we’re going to Do Something phase. It says here that in this phase, “Students demonstrate their awareness and learning from earlier phases through performance tasks that build civic engagement and critical literacy skills.” I really appreciate that this curriculum doesn’t just end with the formal writing assessment.

JUNE

Me too.

EMILY

It gives students a chance to really apply what they’re learning and what they’re reading to their own lives. Not to mention, it’s great for social studies teachers because the inquiry arc for the new C3 Framework for Social Studies State Standards being with developing questions and ends with taking action. This phase does that. It brings us right back to the essential question. Let’s look at some of these options for how our kids will be taking action. I see a PSA.

JUNE

That’s cool.

EMILY

I see some journalism, some films, but I’m drawn to that Act Up! Drama for Justice. You know our kids like to perform. Let’s check it out. “Students write and perform a skit or monologue that brings awareness to a specific issue addressed in the text.” Let’s see why;



why is this a good idea? It says, “Drama can be a powerful tool for social change. It allows students to call attention to injustice and to envision a scene in which that injustice is overcome. Using dialogue, students can change the very language associated with the injustice. With drama, students can re-imagine moments of historical courage. Drama is hands on, creative and fun for students.”

I like this for so many reasons. I want our students to have fun, and to be able to express their unique points of view. Mostly, like I said, I want to bring a contemporary element to this unit on the civil rights movement. With this task, we can.

JUNE

Absolutely.

Wow, look more handouts. Look at that planning guide. A student planning guide. That would be nice. What a powerful resource. That’s great, that’ll be really helpful. And what? A rubric, too? This is great. After assessing them with the writing task, we can give them, we can score their performance task as well. I’m sold. How about you?

JUNE

I love it.

EMILY

Let’s select this task.

JUNE

Now we’re ready for Word Work? Let’s see what this is about. “During Word Work, students will build their ability to comprehend and produce language by using key vocabulary from *Perspectives* central text in their own reading, writing, speaking and listening.” Let’s see if we can find a strategy that will accommodate all of the vocabulary necessary for our students to read the *Brown* decision. The Vocabulary Prediction Chart probably isn’t going to work for our kiddos with such a high-level text. I like for students to understand the words in context, both in historical context as well as reading the legal decision. Too many words for the Meaning-Making Paragraphs, I think.

Let’s take a look at the Prior Knowledge and Personal Association Surveys. These surveys ask students what they know or how they feel about specific words in the text they’re reading. Emily, I really like this strategy. I think it’ll help me identify words students know and then I can focus on unfamiliar words and differentiate if necessary. Look. Did you see the Vocabulary Selection Planner?

EMILY

Yeah, look at that.



JUNE

Wow, this is phenomenal. Both of us can use this handout to prepare students for Tier 2, and Tier 3 vocabulary to settle on the target words for the text. I can't say enough wonderful things about *Perspectives*. Viva *Perspectives*!

EMILY

Yes. What's next? We're going to select a Close and Critical Reading strategy. It says here that in this phase, "students analyze, interpret, critique and make connections to text to form judgments about themselves and the world." This is such an important phase for building critical literacy in both of our classes. The Common Core places such an emphasis on close reading and textual analysis. I love having so many strategies to teach that skill. Thinking about the complexity of that *Brown* case, I really want to find a strategy that allows us to chunk and scaffold that reading. I recognize Shared Reading; let's check out how that works in this curriculum.

"Shared reading combines aspects of guided reading and read-aloud strategies. During shared reading, a teacher or proficient student reads the text aloud, pausing at pre-selected moments to discuss content and analyze the text. This strategy facilitates close reading of a complex text in small or whole group settings." I like that this strategy allows me to model how to read a complex text while I'm working through that text together as a group. I think it will be really important because I really want them to identify the arguments and reasoning in Chief Justice Warren's ruling. Look at all these ELL recommendations. That's fantastic. Ms. Lee's really going to appreciate that.

Back to those handouts. Let me look at that Shared Reading Methods, because I don't want this to be just a boring read-aloud. Let me see if they can help me jazz things up a little. That's perfect, this is something I've really been wanting to find. Looks like a variety of different ways that I can scaffold the reading.

JUNE

There's so many.

EMILY

I'm learning something from this too, which is great. I'm sold. Let's select a strategy.

JUNE

Our next step is Community Inquiry. With this strategy, students define text type, examine how text structure affects meaning, and identify audience and purpose. This is great. I know that the Common Core for English Language Arts emphasizes flexible communication and collaboration skills. I really like this. Students are encouraged to be social, definitely a necessity for our group. I think this is also a great opportunity for our students to think aloud and with each other about a difficult time in our nation's history.

What's listed here? Save the Last Word for Me. That's a structured, text-based discussion. I



like this, but not for this text. Say Something. Not for this text, either. Oh, Socratic Seminar. It's a structured discussion in which students examine issues and respond to open-ended questions about a text. This sounds promising; let's give this a look. I really want to take a look at the handout for this strategy. Have I said how much I love this curriculum?

EMILY

A few times, June.

JUNE

Students can take close notes on articles and claims in the text. This will really help them with writing to the source and the persuasive writing objective I'm covering. Students can really unpack and think about the essential question with the strategy. Really, I am loving *Perspectives*. Why didn't I think of this sooner? This makes co-planning such a breeze, and this is a good strategy, ideal.

EMILY

Look at that, I guess it's time for us to finish up. Wow, that was too easy. What shall we call this learning plan? Something maybe, "Overcoming Obstacles and the Civil Rights Movement"?

JUNE

Perfect.

EMILY

I want to take advantage of this note space. I'm going to make a few notes here that will help us when we sit down and meet with Mr. Costello and Ms. Lee to talk about accommodation. Let's just note Costello and Lee, and we need to discuss how to differentiate the writing prompt using those mild, medium and spicy task command. I think we also need to make sure that we're taking full advantage of the ELL recommendations. Let me make a note of that. We kind of breezed by them, but it's good to know they're there. This is so amazing that I can save this and come back to it the next time I log in. I only wish there was a way I could share this with our ELL and special education colleagues in advance.

JUNE

Let's see, there's a print button. Let's click that and see what happens. There are three print options. We can print the learning plan summary, we can print the learning plan, which includes essential text, task and strategy overviews, but doesn't include the handout for the rubric.

EMILY

Those are PDFs, so we could always download and save them later.

JUNE

Or we could print a portion of the learning plan. Let's print the learning plan. I think we



could save this as a PDF and I think that would be the most logical way of making sure that Mr. Costello and Ms. Lee have the learning plan.

EMILY

Appended as an attachment?

JUNE

Absolutely. Where is the space, though?

EMILY

There's that little section up there that says, "My Learning Plan." If this works the way they say— There it is. My learning plan.

JUNE

Oh no, it's two seconds to the bell.

EMILY

It's a good thing our plan is saved. Thank you, *Perspectives*.

SARA WICHT

June and Emily have compiled a robust and rich literacy experience for their students. Makes me want to join their classes. A couple of notes about technology. We have found that the print options are not reliable in Chrome or Internet Explorer, so please keep that in mind as you choose what browser you will use. We have not found there to be trouble in Safari nor Firefox. We are excited to hear your feedback on this webinar, so please take a few moments to complete the post-event survey before logging off and closing your browser's window. The related resources folder is packed with printable PDFs for your reference and for sharing with your colleagues. Make sure you visit that folder before signing off as well.

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