

Little Rock

Central High 60 Years Later

Mindfulness

Good intentions can go wrong

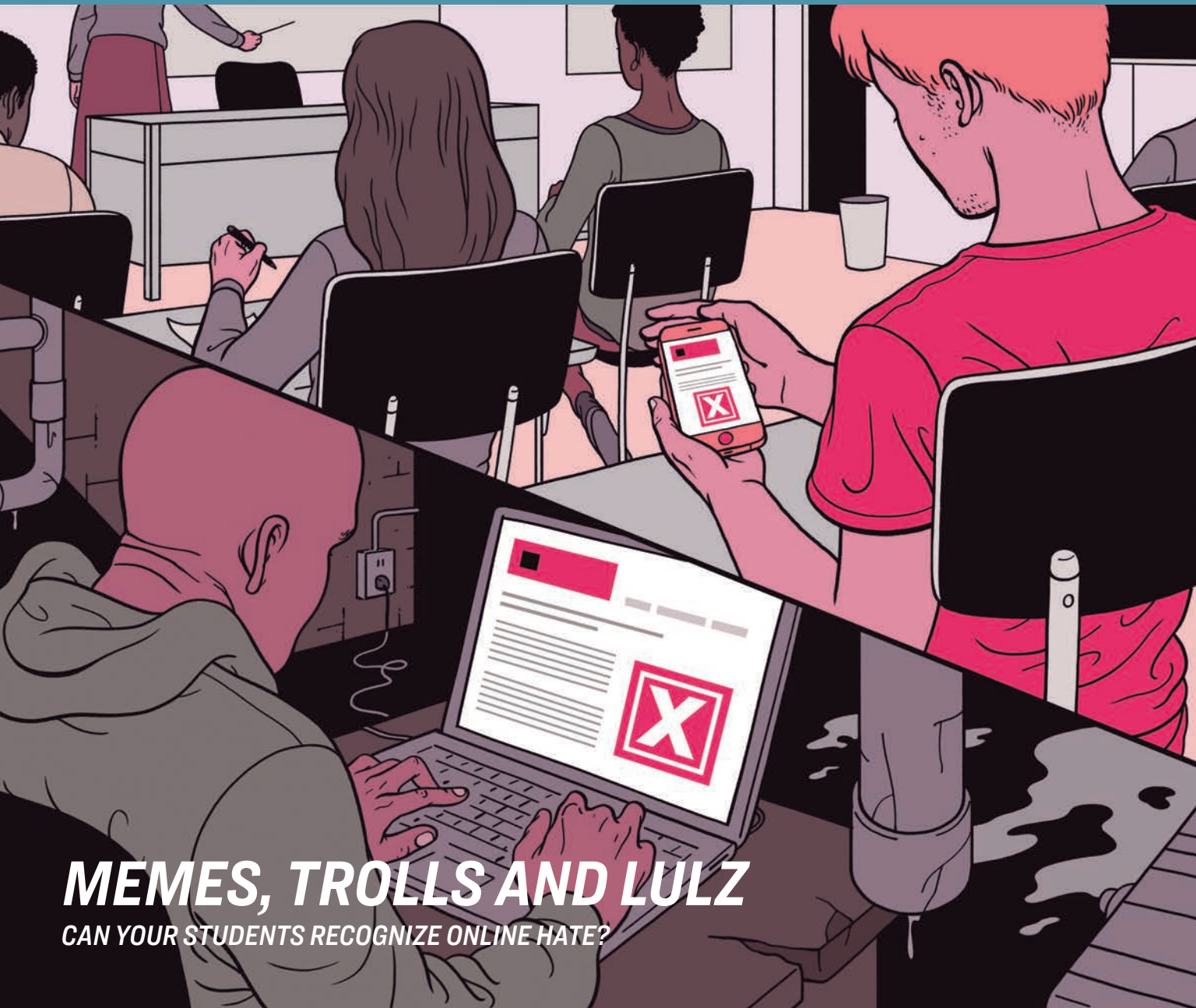
Digital Literacy

Learn the vocabulary

TEACHING TOLERANCE



ISSUE 57 | FALL 2017
TOLERANCE.ORG



MEMES, TROLLS AND LULZ

CAN YOUR STUDENTS RECOGNIZE ONLINE HATE?

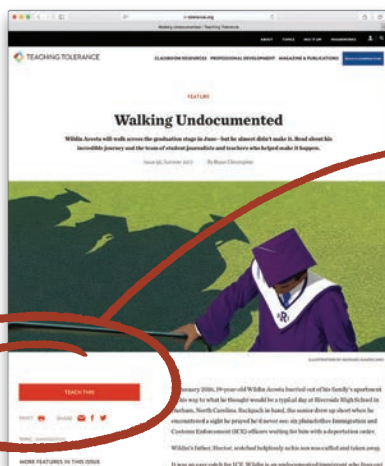
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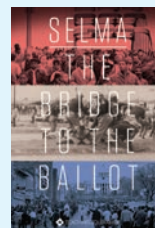
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SELMA: THE BRIDGE TO THE BALLOT

The true story of the students and teachers who fought to secure voting rights for African Americans in the South. *Grades 6-12*



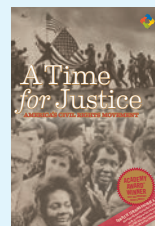
ONE SURVIVOR REMEMBERS

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, Alabama, who brought segregation to its knees. *Grades 6-12*



BULLIED

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TEACHING TOLERANCE

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White nationalists are targeting young people through memes, message boards and a powerful rebranding campaign. Would you recognize their rhetoric if it came to your classroom?

ILLUSTRATION BY **KYLE WEBSTER**

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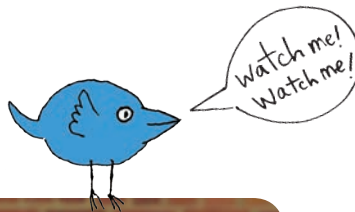
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Understanding how the brain processes information can help students unravel the origins of fake news and other mysteries of the internet.

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ONLINE EXCLUSIVE

Filter bubbles? Signal boosters? Watch our short video on how these phenomena can drive the news cycle away from the truth. tolerance.org/article/fake-news-video





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THIS ISSUE IS DEDICATED TO
THE LOVING MEMORY OF
OUR COLLEAGUE AND FRIEND

Sarah Viets

PHOTO BY RANLENZ



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Perspectives

“I imagine one of the reasons people cling to their hates so stubbornly is because they sense, once hate is gone, they will be forced to deal with pain.”

JAMES BALDWIN



IT'S AUGUST 24 as I write this column. Twelve days ago, white nationalists, neo-Nazis, armed anti-government militias and assorted proponents of racist ideologies brought havoc to Charlottesville, Virginia. ¶ Five days ago, a different scene played out in Boston. ¶ The images and video from Charlottesville led the news for days. Boston was covered only briefly, and mainly as a “disaster averted” story. ¶ But Boston has more to tell us about what we need to do.

cannot be tolerated. It has no valid role in societies based on the ideal—even if unrealized—that all people are equal and have equal rights. The Paradox of Tolerance is that a democratic society must tolerate all ideas, with one exception: intolerance. Hate has a unique power to intimidate, silence and injure an entire class of people. It stifles free expression and harms us all in the process.

Yes, many of you will hear that you can't take a side, that your job is to be neutral and nonpartisan. But hate speech, especially in schools, cannot be subject to debate. There's simply no reason for any teacher to legitimize a hateful position with, “Well, some people think...”

In the end, we will only inoculate young people against hate by developing their positive self-identity and empathy, helping them recognize and think critically about injustice, and equipping them with the skills and dispositions to take informed action.

Our schools are the crucibles in which we're forging the future. As educators, we need to hold on to a vision of the society we want to live in 20 years from now. Picture it as clearly as you can: Is it a place where people listen to each other and participate in civil dialogue, even when they disagree? Does every person have a stake and take responsibility for the health of the community? Is authority exercised wisely? Does everyone have equal access to opportunities?

Fix that picture in your mind. Share it with colleagues. And build it in your classroom and school.

—Maureen Costello

When I taught high school students about Selma, Birmingham and Little Rock—and showed images of the white people who raged against threats to their cherished caste system—my mostly white students reacted with disbelief that anyone could be so far on the wrong side of history. They wanted to believe that, had they lived during those times, they would have stood against oppression and with the activists seeking justice. It's a story many of us tell ourselves when we study history marked by prejudice and hate.

But, as it turns out, we *do live* in those times.

We are experiencing a fraught moment in which it is impossible to stay neutral. The students we teach in 20 years will want to know, “Where did you stand? What did you do to combat hate? How did you seek justice?”

In the past 10 days, I've read countless messages from educational leaders exhorting teachers to denounce hate and fearlessly teach about what's going on. I've been one of those exhorting voices. Within hours, writer Melinda Anderson created #CharlottesvilleCurriculum and, just as we've seen so many times before

(think Ferguson, Trayvon Martin, the aftermath of the presidential election), educators exchanged resources and ideas for teaching about race and having difficult classroom conversations.

How about if we also teach the #BostonCurriculum? There's a lot we can learn from Boston.

Lesson #1: Love is bigger and stronger than hate. In Boston, about 100 people showed up for the so-called “free speech” rally to proclaim their right to spew hate; 40,000 people joined the peaceful counter-protest, “Stand for Solidarity.” Across the country—and in your school—most people are repelled by messages of hate. They want to take a stand. They just don't always know how.

Lesson #2: We lead and teach by taking a clear stand. “The young people of our city are watching TV, are following this,” Mayor Marty Walsh said the day before the scheduled rally. “We have to make it clear what we stand for in the city of Boston.” After the march, the police commissioner, William Evans, added that “99.9 percent of people were here for the right reason, and that's to fight bigotry.”

Lesson #3: There is no moral equivalency between the opposing sides; hate

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FIRST BELL

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ILLUSTRATION BY BILL BRAGG

Reader Reactions

Our magazine feature story “Immigrant and Refugee Children: A Guide for Educators and School Support Staff” is essential reading for anyone working with undocumented youth. Take a look at t-t.site/imm-guide.

This is so vital and important. We need to advocate for these kids and their families. We need to build trust between home and school.

SUBMITTED BY KATHY O’HARA-ROSA

[VIA FACEBOOK](#)

Often, educators and school support staff are the first to witness the impact of increased enforcement measures on students and their families. If you live in an ethnically diverse school district, you may want to share this guide.

SUBMITTED BY ERIKA BERG

[VIA FACEBOOK](#)

Our latest magazine issue, a brand-new guide for serving English language learners and posts about school choice have inspired a lot of dialogue with our readers.

LONGTIME SUPPORT

I’ve supported @splcenter and @Tolerance.org for decades! I think they’ve led the way on fighting hate with creative vision better than any!

—JULIE SEGAL WALTERS

[\(@J_S_DUB\) VIA TWITTER](#)

SPARKING DIALOGUES

[The Perspectives text library] plays a great role in opening up dialogue, engaging diverse populations,

and promoting empathy, agency for social change and actively engaged citizenship.

—ANONYMOUS

[VIA SURVEY](#)

EDITOR’S NOTE

If you haven’t visited us online in a while, our old website and our curriculum tool Perspectives for a Diverse America are now part of one amazing and unified site, filled with resources, tools and the

latest news. Check it out at tolerance.org.

AN OMISSION

I love what your magazine, blogs, media, stand for. Words cannot express how important these issues are. As a Native American teacher/person, however, I must say that even an organization such as yours continues to perpetuate the omission of Native issues. Our children are still

obviously “missing” in your lineup. ...It is time to stop this and make it right.

—DARLA PHILLIPS

VIA EMAIL

THERE DURING DIFFICULT TIMES

Thank you for all that you do to provide resources for teachers and students in these difficult/challenging times. I was particularly touched by the variety of materials available for teachers to support immigrant families in schools and their communities. ... Please don't stop what you are doing on behalf of all the minority students out there.

—JOYCE LAWRENCE

VIA EMAIL

A DEEPER CONNECTION

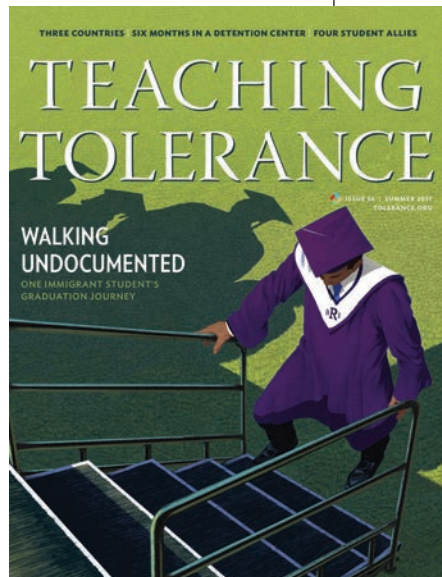
I have been using Teaching Tolerance lessons and ideas in my classroom for several years, but really was able to connect more deeply with the Social Justice Standards after attending [a workshop] at The Museum of Tolerance in Los Angeles. I think they are easy to use and really help breathe social justice into any unit.

—JENNIFER FETTER MARTIN

VIA EMAIL

EDITOR'S NOTE

Our Social Justice Standards provide anchor standards and learning outcomes in four domains: Identity,



Diversity, Justice and Action. Read more and start incorporating them into your teaching: tolerance.org/social-justice-standards.

SPREAD THE LOVE

I just wanted to say how much I love your organization, the newsletters, materials, staff picks, etc. I am pursuing my doctorate in Educational Diversity, and I am a coordinator for Social Justice teaching in my school district, which is greatly expanding next year. Just love it!!!

—ENADRIENNE ROSSER

VIA EMAIL

THE SCHOOL CHOICE DEBATE

I'm just wondering why Teaching Tolerance has taken what appears to be an anti-choice stand with regards to education. ... I'm not saying that we need to be in the business of public school bashing, but promoting the concept of school choice, faith-based schools, or families choosing their best options seems to be one which would increase tolerance.

—DAN TULLY

VIA EMAIL

#WINNING

[On *Best Practices for Serving English Language Learners and Their Families*] Teaching Tolerance for the win again. If you work with ELLs, check this out! They also have free resources on their website!

—LIANA DAVIS

VIA FACEBOOK

EDITOR'S NOTE

Best Practices for Serving English Language Learners and Their Families is packed with recommendations for instruction, classroom culture and more. Access the full guide at t-t.site/ELL-guide.



Burrow Bunch

For the last couple years I have made it a habit to check your Facebook posts *before* I go into my classes (university courses for pre-service teachers); y'all NEVER disappoint and are ALWAYS timely in your discussions. ... THANK YOU for your dedication to providing practical resources.

VIA FACEBOOK

SO MANY USES!

Our administrative team is using [*Responding to Hate and Bias at School: A Guide for Administrators, Counselors and Teacher*] as a construct for our opening assemblies with students, as one of our foundations for an annual leadership conference for our students [and as] a guide in setting how we react to and respond to incidents.

—MIKE KLUGMAN

VIA EMAIL



STELLAR TWEET

Karen Corsello @MsCorsello

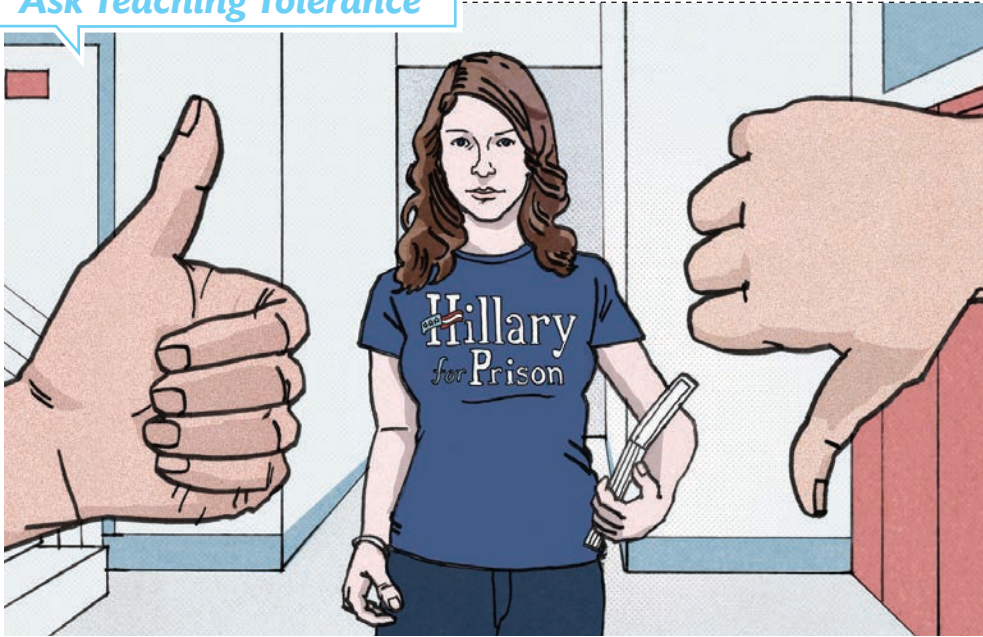
My favorite educational site is @Tolerance_org. I've been hooked since I did my student teaching in 2007! Wow! 10 years!



Research indicates that one aspect of segregation—the disparity in school poverty rates—is also consistently the most powerful link to academic achievement gaps.

—Stanford University Center for Education Policy Analysis

Ask Teaching Tolerance



Q. A student came in with a “Hillary for Prison” T-shirt, and I suggested it might be inappropriate for school. My administrator told the student that political statements on clothing are allowed, but our dress code says students may not wear clothing that “ridicules a person or a group.” How do I talk to my administrator about why this is wrong?

The Supreme Court has usually upheld the First Amendment rights of students to wear message T-shirts in schools. As a general matter, the school may not censor the expression unless the message substantially interferes with school operations or invades somebody’s rights (to privacy, for example). T-shirts like this are considered political speech, and the “Hillary for Prison” shirt is likely protected. Therefore, there

are no grounds for the school to intervene.

Instead of advocating for enforcement of the school policy, use this situation as a teachable moment to talk about our judicial system and civil discourse (tolerance.org/pub/civil-discourse). Engage students in a discussion about the value of focusing on policies rather than vilifying political candidates. While some politicians and citizens have played dirty politics, students do not have to do that.

I teach a social ethics course and a world religions course, and I constantly have students who derail the class with their rejection of the material. Do you have strategies to help ease the classroom tensions and build a better rapport with these students?

Start off the semester by letting students know that you realize they may be uncomfortable with some of the topics and may disagree with some of the perspectives you present. This is a great opportunity for

building intellectual curiosity and understanding about other points of view. From there, you can begin building an intellectually safe community of inquiry through a class contract and group discussion. Help students establish a standard that all participants of the classroom community can ask any question and state any point of view as long as they are respectful of their classmates.

It’s also important to make sure you’ve cultivated a positive classroom climate and fostered community before you start heavy conversations. Our guide *Let’s Talk! Discussing Race, Racism and Other Difficult Topics With Students* (tolerance.org/lets-talk) is a great tool for preparing yourself and your students for such discussions. Also, check out our *20 Face to Face Advisories* (tolerance.org/pub/face-to-face) for activities that fuse anti-bias education and high student engagement. Building a sense of camaraderie with your class can help make challenging discussions easier to dive into.

Finally, talk with these disruptive students privately, and invite their honest feedback on the class and your teaching. Reflecting on their evaluations can help you become a more effective educator.

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.



ARTICLE 3.13.17 // RELIGION

“But You Don’t Look Like a Muslim”

BY FAKHRA SHAH

Knowing that even some Muslims believe that there is a “look” for us to embody, I asked my student to tell me more about why she felt that there was one way that Muslims looked. I thought it would be important for her to think through why she held that view and for the class to be able to discuss this viewpoint as well. Both the student and others agreed that this is what has been portrayed to them via the media, and that they had believed it.

Then two of the Muslim students in class spoke up and talked about the Islamophobic bus ads circulating through our San Francisco streets. These ads depicted Muslims as terrorists, contained words like *jihad* and referred to Muslims as being “uncivilized.”

This was the beginning of a larger conversation around Islam, Muslims and Islamophobia—fueled by my students’ curiosity and my objective to deconstruct common stereotypes about Muslims or people who are perceived to be Muslims.

And a reader replied...

This is well written and a perfect example of how our classrooms and teachers can be instrumental in educating our kids about the politics happening today. ... Good read.

READ THE FULL ARTICLE HERE:

tolerance.org/article/look-muslim

ARTICLE SPOTLIGHT

Check out some of our most talked-about posts. Go to tolerance.org and search for these headlines:



What Is Cinco de Mayo?

BY LAURYN MASCAREÑAZ



To Know Our American History Is to Know Ourselves

BY NEAL A. LESTER



Teaching Students to See Each Other

BY LAUREN POROSOFF



To Teach a Complex Issue, Skip the K-W-L Chart

BY JEFFREY WEBB

DID YOU KNOW?

In a 2015 national survey of school climate, 60 percent of transgender students reported being required to use bathrooms or locker rooms corresponding to their legal sex.

—GLSEN

Why I Teach

Ronell Whitaker is an English teacher and technology coach at H.L. Richards High School in Chicago, Illinois.



The Comic Book Teacher

I've been teaching for over 10 years, and I've been teaching with comics for the past seven. But my journey to becoming the Comic Book Teacher started when I was a kid. When I started second grade, I was part of a school-busing program that took kids like me from what we might now call "at-risk" surroundings and put us in a more successful school. This was especially tough for me because I was way outside of my neighborhood, and I knew no one. I felt like an alien.

Until one day in science class when we were learning about the human body, and my teacher asked, "What is the human body made up of?" Hands

went up all around me with answers of "hair" or "skin" or even "muscles." Before I knew it, my hand went up, too. You see, I might have felt out of place most times in school, but I had been consuming a steady diet of Spider-Man, X-Men and The Incredible Hulk. And if there was any topic I felt confident in, it was science. The teacher called on me and I said, "The human body is made of atoms, molecules, cells and stuff that's controlled by genes that come from your DNA." My teacher had a shocked expression on her face, confirmed what I said and then went on to talk about skeletons and muscles.

Now, even though my teacher's lesson that day was about the human body, what I learned was that the comics I loved so much were actually teaching me things I could use in class! However, while my confidence in class was growing, I still was struggling to find friends. I'd sit at the lunch table with other kids, bring out my X-Men comic and read while I ate. Yet again, comics came to my rescue. One of the boys in my class saw what I was reading, came over and asked if he could see it. We began

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 MARY RAFFERTY



talking about how cool Wolverine was and argued about whether Batman could beat Superman in a fight. In short, we became fast friends. This was my first experience with one of the other pluses of comics: community building.

When I became a teacher, I knew I would use comics in my classes because of how I had benefited from them, but I also knew that comics had some other superpowers. Yes, comics are engaging, but they also allow reluctant readers to build confidence in comprehending and inferring. My students who once felt like they were missing out on what was going on are now “in on the secret,” and they are often the ones who feel empowered to lead discussions. Comics can help students become successful in areas in which they weren’t previously successful.

Comics also are more current than traditional classroom reading options, which leads to more relevance in the material. Broader representation is easier to find in today’s comics than in short stories and novels on the recommended reading lists in many schools. Comics are where I send students who never see themselves in stories. This is why a few colleagues, the education directors at Pop Culture Classroom and I started the Comics Education Outreach program. We want to get comics, especially social justice-centered comics like *March* and *Persepolis*, into as many classrooms as possible through our lending library of comics and graphic novels.

I start off every school year by telling kids a little about myself. Inevitably, when I mention how much I love comics, I always get a bunch of kids who light up with surprise and delight. Then they ask the question they didn’t know they’d get to ask a teacher: Do you think Batman could beat Superman in a fight?

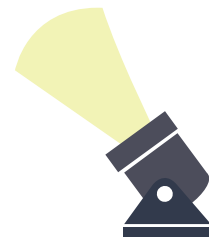
ARTICLE 2.6.17 // CLASSROOM PRACTICE, SCHOOL CLIMATE

What Do Your Classroom Walls Convey?

BY SAMANTHA SCHOELLER

In the wake of rising bias incidents in public schools and an increasingly alarming political climate, my feelings about the importance of my classroom’s physical environment have shifted. Perhaps contrary to what some may believe, as an educator I can control very little about my students’ lives and even their well-being. But I can control the physical environment they sit in for 41 minutes, five times per week. And during those precious few minutes, I can try to convey that they are welcome and safe. ...

And, while the research may be varied or even contrary in some cases, one aspect is clear: Students notice what teachers hang on their walls. In that context, what messages do we want to convey, beyond the content in our lessons? How can we let them know we care about them, even if they don’t want to talk to us directly? How can we try to make them feel just a little bit safer inside their seats, especially in increasingly uncertain times?



And a reader replied...

We absolutely believe that visuals like these posters, student art work, peace poles, etc. play a huge role in creating the cultures of peace, tolerance and nonviolence. ... Don’t underestimate the importance of what is displayed on classroom/school walls and in the halls.

READ THE FULL ARTICLE HERE:

tolerance.org/article/classroom-walls

DID YOU KNOW?

Over the past 30 years, the federal prison inmate population multiplied more than 8 times over. And between 1980 and 2013, federal spending on prisons grew by more than 500 percent, making up 23 percent of the Justice Department’s budget.

—The Brennan Center for Justice

A 2012 study of youth enrolled in weight-loss camps found that 64 percent reported experiencing weight-based victimization and bullying, most commonly from their peers or friends but also from parents and teachers.

—Pediatrics

Big Ideas for Social Studies Learners

Meet Mitch Bickman, the director of K–12 social studies for Oceanside School District in Oceanside, New York. Bickman is passionate about offering opportunities for students to think critically, engage in thoughtful dialogue and make real-world connections. In 2016, the New York State Social Studies Supervisory Association named him the Supervisor of the Year.

What inspired you to become a social studies educator?

It was both my experience in high school and a teacher I had as a junior in high school whose name is Carmine Verde. He was my U.S. history teacher, and his passion and enthusiasm for a subject that I already enjoyed was something that definitely sparked something in me that said, “This is the career I might want to pursue.”

During the 2016-17 school year, you started a program called *Bridges*, through which 60 students from different schools will spend six years, grades 7–12, in dialogue with each other about social issues. How did this program come about?

In December of 2015, I was contacted by a professor out of Hofstra University who was actually my professor in grad school, Alan Singer. He said, “I’d love to have a dialogue between Oceanside and Uniondale,” which is one of our neighboring districts. Oceanside High School is about



Mitch Bickman is the director of K–12 social studies for Oceanside School District.

85 percent white, and Uniondale High School is closer to 97, 98 percent Latino and African American. He said he wanted to have a conversation between seniors, government students, about race in America.

These 17- and 18-year-olds had about an hour-and-a-half dialogue that was raw, it was powerful, it was emotional at times. As powerful as this experience was for students, the problem was that it was a one-off.

That planted a seed for me, saying, “How can we not only replicate these conversations and interactions

but create something more meaningful than a one-time dialogue?” I reached out to Uniondale’s chair of social studies and we had a conversation, and then I reached out to a few of our Oceanside teachers who I thought would be perfect partners in this program. That’s essentially where *Bridges* was born from.

The kids have been just so open to this experience. You don’t see students too often sitting across from a peer and just intently listening [to] their thoughts, their views, their conversation and then weighing those

Lessons Learned

Our classroom resources are grade-specific and align with the four domains of the Social Justice Standards: Identity, Diversity, Justice and Action. Find the lessons at tolerance.org/classroom-resources.

Discovering My Identity—Identity

(Elementary School)

In this lesson inspired by #1000BlackGirlBooks founder Marley Dias, students use illustrated books to analyze and reflect on the many components that make up one's identity.

Understanding Disabilities—Diversity

(All Grades)

Use this lesson to teach students about different kinds of disabilities and about the importance of respectful and sensitive communication.

Music and the Movement—Action

(All Grades)

Students examine the history of music in political movements and then write their own anthems to support issues they care about.

Countering Islamophobia—Justice

(High School)

Using advertisements and multimedia, students analyze examples of stereotypes about Muslims and create their own campaigns to counter Islamophobia in school.

In the Big Ideas for Little Kids program, readings include Margaret Wise Brown's The Important Book, Arnold Lobel's Frog and Toad series and Shel Silverstein's The Giving Tree.

thoughts and responding thoughtfully to them. Ultimately, this will culminate in a service-learning project that students will determine in their sophomore year and execute in their junior and senior years.

You run a program called *Big Ideas for Little Kids*. What is its goal?

The goal of this program is to expose students, as young as kindergarten, to philosophical thinking and to build a framework for questioning and thinking.

Big Ideas for Little Kids was named after the same book by Tom Wartenberg out of Mount Holyoke College and he's a philosophy professor. We mirrored his work: What he does with college students is he pushes into elementary classrooms and has philosophical discussions with his students being the ones leading the discussions.

When we read books about bravery with K-6 students and ask them what it means to be brave, their first thought more often than not—especially in grades K, 1 and 2—is that bravery means someone is strong. During these discussions, something magical happens and we see this evolution where their definition of bravery expands. And by the time we're done with this 30-minute conversation, bravery can mean running away. Bravery can mean all these

other things that they didn't initially think about.

We have now, over the past three years, worked with four of our six elementary schools across grades K-6. And by next year, we'll hit our last two elementary schools, and then our plan is for this to just become part of the curriculum.

During the 2017-18 school year, what lessons or themes do you think students should be exposed to in their social studies classes?

One of the things we're looking to embed more purposefully into the curriculum is real-world problems that the students could investigate through an inquiry-model approach and look to tackle and possibly solve or propose solutions.

Another big goal of ours is to focus more on dedicated instruction of media literacy. Of course, a hallmark of social studies education is always to look at the validity or reliability of sources, which we have been doing for a very long time. But it's taken on an added urgency and importance, given both the climate of our nation and things we're seeing in the world today.

DOWN THE HALL

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

FREE STUFF!

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

A chronicle of the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee, the SNCC Digital Gateway reveals the civil rights group's background and vision through historic documents, interviews and more.

snccdigital.org

The #ImmigrationSyllabus collects multimedia and extensive readings to provide a deep, 15-week dive into the history of immigration in the United States.

editions.lib.umn.edu/immigrationsyllabus

Featuring more than a million resources, the Smithsonian Learning Lab can be used by educators or students to discover, examine and share items from the Smithsonian's major collections and research centers.

learninglab.si.edu

The interactive site Changing Minds weaves together scientific research and personal stories to build understanding of trauma while also providing strategies for helping youth heal.

changingmindsnow.org



Home Visits

Teachers

When is the last time you visited or called a parent or guardian without bad news?

Administrators

How are you equipping teachers to build relationships with families through visits? Learn the benefits of home visits and best practices for how to prepare for and conduct them.

The Benefits

Family engagement contributes to a range of positive student outcomes, including:

- Improved achievement;
- Decreased disciplinary issues;
- Improved parent- or guardian-child and teacher-child relationships.



Best Practices

These are some best practices for teachers *and* administrators concerning home visits:

- Visits should be voluntary for educators and families, but administrators should seek at least 50 percent participation from a school’s staff.
- Home visits should always be arranged in advance. It’s helpful for schools to decide if they want educators to visit families once or twice per year and whether that first visit will take place before the school year begins. Some districts also follow up home visits with family dinners at the school to continue deepening school-family ties.
- If possible, schools should compensate educators for their home-visit work and train them effectively.
- Educators should visit in teams of two. In some cases, teachers partner with other teachers, social workers or the school nurse to help address a student’s well-being in a more comprehensive manner.
- It’s important that educators visit a cross-section of students—ideally all of them—rather than target any particular group.
- The goal of the first home visit is to build relationships. Educators should talk about families’ hopes and aspirations for their students.

Note to teachers: Take extra care when communicating with immigrant families about visiting their homes. Make it clear in advance that you are not from any government immigration agency, such as ICE, and that you will not talk with any such agency. Also, do not ask about immigration status during the visit—or at any other time.

Different Families, Different Visits

Just as instruction is differentiated, so too are home visits. Depending on the needs of the student and family and the previous history of the teacher-family relationship, a home visit might be:

- A formal conversation on the couch;
- A meal together;
- A guided tour of a home (including favorite toys and hangout spots);
- Walking the family dog in the park or another excursion to an agreed-upon meeting place.

Note: Keep in mind that some families may not be comfortable having guests in their homes and would prefer to meet somewhere else. In this case, you could offer the school or another location as a meeting place.

STORY FROM THE FIELD: KEEP YOUR EYES ON THE SPEAKER

“I once went on a home visit to a trailer home. We sat at the kitchen table, and I was astounded to see a hole around a foot and a half in diameter right in the middle of the kitchen, through which I could see the dirt underneath the trailer. However, as mortified as I was, I thought that it probably was even more mortifying for the mother who so kindly received me. She was probably embarrassed and the least I could do was to keep my eyes on her and focus on our conversation instead of on the material distractions around us. My job is to focus on the human being, not on the dehumanizing conditions many people have to live in.”

— Barbie Garayúa-Tudryn, elementary school counselor and TT Advisory Board member

Home Visit Checklist:

Before

- Participate in home-visit training.
- Call each student's home, and explain the purpose of the visit.
- Schedule the visit.
- Determine if a translator is needed. The student should not serve as a translator.
- Confirm the day before or the day of the home visit.
- Before the visit, reflect on the reason you're there in the first place: to build a relationship with the family and collaborate with them for the well-being of the child.



During

- The visit should be 20-30 minutes long.
- Bring a partner.
- Get to know the family. Find out if they have other children in school.
- Talk about the family's hopes for their students and share yours.
- Avoid taking notes or bringing paperwork, which can make families feel as if they are being evaluated and can cause nervousness and disengagement.



- If you need to share paperwork, wait 20-30 minutes before delivering it or plan to send it at a later date.
- Ask the family what they need from you, and make a plan to connect again in the future.

After

- Make a phone call or send a text or note thanking the parents or guardians for the meeting.
- Invite the family to an upcoming event.
- Document the visit, and share takeaways with appropriate stakeholders.
- Follow up with any resource needs that came up during the visit.



To learn more, read "Meet the Family" and watch our on-demand webinar *Equity Matters: Engaging Families Through Home Visits*.

Critical Training Elements for Administrators

Training and preparing for a home visit can be as important as the visit itself. Consider these pointers from the experts when designing professional development for your home-visit program.

- **Review logistics**, such as how to make contact, how and when to schedule visits, whether and how to record discussions with families, and what to do with the documentation and data.
- **Remind teachers to leave assumptions behind** and keep an open mind regarding each family, their culture and their values.
- **Address implicit bias** and the impact it can have on what educators

or families will perceive during the home visit. To learn more about implicit bias, view our on-demand webinar *Equity Matters: Confronting Implicit Bias*.

- **Some prior knowledge is essential**, such as whether a translator will be necessary (it is not appropriate to use the student as a translator), whether the family has access to a working phone or if the child lives between two households.

- **Coach teachers to establish the purpose** for the visit ahead of time. Goals should focus on getting to know the child as a learner and setting the stage for partnership, not on problematic behavior or performance.
- **Model how to talk** about *both* the student *and* the family. Some families may have significant needs. Connecting them to resources can benefit their child's learning.

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TO SCHOOLS
GRADES 6-12

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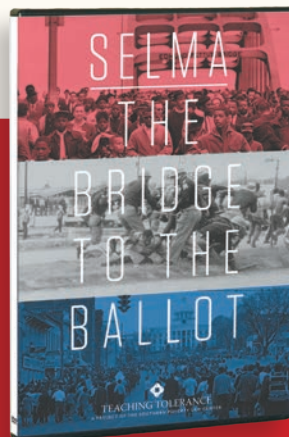
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Order *Selma: The Bridge to the Ballot* today!

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



Secret Agents OF KINDNESS

BY DEBRA GINSBERG ILLUSTRATION BY SHAW NIELSEN

“My simple kind acts have made me a happier person.”

“KINDNESS,” MARK TWAIN said, “is the language which the deaf can hear and the blind can see.” Acts of kindness, however small, also have a way of dissolving the barriers that isolate us within our own worldviews. In this way, kindness benefits both the giver and the receiver.

It was an intrinsic understanding of this concept that attracted Erin Mangahis to Secret Kindness Agents, a program founded by a fellow educator, Ferial Pearson.

Mangahis has spent almost half her life as a teacher and nearly all of those years teaching English language arts at Patrick Henry High School in San Diego. She’s an astute observer of her students’ ability to practice inclusiveness and understanding of one another’s unique identities. And, as a scholar of written and verbal language, she has always made it a priority to allow her students opportunities to deepen their vocabulary of awareness and empathy.

When she learned about Pearson’s program two years ago, Mangahis knew immediately that she wanted to implement it in her own classroom.

Recruiting Agents

The idea behind Secret Kindness Agents, which Pearson details in her TEDx Talk and in a book she has written about the program, is both simple and profound: to perform an anonymous act of kindness every day and, thereby, spread kindness throughout the community.

Anonymity is a key element of the program, as it shifts the focus from the self to others and thus allows the “agents” of kindness to remove themselves from the equation—in effect, to become selfless, which is the DNA of kindness. Essentially, the program creates a reverse-selfie effect: a camera facing out instead of facing in. Agents are able, in some cases for the first time, to see others when they hold up the lens.

Each year, Mangahis begins the program by showing Pearson’s TEDx Talk to the students and having a group discussion about the program. “We then write down a list of about 10 to 15 potential positive benefits of Secret Kindness Agents and also make a list of the potential risks,” she says.

Most students agree the program will make the school a more positive place. Their assessment of the risks ranges from worrying that their faces might hurt from smiling too much to a

more serious concern that their acts of kindness might be rejected or that they might embarrass themselves.

The next steps involve the students brainstorming anonymous acts of kindness, or “jobs,” and selecting Secret Agent names for themselves. Mangahis provides a list of possible jobs but lets her students refine, add to or delete from this list. The jobs the students create run the gamut of kind, selfless acts. Some tasks are as simple as picking up trash around the school and holding open a classroom door. Others require more effort, such as sharing lunch with someone the Secret Agent might not ordinarily talk to or writing letters of appreciation to school staff members who are rarely recognized for their work.

“One student made a job out of taking his friends to a school sporting event—girls’ basketball—that doesn’t get the support and crowds of other sports,” Mangahis says. Other jobs have included making teacher-appreciation posters, placing positive messages on Post-its on bathroom mirrors and smiling at everyone the Secret Agent sees.

The jobs that take the Secret Agents far outside of their comfort zones—for example, striking up a conversation with somebody new—come with the highest risk and vulnerability. These are also the jobs with the highest rewards, notably the sheer happiness of brightening someone else’s day.

Ferial Pearson is a nationally recognized and award-winning high school teacher and an instructor in the Teacher Education Department at the University of Nebraska Omaha. To learn more about Pearson and the Secret Kindness Agents program, watch her TEDx Talk.

t-t.site/secret-agents

Secret Agent Steps to Kindness

After selecting their jobs and verbally committing to honor the jobs they are about to do, students perform their acts of kindness every day for a week. At the end of the week, they write reflections on how their jobs have affected them and those around them. They then select new jobs for the next week and begin the process again.

“They become giddy with excitement for their jobs,” Mangahis says, “and how much fun they are having. I have been surprised by the ease they had with the program and just how much it has unified us and made us a cohesive group.”

Kindness Spreads

The effect of these acts of kindness on the school community has been “tremendously positive,” Mangahis says. After successfully piloting the program with only her seniors in 2016, she extended Secret Kindness Agents to her juniors the next year. “It helps them to become aware of and more sensitive to the needs of others. They see beyond themselves, and it reframes their view of the world.”

Bella Franco, a senior in Mangahis’ class, took her participation to a whole new level in an act of meta-kindness. Mangahis keeps a Twitter board in the classroom—a hard-copy version of the social media site—and Bella created a page for that board, which she called The Henry Effect.

“I followed the most random people from Patrick Henry [High School] that I’ve only talked to a few times, or some who showed great enthusiasm and empathy toward others on campus,” Bella says. “I then posted a picture of the student and a short caption acknowledging and appreciating their kind acts.”

In this way, Bella followed kindness with kindness, and paying it forward filled her with joy.

“Once I started my acts of kindness, I started feeling complete,” she says. “I felt happy and I felt that I gained happiness by making others happy.”

Giving the students ownership of the program and allowing them to decide on their own acts of kindness are integral to the program’s success, according to Mangahis, who is quick to praise Pearson for designing Secret Kindness Agents to be very flexible and easy to adapt.

“It is extremely moldable and can be implemented at any grade,” she says. “It transcends one teacher or one curriculum, which is a big part of its beauty.”

This is also what allows anyone to create a Secret Kindness Agents program in their own community. “It’s a discussion you can have with your kids or your book club, your family members,” Mangahis says. “You commit to doing acts of kindness and talk about it together. Sharing the experience radiates kindness that travels throughout the community.”

The kindness extended to others then moves forward on its own, creating a ripple effect.

As Amelia Lanning, another senior in Mangahis’ class, puts it, “My kind acts are not just one ripple but a rock skipping on water, radiating good deeds to multiple people who can also create those ripples.

“Secret Kindness Agents have taken my shallow attitude and narrow mind into something much greater. I would go day to day keeping to myself and only thinking about waking up and getting my day over with,” Amelia reflects. “After being a part of the Secret Kindness Agents, I have developed an overall sense of happiness. I enjoy waking up every day in hopes that I will make someone’s day. Noticed or not, my simple kind acts have made me a happier person.” ♦

Ginsberg is an award-winning author, book reviewer, workshop leader and contributor to NPR’s All Things Considered. She lives and writes in San Diego, California.

This story was written in partnership with the anti-hate news project 500 Pens.



Step 1

Write down a list of about 10 to 15 potential positive benefits of Secret Kindness Agents, and make a list of the potential risks.



Step 2

Have students brainstorm anonymous acts of kindness, or jobs, and select Secret Agent names for themselves.



Step 3

Once students select their jobs and verbally commit to honor those jobs, have them perform their acts of kindness every day for a week.



Step 4

At the end of the week, have students write reflections on how their jobs have affected them and those around them.

LITTLE ROCK 60 YEARS LATER

LOOKING BACK AND LOOKING AHEAD AT THE STRUGGLE TO END SEGREGATED EDUCATION



BY HASAN KWAME JEFFRIES

WHEN THE U.S. SUPREME COURT RULED in *Brown v. Board of Education* (1954) that segregated education was unconstitutional, segregationists rallied to maintain separate schools. In Little Rock, Arkansas—and in other communities throughout the South—well-heeled whites established a chapter of the White Citizens' Council to intimidate black parents and pressure white elected officials into blocking desegregation efforts. They succeeded in winning over Arkansas

Governor Orval Faubus, who ignited the Little Rock school desegregation crisis in September 1957 by sending the Arkansas National Guard to the city's flagship white secondary school, Central High School.

"The mission of the State Militia is to maintain or restore order and to protect the lives and property of citizens," insisted Faubus the day before school started. "They will act not as segregationists or integrationists, but as soldiers called to active duty to

carry out their assigned tasks." But the actions of the soldiers, who did nothing to disperse a furious mob of whites, exposed the governor's claims as false, making clear that he had sent them solely to prevent nine black students from registering for classes.

The governor's blatant disregard for the authority of the U.S. Supreme Court compelled President Dwight D. Eisenhower to act. With great reluctance, the president federalized the Arkansas National Guard and sent paratroopers

AP IMAGES; FILE (TROOPERS OUTSIDE SCHOOL); BETTMANN (ELIZABETH ECKFORD); BETTMANN (PROTESTORS); BETTMANN (TWO CHILDREN WATCHING)

from the U.S. Army's 101st Airborne Division to escort the Little Rock Nine to and from school and between classes.

Sixty years later, Central High is nothing like it once was. In fact, it is the exact opposite. Today, it is an exemplar of school integration. The student demographic closely reflects the community's population, and student success belies the myths often used to justify segregation.

But Central High School is unlike most schools across the country, which remain rigidly segregated by race. It is even unlike most schools in the Little Rock School District, which was taken over by the state in 2015 because of problems stemming directly from the persistence of segregation.

The reason for Central High School's success is no mystery. It is the result of several decades of intense grassroots organizing in the face of extreme resistance to school desegregation, resistance that continues to keep schools in Arkansas (and just about everywhere else in the country) largely segregated by race. The history of Central High is, therefore, a blueprint for change, a roadmap pointing the way toward better schools and a more hopeful future.

Historical Resistance to Desegregation

While Eisenhower's bold move ended riotous behavior on the part of white protesters outside Central High School, it did not keep white students from violently harassing the black students attempting to learn inside. It also did nothing to keep white elected officials from continuing to fight school desegregation. In a move as daring as the president's, Governor Faubus—acting under new authority granted to him by the state legislature—closed all of the public schools in Little Rock for the 1958–59 school year, a period that came to be known as the “Lost Year.”

The Arkansas National Guard, under order from Governor Orval Faubus, blocks Minnijean Brown and her fellow students from entering Central High School.

The coalition of black activists, lawyers, businesspeople, parents and students who had led the initial school desegregation charge eventually forced the reopening of Little Rock's public schools. However, segregated education persisted. The city's gradual desegregation plan meant that only seven black students attended Central High School that year. At the same time, increasing numbers of white parents pulled their children out of the public school sys-

tem, sending them instead to one of the growing number of private white academies that had sprung up since the school desegregation crisis began.

prolonged segregated education by placing the burden of desegregation on black families. When given the option, white families never chose to send their children to historically all-black schools. Most continued to balk at desegregation, vehemently opposing any and all efforts, such as busing, designed to diversify student populations. They also continued to leave public schools for the rapidly expanding network of private white schools, such

“DESEGREGATED SCHOOLS PROVIDED ACCESS TO THE BEST AVAILABLE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES, REDUCED RACIAL PREJUDICE AND INCREASED COMFORT WITH DIVERSITY.”

as Heritage Christian School, which, according to its founding pastor, was established “to combat the ‘moral pollution’ in public schools.”

Despite the slow pace of progress, proponents of school desegregation kept fighting for change. They knew that segregated schools created unequal opportunities and perpetuated racial hierarchies. They also understood that desegregated schools provided access to the best available educational

resources, reduced racial prejudice and increased comfort with diversity.

They also understood that desegregated schools provided access to the best available educational



resources, reduced racial prejudice and increased comfort with diversity.

Their determination paid off. In recent years, Little Rock Central's student population has been 58 percent black, 30 percent white, 8 percent Asian and 4 percent Hispanic; the school has also been among Arkansas' best performing in terms of graduation rates and achievement on standardized tests. "This is my school," said black student Malik Marshall a few years back when he was enrolled there. "I love it here."

But things have been far from perfect at Central. "We're desegregated," said Marshall, referring to the fact

than tripled." Indeed, fully one-third of African-American and Latino students now attend such schools. Making matters worse, these schools tend to serve communities with high poverty levels, isolating resource-poor students. Not surprisingly, this kind of racial and economic segregation produces low student performance.

It is no mystery why segregated education has persisted in most places and has gotten worse in others. Above all else, racism and poverty have bedeviled desegregation efforts. A recent report on the state of public education published by the Government

based on race for the past 50 years by maintaining an all-black middle school and high school on the African-American side of town, and a historically white middle school and high school on the white side. The court ordered the immediate consolidation of the schools so that student population ratios would be nearly identical to that of Little Rock's Central High.

Beyond the South

Outside the South, where federal courts have been far less involved, segregated education has proven equally intractable. In fact, major metropolitan areas



that racial divisions were plain to see inside the school. "We're not integrated because integration comes from the heart of the people that go here. ... It's something that you have to want to do," he added.

Desegregation, though, is the necessary starting point for integration, and few schools have made this long, arduous journey as successfully. The question, then, is why is Central High such an anomaly?

Beyond Central High

By almost every measure, segregated education has been spreading and deepening. Researchers at UCLA's Civil Rights Project have found that over the last 25 years, "intensely segregated nonwhite schools with zero to 10 percent white enrollment have more

Accountability Office found, "While much has changed in public education in the decades following this landmark decision and subsequent legislative action, research has shown that some of the most vexing issues affecting children and their access to educational excellence and opportunity today are inextricably linked to race and poverty."

In the South

In the deepest parts of Dixie, in small towns and rural communities, opposition to school desegregation by white elected officials has endured. In Cleveland, Mississippi, a town of 12,000 in the heart of the Mississippi Delta, a federal district court ruled in 2016 that the school board had been intentionally operating a dual education system

like New York City now have the ignominious distinction of setting the standard for school segregation. To a great extent, this reflects patterns of residential housing segregation, arrangements created by racially discriminatory local, state and federal housing, and urban planning policies dating back to the New Deal. Housing and urban planning policies have historically been designed to preserve and promote segregated schools. But the persistence of segregated education outside the South also reflects educational policies—such as New York City's eighth-grade school choice plan—that have concentrated students in intensely segregated schools.

Regardless of region, opposition to integrated schools by white families has not only made it difficult to desegregate schools but also seemingly

AP IMAGES (PARADE OF CARS); GETTY IMAGES/ROLLS PRESS/POPEPROTO (ESCORTED BY SOLDIERS)

impossible to maintain integrated ones. White families continue to leave desegregated public schools for white private schools and relocate to communities, usually in the suburbs, that still have nearly all-white public schools.

“If parents can’t get over race or class, they’re not going to put their kids in our schools,” explained Michael Hinojosa, the superintendent of the Dallas, Texas, school system, which is 93 percent African American and Latino and more than 90 percent low income. And this reality is important: “Every major city in America has to find some way to deal with this issue,”

has already defunded “Open Doors, Expanding Opportunities,” a grant program that provided school districts with up to \$12 million to improve socio-economic diversity within their schools. Republican state legislatures have also proven unfriendly to desegregation efforts by promoting school voucher programs that The Century Foundation has found “serve a disproportionate percentage of white and wealthy students.”

The Way Forward

Although ending school segregation is clearly a complicated goal with

public schools will be neither quick nor easy. “We live in a complex multiracial society with woefully inadequate knowledge and little support for constructive policies geared toward equalizing opportunity, raising achievement and high school completion rates for all groups, and helping students learn how to live and work successfully in a society composed of multiple minorities,” explains Myron Orfield, the director of the Institute for Metropolitan Opportunity.

The fact that there will be resistance and setbacks, both locally and nationally, is a crucial lesson learned from the school desegregation struggle at Little

IN RECENT YEARS, LITTLE ROCK CENTRAL'S STUDENT POPULATION HAS BEEN
**58 PERCENT BLACK, 30 PERCENT WHITE,
8 PERCENT ASIAN AND 4 PERCENT HISPANIC.**



Hinojosa added. “When you have a mix of kids, the affluent kids don’t suffer and the children of intergenerational poverty do better.”

Modern Pushback

Remediating school segregation has become substantially more difficult in recent years. The U.S. Supreme Court is no longer an ally in the struggle to desegregate the nation’s schools, having invalidated voluntary school desegregation plans in Louisville, Kentucky, and Seattle, Washington, in 2007 because the plans considered race in pupil assignments—which is, quite obviously, the simplest and surest way to guarantee racially diverse schools. Neither is the U.S. Department of Education under the Trump Administration, which

many obstacles, it is far from impossible. Parental choice is important, but it must be controlled as it is in Louisville so white people cannot choose their way out of desegregation. And choice must be granted early. Starting in the eighth grade, the policy in New York City, is eight grades too late. Special-emphasis schools should be used to attract college-educated, middle- and upper-income white families back to the public schools, as is being done in Dallas, but not at the expense of African-American, Latino and lower-income students, who gain no benefit if displaced. And socio-economic criteria should figure prominently in pupil-placement formulas, a shift that has proven effective in maintaining racially diverse schools in Charlotte-Mecklenburg, North Carolina.

Fully desegregating the nation’s

Today, Central High School is an exemplar of school integration, but its success is not typical of desegregation efforts in other parts of the United States—or even of other schools in Little Rock.

Rock’s Central High School. But the fight for educational equality that has taken place at Central over the last 60 years also teaches us that school desegregation is possible and, when achieved, benefits everyone. Indeed, Little Rock is an essential reminder of how far the nation has come since nine black students needed members of the 101st Airborne to escort them to school. It is an equally important reminder of how far the nation has to go before all students, regardless of race or income, have equal access to quality education. ♦

Jeffries is an associate professor of history at The Ohio State University.



Listen and reflect on the words of Terrance Roberts, one of the Little Rock Nine.
VISIT » tolerance.org/tool/little-rock-60



EARLY IN THE 2016-17 SCHOOL YEAR, DeMarcus*—a fifth-grader in Montgomery, Alabama—had his first encounter with bullying.

His grandmother, Erma Freeman, knew DeMarcus as a strong-willed kid and initially did not worry much about the incident. She told DeMarcus to either brush it off or to stand up to the bullies.

But within a matter of weeks, Freeman found herself bribing DeMarcus to go to school, scheduling counseling appointments for him and making frequent trips to the school and the central office to try and get help.

The bullying continued. By late November, DeMarcus, who has epilepsy, began having seizures again—his first in three years.

After his 10th seizure in just a few weeks and numerous missed school days, Freeman decided it was better for her grandson to be homeschooled. In all, she estimates DeMarcus missed at least 15 days of classes due to the bullying he experienced.

DeMarcus is not alone. Across the United States, students miss thousands of school days each year due to issues,

such as anxiety, fear and illnesses, directly tied to the bullying they experience. Those absences, compounded with other negative effects of bullying, cost students and teachers precious classroom time and also have a little-realized financial impact on schools.

Bullying Costs Schools

As a June 2017 study out of The University of Texas at Austin illustrates, bullying has potentially huge economic costs to schools. The main finding of the study, which looked at California's public K-12 institutions: Schools may lose more than a quarter-billion dollars annually due to bullying-related absenteeism.

Stephen Russell, chair of human development and family sciences at UT Austin, led the study. Russell is one of the country's foremost experts on bullying and anti-bullying programs. He points out that California, like several other states and the federal government, base funding on per-pupil daily attendance—not enrollment. For this reason, it was fairly straightforward for Russell and his colleagues to calculate the economic costs of students avoiding

school because bullying made them feel unsafe. The grand total: \$276,133,055 in a single school year.

“I know people might say that it's California, so of course the number is large. But I don't know of a school system, even one that large, that can take a \$276 million hit to its budget, especially when the problem can be addressed,” Russell says.

The study also found that more than 45 percent of students who missed school days did so because they felt unsafe due to bias-associated bullying against their race, gender, disability, religion or sexual orientation. That totaled 630,751 days of absences in a school year.

The cause for alarm should not begin or stop at the dollar line; students are avoiding going to school as a direct result of bullying—almost half of which targets their identities. That fact alone should be enough to spur schools and districts to action.

But a discussion of the lost funds does have its place. “What it does is provide a financial incentive for those who might need one,” Russell says. “I see this as evidence and data that can be used by those who are searching for help.”

BULLYING

AND THE BOTTOM LINE

BY JOSH MOON ILLUSTRATION BY RYAN INZANA



Pointing to the Numbers

Pointing to the economic costs of bullying—in tandem with highlighting the psychological, physiological and academic ramifications—can be an effective way to garner high-level attention and spur positive change.

“I think there are a number of financial factors that aren’t usually considered when we discuss bullying,” says Pete Price, director of social and emotional learning for the Austin Independent School District in Texas and a former principal. “Certainly, we know that bullying causes students to miss class time, which affects budgets. But what about parents who are forced to miss work to stay home with the kids or hire some form of day care? The cost of counseling?”

“I think this is a very powerful tool when it comes to state legislatures,” Price adds.

In Alabama, where DeMarcus attends school, the financial ramifications of bullying could be an attention-grabber to motivate the stakeholders who control the purse strings and dictate policy.

As a program coordinator in the Alabama State Department of Education’s Office of Learning Support, Marilyn Lewis is in charge of the state’s anti-bullying programs. The results these programs yield are far from encouraging.

A 2016 WalletHub analysis of data collected from a number of reports and surveys found Alabama to be the eighth-worst state in the country for prevalence of bullying and the fifth-worst state for high school-age suicide attempts in which bullying was a known factor.

“I’d believe that,” says Freeman when informed of those statistics. “The people at the school and the central office

seemed completely overwhelmed by the problem. They had no answer for me.”

Lewis recognizes the statewide issues and knows that, even more than money, she needs motivated and dedicated people to turn the tide. But the urgency doesn’t seem to be catching on. Many administrators who work on anti-bullying efforts will find their experiences mirrored in Lewis’ situation.

“It is my experience over a number of years that money alone doesn’t solve a thing,” Lewis says. “What solves problems is involvement by dedicated people who truly want to fix the issues. I do believe it’s possible that this data could be a tremendous help in that regard.”

The Bottom Line Is More Than a Figure

If a desire to stop the loss of money serves as motivation for lawmakers and school officials to make bullying prevention a priority, it could spur

“I don’t know of a statewide school system that can take a \$276 million hit to its budget, especially when the problem can be addressed.”

the level of involvement necessary to implement more successful anti-bullying programs in more schools.

Bullying interventions play a crucial role in addressing harmful student behaviors and building positive school climates, but the *type* of intervention is a critical factor for success.

Most districts across the country, particularly in low-income and rural areas, either use no anti-bullying program or rely on the free program provided by the U.S. Department of Education. While Lewis says the one-size-fits-all programs are well put together, she admits the limitations of the generic model. “There’s not much variation, and what I’ve found is that our [low-income] and rural schools need very different types of programs because they experience very different issues.”

In his research, Russell has noticed that many of the anti-bullying programs in the country fail to address the *focus* of bullying. Instead of tailoring programs to target the primary root cause—specific biases related to race, religion, sexual orientation and so forth—they treat bullying as one general problem that can be solved through “don’t be naughty” lessons. (See sidebar for more on bias-based bullying.)

That was true in DeMarcus’ case. Most of the bullying in his case was directed toward his weight but the school never specifically addressed that, his grandmother recalls.

“Whatever they did had no impact whatsoever, and I think it’s because they took the attitude most of the time that, ‘Oh, that’s just how boys act sometimes,’” Freeman says. “But when it’s making a child sick and a doctor is telling you that it’s making him sick, you got to do something more.”

Russell hopes the cost-analysis component of his research could bolster support for “something more.” Price agrees, and he believes the data could be particularly useful when districts or schools are arguing to prevent losing counselors, who are usually first on the chopping block during budget cuts. Combining Russell’s data with additional scientific studies that show the effects of bullying on mental and physical health as well as academic performance could make counselors less expendable.

“We already knew from years of scientific research that bullying and the associated fears cause certain chemical reactions in the brain—the release of cortisol—that all but prevent a student from learning,” Price says. “This data shows the financial impact of this problem. I think it’s very likely that it could be used to convince some people that counselors and more comprehensive [anti-bullying] programs are not just helpful but necessary.” ♦

Moon is an award-winning investigative reporter and columnist. He lives and writes in Montgomery, Alabama.

When Schools Miss the Bias in Bullying

According to Stephen Russell, there is scientific evidence that anti-bullying programs are more effective when tailored to the needs of the school. “We know that the more personal the involvement, the more specific the focus, the better the results,” he says.

In Alabama, where public education funding is historically tight, school districts have few options when it comes to selecting materials—videos, training programs, literature and so forth—for anti-bullying efforts. Most available materials offer a generic corrective approach and fail to address the specific root cause of bullying: bias.

Decades of studies and medical research indicate that the majority of bullying today stems from a personal bias and is targeted at one characteristic or factor.

“It could be racial- or gender-based; it could be related to a person’s sexuality,” Russell says. “But it’s focused at something. And the data we have now shows without a doubt that if you tackle the root causes, your programs are far more successful.”

Ideally, bullying programs that address bias are implemented along with curricular and school climate initiatives that carry the same message. Reading diverse texts, seeing people from multiple identity groups on posters and bulletin boards and hearing inclusive values articulated in multiple settings can all contribute to an environment where bullying happens less, upstanding happens more and students feel welcome at school.



WHAT THE NUMBERS DON'T SHOW

BY MATTHEW HOMRICH-KNIELING PHOTOGRAPHY BY MARVIN SHAOUNI

IT'S THE WINTER OF 2017. My seventh-grade ELA students and I just finished a unit on stories of resilience and resistance. We read speeches from César Chávez and Martin Luther King and poems from Junot Díaz, Francisco X. Alarcón and Sherman Alexie. We watched videos about Standing Rock and #BlackLivesMatter. We discussed the power of nonviolent resistance and community-building. And we connected historic struggles with current oppressions. 🍌 My students engaged deeply with the curriculum, openly discussed and listened to each other's ideas, made connections with their own experiences as young people living in southwest Detroit. 🍌 On the last day of our unit, I sat in my school's cafeteria as my students collaboratively hosted our capstone project: a "student speak-out" for their families and the school staff. They shared poems, stories and reflections, all calling out against injustices. 🍌 As I watched my students display profound courage and wisdom through their stories, I kept thinking, "You can't standardize this." Regardless of what the state data says, regardless of their test scores and their English language proficiencies, my students are brilliant and they have something important to say. I sat in the cafeteria, beaming with pride.



This story from my own teaching experience served as a catalyst for me to challenge oversimplified and deficit-narratives of Detroit schools. Yes, in far too many systemic and institutional ways, Detroit schools *are* failing our students. Issues that are common to urban districts—lack of resources, high turnover rates, poor school conditions, etc.—are exacerbated in Detroit because of its history and context. And despite the narrative of the city of Detroit being “reborn,” its schools and its neighborhoods, filled with people who’ve been here for generations, continue to be stripped of resources.

Detroit public schools have, for example, experienced a dramatic decline in student population—from 156,000 public school students in 2002 to 44,000 today. The city’s shrinking numbers are only partially responsible for this decline; school choice policies and the unregulated expansion of charter schools pushed an enormous number of students out of the public district. Detroit schools have also been marred by corruption scandals, and students and staff have suffered from atrocious school conditions, which led to a #SupportDPSTeachers Twitter campaign and district-wide “sick-outs” in

“This narrative does not recognize the hard work our students do every day, and it does not recognize the teachers who have built careers and lives around the success of Detroit students.”

January 2016. (The Detroit Federation of Teachers ultimately filed a lawsuit against the district.)

Even this brief overview of Detroit schools’ recent history demonstrates the extent to which policy and administrative decisions have led to existing inequities and a blatant disregard for children in Detroit. These realities have created a static narrative of our schools as uniformly failing and undermine the actual work that is happening in our classrooms. This narrative does not recognize the hard work our students do every day, and it does not recognize the teachers who have built careers and lives around the success of Detroit students.

As a result of my own frustrations as a teacher in Detroit, I decided to talk with other educators in the city, listen to their stories, and build a more nuanced narrative of Detroit schools. While our schools may be failing, our

classrooms—supportive communities filled with successes, relentless determination and care—are not.

Resisting Racist and Classist Narratives

Brian Diskin has taught social studies in Detroit Public Schools for 25 years. I first met Brian at a Detroit education justice panel series. In a subsequent interview I asked him what he likes about teaching in Detroit.

“The kids,” he says. “The kids are enthusiastic, the kids are challenging, they are funny; they will surprise you at every opportunity; they’re smart, they’re kind, they’re capable.” That pride quickly translated into Brian sharing a string of impressive feats his students have accomplished over the years, from Ivy League acceptance to national choir awards to professional internships. But he also commented that these stories are a “hard sell” in Detroit news.

“For the normal news lineup, you’ve got five or six turmoil or violent stories, you’ve got the political blunder of the day, you’ve got only two square inches for local news, but these sort of stories aren’t often out there,” he says. “But you’ve got all of these things that are thriving in our school, and I suspect many, many more schools throughout the district.”

The tension between these deficit narratives about the city’s students juxtaposed with Brian’s positive experiences of teaching in Detroit is not new. Brian, whose family left Detroit for the suburbs during the white flight of the 1970s, recalls his process of returning to the city as a teacher in the 1990s.

“I remember the look of horror on people’s face when I told them I was leaving the suburbs and I was going to teach in Detroit,” he says. People assumed his teaching career in Detroit would be temporary, a mere stepping stone toward attaining a “real job.” Brian remembers hearing phrases like, “If you can teach there, you can teach anywhere” and “You won’t be teaching; you’ll just be babysitting.”

Twenty-five years later, Detroit teachers still hear this sort of rhetoric. When I was applying to teaching jobs, I regularly heard that I was “brave” and that Detroit “might be a good place to start, until something better comes up.” These sentiments are rooted in racist and classist ideology that says teaching poor black and brown kids isn’t actually teaching; it’s practicing your teaching skills for when you get a job in a white, affluent district.

Brian concluded our conversation with this request.

“Unless you’ve spent some time around DPS kids, you don’t know what they’re like. So try not to label them, because in the future that limits them; at some point they’re going to come up to a hiring manager, and that manager may have in their minds some preconceived notions about Detroit kids. But they will surprise you at every opportunity.”



Matthew Homrich-Knieling

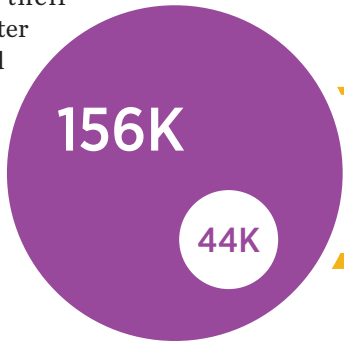
“Unless you’ve spent some time around DPS kids, you don’t know what they’re like. So try not to label them, because in the future that limits them.”

Redefining “Success”

After a 13-year career as an engineer in “corporate America,” Janine Scott decided to pursue her lifelong passion of becoming an educator. She has since taught mathematics at Detroit Public Schools on the city’s eastside for 14 years. I met Janine after I came across a compelling and inspiring video of her created by the Skillman Foundation and ChalkBeat Detroit.

Janine’s unabashed love and care for her students and their humanity was at the center of our conversation and lives at the center of her pedagogy. “When you love them and let them know that you care about their lives and you are truly sincere—they will work for you,” she says.

Despite the successes that teachers like Janine, Brian, and I see in our students every day, our schools are persistently labeled as “low-performing.” As a mathematician, however, Janine understands that standardized test scores don’t always capture applied learning. She shared a story about a former student, who now attends Western Michigan University, enthusiastically contacting her to share that the work in her college-level mathematics



The student population of Detroit public schools declined by 112,000 students between 2002 and 2016.

SOURCE: MI SCHOOL DATA

courses was the same work from “Ms. Scott’s” pre-calculus class.

“Stories like this happen frequently,” Janine added, “And they tell me that I’m teaching them the skills they need to make it.”

Though Detroit teachers are met with unjust challenges, Janine recognizes that, “The kids are never the problem.” And in so many cases in Detroit, the teachers, like Janine, aren’t the problem either.

Transformative Educational Experiences

Recognizing that educational rhetoric dehumanizes Detroit students, I also talked with students about their perspectives, including Dannah Wilson, a 2017 graduate of Detroit schools. Dannah was a member of the 482Forward educational justice youth collective and author of a speech responding to Betsy DeVos’ nomination that went viral. She attended seven different schools throughout her K-12 education. With each decision to change schools, however, Dannah explained that “it was never the teachers.”

In high school, Dannah says her history teacher strayed from the textbook because he recognized its lack of relevance. Instead, he shifted toward a more culturally-sustaining pedagogy, teaching African history and then Detroit history. Similarly, in her English class, they read Michelle Alexander’s *The New Jim Crow* while watching the Netflix documentary *13th*, both about the history and impact of mass incarceration. Reflecting on these experiences, Dannah came to the conclusion that “the education system isn’t failing; it’s doing exactly what it was designed to do. The system is working to fail the students, especially in urban communities, which we know happen to be the most affordable communities for black and brown students and families to live.”

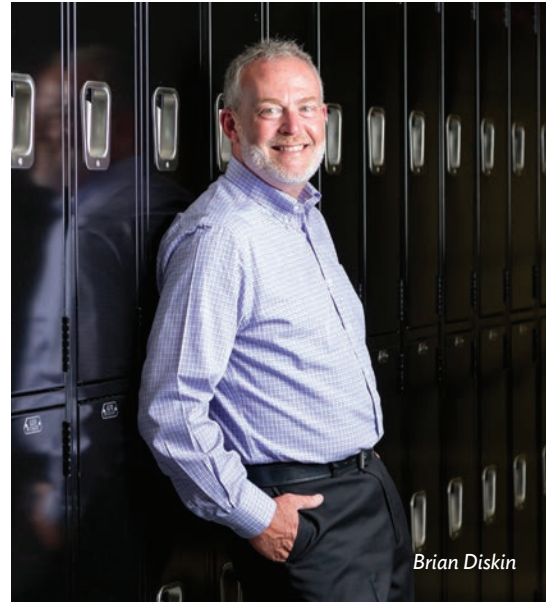
This profound understanding of systemic and institutional racism and



Janine Scott

oppression in our school system demonstrates how the rhetoric around “failing urban schools” not only ignores the work that happens in classrooms each day, but how that narrative is intentionally constructed to uphold power and privilege. Dannah explains how her teachers not only helped her and her peers to see these structures, but taught them to “see ourselves well enough to ask, ‘How do I fit into changing the things I’m passionate about and the things I’ve struggled with to make it better?’” That’s the sort of transformative educational experiences that happen in Detroit but become erased from the general public.

My purpose in sharing these stories is not to distract from the serious and pressing work that we need to be engaging in around educational justice and equity; rather, my purpose is to demand a more nuanced and humanizing narrative around schooling in Detroit and in other urban districts, one that recognizes the value of the students and the teachers in the classroom each day.



Brian Diskin

Detroit teachers and students: Your work is important, your work is valid and I recognize your worth. Let’s continue to use our voices and our classrooms to highlight that work, to highlight our successes and our communities, and to demand justice in our schools. ♦

Homrich-Knieling teaches seventh-grade English language arts in southwest Detroit. The views expressed in this article are his own and do not necessarily reflect the views of his employer.



FIGHTING **FAT** **STIGMA** ***WITH SCIENCE***

“I WILL ALWAYS, without mitigation, and without any ease, utterly hate my external body,” says Maggie O’Leary, a graduate student at Cornell University. “I learned when I was very young that I couldn’t use the entire length of my legs when I walk, for example, because that meant a very audible, noticeable displacement of my weight ... [and] opened my body up to being viewed in ways that were perhaps even more cruel than a general ‘look, fat, look away’ encounter with someone else’s gaze.”

The childhood stigma O’Leary experienced—and the way it shaped her long-term relationship to her body—is not unique. Americans devote a tremendous amount of energy and anxiety to the topic of fatness, real or imagined. We are constantly bombarded with obesity statistics and told how fat we have become. Advertisements show the latest fad diets and champion products promising to make us thinner, more fit, healthier and—theoretically—happier.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) defines obesity as “having excess body fat,” as determined by body mass index (BMI). The American Medical Association officially classified obesity as a disease in the midst of a decades-long public-health scare about the state of body size and its relationship to health, often dubbed the “obesity epidemic.” Few aspects of this supposed epidemic seem to stir the public as much as the dreaded childhood obesity. According to the CDC, the proportion of school-age children with obesity has more than tripled since the 1970s and hovers at around 20 percent today. The organization names obesity as one of the 10 most important public-health concerns facing the country.

However, mounting evidence suggests that the connection between body size and health is not as clear as many people assume. Moreover, our collective obsession with that connection—and the stigma associated with it—may spawn an entirely separate set of problems.

BY ROBERT L. REECE ★ ILLUSTRATION BY MICHAEL DRIVER

Children and schools are not immune to these problems. Children may suffer, as O’Leary did, the negative effects of fat stigma long after their tenure as K-12 students has ended.

Fat Stigma in Schools

A spate of recent research shows that obese children and adolescents suffer from lower self-esteem, self-worth, wages and quality of life than their thinner counterparts.

But obesity itself isn’t the mitigating variable; fat stigma is.

Fat stigma is driven by a society that conflates size and health and uses size to define individual self-control and worth. Ashanté Reese, an assistant professor of anthropology at Spelman College, says that obesity often reads as a “visible marker of failure,” even for children—a “failure” that many people extend to parents as well.

Fat stigma is also an institutional phenomenon that can lead well-intentioned educators to engage in ineffective, even dangerous practices. It influences how teachers and administrators attempt to govern fat children with policy. For example, in 2004, Arkansas implemented a statewide program in which every student’s report card would include a BMI indicator and a rating of whether the child was “normal,” “at-risk” or “overweight”—essentially a fat report card—with encouragement that families of overweight children seek medical assistance on their behalf.

Ultimately, the program failed. “It didn’t help [the children] lose weight. It didn’t make them healthier,” Reese notes. “And then it also increases stigma, but not only just stigma for the children ... [but also] stigma for the parents, and then even more explicit stigma for single-parent households.”

In some cases, educators’ biases against fat students also affect how



WHY “FAT”? The word fat has a long history of negative connotations. We choose to use it in allyship with fat-positive activists and others who seek to remove the stigma associated with large body types.

schools respond to anti-fat bullying by students’ peers. James*, now an adult working as an engineer, was bullied because of his weight as a child, but he does not harbor resentments against his former peers. Instead, he laments how the school system responded to his victimization. “The problem is when the administration absolutely refuses to do anything about it and instead penalizes and further ostracizes the person on the receiving end of the abuse,” he reflects. “I feel like that’s where the majority of the damage came from in that situation.”

The bullying was so intense that James worked to graduate from high school early and escape his isolation. Not only did his educators *not* address the bullying, they also silenced him.

“[They] just wanted the problem to go away so they just threw me in detention,” James says. The prevailing message he got as a result? “Oh, he’s in detention.

Maybe he won’t speak up next time, and I won’t have to deal with this as a result.”

The Long-term Effects of Fat Stigma

Enduring weight-related bullying as a child isn’t just a childhood issue; it can lead to internalized stigma and destructive behaviors much later in life. A 2017 study co-authored by Rebecca Puhl of the Rudd Center for Food Policy and Obesity shows that weight teasing and bullying in adolescence may not only lead to higher BMIs 15 years later but also to such dangerous behaviors as extreme dieting and induced vomiting.

The story of New York native Jewel Brooks speaks directly to this phenomenon. Bullied for her weight as a child, Brooks began using diet pills as an adult to manage her perception of her own weight. She says that the appearance of health and maintaining her weight have become more important than actual healthy behaviors. “It’s like it’s a phantom of health. If I eat these Zantrex pills, Lipozene and all these types of things before I eat everything, then I can still eat like a fat kid, like when I was 10, but then I don’t have the consequences of it anymore,” she explains. “It’s the performance of health. It’s not actually healthy.”

Maggie O’Leary still struggles with her self-perception as a result of the stigma she’s experienced throughout her life. “I hate the way [my body] looks,” she says. “I hate the way it hates airplanes. I hate the way it refuses placement. I hate the way it fills and distends clothing. I hate it because I have been told so often and so loudly that I simply must hate it.”

From destructive behaviors to low self-esteem to discrimination, the known negative effects of fat stigma should cause significant concern and

calls for intervention. Schools are critical sites in the movement to reduce fat stigma because these issues so often begin with stigma experienced in childhood.

More often, though, the focus remains on fatness itself.

Reducing Fat Stigma

Reducing fat stigma in schools requires a multipronged approach that functions at the interpersonal, school policy and societal levels.

First, educators must speak carefully about body size and fatness. It is especially important to avoid the idea that it is students' responsibility to lose weight to help reduce the stigma they experience. Studies show that weight loss does not necessarily lead to better self-esteem among students. Furthermore, suggesting to students that weight loss will end their torment unfairly blames them for the harm that other people inflict on them. It's also critical to note that students may

overhear educators speaking negatively about their own bodies and internalize those negative messages.

Second, schools must change policies that unfairly target fat students—even indirectly. One example is dress codes. Brooks recalls being told by adults that her clothes were “inappropriate” when she was as young as 9 years old.

“My shorts were inappropriate because I had too much thigh out; they're too high,” she says. “They don't come to the knee—maybe it's about mid-thigh—but because my thighs are bigger, it's being seen as being fat.” Similarly, school dress codes that point to fit, length and tightness disproportionately target certain students, particularly girls and fat students.

Third, while schools still hold a responsibility to teach students healthy habits, they must decouple discussions of health from discussions of weight. They can do this by incorporating Health at Every Size principles, which, according to the Association for Size Diversity and

Health, were based on guidance from health care workers who “reject both the use of weight, size, or BMI as proxies for health, and the myth that weight is a choice.” This approach is compatible with multiple models of health, which Ashanté Reese calls on schools to adopt. “[We] are so focused on physical health that we disconnect it from mental and spiritual and other forms of health and wellness,” she points out.

Finally, it is important for students to see people of all sizes engaging in a variety of activities without stigma and without being pigeonholed into certain social roles based on weight. Given the negative health and social effects of anti-fat attitudes, internalized and otherwise, positive depictions of people of all sizes may go a long way toward improving the overall health of fat people—and toward reducing our collective misplaced obsession with weight. ♦

Reece is an assistant professor of sociology at the University of Texas at Austin.

“But It's Unhealthy!”

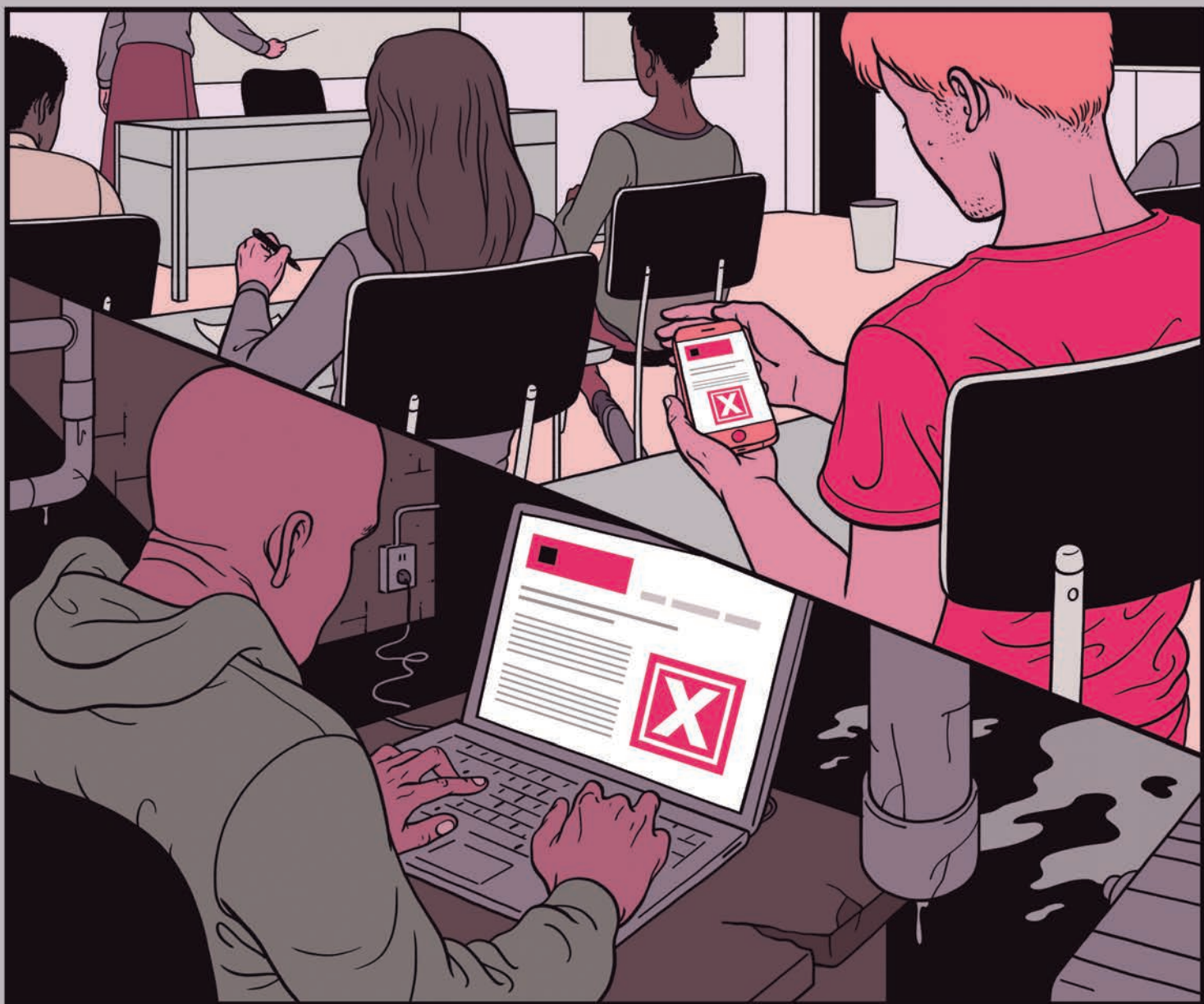
Despite how common it is to connect fatness with negative health outcomes, the evidence of that connection is, at best, mixed. Some studies even suggest that overweight people live longer, healthier lives, especially the elderly. In a 2015 paper, Braiden Hellec, a doctoral pharmacy student, and his colleagues at the University of Alberta in Edmonton reported little increase in the risk of mortality for people living at most body sizes. The only increases they found were at the far extremes, in people who were either severely underweight or severely overweight.

According to Daniel Goldberg, an associate professor in the Center for Bioethics and Humanities at the University of Colorado Anschutz Medical Campus, “There are probably more important factors for improving population health and compressing health inequalities than looking at the size of people's bodies and trying to decrease them,” he says. “Of course there are extremes of any body size, which are bad for people, but that's not what we're talking about when we expand the goalposts of BMI and all of a sudden everybody's huge and fat and death is stalking everybody.”

The legitimacy of an obesity epidemic has been challenged by scholars across the fields of medicine, law and sociology, most famously by Paul Campos in his 2004 book *The Obesity Myth*. But the *perception* of an obesity epidemic is enough to create a widespread atmosphere of stigma for fat people, and a growing number of studies suggest that stigma may be responsible for more negative health outcomes than body size itself.

A 2014 study led by Janet Latner of the University of Hawaii at Manoa shows that BMI was correlated with negative physical health-related quality of life only for women with high-internalized weight bias. A 2013 study led by Matthew Pantell of the University of California, San Francisco, compared the effect of social isolation to the more traditional risk factors of smoking, obesity, high blood pressure and high cholesterol. The study found the mortality risk of social isolation was rivaled only by the risk of smoking.

Finally, a 2015 study co-authored by Angelina R. Sutin of Florida State University College of Medicine suggests that weight discrimination is associated with poor health outcomes and increased mortality risk.



WHITE NATIONALISM HAS COME OUT OF THE BASEMENT AND ENTERED THE MAINSTREAM. WOULD YOU RECOGNIZE IT IF IT CAME TO YOUR CLASSROOM?

WHAT IS THE “ALT-RIGHT”?

BY CORY COLLINS X ILLUSTRATION BY KYLE WEBSTER

“IT HAS SWALLOWED up most of the guys in the senior class at my school. Every discussion devolves into things like which girls are ‘feminazis,’ celebrities dating outside their ethnicity being ‘white genocide,’ and so on... I’m genuinely scared that it’s going to spread to the point where I won’t have anyone I can talk to like a normal human being.”

These words were written by a teenager to *The American Conservative* magazine. The “it” he says has overtaken his classmates: the so-called “alt-right”—a loosely-affiliated group whose teen-friendly messaging inspired the spread of fascist ideals among his friends. The group espouses beliefs so far outside the mainstream that their popularity is causing widespread anxiety and alarm, even to people who, like the young man who wrote the email, embrace their right-wing identities.

For educators, a more imminent concern comes with the alt-right’s rise: They’re recruiting.

Decoding the Alt-Right

For the misunderstood, the misanthrope or for a person who simply feels amiss, an “alternative” represents one of three things: a new path, a new plan of action or a new reality.

For **Richard Spencer**—who is quickly becoming the most visible white nationalist in the United States—“alternative” represented a chance to rebrand.

Spencer is often credited for coining the term “alternative right” in 2008. Its

meaning is vague, used as an umbrella term encompassing right-wing ideals at odds with establishment conservatism and multicultural society.

Keegan Hankes is an intelligence analyst at the Southern Poverty Law Center who studies the alt-right. “The animating grievance of the alt-right is the same thing as white nationalism,” Hankes says. “Concern over white identity, belief that Western civilization is crumbling, that liberal democracy has failed, and that a symptom of this failure is multiculturalism.”

Today, an online community comprised of entertainment-seeking trolls and true white nationalists find themselves mingling within this amorphous movement. This makes it difficult to land on a singular comprehensive definition of the alt-right. The term refers to an ideological island that hosts (all at once) a joke shop, a meme factory, media influencers, a Neverland for lost boys who feel disempowered or a dangerous sociopolitical movement—depending on whom you ask.

Both contradiction and connection define the different factions of the

alt-right. On one side is what Data & Society, a research institute focused on the intersection of technology and behavior, calls an “aggressive trolling culture”—individuals who use inside jokes and hate speech to inspire anger. On the other side are new media personalities and social media influencers who are spreading racist, anti-multiculturalist, anti-feminist propaganda. These sides unite behind a nostalgia for a past in which diversity wasn’t openly embraced. They also share a disdain for what they perceive to be obstacles keeping them from “traditional” white masculine entitlements: racial and sexual dominance and economic power.

It wasn’t always this way. Dale Beran, a comic book writer who has taught at both the middle school and college levels, has closely followed online forums like **4chan** and others that gave birth to many alt-right leaders, tactics and messaging. Beran says he has seen a fundamental shift in the ideas expressed in those forums over time.

“They kind of started out as trolls, and people who were making fun of the fact that they didn’t get out of their mom’s basement or their life was not working out, or that they kind of identified as losers,” Beran explains. “That slowly kind of transformed into a political platform of taking your

powerlessness and feeling empowered by it using far-right ideology. Over time, the irony kind of melts away.”

What remains is messaging that teachers would be remiss to interpret as harmless jokes or outlier opinions. When these rhetorical exchanges make their way out of online communities and into classrooms, they threaten safe learning environments in schools, particularly for students who belong to identity groups viewed as problematic or inferior by members of the alt-right.

Of equal concern is the fact that students susceptible to alt-right messaging can easily fall down a wormhole of online radicalization.

“I think you need to get them while they are young,” Spencer has said.

That is exactly what the alt-right is banking on.

How the Alt-Right Appeals to Young People

“The thing that the alt-right does better than white nationalism has done, in the years that I’ve been tracking it, is it gets young people involved,” Hanks says.

With its origins in online culture, the alt-right speaks the language of millennials and younger generations. Information (and disinformation) is distilled into easy-to-digest videos, memes and sound bites, often imbued with a snarky, “nobody-understands-me” tone.

It is, by design, an affiliation that appeals to young people. Speaking at a conference in Washington, D.C., Spencer once said of the alt-right: “It’s edgy and dangerous, it’s cool and hip. It’s that thing our parents don’t want us to do.”

Spencer and others have made it a priority to target young, impressionable minds. He, **Milo Yiannopoulos** and other figures tied to the alt-right speak on college campuses. The Pettibone sisters have started a young-adult book series. **Daily Stormer** founder **Andrew Anglin** made headlines with a publicity stunt in which he claimed to recruit kids through Pokémon Go.

But this outreach is barely necessary. Alt-right outlets reach young people through their phones. Unlike the far-right leaders of yesteryear, alt-right leaders are tech-savvy and skew young, giving them an air of relatability few politicians or activists can match.

“Social media can be very powerful in shaping outlooks, but it doesn’t operate in a vacuum,” explains Data & Society researcher Becca Lewis. “The shaping is coming from the other people using the platforms.”

The alt-right has a massive presence on social media and other channels where young people congregate. A *Washington Post* analysis identified 27,000 influential Twitter accounts associated with the alt-right, 13 percent of which are considered radical. Later, a George Washington University study found that white nationalist accounts in the United States have seen their follower counts grow by 600 percent since 2012.

According to a Data & Society report, young people tend to find their news via social media, prefer user-generated content (e.g., videos) and distrust traditional outlets. At the same

time, young people seek emotional connections to sources and, thanks to confirmation bias and online algorithms, fall into echo chambers where their views are rarely challenged.

“That’s kind of the problem with ... the intensive tailoring of [online] information,” explains Dr. James Hawdon, director for the Center for Peace Studies and Violence Prevention at Virginia Tech. “You just get led into this rabbit hole of increasingly extreme ideas.”

For young people, the race to construct their online echo chambers may also be the race to construct their belief systems.

“If you catch an impressionable young person at the right time, that could easily be your **red pill**, as [the alt-right] would call it,” Hanks said.

And their messages are already echoing in high school hallways.

The young man who wrote to *The American Conservative* in February expressed his concern over alt-right ideas spreading rapidly among his once-conservative, Christian school peers, whom he called angry and aimless.

“It’s absolutely nuts, but what am I going to do?” he wrote. “[M]aybe that’s

KEY NAMES AND TERMS



RICHARD SPENCER: Coined the term “alt-right” and founded *AlternativeRight.com*. The white nationalist is the alt-right’s most visible figure and is the head of the National Policy Institute.



4CHAN: An imageboard founded by 15-year-old Christopher Poole in 2003. The board, which features mostly anonymous users and little content regulation, gave birth to many of the internet’s most-used memes. Its politics board, /pol/, served as an origin point for many alt-right trolls and tactics.



8CHAN: Like 4chan, but even less regulated, the /pol/ board is an epicenter of far-right organizing, be it serious or “for the lulz,” and features many of the alt-right’s most distasteful memes and messages.



“BASICALLY, ANYONE CAN BE RADICALIZED.”

just the norm for kids my age now, and I’m going to just have to be paranoid that everyone that I meet is secretly a white nationalist.”

Hawdon is in the midst of a study of online radicalization in the United States. The alt-right represents the most “far-reaching” group, he says, and the message resonates primarily with young men.

“A consistent message in the alt-right movement is that working-class white males are being shut out and the government is looking out for all these other groups and the world is being taken away from us,” Hawdon says. “Especially if you spent a lot of time online, you could become convinced that everyone in the world is being handed [opportunities] except for you.”

How often do these ideas reach young people? Hawdon’s research found that nearly two-thirds of respondents ages 15 to 35 had seen extremist messages within the past three months.

What draws them in? According to Lewis, teenage angst and the alt-right’s “specific tactics online for



MILO YIANNOPOULOS: Former Breitbart writer who made a name for himself by reporting on factions of the alt-right. His primer on the movement helped push the alt-right into mainstream discourse.



THE DAILY STORMER: Neo-Nazi website named after Nazi propaganda sheet *Der Stürmer*, featuring a “Stormer Troll Army” community behind several harassment campaigns. The site mixes memes and anti-Semitic and racist rhetoric into a news-website format.

ANDREW ANGLIN: Founder of The Daily Stormer and former 4chan troll who has spearheaded several campaigns of disinformation and harassment.



REDPILLED: First appropriated from *The Matrix*, then from the “manosphere” of 4chan culture, redpilled refers to protagonist Neo’s choice to take the red pill (as opposed to the blue pill) in order to see the truth about society. For the alt-right, it means espousing their viewpoints and seeing through the lies purportedly spread by feminists, mainstream media and multiculturalists.

radicalizing young men” create an appealing combination.

“Teenagers often go through phases of rebellion as they shape their identities,” says Lewis. “4chan and 8chan can be really appealing places to experiment with shocking and subversive ideas.”

Those ideas, when diluted (or cloaked in humor) draw in a broad audience and open a door for young people who may not engage with extreme ideas otherwise.

Which Students Are Susceptible?

While Hawdon cautions that “basically, anyone can be radicalized,” a typical profile does emerge for students susceptible to alt-right messaging: young, white, male and—in some way—feeling powerless.

Dale Beran saw a pattern of young men who felt humiliated by traditional standards, whether because they were underemployed or deemed undesirable by women. Alice Marwick and Becca Lewis of Data & Society also noted a common disdain for “political correctness” and, often, social isolation in schools or communities.

By its very nature, online radicalization happens outside of the classroom. But Hawdon says teachers have a unique opportunity to stop radicalization in its tracks.

“The thing about radicalization is it tends to be progressive,” he says. “[Those being radicalized] go through several phases.”

Teachers who see students’ creative or personal writing have the ability to recognize the rhetoric, Hawdon says. If far-right rhetoric (e.g., anti-Semitic sentiments, xenophobia, racist pseudo-science, etc.) finds its way into a story, make a note of it, he says.

Alt-right rhetoric often cloaks its meaning behind pop-culture references and inside jokes. But if teachers learn to recognize these red flags, they can recognize students who are at risk—and step in.

“If it starts happening again and these stories become increasingly extreme and increasingly violent, that’s a kid who’s on the path,” Hawdon says. “If people can intervene early enough, then they can be diverted from that path.”

Combating the Alt-Right In Class

Diversion can begin in the classroom, perhaps before students are even exposed to alt-right messaging. The first key, according to experts: Do *not* normalize the alt-right.

“If I was a teacher, I would really just hit home that, again, where there’s smoke, there’s fire,” Hanks says. “If the leaders are stated white nationalists, it feels like white nationalism, they’re arguing for an ethno-state, then it is white nationalism.”

Many teachers worry about accusation of partisanship. But experts are clear that being affiliated with the alt-right is in no way the equivalent of being right-of-center, nor is there any need to obscure or soften the alt-right’s messages with euphemisms.

Instead, teachers can undercut propaganda by teaching about the struggles faced by the marginalized groups the alt-right often targets.

“I would just do everything in my power to humanize the would-be victims,” Hanks says. “It needs to be clear there’s only one road to an ethno-state, and that’s by some sort of, most likely, violent program to reverse diversity.”

The Atlantic recently profiled teachers Kathryn Leslie and Malcolm Cawthorne, who used Richard Spencer’s own words as a vehicle to discuss extremist thoughts and how they might manifest. The open dialogue allowed students to discuss why someone might be swept up in alt-right messaging.

Beyond political and historical literacy, however, lies a skill set that could offer students the tools to avoid online radicalization on their own: digital

literacy. Fostering digital literacy could, for example, help students understand how the alt-right takes advantage of a 24-hour thirst for headlines and garners mainstream media coverage for memes, conspiracy theories and misinformation campaigns. It could also inform students of how online and media climates can be so influential in shaping consumers’ worldviews.

“It’s obviously incumbent upon the education system to teach kids how to use computers and the web,” Hawdon says. “Educators need to be aware of this and need to warn their students about it and to encourage the use of the virtual world, the navigation of the virtual world, in such a way that students are at least aware of what’s happening.”

Students left to differentiate between the rational and the radical on their own remain vulnerable to the tactics of the alt-right, as do students who could experience harassment or worse as a result of the movement’s success. On both edges of the political spectrum, online radicalization has led to acts of violence. The war against “political correctness,” fed in part by the alt-right, has led to unsafe and uncivil climates in schools and communities. And, as the August 12, 2017, “Unite the Right” rally in Charlottesville, Virginia, brought into stark relief, white-nationalist actors are presenting more public and more emboldened threats than they have in decades.

In that letter to *The American Conservative*, the student lamented, “I don’t know that any adults would take me seriously if I told them this was a problem.”

But what if they did? ♦

Collins is a staff writer for Teaching Tolerance. Senior Editor Monita K. Bell contributed research to this story.

LEARN MORE

Join our interactive webinar on the alt-right. Mark your calendar for September 19!
tolerance.org/pd/webinars





allowing in the light

*open windows into new worlds—one
book and one slice of pizza at a time*

BY **CHELSEA TORNETTO**

ILLUSTRATION BY **PING ZHU**

Like so many other educators, I became a teacher because I wanted to make the world a better place—to remove blind hatred and build up understanding. But, over the years, I have grown increasingly frustrated by the sometimes-blatant racism and lack of compassion I hear from both my students and the United States’ increasingly polarized political arena. Picture this scene, a version of which played out again and again in my classroom.

It is February. My seventh-graders and I are starting a unit on the Middle East.

“One of the big topics we’re going to cover is the religion of Islam,” I say, bracing myself.

“Terrorists!” snickers one student. The other students join her.

“Well, it’s interesting you should say that,” I say. “Because even though we hear a lot on the news about terrorist attacks that are carried out by Muslims, in reality, very, very few Muslims are terrorists.”

“Just most of them,” another student chimes in. Another smattering of chuckles and sounds of agreement ripple through the room.

“And one of the things we’re going to talk about in this unit is the real beliefs of the religion of Islam and how important it is to the culture of the Middle East.”

“Bomb ‘em!” another student half-coughs, half-shouts, grinning at his friends. The class erupts in laughter.

In my classroom in rural Missouri, moments like this are all too common. I wish I could say things have improved

over the course of the 11 years I’ve been teaching. With our current political climate and the increasingly brazen rhetoric we hear coming from our political leaders and the media, it seems, instead, to be getting worse.

Sometimes I find myself thinking, “Can I really make a difference against all this?”

I can’t fault the students. At just 12 and 13 years old, they simply repeat beliefs and behaviors they see and hear in the media, online and at home—beliefs considered widely acceptable throughout their own community. If I reprimanded them or lectured them on stereotyping, they wouldn’t take it seriously, nor would they gain from it. At best, they would become defensive. At worst, they would feel like they could no longer share their thoughts in my classroom.

No matter how engaging the lesson plan or how lively the discussion, there will always be a level of personal experience missing from what I teach. My students will most likely never face the

choice of either watching their family starve or leaving them to look for work in a foreign country. I suspect many of them have never met a non-Christian, let alone watched as their family is persecuted because of their faith. Many of them will fill their carts at Wal-Mart with little to no awareness of the day-to-day struggles of the Chinese factory workers who made it possible for them to do so. And I can’t give them those experiences.

Or can I?

A story is often the most effective way to create personal connections between very different people. Reading a novel allows us to see the world through someone else’s eyes, remove the context we are used to and replace it with something new. We are more prepared to accept things beyond our own experiences because we know we are reading a “story,” and yet we also actively search for similarities between our own lives and the lives of the characters. A novel can begin to open students’ minds and shape their hearts, without doing battle against their sense of self.

However, like most teachers, I simply didn’t have enough money or time to incorporate a young adult novel into every unit in my regular curriculum. So, I resolved to start on a smaller scale.

The summer I resolved to try to help expose my students to more stories, I spent weeks reading books that sounded like they might match my curriculum. Our school librarian borrowed extra copies of these titles from neighboring libraries; I posted a flyer outside my door advertising a voluntary book club. Students would read the first book for that month and attend a meeting where we discussed the book while we ate pizza. That was it. Just good, old-fashioned, food-based bribery and a good book.

To my surprise, six students signed up. I paid for the pizza myself and let students lead the discussion.

It was incredible. The first book I chose was *Crossing the Wire* by Will Hobbs, which tells the story of a young



A novel can begin to open students' minds and shape their hearts, without doing battle against their sense of self.

boy who must cross the U.S.-Mexico border to earn money for his family's survival. The questions my students asked were genuine, and their comments gave me valuable insight into their concerns and misconceptions.

Are the workers at the local Mexican restaurant illegal immigrants?

Why don't we want them to come here? I didn't know how bad it was for them in Mexico.

Why doesn't their government help them more?

Why do people hire them if they know they are illegal?

A colleague and I fielded questions and guided conversation. We pulled up maps and photos on the internet and encouraged the students to keep talking. We were *very* careful not to take a stance for or against immigration. We played devil's advocate back and forth, making

sure all sides of the argument were heard and challenging bias when it arose.

Suddenly, the issue took on a human face. A topic the students had once viewed as black and white started to take on shades of gray. And, most important, an entire group of people whom they had previously referred to as "those Mexicans" became real people not so different from them.

Before we knew it, the bell was ringing and lunch was over. And all six students were asking me when they could do this again.

The next time, even more students attended, and we've been growing and improving ever since. We now meet once a month for seven months during the school year. Each novel directly correlates to the unit we are covering in class and brings the human element into vivid focus for the students. We meet during

lunch and recess and still provide free pizza—now paid for by a local sponsor. One of my students pointed out, "At first, when I started, I did it for the food, but then as I read the books, I really enjoyed the books and what they taught me!"

Structure at our meetings is minimal. Students come in and grab a slice of pizza and a seat by their friends, and we start talking. And best of all, as one of my students recently commented, "I really enjoy talking, but this book club has helped me more *to listen.*"

The students who attend not only listen; they also take what they've learned back into the classroom with them, share it with their classmates and bring it up during class discussions. It helps them understand the content, and it changes the tone of the classroom. Fewer snide comments. More pauses for thought.

They take it home, too. I've had parents come to conferences and say, "I learned a lot from that book they were reading. It was really ... interesting."

I'm not saying I've solved the problems of racism or sexism or religious conflict with a few good books. But I do believe we're making a difference. My students have started to see that behind every topic the pundits shout about on the radio are real human beings—parents, students, children—just like them. I hope they are starting to realize that an impulsive "Bomb 'em!" shouted out in class has very real consequences, especially when that sentiment pervades an entire culture. At the very least, maybe they will think twice before they laugh about it.

As author Vera Nazarian once said, "Whenever you read a good book, somewhere in the world a door opens to allow in more light." I think book clubs do just that. Ultimately, I hope I have opened up a door to the world beyond rural Missouri for my students and allowed them to see that world in a different, brighter light. ♦

Tornetto teaches middle school world geography in Missouri.







Nothing about us without us is for us.

MEET HAZEL EDWARDS, a passionate advocate and youth leader for Philadelphia's trans community. At just 18 years old, she co-authored a policy for the School District of Philadelphia that established protections for transgender and gender-nonconforming students. Now 20, she serves as an educator and outreach specialist with the Attic Youth Center, the only independent LGBTQ youth center in Philadelphia.

INTERVIEW CONDUCTED BY MAYA LINDBERG
PHOTOGRAPHY BY KARSTEN MORAN

Edwards is currently focused on getting her GED and starting her undergraduate studies and eventually plans to pursue a career in social work and art therapy for trans youth. She spoke with Teaching Tolerance about her school experiences, her activism and how educators can be the advocates trans students need.

How did you become an advocate and youth leader for Philadelphia's trans community?

I started doing my activism work when I was pushed out of my single-sex school in Philadelphia. My principal wanted to have a conversation about my absences and tardies, and I realized in the middle of the conversation that I was not able to explain myself without telling him that I'm trans and that not feeling comfortable at this school was a result.

He had no idea what I was talking about when I was trying to explain my gender identity to him, so he brought in the guidance counselor. The guidance counselor was telling me that I couldn't get my hair done, my nails done or wear makeup, even though none of these things were against the rules. I just wanted to be able to express my gender, but I had no problem with the uniform.

[M]y guidance counselor said, "You are a boy," and at that moment, I felt like she was using her own internal bias to dictate the ways that she did her job. I felt invalidated. I felt like there's no point [in] finishing this conversation, so that's why I packed up my stuff and never went back to that school as a student.

Then I found an internship on social media at the Attic Youth Center called the Justice League. It's an internship for LGBTQ youth of color to talk about their experiences in systems of oppression and also educate youth and adults on different intersecting systems of oppression.

That's what made me a youth leader in the trans community.

Over time, within doing the work at the Attic, my old school actually requested a sensitivity training. I was one of the co-facilitators doing the gender

and sexuality training for 86 of my old faculty members. After the workshop, my old principal came up to me and said, "The student is now the teacher," with tears in his eyes. That was also one of the most empowering moments for me, where I knew I had a gift of being able to share my story and to inspire folks.

I read the following quote by you: "Nothing about us, without us, is for us." What meaning does it hold for you?

If youth, and specifically trans youth, are not given seats at the table to be able to bring their perspectives and their experiences and the ways that they could be best supported, then the policy or the legislation or whatever the rule is will not adequately support [them].

Cisgender folks don't know all of the necessary needs of trans folks. "Cisgender," C-I-S, meaning "same" in Latin, means your gender identity and assigned sex align. And predominantly cis and straight folks are the ones making the policies and making the legislation about trans people and about LGB people.

The resources and the best practices when working with trans youth are different from working with LGB youth, and that's important to recognize as well. Trans is a gender identity that is thrown into an acronym full of sexual identities that often gets conflated, which is why service providers aren't always adequately equipped with best practices when working with trans folks.

You co-authored the School District of Philadelphia's Policy 252 that put in protections for transgender and gender-nonconforming youth. How did this policy come about?

A University of Pennsylvania professor wanted to get protections for her trans daughter, so she came to the Attic Youth Center. I shared my experience, as [did] three other young folks

at the Attic. All of us sat in a meeting with some folks from the Philadelphia school district and with the parent. The school district heard our stories and said that something needs to be done but that's a thing that we've always heard and nothing ever came out of it.

So the parent, the professor at Penn, came to Justice League meetings and we looked at model policies. A lot of the model policies out there don't talk about gender-nonconforming identities or nonbinary identities, or give many protections to those trans folks.

One of the things that we saw was a lot of language of "consistent and persistent." "If this young person is coming in consistently and persistently in the expression of their gender that aligns with their gender identity, then that young person's gender identity will then be confirmed." I never felt comfortable even walking through my

neighborhood or going other places consistently and persistently in my gender identity as I am now.

Also, for many young folks at the Attic Youth Center, they come in with one set of clothes, usually a school uniform, and then change their clothes

for about one to two hours that they're going to be at the Attic and then change back into their clothes that they came in with to leave. Maybe because that young person may not have accepting family. Maybe that young person doesn't feel safe in their neighborhood.

After me and a few other folks crafted the policy, the professor sent it out to the district and it almost immediately was unanimously passed. I saw it on the news one day when I was walking home, and I was extremely happy and ecstatic. If a young person comes out to you, [under] this policy the administration has to support them. The administration has to honor their identity and their pronouns and their names, which is very powerful. I wish it



was a policy that I could use for myself when I was in school.

And the only thing that the Philadelphia school district added is that every staff member has to be trained on gender identity. That's what brought me into helping with training for thousands of faculty members in the Philadelphia school district. I, [along with about 20 other trainers], did the training specifically on gender identity, gender expression and assigned sex.

How can educators create trans-inclusive classrooms and schools?

Throw some trans history in there. Throw some queer history into your classes—in positive ways. In history class, you could talk a little bit about Stonewall while talking about civil rights movements. You could also name that Stonewall was started by Marsha P. Johnson, a black trans woman who threw a shot glass and a brick that initiated the Stonewall Riots, which is the reason why we have gay pride.

If LGBTQ youth don't see themselves represented in the curriculum that they're being given, they could totally zone out of it and disengage from education altogether.

[Celebrate] Day of Silence for those youth who don't have voices or that are not confident or comfortable enough with having their voice out there.

Intervene, step in if [you] hear homophobic or transphobic comments with adequate disciplinary action, instead of just throwing it under the rug, which is what I hear from a lot of interviewees when I interview trans youth for the School of Social Policy and Practice at the University of Pennsylvania. That is one of the main things that I see: lack of advocacy from cisgender allies for the trans community.

Is there anything you would like to add that we haven't talked about?

When I came out as trans and I was pushed out of my school, shortly after, I was pushed out of my home as well. Me and my mom had a lot of issues and conflicts, and within those issues and



conflicts, she would bring up my gender and say transphobic remarks to me that I wasn't accepting lightly.

That ultimately resulted in me not feeling safe or comfortable in the household anymore, so I was basically given invitations to leave and I took it. I've experienced time being street homeless, couch surfing and sometimes my mom would let me come in and then something would happen and I would leave again. Probably for about a year or so, I would say I was bouncing back and forth. I would identify myself as being homeless because I was unstably housed and supporting myself.

But because of the work and the advocacy I'm doing, I'm now able to financially support myself, which is a blessing. I wouldn't have known that half of Philadelphia would know who I am in the LGBTQ community. I didn't know that I would win a National Youth Leadership award from [the National LGBTQ Task Force]. All of these things just kind of happened, and all I was doing was the work that I'm passionate about. ♦

► INTERSECTIONALITY ◀

Hazel Edwards identifies intersectionality as a crucial element of her advocacy work with transgender youth. For a primer on intersectionality, read "Teaching at the Intersections."

t-t.site/TeachingIntersections

Lindberg is a former writer and associate editor with Teaching Tolerance.

WHAT TO DO IF YOUR SCHOOL COMES **UNDER ATTACK**

TEACHING FROM THE **BULLS-EYE**

A CHICAGO DISTRICT ORGANIZING A DISTRICT-WIDE CIVIL RIGHTS DAY IS BARRAGED WITH CALLS AND MEDIA COVERAGE PROTESTING ITS PLANS. // SCHOOLS IN WASHINGTON, PENNSYLVANIA AND NEW YORK EXPERIENCE AN ONSLAUGHT OF COMPLAINTS ABOUT PLANS TO HOST EVENTS TO TEACH ABOUT BLACK LIVES MATTER. // AN IOWA PRINCIPAL RECEIVES DEATH THREATS AFTER SUSPENDING STUDENTS FROM THREE FOOTBALL GAMES FOR REPEATEDLY SENDING WHITE SUPREMACIST TWEETS.

What do these situations have in common? In each case, the complaints and harassment were organized by national groups mobilizing individuals from outside the communities where those schools operate. Motivated by a desire to squash diversity efforts and silence upstanding behavior in schools, these groups used intimidation, troll storming and other scare tactics, hoping to disrupt events and thwart school-based efforts to address bias.

These types of orchestrated actions began to pop up across the country in 2016. They are increasing in frequency and severity as white nationalist groups, anti-LGBT organizations and other groups with anti-diversity agendas—including those that embrace the “alt-right” label—have become bolder and more vocal.

When outside groups undermine efforts to create safety and promote inclusion, schools must address risk and fear *on top of* the risk and fear marginalized students may already be facing. How can school leaders remain steadfast in their values *and* reassure students and families when their school becomes a target?

Organized Efforts

There’s no doubt that nationalist and anti-immigrant sentiments have gained traction in the current political climate. In the months leading up to the 2016 presidential election and since then, racist, homophobic, anti-Semitic, Islamophobic and anti-immigrant incidents have increased, as has the visibility of the individuals and groups perpetrating such incidents. In some cases, the attacks are verbal or virtual; others have escalated to physical violence.

Schools have not been spared. Both individual acts of hate and bias *and* orchestrated attacks have risen in number and severity

over the last 18 months. These attacks are not only disruptive; they can be psychologically devastating.

Consider the example of White Lives Matter, a network of white supremacists with leadership based in Texas, New Hampshire and Georgia. White Lives Matter organized a national effort to harass schools participating in the Rochester School District’s Black Lives Matter Day. The day was intended to, in the words of the district, “affirm the lives of black children, who represent the majority of students we serve, and to promote understanding.” Meanwhile, White Lives Matter organized massive call-in campaigns and even set up online training sessions for its followers.

This was not new territory for White Lives Matter. After targeting one school in Pennsylvania, the group proudly declared a victory, telling its followers that the group’s efforts had successfully divided the staff and “crushed” plans to teach about the Black Lives Matter movement.

In another example, a New York City school received a barrage of harassing phone calls after the press reported that some Muslim students there were encouraging school-wide participation in World Hijab Day. A national media outlet picked up the story, prompting anti-Muslim groups to claim—falsely—that the school was forcing students to practice Islam. The group’s supporters proceeded to flood the school with calls.

In Seattle, one elementary school canceled an event titled “Black Men Uniting to Change the Narrative,” which had been organized to counter negative stereotypes. Officials cited security reasons for the cancellation after details of the event were picked up by the conservative national press, and violent threats from outside the area began rolling in.



For more information about hate groups in your area visit the SPLC Hate Map. www.splcenter.org/hate-map

WHAT CAN YOU DO WHEN THE BULLS-EYE IS YOU?

Creating schools where students of any identity feel safe, accepted and valued is not a radical or controversial act. But, as these examples and countless others reveal, an increasingly vocal contingent of our society disagrees and is willing to go to extreme lengths to undermine school-based anti-hate and anti-bias efforts.

BEFORE AN ATTACK

An orchestrated protest could happen suddenly; preparation is the key to minimizing potential damage. Take the following steps when planning an event that could be targeted.

Find allies in your community. Reach out to local social groups. Build relationships with churches, sports teams and other institutions in your area that actively support efforts to promote safety and celebrate diversity. Build trust with groups that may be vulnerable, such as undocumented immigrant families, and organizations that serve them.

Know the landscape of hate. Be aware of local

and national hate groups that actively target schools, and stay current on their activities.

Work closely with the legal department of your school district. Know your rights and your students' rights. Pose scenarios and ask questions so you can understand the legal ramifications of your actions.

Provide training for staff. Explain what you are doing and why inclusiveness benefits all students. Share your school's values and connect those values to the action you are taking to create an identity-safe school climate. Make it clear that the planned activity may draw unwanted attention and that school safety is a top priority. Make sure all staff know emergency protocols, including when to inform the principal and when to call the police.

Inform district leaders, the teacher's union and families in advance. Being transparent allows you to control the message, builds investment and gives you a foundation to stand on if your plans become twisted or mischaracterized by outside groups. Allow families to ask questions, weigh in on planning and opt their children out of particular activities if they wish. If your district has a communications department, rely on it to help respond to media inquiries. Seek additional security when needed.

Prepare remarks and talking points in advance. Be ready to issue a statement articulating the school's values and reiterating your commitment to the event or action. Make sure that all front-office staff members know about the event and have approved talking points or a script on hand in case of media inquiries or questions from callers.

DURING AN ATTACK

It may begin with one or two calls. Then, suddenly, there are hundreds. Threats begin appearing via social media. Demonstrators

When Teachers Come Under Attack

Sometimes, it's not an activity but a staff member who raises the ire of a group or contingent. When this happens, it might be because the staff member has chosen to engage subject matter the group finds objectionable or because of the identity of the staff member.

It is important that schools stick up for their staff members, even if they don't always see eye-to-eye. Not doing so sends the message that the school can be bullied into compromising its principles. Encourage all staff to inform their supervisor if they are harassed or made to feel unsafe. The same steps that can prepare for an attack on the school can help school leadership prepare for attacks on individual staff members.

It may be that someone from inside the school is part of the problem. Give employees information about the complaint process and access to your school board's harassment policies. Additionally, make sure that all school and district leaders know that Title VII of the Civil Rights Act prohibits employers from allowing offensive conduct, racial or ethnic slurs, racial "jokes," or other verbal or physical conduct based on an employee's race or gender. It also protects against retaliation for reporting the offensive conduct.

If you are a teacher who is not being supported by your administrators, consult your union and consider going to the district level or filing an official complaint.

gather outside the school. Then the news media show up. What now?

Investigate and document. Inform the district leadership immediately and involve them in your investigation. Have a system for saving any evidence of the attack, such as phone or electronic messages (including your responses), and make sure that all front-office staff members have been trained on the system. Take pictures of any graffiti, protesters and illegally parked cars.

Report and take down offensive posts. Social media outlets such as Twitter and Facebook have policies for removing offensive posts. Take screenshots before removing them. Block comment sections on articles and inappropriate comments on any of your school's social media accounts.

Communicate to staff in person. Hold an emergency meeting to explain what happened and how you are handling it, and listen to concerns. Provide guidance for a unified response. Instruct staff not to engage with attackers via social media or otherwise. Encourage them to refer all inquiries to the communications department (if available) or to the principal.

Provide accurate information and dispel misinformation. In addition to releasing your prepared statement, take time to quell rumors or misinformation. Inform students and families about the attack through regular secure channels, but don't overstate the issue or cause alarm. Send an informative message while taking a strong stand in support of your school values and safety. Avoid making comments via social media; they can be misconstrued and inadvertently fuel the fire.

Support the target(s). If the attack targets particular student groups, bring those students together and give them an opportunity to express their feelings. Let them know that you support them, even after the worst is over. Provide counseling if needed.



IF YOUR SCHOOL IS UNDER ATTACK but your district isn't giving you the support you need, reach out to these national organizations:

- Lawyers
Committee for
Civil Rights
Under Law

- LAMBDA Legal

Public Justice

Enlist the help of community allies. Don't remain silent. Reach out to organizations you've built relationships with and ask for their public support. Do the same with community leaders.

Work with the media. It may be appropriate to arrange a press conference so your district can control public messaging and accurately report what happened. If you have a communications department, work with it to designate appropriate speakers. This may include family members, students or staff who planned the targeted event or activity, allies from the community or other community leaders. Meet with speakers in advance to make sure everyone communicates the same message.

AFTER THE CRISIS

Talking about it may feel like the last thing anyone wants to do, but after an attack, it is imperative to reflect on what happened and actively look for ways to heal the school.

Debrief the incident. Gather district and school staff and anyone else closely involved in or affected by the attack. Talk through what happened, and document what you might do differently if it happened again.

Give consequences to students who engage in hateful acts. Follow district policies, but aim to help students learn from their mistakes and transform attitudes

and behaviors. Seek to restore the offenders to the school community while still protecting targeted students.

Work toward healing and reconciliation. Healing from divisive events takes time. Plan activities that will bring students, staff and families together. Be sure to include families of students who were targeted and of students who participated in the attack. Use restorative practices to unite the school. If necessary, bring in professional mediators.

Recommit to a safe, kind school. Redouble efforts to improve school climate.

WE STAND STRONGER WHEN WE STAND UP FOR EACH OTHER

Anyone who has experienced an orchestrated attack on their school will understand the saying, "What doesn't kill us makes us stronger." These are complex situations fraught with numerous pitfalls. Making a strong show of support takes coordination and effort, but it will strengthen your school community and prevent future attacks.

When schools stand strong, it sends a message to students and families—and to groups seeking to intimidate: Hatred and intimidation are not welcome here. As this message builds, more institutions across the country will gain the courage to tackle the waves of hate and commit to the democratic ideals of inclusivity and freedom. ♦

Cohn-Vargas develops curriculum and leads professional development sessions at schools and universities across the United States. She lives in El Sobrante, California.





Speaking of Digital Literacy...

BY KATE SHUSTER

ILLUSTRATION BY MARC ROSENTHAL

LEARN THE LANGUAGE that can help you—and your students—decode the complexities of the digital-media landscape. This vocabulary list covers the many ways “fake” news finds its way online, highlights key terms necessary to understand media manipulation, and describes how our brains absorb information—and how they can steer us away from the truth.

As our story “What Is the ‘Alt-Right’?” reveals, the internet can be a gateway to hate, particularly for young people who don’t know how to critically evaluate sources. This list is part of Teaching Tolerance’s new digital literacy project, an initiative to help educators bring these concepts into the classroom and equip students to guard against hate and bias online.

Agnotology: The study of ignorance.

Algorithm: A procedure used to locate specific data within a collection of information. Also called a “search algorithm.”

Apophenia: The tendency to perceive meaningful connections in unrelated things; seeing patterns where none exist.

Astrourfing: The practice of concealing the financial stakeholders promoting a message or an organization so that it seems to come from and be supported by grassroots entities.

Belief perseverance: The tendency to continue believing something even after learning that the foundation of the belief is false.

Bot: An automated online program; short for *web robot*.

Chan culture: Beliefs and activities related to online message boards such as 4chan and 8chan, where often-offensive images and memes are created and distributed.

Clickbait: Online content created with the primary purpose of attracting visitors and enticing them to click on a link to a specific web page.

Confirmation bias: The tendency to process new information as confirmation of the beliefs one already holds.

Cognitive bias: A mental-processing error (e.g., in reasoning, interpreting or remembering) that often results from clinging to preferences and beliefs in spite of contrary evidence.

Computational propaganda: The manipulation of information and communication technologies to influence attitudes, thinking processes and behavior.

Coppypasta: A block of online text that has been copied and pasted from somewhere else.

Counterknowledge: Inaccurate information that is presented as fact and is believed by a critical mass of people.

Crowdsourcing: The practice of acquiring information for or contributions to a project by seeking the aid of a large number of people, usually via the internet.

Digital footprint: The information about a person that can be found online as a result of their internet activity.

Digital native: A person born or raised during the digital age and who is thus familiar with the internet, computers and other digital technology from an early age.

Disinformation: False information that is disseminated to the media or other entities with the purpose of deceiving.

Dox: To publicly share private or identifying information about a person online, usually with a malicious or vengeful purpose.

Dunning-Kruger effect: A cognitive bias that leads people of limited skills or knowledge to mistakenly believe their abilities are greater than they actually are.

Fake news: Disinformation that is presented as news and optimized for online sharing.

Filter bubble: The limited perspective that can result from personalized search algorithms.

Group polarization: A group's tendency to make more extreme decisions than its individual members would typically be inclined to make.

Groupthink: A group's practice of thinking or making decisions in such a way that promotes harmony and conformity within the group at the expense of creativity or individual responsibility.

Heuristic: A cognitive shortcut, rule or method that helps people solve problems in less time than it would take to think the problem all the way through.

Homophily: The tendency to form connections with people who are similar to oneself.

Illusion of comprehension: A cognitive bias that occurs when people mistake familiarity or awareness for understanding. Also called the “familiarity effect.”

Information cascade: A phenomenon in which people echo the opinions of others, usually online, even when their own opinions or exposure to information contradicts that opinion. When information cascades form a pattern, this pattern can begin to overpower later opinions by making it seem as if a consensus already exists.

Information diet: The kinds and quantity of information that a person consumes on a regular basis.

Information literacy: The ability to recognize the need for information and to locate, analyze and use it effectively in a variety of ways.

Information pollution: The tainting of available information with inaccuracy, redundancy and lack of quality.

Infotainment: Material, online or otherwise, that combines information with entertainment. Often used to describe material ostensibly intended to inform but which is primarily designed for entertainment.

Lulz: Laughter and enjoyment, usually at someone else's expense.

Media hacking: The manipulation of electronic and online media, especially social media, to shape a particular narrative.

Meme: An image, video, phrase, symbol or other piece of culture that is meant to be funny and is shared widely via the internet, often with slight changes.

Memejacking: The act of hijacking a meme and using it for purposes different from those of its original authors.

Motivated reasoning: The tendency to process new information in such a way that it will fit with previously held beliefs.

Myside bias: The tendency to endorse information that supports one's previously held beliefs, truth notwithstanding.

Native advertising: Online advertising that fluidly adheres to the look and feel of the context or platform in which it is placed.

ONLINE EXCLUSIVE

How does “fake” news become news? Watch this engaging video with your students and find out!

tolerance.org/article/fake-news-video

Opinion laundering: The practice of making opinions seem more valid by representing them as coming from think tanks or other sources that seem reliable. See **Astrourfing**.

Poe's law: Taken from a comment made by an online forum participant, Nathan Poe, the idea that it is nearly impossible to distinguish between an extremist view and a parody of it without clear evidence of the author's purpose.

Social spam: Unwanted material that shows up on social networking platforms and any website with content generated by users.

Sock puppet: An online user posing as another person—often a real person—usually to express their own views anonymously.

Sponsored content: An advertiser's paid content in an online publication that takes on the look and qualities of that publisher's editorial content.

Stealth marketing: The practice of paying people to promote products without revealing that those people are being compensated.

Troll: A person who engages in provocative or harassing online behavior using their real identity. Distinct from a **Bot** or a **Sock puppet**.

Two-sides fallacy: The presentation of an issue that makes it seem to have two sides of equal weight or significance, when in fact a consensus or much stronger argument supports just one side. Also called “false balance” or “false equivalence.” ♦





Mindful of Equity

Practices that help students control their impulses can also mask systemic failures.

BY ALICE PETTWAY

PASSING BY A classroom where students are sitting quietly with their eyes closed might have seemed strange a few years ago, before mindfulness became commonplace in schools. But today, most educators wouldn't pause at the scene.

Research shows that mindfulness meditation can reduce anxiety, improve emotion regulation and increase compassion—benefits that account for its

rising popularity among K–12 educators. But some culturally responsive educators worry that using mindfulness meditation in the classroom can send a dangerous message to students struggling within an inequitable education system.

“What we're doing when we teach mindfulness to [only] students is saying, ‘Here's how to cope with school,’”

says Barbara Dray, lead consultant with the LLC Transforming Practices in Education. “That's not sufficient. I want to have their voices be valued at school.”

Jey Ehrenhalt, a Teaching Tolerance staff member with a background in mindfulness studies, agrees. “What we don't want to do is communicate to students that when your school system is

failing you, the best way to cope is to sit still and be quiet and compliant,” Ehrenhalt says.

In other words, implementing mindfulness programs without integrating culturally responsive practices is akin to treating the symptoms of inequitable education without addressing the cause. Mindfulness, without a teacher trained in both meditation *and* cultural competency, may inadvertently teach students to resign themselves to inequity and injustice.

“In schools, we need to have a whole recognition of the different situations that are creating the suffering of our children,” Dray says.

One example of the inequities mindfulness can perpetuate is harmful disciplinary practices. According to the 2014 U.S. Department of Education Office for Civil Rights Data Snapshot, students of color and students with disabilities are referred to law enforcement at highly disproportional rates. Mindfulness practiced by students may reduce some of the *behaviors* that lead to referrals, but it doesn’t address implicit biases in their teachers, which can harm students in numerous ways.

For meditation in schools to reap social emotional benefits without undermining equity and cultural competency, a more responsive—and responsible—approach is necessary. Ideally such an approach is two-pronged: One, educators must acknowledge their own biases and adopt pedagogical practices that acknowledge and challenge systemic inequities; and, two, they must hone their own mindfulness practice *before* bringing it into the classroom.

Begin Within

Part of the problem, says Erica Marcus, a Mindful Schools instructor in Portland, Maine, is that many educators aren’t aware of their biases. Marcus, who teaches mindfulness

What is mindfulness?

“Mindfulness is simply nonjudgmental awareness of what’s happening right now, being curious and compassionate about what’s happening in the present moment.”

—Erica Marcus, Mindful Schools Instructor

to teachers and students throughout New England, asserts that without confronting their innately held beliefs, teachers will continue to discipline their students unfairly. Engaging teachers in mindfulness practice, she says, can help.

Dray’s approach to mindfulness work asks teachers to “unpack the clash” that they’re having with their students. She begins her workshops by asking teachers to “empty their cup”: acknowledging and discussing the negative thoughts they might have about students. For many educators, she says, it can be a difficult, sometimes embarrassing process, but it’s a necessary first step.

Next, Dray talks about intercultural communication theory, or the idea that the statements we hear about people often fall into three categories: *evaluative*, *interpretive* and *descriptive*. She presents teachers with a stereotypical evaluative statement like “Refugee kids steal.” They then unpack it together and move to a more interpretive version: “Refugee kids take more than their fair share during snack time.” Dray finally moves to a purely descriptive statement: “Some refugee students took two boxes of raisins during snack time and put them in their backpacks.”

Once the educators move to a purely descriptive statement, it’s easier to reflect. Why might this be happening? Where is this behavior coming from?

For some educators, these questions mark the beginning of a journey toward becoming a culturally connected teacher, says Dray. Once educators gain awareness of their own implicit biases, they can more effectively teach mindfulness to their

students in a way that doesn’t mask harmful patterns or practices.

Engaging Students

Rona Wilensky, director of mindfulness programs at the Colorado-based nonprofit PassageWorks, agrees that an experienced teacher is fundamental to successful implementation of mindfulness meditation in the classroom.

She suspects that hasty implementation lies at the root of anti-bias educators’ concerns about mindfulness practice in schools. “I think teachers and educators in general tend to be people who prioritize their clients above themselves, and so they want to know ‘How can I use this in my classroom with my kids tomorrow?’ ... That’s an incredibly positive attribute ... [but] it leaves a blind spot.”

She says that, in a quest for quick implementation, many schools bring

Keep Religion Out of It

Mindfulness meditation is often associated with Buddhism, which may be a stumbling block for some administrators or parents. Rona Wilensky of PassageWorks emphasizes the point that mindfulness is not a religion but a scientifically based practice.

Make sure that the mindfulness practice you bring into your classroom is purely secular. That means taking care to not use objects associated with any particular religion, nor to introduce literature that is religious in nature.

How to Get Started

Rona Wilensky says getting started practicing and teaching mindfulness meditation in a school setting isn't difficult—but it is essential that educators prepare themselves appropriately.

- 1. Team up.** Tackling any new task alone can be daunting. Find a couple (or more!) fellow educators who are interested in learning more about mindfulness.
- 2. Educate yourself.** Check out a book or video on mindfulness basics for both adults and students. It's essential to understand both. The book and CD set *Mindfulness for Beginners: Reclaiming the Present Moment and Your Life*, by Jon Kabat-Zinn, is a good place to start.
- 3. Connect to the community.** Not all communities have mindfulness meditation groups, but many do, particularly if you're near a university. Connecting with others who are more experienced with mindfulness practice can deepen your practice.
- 4. Practice, practice, practice.** There's no substitute for experience. Make sure to turn to your peer group and mindfulness community when you hit a stumbling block. And give yourself at least a few months of daily sitting, to experience the process, before you introduce it to students.
- 5. Check in with yourself.** Is mindfulness meditation changing how you behave in the classroom? How you interact with students? The practice will not always represent a quick fix, but noting the effects of mindfulness on your life can help you recognize the progress you're making and prepare you to answer students' questions.
- 6. Spread the news.** Keep your administration and parents informed. Provide information on research and be clear about exactly what you'll be doing in the classroom.
- 7. Start small.** Introduce mindfulness a few minutes at a time. Feel things out with a simple exercise like taking three breaths when returning to the classroom after recess.

in outside experts to lead sessions or resort to push-and-play methods like videos. Without a strong personal mindfulness background, teachers are left unable to respond to students' needs as they arise throughout the process.

What needs to happen, says Wilensky, is for teachers to first be trained themselves in mindfulness meditation so they can then guide their students. This way, teachers become prepared to address the types of student difficulties the practice might bring up.

Marcus adds that there are a few important points that even experienced meditators need to focus on when bringing kids

to consider room setup. Something as simple as avoiding a circle configuration where kids have to close their eyes while facing someone can help to make the space feel safer for newcomers to mindfulness meditation.

And finally, says Marcus, the most important thing to remember as a new classroom practitioner of mindfulness meditation is to always bring your own compassion, experience and understanding. As Dray says, "At the end of the day, it's about connecting with each other on a human level."

Ehrenhalt emphasizes that being very honest about the motive for implementing mindfulness is critical. "Educators should clarify their intention before bringing mindfulness into the classroom," Ehrenhalt says. "While

Be Aware

Students with known mental health issues or histories of trauma may not be good candidates for mindfulness meditation in a classroom setting. A psychologist or counselor should always be involved in the decision about whether those students should participate.

to the practice. First, she says, mindfulness practice should *never* be mandatory. Meditation can activate traumatic memories or thoughts for some children. Teachers should be prepared for this, and understand that mindfulness can mean acknowledging negative emotions and giving students opportunities to process them. Students should always have a way to opt out gracefully in the middle of a practice session if they become uncomfortable.

Debriefing is important, says Marcus. Students need validation that their experience was "correct." There is no *wrong* way to be mindful, and many kids need to be told explicitly that their experience—whatever it was—is okay. Marcus also reminds educators

teaching kids to meditate may appear to be helping them stay calm and controlled, on the inside, it's doing just the opposite. Teachers will only understand this once they have practiced themselves."

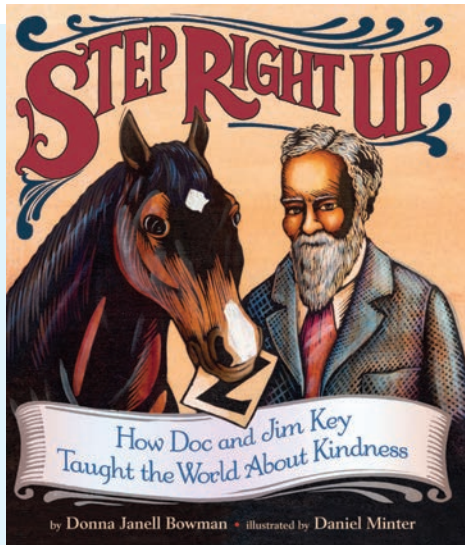
While not a magic pill, mindfulness can be one piece of a culturally responsive approach that equips students with skills that can benefit them in multiple areas of life—without neglecting a school's commitment to equity.

"It's when we use [mindfulness] for our own purposes, in an instrumental way to meet something that's not intrinsic to the practice, that we run the risk of abusing it," says Wilensky. "I think it has a transformative power when we do it with integrity and fidelity." ♦

Pettway is a freelance writer and poet. She lives in Shanghai, China.

What We're Reading

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

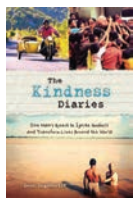


Doc Key believes that animals can do anything: He teaches his horse Jim to read, write, spell, solve math equations and more! ***Step Right Up: How Doc and Jim Key Taught the World About Kindness***, written by Donna Janell Brown and illustrated by Daniel Minter, tells the story of a man who was born into slavery and lived a long and inspiring life. He helped enslaved people find freedom via the Underground Railroad, became a doctor, fought in the Civil War and confronted racism and segregation as he toured the world with his famous horse.

ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

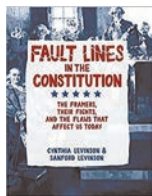
“An incredible story of how kindness and education can change lives.”

—Lauryn Mascareñaz



PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

The Kindness Diaries: One Man's Quest to Ignite Goodwill and Transform Lives Around the World by Leon Logothetis



MIDDLE AND HIGH SCHOOL

Fault Lines in the Constitution: The Framers, Their Fights, and the Flaws That Affect Us Today by Cynthia Levinson and Sanford Levinson



ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

Voice of Freedom: Fannie Lou Hamer, Spirit of the Civil Rights Movement by Carole Boston Weatherford, illustrated by Ekua Holmes



After winning the lottery, two gay couples buy a big, old Victorian house in Toronto. They then settle into a life filled with love and learning in which their seven children (all named after trees) and an assortment of pets can thrive. When their grumpy grandfather comes to live with the family, 9-year-old Sumac has to give up her room and be his guide. ***The Lotterys Plus One***, written by Emma Donoghue and illustrated by Caroline Hadilaksono, invites readers into a perfectly imperfect modern family.

UPPER ELEMENTARY AND MIDDLE SCHOOL

“A fun-filled story about an unusual family that, like all families, has to learn to be open to life's changes.”

—Lois Parker-Hennion, Teaching Tolerance Advisory Board member

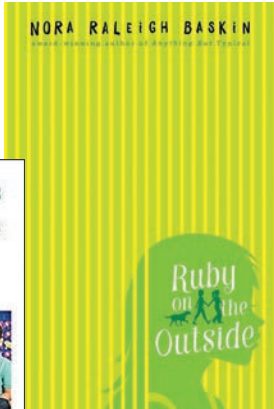


Angie Thomas writes ***The Hate U Give*** from the perspective of 16-year-old Starr Carter, the only witness to the fatal shooting of her friend Khalil by a police officer. Readers follow Starr's path as she is asked to testify in front of a grand jury and speak out in support of her late friend. Repercussions within her predominantly black neighborhood and majority-white school make for compelling final decisions.

HIGH SCHOOL

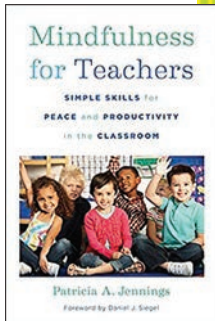
“An important look at activism, justice and racial stereotyping from almost every perspective.”

—Amy Melik, Teaching Tolerance Advisory Board member



“A beautiful way to encourage empathy and seeing others for the complex beings they are.”

—Monita K. Bell



“A user-friendly book to help teachers become more intentional in their practice and create a more supportive classroom environment.”

—Hoyt J. Phillips III



“This deeply relatable novel will ring true for anyone who has grappled to understand their own distinct and diverse identity.”

—Tiffany Gibert



“Inspirational reading for anyone teaching or considering a career in teaching.”

—Kate Shuster

Patricia A. Jennings’ *Mindfulness for Teachers* is an accessible text for educators wanting to learn more about an increasingly popular concept. Jennings begins with the premise that teaching is an emotional practice. Unconscious reactions to emotions can cause harm in the classroom, so using mindfulness techniques can help an educator create space between an experience and the reaction. This space provides more options to intentionally respond to a student or a situation in a way that will produce a more desirable outcome for all. Each chapter unpacks key components for a mindfulness practice and provides easy-to-use activities. The book concludes with a review of evaluated mindfulness programs for schools.

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Ruby Danes is about to experience a major life change the summer before she starts middle school. She’s done an impressive job of keeping her life on the outside very separate from the one on the inside, where her mother is serving a 20- to 25-year prison sentence. *Don’t have anyone over so they don’t ask questions. Don’t ask questions so you don’t open yourself up to answering any.* But a new friend—her first, real best friend—inspires her to live authentically. Nora Raleigh Baskin’s *Ruby on the Outside* explores how friendship and understanding can make all the difference.

UPPER ELEMENTARY AND MIDDLE SCHOOL

Like most seventh-graders, Stef Soto just wants to fit in. But her parents’ embarrassing,

smelly taco truck makes that difficult, especially when her schoolmates start calling her “Taco Queen.” Jennifer Torres’ debut middle-grade novel, *Stef Soto, Taco Queen*, captures this universal period of identity development in one sweet story. Filled with the trials of friendships and family, the book relates Stef’s journey as she learns to value her unique culture and her parents’ different (but delicious) job.

MIDDLE SCHOOL

Peppered with photographs and quotes, this informative book provides a detailed account of the 1966 March Against Fear, begun by James Meredith. After Meredith was shot and wounded, thousands of people took up the 220-mile march from Memphis, Tennessee, to Jackson, Mississippi. So, why did such a dramatic event fade into obscurity? In *The March Against Fear: The Last Great Walk of the Civil Rights Movement and the Emergence of Black Power*, author Ann Bausum explores this question, chronicles the march and puts it into historical context.

HIGH SCHOOL

Why the SUN Rises: The Faces and Stories of Women in Education presents 29 interviews with teachers that can serve as rich sources of strength and inspiration for educators. “Why do you rise each day to teach?” is the question put to each teacher, and their answers show resilience and optimism. Dr. Doran Gresham and Meredith Chase-Mitchell compiled the interviews of a diverse and socially conscious group.

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT



“A fascinating examination of the last major civil rights march of the 1960s and how the demand for Black Power transformed the movement.”

—Lois Parker-Hennion

What We're Watching

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

An Outrage, a documentary film by Hannah Ayers and Lance Warren, addresses the dark and painful history of lynching in the American South. Set against a backdrop of six lynching sites, **An Outrage** looks at this history through the eyes of community activists, scholars and the descendants of victims. These interviewees highlight the deep, lasting effects of lynchings—used as a tool of social control and racial violence against African Americans for close to a century following the Civil War—and their connections to the present. Historian Yohuru Williams says, “My parents grew up in the shadow of Emmett Till. I grew up in the shadow of Yusef Hawkins. My son will grow up in the shadow of James Byrd and Trayvon Martin.” Teaching Tolerance is the K–12 distributor of **An Outrage** and offers an accompanying viewer’s guide. (33 min.)

tolerance.org/classroom-resources/film-kits/an-outrage
HIGH SCHOOL

Colleen Cassingham and Alex Lederman’s short documentary **From Damascus to Chicago** focuses on two Syrian siblings, 10-year-old Retaj and 7-year-old Akram. They are refugees who resettled in Chicago

with their parents, also featured in the film. Retaj and Akram are enrolled in a dance program for Syrian refugee children who have been in the United States for less than a year. The siblings prepare for a dance recital, which helps them acclimate to Chicago, improve their English language skills and have fun at the same time.

From Damascus to Chicago highlights the importance of community-based networks and programs that welcome and support refugees. (12 min.)

pbs.org/pov/fromdamascustochicago
ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

Loving, written and directed by Jeff Nichols, is a feature film about the real-life couple Richard and Mildred Loving. After facing harassment, arrest and jail time for their interracial marriage, the Lovings are banished by court order from their home state of Virginia for 25 years. They move their family to Washington, D.C. It is here, after Mildred pens a letter to Attorney General Robert Kennedy, that the Lovings somewhat reluctantly became the faces of a U.S. Supreme Court case about anti-miscegenation laws. Their landmark victory in *Loving v. Virginia*—50 years ago

this year—struck down bans on interracial marriage in 16 states, including Virginia, and paved the way for other marriage equality rulings. (123 min.)

focusfeatures.com/loving
MIDDLE AND HIGH SCHOOL

In Teaching Tolerance’s short film **Muslim Students in America**, four young people share their personal perspectives on what it means to be Muslim. Rebutting a common, harmful image of Islam as a hateful, violent religion, the students affirm the meaning of Islam—“peace”—as they describe how their faith encourages them to practice kindness and empathy. They also discuss the adversity they face because of their religious identity and the need for allies to speak up against anti-Muslim hate and prejudice. One interviewee, high school student Saria, says, “It would honestly change many people’s lives if kids were taught that Muslims ... are pretty nice and honest and kind.” (4 min.)

tolerance.org/muslim-students
UPPER ELEMENTARY, MIDDLE AND HIGH SCHOOL



... FOURTEEN
... FIFTEEN
... SIXTEEN

ZOHORA

Washed Away

BY ALICE PETTWAY ILLUSTRATION BY ZACHARIAH OHORA

Fourteen, fifteen, sixteen, seventeen ...

“Come on, Max! We’re going to get in trouble.”

... eighteen, nineteen ...

“Seriously, Ms. Alvarez is calling everyone in the hallway.”

... twenty-two, twenty-three, twenty-four ...

Max concentrated on his hands. “I’ll be out in a minute. I have to finish.”

“Fine, but don’t blame me if you have to sit out recess tomorrow!” Jaime said as the bathroom door swung shut behind him.

... twenty-eight, twenty-nine.

Max dried his hands and stuck his head out the bathroom door. Ms. Alvarez was standing there, frowning.

“Hurry up. Everyone else is already back in the classroom! What took you so long?”

Max shrugged his shoulders; he kept his hands behind his back as they walked down the hall.

After school, Jaime plunked down beside him on the bus.

“You got me in trouble! Why are you always messing around in the bathroom? Now we’re both going to miss recess tomorrow!”

Max didn’t say anything.

At home, he slid his backpack under his bed.

He could hear his dad calling from the living room, “Wash your hands, and I’ll make you a snack.”

Max thought about his bag, covered in germs from school. There must be millions of different bacteria—that’s what Ms. Alvarez calls germs. And then there were the books, and he let Trina borrow that one pen. She chews on pens.

He turned on the hot water and stuck his hands under the faucet.

One, two, three ...

His dad’s voice called over the rush of water, “Max! Your sandwich is ready!”

... fourteen, fifteen ...

He could hear footsteps coming down the hall. He pushed the lock.

“Max, stop lollygagging. What’s taking you so long?”

... twenty-nine.

Max turned off the water. His hands hurt from the heat.

“I’m coming, Dad,” he said, unlocking the door and shoving his hands in his pockets.

“Your sandwich is on the table.”

“Thanks, Dad. I’m going next door to Jaime’s house,” said Max, grabbing the sandwich and opening the front door.

Max’s hands started to sweat as he walked across the yard toward Jaime’s house. He’d suddenly remembered high-fiving his dad as he got off the bus. And then his dad made the sandwich. It must be crawling with germs. Gross!

Jaime’s voice startled him. “Hey!” he yelled from his porch. “Mom said no TV. I *told* you’d get me in trouble! You’re such a weirdo, always taking forever in the bathroom.”

Jaime grabbed the sandwich out of Max’s hand.

“Wait! Don’t eat that!” Max grabbed the sandwich back and ran inside Jaime’s house, straight to the bathroom. He threw the sandwich in the trash and lunged for the sink.

One, two, three ...

“Max?” It was Jaime’s mom. “Is everything OK?”

... four, five, six ...

Max realized he’d forgotten to lock the door. It opened, and Jaime’s mom walked in.

... nine, ten ...

“Honey, your hands are really raw. Let’s get you a towel.”

... fourteen ...

“Leave me alone!” Max muttered between counts. “They’re not clean yet!”

... eighteen, nineteen ...

He could hear Jaime’s mom on the phone, “I think you should come over here ...”

... twenty-nine.

Max looked up. His dad was standing in the bathroom doorway. He gently pulled Max’s hands from behind his back. They were red, and the skin on one of his knuckles was cracked. Max started to cry.

“I just don’t want any of us to get sick. If I wash my hands the same way every time, we’ll all be safe,” he said.

Max’s dad held him tight.

“You’re not going to make us sick, Max, but I understand how scared you are. We’ll talk to Ms. Johnson, the school counselor, tomorrow. I bet she can help.”

Jaime poked his head around Max’s dad. He looked embarrassed.

“Sorry I was a jerk earlier,” he said. “I didn’t know you were so worried. Come on, let’s go make some more sandwiches!”

Max cracked a smile. Things were a little less scary with his dad and Jaime on his side. ♦

Pettway is a freelance writer and poet. She lives in Shanghai, China.

Questions for Readers

RIGHT THERE (IN THE TEXT)

Why does Jaime blame Max for getting in trouble?

THINK AND SEARCH (IN THE TEXT)

Why does Max keep his hands behind his back or in his pockets?

AUTHOR AND ME (IN MY HEAD)

Why does Max wash his hands so often and for so long? What is something you do over and over?

ON MY OWN (IN MY HEAD)

Have you ever hid something from family or friends? Explain what happened when they found out.



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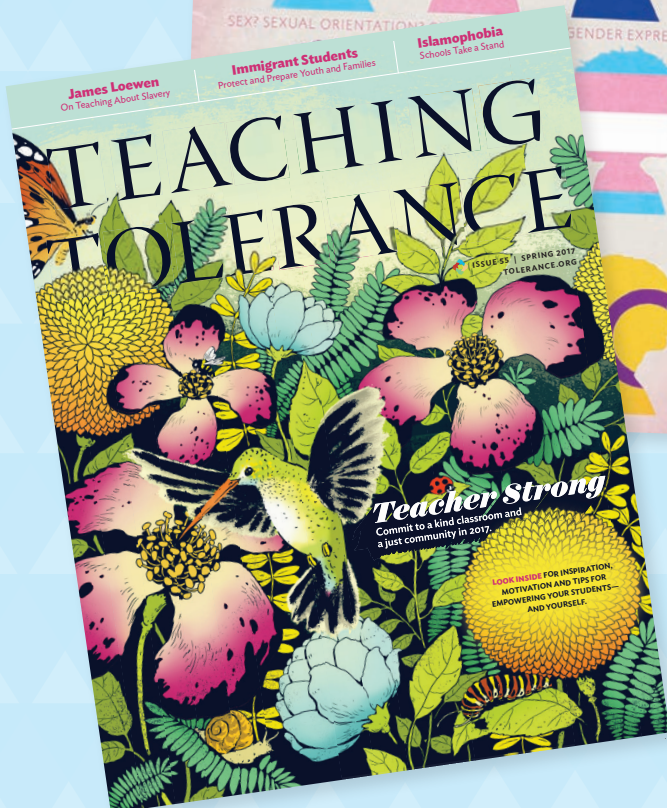
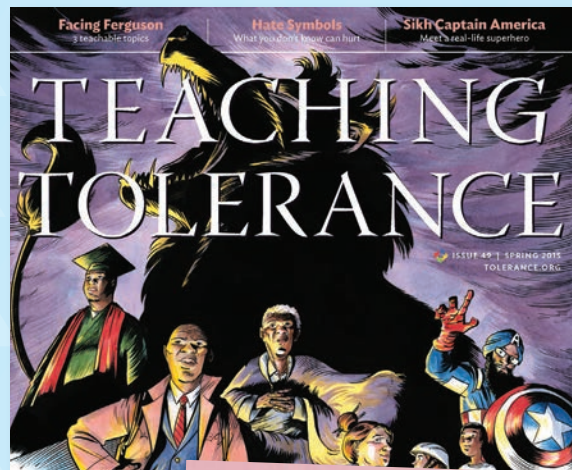
This quote is attributed to Fred Rogers (1928–2003), an American television personality who hosted the popular children’s show *Mister Rogers’ Neighborhood* for more than three decades. The recipient of many awards, Rogers received the Presidential Medal of Freedom in 2002 for his contributions to children’s well-being and education.

ILLUSTRATION BY PEMBERLEY POND



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