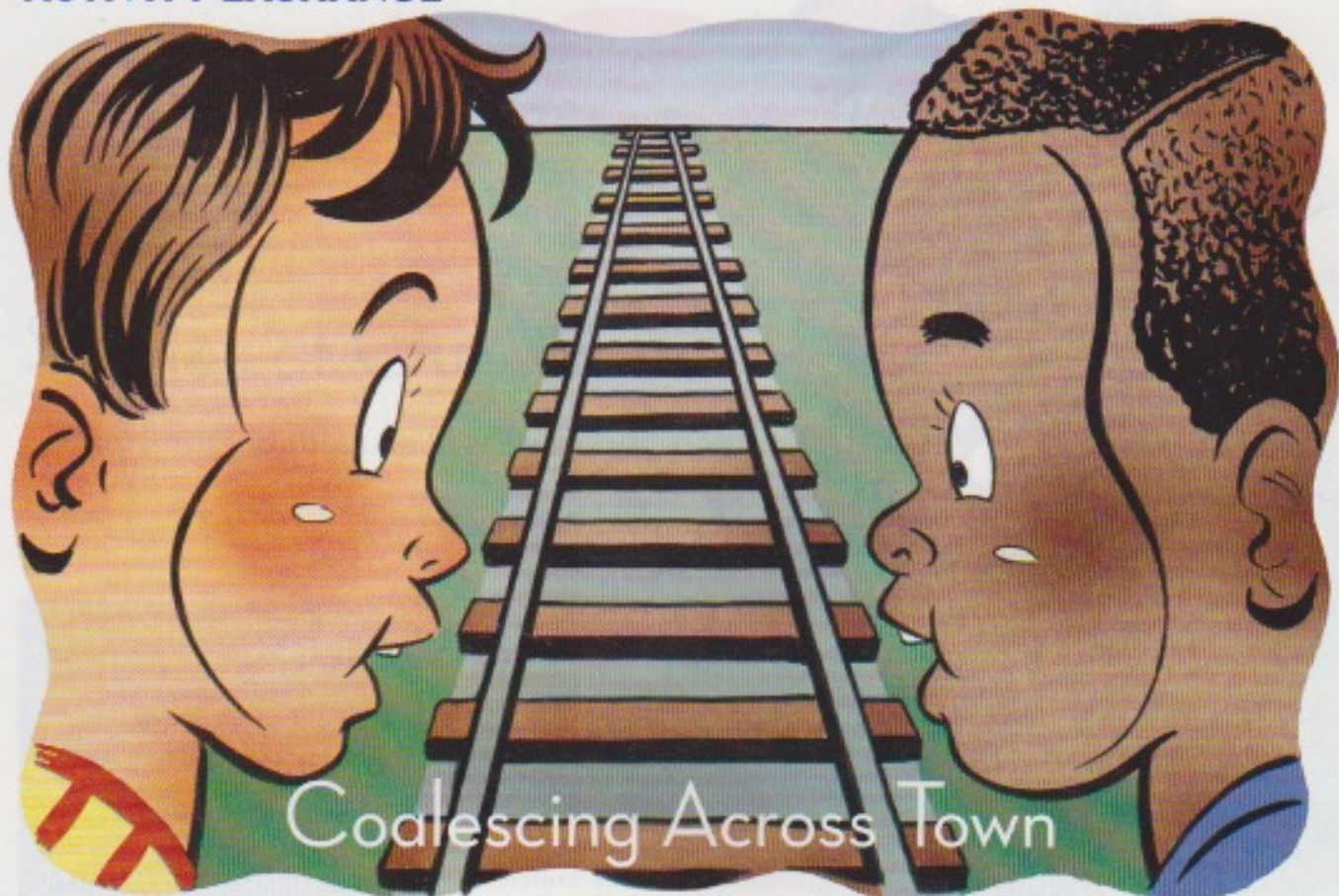


ACTIVITY EXCHANGE



Coalescing Across Town

IN MY FINAL YEAR AT VASSAR COLLEGE, I developed anti-bias interventions and focused teaching methods as part of my senior thesis. I chose preschool as the perfect place to address emerging prejudice, although children from other grade levels would benefit from this activity as well. My goal was to teach children to think in ways that would help them resist stereotypes.

I set up a pen-pal relationship between two classes of 3- and 4-year-olds in Poughkeepsie, N.Y. One class came from a college laboratory school of mainly white and Asian American upper-middle-class families, the other from a community-based organization that worked with primarily black and Latino working-class families.

To introduce the concept, I sat with each class and explained that children in another school wanted to get to know them. I listed names while passing around a class photo, then discussed reactions and questions. The kids were eager to dictate a group letter about themselves.

Next, I presented photos of community landmarks on the three-mile route between the schools, discussing "near and far." The children identified photos and helped me plot them on a large, simplified map with photos of the schools fixed at either end.

Another week, we recorded our daily routines to exchange between the two groups, using photos of the classroom

and drawings to illustrate. The classes recorded their good morning songs and were amazed to hear their pen pals' voices on tape.

Another day, I attached photos of each child to two sets of wooden blocks representing all the children in both classes so each class would have a full set. We sorted the blocks into "same and different," the children coming up with categories such as hair color, shirt color and gender.

Finally, I read books that depicted diverse characters without making diversity their focus. All projects and storybooks remained on display, allowing for independent exploration.

After eight weeks of correspondence, the classes were ready to meet. At a local hands-on children's museum, we sang welcome songs and then gave the children free rein. They had become familiar with each other during the weeks of activities and had the opportunity to coalesce in a friendly environment.

Partnerships between teachers can bring valuable cultural knowledge into even homogenous classrooms. Locating a teacher-partner who works in your town or city models coalition-building and creates a space for collaboration that includes students, too.

Lara O'Toole
Citizens Acting Together Can Help (CATCH Inc.)
Philadelphia, Pa.

GRADES
PRE-K-5

Making Cents of Privilege

I WORK WITH UPPER-MIDDLE-CLASS STUDENTS, and it is sometimes difficult for them to understand that not all children have access to the same opportunities they have regarding dining out, participating in extracurricular activities, vacations or receiving allowances. Consequently, I wanted to create a lesson on the value of money.

I provided my 3rd-graders with menus from local restaurants and advertisements from various local stores. I facilitated a discussion around the following questions:

- Who pays the check when your family eats dinner at a restaurant?
- Do you ever think about whether your parents or guardians have enough money to pay for what is ordered?

Using the menus I have provided, students choose what they would like to order and total the items. Then I give each student a Ziploc bag containing play money amounting to \$5.15. I introduce the concept of minimum wage and inform them that the minimum wage in our area is \$5.15 per hour of work.

Now students look at the meal they have selected from their menu and see if they have enough to purchase it. I have them review the menu to determine what items they could purchase for \$5.15.

After they determine this, I ask the question, "How many hours must a person making \$5.15 per hour work to afford their meal?" This generally intrigues them and leads to deeper discussions of other purchases, activities and vacations enjoyed by their families. We continue our unit by looking at other advertisements and articles.

There are stark differences in economic wealth between families. Teaching students about the value of money is important in helping them to understand that although their families might be financially comfortable, many other families are struggling. This is a way for even the youngest of children to see how privileged they are.

For more ideas on using mathematics to teach social justice see the new release by Rethinking Schools titled Rethinking Mathematics: Teaching Social Justice by the Numbers (\$16.95). Order it at www.rethinkingschools.org.

Tamara J. Candis
Parsons Elementary School
Suwanee, Ga.

GRADES
3-5



Read more about how schools address issues of class and poverty in "Rigor + Support + Success," page 44

Coalescing Across the Globe

ONE OF PARK DAY SCHOOL'S CENTRAL VALUES places knowledge — people's ideas, histories, religions and cultures — at the center of human relationships. In the aftermath of 9.11, concern for the Arab community (who were immediate targets of discrimination and hatred) led to a collaboration between Park Day in Oakland, Calif., and Friends Quaker School in Ramallah, Palestine.

Using the Internet to establish communication between the two schools, we created a magazine project so children could write and illustrate stories about themselves. Our objectives were that children living in relative peace could understand the differences children living in a conflict zone faced; that, through dialogue, the children could use empathy to develop both perspectives; and that these dual perspectives could foster student understanding of tolerance and pluralism.

Students from both schools put their feelings about conflict and cultural difference into words. The practice of writing builds self-respect and a sense of connection to others that results in the experience of contributing to something larger — taking action in the world in a time of violence and fear. Thus the collaborative project of creating a magazine helped the students develop a sense of empowerment and social engagement.

There are four parts to the magazine production:

- Introduce children to the region of the world with which you will collaborate
- Generate themes and types of articles with the children (these might include interviewing a child from the partner school, first-person descriptions of everyday life, and topics such as sports, school and family)
- Help the children write and revise articles
- Celebrate the publication of the magazine

Wonderful resources exist to assist teachers interested in a global pairing. The

Global Dreamers program, developed at Ein Ganim school in Petach Tiva, Israel, offers resources for students and teachers that include a discussion board, art gallery, links to web information about the participating schools' locales, and an idea-sharing space for teachers. You can register your school for this project at: www.globaldreamers.org.

The British Council on Education also offers a partnership registration site that includes curricular materials and international partnership tools. For more information, to find a partner, or to register your school, go to: www.globalgateway.org.

Mona Halaby, Suzie McLean and Cathy Shields
Park Day School
Oakland, Calif.

GRADES

6-8



Write for Us!

If you're involved in a project that successfully promotes acceptance of diversity, community-building, peace and justice, tell us about it – and earn some extra money in the process.

Teacher essays (up to 1,000 words) describe effective classroom programs related to tolerance and diversity. Fees range from \$300 to \$800 per published essay.

Activity Exchange items (up to 400 words) should include concise information on specific classroom activities. A fee of \$100 to \$200 is paid for each Activity Exchange item published.

Longer lesson plans will be considered for inclusion on our website.

Fees for web activities range from \$200 to \$500.

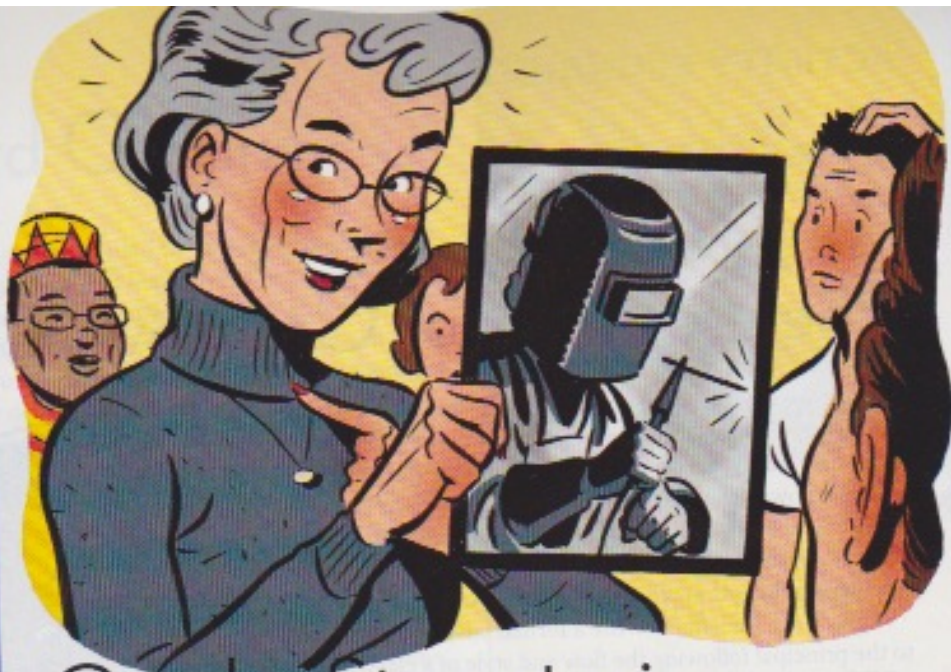
Study previous issues of the magazine to see the style and content we're looking for, and send your manuscript to:

Teaching Tolerance

ATTN: Submissions

400 Washington Ave
Montgomery, AL 36104

We also welcome artwork or photography relating to the activity.



Gender Stereotyping

AS A SCHOOL COUNSELOR ON A K-8 CAMPUS, I prepare classroom guidance lessons for all students on topics of tolerance. At the beginning of a new school year, I like to introduce students to the adults on campus. I have created a lesson plan to go along with this that gets at stereotyping as well.

I do a brief interview with the adults to find out what careers they've had prior to arriving on campus. I make sure to interview a wide variety of adults: nurse, custodian, principal, teachers, librarian and attendance clerk. Careers prior to coming to our school include everything from newspaper carrier to deputy sheriff. Be sure that you can explain whatever career is identified.

In front of the students, I write two lists on the board. On the left hand side I list the adults they know in our school. On the right hand side I list the various jobs and careers these adults have held in their past.

I explain that their task is to match the job or former career with the person; once they think they have a guess, they can raise their hands and share their speculation. Students can talk to each other, make predictions and share their assumptions openly. With me facilitating, it usually takes 10 to 15 minutes to get all the adults and jobs matched correctly. Here the lesson really begins.

I ask the students if any of the outcomes surprised them and why. Without fail, I will get a stereotype pertaining to gender or a prejudicial statement regarding appearance. For instance, one of my former jobs was working as an umpire. Statements made by students about my former job typically include, "But you're a girl," or, "But you wear skirts!" Our principal's former job was working as a gas station attendant, and students make declarations like, "She doesn't look like someone who'd work where she'd get dirty."

There are many directions this lesson can go. I like to show students that everyone has a work history and that they began in unusual places. Students can see that most adults work up a career ladder and are working towards a goal. Most importantly, for me, we can examine stereotypes around gender, class and the way people look or are perceived.

Mollie Reams
Avondale Unified School District
Avondale, Ariz.

GRADES
7-9

The Business of Controversial Topics

DURING MY ROOKIE YEAR OF TEACHING, several of my high school students secretly tacked up a small Confederate flag in the back of my classroom. After class, other students ripped it down. The next day, a larger version of the flag appeared, and this precipitated an even angrier conflict as more students entered the fray. I took this as one of my first teachable moments and developed a project around it.

I asked my students to write a formal business letter to the principal following the flow and style of a classical argument. I instructed the students to defend or to criticize the actions of their peers. Their position, however, needed to contain a few concessions to the other side. This concession part was key — the instructional equivalent of Harper Lee's admonition in *To Kill a Mockingbird* where Atticus Finch says, "You can never really understand a person until you consider things from his point of view ... until you climb into his skin and walk around in it."

Some students argued that the battle flag symbolized Southern pride; but they conceded that the flag may be offensive to Blacks. Other students argued that the flag was nothing more than a sign of ignorance and racism.

Eventually the flag was banned, not by an opposing group, but by the students who originally displayed it. These students, most of them white, privileged and deeply conservative, demonstrated empathy by "walking around" in another person's "skin." I'd like to think that the structure and demands of the writing fostered these feelings and actions.

Now I have students choose any controversial topic and write a business letter regarding it. Or I simply wait for a controversy to crop up on our campus like a recent student proposal that our school fund a gay-straight alliance on campus. I always encourage students to write on topics that are relevant to them, since relevance is a jumping-off point for any classroom project.
Mark Franek
The William Penn Charter School
Philadelphia, Pa.

THE FIVE ELEMENTS OF A CLASSICAL ARGUMENT

INTRODUCTION
Announce the topic

NARRATION
Present relevant background information

CONFIRMATION
Present the principal reasons in support of your point of view

CONCESSION
Consider opposing viewpoints and concede (agree or give a nod to) at least one argument of the opposition

CONCLUSION
Restate your opinion

GRADES
9-12





Word Origins

I DESIGNED A GAME called *Origins* that exposes the history and prejudice of many words or expressions commonly used in the United States. It started out as a short quiz and has grown to 30 terms. Because some of the terms are so commonly used, we either have forgotten their origins or debate their etymology. Two currently contentious terms include "rule of thumb" and "paddy wagon"; a Google search reveals just how controversial such terms can be.

GRADES
9-12

The game asks students to guess at the origins of everyday language that has surprising roots. My students play this game in class, and we have fun making up definitions. I get requests for copies of *Origins* from graduates of our program, who often use it for staff in-services when they are employed in

nonprofits or schools. With necessary modifications to explicit terminology, the game could also work in a high school classroom.

Begin by randomly selecting three judges and supplying them with the instructions to: break the rest of the students into groups of five or six; distribute questions for round one; give each group four minutes to write the common usage and origin for the words on the sheet (they must contrive an answer even if they have no idea of the meaning or origin or the word or phrase); and have each group report their answers. The handout looks like this:

Gypped

Common usage _____

Origin _____

Judges award two possible points for the common usage and three possible points for the origin of the word or phrase. At the end of each round, the judges read the actual definitions and origins of the terms from the key. Students are usually surprised that "gypped" is from the word gypsy, reflecting the belief that Gypsies (people from East India and the Balkan states) will cheat you or steal from you. Here is another example from the key:

Hag

Common usage Ugly or old woman.

Origin Holy woman. Derived from Egyptian heq, meaning
matriarchal ruler.

Download a PDF version of *Origins* at www.teachingtolerance.org/resources.

Sudie Hofmann
St. Cloud State University
St. Cloud, Minn.



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THAT'S SO GHETTO.

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