Fostering Student Activism to Create Local and National Change
Why do you teach?

“The classroom with all its limitations remains a location of possibility. In that field of possibility we have the opportunity to labour for freedom, to demand of ourselves and our comrades, an openness of mind and heart that allows us to face reality even as we collectively imagine ways to move beyond boundaries, to transgress. This is education as the practice of freedom.”

bell hooks
6 ELEMENTS OF SJE

1. Self love and Knowledge
2. Respect For Others
3. Issues of Social Injustice
4. Social Movements and Social Change
5. Awareness Raising
6. Social Action

TK and 2nd Grade are different in many ways but our DREAMS are very similar!

different hair colors
different ages
different skin colors
different eye colors
different favorite movies
different clothes
different names
different heights \& different shapes
different shoes
we celebrate different holidays
some of us are righties, others lefties
we live in different neighborhoods
different houses
some of us are girls, some are boys
different birthdays and MUCH MORE!

to have fun!
world peace
to be happy
to make the world a better place

Names: Wills and Roxon

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group One</th>
<th>Group Two</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Crazy Athlete</td>
<td>Video Games</td>
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<tr>
<td>Athlete</td>
<td>Boss</td>
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<td>Sports</td>
<td>Doctor</td>
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<td>Strong</td>
<td>Captain Underpants</td>
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<td>Pokemon</td>
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<td>Scientist</td>
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<td>Dolls</td>
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<td>Sensitive</td>
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<td>Pink</td>
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<td>Good in school</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Fairy tales</td>
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<td>Purple</td>
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</tbody>
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Title: Mike and Parker's Best Friend

Things We Noticed:

Emily: I see my self in the book

Parker: I do not see my self in the book.
The Journey by Francesca Sanna
Recommendations

- Incorporate a social justice lens across all disciplines
- Identify and get the support of key stakeholders in the school
- Invite and encourage parents and the school community to participate
- Follow students’ passions and desires
- “Rather than teach children the correct labels or names for people, let's teach them that differences are only a part of who we are. It is not the total of who we are.”
  - Dr. C Metzler
Small Steps...

- Listen to your students. What current events are they talking about?
- Address the students as activists or changemakers. What problems do they see in society (or your school)? Do they have any ideas for addressing these problems?
- Talk to other teachers at your school about critical social justice issues.
- Connect with other social justice educators and local activists for support and inspiration.
Using Literature to Foster Activism

- Weekly Social Justice Read Aloud
- Classroom Library Assessment: How Culturally Responsive is Your Library?

Questionnaire

Educators, how culturally responsive and diverse is your classroom library? Use the following questions as a guide to analyze your classroom library book collections and determine where there are strengths and where there are gaps in diversity.

To what extent do you agree with the following statements?

1. The classroom library contains multiple books that include...
   - non-human, anthropomorphic main characters (e.g., talking animals, talking trucks, talking vegetables, imaginary or science fiction creatures, etc.)

2. The classroom library contains numerous books that include...
   - main characters of color
   - main characters who are lesbian, gay, bisexual, or transgender
   - main characters with disabilities

3. The classroom library contains numerous books that...
   - are written or illustrated by a person of color or a Native/Indigenous person
   - feature a person of color or a Native/Indigenous person on the front cover
   - feature contemporary diverse characters and storylines
   - feature a range of family structures and family configurations
   - feature characters with different types of gender identity and gender expression
   - are set in contemporary Asia

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*Lee & Low Books*

*Jacob's New Dress* © 2017 Lee & Low Books

*Written and Illustrated by Innosanto Nagara*
Using Writing to Foster Activism

- Letter Writing
- Changemakers Book
Using Art to Foster Activism

- Picture Interpretation
- Visual Thinking Strategies
- Bechdel and Race Bechdel Test
Resources

- Teaching Tolerance
- Get Free: Hip Hop Civics Ed (Dr. Bettina Love)
- Using Their Words: SJE Units and Projects
- Raising Race Conscious Kids blog and trainings
- Lee & Low Books blog
- weare
- Teaching for Change
- Citizenship and Social Justice
- Facing History
Contact Me

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References

- hooks, bell (1994) *Teaching to Transgress. Education as the practice of freedom,* London: Routledge. 216 + x pages. Draws on Freire but looks to developing a feminist, engaged pedagogy relevant to multicultural contexts.