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The DENIAL of RACISM

A CALL TO ACTION



The Denial of Racism: A Call to Action (Part I)

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George Floyd's killing brought us together for this special issue.

A year later, we wrapped up the manuscripts for this issue and witnessed the trial and conviction of Derek Chauvin. Floyd's killing raised an aggressive nationwide awareness and called for direct action to be taken to change institutions in civil society—from education to law enforcement. At this critical moment, art educators have the responsibility to educate ourselves and others, to work as allies with anyone fighting against racial injustice, and to take concrete actions that push art education toward structural changes so that all may thrive.

This call to action is particularly important given the ongoing conservative attack on critical race theory (CRT) that began with former President Trump's executive order in September 2020 that banned diversity training based on CRT (Cineas, 2020). The state of Iowa revived Trump's order—that President Biden rescinded—by passing a bill that bans K–12 schools and public universities from providing diversity training grounded in CRT (Richardson, 2021).

When it comes to the campaign against CRT, the fear is part of the point, and that denial is at the core of racism. This reality is hard for us to accept. Our struggle to accept the denial, and the structural and systemic racism it perpetuates, inspired the following conversation among the coeditors of this issue.

Amy:
Although there has not been much writing on antiracism in our field, the past decade has witnessed our field using CRT to make sense of race and racism in art education. There is a direct link here with potential implications for the kind of instructional resources (IRs) and modeling that we were calling for in this special issue. The research of critical race scholars provides a conceptual groundwork for antiracist teaching and vocabularies, and constructive race dialogues.

Steve:
The recent national conversation about banning CRT from schools is troubling. Banning CRT from schools also means removing it from art education. That is, the conversation about race in the United States would not move forward. CRT is not restricted to one discipline or discourse, but rather it can be applied as an analytic across the curriculum.

Amy:
I want to point out an important precedent for these recent attacks on CRT. In 2010, ethnic studies was banned in Arizona schools when the state legislature signed into law House Bill 2281. Ethnic studies is very much a part of CRT's genealogy and is the basis of multicultural education. Whether we like it or not, the curriculum is a battleground.

Steve:
You remind me of the film *Precious Knowledge* (Palos, 2011). The film documents the efforts of the Tucson Unified School District in Arizona to ban the Mexican American studies program or La Raza Studies, and the protests by teachers and students to resist this decision.

Dipti:
Curriculum and education have always been a battleground. This IR special issue is an opening to think about what it means to do antiracist work grounded in CRT at a time when CRT is under attack. Censorship of CRT continues to highlight racism as endemic to U.S. society, indicating that we really have not moved forward in terms of race relations. In some states, art teachers will be confronted with the censorship of CRT. They will need to support each other to develop antiracist pedagogy in their classrooms and to become the voice of resistance. Given the



Coeditors of the special issue, The Denial of Racism: A Call to Action, during a recent online discussion: L–R, top row: Asavari Thatte; B. Stephen Carpenter, II; Kendall Crabbe. L–R, middle row: Ashley Mask; Amelia ("Amy") M. Kraehe; Dipti Desai. Bottom row: Ami Kantawala.

attacks on CRT, this issue is critical. It opens the space to have a much-needed dialogue on CRT as a framework for antiracist art education pedagogy. It is a call to action.

Ami:

The idea is to have these difficult conversations. Too many people do not want to talk about it. What remains at the heart of systemic racism is a denial to have that dialogue. In Ibram X. Kendi's (2018) words, "This denial of racism is the heartbeat of racism. Where there is suffering from racist policies, there are denials that those policies are racist. The beat of denial sounds the same across time and space" (para. 11). As a field we have not had these conversations. We have not woven CRT through our teacher education programs. Most educators are not prepared to implement antiracist pedagogy, as was evident in the manuscripts submitted. We received 40 manuscripts and only considered 15% for publication, which is revealing but presents an opportunity to shift our attention to rethink how we teach and learn.

Amy:

It is not simply a matter of not wanting to talk about race or racism, but it is also about not knowing *how*, not having the requisite knowledge or racial literacy to converse fluently (Guinier, 2004). We need to develop a vocabulary. Otherwise our attempts at dialogue go nowhere.

Steve:

Over the past several years I have often heard some White people declare their interest in doing antiracist work. They desire to be an ally but do not know what to do. They often turn to people of color and ask, "What do I need to be doing?" The pervasiveness of this question is why all teachers need to read this issue of the journal, as it provides some of the ways people are deploying CRT through art education.

What Were We Excited to See in the Submissions?

Ashley:

Authors talked openly about taking risks, including challenges that they faced, perhaps feeling they were doing it wrong, as well as successes that came from taking risks. Teachers reading this issue will not feel alone in taking risks. Risk is an integral part of this process.

Curriculum and education have always been a battleground.

Asavari:

Some of the most powerful works in this issue exhibit compelling honesty where educators share their experiences of vulnerability and courage. These voices must be heard now more than ever with the hope that they light the path for other educators who wish to enact and live antiracist pedagogy, providing the necessary vocabulary, rigor, and ideas to carry forward this work.

Amy:

I was excited to read Alisha Mernick's IR. She does a beautiful job demonstrating and giving language to how she scaffolds racial literacy. She describes scaffolding in the context of a yearlong Art 1 curriculum and shows readers what it looks like "up close" in a single project focused on the theme of identity. It is easy to see the moves she makes and the careful decision making behind them. I do not think I have seen the practice of critical art pedagogy modeled as carefully and clearly as it is in this piece of writing. It highlights specific skills that take time to develop. To underscore this point, who among us would hand a student a brayer, some ink, and a plate and tell them to go make a print, and expect the student to be successful on the first try? No one. We would expect students to do it again and again and again. We would also expect there to be appropriate support in place to scaffold their learning. The same applies when developing racial literacy. It takes time and supported practice.

Kendall:

Luis-Genaro Garcia's IR draws on students' funds of knowledge as cultural assets to reframe art education curriculum (González et al., 2005). Garcia flips the dominant narrative as he shares counternarratives and teaches students to draw on the cultural wealth of their communities to challenge racism (Yosso, 2005). This student-centered approach to antiracist pedagogy, using storytelling and counternarratives, is a great example of CRT in practice.

A third of the IR manuscripts and less than a third of all submissions were from authors of color. What does that mean? Why were their voices missing? One reason might be people of color are tired.

All six IRs demonstrate antiracist art education as an orientation that uses CRT to scaffold critical consciousness and racial literacy through the arts. These authors understand that antiracist art education can be challenging, but the impact on teaching and learning can and should extend far beyond the art room. I was excited to see these examples of theory in practice!

What Was Missing?

Steve:

A third of the IR manuscripts and less than a third of all submissions were from authors of color. What does that mean? Why were their voices missing? One reason might be people of color are tired. They have been thinking about and doing this work their entire life. One can theorize what it means to be a good person, but how does one practice being a good person?

Ami:

I found it perturbing to receive manuscripts that did *not* speak to what was asked for in the special issue call, specifically in the context of author positionality. Educators and researchers must be meticulously aware of their racialized and cultural systems for themselves and for the community of people they study or educate. Educators increasingly bend the arc of justice to develop a positive sense of racial and ethnic identity. This is an enduring practice that requires unlearning the falsification and presumed stereotypes about ourselves and others (Tatum, 2001). Thus, it was a missed opportunity for authors not to speak to this point. One can only hope that this issue will prompt art educators to be more reflective about who they are in relation to "others." Only then will the field of art education have taken a step forward to work through the dangers seen, unforeseen, and unseen in making a change to address systemic racism.

Where Does the Field Need to Go?

Asavari:

One of the main challenges of editing this issue was being cognizant of the need to allow educators' honest narratives to emerge, while maintaining academic rigor in the writing. This tension between theory and practice is not new; it is pervasive in the field at large.

Dipti:

We must scaffold racial literacy for it to be an embodied way of knowing. One needs to first understand how *racisms* are structured in our society in different ways, how they function differently across various racial groups, and then we need to learn how to talk about them in classrooms. Given the different histories of marginalization in our country, the racism experienced by African Americans is different from Indigenous people or Asian Americans. This complicates the ways in which racisms are experienced and makes it difficult for those of us who have been trying to do antiracist pedagogy to not inadvertently perpetuate racism. Weaving antiracist pedagogy into all our courses for preservice students in universities and for art teachers, and building a curriculum that continues over a whole year and beyond

One needs to first understand how *racisms* are structured in our society in different ways, how they function differently across various racial groups, and then we need to learn how to talk about them in classrooms.

is imperative. Antiracist pedagogy takes time. One cannot learn it in one art class or one preservice class on diversity. It is an ongoing process of learning, unlearning, and relearning that takes time.

Steve:

Yes, we must look at university preservice art teacher programs—including the programs with which we are affiliated. This hard work must take place. Three of the six IRs (Hamlin, Link, and Garcia) are situated within or reference higher education preservice programs. We must also consider Praxis exams and other gatekeeping practices, policies, and systems that set expectations.

Amy:

Standards and teacher certification exams like the Praxis set the conditions for how we teach in K–20 art education. The standards give legitimacy to whatever is cataloged and codified within it. I have heard instructors in art teacher preparation programs complain about this and other structural reasons why little has been done to advance antiracist art education over many decades. But it occurs to me that we are talking about these things in the context of *Art Education*, the flagship journal of NAEA, an organization that has a very large presence in the world of art education. I am wondering what this organization of 17,000+ members—situated near Washington, DC, and in conversation with other similar organizations—can do.

I know from my own prior research that K–12 and postsecondary art educators comprise the committees that formulate and revise learning standards for students. Once the K–12 art standards are set, art teacher education standards are aligned with them, and then Praxis and test-making corporations like ETS come into play. They operationalize that system of standards in the form of high-stakes teacher certification tests used for admittance to teacher education programs and for state licensing of teachers. Tests like the Praxis serve as gatekeeping mechanisms that ultimately keep too many students of color from ever entering teacher preparation programs to begin with. So, who sits on the committees to write and revise art learning standards? You know, it is K–12 art teachers and some from higher education who sit on these committees. Teachers can take an activist role to intervene in these larger structures that set the conditions within which we work.

I also want to circle back to Jessica Hamlin and Victoria Restler's IR, which is interesting for a number of reasons. They address the body and what whiteness feels like from the inside out—from the experience of being a White person in a White-dominant educational institution. People exist on a continuum of racial awareness. Some folks would benefit from learning how to do critical self-reflection. That is a skill set that needs practice. Like driving round and round in a cul-de-sac, self-reflection can look and feel like you are doing something meaningful, and yet reflection without action can lead to nowhere or right back where you started.

Ashley:

That takes us back to vocabulary. While it's becoming more common to recognize, acknowledge, and reflect on our own privilege, it may not have occurred to many people that their privilege goes hand in hand with the art projects they design and the artists they show their students. That goes back to what Amy said about having to learn this stuff. We are all still learning. Once positionality is pointed out, people realize, "Oh right, that's how I'm viewing the world. I need to be explicit about that and reflect on it."

Ami:

It takes courage to do antiracist work and engage in a conversation. That is the first step toward taking action. Going beyond that conversation to take action, to make a difference, and to have that ingrained in you is lifelong work. The desire to do this work can only happen if it hits you at your core and you recognize that something is indeed wrong.

Dipti:

We in art education must begin courageous conversations about the ways our preservice courses perpetuate core ideas about the arts that continue to reproduce colonialism and modernism as racialized discourses, such as self-expression, creativity, the emotional role of art, and imagination, to name a few. Deconstructing the language of art and design that we use to teach visual arts is critical to antiracist pedagogy.

What Is Next?

Ashley:

The authors were explicit about seeing antiracist art education as a process by posing questions, such as "What's next? What am I going to keep working on? What are the questions that still remain?"

Amy:

It must continue. Antiracism is not merely a topic to be covered in one lesson or even one curriculum unit. Antiracism is an orientation. It is an approach, and it is ongoing. Likewise, this collection of IRs may offer a beginning, but it is not a "one-and-done" issue representing the totality of antiracist thought and practice in the field.

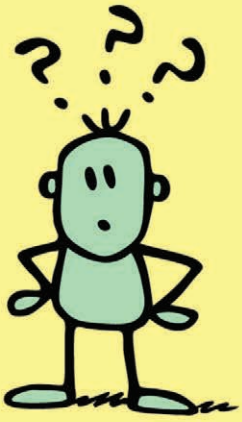
WHAT IS CRITICAL RACE THEORY?

Critical Race Theory (CRT) is a framework that is used to help us understand why racial inequities exist in our society and how we can eradicate them.





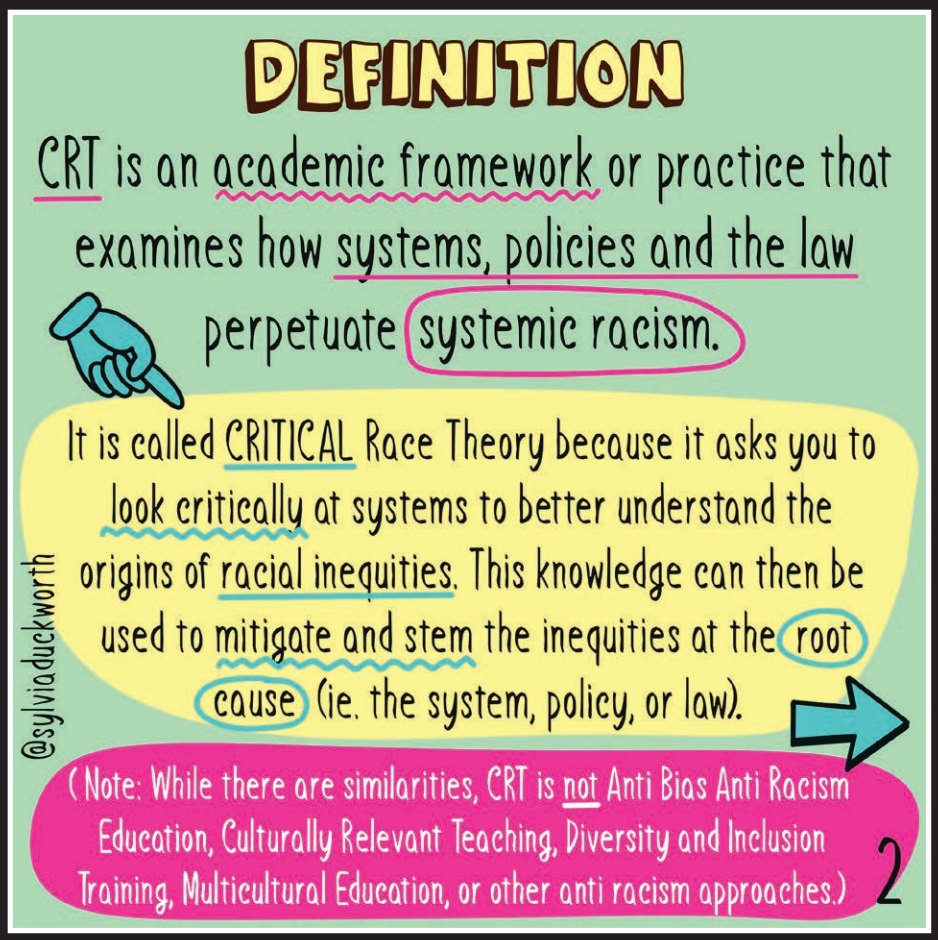
Why is this so threatening to some white people?

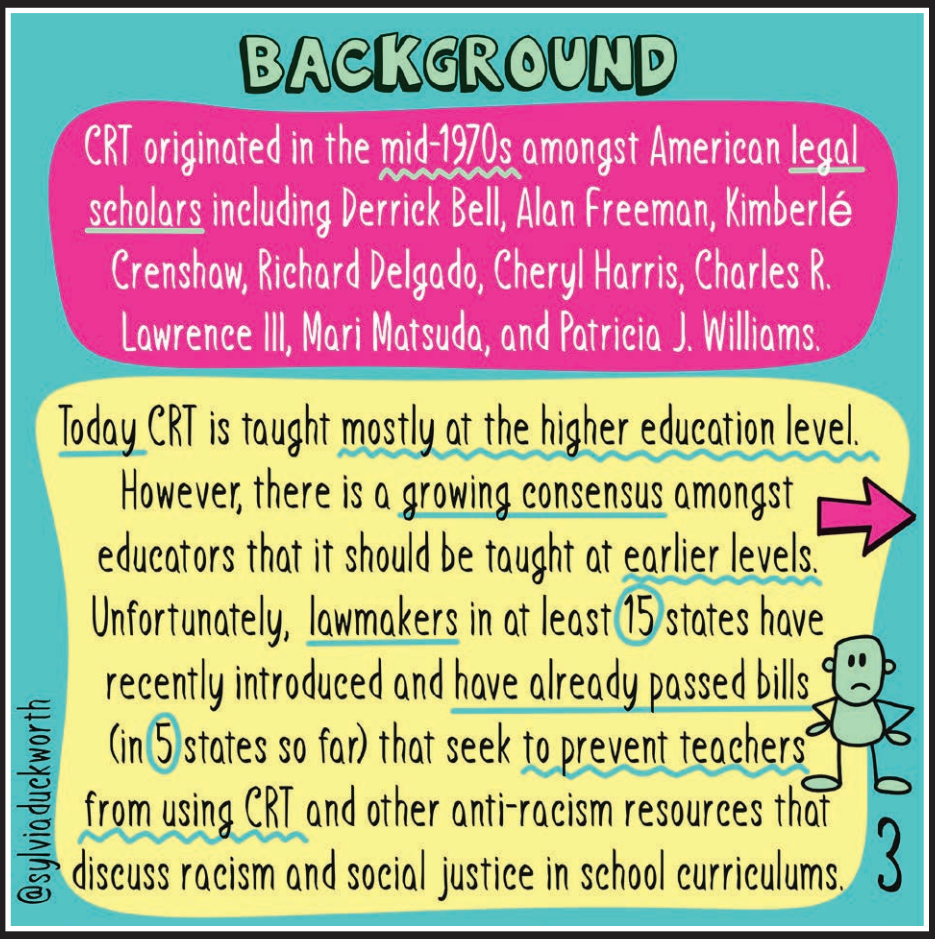


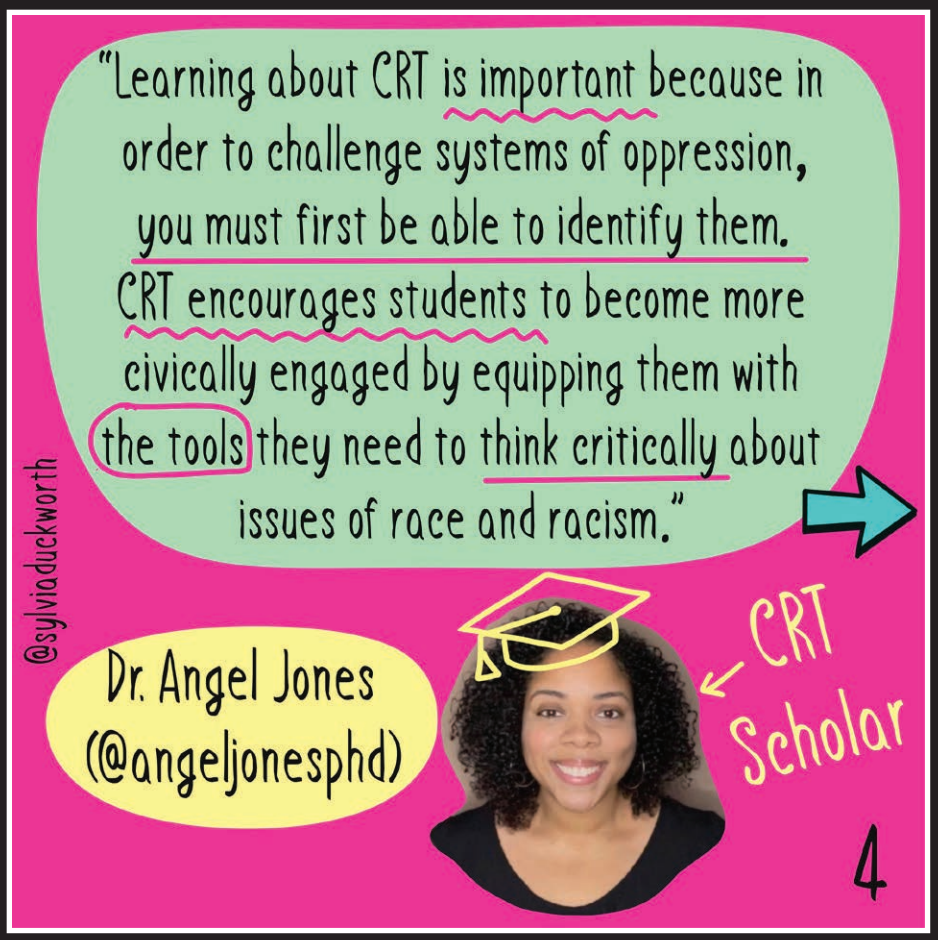
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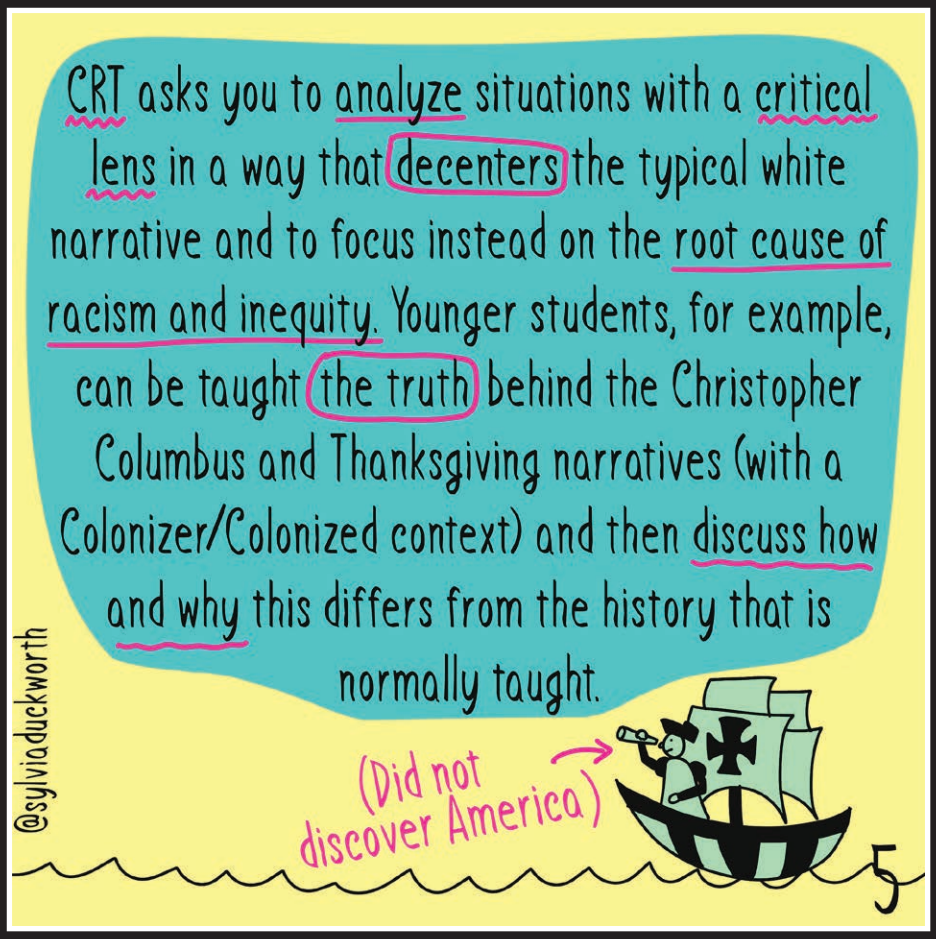
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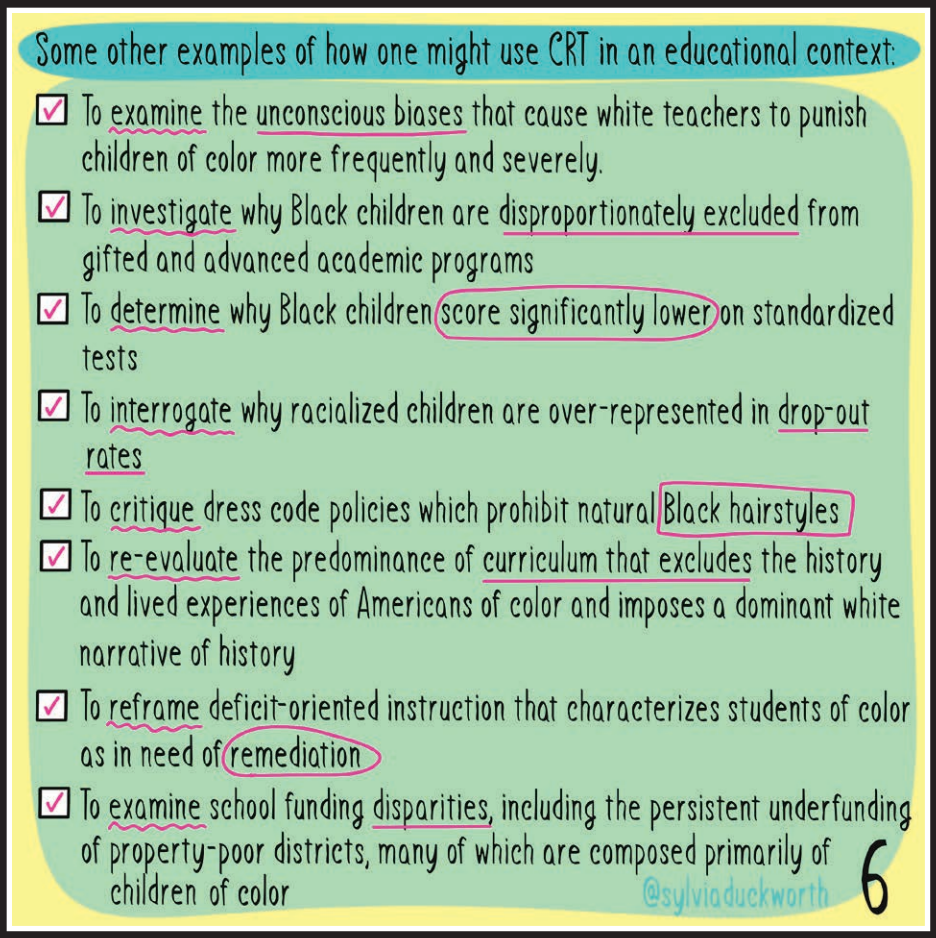


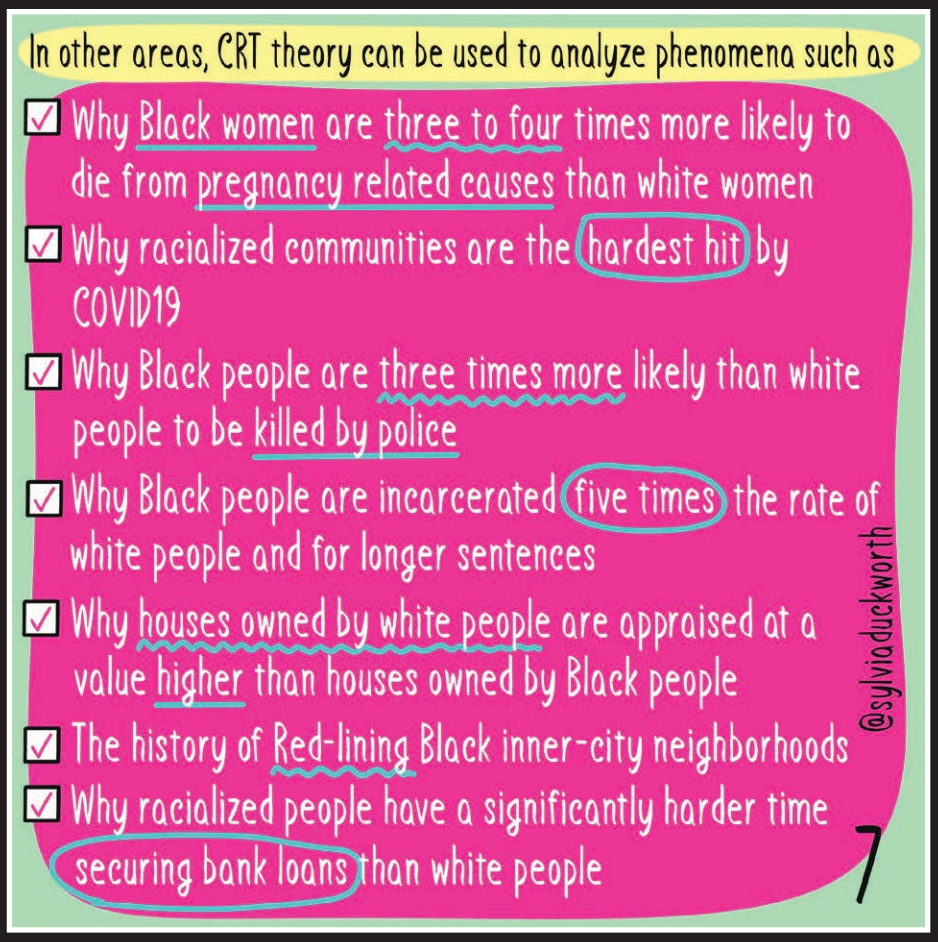

DEFINITION
CRT is an academic framework or practice that examines how systems, policies and the law perpetuate systemic racism.
It is called CRITICAL Race Theory because it asks you to look critically at systems to better understand the origins of racial inequities. This knowledge can then be used to mitigate and stem the inequities at the root cause (ie. the system, policy, or law).
(Note: While there are similarities, CRT is not Anti Bias Anti Racism Education, Culturally Relevant Teaching, Diversity and Inclusion Training, Multicultural Education, or other anti racism approaches.)
@sylviaduckworth
2


BACKGROUND
CRT originated in the mid-1970s amongst American legal scholars including Derrick Bell, Alan Freeman, Kimberlé Crenshaw, Richard Delgado, Cheryl Harris, Charles R. Lawrence III, Mari Matsuda, and Patricia J. Williams.
Today CRT is taught mostly at the higher education level. However, there is a growing consensus amongst educators that it should be taught at earlier levels. Unfortunately, lawmakers in at least 15 states have recently introduced and have already passed bills (in 5 states so far) that seek to prevent teachers from using CRT and other anti-racism resources that discuss racism and social justice in school curriculums.
@sylviaduckworth
3


"Learning about CRT is important because in order to challenge systems of oppression, you must first be able to identify them. CRT encourages students to become more civically engaged by equipping them with the tools they need to think critically about issues of race and racism."
@sylviaduckworth
Dr. Angel Jones (@angeljonesphd)
CRT Scholar
4


CRT asks you to analyze situations with a critical lens in a way that decenters the typical white narrative and to focus instead on the root cause of racism and inequity. Younger students, for example, can be taught the truth behind the Christopher Columbus and Thanksgiving narratives (with a Colonizer/Colonized context) and then discuss how and why this differs from the history that is normally taught.
@sylviaduckworth
(Did not discover America)
5


Some other examples of how one might use CRT in an educational context:
☑ To examine the unconscious biases that cause white teachers to punish children of color more frequently and severely.
☑ To investigate why Black children are disproportionately excluded from gifted and advanced academic programs
☑ To determine why Black children score significantly lower on standardized tests
☑ To interrogate why racialized children are over-represented in drop-out rates
☑ To critique dress code policies which prohibit natural Black hairstyles
☑ To re-evaluate the predominance of curriculum that excludes the history and lived experiences of Americans of color and imposes a dominant white narrative of history
☑ To reframe deficit-oriented instruction that characterizes students of color as in need of remediation
☑ To examine school funding disparities, including the persistent underfunding of property-poor districts, many of which are composed primarily of children of color
@sylviaduckworth
6


In other areas, CRT theory can be used to analyze phenomena such as
☑ Why Black women are three to four times more likely to die from pregnancy related causes than white women
☑ Why racialized communities are the hardest hit by COVID19
☑ Why Black people are three times more likely than white people to be killed by police
☑ Why Black people are incarcerated five times the rate of white people and for longer sentences
☑ Why houses owned by white people are appraised at a value higher than houses owned by Black people
☑ The history of Red-lining Black inner-city neighborhoods
☑ Why racialized people have a significantly harder time securing bank loans than white people
@sylviaduckworth
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There are a few key CRT themes which align with other anti-racism approaches:

1. Race is a social construct created to benefit white people.
2. Systemic racism exists across many spectrums (Criminal Justice system, policing, housing, healthcare, education, banking, politics, etc.)
3. "A few bad apples" is a false narrative; racism is both individual and systemic.
4. White privilege leads to false ideas of meritocracy.
5. "Color blindness" invalidates racialized peoples' experiences
6. The experiences of oppression is exacerbated when a racialized person has additional marginalized identities ("Intersectionality")
7. Internalized racism occurs when a racialized person believes that they are inferior to white people.
8. Racialized people have valid and unique experiences that need to be heard.

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CONCLUSION

There is no reason to fear CRT. As our awareness of how racist systems and policies originate and are perpetuated, so does our understanding of how to dismantle them.* Only those who fear a loss of power will feel threatened.*





@sylviaduckworth

Accounts to follow

1. @angeljonesphd
2. @katerslater
3. @kimberlecrenshaw
4. @akademic67
5. @chrisemdin
6. @chicanstocracy_blog

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ACTION ITEMS
1 Follow and support Dr. Kimberlé Crenshaw's work with African American Policy Forum @aapolicyforum, where they are actively tracking anti-CRT legislation at aapf.org/truthbetold
2 Research anti-CRT legislation in your state and call your representatives to urge them to vote it down.
@sylviaduckworth
For a Google doc with more CRT resources and the full text to these slides, please visit my Linktree or go to bit.ly/CRTbreakdown
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@sylvi
Dr. Angel Jones
(@angeljonesphd)

HEARTBEAT OF TEACHER EDUCATION:

Making the Uncomfortable Conversation Comfortable



SPEAKING WITH PROVOST AND DEAN STEPHANIE J. ROWLEY

Ami Kantawala

In my past editorials I posed several questions for us as educators to consider making a collective change to bend the long arc of history toward justice, and to challenge ourselves to be more proactive in thinking about established practices and those that need to be changed.

In his open letter to NAEA's communities of practice, James Haywood Rolling, Jr. (2020b) calls on art educators to take a firm grip of their "purple crayon" (p. 8; see also Rolling, 2020a) to draw local doorways to social justice education by disrupting the macro-level narratives of systemic racism. Amy Kraehe and David Herman, Jr. (2020) persuasively argue that although "racism is a systemic social malady powered by laws, institutional policies and practices" (p. 4), the urgencies that result ask, "What is it that each of us is willing to risk to lean into the moment and respond to the demands for a more just existence?" (p. 6). This further entrenches inequality in education, deep digital segregation, and disparities facing millions of children of color.

What remains evident is the long-standing lack of reimagining universal education—a concept considered essential to the country's success, as argued by a Washington newspaper editor, Samuel Harrison Smith, in 1797 (MacGillis, 2020). In this context, I present an interview with Teachers College Provost, Dean, and Vice President for Academic Affairs, Stephanie J. Rowley, who encourages us to consider antiracist education as a lifeline of our work whereby removing denial as its heartbeat, thus inviting us to rethink teacher education practices, makes the uncomfortable conversation comfortable.[1]

The key is giving people the tools to get into the classroom, having those difficult conversations, understanding who they are, their power and privilege, and then understanding the way power and privilege works for other people.

AK: *Growing up, did you have to face any challenges as a woman of color?*

SR: I grew up in a liberal town that prided itself on its colorblind ideology. I remember feeling uncomfortable because I, as a child from an upper middle class family, got privileges that other Black students did not get. I was often told that I wasn't like other Black students, and people thought that was a compliment. As I got older I realized the racist roots of those experiences and that really took me to my work on race, gender, and social class that I have pursued.

AK: *Was there any experience—growing up, in school, or in your life—which pushed you to do antiracist work?*

SR: My graduate school mentor, Robert Sellers, showed me early on that we can all lead and build structures that are antiracist. As a very young professor, he created a conference for Black graduate students to make sure that they were getting high-quality mentoring and as a pipeline to the professoriate. I worked on developing that conference as a graduate student, and it has been in place for nearly 30 years. A huge number of Black psychologists came through the conference and use the group as their network. It's really incredible!



AK: *As a leader of a teacher training college, what is your vision for educators and graduate students to lead antiracist work?*

SR: Antiracist work should be a requirement for every teacher education student to leave Teachers College (or any other institution) with a skill set to be able to lead antiracist work. This allows them to stand at the forefront of issues of equity and justice in the classroom. It is equally important for teachers to be able to build a community that centers on antiracist values, which remains a challenge.

What teacher education programs need to do is give students the space to practice inclusive leadership and the right vocabulary to lead this work through their actions. This must come through a strong series of coursework in teacher training programs that leaves students with that expectation that they would take this work on the other side.

We assume that teacher educators feel as comfortable as they need to with concepts like antiracism, social justice, or inclusive classroom practices. Teacher educators are like all other human beings in that they come with a particular skill set that they have learned through their own life experiences, and they are not all prepared to lead this work. When I talk to faculty, oftentimes in those sorts of quiet private moments, they reveal that they also do not know how. I have talked to folks at TC who have said, "You know, I don't know how to talk to students about issues of race or I don't know what words to use. I do not know what is going to be inflammatory when my intention is to mean well."

AK: *If being an antiracist leader and educator is a never-ending process, how can we remain optimistic and engaged?*

SR: The first step is really making sure that we are providing professional development to our own teacher educators so that they have the tools to build their vocabulary and skill set with which they feel comfortable. I think oftentimes we assume that they got it in their teacher education programs, but we know from a variety of research studies that very few students receive this type of training. Students in teacher education programs are getting, at the most, one multicultural education course, which is a nice introduction. However, there is a need for more coursework and a critical race theory (CRT) lens to be ingrained through their graduate education. We need more than one class on multicultural education. The knowledge must be spread throughout the curriculum in an accessible way for everyone. Everyone needs

those skills. Everyone needs the space to access that kind of knowledge to be self-reflective. The key is giving people the tools to get into the classroom, having those difficult conversations, understanding who they are, their power and privilege, and then understanding the way power and privilege works for other people.

AK: *What kind of examples might you have for teacher training programs or for students who have not had the benefit of having an antiracist vocabulary in their graduate work, or are coming from places where this kind of training does not exist? What is your guidance to the folks who are still learning or have no exposure to this?*

SR: We assume that people can read about how to be antiracist and then enact those values. I hear from international students that faculty are assuming a certain level of cultural understanding, of general knowledge and history of things in the United States that they do not come with. So then they are sitting in the classroom, and people are talking over their heads about things they have never heard of. These students are continually worried that if they say something it may be seen as offensive. I think faculty in teacher education programs need to understand that every student is coming with their own background and that they need to be able to start at whatever point they show up with. Being open to supporting students wherever they start as opposed to punishing people for not having the knowledge that they expect—much like one would in any other classroom. Helping students to draw on their own cultural and marginalization experiences and creating a safe space to have that honest conversation is a good beginning.

AK: *Where does one start and/or how does one help others start to do equity and diversity work within their schools and classrooms?*

SR: Doing antiracist work and having cultural humility is a lifelong journey—there is always more for you to know. I have done a couple of webinars this year that were on antiracist leadership. Oftentimes people think of antiracist work as sort of a set of ideologies, but I argue that they are a set of actions. The action is where antiracist work is at. Oftentimes as leaders, we come to the table and imagine that we are going to do all the things: I am going to fix myself, I am going to fix my colleagues, I am going to have this great attitude, I am going to be inclusive of everyone without really getting any traction on any one specific issue. So, what we are left with is a lot of good intentions and a lot of nice beliefs, but not specific action or depth on any issue.

AK: *Why is discussion central to antiracist pedagogy?*

SR: *White Kids: Growing Up With Privilege in a Racially Divided America* by Margaret Hagerman (2018) highlights that what the White kids could not face was their own marginalization. It was hard for them to even talk about race. And those are the same



people who are becoming teachers. This liberal, not racist, idea of wanting to help everybody, then going into the classroom wanting to be colorblind and thinking it is an effective approach simply does not work.

Our culture has rendered issues surrounding race to be taboo. I am a big proponent of building an antiracist vocabulary, asking the questions, and feeling comfortable having uncomfortable conversations. And of course, I am a psychologist—and from our psychological research, if people do not speak what is on their mind, they suppress their biases and stereotypes, which then appear in other places.

AK: *What is the best response to "I do not see color, I see everyone as equal?"*

SR: Amanda Lewis's article, "There Is No Race in the Schoolyard: Colorblind Ideology in an (Almost) All White School" (2001), complicates racial logic by arguing that the actuality of racialized practices and color-conscious understandings are veiled by the colorblind ideology. I think you are helping people to understand when they say they do not see color, they are erasing an important piece of who I am as an individual of color. I feel like you are silencing an important piece of somebody's identity when you do that. If everyone understands that there is nobody in the circle that is perfect, that understands all the issues, then one feels less threatened by the experience. It is important for me to say that I do not have it all figured out.

People do see race and we know that people use race every day to categorize other people. People who enact the most biased behavior are those people who feel liberal. For example, I recall Amy Cooper, a White woman, who was caught on tape and charged by the District Attorney's office in New York City for calling the police on a Black bird-watcher in Central Park. Her defense was, "I am not a racist." She saw herself as liberal, yet called

Doing antiracist work and having cultural humility is a lifelong journey—there is always more for you to know.



We need more than one class on multicultural education. The knowledge must be spread throughout the curriculum in an accessible way for everyone.

Everyone needs those skills. Everyone needs the space to access that kind of knowledge to be self-reflective.

the police to report that an African American man was threatening her. I believe that if you do not "see race," you do not see me and my humanity, and you are more likely to engage in racism.

AK: *Tell us more about how art educators and others can take a first step on equity and diversity work in their schools and classrooms.*

SR: There are so many ways everybody could fully embrace this work, and beginning with using what you have at your disposal is a good first step. For art educators, inviting your students to share an art piece from their cultural group through the lens of their individual experiences often opens that conversational space. Have the kids talk about their own individual identities and what those identities mean to them.

I had attended a workshop where we were asked to think about what our lives might have been like several hundred years ago. It was extremely uncomfortable for some people to say, "If I was alive 100 or 200 years ago, I might have been a slave or a slave owner." But it was a way for us to think and have difficult conversations. I could see using a strategy like this or a reading that might help open difficult conversations.

Antiracist leadership should be planful and organized. It is important to start with an agenda, a set of things that you want to accomplish, rather than simply having the right values. People often assume that antiracist work is intuitive. It is not. People who feel like they are doing the right thing by doing anything are, in fact, doing more harm than good. Hence, being well-informed and well-read, and having an agenda, is the key. Antiracist leaders must also be self-aware. They must ask themselves what their role should be, if it is their voice that people need to hear, or whether their role might be to amplify the voices of the marginalized. Having that sort of cultural humility allows one to have an impact so that you are ready to do whatever comes next.

AK: Stephanie, this is such a powerful interview that offers so much thought for reflection and action for our readers to really push themselves to remove that denial and focus on action to build antiracist vocabulary and pedagogy. It is only then the heartbeat of teacher education will beat at a steady pace. ■

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Endnote

[1] Teachers College, Columbia University (TC) was one of the first American universities to offer coursework and degrees in visual arts education. Its roots began in courses in kitchen arts for girls and industrial studies for boys, and before the end of the 1880s, its curriculum included courses to train teachers in these subjects (Burton, 2001, p. 10). Between the years 1887 and 1891, three divisions were established: a training school for teachers, a model school for children, and special classes in manual training and fine arts. The provisional charter of 1893 described the college as a professional school with the following mission: "to give instruction in the history, philosophy and science of education, psychology, in the science and art of teaching, and also in manual training and the methods of teaching the various subjects included under that head" (Cremin, et al., 1954, as cited in Burton, 2001, p. 11).

In 1912, the college was divided into two schools: Practical Arts and Education. By 1927, the college had directed its work exclusively towards the education of educators, requiring that no degrees could be earned without courses in education. The combination of professional studio courses in fine and industrial arts and those in education that emerged from this new orientation laid the foundation for the evolution of visual arts education at TC (Burton, 2001, p. 12; Wygant, 1959).

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Critical Arts Pedagogy:

Nurturing Critical Consciousness and Self-Actualization Through Art Education

Alisha Mernick



Figure 1. A technical lesson on printmaking doubles as an opportunity for students to make protest art about a social issue of their choosing.

Creativity and Conscientization

"What is art? What is the relationship between art and the real world? How does art reflect, as well as shape, our world? How does art reflect, as well as shape, us?"

These are the first lines of the syllabus for my high school Art 1 course—these essential questions anchor my class, weave through everything we do, and give each learning experience greater purpose beyond the confines of the content or the classroom. It is important to me that my students leave my classroom with an understanding of the cyclical relationship between art and visual culture, and the society that creates it. I aim for students to recognize these cycles throughout art history and become involved as active participants in these cycles today.

Paulo Freire understood that schools could either be a force for maintaining the status quo or for liberation. Freire (1970/2000) recommended that teachers support students in developing a *critical consciousness*, the ability to name and analyze systems of inequity and oppression in society, and plan for actions against those systems. Ultimately, I want my students to develop their critical consciousness through artmaking.

Artmaking, to me, is an ideal medium for *conscientization*—the development of a critical awareness about our world and our role as active participants in transforming it (Freire, 1970, p. 452). Artists typically learn to observe, reflect, envision, judge, and revise their artwork. Similarly, critically conscious members of society aim to observe our world closely, reflect on what we see, envision alternate ways of being, and engage in a continuous cycle of judging and revising our world toward these goals. Art education is an ideal space for a young person to develop their creative capacities, and this should include their ability to create the world and the history in which they wish to live.

In my classroom, students use the creative process not only to create and improve their physical artworks but to "freedom dream," to reflect on our world, envision alternatives, and take steps toward creating a world free of oppression (Love, 2019, p. 1). I believe that conscientization begins with a nuanced understanding of the self. I am a light-skinned, Middle Eastern, able-bodied, straight-sized, neurodiverse, queer, cis woman who is actively engaged in my personal antiracist healing and liberation work. My students are primarily children of color whose families consist of recent immigrants, with a broad range of identities, abilities, and interests, living in a historically marginalized and high-poverty community in downtown Los Angeles. I have recognized the power that comes with a critical awareness about my own social identities, and one of my goals in the classroom is to engage students in a critical analysis of their world through the lens of self.

Scaffolding Toward Critical Consciousness

As antiracist and antibias education becomes more popular, many educators are now teaching more "diverse" artists in their curriculum. However, educators who strive for conscientization and social justice through their pedagogy must go beyond merely diversifying the artists we teach (Acuff, 2018). We must put our lesson planning, classroom culture, and teaching style all in service of one core goal: to transform our classrooms into liberatory spaces where students are supported in recognizing, processing, and challenging systems of oppression (racism, colorism, heterosexism, abusive capitalism, settler colonialism, and cultural hegemony).

Therefore, I cannot rely on one or two token "activism" units to impart an enduring critical lens (Miner, 2014). Instead, I curriculum map and scaffold toward critical consciousness over the entire year. Every unit I teach has two objectives: an artistic technique or concept, and an essential question related to equity, liberation, and justice (Figure 1). These essential questions build on each other and develop in complexity over the school year (Wiggins & McTighe, 2005).

For example, when we study color theory, we also discuss subjectivity and problematize Eurocentric understandings of objective color symbolism. When we practice portraiture, students interview community members and create immigration counternarrative portraits. When we study graphic design, we also study critical media literacy and deconstruct how media reinforces stereotypes and social values.

Each lesson provides opportunities for young people to reflect critically on their lives and their world. Over time, students sharpen their critical lens and create more and more complex, conceptual artwork. This culminates in a final project in which students have a great deal of freedom regarding their technique, materials, or media—constrained only by the thematic focus: identity.

Cumulative Project: Contemporary Art and Identity

Critical self-reflection, including understanding one's multiple intersecting identities and their position within systems of power, is foundational to both ethnic studies education and antiracist identity work (Crenshaw, 2017; Sleeter & Zavala, 2020). Our final project leads students through some of this identity work, grounding them in their positionality and helping them recognize their own spaces of power, oppression, and privilege.

We must put our lesson planning, classroom culture, and teaching style all in service of one core goal: to transform our classrooms into liberatory spaces where students are supported in recognizing, processing, and challenging systems of oppression (racism, colorism, heterosexism, abusive capitalism, settler colonialism, and cultural hegemony).

We begin this project with identity mapping. I stand at the front of the room—modeling the self-work and emotional poignancy I ask of them—as I map my own identities on the board (Figure 2). I begin with my name and five lines branching out to different contexts in my life: School, Family, Friends, Personal, and Society. "How many of you are a slightly different person when you are hanging with your friends than you are while visiting an elder in your family?" I ask. We laugh as the majority of the class raise their hands. This framing helps students recognize the way social context shapes identity and how each individual exists as multiple identities within different contexts.

Next, I name and list two to three roles that I play within each of the contexts listed. Under School, I write "teacher, employee, coworker." Students follow along, completing their charts as we talk, writing "student, classmate, athlete"—whatever applies. Under Personal, I write "artist, intellectual, avid reader." Under Family, I write "daughter, sister, Persian, Sufi." When we get to Society, I ask students to help. "What should I write here? If you didn't know me, what identities would you assume I hold?" Students hesitate, giggling, but eventually offer up, "Woman, 30-something, White? Vaguely ethnic?" I explain that, in some contexts, I pass as White, but in other environments I read as Middle Eastern: for instance, when I attended a primarily White institution for college, or when I am at the airport with my family, and we are "randomly selected" to have our bags searched.

Under each role, we add two to three qualities. As a sister, I am competitive and needy. As an artist, I am creative, spiritual, and obsessive. "What should I put for teacher?" I ask them. "Helpful, funny, weird, moody." Fair enough. Next, they help expand on my roles in society—what qualities would strangers assume I have? Again, with hesitance and giggles, they volunteer adjectives to add to my map. Women are seen as weak, emotional, crazy. White people are assumed to be wealthy, racist, and shallow. Middle Eastern people are viewed as terrorists, conservative, and oppressed. Students continue to fill in their identity maps—how do they believe society views them? What stereotypes and biases are at play when we face the world? We work alongside each other, as I add to my map on the board: Illustrating, annotating, and writing notes to myself, I circle the characteristics most important to me, draw an X over qualities with which I disagree, crowns where I hold power or privilege, lines between similar concepts, and so on. In short, I process what I have just unpacked through visual annotations. Students do the same.

We spend our 2nd day examining a broad collection of contemporary artists who investigate identity through their work. I prepare an online gallery of artwork and articles, choosing artists carefully to include a broad range of topics and issues in identity. Students break into small groups, and each group enters into a dialogue about a single artist's work—analyzing, interpreting, and debating what they will ultimately share with the class. Optional conversation prompts are on the board: "What is the hidden message? What does this artwork suggest about how identity is formed? What issues in identity are the artist exploring in their artwork? Make connections between this artwork and what you know about society or history."



Figure 2. A mind map of the author's identity, which she creates with her students before asking them to create their own.

The presentations are profound—because students have been developing their critical consciousness throughout the year, they are well equipped to recognize the critical themes investigated by each artist. Students note the intentional centering of Blackness in Kerry James Marshall's paintings, discuss issues of cultural appropriation and erasure brought up by James Luna's performance pieces, and identify issues of representation in Lalla Essaydi's self-portraits.

As students present, we take notes of the emerging common themes: race, gender, sexuality, immigration, religion, gentrification, assimilation, beauty standards, body image, family structure, and much more. At the end of the period, we have written on the board a long student-generated list of "issues in identity" explored in contemporary art.

Finally, students begin drafting proposals for their artworks—which they will have 3 full weeks of studio time to create before a public exhibition. The only project criteria given is "make a statement, or ask a question, about identity." Everything else—media, style, imagery—is all up to them. I have a variety of optional brainstorming activities, which I host in small groups, but most of the class hums with quiet conversation as students support each other and sketch out their ideas. At the end of the period, I collect their proposals and take the weekend to process student ideas, adding my own questions, connections, and suggestions.

Liberatory "Studio Time" and Community Learning

The next 3 weeks are filled with fluid, highly individuated, occasionally chaotic workdays. I run around the room facilitating peer feedback, pushing student thinking, suggesting materials to explore and artists to research. Each class begins with each student planning their objective for the day and ends with a formative mini-critique between peers. The level of peer communication is striking; because students have been developing their critical lens all year, they can now readily make poignant observations both about the design of each other's work and the social topics explored.



Figure 3. Ivonne's artwork illustrates the reasons some migrants choose to come to the United States. Green text illustrates what they hope they will gain, while the red text illustrates from what they are running (pseudonyms have been used to protect student identities).



Figure 4. Angélica painted a hybrid eagle to blend the figures on the U.S. and Mexican flags. She represents herself as a faceless individual, being held up by her two cultures.



Figure 5. Karina learned embroidery from her mother to create this critique of how often her culture's heritage arts are appropriated by popular American brands and White consumers.

At last, we hold an exhibition of our finished works (Figures 3–10). Our art classes meet in a makeshift gallery space and lead visiting classes on tours. Artists wear name tags, have written and rehearsed artist statements, and are prepared to answer questions about their work. Community members, school staff, district leadership, and local gallery and museum staff are also invited. The conversations I overhear at these exhibitions are genuinely the best part of my job. The final exhibition results from a year of careful scaffolding toward critical consciousness, confidence, and independent artmaking.

Critical Praxis and Reflections

While I am incredibly intentional about my lesson planning, the only way to truly measure my impact is by assessing for an enduring critical lens—in other words, I regularly ask alumni for feedback. Willingness to engage in a continual cycle of critical self-reflection and self-improvement toward our pedagogical goals is a core principle of critical pedagogy—called *praxis* (Freire, 1970).

The concept of praxis is also relevant in personal antiracism work, in which self-knowledge is understood as merely the beginning of a lifelong critical reflective practice (Kendi, 2019; Lawrence & Tatum, 2004). Student feedback over the past decade has helped me identify and address critical gaps in my perception, especially regarding discipline policies, trans inclusivity, and Indigenizing my curriculum.

In good praxis, I recently asked alumni what they remembered of our class. Angélica, class of 2016, remembered it as the space in which she "grew a sociopolitical consciousness." Daniela, class



Figure 6. Jose's self-portrait represents his waning hopefulness that the United States will support "dreamers" like him. A number of our students are part of Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals programs.

of 2018, remembers our final project as "very liberating" and that our final exhibition "made it very clear that art wasn't all about sunshine and rainbows.… Art has the power to educate people."



Figure 7. Arturo illustrates the identity crisis of having mixed Latino heritage but being perceived by his peers as White because of his light skin.

Jenny, class of 2019, reflected on classroom culture: "The word that comes to mind is community.… [S]tudents would cry because of how emotional their projects were, but because of the community built up over time in the classroom, everyone was very open and respected one another." Similarly, Vanessa, class of 2014, recalled "feeling comfortable enough to share personal details about [her] life."

This comfort, and the genuine culture of love and respect it represents, is an important reminder of the importance of



Figure 8. Catarina remixes the visual style of *lotería* cards to represent herself in several "roles" which counter stereotypes about Latina women.

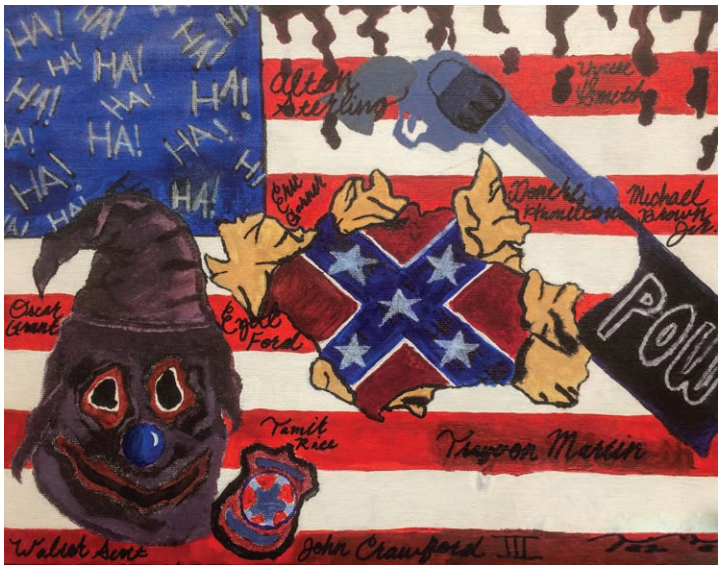


Figure 9. Daniel reflects on the hidden racism in our country, and used his final artwork to memorialize lives lost due to racist violence during his lifetime. He spoke to how his own dark skin puts him at risk.



Figure 10. Ariana illustrates her unapologetic pride in being feminist, recontextualizing symbols from the Gadsden flag to represent the fight for every woman's right to control our bodies.

> I want students to know themselves well, have difficult conversations, understand their power, and use their identities as a launching point toward social consciousness and social action.

establishing a safe space before facilitating critical dialogue. Asking students to explore social justice topics without a respectful class community can inadvertently cause more harm than good. This is especially true when asking students to represent themselves through art, as potentially traumatic feelings and memories may be unearthed through reflective artmaking. Students know they can be authentic in their final artworks because we have practiced respectful dialogue and community all year.

Ultimately, this is core to what I want students to take away from my classroom. I want students to know themselves well, have difficult conversations, understand their power, and use their identities as a launching point toward social consciousness and social action. I want them to self-actualize as critical citizens and freedom dream through their artwork, conspiring individually and in community to envision and create the world they want for themselves.

With a solid understanding of my critical purpose, an intentional but flexible curriculum design, and a continuous reflective praxis, I feel more and more effective as a critical arts pedagogue each year. As antiracist and social justice education become more mainstream, I hope educators will take a holistic approach in their classrooms, recognizing that critical consciousness and class culture are just as powerful as liberatory content (hooks, 1994). We must model our classrooms after the liberated world we wish to inhabit and focus every aspect of our planning and practice toward meeting that goal. ■

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Art as Activism and Allyship:



Black Lives Matter Student Murals

SJ S. Hemmerich

"Everybody should paint" is equivalent to "All Lives Matter" when creating a Black Lives Matter (BLM) community mural. Not often, as an elementary art teacher, do I find myself limiting student opportunity or choice in a collaborative task. Inviting *all* my students to help paint a mural in support of Black Lives Matter might sound initially like a uniting and appropriate lesson in support of racial justice; however, antiracist educators must begin by thoroughly examining our practice. The problem with the notion "everybody should paint" in the context of a BLM mural is this: Not everyone is equal in the fight for racial justice; hence a movement to declare that an entire group of people, at the very least, matter.

I navigate the world with a fair amount of privilege: I am White, generally able-bodied, and grew up with a financially stable, nuclear, Christian family. I only began allowing myself to explore my marginalized gender and sexual identities late in my undergraduate experience, when I enrolled in Student SEED (SEED stands for Seeking Educational Equity Through Diversity), a University of Wisconsin–Madison undergraduate course in which students "engage in conversations about the impact of race, class, gender, sexual orientation, ability and other defining aspects on their personal lives, on their communities and in society as a whole" (University of Wisconsin–Madison, 2021, Description section). Student SEED sparked my lifelong interest in social justice–oriented work by providing the tools to recognize my privilege for the first time and discuss the ways in which varying and intersecting identities fit into society.

I landed my first teaching position outside Madison and taught for 4 years with my visible and assumed privileges. During my 5th year teaching, I got engaged to my wife and started using they/them pronouns as well as the "Mx." honorific. Until then, it was assumed I was straight and cisgender, a privilege not afforded to more visibly noticeable identities. Despite that district's LGBTQ+-inclusive policies, the discrimination I experienced forced me to leave. Madison Metropolitan School District (MMSD) is where I have taught for 4 years as my authentic self. In addition to teaching art, I am our elementary school Gender and Sexuality Alliance advisor and a district Welcoming Schools facilitator. One of my facilitator roles is leading LGBTQ+-inclusive staff professional development for schools in our district (https://welcomingschools.org). I examine and strive to improve the myriad ways our LGBTQ+ youth and families are impacted within the educational spaces they occupy.

> I would argue that the populations that have the most to learn are the ones who experience the most privilege.

Both environments in which I have taught in my 9 years are quite privileged and primarily White. Discussion about "achievement gaps" and "low-performing schools" in my professional development experience tended to default to marginalized people and what they need, but I would argue that the populations that have the most to learn are the ones who experience the most privilege. Although what we now call the United States is home to people of many races, cultures, genders, sexualities, religions, and abilities, its society and education centers Whiteness, heteronormativity, Christian ideals, and able-bodied people.

When creating lessons, I intentionally address social justice topics I see as problematic within my school community, and I feature artwork created by artists of color and queer artists from different religions, cultures, and backgrounds and with varying abilities and disabilities. Positive representation matters, especially for people with the aforementioned marginalized identities. Seeking educational opportunities, especially ones centered around racial equity, and bringing that knowledge and insight to my teaching practice and colleagues is an integral part of this process.

An intersectional approach to any one social justice issue must be taken because each person carries a multitude of identities (Bell, 2016). What we omit often speaks louder than what we include. For example, BLM intentionally includes Black queer and trans people; educators must also address the complexity of the Black experience through more than just a racial justice lens. When considering racism, transphobia, or homophobia independently, straight and/or cisgender people hold the advantage regardless of race, and White people experience privilege regardless of gender or sexuality. When those identities are seen together through an intersectional lens, queer and trans people of color face a compounding and disproportionately high amount of discrimination, harassment, and violence based on gender/sexuality and race (Movement for Black Lives, 2021).

I strive to adapt my classroom procedures, practice, and curriculum focus to reflect and uplift my most marginalized students' histories, cultures, languages, and intersectional identities. Students in my class learn and recite an Art Affirmation,[1] which has expanded from English with arbitrary hand signals to American Sign Language (ASL), Spanish, French, and Hmong. I also taught a unique handshake every week to welcome students into the classroom, which evolved into learning weekly ASL signs. I have seen my quietest Latinx students bouncily sitting in the front row when learning the Art Affirmation in Spanish, empowered Hmong students volunteering of their own volition to teach their classmates about Hmong culture during a Hmong story cloth lesson, a new 3rd grader who spoke no English lighting up with my attempt at the Art Affirmation in French, and current and former students proudly coming out to me as LGBTQ+.

I strive to adapt my classroom procedures, practice, and curriculum focus to reflect and uplift my most marginalized students' histories, cultures, languages, and intersectional identities.

Imagine looking through a radical new lens in which we recognize underlying racism and other inequities embedded in everything from individual thoughts and actions to larger systems. This would empower us to challenge those inequities until all practices and beliefs are critically examined and improved. To effectively use this new lens, we must recognize and unpack our hidden curriculum and its related unconscious biases. Named because it is often collectively understood and therefore overlooked, hidden curriculum is what our students learn is valued or not based on perspectives, rules, and curricular choices (Alsubaie, 2015). Unconscious bias, or implicit bias, is defined by the attitudes, stereotypes, and beliefs we have about a certain thing, person, or group, without consciously being aware of it (Ruhl, 2020). For example, the notion "everybody should paint" upholds a value of fairness and equality, which could easily be part of a hidden curriculum. Kraehe (2017) stated that equality can have "disparately negative or positive consequences for individuals and groups" (p. 268) based on historical power structure and discrimination. This is not conducive to an antiracist and equitable outcome that does consider that context. Gaining an ability to see the world through this new lens will help us see the inherent problems in our first seemingly inclusive phrase, "Everybody should paint."

BLM Mural Lesson

As I witnessed and participated in the BLM protests in the summer of 2020, following the killing of George Floyd, a sense of hope bubbled up among the anxiety and anger. Many people, especially White people, finally seemed to begin to understand the severity of the ongoing reality of police brutality against communities of color and stand alongside their neighbors in the fight for racial equity. As I ventured downtown a few days after the protests, murals already covered boarded-up windows of at least 40 businesses.

Seeing this collective mural-making effort as an opportunity to intentionally and actively uplift my students of color, I created and posted my last virtual asynchronous art lesson of the school year, focused on how a community can unite, grieve, and protest an unjust system through art. The lesson included a slide presentation with photos I had taken of local BLM murals as well as context acknowledging the current events at the time. I posed the following prompt: "If you could design your own mural, describe in words its message and what the mural would look like." While reading the thoughtful and heartfelt responses, I selected one Black student's design idea, which allowed for multiple students of color to fill in their own unique section. My student's design idea would be used for the location with one large panel, and artists of color who showed up to paint would help design and paint the other location, which had five separate panels.

I took great care in designing the lesson to provide a meaningful and appropriate opportunity for everyone involved with help from



Figure 1. An artist poses in front of her painted section of a mural.

my best social justice allies and co-conspirators, MMSD's LGBTQ+ lead and the Welcoming Schools lead. First, we intentionally uplifted the voices of my students of color as the mural designers and painters. Other students and families were invited to be allies by writing and drawing chalk messages in front of the murals, wearing homemade and supportive BLM clothing, and creating and holding up BLM-related signs near the painting areas. Allyship was demonstrated through active support and solidarity. Allies took a back seat to the painters and designers, whose final mural was the actual spotlight (The Anti-Oppression Network, 2017). I coordinated volunteers, donations of supplies and snacks, collected students' design ideas, and prepared communication plans to get the word out virtually.

The announcement and information went out to families and students the following morning, which was also the 1st of 3 mural-painting days. Several allies came to support us on the 1st day, along with one Black family. Even though the Black 3rd-grade student whose design would be used for the larger mural was unable to come that day, I worked with the Black family, who was able to bring her design to life in chalk. The design featured the letters BLM surrounded by "hearts because *Black Lives Matter* needs more love" (Channel 3000/News 3 Now, 2020, 13:24). Because only 2 more days remained, I initiated a coordinated district-wide effort by sending an email to all MMSD K–12 art teachers.



Figure 2. Art teacher and author, SJ S. Hemmerich, assists a young superhero-caped painter.



Figure 3. Three artists painting different sections of a mural.

The following beautiful, sunny days were powerful and filled with painting, chalking, sign making, and conversation. Signs stating that students of color were invited to do the painting of the murals and that others were invited to create supportive chalk messages were posted at both locations and enforced by volunteers helping everything run smoothly. Passersby were welcome to participate as well. In total, more than 135 students participated in the painting of the two mural locations (Figures 1–3). This included students from 36 MMSD schools, 10 surrounding



Figure 4. Two young allies working on a BLM poster near a mural.



Figure 5. An ally chalking a message in front of a mural, "SILENCE = VIOLENCE."



Figure 6. Two allies holding up their own homemade signs in support of their Black classmates.



Figure 7. An ally chalking a BLM fist in front of a mural.

districts, 2 other states, and Senegal (Cotant, 2020). In addition to the painters, hundreds of student allies and their families were overjoyed to support their classmates and be a meaningful part of a movement (Schrager, 2020; Figures 4–7).

Many powerful and moving moments will stay with me. When the 3rd grader whose design idea inspired one of the murals was able to come with her mother to fill in a heart and sign her name, both were beaming with pride and smiling ear to ear (Figure 8). One of my students chose to come with her family and happily engaged with painting in a way I had not seen in years. This experience strengthened my relationship not only with her but also with her entire family. One middle school student worked for hours to complete one small heart showing two hands with the words "Hands up, don't shoot" (Figure 9) while a high school student worked for 2 full days on a small panel to create a detailed masked woman with the names of Black people killed by police over the years (Figure 10).

While reading the thoughtful and heartfelt responses, I selected one Black student's design idea, which allowed for multiple students of color to fill in their own unique section.

These student murals created an environment that made it impossible to keep race out of the conversation. I both overheard and participated in numerous race-centered discussions over the 3 days, especially with White families. Most parents and families expressed appreciation for how the mural created a starting point for discussions about race with their children. However, there was



Figure 8. Mural designer smiling below her decorated heart, which reads, "I am Black Girl magic!!"



Figure 9. Five artists at work painting their hearts, including the middle schooler in the foreground, carefully painting the heart that later read, "Hands up, don't shoot."

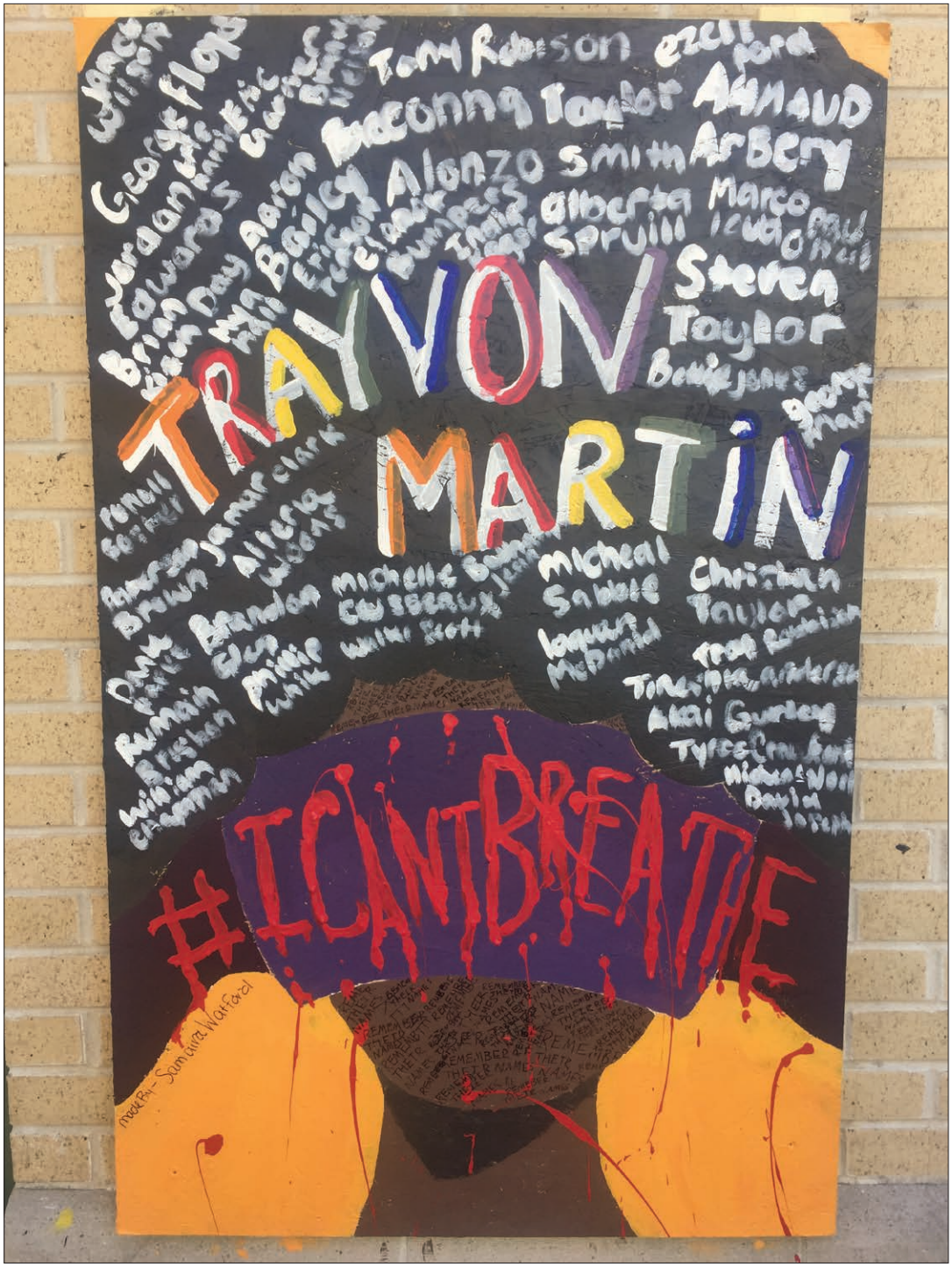


Figure 10. The #ICANTBREATHE mural section painted over 2 days by a high school student.

also some questioning, pushback, and hesitation from a few White families. For example, one person was concerned the mural would not look good if children painted it; some adults even went so far as "fixing" parts of it. A few other parents expressed concern that the mural would be divisive and unfair rather than unifying. Many asked, "Why can't everyone paint?"

> Many asked, "Why can't everyone paint?"

Let us consider the ramifications of changing the one thing I heard the most pushback about, which was that everybody should paint the mural. If my initial request for artists (which was sent to my school only) invited all students to paint, the mural would have been completed quickly, and the opportunity for students from other schools to participate would not have occurred. Because White students make up the majority of my school's population, and underlying systemic inequities privilege families who can easily access online communication and have the time and ability to travel downtown on short notice, most of the mural would have

We should not need another Black murder to remind us to engage with this work. Every lesson we teach, every conversation we have, every question we pose *matters*.

been completed by White students. Because I gathered design ideas from all my students, the messages on the final piece would have included quotes from White students like "it matters what's on the inside" and "everyone matters." The discussions I had with families would have been more about logistics and fairness: perhaps signing up, order, lines, and time limits. For these reasons, I believe that inviting everyone to paint would have had a negative impact on students of all races, intensifying rather than disrupting racial and other inequities.

No matter where you are on your journey of racial justice, there are several actionable steps you might take to begin or continue:

1. Find a group of allies willing to hold yourself and each other accountable without overburdening colleagues of color. Check in with each other often and participate in ongoing discussions about actions you are taking to both educate yourselves and disrupt inequities in your classroom, school, and district.
2. Use an intersectional approach: We must recognize, adjust for, and support students with multiple marginalized identities. What we omit can speak volumes.
3. We must challenge ourselves and our students to be critical thinkers and problem solvers in an inherently inequitable society. Find and utilize resources that bring to light the full history of movements of marginalized peoples from their perspective; representation matters. Discuss the complexities and complete through lines of ongoing struggles: When struggles are only seen as historical, the reality of ongoing oppression is easy to dismiss.
4. Critically analyze your lessons, pedagogy, and classroom management to disrupt any unintentionally racist practices.

We should not need another Black murder to remind us to engage with this work. Every lesson we teach, every conversation we have, every question we pose *matters*. ■

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Endnote

[1] Text of Art Affirmation:

I am an artist.

What I create is unique and beautiful.

I always do my best.

I reuse and recycle.

I am a problem solver.

I challenge myself.

I respect everyone.

I respect my education.

I respect the environment.

I am an artist.

Who Holds the Power?



Figure 1. Norman Rockwell, *Salute the Flag*, 1971. Oil on canvas. Image courtesy of the Norman Rockwell Family Agency.

Students Respond to Whiteness in the Canon

Beth Link

Art educators are adept at using images to communicate and spark dialogues. But what happens when the conversations we need to have in classrooms concern topics that are intentionally silenced or repeated so often that contradictions become invisible? The dilemma of visibility is central when talking to students about Whiteness, which White people like myself are trained not to see. How can educators use images to cut through centuries of systemic erasures to help students see and critique White supremacy? I took up this dilemma in the visual arts section of an art integration course I coteach for a diverse group of preservice teachers. Using dual assignments involving art criticism and creation, I prompted students to recognize Whiteness and power through images, and to respond by producing their own counterstories.

As a White middle-class woman, I am still unraveling how my identity affects my practice. Being an antiracist educator is not an endpoint but a process to which one must continually commit. I spent nearly a decade teaching elementary art at Title 1 dual-language campuses. When I reflect now, I see that my multicultural curriculum maintained barriers between "us" and "them," where race and culture became things that "other people" possessed, and Whiteness was never named or questioned. Mills (1997) explained how this refusal to see race produces "the ironic outcome that whites will in general be unable to understand the world they themselves have made" (p. 18). We see this desire to preserve deracialized discourse in the specious argument that children do not see race; therefore, discussions of race and racism have no place in schools. This notion protects White children from discomfort while failing to recognize the harmful effects of racism on children of color. From the overpolicing of Black students in schools (Ferguson, 2000; Morris, 2016) to the deaths of Tamir Rice and other children of color at the hands of police, it is clear that race has very real effects on the lives of children. We must ask ourselves: Whose interests does maintaining racial ignorance protect? Furthermore, what do White children learn about their own power and identity through this discourse of silence?

How can educators use images to cut through centuries of systemic erasures to help students see and critique White supremacy?

In the art room, racial logics are at work in individual images and their collection in the canon. Everyday images from photographs to monuments "anchor collective remembering" to "impose a permanent memory on the very landscape within which we order our lives" (Savage, 1994, pp. 130, 143). Visual "anchors" codify history, substituting the complexity of real events with simplified snapshots to "create the illusion of consensus" (Sontag, 2003, p. 6). These partial histories are indelible when circulated in visual form, providing anchors we recall from memory. The curation of the Western art historical canon collects and calcifies these partial histories into grand narratives, often glorifying White achievements and progress (O'Rourke, 2018). The canon legitimizes White claims of superiority, preserving the notion of art as White property by linking White artists to refinement and genius (Chin, 2013; Gaztambide-Fernández et al., 2018). Acuff



Figure 2. Kerry James Marshall, *Bang*, 1994. Acrylic and collage on canvas. © Kerry James Marshall. Courtesy of the artist and Jack Shainman Gallery, New York.

> In the art room, racial logics are at work in individual images and their collection in the canon.

(2015) calls on art educators to intervene, claiming that we "have the linguistic, theoretical and philosophical tools to open a dynamic discourse that actively responds to and potentially transforms the way images re-inscribe oppression and racism" (pp. 39–40). Given the inequities of the canon we are tasked with teaching, how can art educators use images to complicate power dynamics in art history?

Seeing Whiteness With Pass the Picture

I coteach a course on art integration for undergraduate students who are primarily preservice teachers. Although my students come from a range of racial and ethnic backgrounds, a large portion self-identify as White and Latinx or Hispanic. To discuss Whiteness and power with students, I first make it visible using a strategy called Pass the Picture (Austin Independent School District, n.d.). I curated[1] a selection of five artworks exploring American identity and citizenship from divergent vantage points. I included well-known images, conjuring up a sense of patriotism from Norman Rockwell (Figure 1) and Joe Rosenthal (*Raising the Flag on Iwo Jima*), as well as images complicating this narrative from Kerry James Marshall (Figure 2), Frida Kahlo, and Nicholas Galanin (Figure 3). I printed out copies[2] of each set and distributed them to small groups of four to six. Students formed pairs within groups and spent 1 minute silently looking at and then discussing a single image with their partner. Close looking prompted them to notice details and form predictions in intimate pairings before sharing out. After 3 minutes, each pair passed their image to the next and drew a fresh picture from the stack, repeating the process. Once all pairs had examined every image, they spread them out in the center of their circle to discuss the set. I asked them to consider the following questions in their groups, sharing out after each prompt:

- What similarities do you see in this set? Where are the differences?
- What themes might this collection be exploring? (Brainstorm a list if time.)
- Who holds the power in each image? Who is the storyteller, and whose story is being told or erased?
- How might being aware of multiple viewpoints inform your teaching?

These questions generated a lively dialogue as students began to notice contradictions within the set and found areas of divergence and connection between the historical narratives and their own lives. A group of Latinx students empathized with Kahlo's painting about her transnational identity and shared that they too felt tension, as they did not neatly fit into either Mexican or American culture. A Filipina American student connected this to her own struggle for self-definition in the White-dominated spaces of the university, where she was frequently questioned about where she was *really* from.

Students also made connections between the images, noticing themes like patriotism, erasure, and propaganda. One White student noted that both the Marshall and Rockwell pieces had American flags draped over the faces of young Black men. This finding prompted a debate about what the symbol of the flag "covered over" in each image. They asked if the flag in the Rockwell painting hid parts of American identity the saluting White patriots would rather not face? The Marshall piece was more mysterious, and students discussed the complex expression of resignation on the young man's face, wondering how he felt.

Students were also perplexed by the inclusion of the Galanin piece, which was less literal. They drew parallels between how the Indigenous mask was "covered" by the colonial pattern and the covering of the American flag in other images. When I shared some background information about Galanin, the conversation grew into a rich dialogue about the authorship of history and legacies of national pride and shame. One White student questioned whose experiences must be erased in order for us to have a cohesive American identity?

When we turned to the Iwo Jima photograph, one student suggested this image fit into the theme of "covering over," noting that the photo only told one side of a complex conflict. Another student, a veteran, reminded the class that she had



Figure 3. Nicholas Galanin, *Untitled* (from the *Imaginary Indian* installation series), 2009. Transformation masks on panel covered in toile de jouy.

A group of Latinx students empathized with Kahlo's painting about her transnational identity and shared that they too felt tension, as they did not neatly fit into either Mexican or American culture.

served in the military and challenged her peer's interpretation, arguing that the image made her feel proud of the bravery of soldiers. This tension created an opportunity to consider how images could become tools to reinforce or challenge ideologies. Could both interpretations be true? What impact could holding multiple truths have on children in the classroom? How could we, as future teachers, use images to create space for students to question the objectivity of historical narratives?

The dissonance between the images generated rich tensions and connections, prompting discussions about how we understand our identity. Slowing down to look deeply and consider whose interests are served and whose perspectives are erased prompts us to move beyond singular stories and master narratives.

Talking Back With Counterstory Portraits

Next, students responded by creating their own art. As a class, we googled "famous portraits" and found that the top 50 results were almost entirely White men. The racialized disparities of the canon rely on the "regime of truth" in which those who curate and produce historical truths have a vested interest in sustaining their version of reality (Foucault, 1977, p. 133). These "truths" form the master narrative, which we all internalize as a sort of "invisible impediment" that justifies and explains failures of people of color and the success of their White counterparts as natural (MacLeod, 2018, p. 18). Art teachers may assume that diversifying representation only benefits students of color without considering the lessons White students glean from their overrepresentation. The overwhelming curricular inclusion of White male artists not only teaches people of color and women that they are deficit or irrelevant, it also testifies to the superiority and achievements of White people (Link, 2019).

After discussing disparities in the canon, we looked at artists questioning the contractions between the master narratives and their own experiences through visual counterstories. Based in legal traditions of critical race theory, counterstories use fictional narratives as a tool to challenge the legitimacy of master narratives and "subvert [the] ingroup reality" (Delgado, 1989, p. 2413). Communities of color developed their own narratives that often dispute the portrayal of their communities as essentialized or deficit (Solórzano & Yosso, 2002). Artists can utilize visual counterstories to critique the symbols, stereotypes, and visual culture that anchor the master narrative.

We analyzed visual counterstories using Dawson and Lee's (2018) Describe, Analyze, Relate sequence. The examples below are taken from composite interpretations of Kehinde Wiley's (2008) *Lamentation Over the Dead Christ*.

- *Describe*: What do you see? (cite observable visual evidence)
  - "I see black leaves surrounding the person in the center."
- *Analyze*: What might these observations mean?
  - "At first, I thought the person was sleeping, but black leaves are usually decaying. This makes me wonder if this person may be dead."
- *Relate* this to prior knowledge: How might this image connect to current events, your own experiences, pop culture…?
  - "This reminds me of the murders of unarmed Black men in the news because the man looks dead."
    - What makes you say he "looks dead"?
  - "He's on a white sheet like in a coffin surrounded by black leaves, and his hands are curled up in a way that looks agitated."

After interpreting this piece, we looked at the Andrea Mantegna painting (1483) that Wiley referenced. I asked them how their view of the Wiley piece changed when they saw it side by side with the Mantegna. Students noticed that there were no mourners in Wiley's and wondered what that meant about the value of Black lives. One student remarked that Mantegna's figure had a sense of dignity as he was protected by a sheet, while the sheet covering the floor in



Figure 4. Brianna Villarreal, *Untitled* (appropriation of M. C. Escher's *Hand With Reflecting Sphere*), 2019. Acrylic on canvas.



Figure 5. Bassam Syed, *Untitled* (appropriation of Leonardo DaVinci's *Mona Lisa*), 2018. Photograph.

the Wiley piece seemed to protect the ground. She questioned why the ground was protected, and he was not.

Students then revisited Google's list of famous portraits, chose one, researched it, and considered how they might appropriate it into a counterstory. This assignment asks students to understand the significance of the piece to dialogue with it as they insert their commentary (on their identity or a social issue that directly affects them) into the image. Finding an issue that directly affects students is often particularly difficult for White students who do not often think of themselves as racialized subjects. To discuss ethics of authorship, I initially omit Wiley as the artist to question how our interpretation of *Lamentation* would change based on the artist's identity. Would the meaning shift if the artist was a White woman? A queer artist? A Black man? What might this mean about artists' responsibility to the stories they tell?

Because my students are not art majors, I left the medium open, yielding a range of responses from paintings and photos to Graphics Interchange Format (GIF) and edible sculptures. One student remade M. C. Escher's self-portrait to show her experience as a Latina woman in community with her mother and grandmother (Figure 4). Rather than a single hand holding the sphere, her portrait shows many hands collectively bearing the weight of working twice as hard to access opportunities. Another student appropriated the revered figure of the *Mona Lisa* to comment on the disrespect and violence women who wear the hijab face in American culture (Figure 5). A third student countered the soft femininity of Botticelli's *Venus* with a powerful depiction of womanhood embodied by the Hindu goddess, Kali (Figure 6).

> Through the development of counterstory portraits, students move beyond critical dialogue to speak back to the canon.

Counterstory portraits provide an opportunity for students to consider power in historical narratives and notice how their intersectional identities are represented or erased. Through the development of counterstory portraits, students move beyond critical dialogue to speak back to the canon.

Conclusion

Pass the picture and counterstory portraits are both strategies that use images to reveal and upend power dynamics in the histories we teach. This unit relies on images that challenge the single perspective of master narratives. The dissonance created by conflicting visuals prompts students to reflect on themselves and larger systems through critical dialogue and creation. This



Figure 6. Beena Lad, *Play on the Birth of Venus Depicting the Hindu Goddess Kali*, 2018. Acrylic on canvas.



Figure 1. Author, *No Justice, No Peace, 1992*, 2018. 12 × 18 in.

Cruising LA's Political Landscape: Critical Car-Culture Narrative in Art Education

Luis-Genaro Garcia

Released in November 1992, and fueled by the Rodney King trial that resulted in the LA riots of 1992, Rage Against the Machine's debut single, "Killing in the Name," opens with Zack de La Rocha calling out the systemic racism that is sustained by White supremacy. The opening verse—"Some of those that work forces/are the same that burn crosses"—refers to individuals that control our socioeconomic system, such as the groups known for their cross-burning rituals, the Ku Klux Klan. This was the social climate that influenced my coming of age and continues to guide me as an artist and critical educator. In this instructional resource, I draw on critical pedagogy (Freire, 1970; Garcia, 2015, 2020), funds of knowledge (FoK; González et al., 2005; Garcia, 2018), and counternarratives (Garcia, 2012; Pérez Huber & Solorzano, 2015; Yosso, 2006) to introduce critical car-culture narrative as a teaching tool that draws on art and car culture to examine the historical outcomes of racism in communities of color, which have deeply influenced the critical discussions between art students and myself, their art teacher.

An Art Educator Positionality

In 2018, I prepared a body of work for an exhibition titled Cruising L.A.'s Political Landscape (Garcia, 2021). I was also teaching art at my former high school in south-central Los Angeles, and I shared my process with students to develop their critical consciousness (Freire, 1970; Solorzano, 1989). I wanted them to understand how I used car culture and history as a narrative to engage audiences (Saldivar, 2019). Because I lived

the social inequities of the same community and school that my students navigate, I understand that traditional Eurocentric approaches to art education are not equitable for Black and Latinx students in the underserved communities of Los Angeles. Although scholars present the benefits of art education programs for marginalized students, they fall short of recommending accessible and equitable arts programing in underfunded schools (Caterall, 2009, 2012). For this reason, I draw on students' FoK as cultural assets in art education to develop their social consciousness for social transformation (Freire, 1970; Solorzano, 1989). FoK are identified as students' historical and accumulated home-based knowledge and resources, which can help them navigate their environment, well-being, and/or social circumstances (Garcia, 2018; González et al., 2005; Huerta & Rios-Aguilar, 2018; Kiyama & Rios-Aguilar, 2018). Drawing from the cultural and communal experiences of students, as an educator and alumnus of the same high school, I developed a practical approach to the idea of creative resistance (Darts, 2004), which I identify as practical forms of art used by students to challenge sociopolitical processes that affect their marginalized communities (Garcia, 2012, 2015, 2018, 2020, 2021). Over the years, I have engaged students in developing counternarratives through artmaking that challenge race, class, and gender through their interdisciplinary FoK.[1] Overall, my positionality influenced me to colearn and coteach with students in marginalized communities by critically analyzing how racism has affected the outcome of their communities today and how they can navigate through such circumstances by acknowledging their own narratives.

Developing a Critical Car-Culture Narrative

Historically, classic cars have resiliently survived the harsh conditions of their production year while carrying the narratives of their political climate. Enduring decades of weathering environments that have deteriorated their original state, car culture has developed the identities and historical context of diverse communities (Bodenner, 2019; Chappell, 2012; DeWitt, 2009; Sandoval, 2014) that have developed custom car styles. Although each style of customization uses the car's surface and body to enhance the vehicle's design aesthetically, lowriders are one example in which imagery is used to tell narratives of the social and historical identity of the city (Sandoval, 2014). The visual narratives in Bedford's *Cruise Night* (2021) provide us with counternarratives (Yosso, 2006) that push against the stereotypes of low riding. Additionally, drawing on Baca's (n.d.) concept of the political landscape, using land to record memories through paintings, my idea of critical car-culture narrative uses the idea of cruising to illustrate the political landscape while challenging dominant perspectives.

Critical race theory (CRT) identifies counternarratives as ways of telling the stories—and raising critical consciousness—of people of color whose experiences are seldom told (Solorzano & Yosso, 2001; Yosso, 2006). CRT in education, as presented by Solorzano (1997, 1998) and others (Pérez Huber & Solorzano, 2015; Solorzano & Yosso, 2001), features five tenets:

1. the intercentricity of race and racism,
2. the challenge to dominant ideology,
3. the commitment to social justice,
4. the centrality of experiential knowledge, and
5. the utilization of interdisciplinary approaches.

Because I lived the social inequities of the same community and school that my students navigate, I understand that traditional Eurocentric approaches to art education are not equitable for Black and Latinx students in the underserved communities of Los Angeles.

Yosso (2006) explained that "counterstories reflect the lived experiences of People of Color to raise critical consciousness about social and racial injustice" (p. 10). Critical car-culture narrative has a similar purpose.

Critical Car-Culture Narrative in the Art Classroom

In 2018, when I created *No Justice, No Peace, 1992*, I created it to engage students with the political landscape of 1992 Los Angeles and how its racism continues to exist with no changes to systemic racism and inequality.[2] According to Baca's (n.d.) political landscape method, she uses the land to record memories and stories through paintings and murals, focusing on those at the margins of society. Drawing on Baca's idea of the political landscape, I show a collage of newspaper clippings from 2018 that highlight examples of police brutality anchored by a 1992 Chevy Caprice cruising in front of a supermarket (Figure 1).[3]

The purpose of using the 2018 newspaper clippings as a background was to contrast the current political climate with the dissatisfaction of our justice system that acquitted the four police officers in the Rodney King trial in 1992. The looted television shows the real-time recording of the Rodney King beating while underscoring the current killings of Latino and Black communities at the hands of the police almost 30 years later.

What I refer to as "Cruising LA's Political Landscape" reflects Baca's (n.d.) idea of using bodies of land to record memories. In this case, I use *cruising* to illustrate the political landscape and identify the critical car-culture narrative; as a counternarrative tool that draws on students' FoK, CRT, and critical pedagogy to challenge stories of their community and critique issues of race, class, and gender. Therefore, critical car-culture narrative displays the political and historical landscape that marginalized communities have endured and continue to navigate through the resilience of their own histories.

When I presented this body of work to my students, it sparked an interdisciplinary discussion of the history of their neighborhood and their families. Because this body of work was influenced by a newspaper technique I shared with my students, I sought to

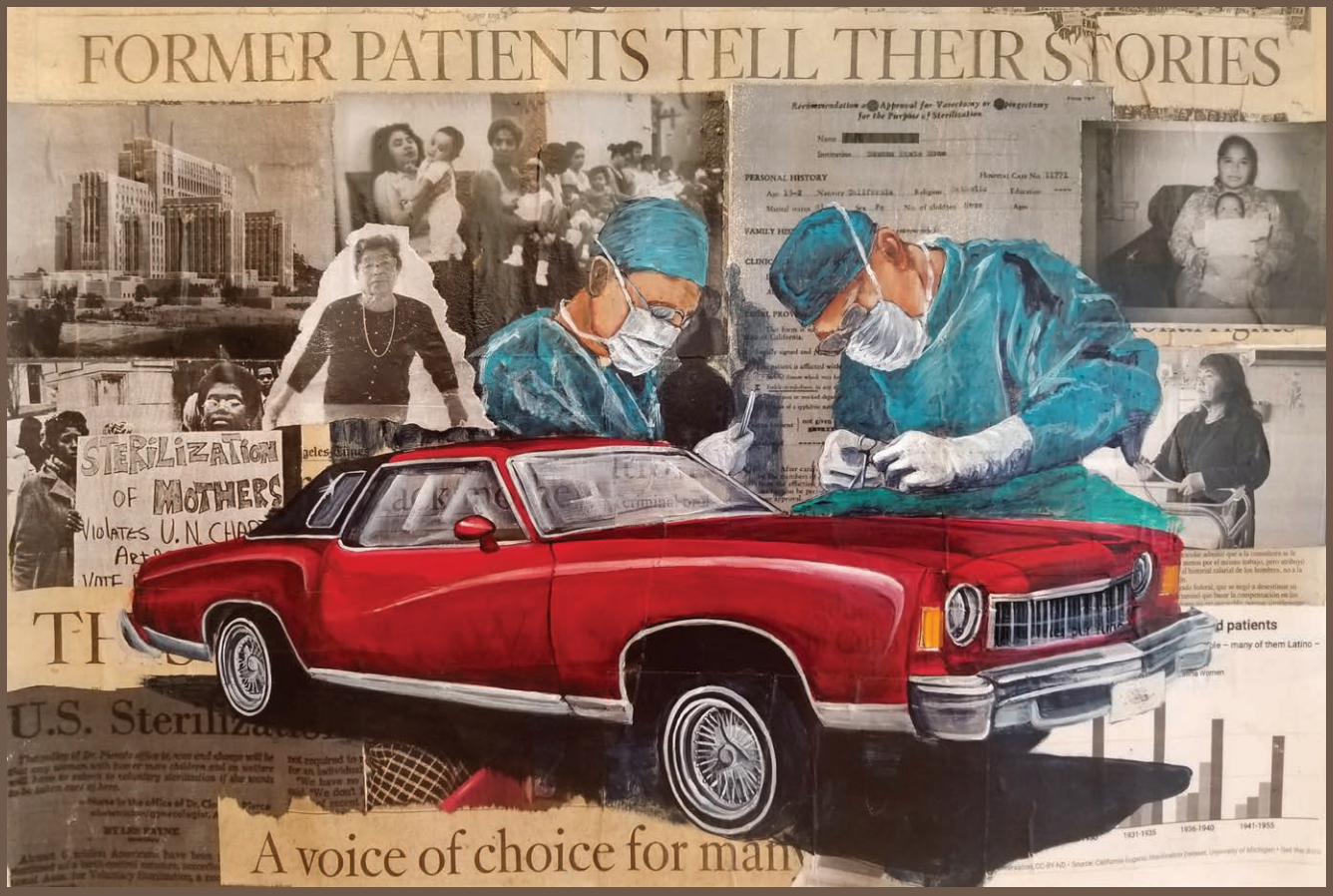


Figure 2. Author, *Tears of the Madrigal 10, 1975*, 2018.

engage them in conversations about their independent thinking and creative process. In our conversations, I shared my experiences of the LA riots and how that influenced *No Justice No Peace, 1992* (Figure 1). Many students knew about the LA riots because of their parents' experiences, but not all understood why the prevalence of empty lots had persisted in their neighborhood for more than 30 years. As I explained the idea of cruising as narrative, students began discussing aesthetics, car culture, racism, history, social class, and gender norms.

While engaging with students about the artwork, one student explained that the images and my narrative helped her understand parts of LA history that were never presented to her before. She added that she understood how historical forms of racism continue to affect their communities today. She referenced Figure 1 while explaining that she never realized that the 1992 riots caused the empty lots in the neighborhood. Based on other images in the series (Garcia, 2021), other students discussed the working conditions of farmworkers because of their families' history of farming. Additionally, when I presented *Tears of the Madrigal 10, 1975* (Figure 2), students understood past and present forms of discrimination as interconnected by systemic racism.

Tears of the Madrigal 10, 1975 highlights the 1975 federal court case of *Madrigal v. Quilligan*, the case of 10 women who filed a class-action lawsuit—against LA County medical doctors, the state of California, and the federal government—for their unjust sterilization at LA County University of Southern California hospital (Zavella, 2016). The counternarrative includes a 1975 Chevrolet Monte Carlo cruising as two White doctors perform surgery on a female patient that is purposely not visible—this insidious pattern of dehumanizing patients includes the continual intent to conceal these unethical practices.

While engaging with students about the artwork, one student explained that the images and my narrative helped her understand parts of LA history that were never presented to her before. She added that she understood how historical forms of racism continue to affect their communities today.

After talking about how I used my own FoK to critique racism and discrimination through my counternarratives, students began connecting their home knowledge and home practices to art standards and even the elements of art and principles of design. They understood that their familial knowledge, such as cooking, sewing, gardening, and celebrations such as quinceañeras, including car culture, could be used to illustrate their counternarratives. Like resistance in communities, car culture has developed from an urge to challenge the status quo of society and have become acts of defiance deemed threats. Similarly, critical car-culture narrative can be used within art education as an interdisciplinary tool to challenge the traditional Eurocentric and irrelevant art education approaches that disregard the cultural backgrounds of our communities. As art educators, we are mandated to teach art standards. However, knowing that we are teaching in marginalized communities, we need to use the arts as a tool for social transformation. If we think that improving the artistic skills of marginalized students will be enough for them to overcome their socioeconomic barriers, then we are providing a disservice to them and their communities. We need to use our privilege as educators to provide them with the tools necessary to navigate the inequity in their environments. The arts need to be used as a tool for developing knowledge and navigating their social circumstances for social transformation.

Reflective Suggestions for Educators

After a 14-year service in my community, I transitioned to a state university in 2019 to begin a career in preparing art educators. Despite the dynamic conversations with my students during the 2018–2019 academic school year, I did not have an opportunity to fully engage new students with the concept of critical car-culture narrative the following year. Instead, I (1) left with this in-depth knowledge of engaging students through culturally relevant histories of their communities and (2) thought that our experience could help other educators use the tool of critical car-culture narrative to develop stories of their communities.

By generating student–teacher dialogues (Freire, 1970) about the history of their neighborhoods, students can use car culture to creatively tell their familial stories through their FoK (González et al., 2005; Huerta & Rios-Aguilar, 2018; Kiyama & Rios-Aguilar, 2018). We must recognize how important it is for students to draw on familial knowledge for counterstorytelling.

With that said, the last part of this self-reflection includes the essential questions students and I exchanged among each other. They drew on the tenets of CRT and focused on the following:

1. centralizing art discussions about race and racism,
2. valuing experiential knowledge that students know most,
3. challenging dominant art education narratives that are fixed and constant,
4. committing to social justice, and
5. drawing on a multitude of disciplines.

The following section explains how educators might consider discussing race, class, and gender by drawing on the cultural knowledge of their communities. Rather than providing a fixed approach to understanding student knowledge and developing counternarratives in the classroom, I share inquiries that shaped unique conversations with my students. As educators, we must trust that students will present and develop our curriculum from their cultural or familial knowledge. The exchanging of experiences and our racial and social environments provided the opportunity to develop students' critical consciousness and creative resistance through the arts (Garcia, 2015, 2018, 2020, 2021).

I invite educators to push the narrative of what we teach by drawing on the FoK that students bring from home—traditions, family histories, parental occupational knowledge, home language, skills, and popular culture—to challenge racism by retelling their stories and drawing on the cultural wealth of our communities.

Students' FoK as Counternarratives in Our Classrooms

At the beginning of this article, I explained how my own FoK influenced my ability to develop the critical car-culture narrative idea. I remind educators that our students' FoK are the accumulated home-based knowledge and resources on which they draw to understand their environment. By recognizing their FoK as academic assets, students and I discussed counternarratives that reflected the lived experiences of people of color to better understand social and racial injustice (Yosso, 2006). This instructional resource presents the critical role of drawing from students' cultural and home-based knowledge to develop counterstories for social consciousness. By drawing on car culture, we developed an in-depth understanding of the racism in the community that they know, live in, and from which they learn. I invite educators to push the narrative of what we teach by drawing on the FoK that students bring from home—traditions, family histories, parental occupational knowledge, home language, skills, and popular culture—to challenge racism by retelling their stories and drawing on the cultural wealth of our communities (Yosso, 2006).

Discussion Questions to Consider

How has the history of racism in our community shaped the culture of our city today?

How does the artist describe their work and refer to historical events/experiences in their community?

Discussion 1

1. What do you see?
2. What details influence your thoughts?
3. What is communicated in the images?
4. What could have influenced the artist to create this?

Discussion 2

5. What is a community?
6. What experiences, beliefs, and activities create a stronger community?
7. What experiences, beliefs, and acts of racism have divided communities?
8. How have communities, people, and groups responded to unjust conditions or actions?

Discussion 3

9. How has racism in communities changed between the past and the present?
10. What types of custom cars do we see in our neighborhoods?
11. How do custom cars reflect their own aesthetic?
12. How do cars reflect the elements of art or principles of design?

Classroom Discussions, Engagement, and Creative Critical Thinking

Centralizing Art Discussions About Race and Racism

Discuss recent or past acts of injustice related to race, class, and gender in their communities.

Valuing Experiential Knowledge That Students Know Most

What familial knowledge can we use to tell counternarratives of our community?

What cultural knowledge exists in our homes and communities?

Challenging Dominant Narratives That Are Fixed and Constant

What stories of our communities need to be told?

How do they challenge dominant or false representations of our communities?

Teachers: How can we challenge dominant narratives in art education and learn about the art from student homes that is not recognized in formal art methods?

A Commitment to Social Justice

How can counternarratives challenge the dominant narratives told of a community?

Teachers: In your classroom, what art approaches can develop students' social consciousness for social transformation?

Drawing on a Multitude of Disciplines

What historical information exists about their community related to issues of race, class, and gender through art, science, math, history, English, etc.? (Examples may include gentrification, racial covenants, Jim Crow laws, gender roles, school-to-prison pipeline, BIPOC lives taken by law enforcement, and environmental racism.)

Students can be tasked with researching past events in their community or interviewing someone about experiences of injustice. ■

Acknowledgment

Dedicated to Ronald Lee Davis (Ronn), Santa Monica College professor, mentor, and friend. Thank you for showing me early on that my cultural knowledge had a space in academia. Rest easy professor.

Luis-Genaro Garcia, Assistant Professor, Art Education, College of Arts & Letters, California State University, Sacramento. Email: Luis.garcia@csus.edu

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Endnotes

[1] In the *Artbound* "Arts Education" special (Reyno, 2021), I provided an example of how students used tortillas as a counternarrative to challenge negative portrayals of their community.

[2] As stated in the Color of Change call, "anti-Blackness is so normalized today that it emboldens *symbolic violence* of hate speech, *violence of neglect* through apartheid conditions, *physical violence* of overpolicing and state-sanctioned killing, and *vigilantism* at the hands of agents who have assumed impunity since the time of slave patrols" (Kantawala, 2021, para. 2).

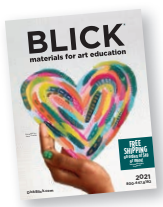
[3] Rubén Ortiz Torres (1998) referred to cruising as the act of socializing, organized by car clubs that enabled driving slowly, while playing music, giving cruisers the opportunity to socialize with other car clubs and/or flirt. For Mexican Americans, cruising was an act of resistance against a system that did not easily accept them.





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Picturing Whiteness

Working With Images to Visualize and Resist White Supremacy in Educational Spaces

Jessica Hamlin and Victoria Restler

This instructional resource explores the creation and activation of an image archive to confront White supremacy in educational spaces. In spring 2018, a series of events on college campuses across the United States became highly visible indicators of the deeply rooted White supremacist ideologies and racialized violence that academic spaces inflict on BIPOC community members. News stories of Black students arrested for napping in common spaces (Caron, 2018) came soon after articles about Indigenous brothers who were kicked off a campus tour (Levin, 2018). Racist messages (Binkley, 2018) appeared on campus walls, and students demanded antiracist institutional reforms (Black Liberation Collective, n.d.).

These campus-specific events were not new; instead, they became visible at a moment when questions around institutionalized White supremacy were fomenting in national dialogues addressing anti-Black police violence. As educators working in spaces that prioritize/assume Whiteness, we cannot be horrified by our criminal–legal system while ignoring the violence within our own institutional contexts. This instructional resource describes our work in designing and leading a series of educator workshops to picture Whiteness in school spaces as a tool for denaturalizing and disrupting educational White supremacy.

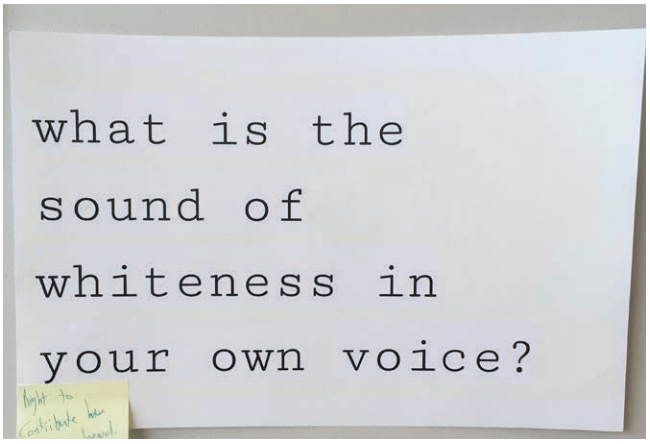
Against the backdrop of racist campus events nationwide, we (the authors—two White, cisgender, middle-class, female-identifying mothers, friends, artists, activists, and academics) came together to read, talk, and plot ways to build our understandings of Whiteness in our own teaching and institutions—one of us working with preservice artist educators and the other with emerging and established youth development professionals. We wanted to surface the deeply rooted practices and assumptions of schooling that marginalize non-White students by questioning our orientations and habits. We were also interested in building community to help identify/visualize/sense oppressive structures of Whiteness across educational contexts.

The "we" of this instructional resource also links with other "we's"—a broader collective of artist–educator–scholar–friends. Our collaborative work includes a set of workshops and a visual archive that we created with Vivianne Njoku and continue to build on with Asilia Franklin-Phipps and Maya Pindyck.

Making Visible the Way Whiteness Works

From the start, our investigations of Whiteness in education orbited around bodies and spaces. We were animated by Claudia Rankine's Racial Imaginary Institute's (2017) call to begin with Whiteness "in order to make visible that which has been intentionally presented as inevitable so that we can move forward into more revelatory conversations about race" (para. 3). We zeroed in on the ways that bodies and buildings stubbornly resist change, even as discourses on our mostly progressive campuses incorporated the race-conscious language of *privilege* and *antiracism*. We swirled in Ahmed's phenomenology of Whiteness (2007), Ohito's pedagogy of discomfort (2016), and Matias's White emotionality (2016)—feeling into the links between bodies, spaces, and emotional topographies of Whiteness. We also looked to the work of artists who interrogate their own relationships to Whiteness (Peggy Diggs's *Being White* series and *White Anti-Racist Studies* collection and Charlotte Lagarde's *Colonial White* project; Diggs, 2008, 2019; Lagarde, 2018) as well as BIPOC artists who engage strategies like photo mapping and visual annotation to surface uncomfortable truths about race and White supremacy in images (Wendy Red Star's *1880 Crow Peace Delegation* series, Nigel Poor's *San Quentin Project* series, and Myra Greene's *My White Friends* photographic series; Greene, 2007–2013; Poor, 2011; Red Star, 2014) and physical spaces (Fred Wilson's Mining the Museum exhibition and Melanie Crean, Shaun Leonardo, and Sable Elyse Smith's *Mirror/Echo/Tilt*; Crean et al., 2016–2019; Wilson, 1992–1993). We wanted to make visible and palpable some of the ways that Whiteness works in our bodies and institutions; we sought to "name" it—sensorily, visually, with words—as a necessary first step to creative, pedagogical, and organizational resistance and disruption.

In a discipline that is centered around aesthetics, we do not often consider the hidden materials embedded within the dominant visual narratives that define our field. Writings on invisibility and race in art education have addressed the politics of erasure around certain bodies, races, and images (Desai, 2014; Knight, 2006; Rolling, 2009; Whitehead, 2009). In these narratives, invisibility describes the intentional and violent omissions that maintain power structures. "Because invisibility is political in that it is



an active form of erasure, to make visible that which dominant institutions render invisible is an activist strategy that is inherently pedagogical" (Desai, 2020, p. 15). Taking Desai's quote as a call to action, this work of making the invisible visible must be at the center of reckoning with White supremacy in art education.

Of course, Whiteness as an ideology and organizing structure is not invisible or visible to all people in the same way. Whether and how we see Whiteness is shaped by context, knowledge frameworks, and above all, racialized positionality. We recognize that for many BIPOC students and educators, the operations of Whiteness in education are hypervisible (and the source of ongoing hurt and harm). While this project is open to all (and has included BIPOC creators, facilitators, and participants at all stages), the intended audience is current and preservice White-identifying educators. We are writing this as White educators in dialogue with the overwhelmingly White power structures and teaching force in educational spaces and the field of art education (Buffington, 2019). Still, this effort, like others in critical Whiteness studies, risks what Denmead (2019) called "the double binds and perverse circularities of whiteness" (p. 122)—recentering ourselves as White women, and Whiteness more broadly. It risks positioning White feelings and reflexivity as "the answer" to systemic racism as opposed to community organizing, policy work, and structural change. This writing—and the workshops we reference—took shape in the context of other work, including learning, teaching, activism, and engagement with BIPOC-led organizing on our campuses and beyond. In doing this work, we acknowledge the tenuous balance between spotlighting Whiteness and efforts toward naming and critical disruption; we strive to move toward disruption.

Re-Seeing Our Own Sites of Teaching and Learning

In 2018, we presented a workshop for art educators working across institutional contexts (elementary, secondary, higher education, and museum spaces) at Harvard University titled "Dis/Orientations: Mapping Whiteness in Educational Spaces." We set out to skew the expectations of traditional race-conscious dialogues. What if we began with art and images, with the body? How might we cultivate space for less talking and more feeling? What kinds of informal dialogues and connections might grow from silent body sculptures and collaborative drawing?

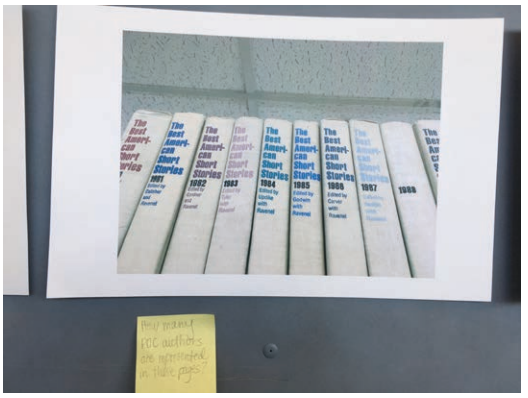
To prepare for this workshop, we collected images from our teaching spaces. We walked around our campuses snapping photos of the overwhelmingly white walls of studios and classrooms; the Eurocentric signage, collections, and visual displays in the library; the neoclassical buildings; and modern institutional functionality. These images helped us begin to name and categorize the ways in which Whiteness takes shape in our spaces and encouraged us to build a collective archive. We added to this collection by sourcing digital images—searching for "classroom," "students," and "teaching," as well as terms like "art school" and "art studio." We knew that we would engage the images for the workshop, but the first purpose was to build shared understanding among ourselves as facilitators. Whiteness is a complex and slippery concept. We wanted to push images beyond the number of White faces, authors, or artworks in a frame, to picture Whiteness as "cultural… [and] processual" (McLaren, 1998, p. 65), as structural and systemic. How might we invoke aspects of Cheryl Harris's multilayered legal analysis of "whiteness as property" (1993) through an image or image collection (Figures 1–4)?

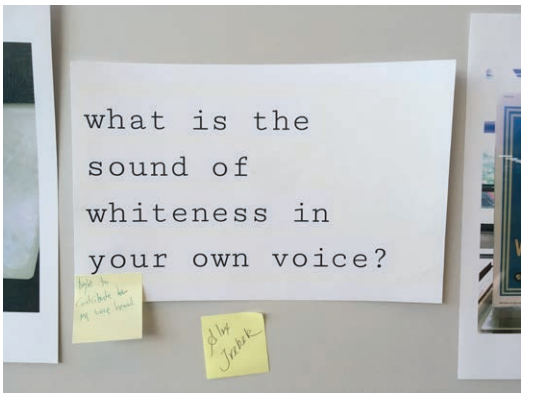
> We wanted to surface the deeply rooted practices and assumptions of schooling that marginalize non-White students by questioning our orientations and habits.

Engaging With Images

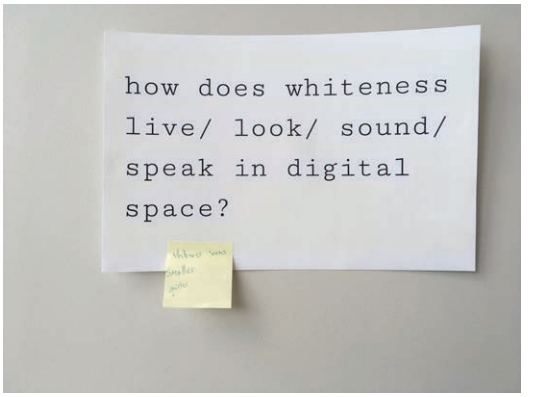
In this first workshop, we mobilized our image archive as a way to transform a seemingly neutral academic classroom into an explicitly visual and reflective space. Before the workshop, we entered our assigned room hours in advance to push tables to one end, arrange rolling chairs into a loose circle, and tape color reproductions of the archive up on the walls. We snaked a collection of 84 images along windows, walls, and columns as a visual exhibition, set of provocations, and opening activity for participants. Remaking the landscape of this classroom was also a way of interrupting a form of institutional Whiteness in the arrangement of university learning spaces, to highlight (by contrast) the ways that the design of these rooms—smooth surfaces, fluorescent lighting, heathered poly neutrals—acts on our bodies. How might the archive—like a ribbon around our circumference—animate our thinking–feeling–making?

When participants entered the space, we invited them to: *Explore the images and texts posted around the room and respond with Post-Its. Share what feels familiar with yellow sticky notes and what feels dissonant with red.* Participants—a predominantly White group of art educators and academics—traced the perimeter and soon Post-It shingles assembled in clusters around the room. The images became a reference for the rest of the workshop, spurring further discussion when we broke into small groups and created maps depicting how Whiteness permeates our learning environments. Beginning with the images primed participants for







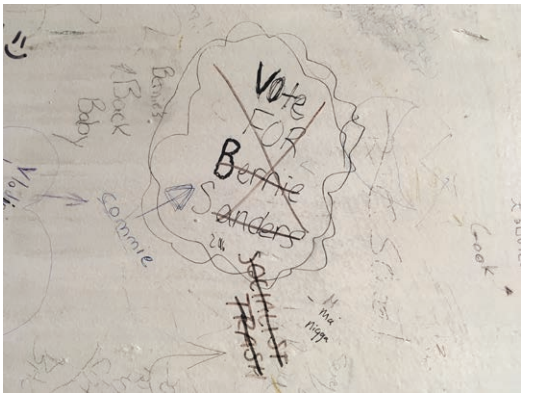


Figures 1–4. A sample of photographs from the image archive taken at Rhode Island College's James P. Adams Library. Photo credit: Victoria Restler.









Figures 5–8. Documentation of the image archive and participant posts from the March 2019 workshop at Rhode Island College. Photo credit: Jessica Hamlin.

> Whether and how we see Whiteness is shaped by context, knowledge frameworks, and above all, racialized positionality.

dialogue, sharing, and making that connected personal experiences to institutional contexts.

In our next iteration of the workshop, at Rhode Island College, a public college in the northeastern US, we expanded our focus on the image archive. Again, we assembled the room—tables aside, chairs in a circle, image archive ringing the differently textured walls: vinyl printed wallpaper, metal tiles, glass. Participants—this time a group of predominantly White with a small group of BIPOC undergraduate and graduate education students, preservice, and in-service teachers—entered the space in the same way by walking, looking, posting. In addition to the original images, we added a group of printed questions, such as "What does Whiteness taste like in school lunch?"—intended to stimulate sensory reflection. This time we encouraged comments, inviting participants to explore the images and post responses to the following prompts:

- Where/how does Whiteness surface in these images?
- Where do you feel at home/at ease?
- Where do you feel uncomfortable or constrained?
- How does Whiteness move or stop here?

The walls filled with sticky note reflections. Below an image depicting a series of edited volumes titled *The Best American Short Stories*, someone asked, "How many POC authors are represented in these pages?" (Figure 5). Under a photo of a shiny green early reader titled *Our Country Long Ago*, someone wrote, "'Our' country to [*sic*] oftentimes washes away the experiences/ history of MANY others. So it's not an our!" Beneath the Courier-font question, "What does Whiteness sound like in your own voice?" one post read, "Right to contribute, have my voice heard," another said, "Alex Trebek" (Figure 6).

Later, we invited participants to lead each other in a gallery walk. Small groups traveled around the room, each member selecting one image to highlight and share. This approach and the new sensory questions made way for new responses and tensions. During the gallery walk, several groups congregated around a blurry close-up photograph of carpet fibers to share surprise/ confusion about why the image was included. (Perhaps a way to deflect the uneasiness of the topic or other imagery?) Later, spurred by questions about the tastes and sounds of Whiteness, a 60-something White male professor shared a belief developed as a young person that Black friends' homes smelled different than his own. As facilitators, we felt a tension between moving into or away from this problematic memory, stunned in the moment, unsure of what we really heard. Like Ahmed (2007) wrote, "This phrase comes up, and it hangs in the air. The speech act becomes an object, which gathers us around" (p. 157). Some of these inaccurate and painful recollections are still present, still hanging in the air. How did we hear this, and how did others in the space make meaning of the words spoken and unspoken? What could and should we have said at that moment? Or circled back to? (Figures 7 and 8).

Creating Collections

Through these workshops, the image archive became a mode of reflection and a catalyst—visually orienting us to the bodily materiality of White supremacy as it saturates educational spaces and inhabitants. Each image is a chance to consider personal and institutional histories—to look back at our relationships to Whiteness in education and to look forward and reimagine new positions, practices, and structures. For us, the archive is an ongoing process—we continue to build on it, and imagine new uses for it, activating it as part of our reflective teaching, and creative–collaborative work. The images we choose are a way to see where we are—build awareness of what is—and begin the work of disruption, transformation, and imagining what should be.

We invite art educators to create personal and collective image archives in order to re-see the racialized spaces and practices where teaching and learning happen and engage others in the work of disruption. What would an image collection that reflects the realities of White supremacy in your buildings, classrooms, and bodies look like? You might take pictures of your educational spaces, source imagery from institutional websites, and image searches to create an image archive for reflective, pedagogical, and activist engagement. As you work with your image archive, consider the following prompts (and create your own):

- Name and order a series of images to tell a story that connects them, narrating structures and systems at work. Where are you in these images?
- Insert new characters/imagine new circumstances—draw and write new roles and relationships into the image and events depicted.
- Talk back to the image—find a counterimage that refuses it or suggests an alternate vision.
- Cut an image up and remake its meaning, relationship, and possibilities.

The creation of an archive is a process of developing a shared visual language around Whiteness, to visualize White supremacy as material, as structural, "as property" (Harris, 1993, p. 1714), and in the forms and foundations of our institutions. Reshaping, reordering, erasing, editing, and destroying these images can

> In doing this work, we acknowledge the tenuous balance between spotlighting Whiteness and efforts toward naming and critical disruption; we strive to move toward disruption.

function as practice, rehearsal, and a problem-posing space for doing this work on the ground in three dimensions.

Antiracist work is a sustained practice and not a destination. We propose the creation and interrogation of archives that visualize and name White supremacy as a commitment to individual reflection and collective work that confronts the intentional and violent omissions that maintain educational power structures. We envision (and enact) this reflective space and set of practices alongside robust participation as activists, advocates, and co-conspirators in educational institutions—the both/and work of turning "'inwards' and 'outwards'" (Denmead, 2019, p. 110). These creative prompts and practices go together with demanding BIPOC representation at all levels of educational leadership, foregrounding the experiences of BIPOC students and educators, reimagining public safety on campus, dismantling the "master narrative of Whiteness in art education" (Buffington, 2019, p. 15), and other efforts to change the structural conditions of White supremacy in our institutions.

We invite art educators to create personal and collective image archives in order to re-see the racialized spaces and practices where teaching and learning happen and engage others in the work of disruption.

Antiracist work is a sustained practice and not a destination.

What comes next? Where does this go? These are the questions that we must keep asking ourselves, our students, our colleagues, our power structures, with skepticism and keen focus on the exploitative "stealth narcissism" (Ahmed, as cited in Denmead, 2019, p. 110) that twists White antiracism into racism. How can we parse these questions from the ever-present solipsism of "'what can white people do?'" (Ahmed, 2007, p. 164). How (as White educators) can we come to and come back to this question and parallel work with playfulness, possibility, endurance, and liberatory imagining? ■

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Seeing and Reading Color: Resisting Hegemonic Power From Within a Foundations Art Classroom

Adam R. Farcus

Figure 1. Teacher sample made from Behr paint color chips with color names that refer to Morocco. © 2019 Adam Farcus.

White straight cis male colonialism is settled within the fields of art and art education (deSouza, 2018; Elkins & Fiorentini, 2021). As educators and artists, we must be engaged with the world in which we and our students live. The new civil rights movement demands that we take up the cause of justice and antiracism both in our lives and in our professions.

When we teach within hegemonic systems designed to reinforce the exclusion of BIPOC, LGBTQ+, and female identities and experiences, how can we work to deconstruct these systems and light a path for others to do the same? (deSouza, 2018; Elkins & Fiorentini, 2021; hooks, 1994). And how can we do this important work when we might have students who are unfamiliar with and even resistant to art beyond the existing canon?

My drive for antiracism, antibias, and diversity work is born in an understanding and ongoing examination of the privileges I have as a White person. I believe it is important that White and privileged educators do antiracist and antibias work because we can serve as a model for allyship, and because we can undermine the essentialist notion that this work is only done by people who experience racism and bias. I also come to this work through the solidarity I have as a queer nonbinary person and from witnessing the reality of racism, bias, and exclusion reflected on my students. For example, the day after we learned that Laquan McDonald was killed by a Chicago police officer, my Chicago high school students and I altered our plans so we could share our anger, fears, and sorrow related to his death and the subsequent cover-up (Ali, 2019; Meisner et al., 2015). My knowledge of antibias, antiracist, and diversity work is primarily built from communal experiences, like the previous example with my high school students, in addition to direct social actions, White ally activist group endeavors, and institutional trainings. In my experience, academic sources—such as those written by Sara Ahmed (2012), Allan deSouza (2018), Aruna D'Souza (2018), Paulo Freire (1970/1993), bell hooks (1994), Claudia Rankine (2014), and Dan S. Wang and Anthony Romero (2016)—have served to reinforce and sharpen my understanding of antibias, antiracist, and diversity work.

My focus on antiracism, antibias, and diversity in art education was prompted by observing curricula that perpetuate the hegemonic canon of art history. It should be noted that these curricula did not exclude faculty from teaching from an inclusive position where diversity in representation is central (and I have learned a lot from those educators who have challenged the art

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canon). However, the curricula were not designed to explicitly work against the exclusive and oppressive power of the art canon. In structures like these, teachers practicing antiracist, antibias, and diversity work must position themselves within the structure to work against it and create change.

Through examples from one of my classrooms, this instructional resource illustrates how art teachers can work within existing curricula to deconstruct or trouble the racist, biased, and exclusive ideologies perpetuated by the canon of art history, include students in the critique and reinvention of the art canon and other systems of oppression, and build diversity-committed communities of support. My examples demonstrate how a pedagogy that practices a system of inclusion can create a classroom community where the students see themselves represented in the course content and where oppression is checked at the door.

First Day

On the first day of my 2D design class at a university for which I no longer work, I asked my students to name some artists, without looking them up, who make 2D artworks. This foundation-level class was at a large state university and Hispanic-Serving Institution in the American South; had 16 enrolled students (about half of whom were art majors, and the others were taking the class as an elective); and while most students were cisgender and ethnically White, transgender, Black, Latinx, and Southeast Asian identities were represented. I wrote all of the answers on the board as the students shouted them out, and it was quickly filled with names like Vincent van Gogh, Banksy, Pablo Picasso, Salvador Dalí, Leonardo da Vinci, Andy Warhol, Thomas Kinkade, and Ansel Adams. In this class, and like other classes before, Frida Kahlo was the only woman and person of color on the board. The class considered aloud what commonalities they saw between the artists on the list. We found that most of the artists made paintings, they were predominantly not living, there were very few women, and they were almost exclusively White.



Figure 2. Byron Kim, *Synecdoche (Whitney Artists)*, 1999–2001. Oil and wax on lauan plywood, birch plywood, and plywood. Paintings made by Kim to match the skin color of artists in the Whitney Museum of American Art's permanent collection. © 2021 Byron Kim. Image courtesy of the artist and James Cohan, New York.

My objective for this exercise was not to make the students feel bad about not knowing artists who were women or people of color (and I told them this), but instead, I did this exercise to begin a lesson on how we end up with these biased lists: what the canon of art history is and how it has influenced the world of art education. These are among the artists that students repeatedly see in school, these artists are heavily represented in art history books, and they are the artists who have had the brightest media spotlight shined on them (deSouza, 2018; Nochlin, 1971; Youngman, 2010).

The students were required to purchase a custom edition of Mary Stewart's (2014) book, *Launching the Imagination: A Comprehensive Guide to Basic Design* (5th ed.), which included Chapters 3 and 5. I did not choose this book, but this is a common textbook for university foundation art classes. It has its advantages and drawbacks. It is one example of an art foundations textbook that features a large number of contemporary artworks, and it is not completely exclusionary like some texts, but it is far from equitable in its representation of artists and designers and, in my classes, it functioned as another example of the hegemonic art canon in action. In class, I projected a slide with data I created containing the gender and race breakdown of the artists used as examples in the two chapters of Stewart's book:

Gender	
Men	73% (35)
Women	27% (13)
Race	
White	85% (41)
Asian	6% (3)
Latinx	4% (2)
Black	2% (1)
Indigenous	2% (1)[1]

These data show that *Launching the Imagination* echoes the history of the art canon by predominantly using examples of artworks by White men. Using statistics like this can support the argument for a more inclusive and less biased pedagogy because data are quantifiable facts. In *On Being Included: Racism and Diversity in Institutional Life*, Sara Ahmed (2012) said that data can be used to critique systems of power because data are authoritative. Ahmed continued by saying that "data is [*sic*] assumed to be 'hard,' a form of evidence whose 'truth' is detached from an emotional world" (p. 75). When working to deconstruct racist, biased, and exclusionary systems, such as the art canon, any perception of emotion and softness can be understood as a weakness (e.g., the social justice warrior pejorative) that allows the counterhegemonic work to be devalued by the institution and students (Ahmed,



Figure 3. Kay Rosen, *Blurred*, 2004/2015. Wall painting. Art Gallery of New South Wales, Sydney, Australia. © 2004 Kay Rosen.

2012). The discussion of the list of artists the students knew, and these data on whom was represented in our textbook, served as models for how our class was going to challenge hegemonic systems.

On the first day, I also introduced the students to the #FirstDayFirstImage initiative and how it fit within our discussion of the artistic canon. #FirstDayFirstImage is a way of asking "artist-educators to actively rethink the canons they create for their curricula, starting with the first image shown to students on the first day of class" (first day first image, n.d., para. 1). This initiative and social media campaign signals our responsibility as teachers to expand the histories we create by centering our classes on underrepresented voices "including but not limited to female artists, artists of color, LGBTQ artists, and [I]ndigenous artists" (first day first image, n.d., para. 2). I explained that I would use this ethos throughout the semester to design all of my projects and then displayed the first artwork image to begin the first assignment.

These three short exercises took less than 30 minutes and set up a structure for how this class would not adhere to the hegemonic structure of the art canon. Our classrooms are not monolithic in identity, and they are spaces that should not reproduce hierarchical power structures that exclude and discriminate. Art classes that perpetuate the exclusionary art canon will multiply the weight of this and other systems of oppression (physical health, mental health, income, safety, and education) on the well-being of our students who do not benefit from racial, gender, or other privileges (Kraehe & Acuff, 2013). For this reason, students must see themselves in the artwork they study in class. Furthermore, studies of students' experience of inclusive course activities have shown "that emphasizing multiculturalism and diversity benefits all students" (Villalpando, 2002, p. 141). This means that the artworks shown in class should be created by a diverse group of artists, and that the artworks should speak to a wide breadth of lived experiences.

This Sign Says

Later in the semester and similar to other foundations programs, I came to a unit on color with skill-based objectives focused on the basics of color theory and split-primary color mixing with watercolor paints. But I could not forget that I am working to deconstruct hegemonic power structures in this class. Therefore, my color unit began with the assumption that teaching color today means connecting and addressing the physical aspects of color perception to the social factors of how color is conceptualized—meaning color, like other principles and elements of design, is inseparable from cultural connotations such as race, ethnicity, gender, politics, nationality, and sexuality (Gude, 2007).

This unit contained four short lessons or challenges for the students before they began designing their final project: a mural

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proposal. First, as a class, we studied some key examples of how signs and myths work (via semiotic theory) and took those ideas quickly to color (Barthes, 1957/1972; Hall et al., 2013). We looked at the color black as a sign, and because signs are not fixed and shift due to cultural context, we discussed the multiple meanings that the sign "black" can have within different cultures and in-groups (Hall et al., 2013). Second, I taught the students how to execute a split-primary color chart using watercolor paints, and they created a couple of color wheels in the downtime between the following two lessons. Third, we read and discussed Kay Rosen's essay, "The Center is a Concept" (2007), which further complicated the connotations of color by introducing the semiotic fluidity of language and the variability of social ideologies. Rosen (2007) claims that some single words can function as conceptual centers of opposing forces and that through active reading and close looking, the "language can exceed its function as signifier to artfully role-play the signified" ("The Center is a Concept" section, para. 3). The connections between color and linguistics that Rosen outlines guide the remainder of the project.

For the last short lesson of this unit, the students were tasked with gathering at least 10 interior latex paint color sample chips from a store. After collecting their paint chips, the students sat in groups at large tables, merged all of their chips into one pile, and worked together to find ways to separate their pile into categories based on color, the text on the chips, and the connotations that are implicit or explicit in them (Figure 4). For example, I presented a teacher sample of grouped color chips I obtained from Home Depot that include the following names and colors:

Morocco Red:	slightly low-saturated warm red
Moroccan Ruby:	slightly low-saturated cool red
Moroccan Henna:	cool brown
Moroccan Spice:	slightly yellow-brown
Moroccan Sky:	low-saturated yellow-orange
Marrakech Brown:	low-saturated slightly brown olive green
Egyptian Pyramid:	low-saturated cool tan
Nairobi Dusk:	tinted warm tan
Kalahari Sunset:	low-saturated slightly shaded orange
African Plain:	low-saturated olive green

My sample exemplified how the Behr paint company used cultural stereotypes of "Africanness" (with a particular focus on Moroccan stereotypes), found between name and color, to sell paints *and* the idea of the homogenous African Other (Figure 1). These earthy reds, browns, oranges, and tans echo the aura of (North) African exoticism. In their groups, the students inevitably found color chips that reinforced gender norms and other cultural exoticisms.

At this point, the students have studied and practiced how color can be dissected through a semiotic lens to lay bare the ideological and oppressive systems that are hidden myths (Barthes, 1957/1972). To launch the final project for this unit, a watercolor painting and written proposal for a mural on campus, we looked at and discussed Kay Rosen's wall paintings, Byron Kim's *Synecdoche* works, and Alma Thomas's paintings.



Figure 4. Student explaining the color chip collections from his group to the class.

Rosen's works (Figure 3) and essay (2007) challenged us to consider the idea of how political and social ideologies are constructed in opposition to others. Kim's series of small oil paint and wax paintings (Figure 2) count and make visible racial identities that might otherwise be erased. Thomas's colorful paintings, such as *Evening Glow* (Figure 5), asked us to contemplate how a title that would seem vacuous on a color chip worked to challenge the nature of human vision.

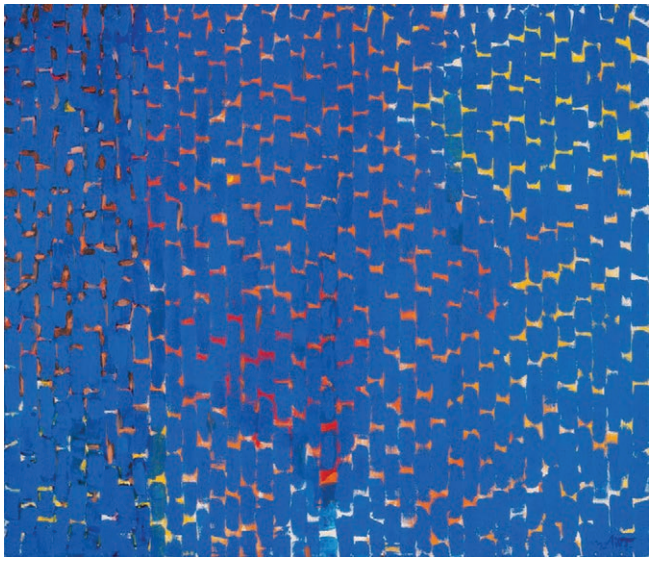


Figure 5. Alma W. Thomas, *Evening Glow*, 1972. Acrylic on canvas. 35 3/16 × 41 in. (89.4 × 104.1 cm). Baltimore Museum of Art: Gift of Ruth and Jacob Kainen, Chevy Chase, Maryland, BMA 1991.98. Photography by Mitro Hood.



Figure 6. Austyn Storm Rogers, *Marked*, 2019. Watercolor on paper. © 2019 Austyn Storm Rogers.

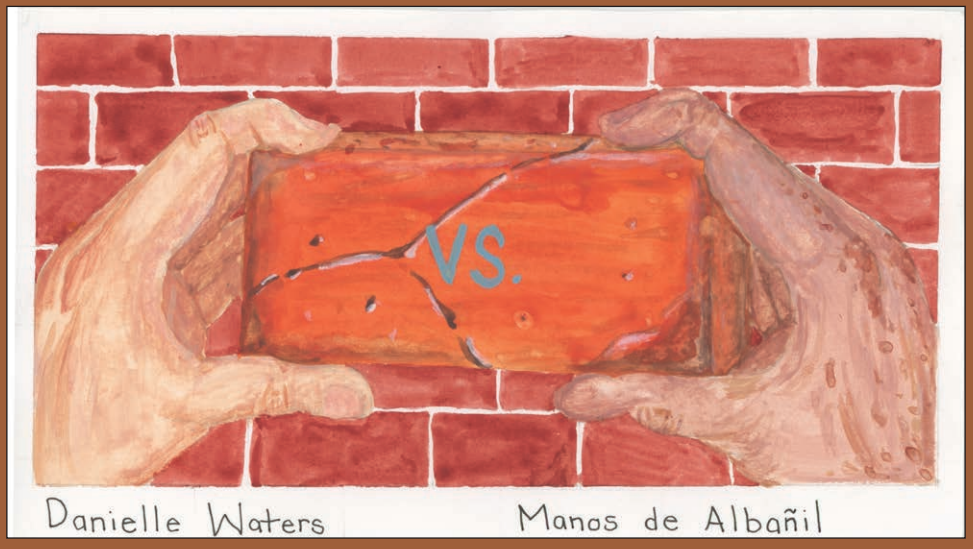


Figure 7. Danielle Waters, *Manos de Albañil*, 2019. Watercolor on paper. © 2019 Danielle Waters.

The discussion of works by Rosen, Kim, and Thomas led to the project prompt. The students were asked to create a campus mural proposal, with a watercolor painting and a written statement, about a social or personal phenomenon that had opposing ideological forces. After some brainstorming, the students met in small groups and helped each other find language and color elements that would express the concept(s) they wanted to communicate. The subject matter they chose ranged from the effects of climate change in the Philippines and Boomer–Gen Z friction to colonial-driven colorism in Mexican culture and the 2020 U.S. presidential election. The mural proposals the students created were heartfelt, cutting, and resolute in their stances.

Austyn Storm Rogers created *Marked* (Figure 6) to address the ways that overweight bodies are thought of as either shameful and unattractive or loudly celebrated as "fat and proud." Rogers wanted to challenge this dichotomy by proposing an alternative where stretch marks are embodied as beautiful, and the expression of that beauty is communicated through a quiet and subdued voice, represented by the pink and tinted orange hues in his painting.

And find your people: The work of deconstructing the systems that oppress, in art education and elsewhere, is important work that is best supported by an engaged community.

In Danielle Waters's mural proposal, *Manos de Albañil* (Figure 7), she created a scene where she and her grandfather are holding a brick with the letters "VS" written on it. Waters said the piece was meant to illustrate two connections between her and her grandfather: one of playful affection—her grandfather called her "manos de albañil" ("bricklayer hands")—and another of exclusion based on skin color. In her proposal statement, Waters wrote that her grandfather (represented by the hand on the right) felt excluded in America because of his race and that her feelings of exclusion came from the Latinx side of her family because she was perceived as White.

In the approaches I have outlined above, I am exemplifying a few ways that educators can use their creative energy to construct antiracist, antibias, and inclusive curricula. Doing the research to find artists who are underrepresented in the canon of art is ongoing and sometimes challenging work that requires diligence and the privilege of time. The #FirstDayFirstImage initiative is a good place to start. Be critical of the media used in your curriculum. To inform the construction of your lessons, read texts by BIPOC authors who write about diversity, racism, and justice. Look for accessible examples of hegemonic power structures in culture and use them in scaffolding your discussions on how to deconstruct systems of exclusion. And find your people: The work of deconstructing the systems that oppress, in art education and elsewhere, is important work that is best supported by an engaged community. ■

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Endnote

[1] There are problems with categorizing any gender or race: Identities are intersectional, these categories are not monolithic, and categorization often erases specific identities. These categories are chosen to clearly illustrate the statistical issue of exclusion.

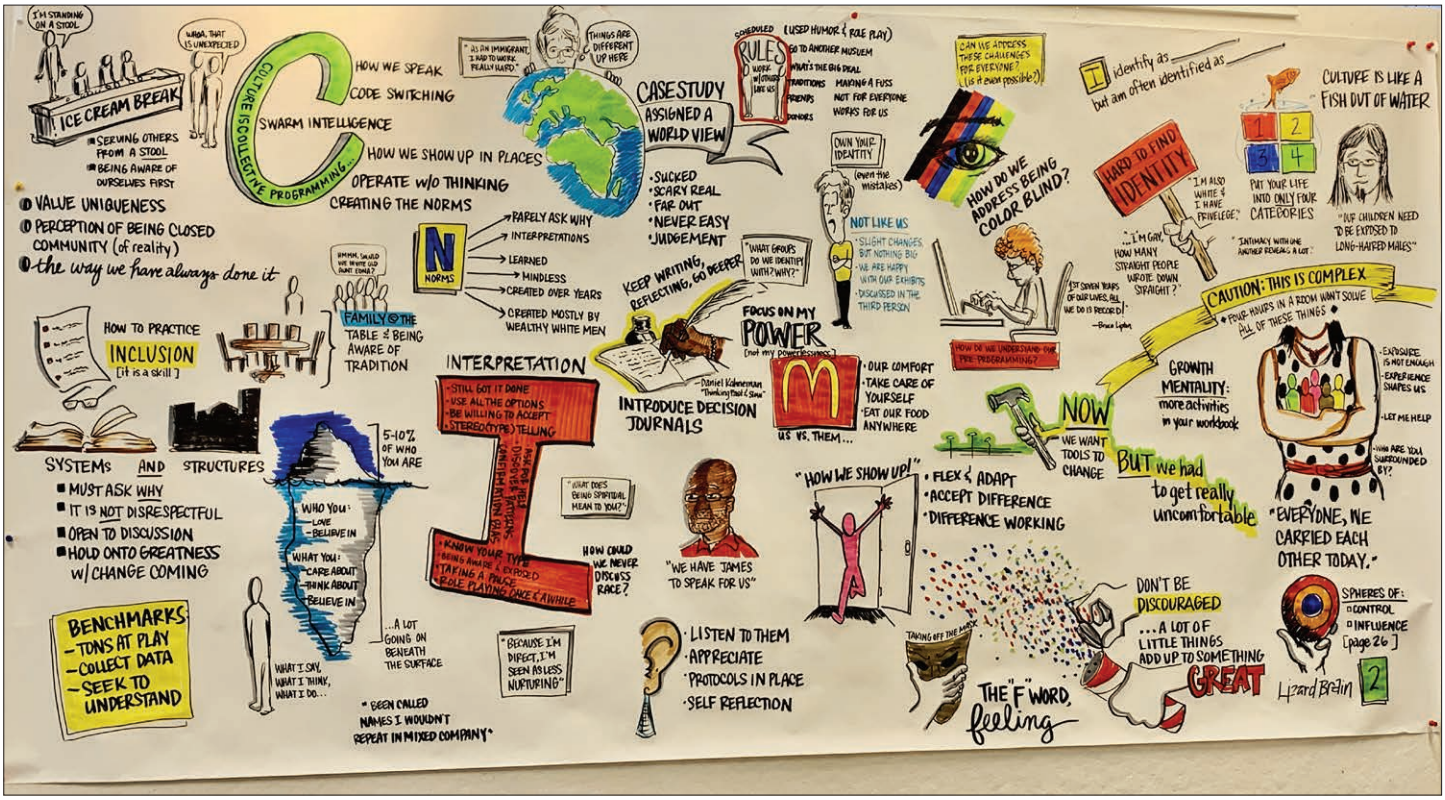
Writer's Corner

Making Your Stories Visible:
How to Add Writing to Your Art Teaching Toolkit

James Haywood Rolling Jr.

> **"Don't just tell the facts; tell stories that carry the facts along for the ride."**

In my new book, *Growing Up Ugly: Memoirs of a Black Boy Daydreaming* (2020), as I reflected on my years as a student at the High School of Art & Design in New York City, I recalled that by the time I was enrolled in Ms. Waksman's 11th-grade creative writing class I already knew I needed stories. I didn't just collect comics and watch movies—I immersed myself in them. Swimming in the stories that authors had written about the lives and adventures that others live—whether those other lives were



Documentation of a day's proceedings at summer 2019 NAEA Board meeting in Alexandria, Virginia, made visible in a storytelling format.

imagined or true to life—allowed me the portals to escape my own story, even if only for an hour or two. It did not matter to me whether the stories were fiction or nonfiction—either way, they came to life as I rehearsed them over and again in my mind. Those stories sustained me.

As an undergraduate BFA student in the School of Art at The Cooper Union, I took 2 semesters in a row of creative writing courses instructed by a professor named Brian Swann, who offered me some respite when I needed it most. While studying with him, I started writing poetry again and submitting collections to annual university poetry prize competitions. Only Professor Swann knew I was doing this, since eligibility required a faculty sponsor. In essence, along with 3 semesters each of photography, printmaking, and advanced drawing, I had added writing as an unofficial minor and as one of my lifelong creative practices.

Understanding writing as a vital practice that flows from the same studio habits of mind that I had already cultivated for myself in the art studio and fostered in both my elementary art and university research students, also serves as the basis for the tips I am sharing in this installment of *Art Education* journal's new Writer's Corner. As an artist, you already have the power to become an effective writer and researcher. Using a framework derived from the eight Studio Habits of Mind (Hetland et al., 2013), here is how you can develop your own creative practice utilizing *words* as your medium.

Envision. Don't just tell the facts; tell stories that carry the facts along for the ride. Envision and create mental pictures or diagrams as vehicles for the precious cargo of meanings you wish to convey. As a visual artist, you are already adept at painting pictures. As a writer, rather than using pigments, you compose with words. As I did in the first paragraphs of this writing, imagine which experiences, encounters, or events you've lived through that will best exemplify the relevance of what you have to share.

Observe. Look for other stories, whether fiction or nonfiction, that you can adapt and build upon to call your own. According to Anton Howes (2017), a historian of innovation and a lecturer in economic history at Brown University, significant invention in any medium or practice starts with detailed observations of preexisting models—messing around with what is already in use to make it work better or repurpose it for other usage.

Express. Find your own "voice," gifting to others what has mattered the most to you so that it will be likewise valued and not forgotten by the next generation that follows you.

Reflect. Brent Wilson (1997) offers a useful conception of research "as *re-search*, to search again, to take a closer second look" (p. 1). By doing so, any writer becomes a researcher.

Understand Art Worlds. Reading what others have written matters—from novels, to essays, to news features, to poetry. Reading across genres of literature and documentation develops a fluency enabling discourse across multiple communicative modes and contexts.

Develop Craft. Craft is an incremental exercise—one learns by doing, and then doing it again. Practice is everything. Consistent practice alone develops a body of work. There is no shortcut, nor anything more fulfilling than mastering a practice you initially struggled with.

Engage & Persist. The editing process is sustained engagement—a persistence of focus until the task refining your first draft is completed.

Stretch & Explore. Finally, when you add writing to your visual creative practices, something wonderful happens. It stretches you as you learn to master yet another creative practice. But more importantly, with each piece of writing you also create space for others to enter a dialogue with the stations of your practice, adapting or building upon the documentation you leave behind.

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