Using the “Talking about Race” Issue in the Classroom

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New England Literacy Resource Center

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Webinar Tools

Use chat box for discussion

Adjust Screen

Write your questions in the chat box.

Please remember to please send chats to “all participants” NOT “all attendees.”
Welcome to our Special Guests from Pima Community College Adult Basic Education in Arizona

Matias

Hazel

Mireya

Kathy
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In this webinar, you will:

A. Familiarize you with CCR-aligned lesson ideas from this issue.

B. Hear from our special guests – a student, teachers, and a student leadership council facilitator– about how using *The Change Agent*:

1. engages students with its peer-written content that is relevant to adult learners,

2. provides inspiring and interesting content for teaching basic skills

3. helps develop leadership in a variety of ways
Warm-Up

• how do you identify by race?
• how are you perceived?
• does the identity of the instructor impact the teaching environment with respect to race-related issues? If so, how?
First, I am going to show you a few specific pieces from the Race issue. These pieces are:

- Designed to teach basic skills while engaging the learner in something that matters.
- Help teachers make sure they are addressing CCR skills.
- Provide opportunities for critical thinking and a sense of personal agency.
We Were on Our Honeymoon
But No One Believed We Were Paying Customers

Roxana Martinez

In June of 2012, my husband and I, who are from El Salvador, went to Miami for our honeymoon. We spent two weeks in a hotel there. Sadly, the hotel staff did not treat us fairly.

On several occasions the security guards questioned us about our stay at the hotel. Several times, they asked to see our identification and asked us about our room number. They acted as if we could not possibly be paying customers. When we sat in the dining room, the waiter served everyone except us. He totally ignored us. We were both upset because he was discriminating against us.

We were sad that the hotel staff discriminated against us on our honeymoon. It is an example of racism. We were treated differently because of our race. In my opinion, racism in the United States continues to be a big problem.

Roxana Martinez is an ESOL student in Fayetteville, AR.
Evaluate the Text

What argument is Roxana making? ______________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________________

What details does she provide to back it up? List three details here:
1. ________________________________________________________________
2. ________________________________________________________________
3. ________________________________________________________________

Do you think she makes her case well? If yes, why? If no, how could she improve?
Before you read…

1. Think about the vocabulary: institutional, suspend, expel.

2. Discuss what we mean by “institutions.” Some institutions are: schools, the media, prisons, the courts, and work. What are some other examples of institutions in the U.S.?

3. Look at the pictures and skim the headings. Every heading says “…while black.” Why?
1. Being in Preschool While Black

Black children are punished much more than white children. For example, 50% of children suspended in preschool are black, even though only 18% of children in preschool are black.

2. Being in School While Black

Forty percent of children expelled from elementary, middle school, and high school are black. Unfair punishment gets more serious, too. The schools refer students to the police! Sixty-five percent of children referred to the police are Black or Latino, according to the Department of Education.
3. Doing a Science Project While Black

Research shows 75% of all people in the U.S. have racial bias. They automatically connect black people with "dangerous or aggressive" behavior. For example, Kiera Wilmot (picture below) is a 16-year old girl who lives in Florida. She was arrested at school when the top came off of her chemistry experiment and smoke came out. No people or things were hurt, but the police arrested her and took her away in handcuffs. She was suspended from school for 10 days and charged with two felonies.
4. Driving While Black

Blacks and whites break traffic laws equally. They are not arrested equally, though. For example, on the New Jersey Turnpike, 15% of drivers are black, but 40% of people stopped for breaking traffic laws are black. It’s worse, though. Seventy-three percent of people arrested on the New Jersey Turnpike are black.
5. Getting a Call-Back While Black

Black people who graduated from college have difficulty finding jobs twice as often as white people. Why? One reason is that people with black-sounding names have to send out almost twice as many applications as people with white-sounding names, just to get a response to their resume. After finally getting an interview, black people are called back to talk with the company again only 14% of the time. White people are invited back 34% of the time. Remember how the schools and police work together? When a person has a criminal record, it’s even harder to get a job, especially if a person is black.
6. Trying to Survive While Black

Is this just a personal problem? No. The average black or Latino family has less cars, property, and money than the average white family. Without these assets white families have, many black families have to rely on landlords, banks, and credit card companies. These institutions also work against black people and people of color. It is difficult to escape institutional racism. The cycle continues.
After You Read...

- What argument is the writer making?
- Which statistics are especially interesting? Why?
- Do some research to find facts that further support the author’s claims or disprove her claims.
- In the introduction, the author says that institutional racism impacts basic human rights. Use the text to explain how that could be true.
Defending my Son against Racism

Daffeh Fatou

When my son went to public school, some children tore his books and bullied him. They made fun of his name and called him an “African Boodie Scratcher”! One boy kept making fun of his name and changing the letters around to something very rude. The teacher didn’t do anything. She said that my son was being a troublemaker. But he never started any of the trouble!

It happened more than 10 times. We had many meetings with the teacher about this problem. She never did anything to help. If this same thing happened with other people, I think the teacher would have done something more quickly.

Finally, we had a meeting that included the teacher and the principal. The principal told the teacher that she

Before this happened, I always believed whatever a teacher said. That was my mistake. I even decided to volunteer at that school, to see what was going on there. That’s how I realized that my son was being bullied and that the teacher’s story was wrong. I became a Learning Lab volunteer.
Write to Daffeh!

• In your letter, notice how this experience helped her grow and change as a parent.
• Acknowledge the efforts she made on behalf of her son. Base your observations on the text.
• Share with Daffeh you experience of advocating for your child or someone else you know. How did it change you or affect you?
• In your writing, use temporal language (first, later, finally) and transition words (consequently, furthermore). See p. 49 for more ideas.
Why I Don’t Watch TV News

David Diaz

It might seem extreme, but I don’t watch the news on TV anymore. I’ve noticed that the media seems to be filled with negative accounts of African Americans and Hispanics. I don’t want my children to be exposed to these biased accounts.

I believe that no human being is born racist. People learn these behaviors because they are taught to do so. Before I got full custody of my son, I noticed that we were not as public if an African American or anyone with dark skin was around.

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In this essay, I’m going to explain why I don’t watch the Black Lives Matter (BLM) movement so much. It keeps the police in check and reminds them that they are not above the law. I also think that the police need to be a voice out there to stand up for those who have been wronged by the police.

Black Lives Do Matter

Jeff Cunningham

In this essay, I’m going to explain why I think the Black Lives Matter (BLM) movement is a good thing. It keeps the police in check and reminds them that they are not above the law. I also think that the police need to be a voice out there to stand up for those who have been wronged by the police.

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Division among Us

Joseph Florides

Racism has been a division among people for many years. I have seen people of color treated like they are less than human. I have seen racist people try to put themselves above the law and above other people. I have experienced it for myself. As a white police officer, I faced a microaggression attitude because I am Hispanic.

On a Sunday morning, while on my way to church, a police officer got out of his truck and began to run my plates. They followed me and stopped trying to pull me over. I wasn’t breaking the law or even coming too close. I believe I did this because I am Hispanic.

I strongly believe that God created all mankind equally in His image. These are my views on either side of racism: it’s a lose-lose situation. Any marginalization of race, race, or religious identity is bound to act in a manner that is contrary to this principle and destroys his integrity. We are a nation under God, and we are the strongest nation on earth.

Matter vs. All Lives Matter

Matter movement emphasizes black lives instead of all lives. Instead, when Black people get free, everybody gets free. And when the black movement really matters, it matters to everyone.

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What do you think?

• Use the chat box to share some of your thoughts about how it might be challenging to bring these topics into the classroom.

• What ideas do you have for teaching with these materials?
You Want Me to Do What?

Yes, We Can Talk about Race in the Classroom!

Race can be a hard topic, but it is important. When we talk about race, we might remember painful experiences. But we might also be inspired by people’s courage. Talking about race helps us understand history and current events in the U.S. It helps us support our children and our communities. It helps us build community in the classroom. This ABE class at El Rio Learning Center in Tucson, AZ, studied race. Here is what students said about it:

Racism in History and Today

I first started to hear about race when I came to the U.S. It is hard to see our community and our people suffer because of race. Racism started a long time ago—with slavery and then segregation. Today, racism continues. I turn on the TV, and I hear about race all the time. I don’t like

We Need to Teach Our Children

We need to teach our children to treat everyone the same. We want them to see everyone as an equal. In America, talking about race can be risky, but we should do it anyway so that we can all learn to fight racism.

-- Matias Rodriguez
Matias

• Having that hard conversation in the classroom. How can teachers learn from the incident Matias describes?

• “Existing while Black” (p. 5 of The Change Agent) offers an explanation.
This 5-page packet by Hazel Robin includes handouts and links for students to prepare to write about race. Available at http://changeagent.nelrc.org/issues/issue-42/ (if you have an online subscription).

- Gather evidence and information about race first.
- Share with students what academic skills they will be learning, including:
  - Conducting research
  - History
  - Science
  - Transferring knowledge
www.pbs.org/race
Before Studying African American History

JASON: My stereotype about African Americans was negative.

AMAR: The media shows you that black people are gangsters and they carry guns.

JANE: My white real estate agent told me [that finding] a location without black people was the most important factor.

MILA: When I came here, I couldn’t understand blacks. I thought, “Why are they talking about racism too much?”

After Studying African American History

ALEX (studied the prison system): I was shocked when I was doing research.

ASTER: Black people contributed to America. [They] are doctors, scientists, professors. I was so surprised.

JACKIE (studied black wall street): What [black people] have done — they never talk about in history.

SARINA: If you want to live in the U.S. or study in the U.S., I think [you] must study the history of African Americans.
How “talking about race” develops student leadership.

• Rhonda’s story in Student Leadership Council.

• “Barrios and Barriers” a Tucson Civil rights history presentation:
  ✓ Facilitation skills
  ✓ Empathy
  ✓ Compassionate listening
  ✓ Civil dialogue
  ✓ Community connections
Write for The Change Agent

• “Call for Articles” includes engaging and relevant writing prompts. The theme of our next issue is “Transportation.”
• Students can write for a national magazine.
• Their story will be read by peers.
• They will experience “the editorial process,” including revisions, etc.
• Next writing deadline is May 6, 2016.

Download “Call for Articles” at:
http://changeagent.nelrc.org/write-for-us/
Use the “Call for Articles” in Instruction

• Show copies of *The Change Agent* to students so they have a feel for the magazine that they’d be writing for.
• Allow them to peruse the magazine. Ask them to share what they notice about it, including:
  – Articles are of different lengths and targeted towards different levels.
  – Articles are written by other adult learners.
  – The content all pertains to a certain theme.
  – The magazine includes learners from the whole country.
  – What else might they notice?
• Before handing out the “Call for Articles,” ask students, “What do you think would be in a magazine that chose as its theme: Transportation?”
Prepare your students to write multiple drafts; encourage peer editing.

Respond to just one or two of the prompts.

Students whose pieces are accepted receive a $50 stipend.

Speak from the heart! Write about something that matters.

Warning! We get 100s of submissions and can only accept about 30.
Submitting Articles to *The Change Agent*

Each submission includes all relevant contact information for the student and the teacher.

Please email submissions as attachments.
Subscribing to The Change Agent

Individual
Get 1 copy
$12 for 1 year, or
$20 for 2 years

Electronic
Access PDFs of all the magazines, audio, etc.
$20 per teacher for 1 year, or
$16 per teacher for 25 or more teachers

Bulk
Get a set of 25
$85 for 1 year, or
$160 for 2 years
Finally…

A recording of this webinar will be available at changeagent.nelrc.org

Questions or comments? Contact Cynthia Peters cpeters@worldded.org, Matias Rodriguez at mrodriguez138@pima.edu, Hazel Robin at Hazel Robin drobin@pima.edu, Kathy Budway at kbudway@pima.edu, and Mireya Escamilla at mmgomez@pima.edu.

Thank you for participating!