

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 what I hear. Everybody should have the same rights.

-- Alma Alicia Zepeda G.

Learn from History

It helps to talk about race so that we don’t repeat the same mistakes from the past.

-- Mark Reynolds

It Is Frustrating

In class, I wrote about when my dad got pulled over by two white cops and they were giving him a hard time, I think, because of his tattoos and his skin color. There are people out there who are racist and people who aren’t. Oh well, you can’t change it. That’s life. It frustrates me.

-- Natalie Roche

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

We Can Do Something

It is important to talk about race at home and in school. If we share our opinions and feelings, we can do something about this problem. When I talk about race, I feel angry. Why can’t people accept others? We are here sharing this planet. We could all live in peace like brothers and sisters.

-- Leticia Alvarez

Inspired to Focus on My Dreams

Talking about race is hard, but it is also inspiring. Black people experienced many abuses in their lives. But they were strong and fought for their rights. They joined forces. They were brave and they fought for their dreams. They inspire me to be strong and brave, and to focus on my dreams.

-- Rosa Imelda Quintana

MORE STRATEGIES FOR TALKING ABOUT TALKING ABOUT RACE: P. 43 AND “BEST PRACTICES” BY LISA GIMBEL AND RIVA PEARSON <CHANGEAGENT.NELRC.ORG/ISSUES/ISSUE-42>.