
Empathy and Compassion

Dialogue



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Winter 2020

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“In reflecting over the last school year, I realized why this year looked so much different than last year: saying we want to have a classroom community and then actively cultivating opportunities to build a classroom community are two different things. This year, we did the usual ‘build community in the first weeks of school’ activities, but we also had

our weekly Friday morning Community Building Circles as a priority. I was committed to this process, and as our class became fluent in using it together, it became an integral piece of our routine. And it was exciting to see that the fidelity in utilizing it regularly led to being flexible in the way that we used it. Additionally, I was able to see my students taking more risks with one another: students were eager to work with one another, and not only with their preferred partners, but with whoever I would assign them to work with for a given assignment.”

#USvsHate: Going National!

Kim Douillard, p. 10

“Last year, I was fortunate to join the leadership of this effort as director of the San Diego Area Writing Project (SDAWP), along with a team of SDAWP teacher leaders. We piloted lessons—some directly from other organizations, and some we had created or adapted for our own contexts and academic requirements—and had our students create anti-hate messaging. “We define ‘hate’ as any time people denigrate, disrespect or harm an individual or group as if their identity makes them an inferior or less valuable type of person.” Students are invited to create original anti-hate messaging—posters, poems, songs, videos, memes, art installations, essays—that refuse hate in whatever form they choose.”

All English Language Learners Matter

Monica Galvan, p. 12

“Social justice can take many forms inside a classroom. I choose to make it visible in my classroom by providing a quality education to English Language Learners. My elementary school teachers did not use a student-centered approach to teaching English Language Learners. While in my teacher training program, my professors would often say, “You teach the way you were taught.” However, I think I am very aware of the way I was taught, and I don’t want to bring those teaching strategies to my classroom. The difference between those teachers and myself is that I understand what it means to be an English Language Learner inside a classroom as both a student and as a teacher. As an educator, I want the way English Language Learners are taught to change. I want the strengths that they bring to our classrooms to be valued and for them to receive an education that is tailored to their needs.”

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A Modest Proposal for Social Justice: Empowering Student Voice & Agency Through Satire

Christen McGaughey-Gilreath, SDAWP 2019

Research Paper. Source Paper. Argument. Persuasion.... As composition instructors, we are often expected to engage students in critical research and argumentation, and this is absolutely valid. Students should leave us with knowledge of research and persuasion. However, traditional argumentation and research paper topics (Should Marijuana Be Legal?, What Are the Impacts of Cellphones?, and so on...) often result in less than desirable student products. Many students blindly write papers with little

passion, generic binary opinions, and ill-supported anecdotal claims. In these types of tasks, students barely scrape the surface of the critical thinking and research skills we want them to master. So, how do we engage students in greater critical thinking? We need to rethink the texts we are asking students to create.

Ultimately, the traditional researched and sourced persuasive paper's potential pitfalls stem from students' lack of passion. Research and inquiry require intrinsic motivation, so it is ultimately essential for students to explore and engage in subjects that are relevant to them. Some may argue that students lack interest in important topics. However, students have a lot that they want to say, and "Even the most disengaged student is passionate about something, and we can leverage that passion to help nurture her writing life" (Marchetti & O'Dell 45). As Marchetti and O'Dell note, every student has a source of passion. We just need to tap into it. Additionally, students' interests don't simply stop at the latest pop-culture trend or recent sports game. Our students are extremely invested in important social justice issues, which have a much wider-reaching impact

So...how do we tap into this passion? The most important first step in supporting student engagement is allowing choice: "When we assign students to write about a text that we've chosen and ideas we have preselected and in a structure we

have determined for them we are essentially giving students a Get Out of Planning Free card" (Marchetti & O'Dell 23). While Marchetti and O'Dell are largely focused on the case of literary analysis, the same can be applied to pre-selected research topics. When students are provided with a directive question on a topic, they often search for the answers that we have selected for them or the answers that appear in the collected research. Therefore, they fall into the same "Get Out of Planning Free" state of mind.

Earlier in my teaching career, I developed a brief research assignment that I initially thought included an engaging central question. I asked students to reflect on how the American Dream has changed over time and what types of new dreams had taken its place. This seemed like a relevant discussion, as the recession was still on people's minds. However, it became quickly apparent that students felt unmotivated in pursuing this line of inquiry. This assignment repeatedly resulted in limited responses and critical thinking because students seemed to be seeking the "right" answer. For example, one student focused on the rising emphasis on fame:

Reality television characters have shown people that you can achieve fame, money, and other forms of idealistic success without hard work. This idea appeals to the majority of people because you can be rich or poor, you don't need any talent or special skill [...] Sociologist Karen Sternheimer wrote a book called Celebrity Culture and The American Dream: Stardom and Social Mobility. She says the glut of reality television during this recession has produced a new jackpot. She says that when the more traditional ways of having economic success or even economic stability seem impossible, there's always the fantasy of the overnight success.

While this student touches on some interesting questions regarding the

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image of fame and success, she is only skimming over the issue, and the provided evidence is limited. Additionally, the student relies heavily on the voice of her source rather than her own perspective. Thus, this demonstrates the temptation for students to follow the traditional “Get Out of Planning card” when confronted with this type of research question.

At the same time, how do we ensure that once students have been given choice, they provide a critical outlook on the passions they choose to explore?

At the same time, how do we ensure that once students have been given choice, they provide a critical outlook on the passions they choose to explore? A reasonable concern arises when considering how to keep students on track. A common problem when having students explore their own line of inquiry arises in students’ heavy reliance on their own perspectives, which often results in limited responses to the provided evidence. Take the following student, who chose to write a research paper on dance and fitness:

Dancing is also an excellent way to improve physical fitness and develop social skills, thereby improving mental health [...] Some ways it improves physical health is by helping people develop strength, suppleness, coordination, and balance in varying amounts. The benefits to mental health derive from the improved self-confidence which results from moving to music, cooperating with others, and from making new friends. I tried to do traditional exercise whether it was at the gym or by myself jogging through the neighbor-

hood or park. I hate working out [...] Dance on the other hand is different.

While this student demonstrates extensive investment in dance and its benefits, she becomes focused on sharing and promoting her interest rather than thinking critically about its greater social impact. So, when we allow for student choice and opinion how do we prevent them from writing mild personal rants? The solution is simple: engage students in non-traditional tasks and opinions.

Enter satire! Many composition instructors recognize satire as an important literary form and often teach satirical texts. Students are commonly asked to engage with these materials because satire is prevalent in our media. For example, Rebecca A. Glazier, from the University of Arkansas at Little Rock, notes, “Many instructors are already teaching with satire; for instance: assigning Jon Stewart’s satirical textbook [...] Emerging research supports these efforts by suggesting that viewing satire has positive and significant effects on political participation and attentiveness” (Glazier 868). Here, Glazier asserts that satire has become a tool for political participation, and that helping students understand and reflect on satire has become an important part of classrooms across disciplines. However, the significance of satire has moved well beyond a simple discussion of texts, genres, and methods. Instead, satire has become an essential means of social justice and political engagement in the world outside of our classrooms.

In fact, satirists have emerged as essential political activists. According to Sophia McClennen, a professor of international affairs and comparative literature, “The real story is that ever since 9/11 comedians have increasingly worked to defend the values of our nation, oftentimes more so than politicians themselves. Stop and consider what an inversion this has become. Typically the role of the satirist is to call out the

flaws in the system, to speak truth to power in a witty way, to expose the hypocrisy...”(McClennen). McClennen illuminates the essential role of comedians in the first decades of the 21st century. These comedians, particularly those engaged in satire, have become essential in defending national values. In this way, the long-standing craft of satire has become a critical form of communication and resistance in our modern culture. While she focuses specifically on Jon Stewart, she indicates that he is only one of many individuals and mediums that is engaged in this type of activism. Therefore, satires not only function as artifacts for analysis, but they are active forms of communication and social justice resistance. As a result, satire provides writing instructors with a rich source for classroom engagement in effective critical research and persuasion.

So, when we allow for student choice and opinion how do we prevent them from writing mild personal rants?

With this in mind, I have redirected my students from a traditional source, persuasion, or a research paper, and instead have students engage in creating their own works of satire based on their social justice passions. Students are first tasked with selecting and researching a social or cultural issue that peaks their interest. Students select topics from animal cruelty to racism to bullying to immigration and beyond. Immediately, students are engaging in social justice issues of importance to both the larger community and themselves. They are asked to craft a short bibliography with selected sources that help them build greater authority. This initial research is often highly productive and engaging because “if they care about a topic

and are curious, they can research to acquire the knowledge needed to write about it authentically and meaningfully” (Marchetti & O’Dell 27). Ultimately, this helps them establish a foundation for the development of their satire.

Now that they have a clear understanding of their social justice issues, students must find an absurd and satirical solution to the problem.

Once they understand their selected issue, as a class we dissect and understand Jonathan Swift’s “A Modest Proposal.” While this is a historical text, it serves as an important model of the ways in which satire can engage in critical and important conversations. Additionally, Swift provides a convincing, logical, and supported argument in defense of eating children in Ireland, which incites significant discomfort. His detailed descriptions of economics and process provide a sickeningly convincing argument, and many students initially believe he is serious. With this initial reaction, we discuss the importance of discomfort in satire, as it works to engage an audience in often uncomfortable yet critical conversations. At this point, students are asked to use Swift as a mentor text to create their own “Modest Proposals.”

Now that they have a clear understanding of their social justice issues, students must find an absurd and satirical solution to the problem. This encourages students to reflect carefully on their selected issues, as they work to find a solution that clearly illuminates the problem’s complexities. Their initial engagement in their issues and solutions can be seen in the following intro-

duction:

It’s shocking but true, “... everything would fall apart if something like all animal kind, for instance, went extinct. Plants and insects would overpopulate, and eventually all mankind would die off” (Smith). In an attempt to postpone this eventual outcome, Zoological Gardens have been made to house animals who face the threat of extinction. However, as a consequence of insufficient funds, zoos are not an acceptable substitute for the natural habitats of the animals they contain. Because of the incredibly small enclosures, the life span of animals in captivity is far lower, sometimes half that of their life span in the wild (Derr). Zoos are not doing their job of preserving animal species to the best of their ability. Passionate animal rights devotees have protested, even boycotted, zoos and animal sanctuaries in an effort to convince them to return the animals to their natural habitats because of this. As support for this movement grows, zoos are becoming less and less popular and face extinction themselves. We cannot let zoos go out of business because we need them to preserve the Earth’s wildlife. Therefore, we need zoos to improve their animal habitats. Shrinking zoo animals to a one hundredth of their natural size will provide a larger and more natural habitat for the animals without having to expand their existing enclosures, thereby extending their life.

In this introductory paragraph, this student clearly demonstrates a passion for the selected topic. Additionally, she represents the importance of the satirical task: 1. it prompts students to critically reflect on their issue and consider what approaches would highlight the particular aspects of the issue which may make it difficult to solve; and 2. students become significantly more conscious of their audience and purpose, as they work to build their problem, making it relevant to an apathetic or

hostile reader. In the above excerpt, the student clearly develops the importance of zoo captivity with a voice of authority while also carefully considering the potential audience for her piece. Finally, the student carefully leads into and presents an astounding and unbelievable proposal.

Finally, the student carefully leads into and presents an astounding and unbelievable proposal.

The critical development of the assignment is only furthered as students work to support their solutions with insightful and credible research. The satirical context pushes students to move away from simply spewing off opinion, and instead, students must carefully think about their solution and how precisely they will support their claims. This produces much more carefully selected and integrated evidence. Instead of checking off numbers of paragraphs and sentences, students must carefully think through the types of information necessary in crafting an engaging and shocking satire, which effectively prompts reflection and conversation. The following student demonstrates this work, as she supports her shrinking plan:

Shrinking technology is viewed by many as a humorous but fictitious plot device for sci-fi movies. However, recent scientific studies and experiments have revealed that reducing the size of an object, or even organism, is now in the realm of scientific possibilities. Because this is a relatively new field of technology, there are few specialists studying these cases. Among the most advanced in this new field are Wei Xiang Jiang and Tie Jun Cui from Southeast University in Nanjing, China. They have published a study on a shrinking device they have

created in an issue of Applied Physics Letters (Zyga). According to an article summarizing their findings: “The shrinking device is simply a small variation on invisibility cloak technology. In the case of invisibility cloaks, the optical radius of the inner circle region is reduced to almost nothing. But by leaving the radius in the positive, the object remains visible — just shrunk” (Zyga). No doubt these scientists will find many useful applications for this new technology. One of the best uses will be to use it to shrink all zoo animals. Critics say that an organism could not survive such a transformation. Scientists who have seen the results of this device firsthand say otherwise, “Researchers first tested the device by running numerical simulations, but after those tests proved successful, experimental tests continued. The results showed that the device had an overall “good shrinking performance” (Nelson).

Additionally,
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they begin
to clearly implement
and reflect on the ways
in which audiences
can be manipulated.

This student further demonstrates the critical thinking that students are capable of completing. Overall, students found reasonable and logical evidence and had to carefully work to apply their evidence to fit their claim. This particular student was able to find significant theoretical physics information on the research into shrinking technology, and she then work to convince her readers that it could be possible. This helps establish clear support for her claim, as she works to further

prove the possibility of her proposal. This use of clear evidence along with careful response helps students work to create the discomfort that satire requires to push for social change. It is this critical thinking and engagement which places satire in the middle of important political discourse. Additionally, as students work to support the absurd, they begin to clearly implement and reflect on the ways in which audiences can be manipulated.

This dive into the humorous and absurd provides students with space for creative thinking, as they engage meaningfully in the challenge of this assignment. From the start, students are excited to take a humorous approach to their writing, but at the same time, they have to carefully think through how their pieces are composed. Finally, because satire is such an essential part of our current culture, it’s an important means to engage students in these critical conversations and help students acquire language to engage in political discourse.

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Congratulations!

SDAWP Fellows Summer 2020

Anne Bartholomew

San Diego Global Vision Academy
San Diego Unified School District

Aimee Corbin

Mesa Verde Middle
Poway Unified School District

Andrea Davis

San Diego Global Vision Academies
San Diego Unified School District

Camie Dyess

Design39Campus-Elementary
Poway Unified School District

Tara Frantz

O’Farrell Charter-Elementary
San Diego Unified School District

Monica Galvan

Johnson Elementary School
Cajon Valley Union School District

Carrie Vi Gordh

San Diego City College
San Diego Community
College District

Erica Guerin

Hoover High School
San Diego Unified School District

Ann Linn

Challenger Middle School
San Diego Unified School District

Christen McGaughey-Gilreath

Grossmont Community College
Grossmont-Cuyamaca Community
College District

Community Building Circles and Restorative Practices in the Elementary Classroom

Tara Frantz, SDAWP 2019

One morning, right before lunch I heard, “Miss Frantz, can I talk to you for a second?” It was our music teacher, and he looked as though he had some bad news to share with me. “Yesterday you had a few girls who were excluding another girl on purpose, and they were making her feel like she couldn’t be a part of the group.” Uh oh, a “mean girl” situation. My heart felt sick. “Ok, thanks for letting me know,” I quietly responded.

It was a proud moment to see the students take ownership of what they did, to recognize it on their own, and to take a step forward towards making it right.

I knew that one of the best courses of action was to convene for a Community Building Circle, in particular—a Restorative Circle, to discuss this issue. In my classroom, a Restorative Circle is a class meeting that is held while seated around the carpet, with the goal being to talk and listen to one another as we share about a problem that needs solving in a safe and trusting environment. A key component of a Restorative Circle is a talking piece. As a group, we had decided earlier in the year that we would use a small stuffed sloth for our talking piece, and the students knew that only the person holding the sloth was allowed to speak. That morning, up went the prompt “I have been a good friend

to my classmates recently because” or “I haven’t been the best friend to my classmates recently because...” I told students that today everyone needed to take a moment to think before making a choice about which prompt they were going to address with our class community when the talking piece came to them.

That day, every girl who had been involved in the “mean girls!” incident the day before acknowledged it to our class and gave a reason why they hadn’t been a good friend. It was a proud moment to see the students take ownership of what they did, to recognize it on their own, and to take a step forward towards making it right.

How did we get to this place of vulnerability, trust, and the ability to talk about difficult issues together? This wasn’t something that I’ve experienced every year with every group of students, but this year was significantly different. This year, more community had been built than I had seen in the past, and we could see it daily in the way that my students interacted with one another and with me.

One big change that we added to our classroom routines this year was doing Restorative/Community Building Circles every Friday morning during breakfast. As a school site, we have been trained in how to use Restorative Practices in our classrooms, as well as throughout our campus. According to Restorative Practices SFUSD, “(restorative practices) are based on principles and processes that emphasize the importance of positive relationships as central to building community and restoring relationships when harm has occurred” (Restorative Practices-Healthier SF, Restorative Practices, n.d.). There are many components to the Restorative Practice move-

ment, and we have been taking the first step with the implementation of Community Building Circles.

There were a few key components that I was taught during professional development on the topic of Community Building Circles, as well as what I learned through the process of implementing it in my classroom this year, that made a big difference in the impact they had in our classroom community:

- Establish clear protocols from the first day:
 - ◆ Only talk if you have the talking piece.
 - ◆ What is shared at circle time stays here!
 - ◆ Choose your neighbors wisely (to stay engaged during Circle Time!).
 - ◆ Be honest!
- Start with community building questions such as:
 - ◆ If you could have any superpower, which would it be and why?
 - ◆ How do you plan to spend your winter break?
 - ◆ Build up to using prompts that explore values or respond to incidents such as:
 - How do you feel about what happened?
 - Please share a time when you became angry.
- Be consistent in doing Community Building Circle every week so it becomes an expected routine.
- Use the Restorative Circle organically—either when a restorative conversation would be beneficial for the classroom community, or when a conflict has arisen among a group/s of students.
- As much as possible, have the Circle be student-focused, with the teacher interjecting only if needed to remind students of the agreed-upon protocols.

These are not the only elements or

ways to implement and use Community Building Circles in the classroom, but I found this process to make the most sense for my group of students this year.

It's not a magic wand that will instantly take all the issues away, but the practice of it would certainly have helped the more turbulent group of students who had been grouped the previous school year.

In reflecting over the last school year, I realized why this year looked so much different than last year: saying we want to have a classroom community and then actively cultivating opportunities to build a classroom community are two different things. This year, we did the usual "build community in the first weeks of school" activities, but we also had our weekly Friday morning Community Building Circles as a priority. I was committed to this process, and as our class became fluent in using it together, it became an integral piece of our routine. And it was exciting to see that the fidelity in utilizing it regularly led to being flexible in the way that we used it. Additionally, I was able to see my students taking more risks with one another: students were eager to work with one another, and not only with their preferred partners, but with whoever I would assign them to work with for a given assignment. Sharing their thoughts and feelings regularly with one another was the expectation, and this carried over in extremely positive ways in how they interacted with one another on collaborative assignments.

Last school year, my group of second graders didn't get along nearly as well, or care for one another in

the same way. I didn't start using the Community Building Circle consistently until the end of the 2018-2019 school year and I wonder how our classroom community would have been different if we had done this routine together for the entire year. It's not a magic wand that will instantly take all the issues away, but the practice of it would certainly have helped the more turbulent group of students who had been grouped the previous school year.

As listed on their website as a basic concept of the International Institute for Restorative Practices, "people function best in an environment that encourages free expression of emotion — minimizing the negative, maximizing the positive, but allowing people to say what is really on their minds." This is my goal too: to have a classroom climate where every voice is valued and heard in an environment where we can learn and grow together.

So on June 7th, 2019, as my group of second graders passed their stuffed sloth talking piece around the circle for the last time, I heard these words repeated over and over again: "we don't want to leave this classroom, this group of kids, this teacher." I brushed away the tears in my eyes and saw more than one student do the same. Building community was an important value in our classroom this year, and I'm grateful that the ritual of Community Building Circles was such a meaningful practice for all of us.

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Project Notes

Kudos to Valentyna Banner (SDAWP 2009) on completing her Administrative Credential in May. Valentyna is currently the Associate Director of Academic Achievement at San Diego Global Vision Academy. She also serves on the SDAWP Leadership Group, is a YWC co-coordinator, and facilitates many professional development activities. Way to go, Tyna!

Congratulations to Emily Yamasaki (SDAWP 2014), Lauren Drew (SDAWP 2015), and Adrian Trayer (SDAWP 2016). New babies all around! Welcome Warren, Charlee, and Bodhi!

Way to go, Stefanie A. Johnson Shipman (SDAWP 2015)! Stefanie earned tenure and was promoted to Associate Professor at San Diego Miramar College.

"Like us" on Facebook at www.facebook.com/SDAWP where links to writing resources and research articles are posted regularly, offering a wealth of ideas for curriculum design and implementation.

Follow @SDAWP_Fellow on Twitter and join the conversation as a different Fellow takes over each week to Tweet about teaching and life from a unique perspective.

SDAWP Fellows: Please Stay in Touch!

We're updating our data base/social media contact lists and would love to hear from you. Have you changed school sites or your teaching context recently? Or maybe retired? Would you like to receive info and updates from us about educational happenings and events via email or social media (Instagram and Twitter)?

Please send your updated information to sdawp@ucsd.edu and use "SDAWP-Changes" in the subject line. Thanks for staying connected!

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Young
Writers'
Camp

Sunrise of Stories

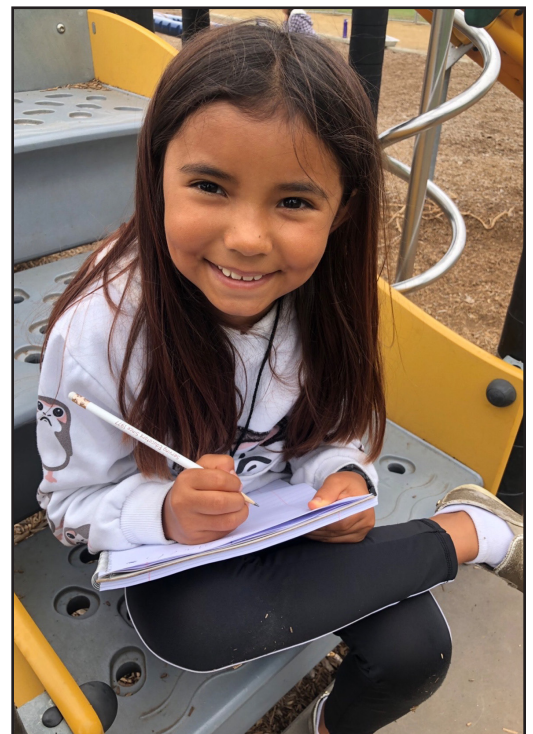
By Ava Zedelmayer

A blank page lies before you
A blank night sky
Masking everything in darkness
Your inspiration flickering in and out like starlight
Giving glimpses of the world below
With the touch of lead
You give light to those twinkling stars
Starting to illuminate something new
With each brilliant stroke
Vibrant colors paint the night
A new world rising with the light
The words flow out of you
Each one inching the sun further into the sky
And finally, you pause
Looking in awe at your story, that rose with the sun

Writing

By Max Gosling

Writing. Such a creative way to express your thoughts. You can write about anything; the topics are endless. It doesn't have to be realistic. It doesn't have to rhyme. Just put your pencil to the paper and let your thoughts flow out. Spelling and punctuation can wait until you revise. Writing is for the people who have ideas, a sudden inspiration, something they feel is necessary to jot down, or for the people who want to create something, change something, develop something. Writing can do big things; writing can do small things. So no matter what you write, why you write, when you write, just pick up your pencil, and do that satisfactory thing, writing.



Untitled

By Mara Cook

How can I help you hold your sadness today?
How can I cradle with care your heart outstretched
 in my open palms?
Tell me where your mind wanders when your body is silent
and your lips are as still as the eye of a storm.
Whisper to me those wisps of ennui that weave themselves
 in your sand colored hair;
confide in me when your seas of sorrow have
drowned out tomorrow's gentle promise.
Bring those weary stones to my ears, eager
to relieve the burden you have carried for so long,
one tender piece at a time,
for that's how mountains are formed
how cliff sides surrender to storms
 with breath ever patient
 we're willing to face it
 the challenges we're gifted to grow from.
There's a universe inside every grain of sand,
every stone we carry, and when I hold them each
in my hands, I can feel them expanding
to heal from the ache that comes from forsaking our feelings
So let us sit with each emotion,
 every tear and every fear
 and ask them what
 they are here for.
And when we have kissed every grain,
every particle of pain, we will thank them with grace
for the blessings they bring,
the lessons they sing, if we're willing to listen
and let in to our beings
a new way to exist
in a flow of emotions that
 teach us to
 dance
 with the wind.

Ink's Colors

By Carolyn Lee

Your pen touches the paper,
Black ink flows out
up and down with the words
The ink turns blue,
emotions flow out
Can you feel the soft ocean
waves crash on you?
Calm,
Peaceful is what splashes on you.
Then a new color flies out.
Yellow,
You can feel the sunny summer
skies
shine on you.
Happiness,
Positivity, is what shines from
you.
The poem glows with emotion.
You open your mouth
and a colorful poem
with feelings and meaning
fills your surroundings
with bright colors and joy.



#USvsHate: Going National!

Kim Douillard, SDAWP 1992

How do you deal with hate in the classroom? As teachers, I know we all work on building safe and productive learning communities—places where the young people entrusted to our care can thrive. But sometimes the world creeps in. Kids hear hurtful comments and see hurtful actions—on media, from adults or others in the community, then bring them to school to test out their impact on their classmates and peers.

And frankly, for whatever reasons, we live in a society where hate has become normalized. So, what do we do about it?

This is where #USvsHate comes in. During the 2017-18 school year, Mica Pollock, the director of the Center for Research on Educational Equity, Assessment and Teaching Excellence (CREATE), and a small team of teachers in San Diego decided to take advantage of the many anti-hate lessons freely available through a variety of organizations (Teaching Tolerance, Facing History and Ourselves, the Anti-Defamation

League, Rethinking Schools, the Bully Project, and more) to open up spaces for students (kindergarten through college) to learn about the origins of hate, to explore their own experiences with hate, and to create messaging to publicly refuse hate.

Last year, I was fortunate to join the leadership of this effort as director of the San Diego Area Writing Project (SDAWP), along with a team of SDAWP teacher leaders. We piloted lessons—some directly from the organizations listed above, and some we had created or adapted for our own contexts and academic requirements—and had our students create anti-hate messaging. “We define ‘hate’ as any time people denigrate, disrespect or harm an individual or group as if their identity makes them an inferior or less valuable type of person.” Students are invited to create original anti-hate messaging—posters, poems, songs, videos, memes, art installations, essays—that refuse hate in whatever form they choose.

I had a front row seat to the empathy and creativity of San Diego students as I helped judge entries from the #USvsHate contests in November, February, and April. (And of course as I implemented #USvsHate into my own classroom!)

I traveled to the Southern Poverty

Law Center in Montgomery, Alabama in July with our team as we presented #USvsHate to Teaching Tolerance, and it made its national debut in September! With a low-key opening, teachers are now invited to submit up to three students’ anti-hate messages per month. We expect the effort to build throughout the school year, knowing that teachers are often occupied with getting to know their students and their interests as the school year begins.

Join us in the effort to amplify student anti-hate messaging by visiting usvshate.org where you can read “#USvsHate: In the Face of Bigotry, Student Voices and Art Can Offer a Welcoming Antidote.” Winning art, poetry, digital work, and other forms on anti-hate messaging are also available on the website. Helpful background information, links to lessons, and protocols and supports for opening up potentially difficult conversations in the classroom can also be found at usvshate.org. In addition, the campaign was featured in *This Week @UCSanDiego*, “Home-grown Campaign to Combat Hate on National Stage,” (<https://ucsdnews.ucsd.edu/feature/homegrown-campaign-to-combat-hate-on-national-stage>.) Our collective action can and will make a difference!



US vs Hate

Henry, 3rd Grade

Spring 2019, Youth Vote Winner for Poem

In a garden bed
with four leaf clovers
A boy makes good luck
turn into real life.
His wish was for everyone
to feel like they're special.
A tiny change
makes a big change
A tiny change
makes everyone change.

#USvsHate



Alexis, 12th Grade—Spring 2019, Youth Vote Winner for Poster

Together We Are

Jonathan, 8th Grade
Fall 2018, Youth Vote Winner for Poem

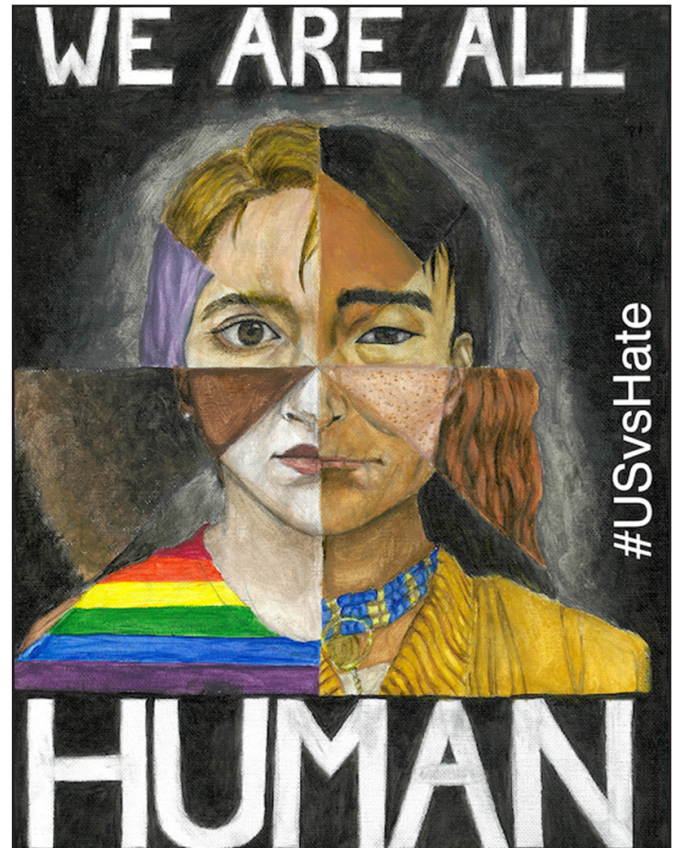
Together we grow stronger
Together we grow tall
Together we can persevere
Because divided we will fall

A chain of chinking stigma heavy
A ring of abuse controls; a levy
A tax of face, of people, of race
Don't be the cause of this disgrace

A people together, a people stands tall
Through our words we rise or fall
Don't let yourself be the cause of hate
For history has shown your fate

Prejudice and temper
Served no-one, ever
The frost of isolation
Stems from condemnation

So beware of your choices
Be aware of your thoughts, dreams
Remember yourself and all of the voices
Whenever you think of us all



Sky, 10th Grade—Spring 2019, Youth Vote Winner for Poster



Kayla, 10th Grade—Fall 2018, Youth Vote Winner for Poster



V., 10th Grade—Winter 2019, Staff Vote Winner for Poster

All English Language Learners Matter

Mónica Galván, SDAWP 2019

Social justice can take many forms inside a classroom. I choose to make it visible in my classroom by providing a quality education to English Language Learners (ELLs). My elementary school teachers did not use a student-centered approach to teaching English Language Learners. While in my teacher training program, my professors would often say, “You teach the way you were taught.” However, I think I am very aware of the way I was taught, and I don’t want to bring those teaching strategies into my classroom. The difference between those teachers and myself is that I understand what it means to be an English Language Learner inside a classroom, as both a student and as a teacher. As an educator, I want the way English Language Learners are taught to change. I want the strengths that they bring to our classrooms to be valued and for them to receive an education that is tailored to their needs. English Language Learners deserve to grow as learners and be active participants in our schools. As María Santos, a Director for School and District Services in the Comprehensive School Assistance Program at WestEd and chair of the Understanding Language project at Stanford University points out, “What traditionally has happened for ELLs in many systems is that they are not afforded or invited to participate” (Berwick). All schools should be accepting of English Language Learners.

An English Language Learner will always remember how he/she was taught. I still do. I came to the United States when I was in second-grade, where we lived in National City and I was in a bilingual program. The kids looked like me, and I had a teacher that spoke Spanish. Since I was a newcomer, I was pulled out of the classroom to be taught English through flashcards and, after

each session, I was given Goldfish crackers. During this time, the only thing that I missed was my former school, my friends, and my Mom—who stayed in Tijuana. In third-grade, however, I disliked school. I was pulled out by another resource teacher who also taught me English using flashcards, but this time I didn’t receive any Goldfish crackers. During this school year, we moved to Chula Vista, and I really wanted to go back to my school in Tijuana. The

However, I think I am very aware of the way I was taught, and I don’t want to bring those teaching strategies into my classroom.

majority of kids didn’t look like me, and those that did were very assimilated. My elementary school years from third to sixth-grade were very challenging. I was in sink or swim classrooms. My teachers didn’t have any strategies to teach English Language Learners. The flashcards were a waste of time and a disservice to a child who had strong foundations in her primary language. Obviously, this teacher didn’t consider that my language skills could transfer. Unfortunately, there are still English Language Learners that are only being taught by the use of flashcards. The flashcards now might look different. They might have sight words or letter sounds, but they are still flashcards that can become pointless when not directed in a meaningful way. These flashcards should become games that engage all students, not only ELLs. “Research shows that game-based

learning has the capacity to motivate students, activate knowledge, and enhance critical thinking capacities” (El Yaafouri). By engaging ELLs in game-based learning not only are students able to learn, but they are also able to be active participants within the learning community.

Most teaching credential programs only include one class that provides teachers with strategies to address the needs of English Language Learners. That is not enough training when the California Department of Education (CDE) states that “In the 2018–19 school year, there were approximately 1.196 million English learners in California public schools.” As well, the CDE demands that “English Language Learners acquire full proficiency in English as rapidly and effectively as native speakers of English.” However, we are not meeting this goal. I get students in fourth and fifth-grade who have had all their education in the United States since kindergarten and have emerging English levels. They are also not fluent in their primary language. We all need language to be able to communicate and be successful. What kind of future will a student that has no language fluency have?

I believe we can make a difference in the education of ELLs if we teach through a theme. This means teaching through a specific lens. I teach through the lens of global warming and climate change comprehension. As of now, all my language arts and science lessons are through this lens. I have a wide range of skills and abilities in my classroom, and it takes a significant amount of time to tailor instruction to meet the needs of all students. Creating curriculum for language arts is a priority because, as previously mentioned, I have some students without language fluency. Last year, upon reflecting on

my practice, I started making use of the three Rs (reduce, reuse, and recycle); I believe that ELLs can learn if educators engage in this practice. The strategies used to teach the four essential components in the acquisition of English (speaking, listening, reading, and writing) need to be reused. A speaking strategy might include the usage of sentence frames. A listening strategy can be students writing down on a sticky note what they learned from their partner. A different color sticky note can be used for each partner they speak with, this way a teacher can tell what each person contributed; this also allows students to be engaged in active listening. In regard to reading strategies, ELLs should be exposed to grade level texts in order to obtain grade level vocabulary and content. When reading gradelevel texts, it is

The responsibility of an educator is to build on their students' wide range of skills, abilities, and knowledge.

important to spend all the time necessary for students to understand the reading material. For writing, provide students with language, and make sure writing is segmented. Recycle their content knowledge to build on new skills. For example, start with informative writing and move on to opinion writing about the same topic.

All English Language Learners want to learn, and educators have to make learning accessible. It starts with how we allow students to acquire knowledge. First of all, we have to engage ELLs in reading. If they don't read, they won't be able to write. We can also allow ELLs to acquire knowledge through images, videos,

quick writes, and by allowing them to think-pair-share with their peers. Teachers should also be knowledgeable about GLAD (Guided Language Acquisition Design) strategies. Further, we should allow ample opportunities for students to collaborate with partners, in small groups, or as a whole class. Additionally, high expectations should always be set for them, and they should be held accountable for their learning through reflections.

Students will achieve even more if these strategies are part of a theme. Why teach through a theme? The responsibility of an educator is to build on their students' wide range of skills, abilities, and knowledge. Students also should be provided with relevant content that will spark curiosity and a love for learning. We have forgotten about content. Many times we just teach skills, and we don't provide knowledge. Often times the only opportunity for many ELLs to have access to knowledge is at school. "Nearly 60% of ELLs nationwide are from low-income families in which parents have 'disproportionately' limited levels of education" (Breiseth). I am an example of this. My father never had the opportunity of obtaining an education. He never set foot in a school; my aunt taught him how to read. My mother only had a third-grade education. Many students face similar obstacles, but by teaching through a theme, there are many opportunities for educators to establish relationships with organizations that can provide students with hands on activities, real life experiences, and resources to enrich teaching and learning. Learning needs to happen outside the classroom and/or experiences need to be brought to the classroom.

This school year, I am discovering the potential of teaching through a theme that is deeply rooted in the specific content area of science. I recently had a conversation with a former colleague from San Francisco Unified School District regarding science. This conversation sparked new thoughts. She mentioned that

once our students got to middle school, they didn't have any foundations in science. While working in San Francisco I taught in a K-8 school where we were very focused on the teachings of Lucy Calkins, which emphasizes literacy. Science was never a topic of conversation. This school year as I started thinking about what knowledge I wanted for my students to acquire, I realized that my thinking took me deeper into the possibilities in exploring science.

As I researched the learning opportunities that I could bring to my students in the area of science this school year, I felt like an avalanche was coming. There is a wealth of support, enrichment opportunities, and resources for our students. Through the California Academy of Sciences one can practically bring the museum into classrooms. For instance, in their vault of videos, there is a video about a kelp forest (www.calacademy.org/educators/take-a-virtual-dive-in-a-kelp-forest). I have a classroom with twenty-eight ELLs,

...I started thinking about what knowledge I wanted for my students to acquire, I realized that my thinking took me deeper into the possibilities in exploring science.

and we spent an entire week talking about the kelp forest after reviewing the video. This short video allowed me to delve deep into new vocabulary. We learned about plankton, but most importantly we learned that marine life is LIFE. At the end of the week, one student said, "This is what I always wanted to learn." This

made me think once again about the conversation I had with my colleague from San Francisco. As educators of ELLs, we frequently limit the content that we provide our students (i.e. only using flashcards). By doing so, we are also limiting the opportunities that they can have in the future. By providing students with real life experiences in the realm of the chosen theme, students are exposed to new opportunities and learning environments. Have you heard about Pure Water San Diego? This is a program through which

By providing students with real life experiences in the realm of the chosen theme, students are exposed to new opportunities and learning environments.

one-third of San Diego's water will be supplied locally. Have you heard about Carlsbad's Desalination Project or about the constant Tijuana sewage spills that impact our beaches? Do you know about the Scripps Institution of Oceanography? Every day I hear in the news about global warming and climate change, and how it impacts our entire planet. These projects are opportunities in our own backyard that our students can access. Science equates to real life learning and real life applications. However, if we don't give our students knowledge of these projects, we are not providing our students access to these opportunities. We need to teach our students how to access these opportunities and knowledge. I always wish I had been provided with more content knowledge during my elementary school years. I can't change the narrative

of my elementary school years, but I can change the narrative of my students and of their journeys.

I have realized that teaching through a theme that is rooted in a specific content area, students are also able to develop as learners. It boosts students' confidence. As they take ownership of their learning, students feel that their behaviors can have an impact on our planet and begin to see themselves as agents of change. Students begin to make real life connections and realize that there are careers related to their theme of study.

When teaching through a theme, one can also see benefits in academics. Students are able to develop emotions that lead to developing opinions about the theme being taught. It facilitates peer editing activities, such as editing a research report, since everyone will have the same content knowledge. Students are able to clarify misconceptions about a topic because they have the content knowledge. They are also able to provide their peers with information they can use to elaborate on their writing. Struggling learners benefit greatly from the repetition that comes with teaching through a theme, as it continuously activates prior knowledge and supports students that struggle with recalling information. Additionally, it promotes writing fluency because they have repetitive content knowledge that has been accessible for all students, allowing them to respond knowledgeably to writing prompts and critical thinking questions based on the theme currently presented. Students develop questions that can be used to continue to build students' research skills and strengthen informative and opinion writing. Furthermore, I had some students that had no language fluency when they came to my classroom. For me, this means that they were not strong in their primary language nor in English. After completing the thematic unit, they have language fluency. One of these students at the beginning of last school year couldn't write a sentence in thirty minutes.

I still have this student this school year. Now, she is able to write multiple sentences in thirty minutes and make connections to real life.

If we want our students to think like scientists, we have to think like scientists too. Scientists start with identifying a problem. However, we don't have a problem. We have a challenge. The challenge is identifying the strategies that work with our ELLs and embracing a mind shift. Once a scientist identifies the problem (but for educators: the challenge), she/he conducts experiments in which there are countless observations and reflections. We have the opportunity to learn every day from our students, and to reflect on what

As they take ownership of their learning, students feel that their behaviors can have an impact on our planet and begin to see themselves as agents of change.

they teach us. Once a scientist has gathered enough data, they tell a story. We have the opportunity to tell thirty-one (more or less) stories. If we embrace a mind shift we can tell stories of thriving ELLs. If we start with a mind shift everything that you need to educate ELLs will come because these students will also make a mind shift. They will start seeing themselves as members of a learning community in which their voice matters. I have a student who had a very hard time writing last year. It was not because he couldn't write. It was because he had low self-esteem, and he always said, "I don't have anything to write about." This school year, he writes multiple sentences

that become paragraphs when asked to write within a given time.

There are still ELL students in our classrooms whose needs haven't been addressed by the school system. Last school year, I had a fourth-grade student that was not reading in English. Yet, according to her English assessment she was at an emerging level in English. This student was born and has received all her education in the United States. She was also part of a student study team; this means the school counselor, teacher, principal, and parents met to discuss student's strengths, weaknesses, and goals. If goals were not met, the student was most likely going to be assessed to see if she had a specific learning disability. In fact, "among all states, California identified the highest percentage of ELLs with disabilities" (Watkins and Kline Liu). Until we learn how to tailor instruction for ELLs, we may likely continue to over identify them as being students with disabilities. As an educator, I could have taught her the same way I was taught. I could have given her flashcards with sight words. I could have taught her how to write simple sentences. I could have not exposed her to the content that her peers were exposed to. But I knew she could achieve. As a result of teaching through a theme and using the three Rs, this student is now reading and writing in English. She is motivated to learn and her confidence has improved tremendously. She is engaged in learning and likes to share her learning with others. The primary language of this student also became stronger. All ELLs can achieve if instruction is differentiated for them. Teaching through a theme and using the three Rs can be a way of differentiating.

Our classrooms won't thrive if we don't educate our English Language Learners. We can't pretend we know how to educate ELLs, when at times we really don't what to do. Knowing and acknowledging our ELLs in our classrooms is a pressing issue. ALL English Language Learners matter. If we want to make a difference

in the education of ELLs, we have to change the way we think, too. I have always worked in schools with high populations of ELLs and I often hear conversations about what ELLs don't have. We can spend the entire school year talking about the challenges in our classrooms, but we should no longer apply the deficit model to our ELLs. This is not only detrimental to our students, but also to our careers. Having a class that includes ELLs gives us the opportunity to grow, be creative, and not lose the joy in teaching.

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Dialogue

Beyond the Student

**Call for Manuscripts
Spring 2020 Issue**

**Submission Deadline:
August 1, 2020**

Manuscripts should consider but not be limited to the following questions:

- How do you create a classroom environment that embodies respect for all students' languages, cultural values, and prior knowledge?
- Describe exemplar teaching strategies that create an empathetic and intellectual symbiosis between students and teachers engaging in a mutual pursuit of knowledge.
- What protocols and strategies have you successfully used to facilitate learning that goes beyond the traditional dichotomy of teacher and student? How do you encourage students to serve as peer mentors, content area experts, and teachers themselves?
- Provide a review of research-based texts (such as those explored during study groups) that have influenced your pedagogy.

Dialogue values experiential knowledge and would love to receive reflective pieces written by educators and students. We encourage you to submit your stories, experiences, and strategies. We are especially seeking voices from K-6 educators. Please submit!

Email all manuscript submissions, suggestions, letters to the editor and/or Project Notes to

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SDAWP 13th Annual Spring Conference 2020

February 29, 2020
UC San Diego

For information and to
register visit our website at
<http://sdawp.ucsd.edu>

CATE 2020 Convention

**Investigating Teaching,
Texts, and Truths**

February 21 - 23, 2020
Los Angeles,
LAX Marriot

Register at www.cateweb.org

2020 James Gray Memorial Pre-Convention Day

**Disrupting Teaching, Texts,
and Truths**

February 20, 2020
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LAX Marriot

Morning and Luncheon
Keynote Workshops:
Michelle S. Pledger, Ed.D
Betina Hsieh, Ph.D.

Register at www.cateweb.org

SDAWP Study Groups

March 14, 2020
9:00am - 12:00pm
UC San Diego

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