

FIGHT FOR EQUITY IN EDUCATION: BLACK HISTORY MONTH



"My silences had not protected me. Your silence will not protect you [...] What are the tyrannies you swallow day by day and attempt to make your own, until you will sicken and die of them, still in silence? Perhaps for some of you here today, I am the face of one of your fears. Because I am woman, because I am Black, because I am lesbian, because I am myself - a Black woman warrior poet doing my work - come to ask you, are you doing yours?"

(Lorde, 1977, *The Transformation of Silence into Language and Action*, pp. 41-42).

CALL TO ACTION: A MESSAGE FROM THE COE'S STUDENT COUNCIL

For Black History Month, the CoE Student Council has compiled resources for pre-service and current educators. While we should not only think about social justice during these months, it's a good opportunity to reflect on the culturally responsive pedagogies in our classrooms and communities. This newsletter highlights key figures in social justice movements and includes resources for the classroom. We aim to continue to engage with and resolutely advocate for EDI efforts throughout our careers.

With the rise of anti-Black and anti-LGBTQ+ laws/policies both in the state of Utah and in the U.S, the CoE's Student Council seeks to provide the following information and resources that celebrate the impeccable strides Black LGBTQ+ populations in our recent and current histories have made while also honoring the incredible contributions Black researchers and writers have had in education and politics today. The Student Council hopes that the CoE community will not only acknowledge that we stand on the shoulders of these phenomenal activists, but that we too must be diligent activists who are steadfast in being agents of change in order to create equitable, inclusive spaces of belonging for these often targeted populations. As Lorde states, we must not let fear be an excuse to remain silent when we see these injustices. Instead, we must be willing to push back when we see or hear racist, homophobic, transphobic acts or rhetoric. Although the law may not allow teachers to discuss these topics in certain school districts in Utah and in other states, we must be willing to find ways to support our historically marginalized students and be vocal advocates for their well-being and rights to equitable education.

PROMINENT ACTIVISTS

ANDREA JENKINS



Andrea Jenkins was born on May 10, 1961. She is known for being the first Black openly transgender woman elected to public office in the United States in 2017. As a politician, poet, activist, and community historian, Jenkins strives to bring “the notion of love into the public discourse.” In 2014, Jenkins helped establish the Transgender Issues Work Group, and organized a City Council summit on transgender equality and the problems facing the transgender community in Minnesota. In 2022, she became President of the Minneapolis City Council.

LORRAINE HANSBERRY



Lorraine Hansberry was born on May 19, 1930. Author of *A Raisin in the Sun* (1957), Hansberry made history as the first Black woman to have a show produced on Broadway. Hansberry worked with W.E.B. DuBois and was a writer and staff member of the *Freedom* newspaper. Hansberry joined lesbian rights group Daughters of Bilitis and contributed letters about feminism and homophobia to its magazine *The Ladder*. She participated in a meeting with then U.S. Attorney General Robert Kennedy and questioned the administration’s commitment to racial equality.

MARSHA P. JOHNSON



Marsha P. (“Pay It No Mind”) Johnson was born on August 24, 1945. Johnson was a prominent figure in Stonewall Uprising. She was also a founding member of the Gay Liberation Front as well as the Co-founder of Street Transvestite Action Revolutionaries. Johnson was a renowned Transgender rights activist who found joy as a self-made drag queen of Christopher Street. Additionally, Johnson actively helped homeless and struggling LGBTQ youth. Johnson had a profound way of putting others’ needs before her own and is recognized as a vanguard of the gay liberation movement in the U.S.

BRING IT TO THE CLASSROOM

Black history is relevant across subject areas and grade levels. It's important to remember the contributions of countless Black artists, scientists, mathematicians, social justice leaders, and more that are frequently looked over in our histories.

ARTS INTEGRATION

This information comes from an Edutopia article, ["Teaching Black History, Thought, and Culture Through Art"](#) by Tanya Brown Merriman, which highlights many Black artists and connects their work to accessible classroom art projects for several grade levels.

One of these featured artists is Faith Ringgold, the author of *Tar Beach*. "Born in Harlem, she began making art in the early 1960s, unflinchingly documenting and responding to the world through her lens as a Black woman, taking on issues of racism, sexual violence, American identity, family, freedom, and hope. She painted White people at a time when most Black artists did not, flipping the gaze and pushing her art to do the heavy lifting of exploring who is in the center of American history and why. She used quilts, a domestic craft, to tell stories of labor exploitation, systemic economic injustice, and personal agency."

Classroom Project

"Story quilts are accessible to all ages, but they also can tell complex, unexpected stories, depending on the grade level of your students. For a Ringgold-inspired quilt, use materials like fabric strips or colored paper. You might also explore the rich history of African American quilting, including the quilts of the Underground Railroad that incorporated symbolic language to help Black people escaping slavery navigate their journey."



"Subway Graffiti #2," 1987, by Faith Ringgold (left); student quilt inspired by the artist. Sourced from the Edutopia article.

Read the article (linked above) to see and learn more about other Black artists and art projects that can bring them into your classroom activities.

SCIENCE CONNECTIONS

Science Buddies is an organization that provides rich science learning. They have compiled a list, ["Learn More About these 35 Scientists for Black History Month"](#) by Amy Cowen, that highlight black scientists, mathematicians, engineers, and inventors with connected STEM lessons. One of those Black inventors is Sarah Goode (pictured below).

"Sarah Goode invented a bed that folded up so it could be stored out of the way when not in use. Goode's "folding cabinet bed" was an early version of the Murphy Bed. Goode was one of the first African American women to receive a patent."



Have your students design a solution and engineer a new invention in your classroom. This science lesson plan asks students to ["Design a Cell Phone Stand"](#) using limited materials.

MATH CONNECTIONS

Katherine Johnson (pictured to the right and below) was included in the same article, "Katherine Johnson was a mathematician whose work at NASA was depicted in the *Hidden Figures* movie. Johnson calculated the flight path for Alan Shepard (the first American in space) and later checked critical flight path calculations for Apollo 13."

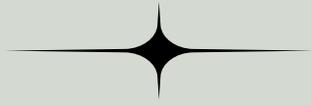


This related lesson titled, ["Bet You Can't Hit Me! The Science of Catapult Statistics"](#), gets students involved in the scientific process with measurement and graph analysis.

This Newsela article, ["NASA star Katherine Johnson blazed a path for #BlackGirlMagic"](#), can be added to your lesson to create a literacy connection. The article can be differentiated to different Lexile levels and also translated to Spanish.



BRING IT TO THE CLASSROOM (CONTINUED)



SOCIAL STUDIES AND LITERACY CONNECTIONS

There are many ways to consider Black voices and experiences in social studies. Three pedagogical choices teachers might make include highlighting Black experiences in history, considering pivotal and influential roles held by Black individuals, and sparking students to critically think about history and the choices that had consequences on racial lines. Here we have included Newsela articles - which can be differentiated to different reading levels and translated to Spanish - as examples of each of these culturally responsive instructional choices.

HIGHLIGHTING BLACK EXPERIENCES IN HISTORY

If your curriculum includes topics related to World War II, consider Black experiences like the Black Rosies discussed in, "'Black Rosies': forgotten Black women workers of World War II".



PIVOTAL AND INFLUENTIAL ROLES

If your curriculum includes topics like the Civil Rights Movement, consider the intersectional nature of these social movements and how these movements persist in the present. This intersectionality and persistence is discussed in, "The many Black women who helped to build the civil rights movement".



SPARK CRITICAL THINKING

If your curriculum includes topics like the Constitution, consider the intentional choices made by the its framers to strategically exclude any mention of slavery from the document. Spark critical thinking and create conversation amongst your students using the article, "'We the People': The Constitution, and the political legacy of slavery".

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES:



TRANSGENDER LAW CENTER:

"Black Trans Women & Black Trans Femmes, existing at multiple intersections of oppression, are uniquely singled out for criminalization by the police and government. Black Trans Women & Black Trans Femmes experience disproportionately higher rates of housing insecurity, police violence, and under/unemployment due to discrimination based in their perceived gender and race [...] When Black Trans Women & Black Trans Femmes are free to live and lead, all transgender women of color, all Black people, all transgender people, and ultimately all people will be free."



"TEACHING WITH AN ANTI-RACIST LENS":

This article by Brenda Álvarez serves as an introduction to frameworks of anti-racist teaching and was published by the National Education Association, a national network of teachers's unions.

Race & Equity Initiative

ANTI-RACISM RESOURCES (UM):

We present this list for all who would like to gain a deeper understanding of historical and present-day manifestations of racism in the United States. This list of guides and resources is just a small sample of the abundance of resources available online.

COE PRESENTS:



Join the College of Education as we celebrate Black History Month during the University of Utah's Collective Day of Action with a panel discussion moderated by Dr. Cynthia Benally

Working with Native Communities. A Panel Discussion.

February 8, 2023 @ 10:45am
Guest House, Granite Ballroom



We welcome the community to support these phenomenal researchers and leaders as they discuss vital issues and how to engage in anti-racist work!



Join the College of Education as we celebrate Black History Month during the University of Utah's Collective Day of Action with a presentation by Dr. Laurence Parker and Jill Waldron, MS, APRN, GNP

A Black Experience on Heart Health Care: Racial Medical Neglect. A Personal Journey.

February 8, 2023, @ 2:00pm
S. J. Quinney College of Law Multipurpose Room



Join the College of Education as we celebrate Black History Month during the University of Utah's Collective Day of Action with a panel discussion featuring Dr. Karen Tao, Cristi Creal, Susanna Cohen & Candace Chow

The Daily Practice of Anti-Racism Work

Dr. Karen Tao

February 8, 2023 @ 2:00pm
Utah Museum of Fine Art, Dumke Auditorium