

Abolitionist Curriculum Guide

Contributors:

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*Opening Reflection by **Ashley Lipscomb, MT, MDiv**
with Consultation from **Dr. Durell Cooper***

Table of Contents

Opening Reflection.....	3
About the Contributors.....	5
Political Posters (Visual Art).....	8
Rhythmical Relics of Resilience (Music).....	15
Socially Conscious Dance Making (Dance).....	21
Theatre as Resistance (Theatre).....	27
Appendix.....	33

Breathe With Us: A Reflection on the Work of Anti-Racist Curriculums

By Ashley Y. Lipscomb

“Are you still breathing? This is an offering towards our evolution, towards the possibility that instead of continuing the trajectory of slavery, entrapment, separation, and domination and making our atmosphere unbreathable, we might instead practice another way to breathe.”

-Alexis Pauline Gumbs¹

In her book *Undrowned: Black Feminist Lessons from Marine Mammals*, Alexis Pauline Gumbs asks the question, “What is the scale of breathing?”² I sit here, and I wonder then...for we the undrowning, we the ones living through “unbreathable circumstances” —what is the scale of our breathing in education? How do we continue to breathe in the unbreathable truth that schooling institutions have actively engaged in the dangerous work of stifling the living, thriving, and breathing of students, communities, families, and educational practitioners? We know what suffering in the educational survival complex looks and feels like for those of us who are dark. We know what it means to endure this complex where “students are left learning to merely survive, learning how schools mimic the world they live in, thus making schools a training site for a life of exhaustion.”³ Again, I ask the question: what is the scale of breathing in schooling institutions?

Anti-racist curriculums offer us a new way of breathing while experiencing the perils and suffering of the survival complex. They are the beacons that call us to the shores of possibility. These curriculums disrupt colonized ways of knowing and being in the classrooms. They are invitations to collective imagination, resistance, creation, and healing. Anti-racist curriculums require the prerequisites of love, racial healing, abolition, and other ways of communal breathing. Therefore, curriculums must move beyond “diversity” and “inclusion” by simply incorporating more diverse stories and perspectives; they must be active agents of change. Our world depends on it.

On the surface, this may seem like an untenable task and far beyond our capacity. Freedom dreaming is not without its costs. But what is a freedom dream, if not a discipline of hope?⁴ Accept the offerings on these pages as new ways of breathing. They are ready for you, waiting for you to

¹ Alexis Pauline Gumbs, *Undrowned: Black Feminist Lessons from Marine Mammals*, 2.

² Gumbs, 1.

³ Bettina L. Love, *We Want To Do More Than Survive: Abolitionist Teaching and the Pursuit of Educational Freedom*, 27.

⁴ Mariame Kaba, *We Do This Till We Free Us: Abolitionist Organizing and Transforming Justice*.

bring these lessons to life in your own fashion, waiting for your abolitionist art and teaching to imagine and create new ways of learning in your classrooms.

To the teaching artists who have given us these offerings, we are grateful. A. Renee offers us the breath of rhythm— a rhythm that honors movement across land and sea, a rhythm whose resilience inspires our own rhythms. Austin Greene invites the breathing work of visual art to ask us deep questions, and provides a way of exploring new ways of breathing and being in a world where punishment as we know it no longer needs to exist. Belinda A. Sáenz engulfs us in movement and liberation as an embodied practice for new ways of breathing, one that is not separate from communal creating, processing, and reflecting. In this offering, we are inspired to be more intentional about upholding and honoring the collective work of breathing. Tammie Swopes invites us to explore living history captured in the fight for liberation with youth fighting for a world where breathing is free. With this offering, breathing is an inherited legacy and a living fire.

Now that these offerings are in your possession, here is your invitation: breathe with us.

About the Contributors



DR. DURELL COOPER

Durell Cooper is one of the nation's most prominent cultural strategists specializing in systems change and collaborative thought leadership. Prior to founding Cultural Innovation Group, LLC, he was a program officer at the New York City Department of Cultural Affairs (DCLA). He also worked at Lincoln Center for the Performing Arts, Inc. In the marketing department conducting outreach to veteran service organizations and for Lincoln Center Education recruiting and training teaching artists as well as several community engagement initiatives aimed at increasing equity and inclusion in NYC public schools. Prior to that he was a public school teacher. Durell is also a proud veteran of the U.S. Navy.

Durell is a highly sought after public speaker presenting at Lincoln Center Education's Summer Forum, the New York City Arts and Education Roundtable's Face to Face Conference, and for the National Guild for Community Arts Education as well as other engagements. Durell is a 2018 graduate of Stanford's Impact Program for Arts Leaders as well as a 2017 graduate of the National Guild's Community Arts Education Leadership Institute. He acquired his doctorate in Educational Theatre at New York University.



AUSTIN GREENE

Austin Greene is an artist, graphic designer, educator, activist, and organizer. He is the former Lead Teaching Artist for the DreamYard A.C.T.I.O.N. project, a four year, social justice and creative arts program for Bronx High School students that seeks to use visual art, theater, and poetry to challenge social injustices and inspire change in local communities.

He also served as DreamYard's inaugural Social Justice Pedagogy Coach, and currently serves as the Director of DreamYard's Art Center Programs. Austin believes that art is a tool for justice; he continues to explore ways that he and his art can be of service to the community. Austin is from Brooklyn, NY.



ASHLEY LIPSCOMB, MT, MDiv

Ashley Y. Lipscomb has a wealth of experience working with, motivating, and advocating for students and educators. After working as a teacher for five years and serving as a youth minister for eight years, Ashley has developed specialized interventions for her students, contributing to her success as an information literacy and language arts teacher at Frelinghuysen Middle School in Morristown, NJ. During her time in the classroom, Ashley advocated for the expansion of the language arts curriculum, leading to the incorporation of young adult literature that portrayed the Black experience. She also worked closely with school administrators to address pipeline issues contributing to the lack of a representative teaching staff.

A graduate of Hampton University (BA English and Master in Teaching), Harvard Divinity School (MDiv) and Montclair State University (Certificate in Supervision), Ashley has participated in and spearheaded several committees focused on diversity, equity, and inclusion in both K-12 and higher education settings. She provides DEI consulting to students in the Diversity and Inclusion Management Course at the Harvard Extension School.

Currently, her research uses a womanist methodology to center her story as a child of adjudicated parents and a Black woman from an urban community impacted by the racial implications of policies and laws, like mass incarceration, and analyze the effects they have on the emotional, spiritual, physical, social, political, and economic growth and development of the individual. Utilizing her research, she has created a unique framework to address the systemic racism that is deeply embedded in pedagogical practices and colonized curriculums which impedes the most vulnerable populations of students from flourishing.



ASHLEY RENEE WATKINS

Ashley Renee Watkins is a classically trained multi-genre vocalist, songwriter, mentor and teaching artist facilitator. As an artist, she is a skilled music maker and performer influenced by Opera, R&B, Jazz, and Soul. The New Orleans born artist has been based in New York City since 2014 – the year she appeared on NBC's America's Got Talent with her opera and multi-genre duo ACTE II. She released her first EP project "Roux" under artist name A. Renee in the fall of 2019 which captures the stories of her struggles, thoughts and triumphs existing as a black woman in America. She currently serves on the administrative staff of The Juilliard School as a Music Curriculum Specialist for K-12 Programs and Initiatives and is also a member of the teaching artist faculty of Lincoln Center Education.

Ashley Renee is an arts education consultant in equitable practices within cultural institutions throughout the United States and also a cohost of the acclaimed Indie Opera Podcast. She developed and manages The Marguerite Watson National Teaching Artist Cohort—an online program dedicated to career development for new and emerging teaching artists. She holds a master's degree in voice & operatic performance from the University of Oklahoma.



BELINDA A. SÁENZ

Belinda A. Sáenz is an interdisciplinary performer, instructional specialist, choreographer, and faculty member with Lincoln Center Education, New York City Center, Disney Theatrical Group, and TADA Youth Theatre. Ms. Sáenz' has collaborated with Bessie-Award-Winning Joya Powell's Movement of the People Dance Company, Callaloo Kids, MJM Dance, Dance the YARD in Martha's Vineyard, Theatre Arts Center/NY, and El Paso Opera. She has appeared at Jacob's Pillow, Lincoln Center, Radio City Music Hall, Aaron Davis Hall, United Palace Theatre, Queens Theatre, etc. and has performed works by Martie Barylick, Jennifer Conley, Sean Curran, Deborah Damast, Diane Duggan, Rocker Verastique, among many others. Belinda's last choreographic work, The US in USA, was presented at the Frederick Loewe Theatre.

Ms. Sáenz is native of the Juárez-El Paso border area where she performed intensively and taught in the private and public sectors for over 15 years. Besides the USA, she has taken her passion for the arts and education to Mexico, England, and Eastern-Central Europe. Belinda served as adjunct faculty at NYU Steinhardt's Dance Education program for three years. Some of her former or effective affiliations include: UNESCO International Dance Council, American Guild of Musical Artists, National Dance Education Organization, and New York State Dance Education Association. She has served as UFT chapter leader for the LCE faculty since January 2017. Belinda holds an MA in Dance Education (Institute Honors/Western Scholarship) from NYU, an MEd as Instructional Specialist in Bilingual Education & BFA in Music Theatre/Dance (Magna Cum Laude & University Honors Certificate) from The University of Texas at El Paso. Belinda is thrilled to begin her Doctorate studies in Educational Leadership and Innovation in the fall of 2021. www.belindasaenz.org



TAMMIE L. SWOPES

Tammie L. Swopes has been in the business of Theatre and Education for over 20 years. Starting her career in Theatre as an intern at the Alliance Theatre Company in Atlanta, GA. Tammie immersed herself in the art and business of Theatre which further inspired her work with youth, social justice, and community building. Her work with organizations such as Performing Arts Program for Youth (PAPY), The Names Project Foundation, and The Partnership for Arts in Learning inspired her move to NYC and her studies at New York University where she earned an M.A. in Educational Theatre working/studying with some of the masters in the field including Dorothy Heathcote, and Augusto Boal. She has since worked as a Teaching Artist, Arts in education specialist, Theatre program director, and a full time Performing Arts Instructor. Tammie is currently an adjunct professor at both New York University and Marymount Manhattan College, Artistic Associate for the Verbatim Performance Lab, all while pursuing her Doctorate in Educational Theatre (NYU), and continuing her own work as an artist/educator and social justice warrior.

Political Posters

Grades
6-8

Arts Discipline
Visual Arts

Teaching Artist
Austin Greene

Lesson Plan Title: Political Posters

Grade Level: 6–8 Arts Discipline: Visual Arts

[Click here to access Political Posters Video Guide on YouTube](#)

Supplemental materials and larger graphics are available in the Appendix (p.35)

LESSON PLAN AT A GLANCE

Objectives:

- To explore the abolitionist movement (past and present)
- To explore alternatives to a punitive justice system and center restorative justice practices
- To create our own abolitionist political posters

Materials:

- This activity is designed as a virtual learning / remote activity. Participants will need access to a device with internet capabilities and a virtual meeting platform (Zoom is preferred for its screen sharing capabilities and advanced functioning).
- Participants will also need access to canva.com (a free online design platform). Participants can create their own free account or facilitator can create a free account and share login credentials and password to keep all participant work in one location.

Words of the Day:

Abolish, Abolition, Restorative Justice, Transformative Justice, Prison Industrial Complex, School-to-Prison Pipeline

Goals for the Day/Work List:

- Explore abolitionist movement (Past / Present)
- Discuss alternatives to punitive justice; consider centering restorative justice
- Create abolition posters

STEPS:

Warm Up / Opening Ritual	NOTES
<p>'Chat'ergories</p> <p>As participants log on, they'll be invited to use the 'chat' function of their virtual platform for an initial ice breaker / check-in.</p> <p>Instruction: "I'm going to say a category— in the chat, see if you can come up with a word that fits the given category. The catch is, all of your responses must begin with a specific letter (letters can be chosen at random). See if you can come up with unique responses that no one else has tried."</p>	<p>*Facilitator should be familiar with and comfortable discussing the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Historical abolitionist movement

Prompts: (I've included some example responses using the letter 'P', feel free to use a letter randomizer to choose a letter)

- Things in a School (pencil, principal, police)
- Summer Things (parasailing, paddles, pools, picnic)
- Foods (pizza, potatoes, peppers)
- Superheroes / Super Villians (Peter Parker, Plastic Man, Pyro)
- TV Shows (Pokemon, Punky Brewster, Power Puff Girls)
- Famous People (Patrick Mahomes, Prince, Picasso)
- Activists / Freedom Fighters (Patrice Lumumba)
- Ways to Fight for Justice (protest, petition)

**facilitator can create their own unique prompts, but it may be worthwhile to consider adding one or two prompts that lean into the content area)*

Time: 5 minutes

Warm Up/Opening Ritual

Definitions, Quotes, and Questions of the Day

Facilitator will lead a conversation with participants in which they will collectively discuss and analyze a definition, a quote, and a question to introduce and begin contextualizing the topic.

Definition:

Abolish (uh-bol-ish) (verb): to do away with; put an end to; to make void; to abolish slavery

Quote:

"Abolition...is not primarily about dismantling, getting rid of, but it's about reenvisioning. It's about building anew."

—Angela Davis, activist

Question:

In the above quote, Angela Davis talks about abolition, even though slavery was officially ended in this country over 150 years ago. What do you think she's talking about when she mentions abolition? What do you think she advocates dismantling and getting rid of? What do you think she's referring to when she talks about "building anew"?

Time: 10 minutes

- Current abolition movement work and orgs
- Restorative justice practices
- Transformative Justice
- Prison Industrial Complex

******Facilitator should be competent using canva.com, and be comfortable pointing out tools and basic functions to participants. Facilitator should have an account set-up that participants can access (canva.com is free, but does have a paid service that allows for increased functionality—the free option should be suitable for this activity)

*******Facilitator should be familiar with and have examples of political posters—consider the artwork of Emory Douglas, or images from [The Design of Dissent](#).

********Facilitator should note that this lesson plan provides many prompts, discussion questions, and points of investigation. It's not likely that all of it will fit within the 90 minute timeframe. Facilitator should determine which elements are most

Hook / Activity #1 / Instruction	<p>relevant based on the size and learning style of the class, and should curate the lesson to match.</p>
<p>Introduction: A Snapshot of Abolitionist Movement Then and Now</p> <p>Facilitator will lead a short introduction into the abolitionist movement. This can be done in a variety of ways (timeline, gallery walk, short video, discussion, photo montage, etc.)</p> <p>*Here's a link to a few resources that the facilitator might find useful in preparing for this workshop. Please note that the content represents a wide range of ideas and perspectives—it is up to the facilitator to responsibly research and vet information suitable to both the lesson and the target audience.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Historical Abolitionist Movement (the movement to end legal enslavement in the US) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Possible key points of reference: transatlantic Slave Trade; economic growth based on unpaid / forced labor; enslaved peoples uprisings / revolts; political agendas; Civil War; Emancipation Proclamation, The Three-fifths Compromise, Juneteenth, etc. ● Current Abolitionist Movement (the movement to abolish prisons / the carceral state and to defund / abolish police) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Possible points of reference: (School-to-Prison pipeline , PIC (prison industrial complex, Defund movement, Critical Resistance, M4BL, BLM, etc. 	<p>Time: 15 minutes</p>
<p>Activity #2 / Instruction</p> <p>Discussion: Punishment vs. Restoration</p> <p>Facilitator will lead a short discussion exploring alternatives to punishment, incarceration, and policing</p> <p>Discussion Prompts:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● What is 'punishment'? What are some common forms of 'punishment'? ● Why do we punish people? (unpack and challenge the idea that punishment is only used as a direct response to wrongdoing when people are often punished based on socially constructed identities like race, gender, etc.) ● Do you think 'punishment', 'force', or 'violence' is an effective way to address harm or change people's behaviors? Are there other ways to change people's behaviors? ● What are some of the ways people are disciplined in schools? In society? 	

- What are some alternatives to school discipline methods? What about alternatives to societal discipline methods?
- Can you imagine a world without police? A world without jails?
- What do we gain when we punish those who've done wrong? What do we lose? Are there ways to invite 'wrongdoers' back into our community after they've caused harm?
- Who determines what counts as a 'harmful', 'wrong', or 'punishable'?
- What is 'restorative justice'? What is 'transformative justice'?

Time: 15 minutes

Activity #3 / Individual Practice

Art Making: Political Posters

Participants will explore how print and digital posters can be used to spread messaging and inspire change. They will create their own political posters using the digital graphic design platform [canva.com](https://www.canva.com).

Intro Activity:

(Facilitator should transition the conversation from the prior section (punitive vs. transformative justice) to how we can inspire the changes we want to see in society)

Prompt: How can art be used to inspire change? Facilitator can share examples of political posters (i.e. art of Emory Douglas)

Step 1

Participants will review the elements of a strong political poster:

- Eye Catching Slogan or Phrase (i.e. Black Lives Matter; Defund the Police, Fund our Futures; Invest in Communities, etc.)
- Strong Central Image or Graphic (Choose an image related to your message that will resonate with your audience)
- Typography and Color Palette (Choose a typeface and color range that fits the intended audience and the theme)
- Call to Action (What do you want people to do? Join an organization, donate money, attend an event, etc.)
- ****OPTIONAL:** Additional Information / Education (Short statistic, story, or context to provide more information to the viewer)

Step 2

Participants will be introduced to the basics of [canva.com](https://www.canva.com) (selecting a template, choosing type and colors, selecting items, adding images / graphics, etc.)

Step 3

Participants will create a political poster using one of two prompts.

Prompt A: Create an Abolitionist Poster using the theme 'DEFUND THE POLICE / INVEST IN OUR STREETS'

Prompt B: Create a poster advocating for one of your alternative models of school discipline

Participants will be given time to research statistics or information for their poster and construct their poster using canva.com

Time: 30 minutes

Reinforcement/Reflection/Closing Ritual

Share Back

Participants will have an opportunity to share their creations. Posters needn't be 'complete'—process shares / works in progress are welcome as well.

Sharing Prompts (directed towards artist / designer):

- Talk about how you came up with your slogan or phrase—what makes it eye catching or attention grabbing? (same question can be asked about the choice of graphic/ visual)
- What do you want the viewer to feel after viewing your poster (anger, empathy, compassion, etc.)? What would you want them to do after viewing your poster?
- How might you modify this design for different social media platforms, understanding that it might need to be made to fit a different shape—how might you rearrange the content? Would you remove anything? Add anything?
- Where would your poster 'live'? Do you have an idea about where it could be placed in order to reach your target audience?
- What societal changes are you hoping for as a result of your poster's message?

Sharing Prompts (directed towards group):

- Do you have any questions or suggestions for the artist / designer?
- Are there ways to create visual connections between this design and the one you created—could they all be a part of a unified campaign? What might you do to make them feel like they were a part of the same 'family' or campaign? (consider similar colors, use matching typography, etc.)
- Who do you think is the intended audience for this poster? Why?

Closing:

Thinking about our quote from earlier (Angela Davis quote), and knowing what you now know about abolition and transformative justice, what practices in your life, in your school, or in society would you like to 'build anew'?

Time: 15 minutes

Arrangement of Physical Space: (i.e. room set-up, chairs, table arrangement)

Since this is a virtual session, facilitator should consider engagement strategies for those unable to be on-screen (communicating in the chat, using the 'reaction' function, coming off mute to contribute, creative avatars, etc.)

Next Steps:

Participants encouraged to think about next steps in addressing their school discipline policies; they can also be encouraged to turn their posters into Zoom backgrounds

Rhythmical Relics of Resilience

Grades
6-7

Arts Discipline
Music

Teaching Artist
Ashley Renee Watkins

Lesson Plan Title: Rhythmical Relics of Resilience

Grade Level: 6&7 Arts Discipline: Music

[Click here to access Rhythmical Relics of Resilience Video Guide on YouTube](#)

Supplemental materials and larger graphics are available in the Appendix (p.36)

LESSON PLAN AT A GLANCE

Objectives:

- Explore and develop a basic shared understanding of syncopation
- Explore the concept of the African Diaspora in relation to the Transatlantic Slave Trade and its musical influence
- Reflect on and create musical choices from their own perspective of resilience

Materials:

Map of Transatlantic Slave Trade

Example: <https://www.slavevoyages.org/static/images/assessment/intro-maps/01.jpg>

Non-pitched percussion instruments (if available)

Lesson Prep:

If needed, teachers should view the rhythm demo videos in the appendix to familiarize themselves with the backbeat and clave rhythms prior to the session.



Image: Backbeat Visual Reference

See larger image on page

Video Demo: Back beat, 3-2 & 2-3 Clave

See video demos on page 34

Question of the Day:

How can we explore some of the resilient syncopated rhythms that exist as relics of enslaved Africans of the Transatlantic Slave Trade and be inspired to create our own rhythms of resilience?

Goals for the Day/Work List:

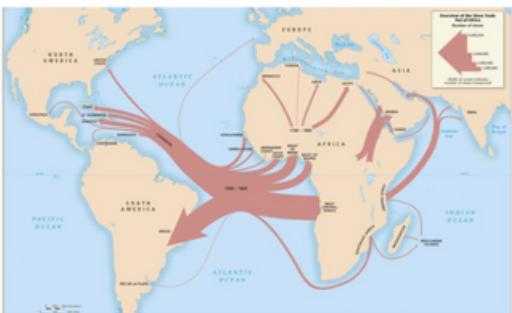
- Learn or visit three (3) rhythms derived from African roots
- Acquire a shared understand of the Transatlantic Slave Trade
- Work to create new rhythms of resilience
- Reflect on and make connections to the resilience of historically enslaved Africans

STEPS:

Check In	NOTES (i.e. supports, accommodations, things to remember, modifications)
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Welcome students into the place and allow them to get settled (optional to have instrumental percussive music lightly playing in the background) 2) Display and verbally ask the prompt: What does the word “resilient” mean to you? (Share a definition as needed) “What was a moment or something you experienced that made you feel resilient?” 3) Hear 1 or 2 responses from students before going over goals for the day. 	<p style="text-align: center;">Time: 6 minutes</p>
Warm Up/Opening Ritual	
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Start with a steady pulse of 4 and have students join you in clapping or tapping. When everyone is together, improvise some rhythms and have students mimic you via call and response. Invite 2 or 3 volunteers to improvise a rhythm and have the rest of the class copy. 2) After exploring for a bit, introduce and teach students the backbeat and 2 clave rhythms. Repeat each rhythm until students feel comfortable with them before moving on to the next. Clap, use a drum or clave as available. 3) After moving through the 3 patterns, ask students what they notice about these rhythms. What feels similar between them? How do they feel different? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Where have you heard a rhythm like <i>The Back Beat</i> before today? 4) Explain to students that all these rhythms use syncopation where the weak beat gets the accent. Demonstrate as needed to explain and have students try the rhythms a few more times in this context, paying attention to where the beats are accented. You can also have the students stomp on unaccented beats (e.g., 1 & 3 of the backbeat) and clap on the accented beats. 5) Ask the students to consider and share their thoughts on how something like a “rhythm” can represent resilience? Encourage them to think back on your initial discussion around resilience. 	<p>If non-pitched instruments are not available or trigger auditory sensitivity, please use clapping or patting as a modification.</p>
Hook / Activity #1 / Instruction	<p style="text-align: center;">Time: 10 minutes</p>
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Display a map of the Transatlantic Slave Trade 2) Ask the students what they notice about the map. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What direction of movement do you notice? • What places are you familiar with? • What else are you curious about on this map? 	

3) Explain to students that this map represents the places enslaved Africans were known to be dispersed to during the Transatlantic Slave Trade dating as far back as 1500.

- When people move or migrate, what are some important things they might take with them?
- What might be important to never forget?



Sample: Image of Transatlantic Slave Trade

4) Share with students that the rhythms you have explored so far all exist in music we hear today — specifically in The United States, Cuba, and even places like Brazil — referring to these areas on the map. Add that they all have roots traveling directly back to Africa in which music has often been heard with interesting, syncopated rhythms. These rhythms were carried with the enslaved people represented on this map and have shaped much of the music we hear today.

- How might the idea of resilience connect to the enslaved people represented here on this map and in the rhythms we've explored?

5) Revisit the question with students of how a rhythm can show resilience and discuss their thoughts in this new context.

- How does this expand or make you think more deeply about what it means to be resilient?
- How can music be a representation of our experiences?

Time: 8 minutes

Activity #2 / Instruction

- Review each of the rhythms with students to be sure everyone remembers them.
- Divide students into groups of 3-4 and have them briefly share and discuss their own moments of resilience from the opening prompt with each other.
- After sharing, remind everyone of the pulse of 4 and invite groups to create their own rhythm patterns that represent their resilience. Move around the room to support groups in their exploration. Encourage

students to use the element of syncopation to really make their rhythm unique to their group.

Creation Questions:

- How can you communicate a feeling of resilience in a rhythm?
- How can you keep the pulse but create a rhythm that represents the experiences of your group?

Note: if a group is struggling to connect to their own resilience, invite them to think about an experience where they felt brave or a moment they are really proud of.

- How can you use the tool of syncopation?

- 4) When a group has found a rhythm they like, remind them to check it against your pulse of 4 and practice it for sharing.

Time: 6 minutes

Activity #3 / Individual Practice: Group sharing

- 1) After groups have had some time to practice, combine them with another group to share their rhythms of resilience.
- 2) To share, have one group keep the pulse while the other shares their rhythm and have them switch roles.
- 3) Discuss in sharing groups:
How did you try to capture resilience in your rhythm?
How might something like rhythm help you carry your own resilience?
Why might something like resilience be important to have?

Time: 5 minutes

Reinforcement/Reflection/Closing Ritual

- 1) Coming back together as a group, hear some highlights of the small group reflections.
- 2) How did learning about the resilience of the enslaved Africans impact your thoughts on being resilient?
- 3) How did it impact your rhythmic choices?
- 4) How else do you think music has been impacted by these individuals and rhythms we explored today?
- 5) Invite groups to volunteer to perform their group's rhythms solo and decide on an order for the sharing.
- 6) Have everyone start on your steady pulse and direct groups to come in after the other has finished until all volunteer groups have gone.
- 7) To finish, return everyone to the original 3 rhythms you explored invoking the rhythmical relics of enslaved peoples to close out.

Time: 5 minutes

Arrangement of Physical Space: (i.e. room set-up, chairs, table arrangement) Chairs should be away from desks starting in a circle and able to shift in groups .

Next Steps:

- Explore additional rhythms of the African Diaspora with students.
- Record group compositions with students using non-pitched percussion instruments
- Explore how these percussive compositions can be accompaniments to stories of resilience.

Socially Conscious Dance Making

**Grades
6-8**

**Arts Discipline
Dance**

**Teaching Artist
Belinda A. Sáenz**

Lesson Plan Title: Socially Conscious Dance Making

Grade Level: MS Arts Discipline: Dance

[Click here to access Socially Conscious Dance Making Video Guide on YouTube](#)

Supplemental materials and larger graphics are available in the Appendix (p.38)

LESSON PLAN AT A GLANCE

Objectives:

Students will be able to

- exhibit personal and sociocultural awareness of potential impact of the arts (dance) in their classroom/school experiences and beyond
- develop skills of expression, perception, and analysis through movement
- reflect about the #blacklivesmatter movement

Materials:

- Space to Move
- Sound System
- Black Lives Matter Packets including: Tool box, 3-4 photos related to #blacklivesmatter movement, 1 poem: "Black By Popular Demand" by Madison Mattison, Grade 12, and a highlighter
 - o Note: In this unit the packets are given to the students but materials may also be developed by students. For example, should the unit be extended, the photos may be researched/selected by students. The poem can also be written by the students as an extension of the lessons in collaboration with the classroom teacher

Words of the Day:

- Justice
- Resistance
- Black Lives Matter Movement

Goals for the Day/Work List:

- Embody personal and communal perspectives of Justice, Resistance, & #Blacklivesmatter
- Make personal and communal connections to the themes/concepts
- Make interdisciplinary connections (dance, poetry, and visuals)
- Collaborate with peers to create our #blacklivesmatter movement piece
- Reflect/Assess (creative process, work in progress, and final product)

Lesson Context:

- 4th or 5th lesson of an 8-10 session-unit.
- Lesson inspired by the socially conscious choreography workshops by Movement of the People Dance Company, Augusto Boal/Theater of the Oppressed, and a previously designed and implemented Aesthetic Education Lesson

STEPS:

<h3>Check In</h3>	<p>NOTES (i.e. supports, accommodations, things to remember, modifications)</p> <p>Other prompts have included/may include:</p> <p>Yesterday, _____ (action/activity they liked/enjoyed); Today I feel _____</p>
<p>1) As students enter, they settle in, prepare their space and reflect about ideas for opening ritual (my movement/gesture of the day) Prompt to prepare "movement/action" of the day: Today I want to celebrate: _____ about me</p> <p>2) Classroom Teacher welcomes TA into their space for another visit</p> <p>3) CT and TA make space adjustments and introduce goals of the day</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Time: 5 minutes</p>
<h3>Warm Up/Opening Ritual</h3>	<p>Students may talk about the prompt and share verbally</p>
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Students volunteer to share their "movement/gesture" of the day (Movement can be an expression/representation of something about them, how they feel today, something they did yesterday, etc.). Students may volunteer to share their movements while entering the circle or wherever they feel most comfortable <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a) Community responds by reproducing the gesture (call-response) 2) Guided community warm-up in a circle— Invite everyone to stand and take a collective deep breath(Repeat breath as needed). Short physical warm-up may include: isolations, stretching, levels, tempo, eye contact, meet up with a partner, give a pound/high 5/dap, and free-style inspired by music. 	<p>Students explore and develop an understanding of how to create gestures based on actions, feelings, or emotions.</p> <p>Play/choose warm-up music to represent and celebrate community's diversity</p>
<h3>Hook / Activity #1 / Instruction</h3> <p>Embody personal perspectives of Justice and Resistance</p>	<p>Acknowledge that the concepts are difficult to navigate. Be sensitive that some students may need additional support or even to opt out. Discuss with CT. Consider letting them know in advance that it is ok to do what's best for them.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Circle Gesture Making: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Using the idea of the Opening Ritual to create gestures. Guide students to create one gesture representing Justice and one representing Resistance <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a) What do we think about when we hear about #blacklivesmatter? b) Possible thoughts: social justice, injustice, something unfair, loss, law, government and police, personal experience, police brutality, protests, #blacklivesmatter movement, civil rights movements, etc. c) Document ideas in communal journal d) As a community choose to work with Justice e) Take time to create and practice individually f) Refer to the various ways students can use their bodies (repetition, levels, body parts, effort) g) Repeat process with the concept of Resistance 2) Rehearse gestures as a community/everyone simultaneously 3) 1-2 Volunteers share their gestures with community <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a) Community responds by reproducing the gesture (call-response) 	

4) Create and review collective Justice-Resistance phrase (phrase will be part of tool box for their dance making as a section or motif)

Time: 10 minutes

• **Activity #2 / Instruction - Making Connections**

- 1) Divide class into dance-making groups
- 2) Each group receives a packet with toolbox, 2-3 photos related to #blacklivesmatter movement, 1 poem, and a highlighter
- 3) Groups review the materials and clarify any questions about project:

Choreographic Direction:

- Use the following tools to begin your #blacklivesmatter dance
- As a group highlight the verbs/action words that stand out and use those words to stimulate ideas for movements
- In your group spend time with the following pictures. Use these pictures to generate movements
- Refer to the choreographic devices we have worked with

Black By Popular Demand

By Madison Mattison, Grade 12

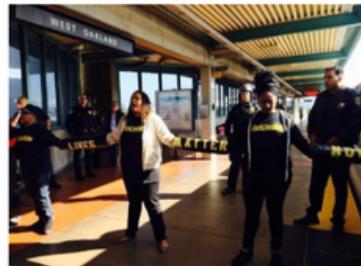
<https://charmlitmag.org/poems-for-black-lives-matter-at-school>

Learn to love that nappy hair
 That we don't care
 That ghettofied
 That dramatized
 That brotherhood
 That divided hood
 Learn to love them gold teeth
 That crooked speech
 That "Imma be a baller" talk
 That 'no fear' in my walk
 Learn to love that black magic
 Honey dripping down the walls
 That majestic beauty standing real tall
 Learn to love those family gatherings that keep you up at night
 That kind of music you don't like
 That hustle game that stays real strong
 That face we make like you did something wrong
 Learn to love that..
 We are Unchanged
 Unchained
 Unapologetic
 Don't you ever forget it
 We are black by popular demand.

Black By Popular Demand is available in the Appendix on page

Students may receive roles they most identify with. i.e.: dancers-performers, choreographers, directors, production crew, etc.

Note: In this lesson all groups receive the same packet. Units of study may include more themes to have groups work with different social topics for their movement piece. Groups can also self-select topics of interest.



These photos are available in the Appendix on page 38.

Tool Box

Justice-Resistance Collective Phrase

verbs/action words from poem

BLM Images

Choreographic devices:

Levels: low, middle, high

Tempo: slow, fast

Repetition: repeat one or more movements

Effort/dynamic: with great deal of strength/then gently or weakly

Time: 5 minutes

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Activity #3 / Individual Practice 	
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Groups collaborate and create 2) CT and TA circulate to support groups as needed. 3) Support the process of incorporating the toolbox and materials <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Sample/possible questions/prompts as groups work on their choreography: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i) How can the image inspire your beginning or end poses/tableaux? ii) How are you using the poem for your work? What words or phrases stand out? How can you embody (X)? <p>Reminders: this is a work in progress, focus and use your rehearsal time efficiently</p> 	
<p style="text-align: center;">Time: 10-15 minutes</p> <p>Reinforcement/Reflection/Closing Ritual</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) One group will volunteer to share their work in progress 2) Open discussion about the process of developing their #blacklivesmatter choreography <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Possible questions to audience members: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. How did the group express their justice / #blacklivesmatter theme? ii. Is it literal and clear? Or is it more abstract/hidden/unclear? iii. What aspects of the toolbox did you notice? iv. What thoughts/ideas did the piece bring to your perspective about the #blacklivesmatter movement? 2. Audience may articulate and ask questions about what they noticed <p style="text-align: center;">Time: 5 minutes</p>	

<p>Arrangement of Physical Space: (i.e. room set-up, chairs, table arrangement)</p> <p>Chairs and desks put aside to create open space.</p>	<p>Next Steps:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Groups continue developing their pieces and maybe aim towards having a more polished product/final share out • Layers may include adding music and/or props to their pieces • Students may see works of art by ContraTiempo, Camile A. Brown, Movement of People Dance Company, et al.
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Theatre as Resistance

Grades
6-8

Arts Discipline
Theatre

Teaching Artist
Tammie Swopes

Lesson Plan Title: Theatre as Resistance

Grade Level: 6-8

Arts Discipline: Theatre

[Click here to access Theatre as Resistance Video Guide on YouTube](#)

LESSON PLAN AT A GLANCE

Objectives:

Students will be able to

- demonstrate the use of Tableau in creating stories
- articulate the historical meaning youth voice and activism of the Children's march of 1963
- embody the concepts of power and resistance

Materials:

- Music for Check In/Warm up and to be played during small group work time for students. This should be very specific music to set the mood for the day's lesson and to spark energy, joy, and creativity during brainstorming and creative time. (*I suggest the playlist is perhaps 60's music perhaps mixed with more contemporary music that speaks of resistance*)
- Markers
- Images from the Children's March
- Small slips of paper with groups of people/things/animals written on them, and a bag to contain the slips of paper
- Post-its or small pieces of paper and pre cut tape to adhere pre cut papers to Chart paper
- Large sticky Chart paper or large chart paper and masking tape.
- Pre-made Large Chart paper with relevant Vocab words written on them and another set with the definitions on them.

Resources:

- Videos: 1) [Memories of the Children's March of 1963 from those who were there](#)
- 2) [The Children's March: Birmingham Children's Crusade](#)
- 3) [Mighty Times: The Children's March](#)

Words of the Day:

Power

Resistance

The Children's Movement

Tableau

ImageTheater

Goals for the Day/Work List:

Students should have already seen some videos and images from the 1960's Civil Rights Movement so that they have some foundational knowledge of the era in our collective history. The previous lesson may have also included more in depth information (1st account videos etc.) of the Children's March. These can be assigned as homework for students If the instructors will be teaching this lesson without having the benefit of a previous lesson dedicated to teaching the historical aspect of the Children's March.

Today's goals are to 1) have students embody some of the key concepts and terms they have been introduced to via the Children's March and 2) create stories from images (tableaus) around the historical perspective of youth actively engaged in the 1960's Civil Rights Movement.

STEPS:

Check In	NOTES (i.e. supports, accommodations, things to remember, modifications)
<p>This music makes me feel... Makes me think about...</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Students will take a post-it and a marker/pen/pencil and write how the music they are listening to makes them feel or what comes to mind when they think/hear it. They will put the words/phrases on a big piece of chart paper that is labeled for this task. Have 2-3 chart papers around the room so not everyone has to go to one place. <p style="text-align: right;">Time: 5 mins</p>	<p><i>This is written as an in person class. Should the need to modify to remote arise, breakout rooms, jamboards, and considerations for individual digital worksheets should be given at the top of the lesson. This is also designed to be a 90min workshop which can be broken down into two 45min workshops if needed as a part of the overall 5 lessons.</i></p>
Warm Up/Opening Ritual	
<p>Today's agreements:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ask students to take a moment to collectively look at the class agreements and state if they all agree with them still (the agreement making should have been done in the 1st class). Adjust, meaning add or take away agreements as necessary. Some may require more discussion than others. The one I always use and make sure gets on the list is respect: of self, others, and the environment. • Tongue Twister as vocal warm up: Encourage students to put their own spin on the tongue twister so it creates a rhythm they choose. Example: Fuzzy Wuzzy, was a bear Fuzzy Wuzzy, had no hair Fuzzy Wuzzy wasn't very fuzzy, was he? <p style="text-align: right;">Time: 5 mins</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>This is the 2nd or 3rd (depending on how in depth the first lesson is) lesson of a 5 part lesson which utilizes the historical event of the Children's March. The first (and possibly second) lesson should be dedicated to an overview and background knowledge around the 1960's Civil Rights Movement.</i> • <i>The student definitions of resistance and power should be on the wall from the 1st class.</i>
Hook / Activity #1 / Instruction <p>Walking in Space</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Students will be given a set of prompts and asked to move around the open space according to the prompts. This is a non-verbal activity. While walking students are directed that this activity is non-verbal and they should be moving through the space without touching anyone. If you see students moving too fast or too slow or touch, etc. have them freeze and look around the space. Ask them to focus on moving toward the empty spaces while they are following the prompts. If a space is too 	

"busy", continue to move towards empty spaces. This will redistribute the bodies moving in space.

Prompts: "Always walking at a normal pace"

- Walk as if you are light as a feather
- Walk as if your whole body feels happy
- Walk as if your left foot is made of led
- Walk as if you are moving through mud
- Walk as if your whole body feels excited
- Walk as if you are moving through water (you could speed this up to show more or less resistance when in water?)
- Walk as if you have balloons attached to the back of your shirt that are trying to take you away but you want to stay on the ground
- Walk with the feeling of being alone or lonely
- Walk with the feeling community
- Walk as if you are going through doors. Each time you go through one another one is in front of you and you have to open it and go through it to move forward. (Add to this and have some doors be hard to open, etc.)
- Walk as if you feel happy...something happy and exciting is happening today and you feel great about it.

2. Process the activity

- Whole class discussion around what they experienced from the Walking in Space activity. Possible prompts include:
 - What did it feel like when the Prompt _____ was given?
 - When _____ was given to you was it easy or challenging?
 - How do you think this activity is connected to some of the words or phrases that you defined earlier?
 - How is resistance connected to any of the ways you were asked to walk in space?

Time: 15 mins.

For the walking in space activity if you have student(s) that are not able to "walk" or move in the space easily there are a couple of ways you could modify this activity and still achieve the same goals.

1. *Re-name the activity moving in space, instead of walking in space and have the class spread out so that they have some space between each person. They can be allowed to sit/stand/etc., however they feel comfortable. The class can then perform the activity from their space.*
2. *They could work in partners and instead of moving create tableaus (frozen images) from the prompts modifying the language of the prompt accordingly.*
3. *Create a big circle, semi-circle, or even concentric circles with ample space between and as in #1 have students move in space, the space being their chair or the space around their chair.*

Activity #2 / Instruction

Introduction to Tableau

- Family Portraits: Students get into random groups of 5 or 6 (depending on class size this could be more but no more than 8 and no less than 3 or 4 per group.) Each group randomly chooses a family group to portray. There are random things like teachers, students, lions, birds, bears, books, superheroes, etc. Give them 2-3mins to come up with a portrait/tableau/image and then rapidly have students show their tableaus to the rest of the class. The class then has 3 guesses as to what they are a family of. Students who are in the audience are asked to quickly decide on a story that is being told through this image/tableau about this group.

- Change groups quickly so that they are not in groups of no more than 4. Have students create images of the word Resistance and Power

Time: 20 mins

Activity #3 / Individual Practice

Small Group Work:

- 1) As a whole class students will review the video: [Mighty Times: The Children's March](#) for context and inspiration for the next activity.
- 2) In small groups of no more than 5 students will be given a pic from the actual Children's March and asked to create a tableau of a moment just before or just after the picture they were given.
- 3) Share Out:
 - Each small group will share their tableau. Similar to family portraits students/audience will look at the tableau and then begin to tell a story about the image. A story about something that the students in the Children's March might have been thinking or feeling at the moment the tableau shows.
 - Full class discussion on how all of the images tie to resistance and power. Are there any other concepts/words we can use to describe what is happening in the tableaus as well as what the youth may have been thinking/feeling during the time of the Children's March? Are there youth [activist](#)/movements that you are currently aware of? How do your feelings about their activism/movements compare to what those children may have been feeling then?

Time: 35 mins

Reinforcement/Reflection/Closing Ritual

- 1) Closing Ritual: Pass the applause
In a standing circle students one student will turn to the person to their right. The student on their right will simultaneously look that person in the eye and they will do a single clap together. The person that received the clap/applause will then turn to the person on their right and the process continues until the applause has made its way around the circle. It's a way of celebrating everyone's work and accomplishment in class.

Time: 5 minutes

<p>Arrangement of Physical Space: (i.e. room set-up, chairs, table arrangement)</p> <p>If at all possible a large space with no tables or tables on the outside of the room pushed against walls so that the open area is maximized. Chairs should be arranged in a circle.</p>	<p>Next Steps:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discussion on resistance as a form of social protest and connection to the larger 1960's Civil Rights Movement and the Black Lives Matter Movement. • The next lesson would energize these stories to include written dialogue from multiple perspectives.
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Appendix

Appendix

Video Guides

Lesson Plan Title: Political Posters

Grade Level: 6–8 Arts Discipline: Visual Arts

[Click here to access Political Posters Video Guide on YouTube](#)

Lesson Plan Title: Rhythmical Relics of Resilience

Grade Level: 6–8 Arts Discipline: Visual Arts

[Click here to access Rhymical Relics of Resilience Video Guide on YouTube](#)

Lesson Plan Title: Socially Conscious Dance Making

Grade Level: MS Arts Discipline: Dance

[Click here to access Socially Conscious Dance Making Video Guide on YouTube](#)

Lesson Plan Title: Theatre as Resistance

Grade Level: 6-8 Arts Discipline: Theatre

[Click here to access Theatre as Resistance Video Guide on YouTube](#)

Appendix

Lesson Plan Title: Political Posters

Grade Level: 6–8

Arts Discipline: Visual Arts

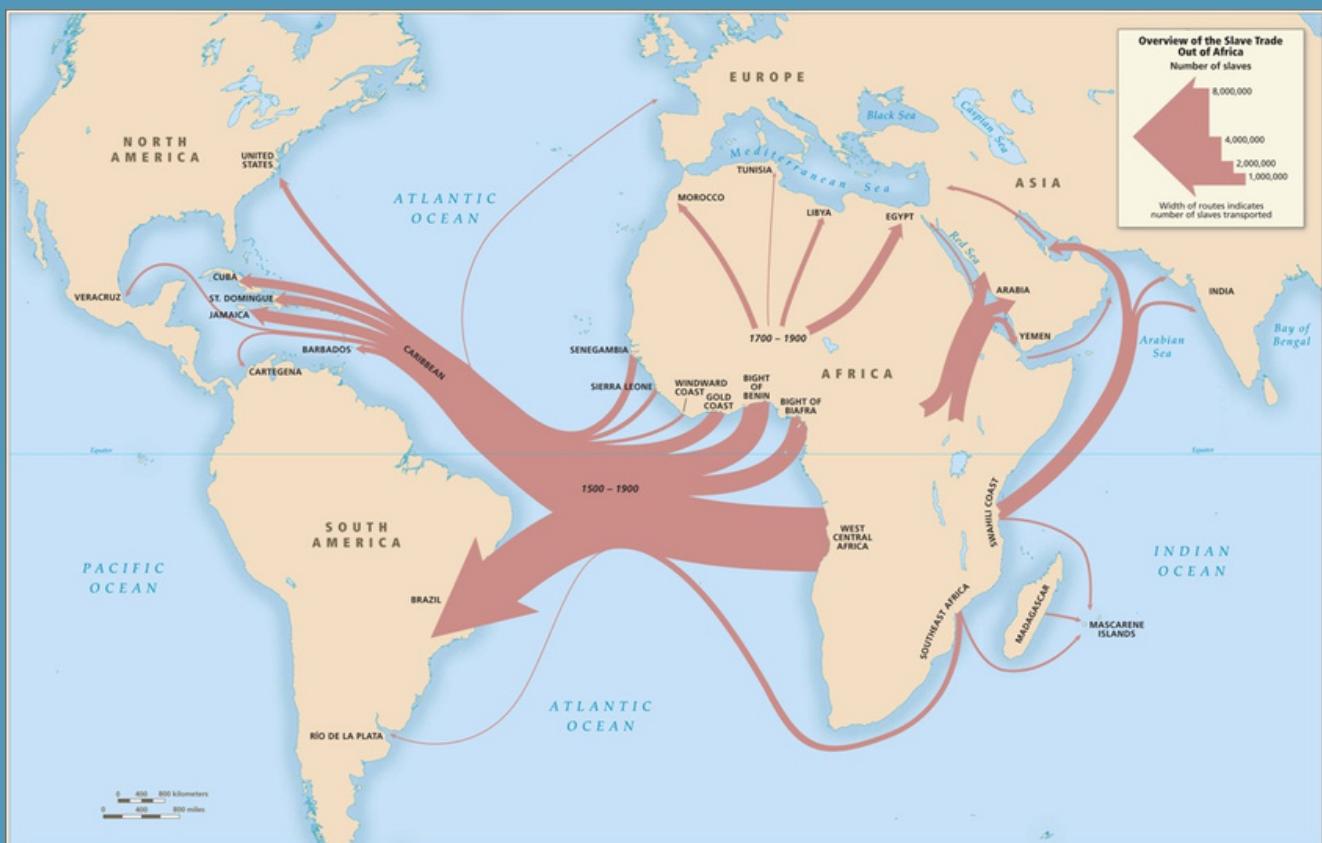
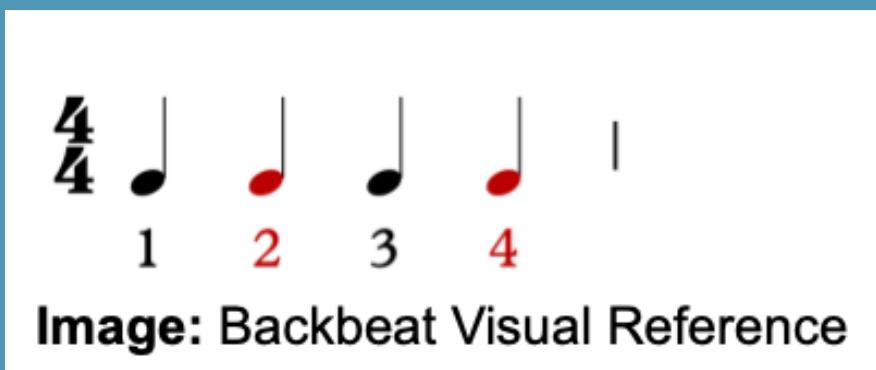
Abolition Resources

- [The North Star Newspaper](#); additional [information](#)
- [Frederick Douglass](#)
- [Abolitionist Movement \(1830–1870\)](#)
- Defund the Police [video](#)
- Police Abolition 101 [zine](#) — Spanish language PDF is attached to this email!
- [Defund the Police - Invest in Community Care \(PDF\)](#) — An analysis of mental health crisis responses, with a **new checklist of things to think/ask about when it comes to proposals for non-police crisis response!**
- [Defund Police Coalition Priority Recommendations from the Reimagining Public Safety Task Force - #DefundOPD](#) — Grab these recommendations and run with them if they work for your community.
- Amistad Law Project practical abolition [videos](#)
- [Cops Out of Care!](#) — A two-part series for building strategy around police abolition in healthcare and care spaces
- [What's Next? Safer and More Justice Communities Without Policing \(PDF\)](#)
- [TransformHarm.org](#)
- Against Punishment [curriculum \(direct link\)](#)
- Against Punishment: Incarcerated Comrades Edition [zine](#)
- Abolition Imagination [cards](#)

Appendix

Lesson Plan Title: Rhythmical Relics of Resilience

Grade Level: 6 & 7 Arts Discipline: Music



Appendix

Lesson Plan Title: Socially Conscious Dance Making

Grade Level: MS Arts Discipline: Dance

Black By Popular Demand

By Madison Mattison, Grade 12

<https://charmlitmag.org/poems-for-black-lives-matter-at-school>

Learn to love that nappy hair
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That ghettofied
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That brotherhood
That divided hood
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That kind of music you don't like
That hustle game that stays real strong
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We are Unchanged
Unchained
Unapologetic
Don't you ever forget it
We are black by popular demand.

Appendix

Lesson Plan Title: Socially Conscious Dance Making

Grade Level: MS Arts Discipline: Dance





Arts in Education
ROUNDTABLE
www.nycaieroundtable.org

The New York City Arts in Education Roundtable is a service organization and a community of arts education practitioners sharing information, providing professional development, and communicating with the public to promote our work in schools and beyond.



www.culturalinnovationsgroup.org

Cultural Innovation Group's mission is to empower communities through art, civic, and community engagement. We seek to ignite the collective imagination of communities to envision an equitable world where everyone is included. We aim to push the narrative of historically marginalized communities past sustainability and into thriving. We envision a world where true innovation begins when the lived experiences of people in communities are informing the solutions that build a better future. Our model is built on authentic collaboration with individuals, community based organizations, government agencies, and corporations to cultivate a culture of innovation in order to build collective impact.



www.antiracisted.org

The Institute for Anti-Racist Education is committed to ensuring that every student receives an education that is truthful, free from bias, liberating, and offered in a supportive, decolonized setting.