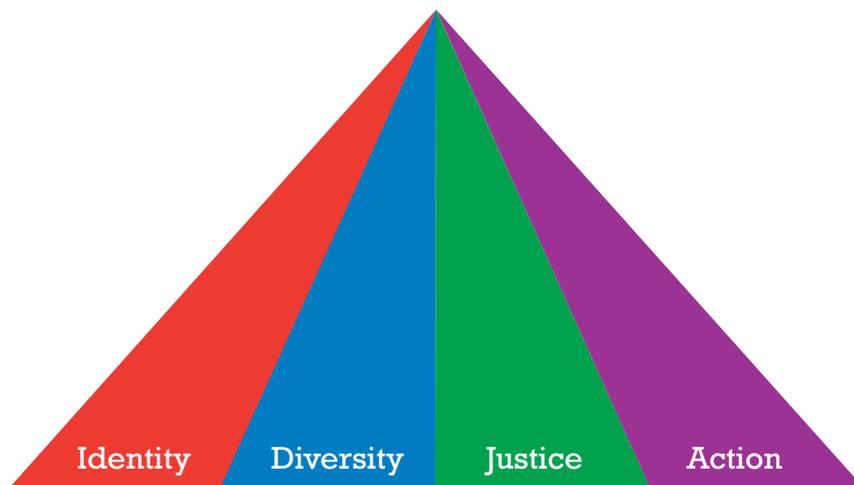


Strengthening a Social Justice Frame

Social Justice, when present in an educational setting, allows educators and students to have a lens into past and current events and to better understand how a fair and just society needs to be supported. Providing opportunities for students to ask questions, research, and challenge bias is critical in a classroom where students will develop resiliency and self-efficacy. At times, identifying what social justice is not may be less of a challenge than identifying what social justice is.¹

Social Justice Standards

In order to support educators, Teaching Tolerance has created Social Justice Standards based on the four domains of identity, diversity, justice and action.



Social justice functions as a lens with which to examine access and privilege. Lessons that incorporate this concept address the treatment of groups of people based on biases and misinformation. These stereotypes most often manifest themselves as they relate to:

- ◆ Race
- ◆ Gender
- ◆ Age
- ◆ Sexual Orientation
- ◆ Religion
- ◆ Nationality
- ◆ Education
- ◆ Mental or Physical Ability²

¹ <https://online.merrimack.edu/social-justice-in-the-classroom/>

Integrating Social Justice into the Classroom

Social justice is a crucial element in an equitable culturally responsive classroom. The Booster Unit provides teachers with opportunities to recognize, practice, and apply the Social Justice Standards within a meaningful academic context.

In the Additional Resources section (AR pp. 4-5), you will find Social Justice activities connected to the complex texts students are reading. These activities are meant to support and promote culturally sustaining social justice practices and provide a chance for students to be critical thinkers when building their understanding of self and others.

Integrated social justice learning experiences provide opportunities for valuing human dignity, valuing cultural diversity, and building critical thinking. Utilizing a critical questioning lens, the activities engage students in:

- ◆ **Building and drawing on intergroup awareness, understanding and skills.**
- ◆ **Creating classroom environments that reflect diversity, equity and justice.**
- ◆ **Engaging families and communities in ways that are meaningful and culturally competent.**
- ◆ **Encouraging students to speak out against bias and injustice.**
- ◆ **Writing responses that reflect a responsibility for self and others and community action.**
- ◆ **Supporting students' identities and making it safe for them to fully be themselves.**
- ◆ **Using instructional strategies that support diverse learning styles and allow for deep exploration of focused themes.³**

² <https://pachamama.org/social-justice/social-justice-issues>

³ Critical Practices for Anti-Bias Education, A Project of the Southern Poverty Law Center, Teaching tolerance.org. Accessed: https://www.tolerance.org/sites/default/files/2017-06/PDA%20Critical%20Practices_0.pdf

Strengthening a Social Justice Frame

Building Identity, Diversity, Justice, and Action

Providing opportunities for students to ask questions, research, and challenge bias is critical in a classroom in which students develop resiliency and self-efficacy. Teaching Tolerance has created Social Justice Standards based on the four domains of identity, diversity, justice and action. We recommend these activities and experiences focused on social justice. The first of these is also the spotlight lesson.

Meals Across the Ages

In this activity, students will have a constructive conversation about the importance of cross-generational support of the hungry and alone.

Put-Ups

In this activity, students will learn to encourage others. Have kids offer “put ups” about classmates, rather than “put downs.” In this way, students recognize the important of affirming other individuals and their capabilities and identities.

The Assertion Jar¹

Have a jar in which students can anonymously place assertions. (These assertions should be able to be refuted, so not “Grass is green,” but more along the lines of “Cats are the best pets.”) During an oral discussion or in a piece of writing, students can learn how to support or disagree with others while recognizing that all points of view should be heard before decisions are made.

Challenging Injustice²

Ask students to think about an event in the community or in a piece of text that contains an injustice or social problem. Have the students think about how to explain the social problem and how to build reciprocal relationships between community members as part of a solution . Students can describe, analyze, and address inequities through collaborative conversations and/or writing.

Small Moments Add Up³

Learning the power of words—and how hurtful microaggressions are acts of discrimination—is essential for the development of social justice in any classroom. Students can research microaggressions and how they are an accumulation of biases that then become “normalized.” This will give all students the tools to confront microaggressions that reinforce stereotypes and aid students in their efforts to be thoughtful, brave upstanders.

Spotlight Lesson

Meals Across the Ages (25 min.)

("Everyday Hero," pp. 6-9)

Engage Thinking (2 min.)

Heroes are not always highlighted in the news or media. Heroes are those who think of others rather than themselves, who see a need to step in and be of help to others no matter what the circumstances.

Remind students of how Ross Tucker, the frontline worker highlighted in, "Everyday Hero", steps in to do the right thing by caring for others. *It is selfless of Ross Tucker to go beyond his job as a driver and bring food to his elderly patients so that they aren't hungry. He also talks with them so they stay engaged and are not lonely.*

Students who wish to can describe a time when they reached out to help someone elderly or in need of assistance with a food delivery.

Have a Constructive Conversation about Social Justice (20 min.)

Put students into groups of 2-4 and explain that they will have a constructive conversation to discuss this question in relation to the text "Everyday Hero": *Why is Ross Tucker a social justice hero?* Tell students that a constructive conversation involves everyone making contributions and being heard. Remind them of the sentence stems for having a constructive conversation that they learned on the first day of the unit.

Listen in to conversations and gather information that will help you support students. Make sure that all students in all groups are being valued and heard. Step in if you see or hear that certain students are not being valued or heard.

Ask each group to create a skit on how reaching out to help those who are hungry (beyond our own friends and family) supports social justice.

Share and Reflect (3 min.)

Bring students together and ask groups to present their skits. Students may also wish to display illustrations that show ways of helping the hungry.

Building on What Someone Has Said	Shifting the Conversation
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Adding on to what you just said...• What you are making me think of is...• I have a similar idea...• Another thing to add...	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• What's popped into my mind is a little different...• Let's shift to something new...• That brings up a whole new idea...• Another idea we can talk about is...

Sentence Stems for a Constructive Conversation

Modifications and Variations

Students can work with partners or in groups to create word splashes focused on **bravery, speaking up** and **social justice**. Invite interested partners or groups to share their word splashes. You may wish to put the word splashes up in the classroom.

1. adapted from https://www.educationworld.com/a_lesson/social-justice-activities-students.shtml
2. adapted from <https://www.edweek.org/ew/articles/2015/06/16/education-scholars-challenging-racial-injustice-begins-with.html>
3. adapted from <https://www.tolerance.org/magazine/teaching-firstgraders-about-microaggressions-the-small-moments-add-up>