

Examining Issues of Social Justice

MY WORLD, MY CHANGE!

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My World, My Change!

Message to Teachers:

Dear Educators,

Congratulations and buckle up! You are about to embark on a very courageous, and, we hope, life-changing educational journey in your classrooms. Thank you for being brave enough to take on this challenge; we know many of the issues addressed in this resource are difficult to talk about, but as teachers ourselves we know first-hand how immense the benefits can be for students, teachers, families, schools, and communities. We believe that schools are the sites of social change, and that education is the single most powerful tool we have to create more just, equitable, and loving societies. We also know that students are hungry for this work and to be empowered; our experiences have continually shown that students are eager to delve deeply into challenging topics and to imagine better ways of being; think about the classroom as a rehearsal space for change, a place where students have control and ownership of decisions, and where they can practice the kinds of thoughtful citizenry we hope they embody as they grow up.

We wish to be clear: this is not a unit. For some, this will be the beginning of an unending conversation about small ways to tackle big problems. For others, we hope this will be a complement to the continuous work you are already engaged in; social justice is a lens through which we can teach rather than a topic to be covered.

Our advice to you is, above all, to listen: listen equally as attentively to what is being said as to what is not being said; listen to your own voice and trust yourself; listen to your students who will continually be communicating their needs, wants, and dreams in many, many different ways. While we understand that this learning is hard and messy, we know you and your students will accomplish great things together!

Best of luck,

Robyn Ecclestone, MEd, OCT & Sarah Hill, MA, OCT

TORONTO STAR

CLASSROOM CONNECTION

By Robyn Ecclestone and Sarah Hill
For inquiries contact Toronto Star Classroom Connection at
classroomconnection@thestar.ca



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Curriculum Connections

The activities in this resource are strongly connected to Canadian curricula and provide you with possible assessment and evaluation opportunities. While sample checklists, rubrics, and other assessment ideas are included in this resource, be sure to look for connections to expectations at your specific grade level(s) in the following areas: Drama; Visual Art; Media Literacy; Reading; Writing; Oral/Visual Communication; Health.

Special Note

Thank you to all the educators and students that helped design the word cloud used on the front cover of this resource.

Classroom Culture

So...you want to do social justice work! This is a significant undertaking and must start with a classroom culture that is conducive to having thoughtful, respectful, productive conversations on a variety of topics...even those that are sensitive.

Students must be comfortable:

- Not having an answer all of the time - at times we are talking about problems no one has the solution to, and it can be difficult not to know what to do.
- Sharing their ideas openly - we can only make so much progress when some students feel silenced; in any classroom, there will be a mix of students who are eager to engage with ideas out loud and those who prefer to listen more than speak, but everyone must feel safe to share his/her ideas.
- Challenging the ideas of others and having their ideas challenged - this includes a basic knowledge of respectful language, ways to probe others to build understandings, and the ability to separate someone's ideas from who they are as a person.

Teachers must be comfortable:

- Sharing the decision making with students - social justice work is, by nature, participatory, and in order to engage students to participate we must provide as many opportunities as possible for them to own the learning.
- Checking their own bias - to do social justice work in the classroom is to engage with ideas, not indoctrinate. Yes, we must stand up to offensive statements, but also model an openness to ideas we may not agree with ourselves.
- Balance the gravity of topics with community support - teachers are often concerned with backlash from their school community for addressing some of these topics in class. It is important to model courage and not to let the loud voices of a few influence the learning of many. That said, this must be manageable for you and your students and you must balance bold choices with the level of support you have from your school administration, colleagues, and broader school community.

Above all, we must recognize that schools are not neutral spaces; students and staff alike may carry with them identities that carry a stigma and, in turn, mask those parts of who they are. In this way, both our short and long-term goals are the same: to make the world a place where each person can live as him or herself without fear of judgement or negative consequences. We may not see these goals accomplished right away, but keeping them in mind, and working to neutralize the environments we have control over as much as possible, must be the impetus to engage in this work.

Using this Resource

Inclusivity Chart

Language is a powerful tool and can dramatically influence the culture of a classroom, for better, or for worse. Educators must be reflective and challenge themselves to continually refine their practices. The way in which we speak to our students, frame our questions and respond to students' ideas not only sets the tone for our classroom but models the way in which we respectfully speak about sensitive topics/issues. We need to be purposeful and explicit in our use of inclusive language. Take a look at the chart below for some simple changes to language that can make a big difference in your classroom culture. As the teacher, you know your context and community and will likely have other examples which may not be included in this chart.

<i>I used to say....</i>	<i>Now I say...</i>
Parents	Families or Guardians – it is important to respect all family structures
Boys and Girls	People, kids, learners, students, room....., Grade.....s – we must be aware that not all students necessarily identify as fitting into a strict gender dichotomy
Low achiever	Struggles with – we need to separate a student's learning needs from who they are; they pick up on this even if it is not said to them!
Minorities	Racialized Persons – the term minority refers to a number, whereas the term racialized acknowledges the social construction of race and its implications
Straight	Heterosexual – this neutralizes the term and subverts any power dynamic that is set up by terminology
Handicapped	Person with a disability – it is important to humanize those we are speaking about or else we run the risk of defining them by their diagnoses

Helpful Tips for Challenging Classroom Discussions

As previously mentioned, this work is not neutral and can get emotional. It is important for students to be allowed to feel whatever emotions they do but in a safe, supported and structured way. It is never okay for anyone to feel silenced or discriminated against in a classroom. If any classroom discussions get heated, know that it is simply a reflection of how the students are engaged with the topic(s) and is never a bad thing. The way we respond in these situations, however, can be the difference between a life-changing learning experience and causing harm. Here are some tips that we have found helpful in diffusing emotionally charged discussions.

- Remember to separate someone's comments from who they are as a person. "I know that we all are coming at this from a good place."
- "That may be your experience but it's important to recognize that may not be the experience of everyone."
- The use of paraphrasing: "I think I heard you say.....is this what you mean?"
- Use of probes: "Can you help me understand what you mean by ..."
- Know when to call a time out. Use your experience and intuition to know when a conversation is becoming too heated and everyone needs time to cool down/reflect. No conversation is productive when tensions are high!
- Responding to discriminatory remarks. It is important to respond as the remarks may have jeopardized the safety of many others in the room who need to know that their teacher(s) is there to protect them. That said, this is a powerful learning opportunity for many students.
- Model the humility you wish to see. Don't be afraid to admit your mistakes, explain if something has changed your perspectives, and if you say something that makes someone feel unsafe, don't beat yourself up, sincerely apologize and move on.

You are the expert on your own classroom dynamics; you know your students and the approaches that will work best for them. Trust yourself!

Section 1: My World

Learning goal: In this section, your students will become familiar with basic concepts and vocabulary around social justice.

Task: What is Discrimination?

The student workbook contains an image for students to review prior to starting the **What is Discrimination?** activity. Page 9 of this teacher resource includes an additional image that you can utilize with this activity. This image is not in the student workbook.

Whether you ask students to share their reflections out loud or simply read their writing, it is critical that students feel that their thoughts or opinions are valued, but also that any overt use of stereotypes or discriminatory language will be addressed; this is a tricky balance to achieve, but important in continuing to establish the safe environment that is very necessary in this work. Here are some ways to respond to some of the responses you may get.

Anticipated student responses for Question #4 from the What is Discrimination? activity in the student guide:

- **Minimal or no understanding** - students may not demonstrate any understanding of these concepts, and it is important that they do not feel intimidated or less capable because of this. As you move through this resource, success will depend on having full participation and all voices in the conversations. Further, students may pretend not to know anything as some of these issues are very real and painful to them in their lives, and they need to know their teacher is a trustworthy ally.
- **Misconceptions** - students may show that they have misconceptions about these concepts, potentially rooted in stereotypes. As always, students should be given feedback in a constructive way, perhaps highlighting how their comments helped you determine what the next steps are in the learning for the whole class. Students could potentially be testing to see how you will react to controversial statements, so it is important to respond.
- **Deep understanding** - some students may have a high degree of knowledge on some or all of these issues and be very active in addressing them. These students are a huge resource to you and the other learners, and have a real opportunity here to feel empowered and important. That said, it may be worth having a conversation with these students about letting other people have space to work through their own learning and to share their opinions without being interrupted.
- **Disclosures** - as always with these kinds of sensitive issues, students may make disclosures about things that are happening to them. Your school or board will have a policy to follow if this is the case.

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Students will likely need help in understanding how recent and significant the **1985 Human Rights Act** really is and will need examples to help them understand what was legal before it was created:

- It was legal to not hire someone based on their gender
- It was legal to refuse service to someone based on their race
- It was legal to deny housing to someone because of their sexuality

It may be fun to research which celebrities were born in 1985 to give the students a sense of how recent this was!

Example: Bruno Mars and Carly Rae Jepsen were born in 1985.

If you choose to share the **What is Discrimination?** image on page 9 with your classroom, please note that this poster intentionally makes visible common forms of discrimination.

After sharing this poster with your students, it is essential that you facilitate a discussion.

Here are some questions you might ask your students to help them respond to the image:

- How is this poster similar to experiences some people have in our world?
- What is different? The messages here are very explicit, but what might some implicit examples of the same messages be?

Example: The lack of women leaders in politics could send a message that women are not suited for these positions.

- How would you feel if you met some criteria? All but one? None?

You are doing a great amount of work unpacking what is and is not being said with this image, so please be aware of how it may look to those who haven't been engaged in those discussions. Your principal, families of your students and even other educators may view this image the wrong way when it is seen out of context.

What is Discrimination?



TO ENTER YOU MUST BE:

6ft tall

Male

White

Christian

Heterosexual

Between the ages of 30-50

Able to pay \$1,000

Able to walk up several stairs

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Task: Terms You Should Know — Answer Key

Privilege - when one's experiences, world views, values or cultures are recognized as the norm or the standard. This results in certain people being able to move through the world with fewer barriers.

Marginalization - when the dominant culture doesn't reflect the experiences or values of certain groups which places value to one group over another.

Oppression - the intentional or unintentional silencing of people/groups/ideas/values.

Ageism - discrimination against a person or group based on age

Ableism - discrimination against a person with a disability

Racism - discrimination against a person or group based on race

Sexism - discrimination against a person or group based on sex

Classism - discrimination against a person based on their socioeconomic status

Possible Discussion Questions:

- Do you see examples of any of these concepts in your life? If yes, where? If no, why do you think that is?
- Do you see examples of any of these concepts here at school? Where? How do you see them impacting students and/or staff?

Task: Equity vs. Equality - Answer Key

1. Equality (equity would take into account their years of experience and pay them accordingly)
2. Equity (only the student who needs the accommodation is provided it, equality would be everyone receiving the large-print version)
3. Equality (equity would be a quiet space being provided for those who need one)
4. Equality (equity would be having a section reserved for people with mobility challenges to be able to see the stage)
5. Equity (equality would be only offering extra help after school where students with jobs or extracurricular, or family commitments could not attend)

Task: 3... 2... 1...

Link to video - **Equity and Equality: What's the Difference?**

<http://tinyurl.com/sjr012>

It may be worthwhile to use the previous activity, **Equity vs Equality**, on the same day as "3,2,1" so that the previous quiz acts as a viewing anticipation guide.

Discussion questions: How would you define the terms equity and equality? In small groups come up with a new example for each; examples should show that equality does not take into account what an individual needs, and sometimes this is appropriate (e.g., everyone has equal access to computers at our school but not everyone needs to access them).

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Task: Spread the Word

In this task, your students will work towards creating a poster to depict equity vs. equality. You may remind students to think back to their own definitions of equity and equality from the previous lesson when creating their poster. The poster will be a key assessment piece, and can be aligned with expectations from your province's writing, media, and visual arts curricula. Here is a sample checklist to potentially guide your thinking:

- Awareness of audience: is the poster clearly targeted to a specific demographic? Are the language and visuals used tailored to that group?
- Clarity: is your message clearly understood? Have you demonstrated an understanding of these concepts?
- Visual appeal: is your poster easily read and eye-catching?

Task: The Danger of Silence – Listen, Reflect, Respond

Video Link: <http://tinyurl.com/sjr001>

Transcript: <http://tinyurl.com/sjr002>

After the students view the video and/or read the transcript, it may be fruitful to have a general discussion about the content. You may wish to use the prompts from the graphic organizer on page 7 of the student guide to guide the discussion:

- What surprised the students?
- What challenged them?
- What confirmed or reflected what they already know or experience?

You may choose to challenge students to notice who does not speak and what is not spoken of as they move through their daily lives.

Task: The Power to Silence – The Lorax

Read aloud *The Lorax* by Dr. Seuss to the students. Before reading, you may wish to review the discussion questions in the student guide and the follow-up learning so that students are attentive to the power dynamics in the text.

eBook, with words: <http://tinyurl.com/sjr003>

First, use the question prompts students responded to in the student guide to have a discussion about power dynamics; how does power relate to silence? Next, ask students how power might be more equitably distributed. Put students into groups and ask each group to create a tableau reimagining the power dynamics of the story in a more equitable way. This assignment uses a "Tap and Talk" strategy: when students are in their tableaux, you may identify or tap on the shoulder one member of the group at a time who explains his/her characters' point of view by verbalizing what that character is thinking. Some pre-teaching of the "Tap and Talk" strategy might be necessary. Remind students of the importance of having a clear character in mind before creating their tableau.

Section 2: My Life

Learning goal: In this section, your students will engage in various learning and reflective tasks which will continue to build their understandings of the perspectives and experiences they have which shape the way they interact with the world.

Task: Which Course Would You Choose?

Have students review the **Which Course Would You Choose?** poster on page 10 in the student guide and respond to the questions on page 9.

Next, show the **Got Privilege** video, and ask how students see it connecting to their previous learning about privilege and equity.

Video Link: <http://tinyurl.com/sjr013>

Opportunities for differentiation in the writing task: assign students a track to write about how they would feel if it was assigned to them, have students share responses to show different points of view; have students pick which track they would choose and why; have students identify which track best represents their school career and why.

The **Food for Thought** questions in the student guide might be helpful to facilitate further discussion if needed.

Assessment of the writing task: You will need to make connections to your province's curriculum expectations, but here are some generic look-fors/success criteria:

- Response is supported - you have explained your thinking clearly
- Evidence of learning - your response shows an understanding of concepts we have learned about so far such as power and privilege
- Clarity and flow - your writing is easily understood by the reader

Task: Put Yourself in Someone Else's Shoes

In this activity, students are asked to imagine the perspective of another and identify potential barriers, stereotypes, and biases. It will be important to closely monitor discussions to ensure stereotypes or negative thoughts about marginalized groups are not reinforced. If necessary, here are some prompts to redirect negative comments:

- Remember, we are here to challenge our beliefs.
- What evidence do you have of that viewpoint? What evidence do you have that does not support it?
- That may be your experience, but...

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Task: A Thousand Words

Ask students to review the photographs on page 12 of the student guide and have them respond to the following questions:

- What do you see in the photograph? Describe the image.
- What information do you have about this individual?
- What inferences can you make about this individual?
- What can't we know by examining the photograph?

Invite students to share their thinking with a partner, their table group or the entire class.

Next, read the following biographies to the students.



Rick Mercer – He was born in October 1969 in Saint John's, Newfoundland. He has been on national television since 1990. He has co-created two different television series including "The Rick Mercer Report", and has published two books. Although a very private person, he is openly gay.



Shadrach Kabango, known as Shad - Born in Kenya, of Rwandan parents, he was raised in London, Ontario. He is an accomplished hip hop artist who holds a business degree from Wilfred Laurier University and a Master's Degree in Liberal Studies from Simon Fraser University. In March 2015, he was announced as the new host of the internationally syndicated radio program 'Q'.



Tanya Tagaq- She was born in Cambridge Bay, Nunavut. As a teenager she began to practise traditional Inuit throat singing. Her post-secondary education was at the Nova Scotia College of Art and Design where she developed her own solo form of throat singing as it is normally done by two women. In 2014, she won the Polaris Music Prize, annually given to the best full length Canadian album based on artistic merit.

After you read each one, invite students to compare the biographies with their initial ideas. You may wish to use the prompts below to help guide the discussion:

- After hearing the biography of the person, what are you thinking?
- Were your ideas challenged? If so, how?
- What may have contributed to those initial thoughts?

It is important to help your students realize that their initial thoughts may have been based on their own biases and stereotypes. We must help our students become aware of how their own biases and stereotypes affect the ways in which they interact with information and the world. Modelling this thinking for your students might be helpful:

Example: "When I looked at the photograph of Rick Mercer, I recognized him but it never occurred to me that he might be gay. It makes me wonder how many people I know don't feel I see who they really are."

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Task: Oh, Canada

When we think about issues of social justice, we often think on a global scale, for example, "I'm so glad that's not an issue in Canada", "It's amazing that some people have to deal with that". These articles will highlight the social injustices right here at home. As consumers of information, your students will be given the opportunity to think critically about the actions and inactions, words and silences that create the rules; written and unwritten that govern our society. What do our responses to these issues say about who we are as a nation and what we value?

In partners, have your students choose two articles from the list below to read and consider. For each article, they will write a brief summary (who, what, where, when, why, how) about the article and respond to one or more of the following prompts:

- Identify the social justice issue(s).
- What might have contributed to this issue/these issues?
- What resonates with you? What are you wondering about?
- Think about ideas, concepts and phrases that made you stop in your tracks, and those which made you slow down and pause.

This task requires both reading and writing skills, and will be a great assessment piece for expectations from both of those curricula. If students are struggling to determine key points from the articles, consider using the Red Light/Yellow Light strategy to frame their reading and thinking:

Red Light - something that makes you stop in your tracks and think deeply

Yellow Light - something that makes you slow down, pause, and consider. Students could code the article (if printed out for them) using different colour highlighters to match the Red Light and Yellow Light

New program Women Speak Out gives the marginalized a voice -
<http://tinyurl.com/sjr004>

Women Speak Out gets Status of Women funding to help marginalized women -
<http://tinyurl.com/sjr005>

Almost a million Canadian kids in poverty is an acute emergency -
<http://tinyurl.com/sjr006>

Food banks are not enough -
<http://tinyurl.com/sjr007>

Charity is not social justice -
<http://tinyurl.com/sjr008>

Task: Image Inventory

In this learning experience, it will be important to support students in remaining as objective as possible and frame the conversations around identifying gaps in representation as a way to improve the inclusivity of the school building. When students are working in partners, some may need assistance determining which ideas are the most important to share; this would be a great informal assessment opportunity to determine their understanding of audience, consider having a space to record some anecdotal notes handy. If your audience is your classmates, what might be important to them?

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Section 3: My Inspiration

Learning goal: In this section, your students will investigate the stories of people who have made a positive impact in their communities/the world and describe how they've made a difference. They will be inspired and begin to understand/identify what it takes to be a change maker in their community.

Task: Caption It!

Ask students if they could caption this image with a social justice lens, what would the caption say? Allow students think time, and then ask anyone who is willing to share his/her caption to do so. There are plenty of ways students could interpret this poster, and having that multitude of perspectives in the room will only enhance how students view the image. Once everyone has shared, frame the poster as one that is trying to inspire, as that is the purpose behind this section.



Would students re-caption the poster knowing that information? What would it say if they did?

Task: The Danger of a Single Story

Watch this video with your students: *The Danger of a Single Story* TED Talk by Chimamanda Adichie - <http://tinyurl.com/sjr014>

Although the entire video is appropriate for students, only the first 10 minutes and 50 seconds are necessary to watch to move forward with this learning task.

The students will use the organizer in the student guide to monitor their thinking, but also to emphasize the importance of speaking for oneself from one's perspective. It will be important to reiterate this with the students. In small groups, students will share their thoughts and summaries; you may wish to create a checklist based on your province's oral language curriculum if this is an area you are assessing. After this, bring the whole group together and pose the following questions:

1. What ideas shared challenged you? (As a teacher, you will need to assess if your classroom environment is conducive to allowing students to name each other in this discussion or not, e.g., "Sarah's ideas really challenged me by....")
2. What perspectives were shared that you hadn't considered before? How did they change your understandings?

Task: Who Is, Who Else?

If there are some local figures that you or your students feel should or could be included in this list, please feel free to add him/her:

- | | | | |
|----------------------------|-------------------------|---------------------------|-------------------------|
| • Rick Hansen | • Leanne Prendergast | (It's Cool to be Healthy/ | • Craig Kielburger |
| • Sheila Watt-Cloutier | (Love Our Lives, ON) | C'est cool d'être en | • Malala Yousafzai |
| • Louise Arbour | • Sabrina Hundal (Girls | santé, ON) | • Nelson Mandela |
| • Sharon McIvor | and Engineering: It's a | • Nellie McClung | • Elie Wiesel |
| • Raymond Wang | Perfect Fit) | • Buffy Sainte-Marie | • Phumzile Mlambo-Ngcuk |
| (Sustainable Engineer, BC) | • Mélanie-Rose Frappier | • Roberta Bondar | |

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In this task, your students will choose a figure to research and create a short summary of his/her accomplishments. Students are encouraged to consider how that person's context might have influenced his/her chosen course of action.

As this is a relatively major assignment, there is a significant opportunity for assessment. It is important to co-create success criteria with your students and ensure it is aligned with your province and grade level's curriculum standards. This is also a great opportunity to "walk the talk"; this section is focused on student empowerment, so we encourage you to give students choice in how to structure the assignment. You may choose to have students propose how they would like to share their learning and provide you with a written rationale, or give them a list to choose from and ask if there are any additions they would like to make. This is also an opportunity for you to be explicit in how you are trying to model equity in the classroom, by allowing students to capitalize on their strengths and interests to demonstrate their learning.

A sample list of projects could include:

- an oral presentation
- a media presentation (e.g. Bitstrips comic, Prezi, movie)
- a social media account (e.g. Instagram; what would 6 of this person's photos, captions, and hashtags be?)
- an essay

Task: Dear...

In this task, your students will write an e-mail or letter to the individual they have chosen to research. Depending on who your students chose, you may consider actually sending/e-mailing the letters to the individuals as an opportunity for real world writing. Here are some sample success criteria; you will likely want to co-create this with your students and ensure they are aligned with the requisite curriculum expectations.

- Proper format: all components of a letter are included, more formal language is used (no short forms)
- Clarity: your ideas are clearly presented and the letter is easy to follow
- Use of examples: you have provided clear, relevant examples to support your points
- Word choice: you have a variety of words and sentence types included in your letter

Task: More than Just a Cup of Coffee

As class, in partners, or in small groups have students read the article "**Starbucks' Push into Race Relations Draws Fire on Social Media**"

More than Just a Cup of Coffee video link: <http://tinyurl.com/sjr011>

This is an opportunity for students to use the inspiration they have gained in this section. They may need some help determining what steps might be appropriate to suggest as this campaign moves forward; you may suggest "Using Starbucks locations to hold community-level forums on this topic" as an example.

Opportunity for differentiation: not requiring all students to give three suggestions.

Task: My Personal Anthem

This is an opportunity to celebrate and enjoy the learning that has occurred so far in a focused and productive way. Many students will likely be able to bring in the song on their own device, but many may need your support. This could mean having something available (such as an MP3 docking station) to play the songs, to a few computers or tablets to play the songs from free websites such as YouTube.

Section 4: My Voice, My Impact

Learning goal: In this final section, your students will be empowered to impact change in their own lives and local communities, identifying where and how they can have the greatest impact. Together, you will help your students to continue to understand the complexity of social justice issues and become better able to identify inequity, to effect change, develop self-efficacy and agency, and situate themselves within solutions.

Task: Mirror, Mirror

The intended message of this image is that students are the ones who get to decide what their identity is, what their place in the world is, and what their contributions will be. First, give students time to reflect on the image and share ideas about what it might mean; they may pick up on the fact that certain identities are less visible in society than others, for example, but, as previously stated, the multiplicity of ideas shared will only enhance the viewing experience. Once you share with them the intention behind the graphic, brainstorm as a class what they might need to have in place to begin making that impact.



Task: Barrier Buster

This task could create tension in the classroom, and the role of the teacher is to support students in negotiating those tensions. For example, if a student identifies race as a barrier, but a racialized student does not see his/her race as a barrier, this could be a very challenging situation. This is why it is important to, first and foremost, be extremely present in the room, monitoring the tone of the classroom. Secondly, it will be important to continuously message to students that their concerns must be grounded in fact; although the racialized student may not feel he/she has encountered any barriers, the other student might cite a lack of visible minorities in government, on boards, or as heads of publicly traded companies as evidence that a barrier exists for many. Depending on the age of your students, you may wish to provide them with a list of barriers to choose from, potentially based on some of the rights identified in the **Human Rights Act of 1985**: race; national or ethnic origin; religion; age; gender; sexual orientation; disability.

You and/or your students may wish to share their learning with the school community, perhaps by creating a bulletin board or display; this is an optional extension for those who see the value in this sort of curatorial endeavour.

Task: My Sphere of Influence

In this learning task, your students will map out who they could potentially influence. Differentiation opportunity: some students will identify individuals, while others will elaborate and identify how those people might be useful in addressing the barrier they chose.

Examples:

"My uncle sits on a board and might be interested in hearing about the advantages of including women."

"My neighbour always tells my mom racist jokes! This person might benefit from hearing why those jokes are not harmless."

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Task: If I Were the Boss of the World...

In this task, your students will be invited to imagine a world where barriers have never existed, and they get to make the rules from the ground up. This task will give them an opportunity to think about their ideas for large scale change on a societal level. Students will complete the sentence starter "If I were the boss of the world....because..." The purpose of this activity is to mitigate students' feelings of helplessness or being overwhelmed; they could have a very positive momentum built up and we do not want them to lose that!

Task: Speak Up!

Instructions for a Bad Day video link: <http://tinyurl.com/sjr015>

As a class, decide on a way to share positive messages; this might mean tweeting them, adding them to an existing display or bulletin board, creating a new display or bulletin board, having them read on your school's announcements, or placing written messages around the school.

You are welcome to share these messages with us on Twitter @starclassroom. We will retweet your submissions.

Task: My Contribution & So What, Now What?

This is the culminating task of this resource, and as such we have provided a sample rubric and exemplar to show your students. They may be feeling highly empowered, and have specific ideas about how they want to move forward as change agents; we encourage you to engage in these dialogues and to honour their goals by allowing students to tailor this task to their specific ideas. Are they already involved in an awareness campaign in your community? Are they organizing a fundraising event for a charity? How can you use what they are already doing towards this project? It is perfectly acceptable to work with the students to come up with a mutually agreeable solution that allows them to incorporate their passions and the work they are already doing into the meeting of your expectations for this assignment. In order to support you in constructing what a Level 4/A looks like for the examples provided, here are some ideas:

- School announcements: student-friendly language; comprehensive communication about the issue; engaging delivery; an invitation to participate in the dialogue (e.g., the creation of a space for students to give opinions such as a feedback box, open-ended questions for students to consider).
- Social media campaign: clear communication regarding why this issue is important; effective use of hashtags; invitations to participate in dialogue (e.g., "What do you think?").
- Editorial: spoken from the student's experiences/perspective; effective connection between his/her experiences and the broader issue; offers suggestions of steps needed to achieve solutions.
- Spoken word piece: engaging performance; powerful word choice; communication of the essential points of the issue at hand; communication of what might audiences think about or do to find solutions.
- Club: clear mission statement; communication plan regarding how to engage people to participate; sample actions the group might take; a rationale regarding why this new club should be formed rather than joining an existing organization.

Examining Issues of Social Justice

MY WORLD, MY CHANGE!

Exemplar of Student Template for “My Contribution” Task:

<p>What is the barrier/issue I want to explore:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Physical disability 	
<p>Provide a summary of the barrier:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> People are thought of as less capable due to their physical disabilities People do not have access to certain buildings/spaces 	<p>How do I know that this is a barrier?</p> <p>Provide specific examples of the results of this barrier. Think about who is affected, what might they not have access to and why is this a problem?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Low levels of employment amongst people with disabilities Less visibility in society (positions of power, advertising, media, etc.) Reports from communities
<p>Who can I reach out to within my community? (Use your Sphere of Influence map)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Community organizations such as Community Living My neighbour whose wife uses a cane A teacher in my school who has a son who uses a wheelchair My aunt who is a city planner 	<p>What are the strengths that I have that I could use to address this barrier?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> I’m a great painter and visual artist I’m very active on social media I have strong presentation skills
<p>MY MISSION STATEMENT:</p> <p>This should be a statement which clearly expresses what you hope to accomplish, why it is important, and the impact it might have on the broader community. It is important to consider your strengths when planning.</p> <p>I will create a multi-media advertising campaign that increases the visibility of people with a physical disability while also raising money for our student council.</p>	

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Sample Rubric for So What, Now What? Task:

Criteria	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4
Messaging/Mission Statement	It is unclear what my message/mission is.	My message/mission is somewhat clear.	My message/mission is clear and understandable.	My message/mission is clear and thoughtful.
Understanding of the issue/barrier	My action demonstrates little to no understanding of the chosen issue/barrier.	My action demonstrates a basic level of understanding of the chosen issue/barrier.	My action demonstrates an understanding of the chosen issue/barrier.	My action demonstrates an in depth understanding of the chosen issue/barrier.
Awareness of the medium	My action demonstrates little to no understanding of the medium I have selected.	My action demonstrates a basic understanding of the medium I have selected.	My action demonstrates an understanding of the medium I have selected.	My action demonstrates a thorough and detailed understanding of the medium I have selected.
Creativity/Target Audience Engagement	I have demonstrated limited creativity and made minimal efforts to engage my target audience.	I have demonstrated some creativity and made some efforts to engage my target audience.	I have demonstrated creativity and made efforts to engage my target audience through purposeful word choice and strategic visuals.	I have demonstrated a high level of creativity and made strong efforts to engage my target audience through meaningful word choice, strategic visuals and creating opportunities for others to join the conversation.

Examining Issues of Social Justice

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My Reflections

Repeat, Rethink, Remove:

If I was to revisit this work next year, what might I change?

What might I do over again?

What wouldn't I do next time?

Examining Issues of Social Justice

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Notes:

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TEACHER RESOURCE

