

**THE LEGACY CIRCLE**



**“Maroon Wake up. Culture Rise Up. Community Lift Up!”**



**New York Collective of Radical Educators**

# Through Culture We Resist!

African Diaspora Cultural Arts & Social Justice



*Lesson Plans, Narratives, and Curriculum Ideas*

*by New York City Public School Teachers, Teaching Artists, and Educators committed to teaching social justice values & action and sharing African Diaspora Cultural Arts in NYC's classrooms, corners, and community spaces.*

*Edited by Manuela Arciniegas*

*Authored by Manuela Arciniegas, Rachel Ibrahim, Ama Codjoe, Angela Dixon, Tene Adero Howard, Natalia Ortiz, Bassirat Ottun, Diana Quinones, Ayanna Maia Saulsberry, Veena Srinisvana, Cara Tait, Jessica Valoris*

***Maroon Wake up! Culture Rise Up! Community Lift Up!***

### What is The Legacy Circle?

The Legacy Circle is dedicated to empowering African Diaspora youth and adults in New York City through cultural arts education. Our goal is to awaken young people to their identity as African descendants and their legacy as leaders and Maroon Warriors. Our Training Institute will prepare African Diaspora teaching artists to initiate young people into grassroots action. It will impart tools for cultural arts educators such as leadership development and youth community organizing using arts and culture as the vehicle. Teaching artists will engage in residencies where youth will create cultural art pieces that affirm who they are and what they envision for their education and their communities. Youth will then use their art to organize for power in their villages. Our Youth and Teacher Circles will work together to spread social justice, community empowerment, and our legacies of maroon resistance. To Contact The Legacy Circle:

Manuela Arciniegas,  
Director & Founder,  
c/o CCCADI

408 West 58 Street,  
New York, NY 10019,

[Manuela@thelegacycircle.org](mailto:Manuela@thelegacycircle.org),  
[www.thelegacycircle.org](http://www.thelegacycircle.org),

212-307-7420 ext. 3012 or 646-924-7187.

### What is NYCoRE?

New York Collective of Radical Educators (NYCoRE) is a group of public school educators committed to fighting for social justice in our school system and society at large, by organizing and mobilizing teachers, developing curriculum, and working with community, parent, and student organizations. We are educators who believe that education is an integral part of social change and that we must work both inside and outside the classroom because the struggle for justice does not end when the school bell rings

To contact NYCORE, email: [info@nycore.org](mailto:info@nycore.org)

### How this Resource Was Created.

This book was created from the gatherings, conversations, and workshops of teachers, teaching artists, elders, social workers, organizers, and artists. The group was our Teacher's Circle and was called: "African Diaspora Cultural Arts Education and Social Justice in the Classroom Inquiry to Action Group". In this group, teachers and teaching artists worked together to learn about various cultural arts of the African Diaspora (Latin American, North American, Caribbean, and African) including music, dance, visual arts, theater, literacy and storytelling. Each week we introduced a new cultural art/artist, and teacher designed lesson plans tailored to their student's needs that address a social justice issue while teaching about the cultural art. The learning process was rooted in popular education, dialogue, peer exchanges, group coaching of individual teachers, artist and teacher partnerships, and personal exploration of the social justice issue as a point of departure to teaching youth. This group was facilitated by Manuela Arciniegas, Director of *The Legacy Circle*, cultural Diana Quinones, public school teacher of sixth graders at New Day Academy in the South Bronx, and 8 visiting teaching artists: Atiba Wilson, Julia Gutierrez-Rivera accompanied by Juan Gutierrez and Alexander LaSalle, Jose Figueroa, Luis Da Silva AKA Eli Efi, and Ayanna Saulsberry. We met weekly at the beautiful Baobab Tree, a community and African art gallery space founded by Philogene Vilmar and located in Harlem. We enjoyed our time together and believe so much in developing this work that we will continue to meet to see how we can keep moving our work forward.

### **SPECIAL THANKS TO:**

Our teaching artists who volunteered their time: ATIBA WILSON, JULIA GUTIERREZ, JUAN GUTIERREZ, ALEXANDER LASALLE, JOSE FIGUEROA, AYANNA MAIA SAULSBERRY, LUIS DA SILVA/ELI EFI, the New York City Social Justice Fellowship/NYU Wagner School of Public Leadership, The Baobab Tree a&nd PHILOGENE VILMAR, NYCORE Bree Picower, and Rocio Silverio.

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*compiled by Tene Howard.*

## Introduction

African Diaspora Cultural Arts Education and Social Justice in the Classroom

January 2007 – March 2007

*By Rachel Ibrahim*

15-20 women, mostly of African descent, gathered weekly to work towards a vision of social change. In unity, as a community of creative educators, we created a platform for self exploration through collaboration. Our ancestors responded to the thirst for solidarity and greater understanding about our cultural heritage of resistance by providing an opportunity for artistic celebration and sharing. Our minds and bodies were used to reunite souls of a common home.

We shared our stories and danced to music that links our pasts. We explored how lyrics created a movement, embraced our similarities, and learned how to wear what we think and feel with pride. Through this group we found ways in which to channel our expanded knowledge into the minds, hearts, and spirits of the future.

We will raise awareness in ourselves, our youth and our communities. We will create opportunities for our young people to tell their stories and fight the oppression brought upon us from centuries ago. We will help them view themselves as beautiful and powerful. We will teach them to demand that society view them this way as well.

*Alone we are made to believe we are weak. As a collective we are unstoppable.*

This resource book of ideas, people, literature, sources, and lesson plans will remind us that community and help is one call, email, conversation, gathering or text message away.

**Our young people deserve to know-**

**may we give them the opportunity.**

**Our young people have the ability to make change-**

**may we model it and provide them with the tools to do so.**

--by Rachel Ibrahim on behalf of our group of teachers, educators and teaching artists. NOTE: There are members of our group who could not join us for this picture!



## Our Approach

*By Manuela Arciniegas & Diana Quinones*

One of the primary obstacles we have found facing our youth is a lack of knowledge of themselves, their power, and the rich legacy they possess as leaders and fighters for social justice. As educators, we have a unique platform and opportunity to launch a process of self-discovery and growth that will help youth step into their legacy as maroon warriors and creators of their own destinies.

Our group brought together teachers, teaching artists, and educators who wanted to learn and directly experience the cultural arts of the African Diaspora. We organized a series of workshops that would provide group members with firsthand contact with the teaching artists and practitioners of diverse cultural arts of African diaspora. New York City's public school curriculum does not require that it's close to 75% Black and Latino students learn about the cultural arts of their respective backgrounds. A Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation Study found that almost 1 out of 2 Black and Latino youth drop out or are pushed out of public schools, and the primary reason these youth cite for leaving is BOREDOM—the irrelevant content, teaching styles, testing, and purpose behind what teachers are mandated to teach youth. We felt that if we could make the curriculums and learning experiences relevant and respectful of the lives and cultural backgrounds of youth, and connect it to their daily realities or obstacles youth face, we could provide the youth with meaningful educational opportunities that would actually help them love learning, love themselves, and use their knowledge to help their communities.

Our journey was one of creating connections and promoting the unity of people of African descent. Once we saw that African ancestry can be found all over the world, we focused on the countries of origin of the many Latino, African, African American, and Caribbean youth in our classrooms. We selected 5 places and 5 diverse art forms:

- |                            |   |
|----------------------------|---|
| ▪ Africa                   | <u>Oral Arts</u> : Storytelling                   |
| ▪ Dominican Republic/Haiti | <u>Performing Arts</u> : Gaga/Rara Music          |
| ▪ Puerto Rico              | Bomba Dance                                       |
| ▪ Brazil                   | Hop Music & Culture                               |
| ▪ United States            | <u>Visual Arts</u> : T-Shirt Design & Printmaking |

Prior to arriving to each class we read articles, visited websites, and viewed materials on-line introducing us to the teaching artist who was coming and giving us background about their particular cultural art that week. Each teaching artist partnered with a schoolteacher and held a conference call where they learned about each other—one learned about the cultural art and the other learned about the academic and development content youth needed. We used as our foundation the 5 points of Social Justice Education shared with us by Bree Picower. These points served as themes to guide our learning and sharing about the cultural art and the creation of our lesson plans. The teaching artist then prepared an introductory lesson on the cultural art and the classroom teacher/teaching artist prepared lesson plans, activities, or curriculum ideas that brought the art and the social justice themes together.

The 5 points of Social Justice Education were:

- Self-Love & Acceptance
- Respect for Others
- Exploring Issues of Social Justice
- Social Movements and Social Change
- Taking Social Action

At the beginning of each workshop, we checked in over snacks about the needs of our students and our experiences that week in our classrooms. Then we engaged in activities that addressed the Social Justice Education points for that week, from reflecting to how moments of reducing or building self-hatred, to sharing our most empowering educational experiences. We sought to engage ourselves in the journey of empowerment we wanted to create for our youth.

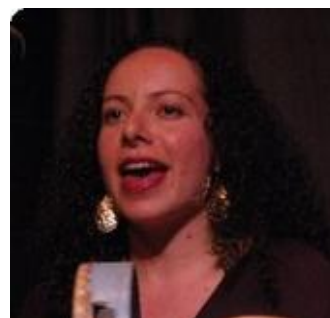
During the first half of the workshop, the teaching artist provided us with the historical, cultural, artistic, and political background behind the art or behind their personal journey in learning and teaching the art form. Then we directly experienced the art form by participating in telling the stories, in dancing to the *barriles* of *Bomba*, in clapping and playing the bell to the *rara/gaga*, or by designing our own t-shirt idea. At the end of each workshop we brainstormed ways together about how we could teach that week's social justice theme, cultural art, and connect it to our student's academic and personal needs. At the end we shared points of affirmation and encouragement for the week to follow.

Throughout our preparation time before engaging in our cultural arts workshop, we shared various skills and ideas such as learning about power and deconstructing the pyramid of power in capitalist societies and helping our youth learn about and analyze various types of power. We also talked about the strategies for affecting social change and learned about the difference between providing a social service, advocating on behalf of someone else, or empowering those directly affected to lead and organize for long-term institutional change that will permanently erase the problem a community faces. We also tried to include resources for teaching artists and new teachers who have never designed lesson plans or curriculums before, providing them with templates from Curriculum by Design and Gardner's Multiple Intelligences.

We selected our final project to be this book of resources, lesson plans, and curriculum ideas as a way to encourage other teachers and educators to create learning experiences that help youth become leaders, grow their personal and community power, and create long-term institutional change. These ideas and lessons are the beginning of what we hope will be youth-led community organizing campaigns to permanently address the problems youth face. By providing information and support to teaching artists, we hope to make a difference in the lives of your youth!

We welcome your thoughts, contributions, and your participation in this movement.

Sincerely,  
Manuela Arciniegas, Diana Quinones & Our Teacher's Circle  
THE LEGACY CIRCLE, [Manuela@thelegacycircle.org](mailto:Manuela@thelegacycircle.org)



*This group was facilitated by **Manuela Arciniegas**, Director of The Legacy Circle, arts organizer, Afro-Caribbean traditional musician, and mother, and **Diana Quinones**, cultural worker, public school teacher at New Day Academy in the South Bronx, and mother.*

## Music & Dance, Circle & Ritual

Theme #1: Self-Love & Theme #2: Respect for Others

By Ama Codjoe



*Ama Codjoe is originally from Youngstown, Ohio with roots in Memphis and Accra. She received her BA in English from Brown University, and was a Presidential Fellow at Ohio State University where she received her M.F.A. in Dance Performance. She has performed works by contemporary choreographers such as Rennie Harris and classic modern dance pioneers such as Pearl E. Primus. Her performance and research center around the question: "What is the role of dance in black liberation movements?"*

During the course of our itags, I have thought a lot about ritual in the classroom inspired primarily by the Haitian/Dominican Gaga traditions we learned about or experienced. Ritual as a theme was integrated into all of our circles. We began our first storytelling experience together by pouring libations and with an attention to our ancestors. But what I began to think about differently after hearing about Gaga (specifically it was hearing about how folks would call each other out, put their neighbor's business into the street through song), was the question: "How can rituals sustain a classroom community?" I began to envision spaces where young people could come into a circle of music and dance and dance out frustration, anger, joy, or resolve some issue/beef that they may have with their brother or sister classmate. I also have the image of a young boy angry, fists gnarled, who instead of leaving the classroom or picking a fight, goes to the corner of the classroom and starts drumming. I don't have my own classroom now, but I imagine how cool it would be to have known systems and rituals put in place in order to keep balance in the community.

I have been able to implement these reflections into the routines of one of my dance classes that I teach once a week to ninth graders. The big idea for the class is Sankofa. Students are learning dancing from West Africa and the Caribbean. The dance curriculum focuses on roots, African culture, and self-love. We have circles at the end of each class where students are able to dance by themselves or with others using movements that they have learned in class. At the beginning of class, in a circle we say the following passage using call and response. Each week the caller or leading voice changes.

*In this circle of dance we will learn together  
We will treat each other as brother and sister  
We will look to our past for lessons  
We will give our best in the present  
We will envision our future  
We offer our intentions now  
Let this circle be unbroken.*

# The Power of Telling Stories: Tupac's Voice

Theme #1: Self-Love & Acceptance

Subject: English (Poetry/Arts)

By Bassirat Ottun



*Bassirat Ottun is originally from Rhode Island and is of Nigerian heritage. She is proud of her Yoruba roots. She is currently in her second year teaching special education at MS 352 Ebbets Field Middle School. Prior to teaching, she was an enrolled at Brown University majoring in Sociology and Ethnic Studies. Her interests include theater, poetry, and spoken expression. She believes in the power of stories and is passionate about making sure her students know their histories and know the power of their collective voice.*

*Bassirat's students are a dynamic bunch residing in Crown Heights, Brooklyn. A majority of her students have Caribbean roots and identify as Black, Latino, or Asian. Her students range in age from 13 to 15 and are the mist of beginning to figure out who they are as they prepare to enter high school. Generally, they are*

*an outspoken, energetic, passionate, and loving group. They have a lot to say and are waiting to be heard by those that will be listen.*

**Connection Question:** What are the various ways people tell stories?

**Pre-Activity:** Who are you? Students will make a list of the various roles that make up who they are. Teacher can model. (i.e. Female, Daughter, Black, African)  
Then students will create a list of the characteristics of those w/ power as they imagine.  
Students will be asked to compare the lists and make correlations if applicable

Then we shall proceed with...

Looking at lyrics/poetry as one form of story telling

**Motivation:** Tupac Song Changes (We will look at how Tupac tells a story through this song. Students will elaborate on what story Tupac is telling and who his audience is.)

**Mini Lesson:** *The Power of Telling Stories* (Brainstorm on chart paper)

*Questions to discuss:* What is the significance of telling stories? Who actually creates stories? Do stories have to be real in order to relate to them? Do stories reflect themes in real life? What do we gain from hearing and telling stories?

After analyzing Tupac's song, we will begin to talk about how we can tell our own stories through written, oral, and visual methods.

Students will then begin their mission: Students will depict the message of power and how it affects one individually and collectively. (Students may choose to focus on different groups they belong to: student, ethnicity, gender, etc.)

**Project:** Students are going to create their own stories (Can be done individually or in groups of no more than three individuals. Students can choose to make their stories either fiction or non-fiction. If they choose to make it fiction then they should incorporate significant real life themes that are important to them)



# Afro-Puerto Rican Bomba & Plena: Telling & Writing Our Stories in Community

## Theme #1: Self Love & Acceptance

### Writing & History by Diana Quinones



*Diana Quinones* is a Humanities teacher at New Day Academy in the South Bronx. She is also a musician of Afro-Puerto Rican and Dominican traditional music and the proud mother of a powerful 2.5 year old little girl. Hailing from California, she is dedicated to social justice, cultural arts, and education. Diana is of Puerto Rican and Jewish background.

The following is an excerpt from a grant I recently applied for and am hoping to get! I thought it would be helpful just for thinking about why cultural arts are important and exploring opportunities to use it in our classrooms. I also can't express enough how collaboration, reflection, and sharing in our ITAG/Legacy Group has rejuvenated my interest in teaching. I hope our work together continues....

#### **Fellowship Rationale and Purpose:**

As a Humanities teacher I am responsible for teaching Social Studies and English Language Arts. I have found that my students are most engaged when making a direct connection to the subject that we are studying. Music has always been a topic that my students respond to. I have noticed that my students have limited opportunities to engage in music and to see the connections between music and history. I have daydreamed about creating a curriculum that would join art and music to social studies and history. I believe that such a curriculum would motivate students to learn, especially if the art and music was a reflection of their community and culture.

Thus I would like to develop a curriculum that reflects the culture of my students living in the South Bronx who are Puerto Rican and African American. I have noticed that many of my students do not see connections between their cultures, and focus instead on divisions. I would like to help students understand how music relates to our lives and can be used as a lens to understand the history and culture of a community. In addition, I would like to help students examine how music and dance tell stories. Storytelling is especially evident in the folk music of the cultural groups of my students.

I would like to do this by researching the Bomba and Plena musical genres of Puerto Rico. Bomba and Plena music consist of drumming, singing, and dancing and are heavily influenced by the enslaved Africans brought to Puerto Rico from West Africa. These genres have many similarities to African American music. As a result studying Bomba and Plena music and dance is one way for students to concretely build bridges between African American and Puerto Rican students.

Both Bomba and Plena incorporate a popular form of call and response singing with lyrics that tell stories of everyday life in Puerto Rico. This music was outlawed in the past when drumming by slaves was prohibited. It tells the story of how Puerto Ricans created a new music and culture when African, Spanish, and Taino Indian cultures mixed together.

I want to study this music and dance in Puerto Rico and develop lessons that will teach students about the history of the Caribbean and Puerto Rico through hands on drumming and dance.

#### **Student Growth and Learning:**

I really believe that when students learn about their own history and culture they experience a sense of pride and which in turn lays a foundation for being open to learning about other cultures. I feel that in the South Bronx there are not enough positive representations of Puerto Ricans and of other people of African descent.

Students will gain an understanding of their own history and in the process develop an appreciation for the history and culture of other groups. They will realize that we all have a story to tell and that history and culture is all around us. They will have an opportunity to look at history through music, dance, and oral history instead of what they typically experience- history as something from the past. Students will also understand that enslaved Africans resisted and were resourceful and thus, they will develop multiple perspectives of slavery. Students will learn that history is not only in textbooks but also can be found in music and dance. Students will also learn to connect the past with the present.

### **Benefits to School Community:**

I will share lessons, stories, cultural artifacts, and more with other teachers, creating a school wide culminating celebration and performance. Many teachers in the South Bronx talk about how students are not motivated to learn and are not engaged; this fellowship will enable me to create and model classroom experiences that are engaging and relevant to students lives. My fellowship will extend to the community when students interview their own families and learn about the role that music has played in their own family histories.

### **Curricular Unit:**

Students will have an understanding of the African influence in Puerto Rico, the origins the Bomba and Plena in Puerto Rico, the history of slavery in Puerto Rico and its impact on Puerto Rican Culture. Students will understand how Bomba and Plena can be used as a lens to understand the history, culture, and everyday life experiences of the people of Puerto Rico. Students will have the opportunity to play percussive instruments and have a basic understanding of song and dance.

The following is an outline of the learning experiences students will encounter:

#### 1. The African Influence in Puerto Rico

West African Culture and Music

Transatlantic Slave Trade

Activity: Slide show, mapping, listening to musical recordings

#### 2. Understanding History through the Lens of Music

Music as Story telling

The Life of Enslaved Africans in Puerto Rico and its Influence on Puerto Rican Music

Activity: Read and view interviews from Puerto Rico, conduct family oral history interviews, journal writing, discussion, identify similarities between Puerto Rican and African music.

#### 3. The History of Bomba and Plena in Puerto Rico

How did it evolve?

What instruments are used? Where did they come from?

Activity: Examine resources available to slaves to create instruments, how has instrumentation changed over time, explore influences of Bomba and Plena on other contemporary forms of music such as Salsa, Hip Hop, and Reggaeton;

#### 4. Bomba and Plena 101

Fundamentals of Music

Fundamentals of Drumming

Multiple Rhythms

Elements of Puerto Rican Dance

Lead Drummer and Dance Interactions

Singing as a Reflection of Life

Call and Response Traditions

Activity: Exploratory Series-Hands on Experience of Drumming, Dancing, and Singing

5. Culminating Experience and Celebration:

**Activity:** Students will analyze song lyrics and in groups write their own Bomba and Plena songs. Students will also plan a culminating music and dance performance for peers, staff, and parents. Students will reflect in journal writing on their learning process and how their understanding of history and music has changed.



# Nappy Hair Read Aloud

*Theme #1: Self Love and Acceptance*

*By Veena Srinivasa*

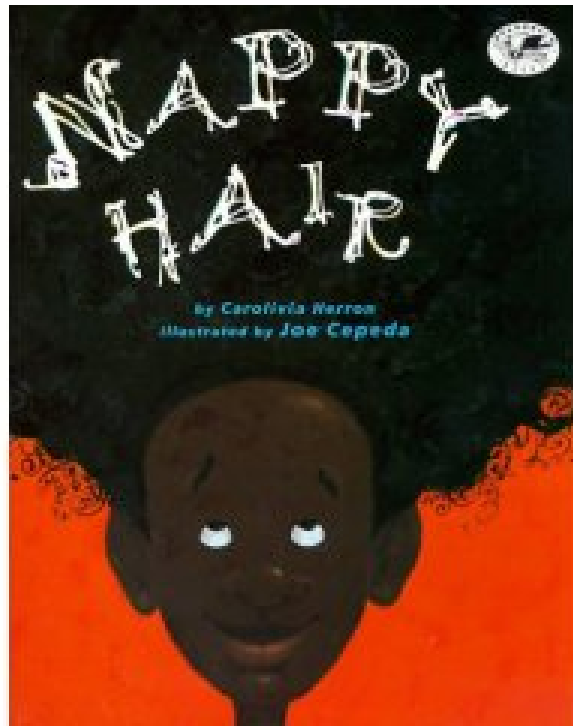
*Veena Srinivasa is a first year teacher at Achievement First Charter School. This is our second year, so the elementary is only K-2 and will grow as our students grow. I co-teach a class of 28 second graders. Almost all are first generation from the West Indies—Trinidad, Tobago, Jamaica and Barbados. This year our school-wide social studies curriculum is dedicated to giving students a sense of identity—understanding their cultural heritage. We've had great help from parents, teachers and administrators in hosting a cultural fair, creating a patchwork construction paper quilt, and putting on a black history performance with songs, readings, and dance.*

## FIVE-STEP LESSON PLAN

<b>PRE-PLANNING: KNOW, UNDERSTAND, &amp; FOLLOW</b>	<b>OBJECTIVE.</b> What will your students be able to do? <input type="checkbox"/>	<b>CONNECTION TO THE BIG GOAL.</b> How does the objective connect to the summer (big) goal? <input type="checkbox"/>
	We will discuss the idea of beauty by reading and responding to <u>Nappy Hair</u> .	Students will understand that different things make different people beautiful, and that we are ALL beautiful in our own way.
	<b>ASSESSMENT.</b> How will you know whether your students have made progress toward the objective? <input type="checkbox"/> How and when will you assess mastery? <input type="checkbox"/>	
	SW respond to story using the prompt, "What makes someone beautiful?"	
	<b>KEY POINTS.</b> 1. We all look different, and we are all beautiful in our own ways. Skin, noses, eyes, height, weight, etc. 2. Read <u>Nappy Hair</u> and discuss the feelings of the main character 3. respond to text with writing prompt	
<b>LESSON CYCLE: GO</b>	<b>OPENING.</b> (5 min.) Student volunteers: What is something that is beautiful about ___? About ___? How are they the same? Different? (focus on height, hair, etc.) Emphasize that each person looks different, but they are all special and beautiful in their own way. We look different on the outside, but what about on the inside? We all have blood that's the same color, feelings, things that we're proud of ...	<b>MATERIALS.</b> <u>Nappy Hair</u> by Caroline Herron  Sentence strips with vocab.
	<b>INTRODUCTION TO NEW MATERIAL.</b> (8 min.) Today we're going to read a story about a girl with some crazy, curly, kinky, nappy hair. In this story, the little girl Brenda is at a family picnic and her uncle starts talking about her hair, and everyone in her family jumps in between the uncle's story. Sometimes it seems like her family is making fun of her hair, but maybe by the end of the story we'll have a different idea about it. I talked to Ms. Shoop over the weekend and she said told me that last year you loved this story. It's a new story for some of you, so if you know what happens, shhhh! Don't tell! Your job is to say some of the lines that the family members say in between the uncle's story. I'll read the line first, and then give you all the signal to repeat the line. <i>Before reading: vocabulary</i> <i>Nappy:</i> This type of hair is tightly coiled, with a thick appearance and feel; sub-saharan African peoples. <i>Ashamed:</i> feeling uncomfortable or embarrassed; feeling like you're not good enough. <i>I feel ashamed of myself when I hurt my teammates feelings.</i> <i>Intentional:</i> on purpose <i>I intentionally</i> <i>Ornery:</i> mean, bad-tempered <i>An act of God:</i> a really big natural event that couldn't be predicted <i>A rose among a thousand thorns:</i> something beautiful in a world with a lot of bad things	XEROX: Writing prompt paper  Globe
	<b>GUIDED PRACTICE.</b> (20 min.) <i>Read and participate in story.</i> <i>Create a T-chart: what makes someone beautiful? Physical traits, personality traits</i>	
	<b>INDEPENDENT PRACTICE.</b> (10 min.) <i>Students respond to prompt: What makes someone beautiful?</i>	
	<b>CLOSING.</b> (2 min.)	

*Share out*

Later this afternoon each of you will have a chance to share something that makes you beautiful – something that makes you a brilliant and beautiful rose. This will be part of a project that the whole school will participate in.



*By Caroline Herron & Illustration by Joe Cepeda*



# African Orature and Storytelling

Theme #2: Respect for Others

By Jessica Valoris



*Jessica Valoris is a student at Eugene Lang College and has studied a combination of education and black history. She is currently working on putting together a curriculum for an introductory black history course for high school students. She has worked with several community based and social justice organizations and is committed to racial justice, self-determination, and creativity. Jessica comes from a family of strong black women who motivate and nourish her soul.*

## Overview:

Oral History and Oral Tradition is an important part of African culture that dates back to the beginning formation of early societies, and spans throughout the African Diaspora.

Cosmogonic orature serves many purposes within a community. It carries the traditions, history, and wisdom of that community, serves to legitimize a change in the social-political structure, and can reveal characteristics of the communities it comes out of. Additionally, the practice of story telling has taken various forms within different African societies, and serves as a communal forum to keep history alive, and tell the story of the community. This also enables students to understand the organization of African societies that may not have been part of a major civilization, and are thus ignored in history. Students will explore various African Societies and Cultures through their stories, folktales, fables, and proverbs. Students will learn the basics of storytelling and explore the ways that they tell their stories today.

## Essential Questions:

- What are the benefits and challenges of an oral tradition?
- What are the benefits and challenges of a written tradition?
- What various purposes does orature serve within a community?
- What can orature reveal about the world view of particular communities?
- What are some examples of how we incorporate orature into our everyday lives?

## Main Activities:

- Elements and Practice of Storytelling
- Storytelling Circle
- Group Stories and Research
- Class Story Circle

## DAY 1: INTRODUCTION: THE WORD

Materials: video clips, Yoruba story, worksheet for homework

-Bring in film showcasing different black orators, poets, comedians, and emcees. Lead a discussion on the role, methods, and meaning of the story and the speaker that leads into a discussion on African orature and storytelling? (50 min)

- As you watch each one, lead a discussion (the story)
  - Who is the speaker? What are they talking about?
  - What is the speaker saying?
  - What are the messages?
  - What are the themes?
- Watch the video again (the act)

- This time look for the methods that the speaker uses to relay his message
- Who is the audience? What is the setting? What is the context?
- How do they engage the audience?
- What do they offer their audience?
- How does the audience interact with them? What if it was a different audience? How might the story or storyteller change?

Discussion: (meanings)

- What are some of the parallels between the different speakers? What do they have in common? How are they different?
- What would we call what they are doing/practicing?
- Are there actions related?
- What purposes do they serve: the speaker, the story, the audience?
- What do people leave with?

\*Recommended video/audio clips from: Malcolm X, Fannie Lou Hamer, Chris Rock, Nas, Biggie, Queen Latifah, Slick Rick, Angela Davis, Paul Mooney, Richard Pryor, Katt Williams, Marcus Garvey, Sonia Sanchez, the Last Poets, KRS-One, Papoose, Mary J. Blige, Dead Prez, Gwendolyn Brooks, Monique.

Homework: Have students read the Yoruba story, and familiarize themselves. And complete worksheet identifying characters, plot, problem, solution, and message.

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## DAY 2:

Materials: list of ethnic groups, each cosmogonic story, articles

WARM-UP: Bring in two articles that talk about the same story/issue in different ways. One article should be from a major paper, i.e. NY Times and another should be from a magazine or paper familiar to the students. Have students read both articles and discuss what the message of each is, and why they differ. Discuss how different identities produce knowledge, and value different knowledges. (20 min)

- Brief intro discussion on how we know history and why it is important? (10 min)
- Discuss role of dominant discourse (top-down) v. alt. narratives (bottom-up)

-Transition into a brief interactive lecture/discussion on what orature is and the role of orature and oral history within various African societies. The word is valued because it passes along the wisdom of the community, and reveals the truth. Give examples of how people told stories, the practices behind stories, the relationship between history and story, and the role of oral history in various cultures. (10 min)

- Walk through Yoruba story and explore parallels with the class (20 min.)
  - Explain to the class that orature in has a purpose: it carries the wisdom of the community
  - Review the cosmogonic story of the Yoruba
  - Brainstorm: what does this story tell us about Yoruba culture/history/society?
  - Reveal the parallels and metaphors of history
  - Emphasize the role of orature
    - Legitimizes change in social structure
    - Metaphors and insider knowledge (validates those who know)
    - Carries wisdom of community
    - Reveals things about the culture of the ethnic group

-Allow students to choose ethnic groups/societies and hand out stories accordingly. Explain that they will be exploring a story that comes out of their ethnic group and will be researching those cultures. "When lions have their own story tellers, hunters will cease to be heroes." Akan Proverb. As a class we will explore the stories that come out of various African cultures in order to reveal the various histories, and customs, and worldviews of these societies, and how they were organized. (5min)

### Homework:

1. Have students read their ethnic groups story, and familiarize themselves. Complete worksheet identifying characters, plot, problem, solution, and message.  
2. Each day we will do different exercises to prepare you for a story circle that we will have at the end of the week. Bring in a song that tells a story, but don't tell anyone in class what song it is. Tell the students to circle the 4 most important lines in the song, the lines should not be next to one another. And bring it to class. (5min)

\*note: teachers may want to review parts of a narrative with students, to make sure they pick out songs that have storylines.

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### DAY 3:

Materials: Assignment sheets for storytelling and fact sheet assignments

#### WARM-UP (15 min)

-Insider Knowledge: Remind students not to reveal the song that they chose. Tell each student to come to the circle with their lyrics, a pen, and a sheet of blank paper. Then have the students rewrite the story, keeping the basic message the same and the storyline the same. And inserting the four lines within the story in the order they appear in the song. Have students volunteer to share their story. Have listeners identify the song, and the message.

-Have groups get together by ethnic group assigned to share their homework. Have each group record on a flip chart identifying the characters, key objects, plot, messages, and themes of their stories. Have each group share and hang around the class. (10 min.)

-Have groups get back together and brainstorm/hypothesize the parallels of their ethnic group and the story that they are assigned on poster paper, and post next to their story brainstorm. (10 min)

-Introduce storytelling and fact sheet assignments. (5min)

-Class Brainstorm on elements of culture: (student record responses on the board) (15 min)

-If a long lost cousin from your assigned ethnic group were to come to live with you here, what are the types of things that you would tell him/her in order to make sure they learn to fit in easily and survive? (i.e.: food, custom, fun, job) OR If you were visiting a long lost relative from your assigned ethnic group, what types of things would you want to know about their culture before going, to make sure you survive and fit in well?

\*(language, norms, values, beliefs, social collectives, status/roles, etc.)

-this class generated list, will come the basis for the fact sheets they will work on next class.

-Research Time (40 min)

Have students do research towards building a fact sheet for their assigned ethnic groups using the elements of culture that they just brainstormed.

\* Make sure you provide resources for student research: (web links, books, etc.)



Homework:

1. Start researching information on ethnic group for fact sheet
- 
- 

#### **DAY 4:**

WARM-UP: have students watch an example of a traditional storyteller describing a journey

-Front door imaginary journey exercise (10 min)

-Pair up students. Have each take turns. Have student A tell student B directions of how to get from the outside door of the school, to a sock under their bed. Tell students to be as specific as possible. Make sure reference places, spots, landmarks, buildings, streets, and stores, etc. along the way.

\*This exercise helps students to lead the listener through a journey, and provide someone else with knowledge that they know by second-nature

-For remainder of the day have students do research for their fact sheets.

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#### **Day 5**

-All day work day. Have groups work on completing their fact sheet. Decorate

-If students have completed the fact sheet, they can work on their storytelling assignment.

Homework:

1. Finish fact sheet
  2. Reread assigned story
  3. Brainstorm ideas for storytelling
- 
- 

#### **DAY 6**

-FACT SHEETS DUE

Materials: video clips

WARM-UP: break up into groups; have them pick three important facts about their assigned ethnic group. Come together in a circle and share. Have each group share how their ethnic group uses storytelling, how do they pass along their history? (15 min) \*Emphasize the diversity of the African Diaspora.

-Class discussion on elements of oral tradition (10 min)

-Communal event: around a fire, tree, and in a circle often

-Replay the videoclips from the first class and discuss elements of a good storyteller

-Repetition, call and response

-Audience participation

-Music, sounds, instruments, props

-Have students get in their groups, and plan their storytelling? (35 min)

Things to keep in mind: props, instruments, music, engaging audience, costumes.

Homework: Plan and Practice Storytelling

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## **DAY 7**

Materials: items for storytelling circle

WARM-UP: allow students to get in their groups and practice (5 min)

### **-STORY CIRCLE**

- Make this a semi-big event. Invite guest to the class, especially younger children.

- Bring food, incense, candles, flashlights, instruments, stools/pillows

- The whole time will be spent having students perform their stories, and having a party with any left over time

**-NO HOMEWORK**

# Storytelling Justice

Theme #3: Exploring issues of Social Justice  
Government High School Class, Courtroom Cases



*Natalia Ortiz is a born and raised New York City Latina. She currently teaches Social Studies to 16-20 year old students at West Brooklyn Community High School. After graduating with a B.A. in Latin American Studies at Wesleyan University and receiving her Masters of Education from Harvard Graduate School of Education, Natalia has returned to the public school system to do what she has always planned to do, Teach! Teach to create change and expose adolescents to the many perspectives of our history.*

*West Brooklyn Community High School is a transfer school serving overage and under-credited youth. It is operated through a partnership between Good Shepherd Services and the NYC Department of Education. WBCHS focuses on providing students, ages 16-20, who have become excessively truant or have dropped out of high school, the opportunity to reengage in school and graduate with a high school diploma. Each student is supported in this process by an Advocate Counselor who works with students to create a plan for graduation as well as for post-secondary opportunities. Our small classroom size and student-centered instruction aims to create an individualized learning environment for each student.*

## Government Lesson Plan

**Objective:** Students will review the four court cases by using story telling circles in order to prepare for a thematic essay.

### **Do Now:**

Listen to the traditional African story or proverb that teaches a moral or behavior code.

Think about a story your parent or grandparent once told you—

1. What was it about?
2. Why do you think you still remember it?
3. What do you think are good elements of a good story?

### **Agenda:**

1. Do Now/Review Do Now
2. Divide up into the four court case groups.
3. Mini-Lesson:
  - a. Model- A class storytelling circle- we will tell the story of our class (we will do this standing up)
  - b. Directions- Each group will be in charge of sharing the story of the court case through a storytelling circle but must include the following information:
    - i. The issue
    - ii. The rights being violated
    - iii. The court decision
    - iv. What people learned about this case
    - v. Why is it important to know about this case
  - c. Students are allowed to use movement and rhythm
  - d. Groups will have 20 minutes to review their notes and discuss amongst each other about their case.
4. Presentations in chronological order (5 minutes each group)

- a. Korematsu v. U.S. 1944
- b. Brown v. Board of Education 1954
- c. Tinker v. Des Moines 1969
- d. Roe v. Wade 1973

5. Wrap Up- How did you feel about the storytelling circles? Were they helpful? Why or why not?

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Government

Cases we studied in class:

- **Korematsu v. U.S. (1944)**
- **Brown v. Topeka Board of Education (1954)**
- **Tinker v. Des Moines (1969)**
- **Roe v. Wade (1973)**

1. Think back all the way from December until now. Which case did you **enjoy** the most and **why**?
2. If you had to rank the cases from **1 (Best)** to **4 (Least Best)** how would you rank them?



# Powerful Countries and War

Theme #3: Exploring Issues of Social Justice

Subject: History Subtopic: War

*By Bassirat Ottun*

**Connection Question:** Is the U.S. a powerful country? Explain your answer for why or why not?

**Vocabulary words:** Power, Isolationism, Expansionism, Nativist, Imperialism, Oppression

**Motivation:** What is power? Who has it and how? (Think-Write-Share)

**Mini Lesson:** Discussion of the Pyramid of Power graphic from School of Unity and Liberation:

[http://www.youthec.org/soul/soul\\_sec/resources/re-free\\_training.html#\\_pe](http://www.youthec.org/soul/soul_sec/resources/re-free_training.html#_pe)



\*Students will detail what it represents to them

\*Students will be asked if they can correlate it to U.S role in War (students will have the option to choose any war that U.S was/ is involved in

**Group Work:** In groups, students will create their own visual representation of how the U.S utilizes power when engaging in war by creating a poster.

**Share:** Students will share their posters with the remainder of the class and depict how they symbolize the manifestation of power.

# Power and Dreams Workshop

by Ayanna Maia Saulsberry

Theme #3: Exploring Issues of Social Justice & Power



## ***Ayanna Maia Saulsberry***

*More than a playwright and a scholar, Ayanna is a performer, designer, and media arts teacher. She has taught various workshops in the New York Public Schools promoting self-esteem and "coming to voice" in pre-adolescent girls in addition along with audio workshops for social activism and life-enhancing lyricism. As a former member and consultant of various independent and progressive hip-hop music collectives including The Vinyl Junkies and Toni Blackman's Freestyle Union, Ayanna has performed poetry, rhymed, spun records and recorded music since she was a teenager.*

*"No one can dream for you."*

### ***Intro/Icebreaker:***

Group Share of participants' most memorable sleeping dream

Trigger questions: What did you see? What did you feel? When (in your life) did you have this dream? How did you feel when you woke up? Did anything change in your life after you had this dream? Why do you think you had this dream? Would you consider this dream a gift?

***Group Discussion:*** Where do dreams come from? Why do we have them?

***Wildest Dream Worksheet:*** This worksheet allows us to voice the potential and a strategy for achieving our greatest dreams. Each participant will share her dream and be affirmed in manifesting it.

### ***Power Structure Exercise:***

Through movement and graffiti board we explore how obstacles and power structures affect our lives, especially the ways power has been taken from us. Then we show, learn, and decide how to reclaim it. We relate how our dreams our tools for inner power.

*"The dream is potential energy. Power is currency."*

I will introduce the concept of feeling empowered and how we need to have power to make things happen, to make our dreams come true.

### ***Exercise:***

1. Ask participants to think of an experience when their power was taken away from them.
2. Create a movement or pose that shows what that experience felt like.
3. Ask participants to think of an experience where they felt powerful and/or reclaimed their power.
4. Create a movement or pose that shows what that experience felt like.
5. Make a t-shirt with the words to wear that celebrate and affirm your power.

*"We must use past experiences of success and empowerment to lead us to our dreams. We have what it takes. "*

***The Native American Dreamer, the Vision Quest***

Participants learn about the rites of passage called the Vision Quest. This was a cultural practice for various Native American adolescents. These young people's dreams and visions were valued. Their adulthood was defined by going out on their own and coming back with a vision for their community.

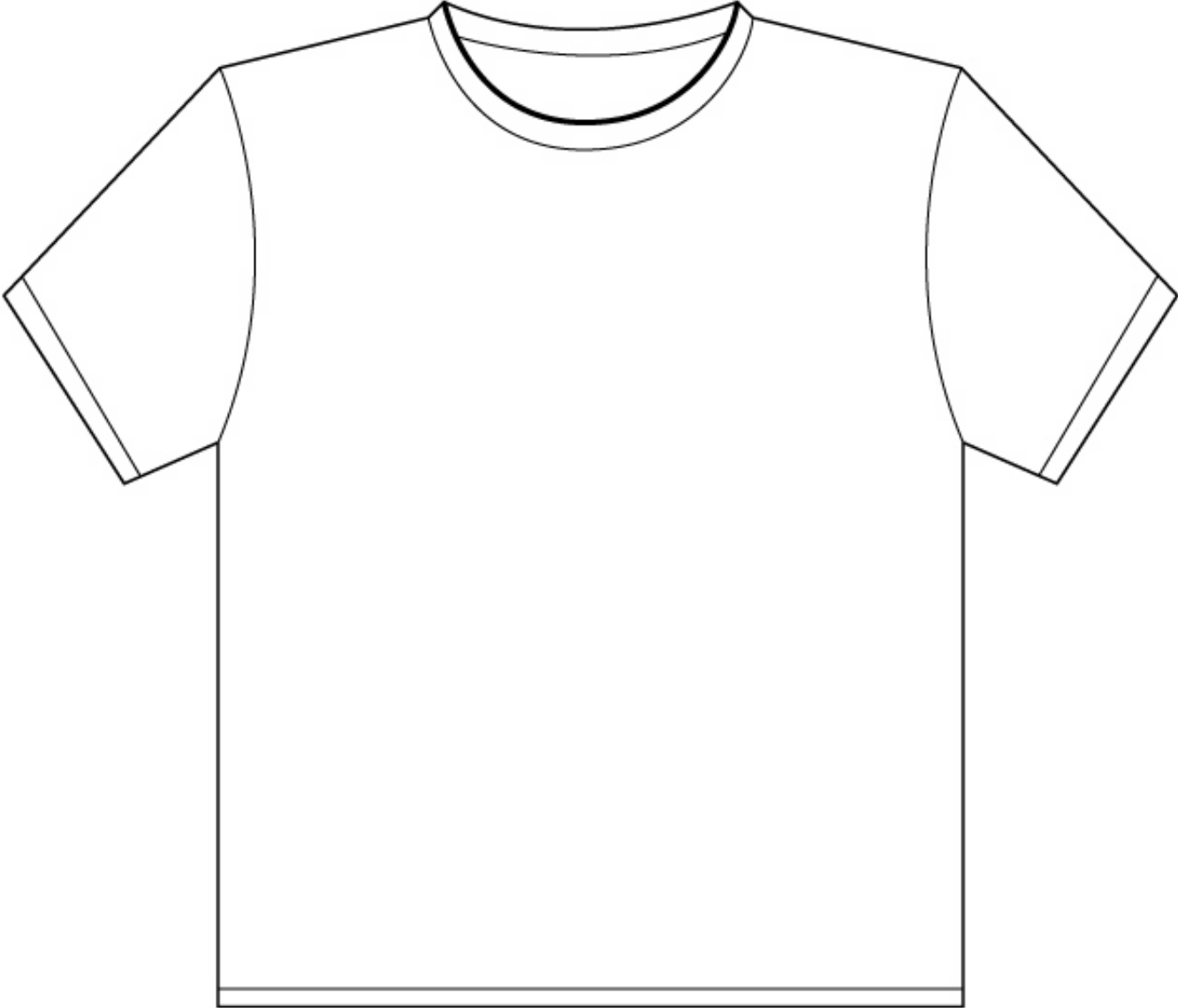
"Vision is the sacrifice for the community, our people, and the spirit world. You must go to the 'in between' as a messenger to help elevate the life force."

*Exercise:* We imagine going on a vision quest for our families and communities. We take quiet time to individually go into spaces of the room and receive/imagine our vision quest. We may record it by writing it in prose, song, poetry, or drawing it. We return to the circle and share.

*Closing*



*The mythical Sankofa Bird:  
Faces backward but Flies Forward.  
The Bird represents looking to the past to find the way forward.*





# Dancing and Breaking Discrimination

## Theme 3: Exploring Social Justice & Understanding Discrimination

By Angela Dixon



*Angela Dixon is a dancer, soprano, and percussionist. She also plays the n'goni (West African harp-lute) and the balafon. Whether she is dancing, singing or playing, her creativity is mostly centered on the intuition and inner rhythm of her body. She is most ecstatic when she is surrounded by love. Angela received a Bachelor of Musical Arts in Voice Performance from the University of Michigan and a Master of Arts in Dance and Africana Studies from New York University. Currently, she is a teaching artist for 5<sup>th</sup>-8<sup>th</sup> graders in Bronx, New York.*

### **Angela's Dance Class**

*Currently, I teach 5<sup>th</sup> through 8<sup>th</sup> grade. I teach 5<sup>th</sup> grade twice a week and 6-8<sup>th</sup> twice a week in Bronx, New York in an after-school program. All of my students are girls of different backgrounds including: Dominican, Puerto-Rican, African, or African-American.*

### Main Objectives:

To be exposed to the cultural arts especially from the African Diaspora  
*Learn about ourselves-learn about others*

To use cultural arts as a conduit to explore ideas about self-love, identity, and social justice  
*Empowerment*

To develop healthy bodies and embrace its individuality and capabilities  
*A Healthy Body is a Wealthy Body, Self esteem*

To tell our stories through rhythm and movement: creating dances  
*Individual Creativity*

### Overall Dance Curriculum

1. African-American Dance
  - a. Dunham, Jazz, Modern
    - i. Video: "Free to Dance" Series
      1. What do you dance: Edna Guy and Discrimination
      2. Step of the Gods
      3. Go for What you Know
  - b. Hip-Hop
    - i. Hip-Hop Education Sourcebook
2. Afro-Brazilian
  - a. Dance combination: Samba Rio, Samba-Reggae
  - b. Video: "Moro No Brazil"
  - c. Video: "The Spirit of Samba: Black music of Brazil"
3. Salsa/Merengue
  - a. Dance combination
  - b. Video: Salsa/Merengue in New York: "Latin Pop Music in the Citeis" or "Roots of Rhythm"

4. African
  - a. Coupe Décalé-Cote d'Ivoire
    - i. Short movement sequence
    - ii. Video clips
  - b. Ghanaian
    - i. Shee Baa Baa clap
    - ii. Traditional dance: Kpanlogo, Kpatsa
  - c. Congolese
  - d. Guinea and Gaudeloupe mix
5. Caribbean
  - a. Afro-Puerto Rican
    - i. Bomba video "Dancing the Drum" Citylore
  - b. Dominican/Haitian
    - i. Rara video myspace clip online: [www.myspace.com/grupokalunga](http://www.myspace.com/grupokalunga)
  - c. Zouk?
- 8 Warm-ups and Creative movement exercises based on Brain Dance
- 9 Folk dances
- 10 Lesson on Africa Diaspora Connection
  - a. Why do we dance? What role does dance play?
  - b. Students create a dance based on the movement they've learned all semester
    - i. Look at list of African aesthetics
  - c. Let's look at all of the dances we've learned. Does anyone see any similarities?
    - i. African Diaspora map

#### Recital

1. Narrative explanation of each segment: text will be from the video questionnaire-person with highest score on questionnaire will be narrator
2. Movement pieces of all genres to create a full show
3. Creative movement will be dispersed within dance combinations
4. T-Shirt making for costumes?

#### Resources I need:

Braindance book  
 Salsa video  
 Samba video  
 Rara video  
 Bomba video  
 Hip-hop education sourcebook

#### Lesson Plan Examples

Day 1: Monday November 20, 2006-6-7<sup>th</sup> grade

Objective: to get to know each other through movement and to start thinking about ideas of positive self-image.

1. Class introduction
2. Introduction of selves
  - a. Share a little about yourself.
  - b. State one hope and one fear about this dance class.
  - c. Experimental question: What is your creative or emotional outlet?

- i. (i.e. What do you do when you're feeling down to make yourself feel better, or how do you express yourself when you're feeling happy?)
3. Name Game. In a circle, each person says his or her name and accompanies it with a movement. Everyone repeats it.
4. Discussion question in partners: What are things in society that influence the way you feel about yourself. Good or bad. Pick the main idea (s) of your discussion. Create one or two movements that express those ideas. Practice and show.
5. Closing Circle: Choose words from experimental question. Each person takes a turn to physicalize a word. The group repeats it.

Tuesday 3/6/07 -5<sup>th</sup> grade

Lesson on Body Parts

1. Warm Up-
  - a. Braindance warm-up
    - i. Breath
    - ii. Tactile
    - iii. Core-Distal
    - iv. Head-Tail
    - v. Upper-Lower body
    - vi. Body-Side
    - vii. Cross Lateral
    - viii. Vestibular
  - b. Introducing the Concept: Body Parts: shoulders, torso, hips
2. Exploring the Concept
  - a. Isolated Parts: "We're going to do a body part dance. I will call out a body part every time the music stops. Try to isolate that part and dance with just that part, keeping your other body parts still. Think of all the different ways of moving that one body part. We will be dancing mostly in our self space. (If having difficulty, suggest directions, levels, speeds, pathways)
3. Developing Skills
  - a. Congolese dance exercise working on isolation of the shoulders, torso, and hips.
    - i. Where on the map is the Congo?
  - b. African mix combination
  - c. If time: Samba Rio
4. Cool-down:
  - a. Breath and stretch
  - b. Review Video and Questionnaire Sheet
    - i. Brief Activity: Discrimination: In the video, how was the dancer Edna Guy discriminated against? Think about a time you or someone you know was discriminated against. How did it make you feel? How did you react? Would you have done something differently? Draw your answer
    - ii. Discussion: is it possible to avoid discrimination? If it happens, what can we do to cope or heal from it?



*Jose Figueroa & Grupo Kalunga, Rara dance*

## Examining the Experience of "for colored girls"

*Theater, Storytelling, and Young Women's Health*

*Theme #4: Social Movements and Social Change & Theme #5: Taking Social Action*

*By Tene Adero Howard*



*Tene Adero Howard has been working with young people for over seven years as an educator and mentor. She is currently a Youth Development Specialist at the High School for Global Citizenship in Brooklyn, New York. At HSGC she co-facilitates a Young Women's Health program with colleagues Coco Killingsworth and Jessica Bartiloni. She holds a BA from Amherst College in Sociology and an MA in International Educational Development from Teachers College, Columbia University. Before coming to Global Kids, she was the Program Coordinator at the Harlem Children's Zone TRUCE program, managing arts education and media literacy projects for youth. She has also worked abroad, teaching a performing arts workshop with young women in the Dominican Republic and dance classes at a street children's center in Durban, South Africa. Her experience abroad includes leading summer travel programs with youth in South Africa and extensive travel and study in France, Venezuela, Cuba, Puerto Rico, Thailand, Cambodia and Japan. She is proficient in Spanish and French, and has studied Zulu and Xhosa.*

The students in this project are young women between the ages of 13 and 17 that attend the **High School for Global Citizenship and Clara Barton HS** in Crown Heights Brooklyn. While the young women come from a diversity of experiences, many are immigrants or the first generation of their family in the United States. Many are from the Caribbean countries of Trinidad and Tobago, Guyana, Haiti, St. Vincent and Puerto Rico.

### Narrative:

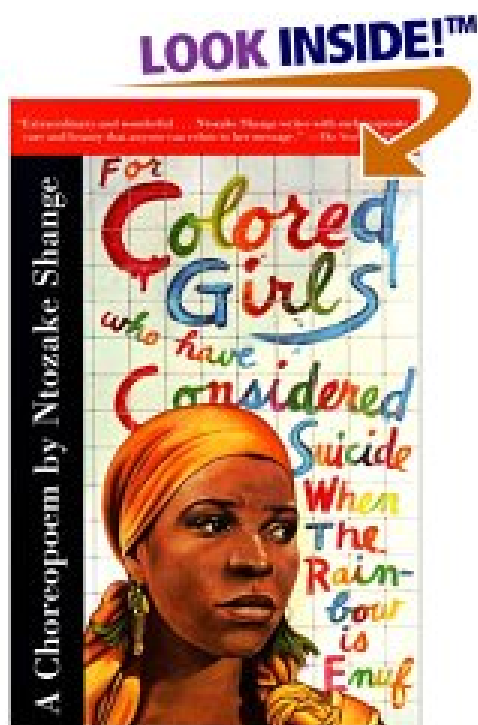
This week we were able to invite two actors who have performed in '*for colored girls who have considered suicide when the rainbow is enuf*' by ntozake shange, into our Young Women's Health group. This group meets once a week and has a focus on learning about women's health issues and putting together a school wide action to bring about awareness and change around a specific issue that the girls identify. For the past several weeks we have been examining how violence against women is an important women's health issue, and that women of all ages are affected. A couple of weeks ago we invited in a Girls' Rights activist from Zimbabwe to speak to us about the activism she does and the concerns of girls in her country. While all the students were really moved by her words and felt her work was extremely important, we wanted to give them a chance to reflect on their own experiences and those of other women they know. Violence against women and girls can often be a taboo topic-- often people feel ashamed and prefer to keep it a secret. Knowing this, we wanted to provide an opportunity for students to not have to immediately put their own experiences onto the table-- but relate to the issue in a personal way that did not necessarily involve having to tell their personal stories right away

*for colored girls...* is a dynamic choreo-poem written by Ntozake Shange. It is a collection of the stories of different women-- their joys, their pains and their experiences. Before the two actors came in to speak to us about their experience acting in the play at The New School, we provided the young women in our group with background info about the author and play and excerpts from the play. They were able to get some background information before meeting with the artists and seeing portions of the play performed. Giving them background info also provided them with an opportunity to flag particular ideas or issues that came up in the work that they could speak about during our Q & A session. After meeting the actors, and hearing portions of the play performed, we asked the young women to choose a passage, word or phrase to give their reactions to.

The young women were extremely moved by the stories they read and saw performed in *for colored girls...* Many were surprised to find that the play was written in the 1970's and the stories of women then were so similar to

those of women and girls in 2007. While there were some concepts we had to deconstruct together in order to understand the details of the story, the emotion of the words was clearly felt by all the students in the class. Hearing and seeing the words come to life through the actors also enabled us to engage in the work on a different level.

We plan to use the experience with the words and performance of *for colored girls...* to provide us with a starting point with the girls to tell their own stories about women's health and well being in their own communities. Both through words and images, we are planning to create a narrative about women and girls' experience that will be exhibited at our school and will be a way to involve the entire school community in a discussion about womens' health and well being.



## Hearing the Messages in Music- Hip Hop

### "What is your message?"

Theme #5: Taking Social Action & Hip Hop

By Rachel Ibrahim



*Rachel Ibrahim is a Social Worker and Community Organizer in Manhattan and Brooklyn. Of Nigerian, Lebanese, and German-American descent and has taught Civic engagement, service learning, and social change to High School and various other grades for over 6 years.*

**Objective:** Allow students to study the lyrics in music and have the opportunity to create their own positive messages or tell their story through self expression.

**Note:** This activity is geared towards high school aged children, and can be altered to accommodate younger students if other songs are used.

**Note:** This activity may not be completed in one session depending on the depth of the discussions.

**Materials:** Song lyrics handout, CD's with various artists, styles and languages (include translations if possible), paper and writing utensils. Board or flip chart paper and markers.

#### **Activity:**

1. Give students the song lyrics handout and have students take turns reading a verse out loud.
2. Have them each write a few lines afterwards on what they believe the song they read was about. Also, allow each student to guess who the artist is. When they are done, play the song for them to hear the artist perform the song.
3. **Discussion questions:**  
Are you surprised by who the artist is?  
What kind of message is the artist relating to his listeners?  
How did the lyrics make you feel?  
What is your interpretation of the artist's message? Why do you think that?  
How do you think the artist felt in this song?  
Why do you think he feels that way?  
(Address the issues in the song that are raised; i.e. "black people unite"- what does that mean? Why do we need to unite? Why does he say he wants black people to be free? How are black people not free? Do you agree with him? Etc.)
4. Explore the words that make the song powerful by having students list the words in the song that stand out to them. Have students write them on the board.
5. Make another list of words that are not in the song that are powerful/meaningful to the students.
6. **Discussion Questions:**  
Is music powerful? Why?  
Can it be used in a good way and a bad way? How? Give examples?
7. Have everyone think of one of their favorite songs and write down the lyrics that they know. Below the song ask them to summarize what the song is about without using the words in the song.
8. Ask students to think of something that is important to them or that is going on in their life right now and express it. Allow them to be creative in how they express it- ideas could be AND ARE NOT LIMITED TO; writing a poem, song, rap, making a dance, present it in any form to the class, creating a beat (drums or with their hands), beat boxing, etc. Students are not required to share; create the space so that all students feel welcomed to do so.

**References:** Options for artists to look up:

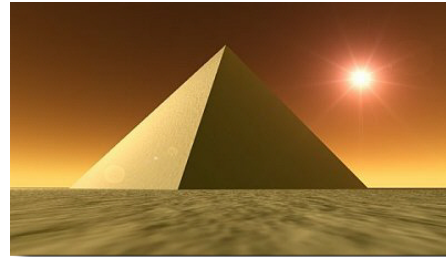
Talib Kweli	Nas
Mos Def	Tupac
Marvin Gaye	Common
Lauren Hill	India Ire

**Umi Says lyrics- Mos Def**

I don't wanna write this down, [world... premiere]  
I wanna tell you how I feel right now [world...premiere] (x2)

Tomorrow may never come  
For you or me  
Life is not promised  
Tomorrow may never show up  
For you and me  
This life is not promised

I ain't no perfect man  
I'm trying to do, the best that I can,  
With what it is I have (x2)



Put my heart and soul into this song [yes yes]

I hope you feel me  
From where I am, to wherever you are  
I mean that sincerely  
Tomorrow may never come  
For and me  
Life is not promised  
Tomorrow may never appear  
You better hold this very moment very close to you  
[right now]  
Very close to you [right now]  
So close to you, So- close to you [your moment in  
history is right now!]  
Don't be affraid, to let it shine

My Umi said shine your light on the world  
Shine your light for the world to see  
My Abi said shine your light on the world  
Shine your light for the world to see  
[I want black people to be free, to be free, to be  
free]  
My Abi said shine your light on the world  
[Want black people to be free, to be free, to be free]  
Shine your light for the world to see  
[Want black people to be free, to be free, to be free]  
My Umi said shine your light on the world  
[Want black people to be free, to be free, to be free]  
Shine your light for the world to see  
[Want black people to be free, to be free...]

Sometimes I get discouraged  
I look around and, things are so weak  
People are so weak  
Sometimes, Sometimes I feel like crying  
Sometimes my heart gets heavy  
Sometimes I just want to leave and fly away [fly fly fly, like a dove]



Sometimes I don't know what to do with myself [ow!]  
Passion takes over me  
I feel like a man  
Going insane  
Losing my brain  
Trying to maintain  
Doing my thang  
Hey hey hey hey hey  
Put my heart and soul into this y'all  
I hope you feel me  
Where I am, to wherever you are [ha ha ha ha]  
Sometimes I don't want to be bothered  
Sometimes I just want a quiet life, with  
Me and my babies, me and my lady  
Sometimes I don't want to get into no war  
[Black people to be free, to be free...]  
Sometimes I don't wanna be a soldier  
Sometimes I just wanna be a man, but

Umi said shine your light on the world  
Shine your light for the world to see  
My Abi said shine your light on the world  
Shine your light for the world to see  
[I want black people to be free, to be free, to be free]  
My dreamers said shine your light on the world  
[Want black people to be free, to be free, to be free]  
Shine your light for the world to see  
[Want black people]  
My elders said shine your light on the world [Hey hey]  
Shine your light for the world to see

I want black people to be free, to be free, to be free  
All my people to be free, to be free, to be free  
Oh black people to be free, to be free, to be free (x2)

That's all that matters to me (x7)

Black people unite and let's all get down  
Gotta have what,  
Gotta have that love  
Peace and understanding  
One God, one light  
One man, one voice, one mic  
Black people unite come on and do it right (x2)  
Black people unite come on and get down  
Gotta have what,  
Love, peace and understanding  
One God, one voice, one life  
One man, gon' shine my light  
Black people unite, now hop up and do it right  
Black people unite, now come on and do it right  
Yeah baby that's what I like (x3)



# Social Justice Movements: Making your Voice Heard Through the Media

Theme #4: Social Movements & Social Change & Theme #5: Taking Social Action

The Written Word for Social Action, by Cara Tait



## *Cara Tait*

*This is my first year teaching in New York City. I am a 9<sup>th</sup> grade Humanities teacher at the Green School, a brand new high school in Williamsburg, Brooklyn. Prior to arriving in New York I also taught GED reading preparation as well as English as a Second language to senior citizens. I love the use of knowledge as a vehicle for empowerment. All of my work focuses on student interest as well development of analytical skills. I enjoy collaborating and helping people plan their lesson plans or units. I feel that education is a collaborative venture so I am always looking for ways to build with those around me.*

## **WHAT IS SOCIAL JUSTICE?**

It is based on the idea of a society which gives individuals and groups fair treatment and a just share of the benefits of society.

## **WHAT IS A MOVEMENT?**

A series of actions and events taking place over a period of time and working to foster a principle or policy: *a movement toward world peace.*

## **WHAT IS A GRASSROOTS ORGANIZATION?**

Grassroots organizing is a political practice to create social change. Grassroots organizing is based on the power of the people to take collective action on their own behalf.

## **WHAT ARE WE DOING?**

During the next 10 weeks, we will study a variety of social justice movements alive in New York City today. We will research issues that New Yorkers face today and see how we can help solve the problems. We will be visited by 4 different Grassroots Organizations, who will give us their spin on the problem. We will then write persuasive editorials that reflect our own views on the issues presented by the grassroots representatives.

After gaining understanding of each movement, we will pick one issue to develop a campaign on how to get young people involved and aware of the issues New Yorkers are facing. We will study social justice movements of the past as a tool to develop campaign strategies. The grassroots organization will return and hear our campaign ideas to see if they can incorporate our ideas in their movement.

## **BY THE END OF THIS UNIT, YOU WILL BE ABLE TO...**

express a persuasive argument written and verbally  
incorporate facts and statistics into your argument  
organize and manage your time for long time projects  
listen for information

## **BY THE END OF THIS UNIT, YOU WILL KNOW...**

4 persuasion strategies

4 social justice movements  
4 campaign strategies

**BY THE END OF THIS UNIT, WE HOPE YOU BELIEVE...**  
WIN-WIN SOLUTIONS MAKE CHANGES LAST  
LANGUAGE CAN IMPACT CHANGE  
CHANGE IS POSSIBLE

## PRE-UNIT QUIZ

1. CAN YOU NAME 4 SOCIAL JUSTICE MOVEMENTS, EITHER PAST OR PRESENT?

2. WHAT ARE 4 DIFFERENT WAYS YOU CAN PERSUADE SOMEBODY?

3. WHAT ARE 4 WAYS POLITICIANS TRY TO WIN VOTES?

BY THE END OF THIS UNIT, EVERY STUDENT WILL SCORE 100% ON THIS QUIZ!!!

How do we get our voices heard?

For the next four weeks we will be working on Op-Ed pieces. The piece we write will always revolve around the topic that our guest speaker discussed. Your Op-Eds will be due at the beginning of the 6th class meeting for the week.

Freedom = Wed (BCUE wk) or Thursday (reg. week)

Revolution = Thus. (BCUE wk) or Friday (reg. week)

## ALL WRITING IS DONE IN CLASS

Op-Ed articles brief essays that express a personal viewpoint. They are included in order to inform as well as persuade people. They are usually located on the page OPposite of the EDitorial page.

After writing four op-ed pieces, every one of us are going to select one that we will revise and send to a newspaper, magazine or newspaper website for submission to be published!

**EVERYONE WILL SUBMIT ONE. ALL VOICES ARE IMPORTANT AND NEED TO BE HEARD!**

If we are going to submit to professional newspapers, we need to know what professional op-ed articles are written like.

We are going to take a moment to look at an op-ed article. With a partner (or triple), come up with four things that the author did in order to try to get us to agree.

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.

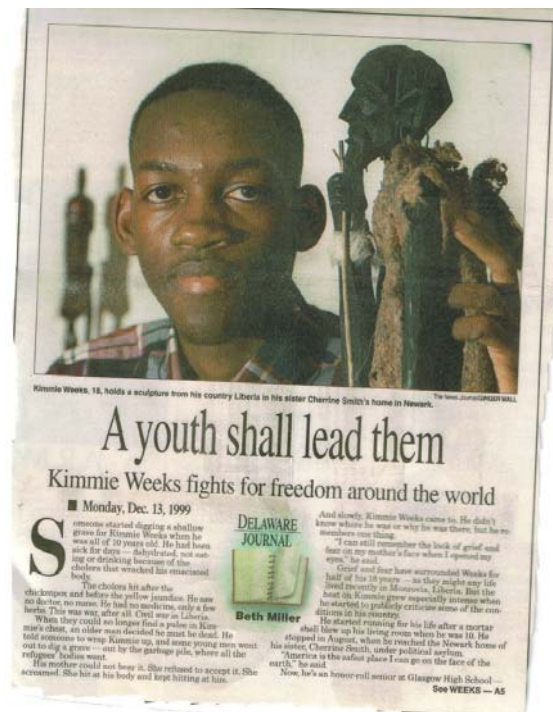
According to Josh Gordon, a well known writer as well as advertisement presenter, he lists five main strategies and the percentage of times that they actually work on people.

The top five persuasive strategies:

- Sharing facts: 73.5%
- Offering a solution: 62.1%
- Sharing a new idea: 52.8%
- Telling a story: 51.6%
- Changing a perception: 50.9%

The remaining practices include humor, creating excitement, audience involvement, building trust, inspiration, building a financial case, creating an emotional appeal, getting competitive, and overcoming hostility.

Each week I am going to be grading you on one of these persuasive strategies and we will discuss how we can truly incorporate the strategy into our writing.



# Teaching Artist and Teacher Directory March 2007

## TEACHING ARTISTS

### *Julia Loiza Gutierrez-Rivera & Juango Gutierrez*

#### **Afro-Puerto Rican Bomba and Plena music & dance**

Los Pleneros de la 21  
1680 Lexington Avenue Room 209  
NY, NY 10029  
(212) 427-5221 Voice  
(212) 427 5339 Fax  
[www.losplenerosdela21.org](http://www.losplenerosdela21.org)

Juango Gutierrez, teaching artist experience 25+ years [pleneros21@aol.com](mailto:pleneros21@aol.com)  
Julia Gutierrez-Rivera, teaching artist experience 3, [rioloizapr@yahoo.com](mailto:rioloizapr@yahoo.com)

Los Pleneros de la 21 (LP21) is a not for profit organization which serves the Puerto Rican/Latino community. LP21 is also a performing ensemble which preserves the Afro-Puerto Rican traditions of The Bomba and Plena. They are based in "El Barrio," which is East Harlem in New York City. LP21 presents the traditional Bomba and Plena from Puerto Rico in venues all over New York and around the world. They have performed from coast to coast all of the US and Canada and have even performed in Russia and Hawaii.

### *Alexander LaSalle*

#### **Afro-Puerto Rican Bomba & Caribbean Music**

Alma Moyo Afro-Puerto Rican Drumming Troupe  
2674 Valentine Ave. #3B  
Bronx, NY 10458  
cell: 646 489-1203  
[alexanderlasalle@yahoo.com](mailto:alexanderlasalle@yahoo.com)  
[www.almamoyo.com](http://www.almamoyo.com)  
Teaching artist experience: 6 years

Alma Moyó is an Afro-Boricua musical group dedicated to the preservation of Puerto Rico's oldest living African musical and cultural tradition, la bomba. Founded in 2002, under the musical direction of Alexander Vale LaSalle from Moca, Puerto Rico, the group's 13 members are a talented mix of musicians, educators and historians dedicated to empowering people of the African Diaspora by sharing Borinquen's potent legacy of bomba music.

### *Jose Figueroa*

#### **Afro-Dominican and Haitian music & dance**

Grupo Kalunga  
330 East 26th Street Apt. 4G  
New York, NY 10010  
phone: 212-545-8505  
Cell: 646-651-8281  
[grupokalunga@yahoo.com](mailto:grupokalunga@yahoo.com)  
[www.myspace.com/grupokalunga](http://www.myspace.com/grupokalunga)

Grupo Kalunga Nèg Mawon is a musical dance ensemble that consists of members who have spent most of their lives researching and studying African culture in the Americas. Our aim is to preserve aspects of African tradition and identity existing in Quisqueya–Ayiti, known today as the Dominican Republic and The Republic of Haiti.

***Atiba Wilson***

**Storytelling & African Drumming**

[AtibaKwabena@songhaidjeli.com](mailto:AtibaKwabena@songhaidjeli.com) or [Songhaidjeli@hotmail.com](mailto:Songhaidjeli@hotmail.com)

<http://www.songhaidjeli.com/>

Teaching Experience: 20+

SONGHAI DJELI is a folkloric performance ensemble "livicated" to the traditional beliefs and customs that have evolved out of the experience of Africa and its diaspora.

Each presentation is a journey into the culture and history of this singular and yet greatly diverse people.

***Luis Da Silva aka Eli Efi***

**Brazilian Hip Hop Artist**

347-248-3121

[luis.eliefi@gmail.com](mailto:luis.eliefi@gmail.com)

<http://www.myspace.com/eliefi>

Teaching Experience: 5+

Eli Efi (LF) is a hip hop artist that blends banging beats, politics, and a global perspective. LF is a well-known hip hop pioneer in Brasil hailing from São Paulo. In 1988, he founded the politically charged rap group DMN and went on to record five albums receiving praise from the hip hop community and music industry alike. A firm believer that jumping on stage and grabbing a mic isn't enough, LF has worked in numerous community based and political projects. He is a member of Abevic, a neighborhood association that uses hip hop culture to work with young people to promote radical change, critical thinking, and cooperative work. Most recently, he was an educator for a series of arts and political education workshops sponsored by Zulu Nation Brasil in São Paulo. In 2004, Eli Efi left DMN and now continues his musical career alongside DJ Laylo. Laylo hails from the South Bronx by way of the Dominican Republic. Together, they bring hip hop back to a place where MCs rocked alongside DJs to move the crowd but with an international flavor with LF rhyming in Portuguese and Laylo always finding a way to blend some Samba or Salsa into the brew. They have performed throughout the United States, Brasil, Mexico, Colombia, and Chile and have shared the stage with U.S. Based artists such as Styles P, Dead Prez, Talib Kweli, Jean Grae, Jeru da Damaja, Immortal Technique, Ras Kass, Lord Finesse, CL Smooth, and others.

***Ayanna Maia Saulsberry***

***T-Shirt Printing & Design, Theater, Poetry, and Hip Hop***

Cell: 646-594-5445

<http://www.myspace.com/asky45lovers>

[mielamorena@yahoo.com](mailto:mielamorena@yahoo.com)

Teaching Experience: 5 years

More than a playwright and a scholar, Ayanna is a performer, designer, and media arts teacher. She has taught various workshops in the New York Public Schools promoting self-esteem and "coming to voice" in pre-adolescent girls in addition along with audio workshops for social activism and life-enhancing lyricism. As a former member and consultant of various independent and progressive hip-hop music collectives including The Vinyl Junkies and Toni Blackman's Freestyle Union, Ayanna has performed poetry, rhymed, spun records and recorded music since she was a teenager.



## ***Philogene Vilmar & The Baobab Tree***

Mailing Address Only:

310 Convent Ave.

New York, NY 10031

Cell: 646-244-0774

baobabwayphil@aol.com

<http://www.myspace.com/thebaobabtree>

The Baobab tree is a: \*Black-Owned Business \*Gallery \*Classroom \*Wood/Workshop and \*Cultural & Community Space Founded 26 years ago, The Baobab Tree was founded by Philogene Vilmar, an artist of Haitian descent that grew up in New York. Phil's store and community place has always been on Amsterdam Avenue in Harlem, with only one move since its founding. Dedicated to servicing the art and Harlem community, the Baobab is a black-owned business that provides art services and community programs.

## **TEACHERS/EDUCATOR/TEACHING ARTIST PARTICIPANTS**

### ***Manuela Arciniegas***

*Founder & Director, Arts Organizer*

*The Legacy Circle*

*c/o CCCADI*

*408 West 58 Street*

*NY NY 10019*

[Manuela@thelegacycircle.org](mailto:Manuela@thelegacycircle.org)

[www.thelegacycircle.org](http://www.thelegacycircle.org)

Race/Ethnicity: Afro-Dominican

212-307-7420 ext. 3012

Cell: 646-924-7187

### ***Angela Dixon***

*Teaching Artist*

*Whedco Afterschool program, Bronx*

*262 Taaffe Place, Apt. 508*

*Brooklyn, NY 11205*

phone: 646-662-5249

email: [angela.dixon@nyu.edu](mailto:angela.dixon@nyu.edu)

Race/Ethnicity: Multiethnic -- Black American/Thai

Years and Grades taught: 3 months, 5th through 8th

Subjects taught: Dance, Cultural Arts, Music

### ***Rachael Ibrahim***

*Social Worker/ Community Organizer*

*Manhattan and Brooklyn*

*676 Park Place, Apt. 3*

*Brooklyn, NY 11216*

phone: 269-267-1356

email: [Rachael.Ibrahim@gmail.com](mailto:Rachael.Ibrahim@gmail.com)

Race/Ethnicity: Nigerian, Lebanese, German-American

Years and Grades taught: All- prefer High School, 6 years

Subjects taught: Civic Engagement, Service Learning, Social Change

### ***Tene A. Howard***

*Educator/Youth Development Specialist*

*High School for Global Citizenship, Brooklyn*

*5000 Broadway, 6N*

*New York, NY 10034*

home phone: 212-567-8696

cell: 917-747-6095 (better than home)

email: [teneahoward@gmail.com](mailto:teneahoward@gmail.com)

Race/Ethnicity: Guyanese American/ Black

Subjects taught: Social Studies, Dance, Social Activism, Media Production, Youth Development

Years and Grades taught: 7th grade - 12th grade, 7 years

### ***Ayana Saulsberry***

*Teacher/Artists/Health Educator*

*Brooklyn/Manhattan*

*305 Ocean Avenue, #Q8*

*Brooklyn, New York 11225*

cell: 646-594-5445

email: [mielamorena@yahoo.com](mailto:mielamorena@yahoo.com)

Race/Ethnicity: Black

Years and Grades taught: 5th - 12th, 5 years

Subjects taught: Hip Hop (Literacy via Lyricism), African Diaspora Aesthetics

### ***Cara Tait***

*Educator/English Teacher*

*The Green School*

*223 Graham Avenue*

*Brooklyn, New York 11203*

phone: 718-757-5889

Race/Ethnicity: Cuban/ African American

Subjects taught: English, Humanities

Years and Grades taught: 2 years, 9th, 11th and 12th

**Jessica Valoris**

**Student, Brooklyn**

435 Jefferson Ave.

Brooklyn, New York 11221

cell: 301-537-4117

email: creyente123@yahoo.com

Race/Ethnicity: Black

Subjects taught: History, Black History

Years and Grades taught: n/a

**Ama Codjoe**

**Educator/Artist, Bronx**

717 Kelly Street, Apt. 4A

Bronx, NY 10455

phone: 718-993-2861

email: ama\_codjoe@hotmail.com

Race/Ethnicity: African American

Subjects taught: History, Dance, Poetry

Years and Grades taught: 6 years, 5th, 6th, 9th, 10th and 12th

**Basirat Ottun**

*Special Education Teacher, 8th grade inclusion*

**MS 352, Crown Heights Brooklyn**

71 Truxton Street

Brooklyn, New York 11233

phone: 401-359-3415

email: bottun@gmail.com

Race/Ethnicity: Black/ Nigerian American

Subjects taught: Special Ed., background in ethnic studies and sociology

Years and Grades taught: 2 years, 8th grade

**Natalia Ortiz**

*Teacher, HS Social Studies*

*West Brooklyn Community High School*

540 Main Street, #1324

New York, New York 10044

phone: 212-753-6365

cell: 646-243-6289

email: natalia.be.love@gmail.com

Race/Ethnicity: Latina (Puerto Rican and Chilean)

Subjects taught: History, Government and Spanish

Years and Grades taught: 2 years, 9th - 12th

**Diana Quinones**

*6th Grade Humanities Teacher*

617 West 170th Street, Apt. #1E

New York, NY 10032

917-558-7331

[Diana.quinones@gmail.com](mailto:Diana.quinones@gmail.com)

New Day Academy in the Bronx, NY

Race/Ethnicity: Puerto Rican & Jewish

Grades Taught: 5th, 6th, Kindergarten, High School, 4 years experience.

**Megan Selby**

*5th Grade Teacher*

PS 224, Brooklyn New York

1116 89th Ave, #3

Brooklyn, New York 11215

phone: 812-391-0491

email: meganselby@gmail.com

Race/Ethnicity: White

Years and Grades taught: 1 yr, 5th grade all subjects

**Katie Melcher**

*5th Grade Teacher*

**PS 224, Brooklyn**

124 Berkeley Place, #1

Brooklyn, New York 11217

phone: 608-358-2262

email: kate.melcher@gmail.com

Race/Ethnicity: White

Years and Grades taught: 1 yr, 5th grade all subjects