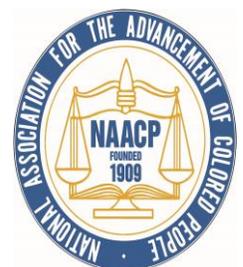


***Teaching
Intersectionality
and Environmental
Justice in Our
Classrooms***



Teaching Intersectionality and Environmental Justice in Our Classrooms

Particularly given the [results](#) of the latest report released by the [Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change](#), we must ask ourselves some critical questions about how we prepare our children to face the world they will be inheriting, and the harsh truth of today's conditions and dynamics. How do we ensure that our youth emerge from their studies with an understanding of the intersection between our social, economic, cultural, political, and environmental status in society? How do we teach them their role as influencers of what's happening in their environment, now and in the future?



The reality of being a youth of color and/or a youth living in a low income community means that, due to socio-political marginalization, already one is more likely to be [located next to a polluting facility](#) and/or living in a county whose air quality is in violation of already lax federal standards. And, our youth are more likely to have the very building that houses their institution of learning built on toxic, [contaminated land](#). We see how this plays out in high rates of asthma, attention deficit disorder, learning problems, and even [violence](#), all of which are tied to exposure to toxins. We also see this manifest in missed days of school for children, missed days of work for parents who are sick themselves and/or caring for sick children, etc. We also see [lower property values because of proximity to toxic facilities](#), which means under-resourced schools and compromised education. These youth are caught in a cycle of pollution, illness, poor education, negative interactions with the criminal justice system, economic blight, which detracts from youth's ability to achieve and their families' capacity to thrive.



Our classrooms must integrate the concept of intersectionality into instruction in order to make lessons relevant to the reality of the lives of these youth, resulting in helping students identify how they can be agents of change in their lives and in their communities. There are numerous inspiring examples of [youth who have seized the reins](#) and are making a transformational impact on their communities and we need to foster more. Youth in Curtis Bay, MD through the United Workers committee, ["Free Your Voice"](#), are actively fighting back against a proposed incinerator which would further contaminate an already pollution-burdened community. [Youth organizing with UPROSE](#) in Brooklyn, NY youth are learning to plant, compost and harvest to ensure better food security in their neighborhoods. In Western

Massachusetts, the [Toxic Soil Busters](#), a youth-run worker cooperative, is making sure their community is protected from lead that contaminates their land while creating jobs. In Richmond, CA youth with [Communities for a Better Environment](#) are engaging on fighting pollution from the Chevron Oil Refinery and stewarding the transition to clean energy. These are just a few of the types of tip-of-the-spear leadership being exercised by youth across the country.



Systems focused on profit instead of the planet and her people, resulting in irresponsible practices, have left today's youth with a polluted, climate change threatened/impacted earth that they must now try to clean up to improve quality of life today and to mitigate the coming catastrophic conditions. Studies show that youth of color are [underrepresented](#) in Science, Engineering, Technology, and Mathematics (STEM) Studies. This leads to underrepresentation in key industries such as the energy and environmental sciences sectors, and, by extension, decision making and implementation bodies such as the Public Service/Utilities Commissions, the Environmental Protection Agency, etc. We have an obligation to motivate and equip our youth with the framing, analysis, tools and space to utilize their emerging leadership, intellect, and creativity to fulfill a vision of a sustainable planet for themselves and future generations.



The Environmental Justice Classroom Resource Guide provides a list of clearinghouse websites with multiple environmental justice (EJ) resources for various age groups, a list of individual EJ lesson plans for various age groups, and a short list of hip-hop videos/songs to help engage youth in classroom settings and beyond.



Please let us know if there are other resources we should add to this list! Also, please let us know if you have feedback to share as you use the various resources. We wish you well in using these tools to integrate EJ into your classrooms, and/or community work, and/or advocate for others to do the same.





Environmental Justice Classroom Resource Guide

RESOURCE LIST WEBPAGES

- I. National Institutes for Environmental Health Sciences—Resources for Educators
<http://www.niehs.nih.gov/health/scied/teachers/>
- II. Classroom Activities—Superfund
http://www.epa.gov/superfund/students/class_act/index.htm
- III. Taking it to the Class: Green Projects for the Classroom
<http://www.edutopia.org/environmentally-conscious-lesson-ideas>
- IV. Environmental Justice Teacher Resources
<http://www.lessonplanet.com/lesson-plans/environmental-justice>
- V. Environmental Justice Curriculum Resources
<http://worldsavvy.org/community-resources/sustainable-communities-theme-resources/curriculum-resources/>
- VI. Center for Ecogenics and Environmental Health—Resources for Educators
<http://depts.washington.edu/ceeh/educators/k12-resources.html>

INDIVIDUAL LESSON PLANS

- a. Environmental Justice (general)
<http://www.tolerance.org/supplement/environmental-justice-middle-grades>
- b. Poverty and Natural Disasters
<http://www.tolerance.org/supplement/poverty-and-natural-disasters-exploring-connections-middle-a>
- c. Editorial Cartoons: Poverty and Environmental Justice
<http://www.tolerance.org/lesson/editorial-cartoons-povertyenvironmental-justice>
- d. Introducing Kids to the Idea of Environmental Racism
<http://www.tolerance.org/lesson/introducing-kids-idea-environmental-racism>
- e. Environmental Justice: Investigating Landfills
<http://jharmseenvironmentaljusticeunit.weebly.com/lesson-4.html>
- f. Action for Environmental Justice
<http://files.earthday.net/earthdaycurriculum/environmentaljusticefiles/Action%20for%20Environmental%20Justice%209-12%20Lesson%20Plan.pdf>
- g. Environmental Justice and Social Action
<http://www.tip.sas.upenn.edu/curriculum/units/2012/01/12.01.04.pdf>

- h. E-Cycling for Environmental Justice
<http://edu.earthday.org/e-cycling-environmental-justice>
- i. Green Jobs and Environmental Justice
<http://edu.earthday.org/green-jobs-and-environmental-justice>
- j. Whose Resource Is It?
<http://susdev.agecon.vt.edu/curriculum/Environmental%20Justice.pdf>
- k. And Justice for All? Environmental Health, Racism, Equality
<http://www.thinkport.org/Tools/ContentViewer/ContentPreview.aspx?ContentID=c9eca937-f539-4807-8f1e-89ea9ee0dcef>
- l. Unnatural Causes: Is Inequality Making Us Sick?
http://www.unnaturalcauses.org/discussion_guides.php
- m. Our Place in the Web of Life
<http://uuministryforearth.org/EJ-Curriculum>
- n. Environmental Racism
<http://www.asanet.org/introsociology/LessonPlans/Lesson%20PlanEnvironmentalRacism042408.htm>
- o. What Is Environmental Health?
http://phpa.dhmh.maryland.gov/OEHFP/EH/Shared%20Documents/curriculum/8GRD_EH_Lssn.pdf
- p. Chemicals in the Environment
<http://www.ithaca.edu/hs/psychology/looksharp/?action=chemicals>
- q. Environmental Justice Ethics Analysis
<http://yyy.rsmas.miami.edu/groups/ambient/teacher/ethics/ethics.html>
- r. Center for Culturally Responsible Urban Education (CRUE) Discussion Guide: Environmental Justice
<http://www.cruecenter.org/update.php?page=121310>
- s. Environmental Justice: Parks in Our Community
<http://jharmсенenvironmentaljusticeunit.weebly.com/lesson-3.html>
- t. Gulf Oil Disaster
<http://www.tolerance.org/activity/environmental-justice>
- u. Environmental Justice: Love Canal and What You Can Do
<http://jharmсенenvironmentaljusticeunit.weebly.com/lesson-1.html>
- v. Environmental Justice: Reorganizing the City of Polyville
<http://jharmсенenvironmentaljusticeunit.weebly.com/lesson-2.html>
- w. Introducing Children to Environmental Justice: A North Carolina Case Study
<http://www.learnnc.org/lp/pages/6968>
- x. Teaching the Levees: Katrina and Environmental Justice
http://teachingthelevees.org/?page_id=54
- y. Environmental Injustice Reporting the Facts 5-Part Lesson
 - i. Research the Facts
<http://lessonplanspage.com/lasciencessearthdayreportingenvironmentalinjusticeunitlesson168-htm/>
 - ii. View the Powerpoint
<http://lessonplanspage.com/lasciencessearthdayreportingenvironmentalinjusticeunitlesson268-htm-2/>
 - iii. Go on the WebQuest
<http://lessonplanspage.com/LAScienceSSEarthDayReportingEnvironmentalInjusticeUnitLesson368.htm/>
 - iv. Create the Television Newscast
<http://lessonplanspage.com/lasciencessearthdayreportingenvironmentalinjusticeunitlesson468-htm/>
 - v. Make the Presentation
<http://lessonplanspage.com/lasciencessearthdayreportingenvironmentalinjusticeunitlesson568-htm/>

YOUTH FOCUSED SONGS/VIDEOS

- 7 Billion Strong: Power to the People
<http://www.tolerance.org/supplement/environmental-justice-middle-grades>
- Global Warning—Earth Amplified
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aV3C-e2ukWw>
- Clean Up The Air
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PLaEQZlyKs>
- Gallo—Ima Push
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gXBIFgQKSMY>
- Climate Control (audio only)
<http://getyourgreencrew.bandcamp.com/track/climate-control>
- Stop the Incinerator—Free Your Voice
<http://vimeo.com/79650720>

QUESTIONS? CONTACT: Jacqui Patterson jpatterson@naacpnet.org