

RE:ACTION

Curriculum Guide

A guide to support 9th through 12th grade educators in Illinois interested in exploring the impact of mass incarceration on the people and communities that comprise our state.



Why RE:ACTION for Educators?

Since 2017, Illinois Humanities' [Envisioning Justice](#) program has been centering the voices and experiences of people impacted by mass incarceration and using arts and humanities to help people envision alternatives to the injustices of the status quo. One of the tools we created in this effort is the online exhibition, [Envisioning Justice RE:ACTION](#).

The interactive exhibition, launched in 2022, consists of projects created by Illinois-based artists and humanists who engage with issues such as recidivism, wrongful convictions, and reentry through art, creative and nonfiction writing, music, and video. Each project is accompanied by a prompt that encourages reflection, creativity, connection, and action.

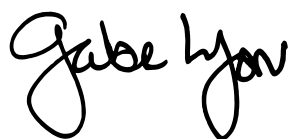
The content featured in RE:ACTION is uniquely relevant and timely given current events and policy actions in Illinois. **Upon its launch, however, the site did not support educators to easily use the content with students.**

The opportunity to connect educators and their students with the questions raised by Envisioning Justice was undeniably exciting, but also intimidating. So, we turned to teachers for help.

The lesson plans you find here were crafted by teachers for teachers.

I very much hope we've been able to contribute a useful arts- and humanities-based resource that supports students' civics education requirements. But even more so, as a long-time educator myself, I hope that we are helping teachers and students have conversations about what justice can — and should — look like, and how, together, we might envision alternatives to the world we know and build the world we want, need, and deserve.

Sincerely,



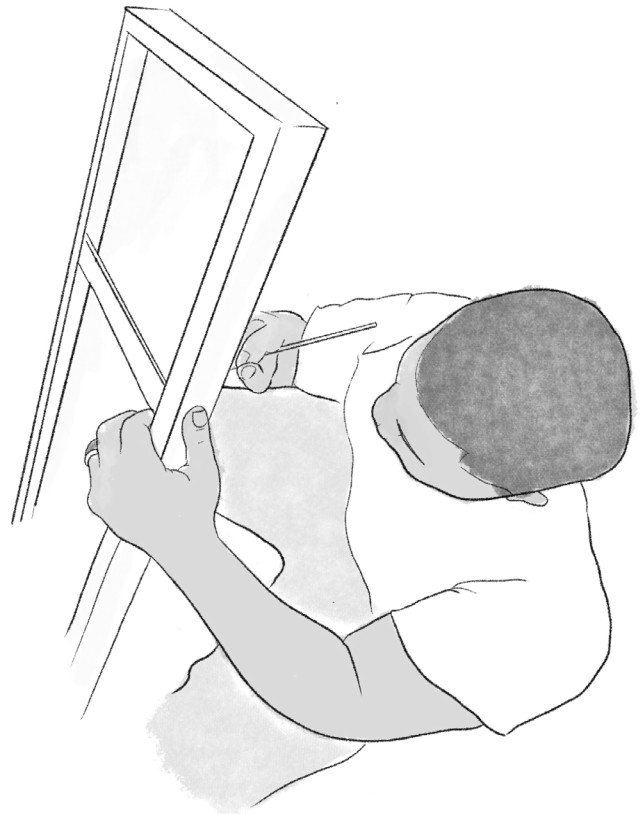
Gabrielle H. Lyon
Executive Director, Illinois Humanities

About Illinois Humanities

Illinois Humanities is a statewide nonprofit organization that activates the humanities through *free public programs, grants, and educational opportunities* that spark conversation, foster reflection, build community, and strengthen civic engagement *for everyone in Illinois*. We envision an Illinois where the humanities are central to making the state more *just, creative, and connected*.

About Envisioning Justice

Since 2017, Envisioning Justice has created free public arts and humanities programs in partnership with communities and people affected by the carceral system and provided grant funding for individuals, nonprofits, and collectives. Together, we examine the causes and impacts of mass incarceration, foster conversation, and empower diverse perspectives in order to *imagine community-based solutions together*.



Envisioning Justice

RE:ACTION Curriculum Guide

This guide is intended to support 9th through 12th grade Illinois educators who are interested in exploring the impact of mass incarceration on the people and communities that comprise our state. It engages with Illinois Humanities' Envisioning Justice RE:ACTION project, an online interactive exhibition and activation kit (envisioningjustice.org) and it is aligned with Illinois State Learning Standards in Social Science, English Language Arts, and Fine Arts. (We also believe these lessons are very adaptable to different learning goals as you'll see below!)

Illinois Humanities believes the humanities and arts are critical to helping us think deeply about both justice and injustice and imagine creative, just, and connected futures. We hope you will find this guide and the site rich, thought-provoking, and adaptable to your classrooms. As you practice these lessons with your students, we also hope you will share your feedback with us: education@ilhumanities.org.



Acknowledgments

This guide, like the Envisioning Justice program itself, is a tribute to the power of collaboration and collective purpose. It would not have been possible without the generous mentorship of Nora Flanagan and Dr. Asif Wilson, who helped to bring together a skillful, creative group of educators to develop these lessons. The lessons were created by Eraldy Ballesteros, Kayce Bayer, Rebecca Coven, Nora Flanagan, Francisco Thornton Gonzalez, Alissa Irvin, Whitney Jean, Rachel McMillian, James Sloan, and Kee Taylor. Meredith Nnoka contributed thoughtful facilitation and administrative support for these educators. In addition to our lesson creators, eleven Illinois high school teachers dedicated their time and advice to the development of the guide by participating in focus groups, which proved essential to expanding the resources list and writing the “how to use this guide” essay. Enormous thanks go to Nora Flanagan for reviewing, refining, and formatting all of the lessons, drafting parts of the guide, and co-facilitating our focus group discussions.

In addition to the team that produced the guide’s content, we also want to thank the long-time Illinois Humanities team, past and present, that stewarded Envisioning Justice RE:ACTION, including Jane Beachy, Alyssa Bierce, Meredith Nnoka, Willy Palomo, Tony Pizarro, and Tyreece Williams. Our design and communications team has ensured that the guide is readable, easy to locate, and beautiful to see. Thanks to Alyssa Bierce, Gabby Curtis, Morven Higgins, Sarah Sommers, and Tia Williams.

Finally, nothing happens at Illinois Humanities without the guidance of our Executive Director Gabrielle Lyon, our board, and our brilliant staff — or without the visionary support of our funders. The Art for Justice Fund and the Polk Bros. Foundation were critical to helping us conceptualize the educational components of Envisioning Justice RE:ACTION. We are ever grateful for the trust our partners and funders have put into promoting this work.

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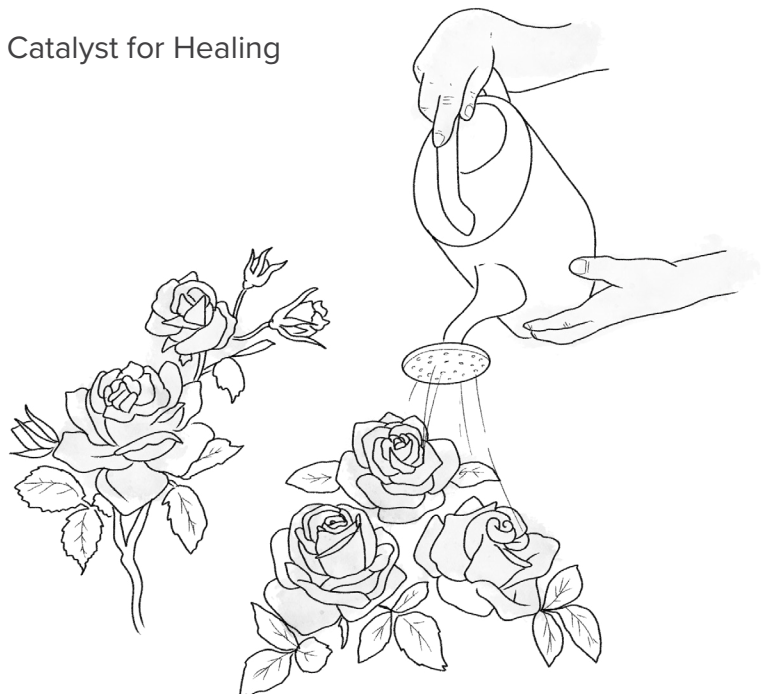
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Introduction

By Dr. Asif Wilson

How might we envision justice in an unjust world? Since 2017, the Envisioning Justice Program at Illinois Humanities has produced a number of multidisciplinary works created by Illinois artists that use the arts and the humanities to imagine a world free of mass incarceration. The **Envisioning Justice RE:ACTION Curriculum Guide** is a compendium of those works, transformed into lesson plans for teachers' use. This 12-part curriculum aims to support students in 9th-12th grade to explore mass incarceration and act towards its abolition. More specifically, it is a standards- and inquiry-based curriculum aimed towards creating teaching and learning contexts for students (with the support of their teachers) to generate rich questions, carry out critical and relevant investigations, develop and enact systemic analyses of harm and freedom, and both imagine and build the conditions related to a post-carceral world.

We invite teachers interested in using this guide to explore it with breadth and depth. It is full of curricular resources to activate your classroom. Use the stories, the works, and the guidance shared within its pages in ways that both supplement and transform your curricular and pedagogical practices. The guide transforms the stories, analyses, and dreams within Envisioning Justice RE:ACTION into tangible learning experiences for students, bringing the work of Envisioning Justice to a wider audience. In doing so, we have created curricular and pedagogical tools and support that invite students to critically read and rewrite their worlds. Each of the 12 lessons within the **Envisioning Justice RE:ACTION Curriculum Guide** places students at the forefront of their learning, creating opportunities for them to deepen their understanding of carcerality and oppression. Students will explore incarceration, police torture, confinement, local and international implications for state violence, concepts of confession and resistance. The lessons also create space for students to dream about and actualize freedom. They will develop sociopolitical analyses of harm and healing while also creating artistic expressions that tell their stories to the world. Each lesson introduces students to varying methods of storytelling and action. We hope that teachers can take up these humanities-based approaches as viable pedagogical tools to engage students in the freedom dreaming necessary to explore alternatives to harm.

In her book, *Freedom is a Constant Struggle* (2016) Angela Davis writes, “every change that has happened has come as a result of mass movements” (p. 36). She goes on to write, “movements require time to develop and mature. They don’t happen spontaneously” (p. 36). It is our hope that this guide can support teachers and students building the time and space necessary to imagine and construct movements that decenter punishment and surveillance, creating opportunities for them to learn about oppression but also dismantle it.

How to Use These Resources

This work is the result of collaboration among educators from across Illinois, who teach every grade level and *many* subject areas, and who range from seasoned veterans to first-year teachers. We hope we are providing a set of lesson plans and activities that are simultaneously ready-to-use *and* easily adaptable, but we also want to provide some guidance on how best to approach and use these plans, as well as how they can be adjusted for different grade levels, subject areas, abilities and disabilities, and languages.

Context Matters

When **Envisioning Justice RE:ACTION** first launched, Illinois Humanities assembled a collection of [supplementary resources](#) to support educators, especially those who might be less familiar with prison abolition and other work against mass incarceration. We encourage you to explore those resources before implementing these lessons and activities to build up your comfort level and confidence to better support your students.

Additionally, teachers may have concerns about the subject matter and language in some of the texts and materials in these lessons. We recommend reviewing some suggestions for how to approach such texts with your students, especially [Strategies for Addressing Racist and Dehumanizing Language in Literature](#), from Facing History and Ourselves.

Adaptable Content

Beyond these initial resources, educators have requested additional supports to help them prepare and deliver these lessons more adeptly and to a broader range of students:

- Educators who reviewed these lessons with us immediately spotted opportunities for interdisciplinary, project-based, and service learning models. We agree! If you're newer to interdisciplinary planning, Carleton College offers a great [introductory guide](#).
- For project-based learning, any number of creations or assessments in these plans can be expanded to function more summatively while still meaningfully connected to state standards.
- To add a service learning component, we recommend the [Illinois Civics Hub's Service Learning Toolkit](#) to help build out any number of these lessons to help students fulfill their service learning requirement. The lessons may also work well with Chicago Public Schools' Participate Civics Course.

- **Illinois ELA Standards:** Several teachers noted how easily the lessons built for fine arts or social science classes could be adapted for use in English Language Arts classes, so we're providing those state standards, too.
- These lessons complement a number of standardized curricula, including Chicago Public Schools' Skyline Curriculum.
- You may notice these lessons are "stackable", which means you may want to combine a lesson or two (or three) to explore different aspects of carcerality and post-carcerality.

Adaptable Time Frames

Our lessons are built around the range of time frames we know exist in school schedules all across Illinois: most schools operate on a traditional 8-period day in which classes are approximately 50 minutes long, but more and more schools continue moving to a block schedule model, where classes meet two or three times a week for 90-100 minutes. We want all Illinois teachers to see their schedules reflected, so we've left that range in the lesson plans. We hope teachers can imagine how they can adjust a set of plans to fit their school's schedule, but we are also happy to work with teachers who need support making adjustments.

Similarly, some of these lessons will seem too dense, too expansive, too rushed, or too leisurely for your classroom and student population. This is actually a good thing. The lessons are constructed incrementally so that teachers can spot ways to build out, trim an activity, level up a set of texts, or otherwise change the plan to fit their students' needs. Do not feel compelled or obligated to teach these lessons exactly as written, but **we do want to emphasize the importance of protecting time for reflection and student voice.** Make the changes you need, and then reach out to Illinois Humanities to tell us what worked!

Lessons



School-to-Prison Nexus & Freedom Dreaming

Grade: 9-12

Class: American History, AP Government, Law, Sociology, or other Social Science elective

Days: 2

Class structure: 90-minute blocks (adaptable)

Lesson Rationale

Learning Goals and Focus (Quick overview of lesson focus):

Our students deserve to bring their whole selves into the classroom. They deserve to learn in brave, affirming, and liberatory spaces. However, we know that isn't always the case in schools.

We know that schools can often replicate and/or perpetuate systems of oppression. This is particularly true when we consider the school-to-prison nexus. In attempts to address this problem, we often spend a lot of time talking about what isn't working in schools and the barriers that are getting in the way. It is important to acknowledge some of those barriers, but it is also important to move beyond those barriers and think about what we are fighting *for*, not what we are fighting *against*. We need to think about **what school would look like if it was designed for US**. *This* is what we should be fighting for.

What would it look like if our education system was rooted in liberation?

Liberation is the act or experience of freedom from systems of constraint, confinement, or oppression. It is something rooted in very clear freedom, in equity, in diversity, in inclusion and affirmation of the whole experience. Liberation is something that is rooted in antiracist and antibias work. It is something rooted in solidarity and coalition building across lines of difference. In that coalition building, it is something that centers the voices of BIPOC (Black, Indigenous, & people of color). And it is also something deeply rooted in joy.

In this two-day lesson, we will practice **freedom dreaming** together: envisioning an education experience that is designed for *US* and that works towards a more just and free society. This work is going to require students to be creative and to reimagine. Students will have to think beyond the boundaries of what they have experienced and what they thought possible. The lesson will culminate in students envisioning their dream educational institutions.

Lesson Objectives: SWBAT (Students will be able to...)

SWBAT *investigate* how we are impacted by the school-to-prison nexus

SWBAT *identify* what a brave, affirming, and liberatory space looks like for them

SWBAT *create* a vision of school that centers their needs and enables their liberation

SWBAT *justify* their vision using the texts we have explored

Illinois State Learning Standards addressed:

SS.IS.8.9-12. Use interdisciplinary lenses to analyze the causes and effects of and identify solutions to local, regional, or global concerns.

ELA CC.9-10.SL.1.c Comprehension and Collaboration: Propel conversations by posing and responding to questions that relate the current discussion to broader themes or larger ideas; actively incorporate others into the discussion; and clarify, verify, or challenge ideas and conclusions.

ELA CC.9-10.SL.1.d Comprehension and Collaboration: Respond thoughtfully to diverse perspectives, summarize points of agreement and disagreement, and, when warranted, qualify or justify their own views and understanding and make new connections in light of the evidence and reasoning presented.

ELA CC.9-10.SL.5 Presentation of Knowledge and Ideas: Make strategic use of digital media (e.g., textual, graphical, audio, visual, and interactive elements) in presentations to enhance understanding of findings, reasoning, and evidence and to add interest.

Essential Questions:

1. What is the school-to-prison nexus?
2. What would it look like if our education system was rooted in liberation?
3. How does this lesson connect to students' cultural, personal, and/or academic backgrounds?

Additional considerations and notes:

In this lesson we use the term “school-to-prison nexus” as opposed to “school-to-prison pipeline.” We do this because the term “pipeline” refers strictly to the ways that school disciplinary practices disproportionately steer students of color towards contact with the criminal legal system, thus contributing to mass incarceration. However, the term “nexus” encompasses the many practices — beyond just disciplinary practices — that schools and prisons have in common and that condition us to see people of color as “dangerous” and in need of surveillance. The school-to-prison nexus isn’t just about disproportionate disciplinary outcomes — it is also about the implicit biases that lead to the disproportionate disciplinary outcomes.

Materials needed

Day 1:

- [Chasing Hearts — Envisioning Justice](#)
- [The school-to-prison nexus slides](#)
- Chart paper
- [The school-to-prison nexus infographics](#) (one per chart paper)
- Video: [The school-to-prison pipeline, explained](#)
- [Today’s students experience...](#) (one copy per student)
- Index cards

Day 2:

- [Instructions: Map Your Freedom Dream for your School Community](#)
- [Brainstorming: Map Your Freedom Dream](#)
 - [Video for exercise #3: “I Deserve That” by Oompa ft. Cliff Notez](#)
- [Example map your freedom dreams](#) (made by students)
- Colored paper, markers, colored pencils
- *Optional:* [Supplemental texts: freedom dreaming](#)
 - *Note to educators:* This lesson can optionally be expanded into a mini-project or mini-unit learning about the different purposes that education can serve. This document includes a variety of texts that can be used to help students think critically/expand their thinking about different purposes education can serve.

Project Timeline	
<u>Day 1</u>	
<u>Time</u>	<u>Activity</u>
15 minutes	<p>Warm up: The exhibit “Chasing Hearts” by Renaldo Hudson is a five-part video series of conversations between Renaldo Hudson, Director of Education at the Illinois Prison Project, and others around Illinois and nationwide who are committed to the struggle for justice. Renaldo’s guests include returning citizens, activists, community leaders, and many others who discuss the impacts of long-term or life without parole sentences on those who receive them.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Play “Chasing Hearts” Episode 4 for the entire class. <i>10 minutes</i> b. After watching Episode 4 as a whole class, discuss: what do you think Renaldo Hudson means when he says, “The prison system is the system that continues the process and the philosophy of being a slave. They don’t teach you independence; they teach you complete dependency?” <i>5 minutes</i> c. Tell students that over the next couple of days, we are going to consider how this might apply to our school systems.
15 minutes	<p>Infographic chalk talk.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Tell students: Around the room there are 4 posters, each with an infographic related to the school-to-prison nexus. For each one, you should write at least one of the following: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> i. Notice: What do you notice or what stands out to you about this infographic? ii. Wonder: What question(s) does this infographic raise for you? iii. Response: You may respond to something a classmate wrote on the chart paper. b. Share out: After allowing time to write on the chart paper, bring everyone back together to share out and discuss what they noticed and wondered.

<p>10 minutes</p>	<p>Watch The school-to-prison pipeline, explained.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Define important terms: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> i. <u>School-to-prison nexus</u>: “School to Prison nexus analyzes the relationship between mass suspension and mass incarceration as well as the relationship between the growing wealth gap, residential segregation, and violence as continuous states of incarceration that span across home, school, and prison for vulnerable people.” (Metropolitan Center for Research on Equity and the Transformation of Schools) ii. <u>Zero tolerance</u>: Policies that criminalize minor infractions of school rules, while cops in schools lead to students being criminalized for behavior that should be handled inside the school. Students of color are especially vulnerable to push-out trends and the discriminatory application of discipline.” (ACLU) b. Use slides 4-5 to discuss how the school-to-prison nexus functions and who is most impacted by it.
<p>25 minutes</p>	<p>What contributes to the school-to-prison nexus?</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Put students in pairs or groups of 3. Each pair will be assigned one part of the infographic on slide 6 (Today’s students experience...) to look at (prison-like environments, under investment, harsh school discipline, or pressures & uncertainty). They should discuss (and answer on the back of their infographic paper): <i>15 minutes</i> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> i. How do each of these contribute to the criminalization of students in schools? ii. How do any of these play out at our school? iii. What else is missing from this category that also contributes to the criminalization of students in schools? b. Come back together and share out. <i>10 minutes</i> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> i. Allow students to share experiences they have had or that they have witnessed in schools that could be considered a policy or practice that contributes to the school-to-prison nexus.

5 minutes	Closing: Have each student write on an index card one thing that could be done in schools to disrupt the school-to-prison nexus. Collect index cards and save for tomorrow’s discussion.
<u>Day 2</u>	
<u>Time</u>	<u>Activity</u>
5 minutes	Warm up: When you hear the words “education institution,” what words do you think of? (Answer on first page of brainstorming packet .)
10-15 minutes	<p>Rethinking what an education institution is.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Students should share out words that they think of when they hear “education institution.” Create a word cloud on the board. b. Ask: what patterns do you notice in your word cloud? <ol style="list-style-type: none"> i. Highlight words that come up that connect to or are reminiscent of the carceral state/prison industrial complex. <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. <u>Carceral state:</u> Institutions, policies, and practices of oppression and confinement, such as jails, detention centers, and prisons. 2. <u>Prison Industrial Complex:</u> “The Prison Industrial Complex is a term we use to describe the overlapping interests of government and industry that use surveillance, policing and imprisonment as solutions to economic, social and political problems” (definition from Critical Resistance). In other words, both government and private organizations construct and operate prisons and other carceral facilities in order to generate profits. c. Students should complete question #2 in exercise #1 of the packet: when you’ve been excluded from an education institution, where do you turn? In what spaces have you learned that aren’t schools?

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> d. Students share out. Note the differences between students’ responses and the word cloud. How does this change our definition/conception of what an education institution is? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Highlight that we often think first of schools when we hear “education institution,” but in fact a lot of our learning happens outside of schools and sites of formal education. e. Tell students that today we will consider the question: What would it mean to disentangle schools from the Prison Industrial Complex?
<p>5-10 minutes</p>	<p>Introduction to freedom dreaming.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Ask students what they think this quote means: “In order to do this work you will need to visualize what you are fighting for. When it comes to the work of social justice, we often become so consumed by what we are fighting against that we hardly take the time to truly envision the kinds of schools, communities, and societies that we are fighting for.” — Jamila Lyiscott, <i>Black Appetite. White Food</i> b. Tell students: We know that schools can often replicate and/or perpetuate systems of oppression. In attempts to address this problem, we often spend a lot of time talking about what isn’t working in schools and the barriers that are getting in the way. It is important to acknowledge some of those barriers, but it is also important to move beyond those barriers and think about what we are fighting <i>for</i>, not what we are fighting <i>against</i>. We need to think about what school would look like if it was designed for YOU. <i>This</i> is what we should be fighting for. c. Tell students: today we will practice freedom dreaming together: envisioning an education experience that is designed for <i>YOU</i> and that works towards a more just and free society.

<p>45 minutes</p>	<p>Freedom dreaming.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Review instructions for the Map Your Freedom Dream activity and the corresponding brainstorming packet. Show examples that were created by other students. b. Students may then work at their own pace to complete the brainstorming exercises in the packet. Once they finish the packet they can move on to mapping their freedom dreams. c. At the end of work time, have students share their maps in small groups. <ol style="list-style-type: none"> i. As they share, students should consider: What patterns did you notice in your classmates’ maps? What similarities and differences did you see? ii. Have one representative from each group share out with the class about the patterns they saw.
<p>10 minutes</p>	<p>Closing:</p> <p>Discuss: How does this activity help us dream beyond the school-to-prison nexus?</p>



Bars & Gates: COPY+PASTE+DELETE

Grade: 9-12

Class: Social Science Electives (Sociology, Psychology, US Government, etc)
or US History

Days: 3

Class structure: 50-minute periods

Lesson Rationale

Learning Goals and Focus (Quick overview of lesson focus):

Antonio Burton's *Bars & Gates: COPY+PASTE+DELETE* works to spark dialogue about the impacts of mass incarceration on residents of Decatur, Illinois. In three layers — a six-song EP, a collection of original paintings, and a documentary — Burton examines the question: “Could you see a world without prisons?” *Bars & Gates* takes up this question through a variety of media, interrogating the impacts of incarceration on those who are incarcerated and those left behind — particularly children.

Lesson Objectives: SWBAT (Students will be able to...)

SWBAT **investigate** the impacts of incarceration and confinement on children and youth in their local communities or hometowns

SWBAT **identify and describe** some of the effects of parental/familial incarceration on youth

SWBAT **imagine** what their community would look like without prisons

SWBAT **capture** personal photographs/images which depict both incarceration and freedom

Illinois State Learning Standards addressed:

SS.9-12.IS.4. Determine the kinds of sources that will be helpful in answering compelling and supporting questions, taking into consideration multiple points of view represented in the sources, the types of sources available, and the potential uses of the sources.

SS.9-12.IS.5. Gather and evaluate information from multiple primary and secondary sources that reflect the perspectives and experiences of multiple groups, including marginalized groups.

SS.9-12.IS.6. Analyze evidence and identify counter perspectives to revise or strengthen claims.

SS.9-12.IS.7. Construct arguments using precise and knowledgeable claims with evidence from multiple sources, while acknowledging counterclaims, perspectives, and biases.

SS.9-12.IS.8. Evaluate evidence to construct arguments and claims that use reasoning and account for multiple perspectives and value systems.

SS.9-12.IS.9. Develop and prepare communication by identifying stakeholders (or audiences) and evaluate what messages and media are likely to result in stakeholder support or opposition.

Essential Questions:

1. How is your particular community shaped by incarceration?
2. What are the impacts of incarceration on children and youth in your community?
3. How can we utilize the stories of children and youth impacted by incarceration to imagine a world without prisons?
4. What does a world without prisons look like? Sound like? Feel like?

Enduring Understandings:

The use of photovoice to interrogate the impacts of incarceration in local communities (particularly on children) can lead to informed imaginations of what a world without prisons could look like.

How does this lesson connect to students’ cultural, personal, and/or academic backgrounds?

This lesson plan utilizes Burton’s *Bars & Gates: COPY+PASTE+DELETE* to prompt students to investigate the impacts of incarceration and confinement on children and youth in their local communities. Additionally, through the use of photovoice, this lesson prompts students to capture images which depict both incarceration and freedom, asking students to imagine their communities, cities, or the state of Illinois without prisons. This lesson culminates in a community teach-in or community exhibit in which students share their selected photos to tell both the story of incarceration’s impact on children and youth in the community as well as their imaginations of freedom.

Additional considerations and notes:

Suggested Pre-Reads for Teacher Understanding:

- [*Locking Up Our Own: Crime and Punishment in Black America*](#) by James Forman Jr.
- [*Since I Been Down*](#) film

Materials needed

Materials needed:

- [*Visiting Dad in Prison*](#) or [*Nylo’s Story*](#)
- [*Separation takes toll on incarcerated moms and their kids*](#)
- [*Bars & Gates: COPY+PASTE+DELETE*](#)
- Printouts of the paintings found in [*Layer Two: Artwork*](#)
- Butcher paper or post-it notes and markers
- Photography devices (Camera phones, digital cameras, disposable cameras, Polaroid cameras, etc.)

Project Timeline

Day 1

<u>Time</u>	<u>Activity</u>
15 minutes	<p>Opening Activity:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Explain to students that the purpose of the lesson is for them to begin to critically investigate the impacts of incarceration and confinement on children and youth in their local communities or hometowns. Then, as a class, watch <i>Visiting Dad in Prison</i> or <i>Nylo's Story</i> (additional, supplemental videos can be found at <i>Little Children, Big Challenges: Incarceration</i>)• Following the video, read and annotate this article about the toll separation take on incarcerated moms and their kids together as a class (ask students to pay particular attention to the photographs).• Engage in a short, whole-group discussion around the following questions:<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Using evidence from the video and article, what are the impacts of incarceration on children and families?• What additional impacts do you think there might be on children — especially children who are incarcerated themselves?

<p>15 minutes</p>	<p>Use the discussion to transition and briefly describe Antonio Burton’s work and the purpose of the exhibit Bars & Gates: COPY+PASTE+DELETE (see introduction).</p> <p>Dividing the class into 6 small groups, assign each group a song to listen to, and read the lyrics from Layer One: Bars & Gates EP (2021). In the small groups, ask students to consider and discuss the following questions about their group’s song:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What lyrics or lines stand out to you? • What were some emotions conveyed in the music? Have you ever felt such emotions? • Did you make any personal connections to the music? Did it remind you of past experiences, people, or events in your life? Did it make you think of anything happening in the news? In your community? • How is incarceration and/or community freedom depicted throughout the songs? • Do the songs help you to imagine a world, Illinois, or your local community without prisons? If so, in what ways?
<p>15 minutes</p>	<p>Organize a gallery walk in the classroom for Burton’s paintings found in Layer Two: Artwork. As students participate in the gallery walk, ask them to answer the following questions for each painting:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What are your initial thoughts about this painting? • How does the painting make you feel? • What do you think is the story behind the painting? <p><i>*These can be answered on large butcher paper, post-it notes next to each painting, or in individual notebooks.</i></p>

5 minutes	<p>Closing activity:</p> <p>Following the gallery walk, briefly discuss initial impressions of the paintings (this will be discussed more in-depth on Day 2). Then revisit the Essential Questions with students and discuss what students should expect for Day 2.</p>
<p><u>Day 2</u></p>	
<p><u>Time</u></p>	<p><u>Activity</u></p>
20 minutes	<p>Opening activity:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Revisit the paintings from the gallery walk exercise and discuss the students’ notes from the exercise. Then as a class, watch <i>Layer Three: Bars & Gates Documentary</i> (15-20 minutes). Following the video, engage in a whole group discussion around the following questions: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How does Burton describe the purpose of <i>Bars & Gates: COPY+PASTE+DELETE</i> ? What are Burton’s goals with the project? • How does Burton describe some of the effects of parental/familial incarceration on youth? • What are the stories behind the paintings? • Do the stories surprise you? If so, in what ways?
25 minutes	<p>Following the video, have students research the local community’s relationship to incarceration</p> <p><i>*This activity should be open-ended and guided questions should reflect the educator’s knowledge of the local community.</i></p>
5 minutes	<p>Closing:</p> <p>Following the research activity, briefly revisit the Essential Questions with students and discuss what students should expect for Day 3.</p>

<u>Day 3</u>	
<u>Time</u>	<u>Activity</u>
5 minutes	<p>Opening activity:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Describe the process of photovoice to students. <p><i>*Photovoice is a technique that has students take photos in response to a prompt, reflect on the meaning behind their photos, and share the photos with others to find common themes. Photovoice always ends in students taking action in their schools and/or communities.</i></p>
45 minutes	<p>Community Walk/Photovoice Activity:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Remind students of the essential questions and organize a walk around the school and community in which students capture personal photographs/images which depict both incarceration and freedom.
<u>Assessment</u>	
[Flexible]	<p>Assessment:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Organize a community teach-in or exhibit for students to display their photos and discuss their research around the essential questions below: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> How is your particular community shaped by incarceration? What are the impacts of incarceration on children and youth in your community? How can we utilize the stories of children and youth impacted by incarceration to imagine a world without prisons? What does a world without prisons look like? Sound like? Feel like?



Exploring Contradictions of Mass Incarceration with Poetry and Collage

Grade: 9-12

Class: Art I or Mixed Media; adaptable for ELA classes

Days: 3

Class structure: 50-minute periods

Lesson Rationale

Learning Goals and Focus (Quick overview of lesson focus):

Anchored by the *Envisioning Justice RE:ACTION* project [Unbarred Poetics](#), this lesson seeks to invite critical questions about U.S. mass incarceration through reading and analyzing poetry that explores multifaceted experience with the carceral state in Chicago and responding by creating a visual collage inspired by the poems.

COLLAGE Project: Wisdom Juxtaposed

Make a collage responding to or illustrating a line (or verse) of text from one of the poems

- play with visual metaphor and juxtaposition to highlight the dissonance of ideas
- combine found image (and text: optional)

Lesson Objectives: SWBAT (Students will be able to...)

SWBAT *investigate and explore* meaning through visual imagery

SWBAT *reflect* on how art expresses human experience

SWBAT *interpret* lines of poetry for meaning and contrast

SWBAT *create* visual representations of poetry through collage

Illinois State Learning Standards addressed:

Visual Art: Creating1.2.I

Shape an artistic investigation of an aspect of present-day life using a contemporary practice of art or design.

Visual Art: Responding7.1.I

Hypothesize ways in which art influences perception and understanding of human experiences.

Essential Questions:

1. What are some contradictions of incarceration?
2. How does art (poetry and visual art) help us understand contradiction?
3. How does art (poetry and visual art) elevate the human experience and invite critical questions?
4. What wisdom(s) do we find in the stories of people impacted by incarceration?

How does this lesson connect to students' cultural, personal, and/or academic backgrounds?

Additional considerations and notes?

- The first section of the agenda is optional depending on what the group has already learned about the subject.
- The project work time may need to be longer to allow students to explore their ideas and search for images to express their ideas.
- The project could be individual or students could work in pairs or small groups (it might take longer for collective ideation, but the work of sourcing imagery and assembling could take less time).

Materials needed

Materials needed:

- [Unbarred Poetics](#)
- If working analog:
 - Magazine clippings
 - Scrap drawing or construction paper
 - scissors
 - glue sticks
 - cardstock or thicker paper for base of collage
 - (optional) mixed media drawing materials
- If working digitally:
 - access to computer or tablet
 - photo-editing software (Photoshop or a free online one like Pixlr)
 - images can be collected from Google image searches or free stock image sites like:
 - unsplash.com
 - wellcomecollection.org/images
 - publicdomainreview.org
 - wordpress.org/openverse
- Handout for student reflection and partner work
- Texts:
 - [What We Mean by “Mass Incarceration”](#) (brief intro)
 - pgs 23 – 25 of [PIC Zine explainer](#)
 - [Video: Mass Incarceration, Visualized](#)
- Slideshow with Collage Inspiration
- PIC Bullseye Exercise: [PICBullseyeExercise.pdf](#)

Project Timeline

Day 1: Context building: What is Mass Incarceration and the PIC (Prison Industrial Complex)?

<u>Time</u>	<u>Activity</u>
10 minutes	Share/Discuss/Map on a board: What do students already know?
30 minutes	<p>Reading:</p> <p>These texts and definitions are looking at the large entangled systems of punishment in the U.S. The goal of these readings is to build background knowledge and historical context for these terms. We need to acknowledge that some of us have loved ones, neighbors, or friends impacted by incarceration. We will make room to share experiences, but it is not required if you do not want to. In the next section, we will read poems that illuminate the humanity of impacted people and provoke questions about the injustice of mass incarceration.</p> <p>Split into two groups for reading:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Group 1 reads Text 1 and collects key learnings (highlight/underline key info)• Group 2 reads Text 2 and collects key learnings (highlight/underline key info) <p>Exchange key learnings.</p> <p>If time and feels appropriate: watch the video together and respond</p>

<p>10 minutes</p>	<p>Reflect, Share, Discuss:</p> <p>Students respond to questions on the handout (either in small group discussion or written reflection then share out to the full group). Collect responses to question #5 in a central place like on the board, for referring to later.</p> <p>If helpful share this set of definitions:</p> <p>Contradiction:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • a combination of statements, ideas, or features of a situation that are opposed to one another. • “the proposed new system suffers from a set of internal contradictions” • a person, thing, or situation in which inconsistent elements are present. • “the paradox of using force to overcome force is a real contradiction” • the statement of a position opposite to one already made. • “the second sentence appears to be in flat contradiction of the first”
<p>Framing for what’s next: In the following two parts, Exploring Poetry and Creating, students will read and interpret poems and respond by making a visual collage.</p> <p>A guiding question throughout: <i>How does art help us understand contradiction?</i></p>	

Day 2: Exploring Poetry

<u>Time</u>	<u>Activity</u>
20 minutes	<p><u>Listen/Read poems:</u></p> <p>Pairs or small groups are assigned one poem to read and analyze together so that all poems are represented across the full class. If possible, allow groups to watch the videos and listen to the performance of the poem as well as read the text.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Poem 1: “Small Illuminations” by Tara Betts• Poem 2: “Welcome to Sunnyside” by Ciara Miller• Poem 3: “Bandeles: Beautiful Chain” by Devon Terrell• Poem 4: “Cost-Benefit Analysis” by Khari Bowden
20 minutes	<p>Respond and Interpret</p> <p>In pairs/groups respond to questions on the handout:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. What do you notice? What resonates with you?2. What do you feel? or think about?3. How does this poem emphasize human experiences?4. Where do you see contradiction and contrast? (ex: humanity vs. cruelty, justice vs. injustice, “criminal” vs. capitalist opportunity, disposability vs. care, control vs. freedom, safety vs. harm...)
10 minutes	<p>Now pull out 1 line or a stanza to read more carefully.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. What do you visualize as you read?2. Are any of these words and images metaphors or hold multiple meanings? Which ones and what could they mean?3. What wisdom(s) or lesson(s) do you take away?

<u>Day 3: Creating</u>	
<u>Time</u>	<u>Activity</u>
5 minutes	<p>View Slideshow for Inspiration:</p> <p>Introduce the concept of Juxtaposition.</p> <p>Invite students to analyze the effect of using contrasting imagery in collage by viewing the work of contemporary artists. Connect how poetry and collage use contrast to provoke thought, questions, and emotions.</p>
[instructions]	<p>PROJECT: Wisdom Juxtaposed Collage</p> <p>Make a collage responding to or illustrating a line (or stanza) of text from a poem.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • play with visual metaphor and juxtaposition to highlight the dissonance of ideas and images • combine found image (and text: optional) • depending on the tools available, students can work analog or digital • support with collage techniques as students work
45 minutes	<p>Project Steps:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Decide the line or stanza you will respond to or illustrate. 2. Write or sketch out an idea on scrap paper as you consider: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. What emotion or idea do you want to convey? b. How can you use contrast or juxtaposition? 3. What imagery could you use? Could you use a metaphor? 4. Search for images or make them yourself with found papers. 5. Cut or tear and arrange. 6. Glue and add any other drawing media (digital: add texture, color, and save)

[Possibly to start class on Day 4)

Review and Reflect

Post up work and do a gallery walk.

Invite students to reflect on the work and share their responses.

Some questions you could use:

- What do you notice? What strikes you?
- What do these make you feel, think about, or question?
- How does art help us understand contradiction?
- How does art influence our perception or understanding of human experience?



Poetry, Unbarred

Grade: 9-12

Class: Creative Writing, American Literature, African American Literature, Topics in Literature

Days: 5

Class structure: 60-minute periods

Lesson Rationale

Learning Goals and Focus (Quick overview of lesson focus):

Students will learn about and explore poetry as a form of resistance and documentation, as well as options for sharing, displaying, and preserving poetry.

Lesson Objectives: SWBAT (Students will be able to...)

SWBAT *investigate* how they have encountered complex issues around freedom, justice, policing, and incarceration

SWBAT *identify* their experiences around freedom and justice

SWBAT *interpret* multiple poems and prose excerpts on these concepts

SWBAT *create* a 4-stanza poem

SWBAT *justify* their feelings about freedom and justice

SWBAT *share* their work through live performance, display, or recording

Learning Standards:

Illinois Visual Arts Standards:

Anchor Standard 6

Convey meaning through the presentation of artistic work

Enduring Understanding: Objects, artifacts, and artworks collected, preserved, or presented by artists, museums, or other venues communicate meaning and a record of social, cultural, and political experiences resulting in the cultivation of appreciation and understanding.

Anchor Standard 7

Perceive and analyze artistic work

Enduring Understanding: Individual aesthetic and empathic awareness developed through engagement with art can lead to understanding and appreciation of self, others, the natural world, and constructed environments.

VA:Pr4.1.I

Analyze, select, and curate artifacts or artworks for presentation and preservation.

VA:Pr6.1.I

Analyze and describe the impact that an exhibition or collection has on personal awareness of social, cultural, or political beliefs and understandings.

Essential Questions:

1. How does the presenting and sharing of objects, artifacts, and artworks influence and shape ideas, beliefs, and experiences?
2. How do objects, artifacts, and artworks collected, preserved, or presented cultivate appreciation and understanding?
3. How do life experiences influence the way we relate to art?
4. What can we learn from our responses to art?

How does this lesson connect to students' cultural, personal, and/or academic backgrounds?

Our students possess considerable prior knowledge on issues of freedom and justice; they just may not often be given the time, space, support, vocabulary, and context with which to consider them more closely. Some may not even realize these are valid topics to discuss in school as they have encountered and experienced them.

Materials needed

List of Materials:

- Links and/or printed copies of all poems
- Internet access
- Projector
- Screen
- Speakers
- Writing supplies
- Display or recording supplies

Project Timeline

Day 1

<u>Time</u>	<u>Activity</u>
5 minutes (may read twice)	Begin by reading Claude McKay's "If We Must Die" together in class.
15-20 minutes	Questions for discussion: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• How does sound (meter, rhyme scheme, assonance, consonance, alliteration) draw our attention to certain words and phrases? Where do we see this?• Is the mood of the poem hopeful, hopeless, or something more complex?• If the context isn't literal — if this poem isn't about literally dying, although it could be literal — what situations might it describe? When might we know we can't win, but we try anyway? And why do we do that, according to the poem? Cite lines in the poem to support your position.

5 minutes (CW: racial slur)	Next read " Hard Rock Returns to Prison from the Hospital for the Criminal Insane ," by Etheridge Knight
15-20 minutes	Ask students to choose a line that evokes a powerful image to them. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What do they see? • What details can they describe that aren't explicitly in the text? • What mood does this image create?
5-10 minutes	Close by asking students how and where they see these two poems 'talking' to each other. Where do the pieces connect? Around ideas? Specific words? Vibes? Record students' responses (on the board or a giant Post-It, if possible) for use next class.
<u>Day 2</u>	
<u>Time</u>	<u>Activity</u>
5 minutes	Refresher: Return to the students' responses to yesterday's poems, especially where they interacted. Explain that today we'll be encountering several more pieces on these themes by modern poets, often speaking specifically about Chicago.
15-20 minutes	Exploration: Give students time and space to explore the four poems in the Unbarred Poetics exhibit . Students can watch and hear the pieces on their devices at their own pace, or the teacher can stream the poems with captions on the classroom screen. (The four poems total 15 minutes of watching/listening; students don't need to hear all three, but that's ideal.)

15 minutes	<p>Connections: How do these more recent pieces interact with the canonical poems we heard yesterday? Where do we see common topics, images, words, moods, or messages? Have copies (online or print) available of all poems so that students can dig in.</p> <p>Note: Teachers can decide the best structure for considering these questions. Students can work in small groups and record their ideas on paper, students can work in pairs, or this could work as a whole-class discussion, recording ideas on the board or in a doc on-screen.</p>
10 minutes	<p>Share: Ask groups or pairs to explain the connections they noticed. Record responses.</p> <p>Finally, either as an exit ticket or for class tomorrow, ask students to write one sentence proposing a connection among three of the poems and what this connection wants to tell us.</p> <p>Example: “Hard Rock,” “Small Illuminations,” and “Welcome to Sunnyside” all talk about how bodies change from the impacts of overpolicing and incarceration to push readers to consider the impacts as personal and intimate.</p> <p>This task can also be completed in the same pairs or small groups, depending on time and tech availability.</p>
<u>Day 3</u>	
<u>Time</u>	<u>Activity</u>
10 minutes	Share and talk through some of the analysis statements written about the poems from the last two classes. If time allows, conduct a short editing workshop for these sentences to focus on strong verbs, vivid descriptions, and specific use of the texts. Display final versions however possible. (Compiled in a Google Doc, or written large and hung up in the room)

<p>10-15 minutes</p>	<p>Introduce poetry writing task by explaining the following starter options:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Consider what you would like to say about justice, freedom, policing, incarceration, or the impacts of any combination of these on your community. 2. Conjure a vivid image inspired by one of the poems. A street by where you live? A person you know or knew? A complicated situation involving any of the topics of the poems? 3. Form a question that you think needs an answer in order to make our crisis of over-policing and incarceration more just. Try to make it a <i>how</i> or <i>why</i> question; these offer more space to roam.
<p>10 minutes</p>	<p>Once students have chosen a starter option and feel ready to start writing around these ideas, focus their attention on the central questions for this task:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What do you believe? • What did you learn? • What do you feel? <p>Ask students to start writing ideas, images, phrases, or lines. Affirm that the goal is expression, not perfection. They can write rough paragraphs and then break them into lines, if that helps.</p> <p>Poem requirements:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 15-20 lines, ~7+ words per line • Create vivid imagery • Try to play with sounds in your words • Let your poem interact with at least one other poem we read
<p>15 minutes</p>	<p>After offering support and answering questions about the task, leave students to write for the last 15 minutes. They should aim to have a partial or full draft by the end of class. Collect evidence of this as needed. (Online submission, visual check-in, or collect paper drafts until tomorrow.)</p>

<u>Day 4</u>	
<u>Time</u>	<u>Activity</u>
20 minutes	Ask students to form pairs or groups of three for check-in, feedback, and editing. Depending on how much students wrote, this can be feedback on the whole draft, or even just the first few lines. Editing partners should offer specific feedback on the poem requirements (see above), as well as their personal thoughts after reading it.
20 minutes	Students should be given generous time to revise and finish composing their poems. These first two segments of class can be adjusted for time based on how much more time students need.
5 minutes	Decide with students how they would prefer to share their work: published together online (class website, for example), hung around the room, or shared closely with their working groups.
5 minutes	Debrief: What did they hear or learn that was new? How did it go, writing a poem on these topics? If they could do the assignment again, what would they do differently?
<u>Day 5</u>	
<u>Time</u>	<u>Activity</u>
10-15 minutes	Opening discussion: What is the relationship between written poetry and performed poetry? How does this relationship compare to other ways we display and consume art? Show clips of live performance poetry (widely available on YouTube), if students are unfamiliar. Compare these clips with the Unbarred Poetics installation we viewed earlier in the week.

30 minutes	<p>Challenge students to perform and preserve their poems. Options can include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reading/reciting/recording 2-4 favorite lines • Reading/reciting/recording their entire piece • Planning a class performance to start the following week (optional Day 6), in which all/most students read some or all of what they wrote or share their recordings • Displaying favorite lines around the classroom, with optional visual art included
Wrap-up	Adjust time as needed, depending on what students/teachers choose for sharing student work.

<h2>Accommodations</h2>
<p><u>NAEA Special Education Classifications and Modifications</u></p> <p><u>Art in Special Education: Resources Collection</u></p> <p><u>Visual Arts Inclusion Guidelines</u> (National Arts Standards)</p> <p>Some students might require accommodations in order to fully participate in this lesson. Extended time, more frequent check-ins, assistive devices for discussion and/or composition, and modified rubrics can all be easily implemented to support student growth and IEP goals.</p>

Supporting Language Development

<p>Essential Vocabulary: <i>What key vocabulary terms do students need to know?</i></p>	<p>Planned Learning Supports/Tasks:</p>
<p>Language Function: <i>What key language function will students learn how to use?</i></p>	<p>Planned Learning Supports/Tasks:</p>
<p>Discourse: <i>How will students talk, write, and/or participate in knowledge construction within the visual arts?</i></p>	<p>Planned Learning Supports/Tasks:</p>

1. **Vocabulary** includes words, phrases, and symbols used within and across the disciplines.
2. **Language function**, or what we use language to do, is often represented by active verbs within your learning objectives; e.g., compare, explain, interpret, evaluate.
3. **Discourse** includes creating works of art; writing artist statements; participating in critiques; selecting and arranging artworks for group display.



Grade: 9-12

Class: General Music, Music Theory, or ensemble-specific music classes with adjustments (Band, Choir, Orchestra, etc, by specifying repertoire)

Days: 5

Class structure: 50-minute class periods

Lesson Rationale

Learning Goals and Focus (Quick overview of lesson focus):

Students will learn about and explore connections among mass incarceration, police torture, war, resistance movements, and music.

NOTE: This lesson was designed to accompany the [Reparations Won curriculum](#) mandated for 10th grade students in Chicago Public Schools.

Lesson Objectives: SWBAT (Students will be able to...)

SWBAT *investigate* instances of war and other state violence, as well as the revolutionaries who resisted through multiple media

SWBAT *identify* one specific resistance fighter and research their story

SWBAT *interpret and apply* multiple examples of music as resistance text

SWBAT *create* an original composition to tell the story of the revolutionary they researched

SWBAT *justify* their compositions in a written reflection after a feedback and revision process

Learning Standards:

Illinois Fine Arts Standards:

MU:Pr4.1.IIc.

Demonstrate how understanding the notated style, genre, and context of a varied repertoire of music influences prepared and improvised performances.

MU:Cn11.1.IIa

Demonstrate understanding of relationships between music and the other arts, other disciplines, varied contexts, and daily life as developmentally appropriate.

Essential Questions:

1. In a world that's filled with dehumanization, war, and destruction, as well as one that's filled with moments of beauty, love, and humanity, where do U fit?
2. How do the other arts, contexts, and daily life inform creating, performing, and responding to music?
3. How has music been used to fuel and support resistance movements?
4. How can we use music to inspire?

How does this lesson connect to students' cultural, personal, and/or academic backgrounds?

Many of our students have witnessed police violence in their communities, if not within their family or social circles. We have not historically created or curated opportunities for students to process what they see and experience. Music offers a potentially impactful way to enable these conversations.

Special considerations for this lesson:

- Students will need a basic understanding of the processes involved between arrest and being charged with a crime.
- Students will need an overview of the military prison at Guantánamo Bay Naval Base, Cuba, as would be accomplished by this blurb “Opened January 11, 2002 following the 9/11 attacks Guantánamo Bay is an infamous CIA torture site that primarily houses people who are accused of being terrorists. The majority of the people in prison there are Brown and Black Muslim people. There are lots of people who have been accused of terrorism and held for years with little to no evidence or conviction.”
- Students will need an overview of the Burge cases in Chicago participating in the [Reparations Won curriculum](#).

Project Timeline

Day 1

<u>Time</u>	<u>Activity</u>
5 minutes	As students enter, play Saba — Church / Liquor Store Sofar Chicago
30 minutes	Students will listen to “ Ep 1: Tea, Tenderness, & Torture ,” part of the Illinois Humanities Envisioning Justice RE:ACTION exhibit, The Tea Project , and complete this worksheet while they listen. They should save these responses (or teachers should collect and hold) for discussion at the start of class tomorrow. Suggestion: break up this longer listening activity with check-in questions from the worksheet, or stop for breaks as needed by your students.

<p>10-15 minutes</p>	<p>Gallery Walk on War: Teachers will put butcher paper around the room with each question on it. There should be 4 pieces of paper with the following questions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Where does it happen? • What are the elements of war? • Who is impacted? • What does it mean? <p>Give each student a sticky note and tell them to pick a question to answer.</p>
<p>5 minutes</p>	<p>Share this quote from Saba with students: “It look like funeral home, church, church, liquor store/ Corner store, dreadhead, deadly, ditto/ 10-4, ten foes from Cicero to Central,” then share this Short bio on Saba</p>
<p>5 minutes</p>	<p>Additional question for discussion, if time allows: With phrases like Chiraq and constant reports of gun violence on the “South and West Sides,” based on our definition of war, is there one in Chicago? If so, who is impacted? Who are the powers involved (who is in charge)?</p>
<p><u>Day 2</u></p>	
<p><u>Time</u></p>	<p><u>Activity</u></p>
<p>10-15 minutes</p>	<p>Using the worksheet from yesterday to guide discussion, divide students into small groups to share responses with one another. Challenge students to consider what they might like to say to any of the people whose stories are part of the podcast.</p>

<p>10-15 minutes</p>	<p>Students will listen to “The Revolution Will Not Be Televised,” by Gil Scott Heron (3 mins)</p> <p>Lyrics (distribute copies)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • As they listen, they need to annotate and highlight what the revolution looks like from Gil Scott’s perspective. • As a class, students will share what they heard and noticed. • How does the piece interact with yesterday’s podcast about victims of state violence and incarceration?
<p>5 minutes</p>	<p>Introduce the concept of Freedom Dreaming: “It is a tool that invites us to create the world we dream of by first, visualizing the future we want to live in, and second, to take action against these injustices by recognizing them to move towards a more just and free society.”</p>
<p>10-15 minutes</p>	<p>Each student will receive a picture of an old skool TV and be tasked with sketching the world they envision on this template while listening to music.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teachers can ask students if they’d like to hear Saba’s song again, Gil Scott Heron, or any number of other songs about change and revolution. • Encourage students to share and discuss their sketches with a classmate and explain their choices. • Optional Exit Ticket to check for comprehension and retention: What is Freedom Dreaming, and how did Gil Scott Heron utilize it in The Revolution Will Not Be Televised?

<u>Day 3</u>	
<u>Time</u>	<u>Activity</u>
5-10 minutes	<p>Whole-class check-in: What is the purpose of music?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Encourage students to share as many purposes as they can think of, and list them on the board/on the screen. • Take a moment on music as a form of ode or remembrance to people we respect, and who may be gone. Can students think of any songs that serve these purposes?
5 minutes	<p>Listen to Blk Girl Soldier — Jamila Woods, and focus students' attention on the revolutionary women she lists:</p> <p>“Rosa was a freedom fighter Ella was a freedom fighter Audre was a freedom fighter Angela was a freedom fighter Sojourner was a freedom fighter Assata was a freedom fighter And she taught us how to fight.”</p>
5 minutes	<p>Allow students time to explore and consider before choosing one of the women named in the song to research.</p>
15-20 minutes	<p>Using this Bio Template, students should find, rephrase, and cite biographical information about the revolutionary woman they chose for their research.</p>
15 minutes	<p>On the back of their Bio Templates, ask students what they think are the <i>most</i> important, compelling, or surprising things about the revolutionary they researched. (These will help students start their compositions next class.)</p>

<u>Day 4-5</u>	
<u>Time</u>	<u>Activity</u>
	<p>Students will create a composition (16 bars or more) that captures the life and accomplishments of their chosen revolutionary.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students can also incorporate elements of their Freedom Dreaming TV or draw on it as inspiration • Compositions can have lyrics, and teachers should encourage students to consider this option, but they don't <i>need</i> to. • This activity should take most or all of two class periods to complete. • Students can use Soundtrap, Chrome music lab, Musescore, or staff paper, depending on what's available.
Closing	<p>Work with students to build a collection of their compositions for others to hear and experience. Students should also complete the Composition Reflection after they have finished.</p>

Accommodations
<p>NAEA Special Education Classifications and Modifications</p> <p>Art in Special Education: Resources Collection</p> <p>Visual Arts Inclusion Guidelines (National Arts Standards)</p> <p>Some students might require accommodations in order to fully participate in this lesson. Assistive listening devices, alternative writing or composing equipment, extended time and additional check-ins — especially as students spend two class periods composing — could support a student's capacity to complete these tasks.</p>

Supporting Language Development

Essential Vocabulary:

What key vocabulary terms do students need to know?

Dehumanization
Abolitionist
Freedom Dreaming

Planned Learning Supports/Tasks:

Students may already feel comfortable with these and other relevant terms from the Reparations Won unit, but teachers should make sure that any terms specific to prison abolitionism and discussions of mass incarceration have been introduced. A vocabulary table could help students track a longer list of terms.

Language Function:

What key language function will students learn how to use?

Students will discuss, synthesize, and explain the texts we explore and their choices around their creations.

Planned Learning Supports/Tasks:

This sequence frequently asks students to share their ideas and draft work with classmates, in pairs or small groups.

Discourse:

How will students talk, write, and/or participate in knowledge construction within the visual arts?

See above; also, during the last two days of the sequence, when students are composing, teachers should encourage check-ins with classmates.

Planned Learning Supports/Tasks:

Teachers should build in pauses in composition time with a check-in question appropriate to the point in their work time.

1. **Vocabulary** includes words, phrases, and symbols used within and across the disciplines.
2. **Language function**, or what we use language to do, is often represented by active verbs within your learning objectives; e.g., compare, explain, interpret, evaluate.
3. **Discourse** includes creating works of art; writing artist statements; participating in critiques; selecting and arranging artworks for group display.

Lesson Outline

List of Materials:

- Speaker(s) for listening to music and podcast “[Ep 1: Tea, Tenderness, & Torture](#),” part of the Illinois Humanities [Envisioning Justice RE:ACTION](#) exhibit, [The Tea Project](#)
- “The Revolution Will Not Be Televised” [lyrics sheet](#)

For mind mapping/brainstorming and initial planning drawing:

- Pencil/Pen/Colored Pencil/Crayon
- Paper ([TV template](#))

For gallery walk about war:

- Giant Post-Its
- Images of various conflicts
- Small Post-Its (for responses)
- Pens or markers

For composition:

- Soundtrap, Chrome music lab, Musescore, or staff paper

Scaffolding:

What [scaffolding steps](#) have you built into your lesson plan?

- Students will use the brainstorming activity, as well as multiple check-ins with classmates and teachers to build their summative work.

Additional resources (websites, citations, etc.):

- [‘Get Up, Stand Up’: The Story Behind Bob Marley’s Militant Anthem](#)
- <https://freedomdreaming.commons.gc.cuny.edu/about/>
- [Reparations Won curriculum](#)



RE: ACTION — Tea Project Lesson Plan

Grade: 9-12

Class: Social Science Electives (Sociology, Psychology, US Government, etc)
or US History

Days: 1 (75-90 minutes)

Class structure: 90-minute blocks

Lesson Rationale

Learning Goals and Focus (Quick overview of lesson focus):

“In 2002, following the start of the Global War on Terror, the United States established an extralegal military prison at Guantánamo Bay Naval Base, Cuba. The prison was founded there to intentionally avoid US and international law. Since then, it has been the site of major human rights violations, such as holding people for indefinite periods of time without trial, subjecting them to extreme interrogation methods, torture, and even death. [The Tea Project](#) is a podcast that examines local and international implications of state violence, while also uplifting acts of creative resistance. Through the voices of torture survivors and activists, this podcast highlights connections between policing and incarceration in Chicago and the human rights violations of the [Global War on Terror](#), while also celebrating the struggle for justice and reparations.”

– Aaron Hughes and Amber Ginsburg, Tea Project, 2021

Anchored by the *Envisioning Justice RE: ACTION* project, this lesson plan for [The Tea Project](#), asks students to examine the similarities between policing and incarceration in Chicago and the human rights violations of the Global War on Terror. Throughout this project, students will also connect how people use art as a form of resistance and/or healing.

Lesson Objectives: SWBAT (Students will be able to...)

SWBAT *investigate and identify* the similarities between policing and incarceration in Chicago and the human rights violations of the Global War on Terror

SWBAT *explain* the importance of story sharing

SWBAT *analyze* how people use art as a form of resistance and/or healing

Illinois State Learning Standards addressed:

SS.9-12.IS.11. Use interdisciplinary lenses to identify local, regional, state, natural, or global concerns and anticipate the outcome possible solutions might have on all impacted communities, including marginalized communities.

S.9-12.IS.12. Analyze existing structures, systems, and methodologies to determine what types of interventions or informed action will lead to increased equity, inclusion, and community and civic good.

SS.9-12.CV.1. Distinguish between the rights, roles, powers, and responsibilities of individuals and institutions in the political system and analyze the marginalization of multiple groups and perspectives in that system.

SS.9-12.CV.6. Identify and explain how political parties, the media, and public interest groups both influence and reflect social and political interests.

SS.9-12.CV.7. Compare and contrast the democratic concepts and principles inherent to the U.S. system of government.

SS.9-12.H.3. Evaluate the methods used to promote change and the effects and outcomes of these methods on diverse groups of people.

Essential Questions:

1. What is the relationship between policing and incarceration in Chicago and the human rights violations of the Global War on Terror?
2. How and why is creative art used as a form of resistance? How do people use both religion and art to heal and confront systems?
3. Why is it important to share the stories of our struggle for justice and dreams for reparations?

How does this lesson connect to students’ cultural, personal, and/or academic backgrounds?

Students have grown up witnessing, studying, and experiencing an increasingly surveilled and incarcerated culture. This activity welcomes them to confront their observations and experiences in a supported and safer setting.

Materials

Materials needed:

- [Note catchers/slides](#)
- Podcast Audio (linked in slides)
 - Episode 1: Tea, Tenderness, and Torture
 - Episode 2: Maps, Memory, and Violence
 - Episode 3: Poetry, Resilience, and Resistance
 - Episode 4: Ships, Contradictions, and Confinement
 - Episode 5: Trees, Solidarity, and Struggle
 - Episode 6: Flowers, Freedom, and Justice
- Slides or Chart paper and markers

Vocabulary:

- Reparations
- State Violence
- Global War on Terror

Linked URLs:

- Note Catcher and Presentation: drive.google.com/file/d/1D1CdOmvXFCpTryKZiSp5Q93xB1QhBhbQ/view?usp=sharing
- Tea Project: envisioningjustice.org/exhibitions/the-tea-project
- Chicago Torture Justice Center: chicagotorturejustice.org
- #FreedomSquare page: letusbreathecollective.com/freedomsquare

Additional notes and considerations:

This activity can be split between two 50-minute classes or contained within one longer block. The lesson as written assumes one longer block.

Project Timeline

<u>Time</u>	<u>Activity</u> (Note: Activity can be found in these slides)
5-10 minutes	<p>Start by asking students to reflect on and answer the essential question for today’s lesson with a turn and talk. Introduce the lesson by telling students they will listen to a Podcast called <i>Remaking the Exceptional</i>. Read the following Introduction:</p> <p>“In 2002, following the start of the Global War on Terror, the United States established an extralegal military prison at Guantánamo Bay Naval Base, Cuba. The prison was founded there to intentionally avoid US and international law. Since then, it has been the site of major human rights violations, such as holding people for indefinite periods of time without trial, subjecting them to extreme interrogation methods, torture, and even death. The Remaking the Exceptional podcast examines local and international implications of state violence, while also uplifting acts of creative resistance. Through the voices of torture survivors and activists, this podcast highlights connections between policing and incarceration in Chicago and the human rights violations of the Global War on Terror, while also celebrating the struggle for justice and reparations.”</p> <p>Tell students they will be broken into 4 groups, each representing a different episode and idea. They will have 25 minutes to listen to one of the episodes and will be responsible for capturing notes on their specific note catcher and sharing their ideas with their group mates. At the end of class, they will have 5 minutes to share their group’s thoughts with the class.</p>

5 minutes	Place students into groups of 4, assigning each group one episode of the podcast.
35 minutes	Have students listen to 25 minutes of their podcast (in a group or alone) while jotting their thoughts down on their episode-specific note catcher. Students will have 10 minutes to share their thoughts on the essential questions with each other on a Google Slide or chart paper.
30 minutes	In episode order, each group will share their findings and perspective with the whole class (5 min each).
5-10 minutes	<p>Students will write down common themes and connections between local and international forms of state violence on an exit slip.</p> <p>Exit Slip: What are some common themes and connections between the stories of local and international forms of state violence? Why is it important to share these stories?</p>

Extensions

- **Finish listening to the rest of the episodes of the [Tea Project](#), on [Envisioning Justice's website](#).**
- After decades of fighting, the Chicago City Council unanimously approved the Reparations Ordinance put forth by the neighborhood organization Chicago Torture Justice Memorials (CTJM) on May 6, 2015. Chicago became the first American city to offer compensation for racially motivated police violence. A part of those reparations included the creation of the [Chicago Torture Justice Center](#). **Please check out the [Chicago Torture Justice Center](#) and the amazing work they do!**
- In recent history, Freedom Square was a 41-day nightly occupation, protest camp, and block party in Homan Square, in response to the CPD “black site” where thousands of Chicagoans have been unlawfully jailed and tortured. This occupation was established in the summer of 2016 by the #LetUsBreathe Collective. **[Please check out this page dedicated to #Freedom Square, which shows us that the struggle for justice and reparations from the Chicago Police is still ongoing.](#)**



The Mothers Healing Circle: Storytelling as a Catalyst for Healing and Connectedness

Grade: 9-12

Class: Sociology, US Government, Law, or Psychology; can also be used in ELA classes, including American Literature or Creative Writing

Days: 1

Class structure: 90-minute blocks (adaptable for shorter class periods)

Lesson Rationale

Learning Goals and Focus (Quick overview of lesson focus):

The main goal of this lesson is to critically examine broadly and make connections among social, political, and economic systems in relation to community violence. This activity enables holistic exploration of forms of storytelling as a method of healing.

Lesson Objectives: SWBAT (Students will be able to...)

SWBAT *investigate* alternative, holistic methods of community healing

SWBAT *identify* key components to healing spaces and processes

SWBAT *interpret* personal narrative as a vital element in identifying and addressing community needs

SWBAT *define, imagine, and create* spaces of healing that center a critical understanding of loss through violence

SWBAT *reflect* on personal experiences of healing in community and the implications for broader awareness through community action

SWBAT *cultivate and justify* lasting classroom community as a model that supports to students' call to action community building project within the community

Illinois State Learning Standards addressed:

Core Standard SS.Soc.1.9-12 Analyze the impact of social structure, including culture, institutions, and societies.

SS.H.3.9-12. Evaluate the methods utilized by people and institutions to promote change.

SS.Soc.4.9-12 Describe the impact of social relationships on the self, groups, and socialization processes.

Essential Questions:

1. How can communities imagine, define, and implement better systems of care and healing after loss through violence?
2. What role can storytelling play in imagining and enacting these spaces?

How does this lesson connect to students' cultural, personal, and/or academic backgrounds?

Many of our students have experienced personal and community loss to violence, without proper supports to help them process and recover. Some supports offered are top-down and one-size in nature, rather than community centered and generated. This lesson flips the standard model for community care by starting with stories.

Additional considerations and notes:

Materials

Materials needed:

Videos for discussing art and storytelling as methods for healing:

- <https://youtu.be/QVDK3Wx9ikM>
- <https://youtu.be/mL7TYXRKH2c>
- <https://youtu.be/P8kc-h5FdII?t=8>

Additional references and texts to consider:

- *Dear Martin* by Nic Stone
- *Dear Justyce* by Nic Stone
- *Brown Girl Dreaming* by Jacqueline Woodson
- *The Awakening of Malcolm X* by Ilyyah Shabazz and Tiffany D. Jackson

Project Timeline

<u>Time</u>	<u>Activity</u>
5 minutes	<p>Introduction and Overview (5 minutes):</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Begin the lesson by asking students to reflect on and write down their definitions of healing and community.2. Explain that in this lesson they will explore connections between community violence, healing, and community building.3. Discuss art as a storytelling method for healing. <p>https://youtu.be/QVDK3Wx9ikM</p> <p>https://youtu.be/mL7TYXRKH2c</p> <p>https://youtu.be/P8kc-h5FdII?t=8</p>

<p>25 minutes</p>	<p>Conceptual Framing:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Present a brief overview of Janice Bond and Sonja Henderson’s <u>“Recipes for Life: A Legacy Cookbook”</u>. 2. Allow students in small groups to review and discuss the cookbook and return prepared to share out. Encourage students to share the overall theme(s) of their small group discussion and any questions that arose from discussion. <p>3. Consider the following guiding questions:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. In what ways do we see storytelling show up as a healing practice? b. How do we understand Mothers Healing Circle as a healing space? c. How does the cookbook help us imagine and understand methods of healing in community? d. What specific methods stood out as tools for fostering connectedness and promoting healing? e. How can we identify storytelling in any instances where food becomes a source of liberation within the context of community as you earlier defined it? <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 6. After discussing and exploring the Mothers Healing Circle cookbook, how have your earlier understandings and definitions of healing and community building evolved? 7. Collectively discuss (as a class) ideas, themes, questions produced for smaller group discussions.
<p>10 minutes</p>	<p>Reflecting:</p> <p>Reflect as a class on our earlier discussions around healing through community building and the ways Janice Bond and Sonja Henderson created space for this through their cookbook for mothers who have experienced loss of children to violence.</p>

<p>15 minutes</p>	<p>Brainstorming:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Now think about ideas for community building that addresses the discussion of healing and community that you find contributes to or extends on this conversation and version of storytelling. Think about: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. What other stories in the community contribute to the discussion? b. What voices do you choose to center? c. Where do you find the voices in the community? d. How can we access collaborators (similar to the mothers who contributed to the legacy cookbook we are learning from)? e. Is there a specific set of stories we want to tell? f. How can we affect meaningful, lasting change in the community through community building? 2. Discuss ideas for a call to action community building project: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Think critically about storytelling method(s) of choice (Why was a cookbook meaningful to mother collaborators? What do you think would be meaningful to your collaborators?) b. Understand how the elements of your project support healing. 3. Explore methods of inviting community members and collaborators into community with you.
<p>25 minutes</p>	<p>Action Planning:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Create objective for community building project (what about state sanctioned violence, incarceration, police violence, etc. are we choosing to address as modeled by the Mothers Healing Circle) and from whose perspective, with what method of storytelling, and why? 2. Collectively develop an action plan for collaborator outreach based on voices to be centered (consider positionality and relationship to subject, method and as community members).
<p>10 minutes</p>	<p>Conclusion and Reflection:</p> <p>Create a lasting product from your action plan to be created and presented accessibly to the wider community.</p>



Felting Recipes for Life

Grade: 10-12

Class: Multimedia Art/Art II

Days: 3

Class structure: 90-minute blocks

Lesson Rationale

Learning Goals and Focus (Quick overview of lesson focus):

Students will learn about and explore the concept of the “[Recipe for Life](#)” installation, taking time to learn about and discuss the cookbook available on the [RE:ACTION Envisioning Justice](#) website. *What makes this recipe and meal special to you, and why do you think it fits the criteria we have determined for a “Recipe for Life”?* Students will then create a sketch of the meal that they have selected as their “Recipe for Life” using elements of simplicity and minimalism to create an outline for the final part of the lesson, two-dimensional felting. Students will take their sketch and translate it into a simple, 2D felted artwork, using no more than five colors of felt.

Lesson Objectives: SWBAT: (What students will be able to do):

SWBAT *investigate* the RE:ACTION Justice cookbook and evaluate what about each recipe makes it a recipe “for Life”

SWBAT *identify* their own “Recipe for Life” based on the criteria discussed and chosen by the class (See Day 1 activity 3)

SWBAT *interpret* their recipe into a simplified, minimalist illustration using a maximum of 5 colors

SWBAT *create* a felted version of their illustration using a 2D felting method and their <5 colors determined by their drawing

SWBAT *justify* their choice of recipe and their portrayal in a short statement following the creation of their felted artwork

Learning Standards:

Illinois Visual Arts Standards:

VA:Cr2.3.III

Demonstrate in works of art or design how visual and material culture defines, shapes, enhances, inhibits, or empowers people’s lives.

VA:Pr6.1.II

Make, explain, and justify connections between artists or artwork and social, cultural, and political history.

VA:Re7.2.II

Evaluate the effectiveness of an image or images to influence ideas, feelings, and behaviors of specific audiences.

Essential Questions:

1. What makes something (a recipe, an idea, a family or personal story) worthy of remembrance?
2. What are the most effective ways that we can portray our recipes in 2 dimensional form? Do we have to make our meals look exactly like they do in real life?
3. What are ways that we can make the physical representations reflect the feelings that the meals imbue in us?

How does this lesson connect to students’ cultural, personal, and/or academic backgrounds?

Food is an essential part of the cultural makeup of families and the way that they fit into cultural ideas and groups. Through learning about the conceptual framework that surrounds the ideas of the “Recipe of Life,” students will consider the ways in which the lesson connects to their personal backgrounds and across generations. Simplifying, discussing, and converting their ideas and drawings into two-dimensional felted final artworks enables students to see and honor their ideas and memories across multiple formats.

Project Timeline	
<u>Time</u>	<u>Activity</u>
<u>Day 1</u>	
5 minutes	<p>Introduction to “Recipes for Life” exhibit: discussion about what makes the recipes important, what we can tell about the people involved through their recipes, and what we think about when asked about potential personal “Recipes for Life” from our own lives and family histories.</p> <p>Here, teachers should approach the topic and the exhibit with care, as it deals with death and other engaging but possibly triggering topics. As a suggestion, a primer about the violence inherent in the carceral system and the many ways it presents itself could be helpful ahead of this activity for a teacher seeking to properly engage with the topic.</p> <p>Teachers should help students to engage with the Recipes for Life by asking the Who/What/When/Where/Why questions about their favorite recipes from the book.</p>
15 minutes	Give students time and space to explore the collection. Circulate and ask questions to encourage engagement about what they are seeing.

<p>30 minutes</p>	<p>Brainstorming/Mind Mapping Activity:</p> <p>What makes a “Recipe for Life”?</p> <p>First, encourage students to share any recipes from the exhibit that interested them or resonated with them for any reason. (Students love discussing food!) Then, with the whole class on the board, branch out from the idea of a “Recipe for Life” using vocabulary words that the class thinks appropriately describe what would make a meal worthy of that title. (For example: If a student says that they think “comfort” is part of what makes a meal worthy of being a “Recipe for Life,” what are some things that we think of as being comforting when we think of food?)</p> <p><i>*These (the criteria determined during the activity above) are the criteria on which student Recipes for Life should be graded*</i></p> <p>Then in small groups or pairs, work on selecting your own “Recipe for Life.”</p> <p>Students should be ready to explain how the meal they chose involves at least one of the terms chosen by the class as representative of the concept of the “Recipe for Life.”</p>
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<p>15 minutes</p>	<p>Intro to simplified line drawings of food.</p> <p><i>(Students here should be encouraged to use devices to look up examples of pictures of the foods they select, as relying solely on memory can be tricky. Because of the personal nature of the foods, printing out some examples can be helpful.)</i></p> <p>How can we draw the foods that we have identified as being parts of our “Recipes for Life” as simple line drawings and shapes, so that they are easier to 2D felt?</p> <p>What are some ways that we can simplify the more complicated foods that we have identified into shapes and colors, while still getting across the general idea and type of food?</p>
<p>15 minutes</p>	<p>Students should spend the final 15 minutes of the first day writing a short reflection about how they feel about what they have learned and completed so far. Some leading questions might be:</p> <p>What/Why did you choose the food you did for your recipe for life?</p> <p>Why do you think “Recipes of Life” are so important?</p> <p>What makes a recipe for life a recipe for life (check for understanding of criteria)?</p> <p>Encourage students to think about how they will illustrate their choice next class.</p>
<p><u>Day 2</u></p>	
<p>15 minutes</p>	<p>Students will begin Day 2 by illustrating their recipes and dishes. Peer to peer interaction and sharing is encouraged, as some students will have a better grasp on the idea of simplification and simple line drawing, and as such can serve as integral resources for their fellow artists.</p>

15 minutes	<p>Intro to Needle Felting:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Watch Video • Safety overview (use of felting needles)/expectations.
10 minutes	<p>In person demo (ex: How to make an egg), Instructor will draw a simplified food on the board and do a quick, 5-10 minute demo as to how to translate that drawing to the 2D felting.</p>
50 minutes	<p>Students will felt their own recipes/meals.</p>
<p><u>Day 3</u></p>	
15-20 minutes	<p>Students will use the first portion of class to finish any remaining parts of their “recipes.” Any students who are finished can help classmates, or start repacking materials.</p>
25 minutes	<p>Students will write a short, two paragraph reflection (artist statement):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Paragraph 1 describes their final felted artwork – what meal it makes, what components are included, and how they worked through the project (challenges, learning moments, etc). • Paragraph 2 discusses what this recipe represents to them. Based on our brainstorming activity, students should explain why this recipe and meal meets the predetermined criteria of a “Recipe for Life.” <p>(Template for this task)</p>
30 minutes	<p>Share: Students (according to their comfort level) will share their work — including why they chose this meal, how they planned their piece, and what they learned about illustrating and felting food from the project.</p> <p>To close the activity, return to the exhibit. Did any recipes from the “Recipes for Life” exhibit influence their work? Revisit the dedication at the end of the booklet, and encourage students to add a dedication to their reflection piece: were they thinking of anyone when they built their recipe?</p>

15-20 minutes	Clean up and final debrief
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<h2>Accommodations</h2>
<p>Resources:</p> <p><u>NAEA Special Education Classifications and Modifications</u></p> <p><u>Art in Special Education: Resources Collection</u></p> <p><u>Visual Arts Inclusion Guidelines</u> (National Arts Standards)</p> <p>Some students will require accommodations in order to fully participate in this lesson. Some additional prompts and check-ins may be necessary, as well as more incremental use of group brainstorming or mind-mapping. Felting can be an intense practice in hand-eye coordination, and depending on the size of felt can also be a matter of precision; as such, some students may benefit from adaptive modifications to felting needles, including attaching sticks/tennis balls in order to make the process easier for those who may struggle with fine motor tasks.</p>



Reclaiming Confession

Grade: 9-12

Class: Art I, “Art Cubed,” Can be used in media-specific classes by adjusting materials

Days: 2

Class structure: 100-minute blocks

Lesson Rationale

Learning Goals and Focus (Quick overview of lesson focus):

Students will read and listen to pieces from the Envisioning Justice RE:ACTION exhibition and consider ideas around the concept of confession. (See ‘Essential Questions’) Students will respond in discussion (and/or in writing), and then create pieces reacting to ideas about the nature of confession and wish-making, aligning their work with the texts from the exhibition in a structured exit ticket.

Lesson Objectives: SWBAT (Students will be able to...)

SWBAT **apply** multiple texts about confession and incarceration from the [Envisioning Justice RE:ACTION exhibition](#)

SWBAT **consider** alternate lenses through which to consider the idea of ‘confessing’

SWBAT **investigate** examples of Shinto temple confession walls

SWBAT **interpret** art installations inspired by Shinto temple confession walls

SWBAT **create** original works inspired by the texts and examples shared in class

SWBAT **justify** their choices by connecting their work with the texts

Learning Standards:

Illinois Visual Arts Standards:

VA:Cr1.2.II (Intermediate High School Levels)

Choose from a range of materials and methods of traditional and contemporary artistic practices to plan works of art and design.

VA:Cr2.2.II (Intermediate High School Levels)

Demonstrate awareness of ethical implications of making and distributing creative work.

VA:Pr4.1.II (Intermediate High School Levels)

Evaluate, select, and apply methods or processes appropriate to display artwork in a specific place.

VA:Pr6.1.II (Intermediate High School Levels)

Make, explain, and justify connections between artists or artwork and social, cultural, and political history

Essential Questions:

1. Who has a right to our stories?
2. What role does the concept of confession play in making art?
3. How can art help us reclaim the choice to share?

How does this lesson connect to students' cultural, personal, and/or academic backgrounds?

Many religious and cultural backgrounds include a focus on the idea of confessing, and confession is an integral aspect of our carceral society – from everyday life to police procedurals. Educators can encourage students to apply, reconsider, and respond to what they know and have encountered around the idea of confession, including how it plays out in our schools.

Important considerations for this lesson:

1. This activity is designed to offer educators as much flexibility as possible when adapting it to their own classrooms. Sections can be expanded or reduced, but keep students’ needs and the potentially upsetting nature of the subject matter in mind.
2. Incorporate [trauma-informed practices](#). Check in with students and allow time for breaks and exercises to calm and recenter students.
3. Schools are **often** sites of coerced confessions and other aspects of carceral practice, and intrusive questions are often [normalized](#). Keep this in mind throughout the activity, and allow students the opportunity to parallel what they see, read, and hear.

Project Timeline

<u>Time</u>	<u>Activity</u>
<u>Day 1</u>	
10 minutes	Share quote and piece with students about the concept of confession: <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. “A work of art is a confession.” (Albert Camus)2. “All art is a kind of confession, more or less oblique. All artists, if they are to survive, are forced, at last, to tell the whole story; to vomit the anguish up.” (James Baldwin)3. “The Confession,” by Alphonse Legros Ask: How do the connotations about confession differ between the quote and the painting?

<p>10 minutes</p>	<p>Ask: In what contexts do people request confessions from us? Demand?</p> <p><i>[Suggestion: Ask students to consider these questions in pairs or small groups and report back.]</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Examples may include faith-based contexts, parents and other family, school settings, and police or carceral contexts. • Keep in mind trauma-informed practices and check in with students throughout this discussion.
<p>15-30 minutes, if reading in class</p>	<p>Read and discuss “There But for the Grace,” by Michael Fischer</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Assign the previous class, or b. Read together during class, and extend this plan to three days. The piece may take students 12-25 minutes to read, depending on fluency.
<p>30 minutes</p>	<p>Listen to one or both of the following pieces from Narrating the Struggle for Justice from Police Torture Survivors:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. “Latanya Jenifor-Sublett” (11:30) 2. “Bertha Escamilla” (article) (5:52) <p>Note: If time is short, prioritize Latanya Jenifor-Sublett’s story, as it deals more directly with the complexities of confession and privacy. Allow students time to process, ask questions, and respond.</p>
<p>10-15 minutes</p>	<p>Questions for discussion:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. How many different kinds of confessions come up in these pieces? 2. How are they the same and different from one another? 3. What does each piece tell us about the nature of confessing and confessions? <p>If students are struggling to articulate responses, form small groups in which students can discuss the questions with one another first, and/or provide sheets with our discussion questions on them so that students can jot down thoughts and responses.</p>

5-10 minutes	Share Google Form link for students to reflect on the pieces shared in class today.
<u>Day 2</u>	
15 minutes	Share and discuss ema plaques at Shinto temples and the art installations inspired by them, which encourage visitors to write down and display a hope, a private thought, or some other wish they feel they need to send out into the world.
10 minutes	<p>Invite students to consider an idea, hope, thought, or image that they would like to send out into the world — anonymously as part of a classroom display, directly to someone they feel needs to share in it, or both.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If sharing a text statement, consider typography and accompanying design work. Just text is okay, too. • If creating an image, consider all available materials to create something personally meaningful. • Encourage a bit of planning to work within the limited space of the 3x5 cards provided.
25 minutes	<p>Distribute materials (see list of options above) and encourage students to begin creating.</p> <p>Periodically check in to provide support, answer questions, or suggest additional materials, but respect students' space and privacy.</p>
10 minutes	As students complete their pieces, include them in planning, arranging, and constructing the display of these pieces, while also respecting the anonymity of some of the work. (see list of options for display)

<p>15 minutes (depending on which option for reflection the teacher chooses)</p>	<p>Distribute materials (link or physical materials) for student self-reflection or formative assessment about this activity and the work students created for it.</p> <p>Options:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students complete a self-assessment, identifying their piece(s) only if they choose to do so, focusing instead on their thought process in making their ema, connections to the text(s), and how this activity might intersect with the quotes and artwork we shared when we started. This can be completed in one of a few ways: • Students create an additional ema, this time using the space to reflect on the exercise in whatever form they choose. • Students respond to prompt questions in a Google Form or on paper, turned in the following class. • Students add a reflection about this activity to their portfolio for class.
<p>15 minutes</p>	<p>Debrief</p>

<p>Accommodations</p>
<p><u>NAEA Special Education Classifications and Modifications</u></p> <p><u>Art in Special Education: Resources Collection</u></p> <p><u>Visual Arts Inclusion Guidelines</u> (National Arts Standards)</p> <p>Some students might require accommodations in order to fully participate in this lesson. Additional prompts and check-ins may be necessary, breaks during longer segments, reading supports (including a pull-out cohort if a co-teacher is available to support students with literacy or ELL accommodations). Depending on what materials teachers make available, physical accommodations may also be needed to support fine motor development, hand-eye coordination, and other IEP goals.</p>

Lesson Outline

List of Materials:

Exhibits

- Internet access
- Speaker(s)
- Screen

Supplementary texts:

- Black, Jin. "Typography and Confessions." JinsPiration, 25 June 2014. jinspiration.wordpress.com/2014/06/25/typography-and-confessions/.
- Chang, Candy. "Confessions." Candy Chang " Confessions, 2020, candychang.com/work/confessions/.
- O'Connell, Ronan. "How These Japanese Prayer Plaques Became Symbols of Hope." Travel, 26 Jan. 2022, nationalgeographic.com/travel/article/how-these-japanese-prayer-plaques-became-symbols-of-hope.
- Sugoi Japan. "Japanese EMA - All You Need to Know about These Wishing Plaques." Sugoi Japan, 13 May 2023, sugoi-japan.com/japanese-ema-wooden-wishing-plaques.

Display space: choose one that works for your space and materials access

- pegboard
- Popcorn ceiling
- Bulletin board
- Blank wall

Display supplies

- Ribbon
- Tacks
- Tape
- 3x5-inch blank notecards or cut cardstock

Multimedia supplies:

- Pencils
- Drawing pens
- Colored pencils
- Pastels
- Paint
- Collage materials (magazines, newspapers, product packaging)

What [Elements & Principles of Art & Design](#) does this project connect to?

Shape:

Color:

Space:

Scaffolding:

What [scaffolding steps](#) have you built into your lesson plan?

Students will build on their understanding of the central concept (confession) with each text and discussion check-in. Day 1 exit tickets can be used to check for understanding and to assess the need for additional support before moving forward.

Resources (websites, citations, etc.)

Gaines, Lee V. “Student Arrest Records a ‘disturbing Mess’ at Illinois School Districts.” *Illinois Newsroom*, 10 Jan. 2021, illinoisnewsroom.org/student-arrest-records-a-disturbing-mess-at-illinois-school-districts/.

Heise, Donalyn, and Lisa Kay. “Trauma-Informed Art Education: Caring for Learners and Ourselves” *Translations: Theory to Practice*, Aug. 2021, tyler.temple.edu/sites/tyler/files/Translations4_Trauma-informed%20Art%20Education.pdf.

Issa, Nader. “How Many Students Are Arrested at Chicago Schools? CPS Tells City Council It Doesn’t Know.” *Times*, 2 July 2020, chicago.suntimes.com/education/2020/7/2/21311297/police-schools-cps-chicago-cops-local-school-council.

Sabino, Pascal. "73% of Students Arrested at Chicago Schools Are Black - but the Majority of Schools Voted to Keep Police." *Block Club Chicago*, 21 Aug. 2020, blockclubchicago.org/2020/08/21/73-of-students-arrested-at-chicago-schools-are-black-but-the-majority-of-schools-voted-to-keep-police/.

Richards, Jennifer Smith, and Jodi S. Cohen. "This School Calls the Police on Students Every Other Day." *ProPublica*, 17 Dec. 2022, propublica.org/article/students-police-arrests-illinois-garrison-school.

[\[Complete Works Cited\]](#)



Puppets + Resistencia

Grade: 9-12

Class: Mixed Media, Art II

Days: 4

Class structure: 50-minute periods

Lesson Rationale

Learning Goals and Focus (Quick overview of lesson focus):

Students will explore possibilities for more effective conflict resolution in their communities. In this activity, students will create puppets to express aspects of their own identities, how these identities might be challenged in conflict with family and community, and how conflict can be more successfully resolved.

Lesson Objectives: SWBAT (Students will be able to...)

SWBAT *investigate and discuss* the concepts of identity, community, and conflict

SWBAT *collaborate* in a discussion about community safety and conflict resolution

SWBAT *identify* aspects of their self-image that they want to share in their work

SWBAT *interpret* these elements of identity as animal traits that effectively represent them

SWBAT *create* puppets using mixed media options

SWBAT *justify* their choices and their work in multiple formats

Learning Standards:

Illinois Visual Arts Standards:

VA: Cn10.1.3

Synthesize knowledge of social, cultural, historical, and personal life with art-making approaches to create meaningful works of art or design.

VA: Cr2.3.3

Demonstrate in works of art or designs how visual and material culture defines, shapes, enhances, inhibits, or empowers people's lives.

VA: Re7.1.3

Analyze how responses to art develop over time based on knowledge of, and experiences with, art and life.

Essential Questions:

1. How can we use visual art to help directly name and address harmful behavior?
2. How can we lead with compassion when we are faced with harm?
3. What choices do we make that can cause or defuse harm?

How does this lesson connect to students' cultural, personal, and/or academic backgrounds?

This lesson allows students to navigate their own experiences with conflict and resolution in their community, both on their own and in collaboration. It will open space for students to learn from each other about different approaches when conflict arises. It also relies on play as a way of opening up conversation and possibilities for reflecting on their own experiences with conflict.

Project Timeline	
<u>Time</u>	<u>Activity</u>
<u>Day 1</u>	
15 minutes	<p>Introduce the “Puppets + Resistencia” exhibit. Discuss the concept and goals of the exhibit as a class:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Why might the artists have chosen puppets to explore conflict resolution instead of other media? • What challenges might keep us from talking about conflicts and conflict resolution in our own communities?
20 minutes	<p>Watch the two existing episodes provided by the exhibit creators.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Take time after each to answer clarifying questions, seek student responses about anything that resonated with them, and identify any familiar elements. • If your school uses restorative justice practices, did the students see any familiar elements in the second episode?
15 minutes	<p>To capture some possibilities for the subsequent parts of this lesson, ask students to fill out this doc (English/Spanish) before they leave, based on the work they saw and discussed today.</p>

<u>Day 2</u>	
25 minutes	<p>Complete Part One of the worksheet (English/Spanish) in a small group and reflect on each others' responses. Students can use responses from yesterday's Planning Doc to help get them started.</p> <p>For the group discussion, each student should have a role, such as timekeeper, facilitator, notetaker, and presenter. Students have the option to respond to the questions or not according to their own feelings of safety within the group. Starter questions around examples of conflicts may be:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How did it make you feel? • Was it difficult to overcome? • Are there any solutions?
20 minutes	<p>Presenters from each group, with support from their group members, should share key ideas and outcomes from their group's conversation with the class.</p>
5 minutes	<p>Debrief today's activity, and explain that tomorrow's class will be dedicated entirely to making puppets of ourselves. Ask students to return to their Planning Doc and think about which traits about themselves they want to make sure come through clearly in their work.</p>

<u>Day 3</u>	
10 minutes	<p>Introduce materials and options:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Depending on availability of materials, classes can build from the templates provided as part of the “Puppets + Resistencia” exhibit, or students can design their own. Puppets can be fabricated from a huge range of materials: fabric and trim, paper bags, socks, <i>anything</i> works here, depending on what’s available and/or what students choose. Teachers can also choose to follow the steps in the artists’ Activation Kit activity offered as part of the exhibit. Remind students to design puppets that demonstrate a key trait in either themselves or that they see as important to effective conflict resolution.
35-40 minutes	Create puppets! Teachers should circulate to offer support and accommodations as needed, as well as to keep students on task
5 minutes	As class ends, make sure students’ work is stored safely to be used during the next class.
<u>Day 4</u>	
15 minutes	<p>In the same groups as Day 2, ask students to choose a conflict to act out with the puppets they have created.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> When introducing this portion of the lesson, ask students to consider one another’s feelings when choosing topics and roles. The group should write down a basic script for a scene in which their puppets act out this conflict and how it could be resolved using empathy and harm reduction, as we saw and discussed in the “Puppets + Resistencia” exhibit videos. Students should look over Part Two of the Worksheet (English/ Spanish) for this activity to guide their thinking and keep their scene connected to our goals and essential questions.

25 minutes	Groups should plan, practice, and finally record their scenes with their puppets (most likely using phone video capabilities). If phone video capabilities are not available or allowed, students can perform a final version of their scenes live for the class, and/or the teacher can record.
10 minutes	<p>Debrief:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If time allows, ask students to share some examples of good conflict resolution strategies, a challenge they encountered, or something they might change if they could repeat this project. • Distribute the Exit Slip (English/Spanish) and ask students to complete it for the next class. (Possibly debrief further, once students have submitted their responses.)

<h2>Accommodations</h2>
<p>NAEA Special Education Classifications and Modifications</p> <p>Art in Special Education: Resources Collection</p> <p>Visual Arts Inclusion Guidelines (National Arts Standards)</p> <p>Some students will require accommodations in order to fully participate in this lesson. Additional prompts and check-ins may be necessary, for example, as well as more incremental work to support group brainstorming or scene-writing and performance. Creating the puppets can require advanced hand-eye coordination and fine motor skills; as such, some students may benefit from different choices in material according to their ability to physically manipulate various supplies and materials.</p>

Supporting Language Development

Essential Vocabulary:

What key vocabulary terms do students need to know?

Empathy
Community
Conflict resolution
Harm reduction
Restorative justice

Planned Learning Supports/Tasks:

Depending on students' prior knowledge about conflict resolution and restorative justice, an additional front-loading lesson might be required here.

Language Function:

What key language function will students learn how to use?

Students will articulate a conflict and how it could more effectively be resolved. Students will write and perform dialogue toward this goal.

Planned Learning Supports/Tasks:

In groups, students will compose an original scene that illustrates a conflict and how it might be resolved. Students should collaborate in writing and editing their scenes.

Discourse:

How will students talk, write, and/or participate in knowledge construction within the visual arts?

Students will work in small groups for two of the four days required for this activity. Guiding questions will be provided to support their discussions, which will also inform the scenes they write.

Planned Learning Supports/Tasks:

The Activity Worksheet and the Planning Doc both encourage dialogue among students about the themes and goals for this activity, as well as around the creation of their individual puppets.

1. **Vocabulary** includes words, phrases, and symbols used within and across the disciplines.
2. **Language function**, or what we use language to do, is often represented by active verbs within your learning objectives; e.g., compare, explain, interpret, evaluate.
3. **Discourse** includes creating works of art; writing artist statements; participating in critiques; selecting and arranging artworks for group display.

Lesson Outline

List of Materials:

For discussion, planning, and debrief:

- [“Puppets + Resistencia”](#) exhibit
- Video 1: [Tú Eres Mi Otro Yo: Empathy](#)
- Video 2: [Tú Eres Mi Otro Yo: Repairing Harm](#)
- [Planning Doc](#)
- Activity Worksheet ([English/Spanish](#))
- Exit Slip ([English/Spanish](#))

For puppets:

- See lesson plan for list of possible materials; this is open and flexible, depending on what is available. Possibilities include:
- Art Making materials (colored pencils, markers, etc)
- Brass fasteners
- Card stock paper
- Popsicle sticks
- Tape
- Glue sticks

What **Elements & Principles of Art & Design** does this project connect to?

Shape: Students will utilize basic shapes to create their puppets and emphasize a trait they feel is important for conflict resolution.

Color: Students will use color to add detail to their puppets from whatever materials they are using (colored pencils, paint, yarn, fabric, etc).

Space: Students will think about and purposefully use space to depict the scenes they have written, choosing movement and filming angles to allow their use of space to help tell a story.

Scaffolding:

What [scaffolding steps](#) have you built into your lesson plan?

Multiple initial activities help students build toward the more complex task of acting out a conflict and demonstrating conflict resolution skills. (See Activity Worksheet and Planning Doc)

Resources (websites, citations, etc.)

<https://envisioningjustice.org/app/uploads/2022/02/Conflict-Worksheet.pdf>



Drawing Comics to Imagine Alternative Responses to Harm

Grade: 9-12

Class: Art I or other visual arts classes; adaptable for Creative Writing or other ELA electives, or Social Science classes learning about mass incarceration

Days: 2.5

Class structure: 90-minute blocks

Lesson Rationale

Learning Goals and Focus (Quick overview of lesson focus):

Inspired by the visual storytelling and themes of *Puppets + Resistencia for Envisioning Justice RE:ACTION*, this lesson aims to draw stories as a way to slow down, reflect, and gain a new perspective on responding to harm or conflict in our daily lives.

The task:

Tell a story of a small harm or conflict you experienced or witnessed in simple comic form. Imagine and draw an alternate ending that centers on transformative justice, restoring relationships, and community accountability and care. (If there are time constraints, begin with a common harm that comes up in communities or schools as an example for partners or small groups to develop different alternate endings.)

Lesson Objectives: SWBAT (Students will be able to...)

SWBAT **reflect** on our relationships and experiences with small harms or conflicts

SWBAT **identify** opportunities for transformative justice in daily life

SWBAT **create** a story in comic form

SWBAT **justify** storytelling with comics as a way to analyze and reflect on a situation

Illinois State Learning Standards addressed:

VA: Creating1.2.I

Shape an artistic investigation of an aspect of present-day life using a contemporary practice of art or design.

Essential Questions:

1. What is transformative justice?
2. How do we respond to harm or conflict in our daily lives?
3. What are some alternatives to punitive responses and perpetuating harm?
4. How can we use visual storytelling to reflect on our experiences with harm/conflict and imagine another way to respond?

How does this lesson connect to students' cultural, personal, and/or academic backgrounds?

Popular media is engaging for most young people. Many high school students are well-versed in how to read comics, so it is a familiar medium. The combination of working with illustration and text brings stories to life for the reader and can help draw out aspects of a story like emotion and human experience that engage our empathy. Comic storytelling can bring us another view, seeing through someone else's eyes. AND like any art form, comics invite us to imagine what hasn't happened yet, to project futures and dream solutions, giving young people the power to create the story (relationship, world) they want to see.

Additional considerations and notes:

If you think more visual inspiration would help, ask students to share what comics they read and prepare ahead to bring in some examples. You could find graphic novels/ comics from the library or excerpts online. (Some biographical story examples to look at: Marjane Satrapi's *Persepolis*, *I am Alphonso Jones*, Lynda Barry comics, Thi Bui's *The Best We Could Do*, Malaka Gharib's *I was their American Dream*, John Lewis's *March*, *Illegal* by Eoin Colfer and Andrew Donkin, *Zenobia* by Morten Durr.)

Materials

Materials needed:

- Plenty of paper (copy paper is sufficient)
- Pencils
- Colored Media: markers or colored pencils
- Ruler (optional for drawing panels)

Printables:

- Storytelling for RJ/TJ handout for student response and brainstorming during lesson
- Making Comics Basics Slideshow (could use as handouts) for comic-making concepts and techniques

Texts:

1. Punitive/Restorative/Transformative Frameworks comparison chart from pgs 64 – 65 in *Lessons in Liberation: An Abolitionist Toolkit for Educators*
2. [A Brief Description of Transformative Justice](#) by Mia Mingus
3. [What is Transformative Justice?](#) video
4. [Everyday Practices of Transformative Justice](#) video

Supplemental texts:

- “Alternative Practices” pg. 51 from [Critical Resistance Abolitionist Toolkit](#)
<https://www.creative-interventions.org/toolkit/>
- [“Justice: A Short Story”](#) by Mariame Kaba
- Bay Area Transformative Justice Collective: [“Transformative Justice and Community Accountability”](#) [1 page]

Project Timeline	
<u>Time</u>	<u>Activity</u>
<u>Day 1</u>	
15-20 minutes	<p>Opening Circle</p> <p>Facilitate a Talking Circle with a talking piece, inviting each student to share and listen to each other’s responses. (If you haven’t facilitated a circle before, establish the grounds and rules. An introduction for reference here.)</p> <p>Circle question: What makes you feel like you belong and matter in a community or in a relationship with someone?</p> <p>Framing questions: Share with full group (or write them on a board). We will work to answer these big questions together throughout the lesson and beyond.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How do we practice caring for each other and the relationships in our daily lives? • How do we engage with everyday conflict that arises in non-punitive ways to practice the skills we need to create a world without prisons or police?

<p>30 minutes</p>	<p>Context building: What is Transformative Justice?</p> <p>Students can use the Storytelling for RJ/TJ handout to write their responses or to guide their small group discussions and reflections.</p> <p>Share comparative framework and examine together >>> Punitive — Restorative — Transformative.</p> <p>Read an excerpt of A Brief Description or</p> <p>Watch video through 4:35 min: What is Transformative Justice?</p> <p>Questions to respond to (in writing or in small group discussion):</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Based on the definitions and frameworks shared, how would you describe Transformative Justice in your own words? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Together: watch video through 7:28 min: Everyday Practices of Transformative Justice 2. What does Mia Mingus mean about tending to the little cuts vs. the big harms? 3. Name some everyday practices or skills for developing transformative justice in small ways? <p><i>(Some examples: listening, owning mistakes, apologizing, sitting with discomfort, naming your discomfort, having empathy for others, deep breathing to allow big emotions to settle, naming what you feel or what you need or hope for in a relationship...)</i></p>
<p>15-20 minutes</p>	<p>Storytelling Example</p> <p>Watch episode 2 of Puppets + Resistencia (~10 minutes): envisioningjustice.org/exhibitions/puppets-resistencia</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. How did Adam interrupt reacting to harm with more violence (by calling the police)? What did he do to try to restore the relationship between Mike and Abuela and repair the harm?

<u>Day 2</u>	
15 minutes	<p>Name Examples of Harm/Conflict</p> <p>Invite students to think about everyday small harms or conflicts that they experience in school or in their home communities. As a full group or in small groups, name a few examples. (See examples scenarios.)</p> <p>Describe the harm or conflict:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What happened? How did the people involved react? How did they feel? • Is there anything that we need to know about the context — the conditions around the situation?
30 minutes	<p>Art Activity PHASE 1: Share Your Story</p> <p>Instructions: Draw a story of conflict or small harm in a four-panel comic. Illustrate what happened in pictures and text.</p> <p>Support students with handouts or digital access to resources on comic storytelling (see slideshow):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Matrix for story development • Making simple characters • Framing and POV shots • Using text <p>Steps:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Scribble sketch (using stick figures is fine!) your story in four panels to plan it out. <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. How can you tell the story in only four frames — what happened first, next, and in the end? b. How can you describe the conflict? c. How can you show how people feel or what they are thinking?

	<p>2. Draw out your four frames or panels on the page.</p> <p>3. Draw out your story — including characters, setting, action and text — to illustrate what actually happened.</p> <p>4. Include a Title and Author (authors if collaborating) at the top of the page.</p> <p>Suggestion for four panels:</p> <p>Panel 1: The relationship before or any context, establish who and where</p> <p>Panel 2: The beginning — the first seeds of conflict/harm</p> <p>Panel 3: The moment of conflict/harm</p> <p>Panel 4: The fall-out or reaction to conflict/harm</p>
<p>20 minutes</p>	<p>Ask students to form partners or groups of three if not already collaborating to support each other in the reflect and imagine steps below.</p> <p>Reflect on the Response</p> <p>Share your comic stories and reflect:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. <i>What is the punitive response to conflict or harm in this situation?</i> 2. <i>Did the reaction punish someone or isolate them from the community or further break down communication or relationships?</i> <p>Imagine Another Way</p> <p>Think about a pivot point in your stories.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. <i>Is there a moment to interrupt patterns of harm? Can we notice and tend to the small things before an explosion?</i> 2. <i>What could a restorative or transformative response look like?</i> 3. <i>How could those involved in the conflict or situation respond without creating more harm?</i>

	<p>4. <i>What skills could be practiced toward restoring relationships and transforming harm?</i></p> <p>(ex: listening, owning mistakes, apologizing, sitting with discomfort, naming discomfort, having empathy for each other, deep breathing to allow big emotions to settle, naming what you feel, sharing what you need or hope for in a relationship, asking for help...)</p> <p>See example scenarios below. Share these with students if helpful.</p> <p>After the discussion, students will amend their comics by drawing a different ending.</p>
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Day 3

<p>20-30 minutes</p>	<p>Art Activity PHASE 2: Alternate Endings</p> <p>Instructions:</p> <p>Draw a different ending to your story by making another frame or two to illustrate one possibility to engage conflict that is restorative or transformative.</p> <p>Steps:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Draw one or two additional frames or panels on the page to make a different path of the story. 2. Imagine what could happen instead. What is one possibility? 3. Draw out this alternative response and how it might affect those involved. Play out one small idea to try something. <p>Suggestion for alternate ending panels:</p> <p>Panel 5: We see the conflict or harm being addressed with care, compassion, and support for one another while also taking some accountability for the harm caused to relationships or community. People involved are trying something. It can be very small!</p> <p>Panel 6: We see the effects of a restorative response being to heal, repair, and transform relationships or the situation.</p>
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<p>15 minutes</p>	<p>Gallery Walk and Affirmations</p> <p>Invite students to walk around and review the comics with alternative endings. Express gratitude for all the stories shared. All share affirmations in writing or aloud for each other, affirming the many possibilities generated by the group(s).</p>
	<p>A parting thought:</p> <p>There is no one way to address harm and conflict. We will make mistakes and conflict will arise. (Conflict isn't bad — it tells us something needs to change and we can engage it productively.) AND we all have the power (and imagination!) to try something different to practice restorative/transformational justice skills in our daily lives and interrupt cycles of hurt and harm in our own relationships and communities.</p>

Example scenarios	
<u>Example 1</u>	<u>Example 2</u>
<p>Describe the harm/conflict:</p> <p>My friend said some things about me that hurt my feelings. So I quit talking to them. And I told my other friends to cut them off. I thought “They messed up. They have to fix it.” My other friends went along with me and gossiped about them.</p>	<p>Describe the harm/conflict:</p> <p>I made a mistake, flaked out, and didn’t do my part of the group work. Everyone did their part and had to cover for me and was mad that I brought them down. I say “whatever, it doesn’t matter” and withdrew from the group. I felt shame but didn’t want to show it.</p>
<p>Reflect on the response:</p> <p>Cutting someone off both punishes and isolates which is harmful and breaks community bonds. This response doesn’t work to resolve the conflict, either. It is an avoidance of accountability.</p>	<p>Reflect on the response:</p> <p>Someone who has caused harm can both be punished by a group and punish themselves by voluntarily withdrawing from relationships or the community when conflict is not resolved.</p>
<p>Imagine another way:</p> <p>What if I could tell my friend how I felt and what I needed from them (support, apology, understanding)? I could give them the opportunity to listen and make amends. We could have a conversation about why they said what they did and help them understand why it was harmful. Maybe I can invite our other friends to support both of us in trying to communicate more honestly with each other.</p>	<p>Imagine another way:</p> <p>What if I practiced owning my mistake and taking accountability? And what if my group members supported me in this process? I could say, “Hey, I’m sorry, I totally messed up. I didn’t do it intentionally but will take responsibility for the impact it caused. I know my actions affect you. Is there something I can do to make it up to you? And the group can listen to the full context of the situation with empathy and compassion. Maybe they can come up with a check-in and communication plan together to make sure this doesn’t happen again.</p>



Imagining a World Without Bars with Visual Art

Grade: 9-12

Class: Any visual arts classes, adaptable to skill levels and availability of materials

Days: 2

Class structure: 90-minute blocks

Lesson Rationale

Learning Goals and Focus (Quick overview of lesson focus):

Inspired by the work of Antonio Burton — *Bars and Gates for Envisioning Justice RE:ACTION*, this lesson seeks to introduce PIC Abolition and use art-making to practice expanding our imaginations to vision a better world.

Lesson Objectives: SWBAT (Students will be able to...)

SWBAT *investigate* alternatives to mass incarceration

SWBAT *identify* abolition as a concept and a goal

SWBAT *create* a visual representation of a freedom dream

Illinois State Learning Standards addressed:

VA: Creating 1.1.I

Use multiple approaches to begin creative endeavors.

VA: Responding 7.2.I

Analyze how one's understanding of the world is affected by experiencing visual imagery.

Essential Questions:

1. What is PIC Abolition?
2. What does a world without prisons look like and what will get us there?
3. How do we practice collective hope and creative resistance through art-making?

How does this lesson connect to students' cultural, personal, and/or academic backgrounds?

Additional considerations and notes:

Teachers should consider listening to *Intercepted* Podcast: Ruth Wilson Gilmore makes the case for abolition, June 2020: <https://theintercept.com/2020/06/10/ruth-wilson-gilmore-makes-the-case-for-abolition/>

Read article: *Is Prison Necessary?, Ruth Wilson Might Change Your Mind*, Rachel Kushner, New York Times, April 17, 2019

Materials

Materials needed:

Bars and Gates (music and excerpt of video)
envisioningjustice.org/exhibitions/bars-gates

- Paper and writing utensil
- Envisioning Abolition slideshow
- Envisioning Abolition handout
- Art and Abolition slideshow

The project materials are flexible and can happen with whatever tools are available.

Some suggestions:

- Canvas squares, paint, brushes, palettes
- Mixed media paper squares, colored media (colored pencils, markers, pastels)
- Digital tools (like Photoshop, Illustrator, Pixlr, Canva) to work with simple shapes, painting tools, and type

Project: Abolition Dreaming Quilt

- Practice envisioning a world without prisons and the PIC. Create a vision for a better world on a square of paper or canvas or digital composition. Draw, paint, or design your vision using art tools. You may use text as well as imagery. These can be stitched/assembled together into a collective quilt-like mural.

Additional resources:

Texts:

1. Critical Resistance. [What is the PIC? What is Abolition?](#) [1 page] — brief intro and PIC graphic.
2. [“So You’re Thinking about Becoming an Abolitionist”](#) by Mariame Kaba, LEVEL, Oct. 2020 — explains what an abolitionist vision is really about.

Art inspiration:

(Some examples included in “Art and Abolition” [slideshow](#))

- Faith Ringgold’s story quilts
- Jen White-Johnson’s design and advocacy work
- Chiara Galimberi’s (@chiara.acu) visioning and manifesting graphics
- Afro-futurism and Indigenous-futurism
- Art by Jess X Snow, Kah Yangni, Aram Han Sifuentes
- Chicago murals
- The community workshops with William Estrada’s art cart
- Selections from [JustSeeds](#) and [Youth Art Advocates](#)

Additional supplementary materials:

- Perhaps working through [Critical Resistance Abolitionist Toolkit](#) and doing the picture exercise “Cages of the PIC” on pg 20
- Abolition is also building what we want/need — examples in Chicago (share excerpts of) chicagoreader.com/news-politics/abolish-the-police-organizers-say-its-less-crazy-than-it-sounds
- letusbreathecollective.com/freedomsquare
- Excerpt of Abolition is For Everybody podcast [minisode 3](#) — stating the role of art as integral to advocacy for change
- View art from those on the inside of California’s prison system: initiatejustice.org/theartgallery

Project Timeline

<u>Time</u>	<u>Activity</u>
<u>Day 1: Context Building</u>	
5-10 minutes	To gain an understanding of the big picture, engage with these definitions and the concentric circle framework: What is the PIC? What is Abolition?

	<p>Drawing Exercise (from Critical Resistance Toolkit)</p> <p>Set-up the exercise by reading this excerpt from pg. 16 of Critical Resistance Toolkit:</p> <p> WHAT DO YOU SEE? </p> <p>IT'S EASY TO SEE HOW FIGHTING THE PIC IS FIGHTING TO TEAR DOWN CAGES. And if abolition is about getting rid of all the cages, part of the problem is figuring out where they all are. Different approaches to abolition make different cages easier and/or harder to see. A cage isn't only four concrete walls; cages are all the things that restrict self-control and make someone exposed to harm. Cages work physically, emotionally, and structurally (meaning they have to do with patterns of how we live, not someone's personal politics or feelings). We believe that if you can't get rid of all the cages, you haven't abolished the PIC. We also believe that if you don't get rid of all the cages, the ones left standing will create new ones. If we only tear down the concrete cages but not the structural cages like white supremacy, heterosexism and imperialism, the PIC will reappear in new forms.</p>
<p>15-20 minutes</p>	<p>On a piece of paper, draw the “cages” of the PIC. What connects them?</p> <p>Cages are all the things that restrict self-control and make someone exposed to harm. Cages work physically, emotionally, and structurally (meaning they have to do with patterns of how we live, not someone's personal politics or feelings).</p> <p>(This is open to interpretation, yet some examples of “cages” could be heteropatriarchy and the gender binary, segregation in our city and racist disinvestment, economic struggle under the conditions of capitalism, borders and colonialism, lack of access to healthcare and mental health services, lack of affordable housing, surveillance...)</p>
	<p>In small groups:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Share our cages, compare and contrast. • Connect with the PIC concentric circles chart. Anything missing?

	<p>Why do people think abolition is a necessary approach?</p> <p>Listen to excerpts of an interview with Ruth Wilson Gilmore and respond to questions on paper or in discussion together.</p> <p>theintercept.com/2020/06/10/ruth-wilson-gilmore-makes-the-case-for-abolition</p> <p>In Part 1, 15:58 – 20:38</p> <p>1. Gilmore says, “Where life is precious, life is precious.” What do you think she means by that?</p> <p>In Part 2, 8:14 - 9:00 and 11:43 – 13:00</p> <p>2. Gilmore says, “We knew that prison wasn’t solving the problems that we in our communities were struggling to resolve.” Circling back to our cages exercise, can you think of an example of this? (ex: When houseless people are incarcerated, it doesn’t solve the problem or change the conditions of their situation. It temporarily removes them from the street.)</p>
	<p>Read article</p> <p>“So You’re Thinking about Becoming an Abolitionist” by Mariame Kaba</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If short on time, you could read through “None of us has all the answers” paragraph — ending before “Here’s how to begin.” • Encourage students to highlight, underline, or circle phrases that seem important as they read. <p>Share out:</p> <p>In a circle, each student shares one idea from the article that helps them understand what abolitionists do or think about.</p>

<p>20 minutes</p>	<p>Reread to emphasize the last two paragraphs of the article:</p> <p>“Changing everything might sound daunting, but it also means there are many places to start, infinite opportunities to collaborate, and endless imaginative interventions and experiments to create.</p> <p>Let’s begin our abolitionist journey not with the question ‘What do we have now and how can we make it better?’ Instead, let’s ask, ‘What can we imagine for ourselves and the world?’ If we do that, then boundless possibilities of a more just world await us.”</p>
<p><u>Day 2: Envisioning and Creating</u></p>	
<p>15 minutes</p>	<p>Envisioning Exercise</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In small groups/pairs, use the framework on slide 3 of the Envisioning Abolition slideshow to envision what we want to create. • Encourage students to think through the framework together and fill their own example on the Envisioning Abolition handout, focusing on any aspect of life, and starting at any frame of the cycle. (ex: They could begin with a problem or could begin at the end with the results they hope for.) • Reminder: “Abolition is about presence, not absence.” – Ruth Wilson Gilmore

<p>15 minutes</p>	<p>Guided Vision Reflection</p> <p>Ask students to close their eyes for 2 minutes (you could turn off the lights if that is comfortable) and invite them to relax in their seats.</p> <p>Imagine a world without the PIC or any bars or barriers that limit our freedom.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What does it look like? • What does it sound like? • What does it smell or taste like? • What does it feel like? <p>Open your eyes and write:</p> <p>“Abolition, to me, is _____.”</p> <p>or</p> <p>“In the Future, _____.”</p>
<p>10 minutes</p>	<p>Creating — Art as a Practice of Abolition Dreaming</p> <p>Questions to ask with accompanying slideshow:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How do images affect our understanding of the world? • How does art and popular media perpetuate narratives to normalize the PIC? • But what if art could expand our possibilities? • How can art stimulate our imaginations? • Is art critical for advocating for a better world? Why or why not? <p>Listen to song “Bars and Gates — Toni Picasso”: envisioningjustice.org/exhibitions/bars-gates</p> <p>Burton poses the questions:</p> <p><i>“Could you see a world without prisons? Better yet, can you see your hometown in the light of what it would be without prisons? How would that look?”</i></p>

	<p>(Encourage students to listen to the rest of his music and watch the documentary — perhaps for homework. If you have class time, you could watch the documentary together and discuss Burton’s project as a model for practicing hope in his community of Decatur, IL. Invite students to draw connections with their own communities and city experiences.)</p>
<p>30 minutes</p>	<p>Illustrate Our Visions in a Collective Dream Quilt</p> <p>The group will assemble a quilt that stitches together their visions for the future. The intention is to inspire, tend to, and uplift their individual abolition dreams as well as draw connections and affirm each other in practicing hope and imagination for a better world. The idea is inspired by the story quilts of Faith Ringgold, the anti-slavery quilts used to advocate and fundraise for abolition in the early to mid-1800s, and the healing act of collective quilting in sewing circles with folks impacted by incarceration.</p> <p>Invite students to express their own freedom dreams with whatever tools you have available by drawing, painting, or designing a quilt square.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • They could include their words “Abolition is _____.” or “In the Future, _____.” • They may focus on a particular aspect of freedom related to themselves or their families (ex: “In the future, my family is together and safe”) or speak more broadly about systems or society (ex: “Everyone is cared for and belongs.”) • They could illustrate without words and let the image speak for itself (ex: illustration of young people hanging out in a greenspace making a mural and dancing to music.) <p>Once complete, students work together to assemble all the squares. They can be taped, stitched, or digitally composited to become a collective dream quilt for display in the classroom or the school building or shared digitally.</p>

<p>20 minutes</p>	<p>Share Out and Reflection</p> <p>Hang up the collective quilt for all to view.</p> <p>Invite students to share their creations and expound upon their dreams.</p> <p>What connections do they notice?</p> <p>Share aloud or write affirmations for each other.</p> <p>Discussion questions to take it further:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Looking at our visions, how do we get there? What kinds of steps can we take NOW to work toward this future? What do we need to build, make, and practice?• What abolitionist work is happening where you live? How can you get involved?
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Additional Resources to Support These Lessons

Lessons in Liberation: An Abolitionist Toolkit for Educators

From the publisher:

“A political vision for a future ripe with alternatives to imprisonment and punishment.”

Lessons in Liberation: An Abolitionist Toolkit for Educators offers entry points to build critical and intentional bridges between educational practice and the growing movement for abolition. Designed for educators, parents, and young people, this toolkit shines a light on innovative abolitionist projects, particularly in Pre-K–12 learning contexts.

Sections are dedicated to entry points into Prison Industrial Complex abolition and education; the application of the lessons and principles of abolition; and stories about growing abolition outside of school settings. Topics addressed throughout include student organizing, immigrant justice in the face of ICE, approaches to sex education, arts-based curriculum, and building abolitionist skills and thinking in lesson plans.”

CTUF Quest Center

Members of the Chicago Teachers Union can enroll in a wide range of classes, many virtual and some at no cost, addressing issues of restorative justice, building trust in our classrooms, and facilitating difficult conversations. These and other topics can support the work of Envisioning Justice by helping educators and students approach complex topics with more comfort and expertise.

Magic School

This educator-specific collection of AI resources can help address text complexity, suggest accommodations, and otherwise adapt our resources and lessons to support a wider range of student experiences. Check out their [Text Leveler](#), [Assignment Scaffolder](#), or [Accommodation Suggestion Generator](#) tools. A free version is available to individuals; premium versions are available with monthly or yearly subscriptions.

Picture Books About Families and Incarceration

Chicago Public School teacher, Jen Cullterton Johnson, has found that picture books can be an excellent way to initiate or supplement conversations with students of all ages about mass incarceration. Among the books she recommends are *Missing Daddy* by Mariame Kaba (Haymarket Press), *Visiting Day* by Jacqueline Woodson (Scholastic Books), *Knock Knock: My Dad's Dream for Me* by Daniel Beaty (Little Brown), *Deena Misses Her Mom* by Jonae Haynesworth, Jesse Holmes, Layonnie Jones, Kahliya Ruffin & Leslie Jindalay Pyo (Shout Mouse Press, Inc.), and *Stardust: We Always Share the Same Sky* by Ivana Mlinac & Porsche Tiavale (Mary Egan Publishing).

Anticipating Pushback from Parents

Many educators worry about incorporating challenging, complex topics like mass incarceration into their classrooms. In Illinois, we have more protections than many places, including [strong unions](#), [legislation against book banning](#), and a number of curriculum [mandates](#) and [guidelines](#) to help introduce and normalize complicated material. Here, too, is [a piece by a teacher grappling with this issue](#) who reminds us to keep students at the center of these decisions.