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To Dr. Charles Lentz (*Superintendent*), Mrs. Liz Sheehan (*Board President*), Dr. Charles Malone (*Director of Education*), Mr. Stephen Seier (*High School Principal*), Mr. Brian Loving (*Middle School Principal*), Mr. Michael McKenna (*Upper Elementary School Principal*), Mrs. Jennifer Bloom (*Lower Elementary School Principal*), Mr. John O'Hara (*President of the NHS Education Association*), members of the school board, district administrators, and the faculty who share the responsibility of educating the students of the New Hope-Solebury School District:

We, New Hope-Solebury graduates who study and work in a variety of professional and academic fields, write this as an informal addendum to the widely supported [June 19 letter to the NHSD Administration](#) and [June 22 response from the district](#). We fully support the community petition and are prepared to provide more resources and requests to further push for change within the walls of every New Hope-Solebury School District building and, through that, our greater community.

Ahead of the June 30 Board meeting, we would like to thank the district for its prompt and detailed response. We would also like to present a more extensive overview of changes necessary to combating racism in and through education. In addition to the tangible actions outlined in the signed petition and the district letter, we were inspired by other [petitions](#) to demand changes in the content areas of Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM) and Business Education. Experiences of faculty and students, both past and present, have indicated a lack of diverse and culturally relevant education within STEM departments. Accompanying our demands for STEM, we will highlight further [course content](#) suggestions to bolster [anti-racism](#) efforts in our community. We feel that there is no reasonable excuse for omitting these topics as part of curriculum adjustments in the future.

### ***A NOTE ON PERSPECTIVE***

The "New Hope Bubble" limits experiential learning throughout students' time in this community. Many graduates of NHSD come to their own knowledge of systemic racism through collegiate, graduate, and non-academic avenues. Especially considering the [negative and even traumatic experiences](#) of so many Black, Asian, Latinx, and other [POC](#) students during their time at NHS, this independent learning post-graduation can no longer continue.

Many of us have noticed that, perhaps due to the racial homogeneity of the NHS community, there seems to be an eagerness to believe that racism is not a problem here in our small town. In reality, racism, both systemic and individual, pervades every aspect of American culture, and our community is no exception. White members of the student body largely have the privilege of being educated about racism rather than experiencing a lifetime of oppression, violence, and microaggressions. That privilege means that many students in this district are oblivious to the realities of people living in neighboring communities and the nation at large. We have chosen to highlight three recent articles to illustrate the presence and prevalence of local racism: [a 2015 article from \*The Patch\*](#), [a 2017 piece from \*The Intelligencer\*](#), and [a June 2020 article on the killing of Maurice Gordon by a New Jersey state trooper](#). These are a tiny sample of reported incidents that don't even begin to reflect the unreported lived experiences of many people in Bucks, Montgomery, Hunterdon, Philadelphia, Delaware, and Mercer counties.

It also feels important to re-emphasize that *these demands and suggestions are not political statements. They are, non-negotiably, matters of civic literacy, social justice, and ultimately, human rights.*

Having been through the district ourselves, we would like to acknowledge that there are individuals and courses that have undoubtedly put forth anti-racist and diversification efforts already. Those lessons, discussions, and readings have not gone unnoticed, and we are grateful for those efforts and experiences. However, all individuals in the district have a shared responsibility to do this work and cover this material so that the bulk of anti-racist education does not depend only on a small set of self-motivated teachers.

Anti-racist education functions best as a collective effort moving forward. This document is not by any means intended to guilt-trip or villainize any one individual, but rather to advocate for a better future and more just society by spotlighting opportunities to enact necessary changes in education.

We can and should always hold ourselves, each other, our schools, and history itself accountable. It is not enough to settle for political correctness or [performative allyship](#). We hope that this moment's anti-racist movement will be the impetus for actual change, teaching NHS students and our community to value, support, and demand justice for oppressed and disenfranchised groups.

## ***ACTION ITEMS***

*Action Item One: Shift in Attitude*

1. Class discussions and course material should not merely mention injustice or [BIPOC](#) historical figures, but need to investigate and interrogate white complicity in [systemic](#) and individual racism. This is essential to the process of dispelling harmful mythology around oppression and inequality throughout elementary, secondary, and higher education.
2. Students need to learn about these topics not as tourists passing through centuries of pain and injustice, but as *active, thoughtful, compassionate citizens of a culture undeniably built upon that oppression*. It is important to have frank conversations about racial violence and oppressive systems. Educators cannot afford to shy away from these topics simply because they might be uncomfortable or reveal horrific truths.
3. Students of color should not be expected to contribute [emotional labor](#) by explaining their personal experiences/culture/religion or even identity. However, if course material incorrectly depicts or misrepresents an experience/culture/religion, students who volunteer correct information should be respected, listened to, and taken at their word by teachers and classmates alike.

#### Action Item Two: District Sessions and Staff Training

1. We would like to reiterate the demand for twice yearly training from the June 19 letter and further suggest specific sessions for smaller groups of teachers within each subject area or department. Racial bias manifests differently in each field, and specificity is key to analyzing and correcting injustice and imbalance.
2. We would also like to reiterate the demand that all staff are assessed for their implicit bias, as this is essential to self-awareness and helps to *neutralize bias in all forms of teaching and classroom environments*. These assessments should be used to further individualize anti-racism training for members of the New Hope-Solebury School District. [Harvard University](#) has created a well-regarded implicit bias self-assessment.
3. With regard to the June 19 petition's suggestions regarding guest speaker programming, [The African American Museum of Bucks County](#) would be a great organization to reach out to for events, speakers, workshops, and local history. In addition, this local museum provides an opportunity for educators and community members to enrich their knowledge and appreciation through physical, virtual, and artistic educational programs.
4. Other anti-bias training tools and teaching strategies should be sought out from resources like [Teaching Tolerance](#), a project of the Southern Poverty Law Center that is host to an abundance of free classroom resources and professional development tools.

#### Action Item Three: Improved Information Literacy

1. *Comprehensive [information literacy](#) education across the district:*

- a. NHSD has the privilege of providing students with personal laptops. Experiences from graduates and faculty suggest that students have access to a vast sea of information, yet lack the proper information literacy-based skills that are associated with proficiency in a technological world. Though this is a wealthy community, the lack of education in information literacy does an injustice to students of all socio-economic backgrounds, where [consequences](#) are more severe for those who are already disadvantaged.
  - b. Poor information literacy leaves individuals without the ability to effectively locate, analyze, and communicate information. This leaves privileged individuals ignorant of misinformation and thus upholds racist systems. This also funnels disadvantaged individuals into [cycles of struggle and poverty](#) as they cannot compete or defend themselves against more educated individuals in situations of employment, education, legal actions, housing access, finances, and other resources.
  - c. A comprehensive education in information literacy is beneficial for developing skills and experiences associated with locating, analyzing, evaluating, and sharing credible information. This learned behavior helps in stopping the spread of harmful misinformation, in addition to improving the community's confidence in the differentiated education they expect from the district.
2. *Increased presence of both school and community librarians in the classroom:*
- a. New Hope-Solebury is one of the [few](#) privileged school districts to have both a school and community [librarian](#). The benefits of this privilege are endless, yet our observed experiences as faculty and students suggest that teachers and librarians rarely interact, and when they do, there is more cooperation than collaboration. [Literature](#) also supports this [globally](#).
  - b. Relationships between the educators responsible for delivering the skills required for information literacy must be effective and healthy. Improved collaboration throughout the planning, delivery, and evaluation of course content will benefit both students and teachers. Collaborative teaching between classroom teachers and librarians is [“central in developing information literacy within the context of the regular curriculum.”](#)
  - c. The benefits of effective teaching methods and relationships will reach more than just the students present in the classroom. Community and local librarians will bring new perspectives to the classroom, while classroom teachers will be able to deliver those perspectives effectively. If educators can develop these effective relationships and translate collaborative efforts into effective teaching, current, past, and future generations will be more prepared to practice anti-racist behavior

in both the classroom and their communities.

#### Action Item Four: Curriculum Changes

1. Anti-racist education needs to be *ongoing and central to the experience of every student at every grade level*. Lessons about race in America need to be a focal point of the core curriculum, not just in electives, a single required course, or history textbook chapter.
2. There is no shortage of resources available in popular media and academic databases. This document contains a selection of peer-reviewed sources and other resources here that are relevant and important to the outlined mission. Again, [Teaching Tolerance](#) is a great place to find and develop grade-specific lesson plans and more.
3. This document proposes course content changes in the following section, and contributors urge serious consideration of the material laid out in each subject area.

#### **COURSE CONTENT**

In the spirit of democracy and candor, we request that the June 19 petition, this letter, and the resources therein be directly shared with and made readily available to all teachers and other individuals delivering education in NHS classrooms.

It is important to preface the remainder of this document with an acknowledgement that academia and its many disciplines have long been dominated by white, hetero-normative, Euro-centric perspectives, both in established writings and [classroom teaching](#). In order to combat institutional racism, curriculum changes need to focus on amplifying BIPOC voices, experiences, innovations, and achievements *without tokenizing* them. This means centering previously untold (or untaught) stories, not simply mentioning names or events, and, whenever possible, intentionally centering the voices of the most marginalized populations, particularly [trans](#) and [cisgender](#) women of color.

Racism, be it aggressive or covert, needs to be addressed differently but equally within each subject area. The district, schools, departments, and individual teachers all need to implement a multidisciplinary and [intersectional](#) approach to combat the bias and harm that linger due to racist ideologies, practices, and histories. This is another reason that specified anti-racism training for departments is necessary, along with listening to student perspectives and input.

Practicing anti-racist education and [de-colonizing](#) the classroom is collective, ongoing work that begins with these active changes:

“Diversify materials and course content; Teach to learning outcomes that address power and social justice; Design assessments that allow diverse students to demonstrate mastery

in diverse ways; Involve students in the creation of knowledge, content, and curriculum; Embrace diverse language usage in interactions, writing, and assessments; Involve oneself at the institutional, local, state, and national levels to advocate for equity.”

*Direct quote from [Seward, M. \(2019, April 11\). Decolonizing the Classroom: Step One. National Council of Teachers of English.](#)*

### Science

Combating racism in STEM means *teaching students about the legacy of racism in STEM and encouraging students who are interested in pursuing those careers to be mindful of their own biases and the biases of the field.*

Courses should include:

1. Recognition of and respect for the sacrifices made by BIPOC individuals and groups in the name of science. *These sacrifices were largely made involuntarily, or without proper informed consent*, resulting in the suffering of individuals and communities, while the scientific community largely upholds the perceived accomplishments of the people who took advantage of them.
  - a. Studies and behavior to investigate STEM history, including (but certainly not limited to) [Tuskegee Syphilis Experiment](#), [Guatemala Syphilis Experiments](#), [Worldwide AIDS Epidemic](#), [J. Marion Sims' experiments on enslaved Black women](#), [Puerto Rico Pill Trials](#), Nazi Germany, and [Henrietta Lacks](#), whose cervical cells were taken without her or her family's knowledge or consent. The impact that her cells made on medical research cannot be overstated. Four Nobel prizes have been won using HeLa cells and likely more will be won in the future, but her family received no compensation for her cells.
2. Historically relevant BIPOC STEM figures and their significance and impact on modern science and medicine.
  - a. The presence of BIPOC individuals and communities are valuable and influential in the scientific community. Courses must investigate how the scientific community has acquired knowledge and the significance of contributions made by individuals.
    - i. Figures to investigate:
      1. Biology: George Washington Carver, Ernest Everett Just
      2. Chemistry: Alice Ball, Percy Julian, Marie Daly
      3. Physics/Mathematics: Katherine Johnson, Gladys West
      4. Engineering: Otis Boykin, Robert Robinson
    - b. Courses should also investigate and discuss the scientific community's pattern of praising individuals for “stolen work” and ignoring the mistreatment of women,

immigrants, BIPOC, and LGBTQ+ individuals as members of the scientific community.

- i. Cases to investigate:
  1. Biology: Contributions from [Rosalind Franklin](#) and [Nettie Stevens](#)
  2. Chemistry: [Alice Ball](#)'s treatment for Hansen's disease
  3. Physics/Mathematics: [Gladys West](#)'s development of GPS technology
  4. Engineering: [Lewis Howard Latimer](#)'s influential role in the development of the light bulb
3. Culturally relevant study of current and recent issues surrounding racism in science and persisting biases affecting BIPOC communities, including environmental and socio-economic racism.
  - a. Examples: [Seneca Village](#), [redlining](#) and pollution, [prison gerrymandering](#), and [the Flint water crisis](#), which since 2014 cuts accessibility to clean drinking water for nearly 100,000 Americans and is responsible for at least 12 deaths and countless other health complications in the predominantly Black community of Flint, Michigan. This crisis is ongoing.
4. A deliberate and persistent effort to foster critical thinking about scientific and medical bias, as well as [the origins of the social construction of race and racial hierarchy](#) itself.
  - a. Examples of culturally relevant study, such as investigating disease spread/impact through disproportionate rates of COVID-19 in disadvantaged communities and other [epidemics](#) (such as Ebola, Zika Virus, and Malaria) and public health issues experienced by Black and Indigenous communities due factors like Sickle Cell Disease and healthcare discrimination.
  - b. Until recently, infectious diseases were named after where they originated casting a racist shroud of uncleanness on those places and the people associated with its geography. The early days of this very coronavirus pandemic saw [increased violence and racial slurs targeting](#) Asians and Asian-Americans. Courses need to be aware of this and the potentially harmful effects of associating disease and geography/identity.

### Mathematics and Computer Science

Engineering and mathematics have consistently been complacent in upholding systemic racism. These topics are often taught in a vacuum of academics, without considering their impacts or potential harm to disenfranchised groups and individuals. It is important to consider the detrimental ways these tools can be (and have been) used, so teachers and students need to consider the ethics and morals of their course content and its potential impact.



Courses should include:

1. Historically relevant BIPOC, women, and LGBTQ+ STEM figures and their significance and impact on modern mathematics and computer science:
  - a. Acknowledge and equally weigh the contributions of non-white and non-male mathematicians, theorists, engineers, and computer scientists. Areas of study include the [Japanese Mechanical Counting Machines](#) and [The Analytical Machine](#).
2. Culturally relevant study of ethics through current and recent issues surrounding racism in mathematics and computer science and persisting biases affecting BIPOC communities.
  - a. Ethical Use of Artificial Intelligence (AI)
    - i. Artificial Intelligence has been known to harm Black individuals when used to expedite sentencing by unfairly [giving them higher sentences](#). Similar bias can harm women when used [in hiring technology](#). In addition, computer science courses should have students consider interdisciplinary implications of their program, ensuring [ethical AI practices](#).
  - b. Ethical Application of Statistics
    - i. Statistics courses should include investigations into how survey methods and questions can be biased and harm marginalized groups through the use of culturally insensitive questions, leading questions, and disproportionate demographics in responses.
    - ii. Unethical application of statistics is capable of misleading individuals and policy-makers. Statistics courses should address this issue by investigating [p-hacking](#), the manipulation of [plots or statistics](#) and [confirmation bias](#).
  - c. Real World Implications of Standardized Testing
    - i. In lower grade levels when real world example-based teaching may not be as relevant or appropriate, simply be mindful to use culturally sensitive and appropriate language to eliminate racial and socio-economic bias in assessments. Motivation and inspiration for this change can be found in research showing the [bias of standardized testing](#) and ways [to combat it](#). This helps to halt the instilling of damaging ideas and prevents harm to BIPOC and LGBTQ+ students.
    - ii. The racist history and implications of [the Bell Curve](#) and [IQ tests](#) should also be addressed in course material as well as at the district level.

### *Business Education*

Providing an anti-racist business education is fundamental to creating an actively diverse workplace and marketplace for the next generation. Systemic oppression and existing bias create



hurdles for women, BIPOC, and members of the LGBTQ+ community entering the American workforce, seeking leadership positions, and funding entrepreneurial ventures. Educators can help students understand the historical and current implications of those roadblocks, the best methods proven to uplift marginalized groups within the workforce, and appreciate the contributions that BIPOC individuals and groups have made to American business and innovation.

Courses should include:

1. Historically relevant BIPOC figures and their significance and impact on modern American business, oration, and finance.
  - a. Business leaders: Madam C.J. Walker, Oprah Winfrey, A.G. Gaston
  - b. Orators: Martin Luther King Jr., Native American Oratory, Nelson Mandela
  - c. Financial Institutions: [Empire Savings & Loan](#), [Daniels & Bell Inc.](#)
2. Acknowledgment of advantages of white male privilege in the college and job application process, workforce, and American financial system, including:
  - a. Statistics about racial and gender disparities in C-suite executives of [Fortune 100](#) companies and across the workforce in industries like [tech](#) and [finance](#).
  - b. *Systemic oppression limiting the [economic opportunity](#) of certain groups.*
  - c. Destruction of BIPOC cultural and economic advancement: [Black Wall Street](#), [Residential Schools](#)
3. Discussion of proven anti-racist practices in the workforce that promote a diverse and inclusive company culture, combat systemic oppression in its unique forms at each stage of the business, and normalize business standards that are ethical and anti-racist. Topics to cover include:
  - a. Awareness of unconscious bias and its impacts on what problems entrepreneurs [imagine need to be solved](#)
  - b. Incorporating BIPOC in the design and [marketing](#) of a product or service.
  - c. [Environmentally responsible](#) manufacturing and waste disposal.
  - d. Engaging in conversations about [creating a diverse](#) and [inclusive workplace](#)
  - e. Corporate Social Responsibility:
    - i. Emphasize donating to and recruiting from groups that promote education and access to resources for marginalized communities, including [American Indigenous Business Leaders](#) and [Black Girls Code](#).
    - ii. Business Ethics conversations should include such topics as exploiting international [labor markets](#).

## Social Studies and History

Instead of following the established format in this area, we will point to the plethora of accumulating anti-racist syllabi available through [university libraries](#) and on databases like [JSTOR](#). [#Charlestonsyllabus](#) from the African American Intellectual History Society is a particularly abundant and reputable resource.

In addition to expanded course material from these resources:

1. The Social Studies department must address the othering and exoticizing of the “non-Western world” through terminology and curricula that center “the West” (Europe and North America) in global conversations. The “West/non-West” dichotomy harmfully messages European/white superiority over non-European/non-white cultures and perpetuates [colonial](#) and [imperialist](#) attitudes. *The department should change the course name of “Exploring the Non-Western World” to something that is more representative of a non-hierarchical perspective of global cultures and history.*
2. Shared reads should address local and national atrocities as well as global. NHS rightly investigates [foreign genocide](#) with its students, but lacks depth of investigation into genocide (through disease, violence, enslavement, and other race-targeted behaviors) in America’s own history.
3. Teachers and students need to be able to consciously assess the narrators of history and the perspective of history textbooks and resources. This critical thinking would benefit from offering multiple perspectives on the same topics instead of relying on a single [textbook](#).
  - a. Particularly when teaching about specific religions and cultures, English textbooks are often unreliable or reductive. It is better to fact-check and get information from sources like advocacy organizations.
    - i. For example, the Sikh religion has been mis-taught throughout American schools, and NHS is no exception. There are resources available for teaching about [Sikhism](#) that are particularly important because of the [1984 genocide](#) against Sikhs and continued human rights abuses against them, for which Sikhs still haven’t received justice and is an ongoing [fight](#) for justice among the diaspora.
  - b. In this vein, there should be attention given to the methodologies of historiographical writing and work, including its elitist tendencies. A primary example of this is to be found in the dissembling of [Leopold von Ranke’s](#) ideas of ‘scientific history,’ which, as has been time and time again stated, is impossible. Students must be taught that history as a methodology is subjective and not a science, and all historians are biased in some way, thus impacting their work. In order to begin addressing one’s own implicit bias and rethinking the ways in

which teachers and professors shape students' interactions with history, all teachers ought to read Peter Baldwin's article, [‘Smug Britannia’](#).

### *Reading, English, and Language Arts (RELA)*

According to the [Committee Against Racism and Bias in the Teaching of English](#), an anti-racist RELA classroom is one “[where silence about racism is recognized as a form of complicity](#).” In addition to expanding the range of perspectives represented and celebrated through literature and language, it is important to recognize the untapped value in books that are already present in the curriculum.

### *Literature-related courses should include:*

1. Expanded reading lists at all grade levels and discussions of English literary history that deliberately highlight movements such as the Harlem, Chicano, and Native American Renaissances.
  - a. Reading requirements and suggested book lists should include an equally weighted, diverse slate of authors such as:
    - i. Ta-Nehisi Coates, Ibram X. Kendi, Angela Y. Davis, bell hooks, Audre Lorde, Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie, C.L.R. James, James Baldwin, Maya Angelou, Alice Walker, Phyllis Wheatley, Chinua Achebe, Amy Tan, Haruki Murakami, Vikram Seth, Arundhati Roy, Salman Rushdie, Jhumpa Lahiri, Sandra Cisneros, Isabel Allende, Sonia Sanchez, Junot Diaz, Cleo Wade, Sherman Alexie, Leslie Marmon Silko, Louise Erdrich, N. Scott Momaday, William Appess, Zadie Smith
  - b. Required and optional readings should not exclusively focus on the pain and struggles of BIPOC individuals, as this will cultivate negative stereotypes about non-white experiences. *Intentionally utilize readings that celebrate success, innovation, art, and joy.*
2. [Diversified readings of the canon](#) that address the whiteness or white-washing of beloved novels by acknowledging the factors that led to the absence or negative representation of characters of color.
3. Re-framing and confronting representations of race in classics like *Othello*, *The Crucible*, *The Great Gatsby*, *Of Mice and Men*, *Beowulf*, and even [To Kill A Mockingbird](#), especially those that reflect or hinge on race and were penned by white authors. This is particularly true for *Beowulf*, as the first English epic poem. Analysis should integrate the [Tolkien v. Morrison](#) critical reading discussion.

### *Writing and language courses should include:*

1. Discussions of academic writing that recognize, analyze and respect vernacular English, particularly African-American Vernacular English ([AAVE](#)) and other dialects developed by non-white communities. Instructors need to consider the dangers of categorizing “proper” and “improper” language according only to traditions of grammar that are often inherently [sexist](#) and [racist](#). Writing instruction and grading should instead consider linguistic definitions of ["standard" or "non-standard"](#) language, teach students to write in context and for a specific audience, and emphasize rhetoric and composition over “sameness” and restrictive style.
  - a. AAVE and other vernacular/slang need to be addressed and used *without* [appropriation](#).
  - b. [Bad Ideas About Writing](#), an open access textbook from West Virginia University, is a solid resource on this (see “Bad Ideas about Style, Usage, and Grammar”), as well as other efforts to [democratize](#) and improve writing.
  - c. For more on AAVE, see June Jordan’s ["Nobody Mean More to Me than You and the Future Life of Willie Jordan."](#)
2. More thorough, continuous [support](#) for ESL/ELL (English as a Second Language/English Language Learner) students at all grade levels. All teachers should intentionally share the same ESL [program goals](#) and collaborate with each other as well as ELL students to adjust and develop individualized methodology that best benefits the students.
  - a. This is actually true in all subject areas, including [STEM](#). ESL is [most effective](#) with a well-communicated, individualized, and interdisciplinary approach to each student’s support plan. Teachers need to ensure that English learners are not left out of STEM education and can refer to [this article](#) by education journalist Emily Tate for guidance in that arena.
  - b. In RELA courses, ESL/ELL student writers should be encouraged to improve their writing through effective, creative [communication instead of rote repetition and cultural assimilation](#), whenever possible. The goal should be to teach better writing, not sameness. This attitude should be [adopted and enforced](#) by all writing instructors in all content areas, not just ESL/ELL specialists.

### Visual Arts

As the [Anti-Racism Resources](#) page of the website for Californians for the Arts states, ‘Arts and culture practices are among the most impactful ways to effect social change, explore racial and ethnic representations, reflect a community’s history and identity, and provide an opportunity to engage diverse audiences in transformational learning.’

It is for this reason, and others besides, that NHS must readdress its visual arts curriculum. Historically speaking, art education has privileged the works of white, European artists and art

styles above the plethora of other artistic traditions. While art history has remained but a small component of the visual arts classes at NHS, it is suggested that it must be included in order to provide white students with a basic understanding of how cultural appropriation in the arts is highly problematic.

*Visual arts courses should include:*

1. Discussions of art history that do not treat non-white art as the periphery, with white art as the center, an issue clearly lined out in Hyperallergic's article '[Committing to Anti-Racism in Galleries of European Art](#)'.
  - a. Reviewing the ways in which galleries and museums display, contextualize, and describe their artwork is an important comparative activity that can bring to light the disparate treatments of white and non-white artwork. MOMA's controversial 1984 exhibition "[Primitivism in 20th Century Art: Affinity of the Tribal and the Modern](#)" is an excellent starting point, and provides some clear distinctions between display methods. Students should be invited to consider why it is that, for example, African art is thought of as mysterious, and why white scholars so infrequently discuss individual styles within that grouping, versus the total emphasis on individuality and stylistic distinction between European art forms.
2. Projects which respectfully explore the origins of non-white art forms, placing emphasis on societal function as well as visual form, and also make the student aware of their racialization.
  - a. Hyperallergic has developed [A Syllabus for Making Work About Race as a White Artist in America](#), which forces white artists to think about and dwell with their whiteness. A primary aim of the syllabus is to 'Introduce constructive discomfort both within yourself and among your white-identified peers, social circles, and families.' While the four-assignment program is designed for more mature learners, it provides a format for teaching students to acknowledge their own whiteness.
  - b. The notion of [appropriation](#) must be acknowledged and tackled. There is no skirting around it in art. There are positive forms of appropriation, such as [Kehinde Wiley's](#) work, which redresses the issue of the black body's absence in classical artwork. However, students should be aware that appropriation becomes harmful when an object, concept, or symbol is stripped of its original cultural heritage and context. There is a reason why it is acceptable for Kehinde Wiley to paint black people into classical portraits and poses, and unacceptable for white people to claim ownership of black cultural hallmarks.
  - c. The respectful teaching of art in this manner will require research on the part of the teacher or teachers, depending upon the area of study.

3. An acknowledgement of colonialist and imperialist attitudes in the art world of today, and how they impact what we see as 'good' and 'bad' art.
  - a. Teachers are encouraged to review the collection '[Modern Art in Africa, Asia and Latin America: An Introduction to Global Modernisms](#)', a source which breaks down the various ways that colonized communities, countries, and continents struggled to find their own artistic identity following colonialization.
  - b. Teachers must remind students that even the artists who furthered Modern Art were capable of racism. [Attention should be given](#) to Picasso's use of African mask forms to paint syphilitic prostitutes in *Demoiselles d'Avignon*, and Gauguin's abandonment of his family to move to Tahiti, where he entered into sexual relationships with young Tahitian girls, barely teenagers, while he was in his forties. Even van Gogh cannot be absolved: he and Gauguin were for a time close friends, and a disagreement with Gauguin is what led van Gogh to cut off part of his ear.
  - c. European art movements and styles based upon non-European art, such as Japonisme, present in the works of Mary Cassat and Vincent van Gogh, have to be disassembled and acknowledged as byproducts of imperialism. Basic components of Edward Said's seminal text 'Orientalism' should be taught to students, allowing them to think critically about the European imagination of non-European, non-white spaces, and how this imagination others and primitivizes non-white cultures.

### ***EARLY AND OFTEN***

We present these suggestions in the hopes that these culturally relevant topics will be taught and retained much sooner than the collegiate level, ideally beginning in [kindergarten](#) and continuing until students leave high school.

#### Benefits of starting early:

1. There will be less pressure on individual teachers to provide students with this education. If a collaborative effort is made throughout the district, then no single individual will feel responsible for ensuring the expectations are met.
2. Students are more likely to practice anti-racism when they are exposed to these ideas earlier and consistently. Consistent education is what will prevent students from 'missing the point.'
3. Reckoning with these histories from a younger age and more frequently will teach students to think critically about race and racism, which enforces a better general understanding of our culture and fosters responsible, aware citizenship.

## *IN CONCLUSION*

By demanding change in our education system, we are working to solve the problem at its root. Given limited spheres of knowledge and experience, contributors would also like this to exist as a living document. Anyone who feels they want to add productively to this conversation is invited to do so through [this form](#).

Thank you sincerely for your time, consideration, and action. We will leave you with this:

“The paradox of education is precisely this - that as one begins to become conscious one begins to examine the society in which he is being educated.”

- James Baldwin



## ***ADDITIONAL RESOURCE LIST***

### *Highlighted Anti-racist Syllabi:*

1. The entirety of the Teaching Tolerance Classroom Resources and Professional Development tools available from [Southern Poverty Law Center](#)
2. [#Charlestonsyllabus](#) from the African American Intellectual History Society
3. [Syllabus on Institutionalized Racism](#) on JSTOR
4. Dr. Ibram X. Kendi's [#HowToBeAnAntiracistSyllabus](#) through Iowa State University
5. [Anti-racism Resources for Students, Educators, and Citizens](#) from University of Connecticut
6. [An Educator's Guide to Teaching Sikhism](#)
7. [This list of online classes](#) that teach about racism and privilege

### *On Information Literacy:*

[American Association of School Librarians. \(2018\). AASL Standards Framework for Learners. ALA Editions.](#)

[Adeyinka, T. \(2015\). Information Literacy and Lifelong Learning: A Review of Literature. In Promoting Active Learning through the Integration of Mobile and Ubiquitous Technologies \(pp. 223-234\). IGI Global.](#)

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