Teaching Black Experiences in Schools:
The Importance of Diversifying the Curriculum in the Wake of a Divided World

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Abstract

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Black experiences are being left out of the current curriculum. One way to educate American citizens on the Black experience is by offering a collection of lesson plans and texts that offer teachers the tools to teach Black experiences in schools. Police brutality has been a topic for conversation and this issue should be taught in academic spaces. In this thesis, I analyze the current curriculum at Dexter Middle School in Memphis, Tennessee for evidence of Black experiences in the current sixth grade English curriculum as well as design a unit that centers around police brutality and the Black experience.

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Introduction

In the wake of 2020, we have emerged into a completely new atmosphere from the year we left behind, or did we? During the presidential campaign of 2020, I cannot count how many times I heard the phrase, "We are a nation divided." As an African American woman living in the United States of America, I have known from the moment I was born that we are a nation divided. We cannot heal the nation and continue to avoid racial talks, but we can educate our community better by diversifying the curriculum. *Teaching for Black Lives* (Watson et al., 2018) was published during the Black Lives Matter movement with its goal to bring awareness to the Black experience by offering a collection of lesson plans and texts that offer teachers ways to make their Black students matter in schools by highlighting the Black experience. Some lawmakers are trying to silence the sharing of Black experiences in the public-school sector. In Michigan, Idaho, Iowa, Oklahoma, Texas and Tennessee, Republican lawmakers are lobbying for a bill that would silence educators from teaching Black experiences and Critical Race Theory in public schools. Critical Race Theory was part of an academic movement of civil rights scholars and activists who examine U.S. law and race relations (Crenshaw et al. 1995). This bill, if passed, would eliminate race relation discussions and American history curriculum in classrooms. According to Levin (2021),

> Under the legislation introduced Thursday, K-12 districts will lose 5% of their funding if educators teach critical race theory, "anti-American" ideas about race in America, or material from the 1619 Project, a New York Times initiative that puts Black history and the consequences of slavery at the center of the U.S. national narrative. (p. 2)

How is teaching about race anti-American when racism still presents itself in this country every day? If this bill succeeded, any teacher who teaches present day race relations and Critical Race Theory would cause their schools to lose funding from an already tight

budget. They are also trying to prevent any teacher from teaching the 1619 Project (Hannah-Jones, 2019), published by the New York Times. The 1619 Project is an initiative to refocus U.S. history to examine the legacy of slavery in this country as well as note the many contributions of Black Americans. This bill, if passed would strip away much-needed funding from public schools and would deny American students of the proper education.

American citizens have been calling for full recognition of what it took to build this country as well as the ugly truths that this country holds. Demonizing schools for telling the truth about the country that we live in is contradictory for a country that prides itself on free speech. Controlling what our youth learns is counterproductive. According to *Teaching for Black Lives* (Watson et al., 2018), "Teaching for Black lives means that we cannot relegate Black history to certain historical periods or events, and we must include Black lives in all aspects of the curriculum, including science, math, literature, and the arts" (p. 10). The current curriculum is not as diverse as it should be, and it does not press on current issues that continue to plague the Black community. As a future African American English ELA teacher, I analyzed the current curriculum at Dexter Middle School in Memphis, Tennessee, for evidence of racial diversity and devised a sixth grade English unit that is an example of ELA curriculum which highlights police brutality and the Black experience.

It is also important to teach Black experiences in schools because we must remember that children, if not corrected, will repeat the same behaviors as their parents and the outside community. Diversifying the curriculum will not only help Black students but also help students of other races show empathy and understand the world around them. Children can be racist to each other, and it should not be ignored in the classroom. Like millions of African American children, I first experienced racism at an early age at school. Growing up in Louisiana, I have experienced many educational settings.

Attending St. John The Evangelist High School in Plaquemine, Louisiana, I found myself one of the only two African Americans in the whole high school wing. The White children in my school were subject to the same all White social circles, only to relearn the same harmful White nationalistic ideas. The school did not combat these harmful knowledge transmissions with exposure. Not one facility member reprimanded the White boys or other individuals in racially motivated instances. The school was a cesspool for ignorance, bullying, and intolerance. The students were free to indulge in and uphold White supremacy, which ultimately pushed me out of the school. To create a safe environment for Black students and a diverse curriculum, the school must handle racial situations properly. When I left the school, there were many African American middle school students whom I feared would have similar experiences. *Hate at School Report* (Costella & Dillard, 2018), talks about how other African American children experience what I have experienced in the educational system. Of "2,776 educators who responded to the survey, more than two-thirds have witnessed racial bias instances on school grounds during fall 2018, and 57 percent of the incidents went without punishment" (para. 17). The sad reality is that there are thousands of young African American children that are faced with my experience in our modern-day education system.

Schools are a replica of society. Society has a way of deciding who is the fittest for survival and more desirable than others. Societies have hereditary structures in place to uphold the status quo and suppress those who have been deemed unworthy, and the curriculum often glosses over their contributions. The current curriculum can do a better job at expressing the Black experience. We should never grow tired of talking about racism and highlighting the Black experience in schools because it is an ongoing experience. Diversifying the existing curriculum allows for future generations to have a better understanding of one another and a clear picture of the world that they live in.

Diversifying the curriculum in public schools is needed now more than ever.

Educators have discussed that they do not have materials that are substantial enough to teach racial diversity in an up-to-date manner. According to Gurung and Prieto (2009), "the perennial problem for teachers is that there is never a single, up-to-date resource on teaching about diversity" (p. xiv). Many curriculum maps have set items for students to cover in most states which leaves little to no room to add new lessons that promote racial diversity into the schedule. Gurung and Prieto (2009) further say that there are not any suitable materials to teach racial diversity currently. According to Gurung and Prieto, "manuals or media that accompany many diversity texts sometimes provide techniques to incorporate diversity in the classroom, but these are rarely detailed to developed enough" (p. xiv). As Americans, we must share the truth about the country we live in and who lives in it, and the public-school curriculum needs to reflect that. We cannot get rid of racism, but we can at least take the time out to educate our citizens the right way by designing a curriculum that highlights the Black experience. To reform the existing educational system, we must infiltrate change and introduce factual knowledge into the classrooms instead of sugar-coated propaganda. To do that, we must have a curriculum that discusses the uncomfortable moments in history. We must have a curriculum that does not try to silence and discredit minorities but tells their stories.

Literature Review

The current educational system has many instances of racism. Diversifying the curriculum to highlight Black experiences is often met with apprehension. Many African American educators have found it difficult to discuss how to educate their Black and minority students to their White colleagues and have expressed how they find it difficult to navigate in educational spaces. Lisa D. Delpit discusses the issues faced by African American educators. According to Delpit (1988), "They won't listen, White folks are going to do what they want anyway. It is really hard. They just do not listen well. No, they listen, but they don't hear" (p. 280). To recognize this disconnect with this

miscommunication between African Americans moving in White spaces is to acknowledge racism and racial bias as well as diversifying the current curriculum. There is a great need for diverse perspectives in the English curriculum, particularly the Black experience, and many educators have found ways to incorporate Black literature with their students. The media has played a role in subliminally giving a stereotypical depiction of the Black experience. Carter, P. S., (2007), author of "The African American Read-in: Celebrating Black Writers and Supporting Youth," talks about approaches that she has spearheaded to diversify English literature in schools as well as build a lesson that acknowledged countless contributions made by African Americans. She invited 140 high school students to read excerpts from their favorite Black authors. She allowed her students to have space to bring an author that was personal to them to the classroom. She also created an environment where the students feel comfortable to talk about their present experiences and celebrate Black contributions.

Teaching for Black Lives (Watson et al., 2018) chronicles educators fighting to diversify the curriculum. February 2018, educators meet from around the country where they organized their first national, "*Black Lives Matter at School*" week of action. During this week, the teachers taught lessons that centered around the Black experience and together the educators corresponded with the 13 principals of the Black Lives Matter Global Network organization, where they raised demands two of which were to hire more Black teachers and Black history/ethnic studies mandated K-12. Teaching for Black Lives also accounts for how educators have interwoven the Black experience into their lessons. One educator, Renee Watson (Watson et al., 2018) wrote a section in the book titled, "Happening Yesterday, Happened Tomorrow: Teaching the Ongoing Murders of Black Men." After the murder of Trayvon Martin, Renee Watson modified her lesson in her seven-grade class. Her lesson titled, "From Pain to Poetry" had the goal in mind to account for what was happening in the real world as well as Aracelis Girmay's poem,

"Night, for Henry Dumas." The educator diversified the curriculum by modifying her lesson to make connections to current social justice issues. Our students need to understand that they do not live in a cookie-cutter world. The educator did a great job by crafting a lesson where students look at the past to understand the present. We cannot get rid of racism, but we can make room in our lessons to talk about present social justice issues.

Another educator used his music class as a space to discuss police brutality and Tamir Elijah Rice, who was one of the many victims who lost their lives to police brutality. He was 12-years old when he was murdered by a White Cleveland officer. He had a toy gun, which was mentioned by the witness who placed the 911 call. He was killed by the police officer while the officer remained in his vehicle. The officer was not tried for his death, and he was finally fired by the police department for being emotionally unstable. Music Teacher, Martin Urbach's (2020), *Song for Tamir Rice*, is a lesson plan that Urbach crafted to expose his students to the murder of Tamir Rice as well as have a conversation about police brutality in his classroom. Even though Music is the class subject, Urbach expresses how music has been used to shed light on social issues. On November 22, 2018, Tamir Rice would have been 16 years old, Urbach wanted to revise his curriculum so that the students can learn about police brutality as well as honor his death. He showed a video to his students from the Peace Poets, performers, and educators in New York city who bring awareness to police brutality and social justice through spoken word. Urbach opened up the conversation with his students by asking them if they were familiar with Tamir Rice. He allowed the students to express their thoughts and feelings surrounding his murder. The students made connections between themselves and Tamir Rice. After they established an understanding of who Tamir Rice was and what happened to him, the students were asked another prompting question relating to how music can shed a light on the situation. The students then collectively

wrote cords to accompany the Peace Poets spoken word and published their version online. I particularly liked this lesson because I was in the band during my formative education. Urbach used his Music class to talk about police brutality and taught his students that they can bring awareness by using their musical talents to bring awareness to current social justice issues.

Chicago Torture Justice Center in 2017, ordinance the history of torture committed under the direction of the disgraced Police Commander Jon Burge and the fight uncovered many victims of police torture and his abuse of power. The Chicago Torture Justice Center has coordinated with the Chicago Teachers Union Foundation to support the professional development of a curriculum for each school year. They have developed two curriculums for eighth and tenth-grade student's History classes. In the curriculum, the students will learn about the series of events in Chicago history. This unit is designed to teach basic information about the torture of persons conducted under Commander Jon Burge of the Chicago Police Department and the legacy of this experience. Thai Jones (2018), the author of *How Chicago's Public Schools Are Teaching the History of Police Torture*, recalls that Ronald Kitchen, a victim of Jon Burge, visited Lincoln Park High School on the North Side of Chicago. The students heard Ronald Kitchen's story of police brutality as part of their unit. The unit presents this scandal to the students within the context of the role that police play in the criminal justice system. The unit examines the proper role of police as well as the factors that allowed for the uncovered police brutality and abuse of power to occur undetected for so long.

Fishtank learning is a resource for lesson plans for teachers to share and publish amongst themselves. Aleah Dacey (2021) is the author of the middle school Fishtank writing and grammar curriculum. This is an English Language Arts 8th grade unit titled, *Unit 1: Facing Prejudice: All American Boys*. This lesson uses *All American Boys* as

their anchor text. *All American Boys* is a 2015 novel written by two American authors, one White and the other Black. The book tells a story about two kids. The African American boy and the White boy cross paths in their neighborhood when the Black boy is being beaten by a police officer. The White boy witnessed this incident and was forced to realize that society treats you differently by the color of your skin. In addition to reading the book as part of their unit, the students interacted with other materials. The students watched a ted talk centering around growing up Black in America that focused on how racial biases shape a person's experience and understanding of the world around them.

Methodology

I occupied a clinical field placement at Dexter Middle School in Shelby County, Tennessee, for the 2020-2021 school year. Dexter Middle School is using the Myperspectives Tennessee English Language Arts textbook with the accompanying online resources. MyPerspectives advertises its English language curriculum as providing, "next-gen learning experiences that promote higher achievement and develop the competencies needed for college and career readiness" (Savvas Learning Company, 2017). As I continued my placement, I analyzed the current curriculum for evidence of the Black experience and did not find an abundance of evidence. The textbook has five unit topics: childhood, animal allies, modern technology, imagination, and exploration.

I analyzed the textbook and conducted a document analysis for evidence of an anchor text that portrayed the Black experience in any capacity. From my analyses, I identified four anchor texts that are centered around Black people. The first evidence of the Black experience I located was in Unit 1 Childhood on page 12, *"Brown Girl Dreaming,"* by Jacqueline Woodson. This excerpt accounts for her childhood in the 1960s as she moved with her family from Greenville, SC to Brooklyn, New York. In this anchor text, students learned about memoirs and added new words to their vocabulary.

There were many missed opportunities because the textbook did not include the issue of discrimination that is prevalent throughout this example of a memoir. The textbook did not mention that this memoir is about the author's childhood during the Civil Rights Movement. The textbook also did not include her witnessing sit-ins in Greensville, South Carolina, or the discrimination that her family members experiences in the workplace. It is evident that the textbook only includes non-controversial excerpts from the memoir.

In unit one, there is a second evidence of an anchor text that centers around the Black experience. In the making meaning section on page 50, the anchor text is, *"*Michaela DePrince: The War Orphan Who Became a Ballerina," by William Kremer. The anchor text depicts a young Black girl who struggled in an orphanage in Sierra Leone, who later accomplished her dreams of being a professional ballet dancer. The article also talks about the Black experience in the ballet world. In the text, the author pointed out that they are few Black dancers, especially those who have a darker skin tone like Michaela DePrince. The anchor text was used for the six grade ELA students to be introduced to new vocabulary and biographical writing. The students were asked to conduct a first and second read of the story and answer the comprehension check questions that are all provided in the myPerspectives textbook. The comprehension check questions asked three simple questions to check the student's understanding; why did the aunties at the orphanage dislike Michaela, how did Michaela first learn about ballet and ballet dancers, and how did Michaela finally leave the orphanage? The comprehension check questions serve as a missed opportunity because the questions do not cover key moments in the passage such as racial exclusion in ballet An improvement to the comprehension check questions would ask the students to revisit the last paragraph of the anchor text. In the last paragraph of the anchor text, Michaela Deprince talks about how we rarely see professional dancers with her skin tone, and drawing attention to the last passage would have allowed for the students to have a deeper conversation about the

discrimination between people of color in the arts. Instead, the questions are subjected to small events that happened in the beginning, middle, and end of the text.

I conducted further analysis of the current curriculum and found a third example of the Black experience in unit one. On page 60, the anchor text is called, "From Bad Boy," authored by Walter Dean Myers, which is a memoir about his childhood growing up in Harlem, New York in the 1940s and 50s. This story is the third example of the Black experience in the myPerspective English language Arts book. The anchor text talks about Walter Dean Myers and his life growing up in Harlem. He talked about how he had to hide some of the things that he liked which include reading, writing poems, and dancing from his male peers. This anchor text was used for the students to be introduced to concept vocabulary words, read nonfiction, as well as learn about the central idea or author's purpose. The complete work by Walt Dean Myers talks about his internal struggle with his identity as a black boy and his primary interests. In the book, the author comes to terms with the fact that he can be both a black man and a writer. The text included in the textbook serves as a missed opportunity because the students were not exposed to the central idea of the memoir. If the students were exposed to the anchor text in its entirety the students would have been able to have a deeper conversation about how the author struggled with liking things that may be perceived as outside what was expected of the boys in his community.

I also found evidence of Black experiences in unit 2. Unit 2 focuses on the relationship between people and animals and how they relate to each other. In this unit, we have an author who is African American by the name of Julius Lester, who is a native of St. Louis, Missouri. He has been a folk singer, a civil rights photographer, a writer, and a professor of African American studies and Judaic Studies. This anchor text is titled, *"Black Cowboy, Wild Horses."* This anchor text takes centers around a boy, Bob, and his relationship with his horse, Warrior. The story also focuses on the background of when

the Spanish explorers came to America and brought domestic horses with them and over time some of these horses escape into the wild where they formed untamed herds and eventually spread west across the Great Plains. The students use this anchor text to learn new vocabulary, learn context clues skills, analyze story structure, plot, and as an example of fictional narrative. I appreciated this anchor text because it redefines the image of what a cowboy is, being that many of the earlier cowboys in the United States where Black.

After analyzing the myPerspectives English language Arts grade 6 textbook, I have concluded that the text does not offer Black experiences centering around police brutality, gentrification, discrimination, and mass incarceration. While these stories were good texts by award-winning Black authors, who do examine in their other work current issues of Black youth, the textbook highlighted sections of their work that did not address current issues of the Black experience that many Black students at Dexter Middle School will go through in their future. Out of the 495 pages of the textbook, 42 pages center around Black people and their experiences, which includes the four anchor texts and the related assignments associated with them. However, this textbook does not cover the civil rights movement or any recent civil rights movements, like Black Lives Matter that has occurred before the book's publishing in 2017. The excerpts that the myPerspectives textbook uses have many missed opportunities. From my analysis, I have concluded that although the textbook has 42 pages centered around Black people, the anchor texts provided are only short excerpts of work that does not illustrate instances that parallels the everyday Black experience, even though the works cited have examples of that in their complete work. It is important to include current Black Experiences because it exposes our students to how other people experience society. Having a textbook that centers around Black experiences also validates the everyday struggles against systematic inequality that Black Americans face. Even though myPerspectives offers diverse anchor

texts that range from various subjects, the everyday Black experience is not evident in the textbook.

Background on Police Brutality

There have been numerous African Americans that have lost their lives to police brutality. Moore (2020) is a professor of history at the University of Texas at Austin. He defines police brutality as, "the unwarranted or excessive and often illegal use of force against civilians by U.S. police officers" (1). It is an abuse of power and authority when a police officer decides to use his or her personal beliefs on U.S. citizens. It is a violation of not only the badge but a disgrace to the American government's judicial system. A police officer does not and should not be the judge, jury, or executioner of a citizen. In laymen's turns, it is not in their job description. Police brutality has been a current issue that has gained media attention. With the rise of the Black Lives Matter Movement and social media, police brutality has been documented and brought to the attention of millions, as many African Americans have continued to become victims each year due to police brutality. I was in high school when Trayvon Martin was killed by a neighborhood watchman, and I was old enough to understand that justice was not severed, and Trayvon Martin was racially profiled for just trying to live his life the best way he knew how. He was walking from home with a bag of skittles in one hand and a hoodie over his head. Before Trayvon Martin, there was Rodney King. I was not alive when Rodney King's famous video was released for all to see on television but in current terms, his video went viral, sparking mass protest and civil unrest. His case mirrors the George Floyd case because of the violence that has long existed in our neighborhoods between African Americans and the police department. On March 3, 1991, Rodney King was beaten by four LAPD officers. Plumber George Holliday, who was awoken by hearing a loud commotion caught the Rodney King beating on tape. He grabbed his camera and filmed what would become the historic video showing evidence of police brutality. Fortunately,

Rodney King would live after his violent encounter with the police, but years later George Floyd would not have that same luxury. On May 25, 2020, in Minneapolis, MN George Perry Floyd Jr, an African American man, was in the convenience store where he attempted to use a counterfeit twenty-dollar bill. The store clerk, by store policy, alerted the authorities. Four police officers were involved with restraining George Floyd with excessive force. Tou Thao, J. Alexander Kueng, Thomas Lane, and Derek Chauvin. Derek Chauvin blocked George Floyd's airway by kneeling on his neck for more than nine minutes. Derek Chavin was convicted of second-degree unintentional murder, third-degree murder, and second-degree manslaughter where he was sentenced 22.5 years with a possibility of serving 15 years. Dereck Chauvin's conviction should not cause any false hope that police brutality would suddenly cease to exist because of the conviction of one police officer. African Americans are more likely to die, from police brutality at a disproportionate rate compared to White Americans. Racism is nothing new in this country and police brutality has always been occurring in Black communities. According to Fyfe (1982), *Readings on Police Use of Deadly Force*,

> An individual who enters police work has a certain status-quo linked (middle-class) view of society-which he affirms by choosing a law enforcement career. When the citizenry he serves deviates culturally from his middle-class, ethnocentric orientation, the officer is more likely to become suspicious of behavior and is more likely to intercede in the affairs of citizens. (p. 131-132)

Police officers can not help but bring their individual attitudes to the workplace, and when unchecked, it can cause citizens to fall victim to their racial biases. To make lasting change within the police department, one must analyze the unchecked influence that has shaped police attitudes for present-day policing. Connie Hassett-Walker is an assistant professor of the Justice Studies and Sociology department at Norwich University. Hassett-Walker (2020) discusses the origins of policing in America in the article,

"George Floyd's Death Reflects the Racist Roots of American Policing." In the article, she talks about slave patrols and the origins of policing. Policing in southern states have different origins than their northern counterparts. Slave patrols were made up of volunteers empowered to use vigilante tactics to enforce laws related to slavery. They located and returned enslaved people and punished the enslaved for violating plantation rules. Members of the slave patrols were permitted to enter any home that was suspected of harboring slaves. These origins left unchanged have caused the disproportionate attacks of violence against African American communities and caused a great distrust of law enforcement. Jim Crow laws mandated segregation in schools, libraries, water fountains, etc. and it was a part of the police's job, and Blacks who violated these social norms would be violently brutalized by police. Meanwhile, the same entity did not punish the White perpetrators who lynched countless innocent African Americans. Nor did the judicial system hold the police departments responsible for failure to stop the many White mobs that would terrorize African American communities. The history of institutional racism in policing still matters today because it is the very foundation that modern-day policing is founded on. The systematic racism and historic instances of police violence caused a deep mistrust of authority and many police officers to act on a toxic policing culture that upholds systematic racism and targets Black and brown communities.

Chris Horn (2020), a member of the South Carolina Political Science Department was part of a study where they analyzed 20 million traffic stops. Chris Horn (2020) and the South Carolina Political Department found,

> Blacks were 63 percent more likely to be stopped even though they drive 16 percent less. Considering less time on the road, Blacks were about 95 percent more likely to be stopped. Blacks were 115 percent more likely than Whites to be searched in a traffic stop (5.05 percent for Blacks, 2.35 percent for Whites).

Contraband was more likely to be found in searches of White drivers. (para. 6-7) African Americans are disproportionately pulled over by the police because they are suspected of committing a crime. It is very important to highlight the racial disparities that Black adults must go through. As a young African American, buying their first car is met with a lot of apprehensions from parents because they are concerned about their children not making it home. Samuel Sinyangwe (2021), creator of *Mapping Police Violence*, a website that collects data on the number of people killed by the police. According to the data, "police have killed 489 people in 2021" (para 1). *Mapping Police Violence* also states of that data, "Black people were 28% of those killed by police in 2020 despite being only 13% of the population" (para. 2). It is a possibility, unfortunately, that one of our students might run into a "bad cop" during a routine traffic stop and end up deceased. African American parents often lecture their children about the dangers of being pulled over by the police. I remember my parents telling me not to make any sudden movements and to remain as calm as possible. These types of conversations are the conversations that only Black parents must make sure to tell their children to keep them safe. *The Disproportionate Risks of Driving While Black* (Lafraniere et al., 2015) highlights research that shows African Americans are disproportionately targeted from their White counterparts by analyzing Greensboro, North Carolina. According to Lafraniere et al., "officers were more likely to stop Black drivers for no discernible reason and they were more likely to use force if the driver was Black, even when they did not encounter physical resistance" (para. 10). This study has shown that even when the Black driver is acting in a compliant manner, police officers have shown that they will continue to use force even when it is not warranted. As a society, we need to understand that we carry our personal biases to the workplace. If we can understand that people take their personal biases to their workplace, why are police officers exempt? Police officers are not only displaying those same racist biases onto African American civilians, but they

also discriminate within their profession because of the color of their skin. Baker's (2010) "Bias Seen in Police-on Police Shootings" shows how the law enforcement community discriminate amongst each other. The study examined police on police shootings, and it is reported,

> Black and Latino police officers face a greater risk of being killed by police. In cases of mistaken identity, 9 out of the 10 off-duty officers killed by other officers in the United States since 1982 were Black or Latino. The report also shows the inherent or subconscious racial bias plays a role in shoot/don't shoot decisions made by officers of all races and ethnicities. (para. 5)

This study is showing that even within their profession they have allowed their racial biases to kill one of their own because of the color of their skin. There has always been mistrust between African American communities and the police. Recently with Alton Sterling and the other incidences of police brutality being caught on tape, it has caused a mass distrust of law enforcement. The idea that a Black citizen can be killed by the police with little to no criminal action has increased that mistrust. Breonna Taylor's death sparked a wave of protest when she was killed by police in her home in the night hours of March 2020. "What to Know About Breonna Taylor's Death" (Oppel et al., 2020), details the circumstances surrounding her death and the resolution that was made after the mass protest brought media attention to her case. According to Oppel et al. (2020), "The only support for a grand jury's conclusion that the officers had announced themselves before bursting into Ms. Taylor's apartment beyond the assertions of the officers themselves was the account of a single witness who had given inconsistent statements" (para. 5). Breonna Taylor was killed during a botched raid. The police officers were able to enter her room with a no-knock warrant. According to Oppel et al. (2020), "May, Louisville officials have banned the use of no-knock warrants, which allow the police to forcibly enter people's homes to search them without warning" (para. 7). After the mass protest,

Louisville, KY used this case as the catalyst to end no-knock warrants. When Breonna Taylor, a Black medical worker, was killed in her home it added more fuel to the fire for the Black Lives Matter movement because here lies a woman who was simply sleeping in her bed when the police officers abruptly entered her home and shot her multiple times. It put fear in the Black community to know that an officer can knock down your door and kill you in the middle of the night. The police officers made false claims in their reports. According to Oppel et al. (2020),

> The police's incident report contained multiple errors. It listed Ms. Taylor's injuries as "none," even though she had been shot several times, and indicated that officers had not forced their way into the apartment-though they used a battering ram to break the door open. (para. 34)

The police officers reportedly tried to cover up the circumstances surrounding Breonna Taylor's death. What does that say about other police departments in other jurisdictions around our country? Police officers can falsely report incidents, and left unchecked, can eventually try to cover up their crimes. Even if the police officers surrounding Breonna Taylor's death were not racially motivated to commit her murder, the police officers tried to use their power to manipulate incident reports to cover up the botched raid that led to her death. What if one of your students was related to Breonna Taylor? Would you chalk up the Black Lives Movement as strictly political or would you identify those lives are being affected and show empathy to that student? The victims of police brutality have families, children, and loved ones. If we can acknowledge that there are people who bring their racial biases to their prospective workplaces, we can acknowledge that racial biases can cause a police officer to throw out empathy and commit murder. Why can't we as a nation realize that people bring their racial biases to police departments around the country and it not only affects the victim, but their families and respective communities?

I am a Louisiana native; my state has a high rate of mass incarceration. The

Black community has always warned their youth about law enforcement in Louisiana, particularly around the holidays. Around the holidays, a common narrative around the Black community is police officers are more aggressive with writing tickets. My mother and my father have said that same statement to me. If a group of people collectively dislike law enforcement, they must have good reason too. In recent news, a former officer decided to be the whistleblower to policing in not only America but policing in my community in Baton Rouge, Louisiana. Niko Mann, author of the article, "Officer Jeremiah Ardoin Blows the whistle on Corruption BRPD cops," cites the corrupt ways in which the Baton Rouge precinct operates. Mann (2021) has reported the response to former Police Officer Jeremiah Ardoin,

> Due to information from Officer Ardoin, the District Attorney's office has dismissed 640 drug chargers. Two officers have also been arrested, as well as two lieutenants and two sergeants were demoted to uniformed patrol and transferred out of the narcotics unit pending an investigation. (para. 2)

This whistleblower has validated what Black people in my area have been saying for years. We have been saying that they are corrupt. We watched Alton Sterling get killed by police officers, who were also in Baton Rouge all over the media, and now police officers have finally joined in to hold their fellow officers accountable for their actions. Ardoin sat down with reporter Chris Nakamoto for an exclusive interview. Nakamoto (2021) reported that Ardoin, "during his four-year-stint in the narcotics division, officers were required to make one drug arrest per shift, Ardoin recalled that mandate was verbal and would not be found written in any policy" (para. 29). Ardoin turned his back on his department to tell the truth about the Black community being subjected to unconstitutional pat-down searches. He also alleged that citizens have had narcotics planted on them to meet quotas. Police officers are starting to realize that they can not hide amongst each other because this case shows that police are starting to come forward

and tell the truth about their behavior. Nakamoto (2021), also reported on “snapping’ which Ardoin claims that police officers in the precinct operate to meet this unestablished quota,

> At least three to four nights a week they would have us riding through the neighborhoods Ardoin said. If you saw a random Black person walking around the street and hasn't done anything, they would tell us just to jump out the vehicle, grab them and pat them down without probable cause. I voiced my opinions several times, and I didn't agree with that. (para. 4)

A former police officer is telling my local news station that the Baton Rouge Police department is actively seeking out Black people walking around who do not pose a threat. This hit home for me because not only has the Black community already had their suspicions, but this former officer coming forward validated our suspicions about our local police departments in Louisiana. Another police officer, trooper Carl Cavalier, has come forward to WBRZ-TV local news station in Baton Rouge, Louisiana to uncover a deadly case of police brutality. *Nakamoto exclusive: Ronald Greene investigative notes show troopers asked for colleagues to be arrested* (Schmaltz et al., 2021), published trooper Carl Cavalier call for his colleagues to be arrested for the events surrounding Ronald Greene. Trooper Carl Cavalier expressed his need to come forward,

> we still have murderers in my eyes, on the job. Guys who received a slap on the wrist for their roles in the wrist for their roles in the Ronald Greene incident are unpunished…patrolling the streets and left on the job. (Schmaltz et al., 2021, para. 6)

Ronald Greene was killed in a deadly encounter with Trooper F in Monroe, Louisiana. His family was told he was killed in a car crash resulting from a high-speed chase, but body camera footage resurfaced two years later showing him being brutally accosted by officers. WBRZ-TV obtained notes from trooper Albert Paxton, who was investigating

the murder of Ronald Greene. Trey Schmaltz and other journalists at WBRZ-TV (Schmaltz et al., 2021) published Trooper Albert Paxton's notes detailing many obstacles in the Ronald Greene investigation,

> On May 27, 2019, at a golf tournament, Colonel Kevin Reeves is approached about this. [Someone else] tells Colonel Reeves our concerns and makes him aware of the case. Colonel Reeves says we can't arrest troopers for turning off cameras because it will set a precedent. (para. 13)

Colonel Reeves was concerned with setting a precedent in court than aiding the investigation with removing murders from the police department. It shows a lack of empathy for humans and a disregard for the criminal justice system. If it were not for these officers, Ronald Greene's family would have continued to believe that he died from a car crash. Video footage was later leaked showing the incident and an officer can be heard saying, "I beat the ever-living f*** out of him" (Schmaltz et al., 2021). Trooper Carl Cavalier responded to WBRZ-TV anchor Chris Nakamoto (Schmaltz et al., 2021) "me, seeing Ms. Mona Harding, Ronald Greene's mother on TV, just having a feeling of what if that's my mother; what if Ronald Greene was me" (para. 20). Trooper Carl Cavalier did the right thing by being a whistleblower for Ronald Greene's family. He showed great empathy for the mother of the victim, and he put himself in the victim's shoes and uncovered police brutality in his department.

There has been a push to remove police officers from schools because Black and brown minors are also being subject to police brutality in their schools. School shootings have prompted lawmakers and school officials to deliberate over new laws that would allow more police officers in schools. The idea was that the students would be protected from the possible threat of a school shooting, like the recent tragedy at Sandy Hook Elementary School in Newtown, Connecticut. This new discission has caused a negative effect. The heightened police presence has caused a school-to-prison pipeline for many

Black and brown students. Nance (2016), from the University of Florida Law Center, writes about the relationship between students and police officers in school in the article titled, “Students, Police, and the School to Prison Pipeline.” In his article, he cites several instances where children have been violently handled by police officers while at school. In October 2015, a police officer violently handled a school incident. A student was using their cellphone in class where the teacher called the on-campus police officer. Instead of deescalating the situation, the female student was grabbed by the neck and flipped on the ground, she was then dragged across the classroom floor and arrested. Police officers are overstepping their authority, bypassing the school administrators, and handling the students with force. If a teacher cannot put their hands on a student, an officer should not have the authority to forcibly handle a student on school grounds. The police presence has caused an unnecessary amount of personal involvement with handling minors that should fall more on the school administrators, guidance counselors, and teachers than the on-duty campus officer. Who is really in charge when a police officer is present? It begs a question of who controls school operations and students are often arrested for minor infractions. Nance (2016) lists the offenses that students have received criminal charges for,

> The anecdotal evidence of police officers mishandling student disciplinary problems abounds. For example, police officers stationed at schools have arrested students for texting, passing gas in class, violating the school dress code, stealing two dollars from a classmate, bringing a cell phone to class, arriving late to school. (p. 922)

Is the responsibility for students rely on the principal or the police officer patrolling the halls? This power dynamic is a dangerous one when school employees also fear the repercussions from the police officer.

Students as young as five years old have been arrested because of on-campus

incidents by the on-campus police officer. In 2005, a five-year-old was placed in handcuffs for having a temper tantrum in class. In what world is it ok to handcuff a child for being a child, throwing a temper tantrum at an age where they are still getting used to being in a space without their primary caregivers. That should have been an eyeopener to the dangers of policing in schools by the age of the victim alone. Babies are being traumatized by the police in their classrooms. The consequences associated with incarceration are even more severe when a person has had negative run ends with the law starting at an early age. Students of color are more likely to be disproportionately punished than their White counterparts by school administrators and teachers where they discipline more minority students often and more severely. Ellen Tuzzolo from the Juvenile Justice Project of Louisiana published an article, "Rebuilding Inequity the Re-emergence of the School-to-Prison Pipeline in New Orleans." Tuzzolo (2006), spoke about the effects of law enforcement and zero-tolerance policies that have affected students, "African Americans comprised just 17% of public-school enrollment nationwide but accounted for 34% of suspensions. And in 2003, African Americans made up 16% of the nation's juvenile population; however, they accounted for 45% of juvenile arrests" (p. 61). This shows that policing itself is discriminatory. If police officers can exert those same racial biases on Black and brown children, why have we as a county not accepted that police brutality is a product of that same racial bias. Officers are patrolling the halls with a high probability that they will arrest a Black child, so they are going to exhibit the same bias behavior with Black adults. Small interactions are often met with heightened police violence that disproportionately affects African American students.

A New Mexico on-campus police officer resigned after evidence of him attempted to retrain an eleven-year-old African American student was made public. The eleven-year-old student was violently restrained to the ground by the officer. The student was visibly upset as she was trying to tell the officer that he was hurting her. The police

officer is seen, on video, asserting himself into a disciplinary situation with a school administrator and student. The officer expressed that the student was involved in two assaults between the school staff, but from further review of the camera footage, the student only brushed past the teacher without harm. There was no evidence of assault brought on by the student, but the police officer's report said otherwise. The police officer can be heard on the bodycam footage taking control of the situation. Wayt (2019) reporter at NBC News published an article, "New Mexico School Resource Officer Resigns After Being Caught on Video Allegedly Roughing Up 11-year-old Girl." The article shows the video of the incident as well as recording the cops statements during the situation. According to Wayt (2019) the cop said, "She took more milks than she was supposed to, she threw a milk on the ground" (para. 11). The eleven-year-old girl suffered a concussion and had arm and shoulder pain brought on by the incident. No child under any circumstances deserves to be given a concussion by a school police officer because they were seen as "not following the rules." The eleven-year-old child received a concussion from the police officer because she went straight to the cafeteria, took more milk cartons than she should have, and threw one milk carton on the ground and walked away. This situation does not call for such violence nor does a child deserve to be brutalized over a milk carton. Police brutality is affecting children and adults. We have lost innocent lives to police brutality and the number is increasing and many children have faced that same brutality in their schools.

Overview of Unit

Police Brutality should be taught in schools because children are finding themselves victims of police brutality on school grounds because of the color of their skin. This issue should not be treated where we pick sides, but it should be acknowledged as an experience that many African Americans are burdened with because we have an unjust system based on discrimination and fear. It needs to be acknowledged that

systematic racism exists today. Throughout the unit, the students will be interacting with a series of anchor texts that highlight police brutality as a feature of the Black experience. We will take a closer look at policing and its role in American society as well as bring awareness to the victims who have lost their lives to police brutality.

Throughout the unit, the students will be able to express their personal experiences with law enforcement and have an open conversation. For the students' performance-based assessments, the students will conduct their own research. While completing the Police Brutality Awareness Project, the students will work in groups where their task is to bring awareness to police brutality by honoring a victim who we have not discussed in class. The group will be responsible for creating a 20-minute PowerPoint presentation depicting who their person was before they became a victim of police brutality, the circumstances surrounding their death, legal action if taken, and the community impact after the incident. The students will learn about policing throughout the unit. After learning about policing the students will compare two cases of police brutality. The students will compare the Rodney King case with the George Floyd case to understand how the media has been used to uncover police brutality as well as analyze the community response. Comparing these two cases, one from the past and one from the present, will help the students understand the longevity of this social issue. The students will also learn about how police brutality impacts the community. They will hear the words of an 11-year-old girl expressing what police brutality and Black Lives Matter mean to her. This will benefit the students by seeing a person close to their age express their personal experiences as well as bring awareness. The students will also be able to work on their research skills while they read a scholarly article about the statistics of African Americans killed by the police, distinguish between primary and secondary sources, and learn how to give a presentation. When teaching this unit, we also must address the students who can be triggered by the subject matter of this unit. Some

teachers might be hesitant with the unit because of the subject matter. In truth, Black and brown students are already having conversations in their respective communities about police brutality. We must remember as teachers that education starts at the home.

Police Brutality has become a racial issue and because of this there is a possibility that there may be some barriers when teaching this unit in schools. This unit focuses on policing. As American citizens, our students have a right to understand the people who have an active role in their communities. Police officers are present across the United States of American. Yes, the unit focuses on police brutality, but it also primarily focuses on the role that police play in American society and how everyday citizens are affected by policing. There are some positive roles that police officers play in American society, but it is also important that our students can identity what is good policing and what is bad policing in their communities.

Conclusion

The internet, cell phones, and social media have shed a light on police brutality and our students possess those tools. To validate Black experiences, we must teach those experiences in academic spaces. We also must remember that it is our job as educators to equip our students with the tools to navigate our world. We are no service to our students if we are too afraid to tell them the truth. With White lawmakers are lobbying to silence Black experiences and Critical Race Theory from schools, Tennessee being one of those states, we as educators cannot be afraid to teach facts. Facts that have statistical data backing them up, but the White lawmakers continue to ignore and turn a blind eye to the discrimination and racism occurring in present-day society. I feel like we should not tread lightly when teaching Black experiences because of political pushback. We as educators must consider how trauma effects our students. According to the National Child Traumatic Stress Network (2017) trauma is defined as,

Traumatic events involve (1) experiencing a serious injury to oneself or

> witnessing a serious injury to or the death of someone else; (2) facing imminent threats of serious injury or death to oneself or others; or (3) experiencing a violation of personal physical integrity. Child traumatic stress occurs when children's exposure to traumatic events overwhelms their ability to cope with what they have experienced. (p. 2)

Our students are living with traumas which can cause students to act out in the classroom in a variety of ways. It is important to address trauma. African American students are more predisposed to trauma because of the discriminatory relationship that they have with this country. The Black community has continued to face racism and discrimination and our Black students are also victims of White supremacy. The educational institutions that we have in this country have a history of discrimination against African Americans.

According to "Racism and Psychological and Emotional Injury: Recognizing and Assessing Race-based Traumatic Stress," racial trauma is defined as a "traumatic events that occur as a result of witnessing or experiencing racism, discrimination, or structural prejudice (also known as institutional racism) can have a profound impact on the mental health of individuals exposed to these events" (Carter, R.T. 2007, pp. 22-23). When our Black students are scrolling through their social media accounts, there is a possibility that they will come across a traumatizing video of a police officer killing someone that looks like them? Our students are wondering if they can be the next victim of police brutality. They have questions and concerns that they might not know how to find the answers to. It is our job as educators to help our students in need, especially when they are hurting. Black experiences should not be left out of the school curriculum because old White men refuse to acknowledge their obvious White privilege. There is a possibility that there will be another name added to the ever-growing list of names of unarmed Black citizens of the United States of America who have been victims of police brutality, and this is a historic trauma that needs to be addressed in classrooms. According to the article, "Police

are Still Killing People at the Same Rate as Before" (McCaskill 2021), "through the first four months of the year, there have been just six days in which police across the United States did not kill anyone" (para. 2). There is bound to have another name, another video, and another tragedy that the Black community must mourn for, and we must remember that we have students in the Black community that are mourning as well.

We are living in historic times where we are a nation divided, waiting for the next hashtag or video which depicting an incident of police brutality. After the death and trial of George Floyd, we have still had incidents of unarmed Black people being killed by the police. 16-year-old Ma'khia Bryant, 20-year-old Dauntie Wright, and 42-year-old Andrew Brown are all victims of police brutality that occurred after the mass protests. There seems to be no end in sight, so it is important to have these conversations now. Our Black students need to know that their schools are a safe space to talk about the current events that relate to their communities. Students should not feel scared to talk about problems that are happening to their community in school, especially with the Black Lives Matter movement. The educational institutions have a history of discrimination against African Americans. My findings have shown that textbooks are continuing to not talk about the present-day issues that impact the Black community. It is important to squeeze time out of our lessons to talk about issues affecting the Black community. We should encourage our students to research the facts for themselves so that they have a better understanding of how the world works around them. Education starts at the home. Black parents have always had conversations with their children about how the world treats them, so White parents should do the same. We should encourage our students to share their experiences because to understand each other we must understand how we all see the world and how the world sees us.

Appendix

Unit

Title: Police Brutality
Essential Question(s): What role do police play in American society? What is police brutality? How are everyday citizens affected by policing?
Age/Grade 6th grade ELA
Standards: RL.9-10.4 Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in the text, including figurative and connotative meaning. RL.9-10.3 Analyze how complex characters develop over the course of a text… RL.9-10.5 Analyze in detail how an author's ideas or claims are developed and refined by particular sentences, paragraphs, or larger portions of a text. SL.9-10.3 Evaluate a speaker's point of view…identifying any fallacious reasoning or exaggerated or distorted evidence. SL. 9-10.4 Present information, findings, and supporting evidence clearly, concisely, and

logically such that listeners can follow the line of reasoning and the organization, development, substance, and style are appropriate to purpose, audience, and task. W.6.4 Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development, organization, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience.
Length of Time: 4 90-minute class periods
Lessons: Lesson 1: [Policing and Police Brutality] Lesson 2: [Compare and Contrast Past and Present] Lesson 3: [Police Brutality and How it Affects the Community] Lesson 4: [Bringing Awareness: Final Introduction/Research Skills]
Performance Based Assessment: Police Brutality Awareness Project. The students will work in groups and their task is to bring awareness to police brutality by honoring a victim that we have not discussed in class. The group will be responsible for creating a 20-minute PowerPoint presentation depicting who their person was before they became a victim of police brutality, the circumstances of their death, legal action if taken, and the community impact after the incident.

Lesson 1: [Policing and Police Brutality?]

Objective(s):

Students will be able to identify key details to determine the central idea of a text.

Students will be able to determine the central idea to compose a summary distinct from personal opinions and judgments.

Standard(s):

RL.9-10.4 Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in the text, including figurative and connotative meaning.

6.L.VAU.6 Acquire and accurately use grade- appropriate general academic and domain-specific words and phrases; develop vocabulary knowledge when considering a word or phrase important to comprehension or expression.

Materials Needed:

- Anchor Text: Role of Police in America
- Role of Police in America, (Charles Koch Institute, 2021)
  Link: https://charleskochinstitute.org/stories/role-of-police-in-america/
- First Read Anchor Text Worksheet
- Vocabulary Worksheet
- Anchor text: Role of Police in America Comprehension Questions
- Writing Prompt Worksheet

Instructional Sequence:

Jump Start: Who are the police? What roles do they play in society? What is their Job?

The instructor will start the lesson by asking the students the following questions from the jump start. The instructor will ask the students if they have had positive or negative

experiences with the police or have witnessed police brutality in general. Note that the instructor should focus the conversation on the role that police play in our society. During this time, the students should feel free to share their responses from their personal experiences.

Vocabulary Lesson:

The students will be introduced to their new vocabulary words in their anchor text for the unit, colonial, agencies, demand, communities, crime, public safety, engagement, discretion, organization, accountability.

The instructor will then prompt the students to respond if they are familiar with the words and give the definition in their own words. Note that for homework the students will be assessed on their new vocabulary words. For homework, students are responsible for ranking their words from least familiar to most familiar and completing vocabulary 2 activity on the vocabulary worksheet. The students will also be assigned to write a paragraph using their new vocabulary words.

The students will then be given 5 minutes to rank their new vocabulary words from least to greatest before transitioning to the next lesson.

First Read Anchor Text: For the anchor text the students will read the criminal justice article: Role of Police in America.

The students will listen to the instructor read the article out loud. While the students are reading the article, they should be actively listening to the instructor, following along, and completing their First Read Anchor Worksheet. The students are writing down what they notice from their first read.

Second Read Group Activity:

Students will spend 15 minutes in groups where they will conduct a second read of the article and complete the comprehension questions. After the fifteen minutes, the instructor will go over the comprehension questions.

Closure: Go over the homework with the students. For homework, the students are responsible for summarizing the Role of Policing article in their own words. Students will also be responsible for completing the Vocabulary Worksheet.

Assessment:

Informal Assessment:

First Read Anchor Chart. This chart will be used to help aid the students with the first read of their anchor text. The students will use this chart to understand the story. The First Read Anchor Chart can also be used to aid the students with their research for their performance assessment.

Comprehension Question Worksheet. This worksheet will test the student's level of understanding of the anchor text.

Formal Assessment:

Writing Prompt: The students will write a summary of the anchor text that we read in class today for homework. Their summary should be a paragraph which should be at least 5 sentences.

Vocabulary Worksheet: The students will be introduced to their new vocabulary words in their anchor text for the unit; colonial, agencies, demand, communities, crime, public safety,

engagement, discretion, organization, accountability. The students will also have to define and write a paragraph using their new vocabulary words.

Lesson 2: [Compare and Contrast Past and Present]

Objectives:

Students will be able to identify key details to determine the central idea of a text.

Students will be able to analyze texts and compare their similarities and differences.

Standards:

RL.9-10.5 Analyze in detail how an author's ideas or claims are developed and refined by particular sentences, paragraphs, or larger portions of a text.

RL.6.9 Compare and Contrast texts in different forms or genres (e.g., stories and poems; historical novels and fantasy stories) in terms of their approaches to similar themes and topics.

RI.6.1Cite textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text.

Materials Needed:

- First Read Anchor Text Worksheet
- Anchor text(s):

  George Floyd Article: Prosecutors do not announce charges in George Floyd's death but say "justice will be served," (Maxouris et al., 2020)

  Link: https://www.cnn.com/2020/05/28/us/minneapolis-george-floyd-thursday/index.html

  Rodney King Article: Rodney King beating: 30 years later, incident remains a seminal part of LA history, (Garcia, 2021)

  Link: https://abc7.com/rodney-king-lapd-anniversary-george-holliday/10385652/.
- Compare and Contrast worksheet

- Evidence Log

Instructional Sequence:

At the beginning of class, students are asked to read a passage on the recent death of George Floyd. The students will get into groups and conduct the first read on their own aided by their First Read Chart. After they have read the passage, the instructor would ask the students if they were familiar with the case. The instructor will also instruct the students to recall what they noticed from the article while prompting them to cite textual evidence.

Compare and Contrast: Group Activity:

The students will compare the two incidences of police brutality. Inform the students that they are going to compare the George Floyd case with The Rodney King Case. Inform the students that Rodney King was a victim of police brutality on March 3, 1991. The students will pair into groups. Each group member will use their First Read chart to aid them while they work in their groups. While in their groups the students are reading the Rodney King article. After the students read the Rodney King Article together the students will work together to complete the Compare and Contrast worksheet for 20 minutes. The students are focusing on the details of the case, any legal action taken, if any, and how the community reacted to both cases.

After the twenty minutes is up each group will share what connections they have made between the two cases. While each group is reflecting on the similarities and differences between the two cases. Each individual student will write down what they have learned from each case in their Evidence log.

Assessment:

Informal Assessment:

First Read Anchor Chart. This chart will be used to aid the students with the first read of their

anchor text. The students will use this chart to understand the story. The First Read Anchor Chart can also be used to aid the students with their research for their performance assessment.

Formal Assessment:

Compare and Contrast worksheet. This worksheet will allow for the students to analyze the two cases and find the similarities and differences as well as gain knowledge on each case.

Evidence Log: This worksheet allows the students to connect what they learned to the essential questions for the unit. The students are responsible for collecting evidence throughout the unit that supports the essential questions as well as explain why their evidence backs up their claim.

Lesson 3: [Police Brutality and How it Affects the Community]

Objective(s): Students will be able to identify key details to determine the central idea of a text.
Standard(s): RI.6.6 Determine an author's point of view or purpose in a text and explain how it conveyed in the text. RI.6.1Cite textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text. W.6.4 Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development, organization, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience.
Materials Needed: o Video: What Black Lives Matter means to an 11-year-old Link: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=muy5zpqslRc o Know their Names Black People killed by the police in the US, (Chughtai, 2021) Link: https://interactive.aljazeera.com/aje/2020/know-their-names/index.html o Evidence Log o Comprehension questions worksheet: Black Americans 2.5X More Likely Than Whites to be killed by Police. o Anchor Text: o Black Americans 2.5X More Likely Than Whites to Be Killed by Police, (Richter, 2020) Link: https://www.statista.com/chart/21872/map-of-police-violence-against-black-americans/. o First Read Anchor Text Worksheet
Instructional Sequence: Jump start assignment: When the students walk into class and watch the video: What Black

Lives Matter means to an 11-year-old girl. After we watch the video, the students will have a share out about what they felt about the video. The students will make connections to how police brutality affects how the 11-year-old girl views the world.

After the share out they will interact with, know their Names Black People Killed by the Police in the US. By Ala Chughtai. This is an interactive website that features victims of police brutality in the United States.

The students will spend 10 minutes interacting with the website and answering their writing Prompt: Interact with the Know their Names Black People killed by the police in the US website and answer the prompt. Are you familiar with these names? Pick a victim of police brutality that you have not heard of. Write down what you noticed about their case. Encourage the students to use their Evidence Log as well to record their interactions.

Analyze the Statistics: First Read Anchor Text: For the anchor text the students will *read Black Americans 2.5X More Likely Than Whites to be killed by Police.*
The students will listen to the instructor read the article out load. While the students are the article they should be actively listening to the instructor, following along, and completing their First Nonfiction Worksheet. The students are writing down what they notice from their first read.

The students will spend 20 minutes answering the comprehension questions as a group. After the students work as a group the class will share out their responses.

Assessment:

Informal Assessment:

First Read Anchor Chart. This chart will be used to aid the students with the first read of their anchor text. The students will use this chart to understand the story. The First Read Anchor Chart can also be used to aid the students with their research for their performance assessment.

Formal Assessment:

Comprehension Question Worksheet. This worksheet will test the student's level of understanding of the anchor text.

Writing Prompt worksheet:

The students will interact with the Know their Names Black People Killed by the Police in the US website and answer the writing prompt. Are you familiar with these names? The students will also be responsible for reading through the victims of police brutality and write about a victim of police brutality that they have not heard of what they noticed about their case, as well as further research this person and the impact that their death has had on their community.

Lesson 4: [Bringing Awareness: Final Introduction/Research Skills]

Objective(s):

Students will be able to distinguish between primary and secondary sources.

Students will be able to present information.

Standard(s): SL. 9-10.4 Present information, findings, and supporting evidence clearly, concisely, and logically such that listeners can follow the line of reasoning and the organization, development, substance, and style are appropriate to purpose, audience, and task.

Materials Needed:

- Final Assessment Prompt Worksheet
- Evidence Log
- Exit Ticket
- Primary Secondary Short Clip

  Link: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dU8Tr6JChqY
- Primary Source example:
- Rodney King court documents, Koons v. United States, 584 U.S. (2018). https://www.supremecourt.gov/ opinions/17pdf/17-5716_jhek.pdf
- Secondary Source example:
- Rodney King beating: 30 years later, incident remains a seminal part of LA history, (Garcia, 2021)

  Link: https://abc7.com/rodney-king-lapd-anniversary-george-holliday/10385652/

Instructional Sequence:

Police Brutality Awareness Project: Students will be introduced to their final assessment. For their final assessment, students will be placed into groups of four. They are responsible for

creating a PowerPoint presentation. The students are responsible for presenting a victim of police brutality to the class. During the presentation, the students should focus on the victim of police brutality, what happened to them during their interaction with law enforcement, and the community response.

Research skills:

The students will be asked if they are familiar with primary and secondary sources. The students will respond. The instructor will give the definition of primary and secondary sources. Then the students will then watch a video on the difference between primary and secondary sources.

After the students watch the video. The instructor will conduct a think-aloud on how to conduct proper research. The instructor pulls of court case documents pertaining to the Rodney King Case. The instructor will ask the students to respond to if it is an example of a primary or secondary source. The students give their responses. The instructor informs the students that court documents are considered primary sources. The instructor provides the definition of a primary source to the students, “A primary source gives you direct access to the subject of your research.”

Next, the instructor projects a secondary source on the screen from a news outlet recounting 30 years after the Rodney King Case. The instructor informs the class that the news outlet has very credible information, but it is classified as a secondary source and provides the definition of a secondary source, “Secondary sources provide secondhand information and commentary from other researchers.”

The students will spend the remainder of class working with their groups to finding at least

three primary and secondary sources for their bibliography, which is part of their final assessment. Each person in the group is responsible for adding three sources to their group bibliography and specifying if their sources are primary or secondary.
Assessment: Informal Assessment: Exit Ticket: Students are responsible for starting their bibliography. Today's exit ticket is for the students to turn in three secondary sources that they have found with their instructor before they leave class. Formal Assessment Bibliography: The students will start to build their bibliography for their performance-based assessment.

Unit 1: Police Brutality and the Black Lives Matter Movement

Police Brutality Project Rubric**:**

Group members: _____ Subject: _____

Score: ___/50

Criteria	4	3	2	1
Content	Knowledgeable of content and includes an engaging introduction to the victim of police brutality, overall knowledge of the case, and shows community impact from the incident.	Knowledgeable of content of the victim of police brutality and shows the community impact from the incident.	Somewhat knowledgeable of content community impact is not present in presentation.	Some content facts seem questionable, and contribution is not present.
Visual Aid	The visual aid complements the speech, and it is neat and creative, pictures throughout with description	The visual aid connects to the group speech and is mostly neat and colorful, pictures present	The visual aid somewhat connects to the speech and is somewhat neat	The visual aid does not connect to the overall presentation.
Organization	The presentation flows nicely and sticks to the point.	The presentation was organized but lacking in some areas	The lack of organization is causing confusion for the overall project	The presentation is not organized
Time	The group's speech is given in the time allotted	Speech is 10% short or over the allotted time	Speech is 20% short or over the allotted time	Speech is 30% short or over the allotted time

Unit 1: Police Brutality and the Black Lives Matter Movement

Police Brutality Awareness Project

Final Unit Assessment Prompt

The class has spent the unit learning about police brutality through the several anchor texts that we have read throughout the unit that has highlighted policing, police brutality, and we have compared cases of police brutality from the past and the present. The group task is to bring awareness to police brutality by honoring a victim that we have not discussed in class. The group will be responsible for creating a 20-minute PowerPoint presentation depicting who their person was before they became a victim of police brutality, the circumstances of their death, legal action if taken, and the community impact after the incident. You should assume that the audience is unsuspecting people who have never heard of your person. The PowerPoint is graded on organization and content. In total, your group should have five sources in your bibliography, which should be located on the last slide of your PowerPoint slide. During the presentations, each student will receive an individual participation grade by asking two questions minimum during each group's presentation.

Unit 1: Police Brutality and the Black Lives Matter Movement

Evidence Log

Throughout the Unit you will be interacting with different anchor text centered around police brutality. For this unit, record your evidence answering the Essential Questions: **What role do police play in society? What is police brutality? How are everyday citizens affected by policing**?

Title: Evidence That Answers the Essential Question(s) of the Unit	Explain How the Evidence supports the Essential Question(s)
Title: Evidence That Answers the Essential Question(s) of the Unit	Explain How the Evidence supports the Essential Question(s)
Title: Evidence That Answers the Essential Question(s) of the Unit	Explain How the Evidence supports the Essential Question(s)

Title: Evidence That Answers the Essential Question(s) of the Unit	Explain How the Evidence supports the Essential Question(s)
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Title: Evidence That Answers the Essential Question(s) of the Unit	Explain How the Evidence supports the Essential Question(s)
Title: Evidence That Answers the Essential Question(s) of the Unit	Explain How the Evidence supports the Essential Question(s)

First Read Anchor Text: _____

Unit 1: Police Brutality and the Black Lives Matter Movement

What stood out to you?

What is the Central Idea of the Anchor text?

Cite lines from the passage that pertain to the central idea?

Unit 1: Police Brutality and the Black Lives Matter Movement

Lesson 1: Policing and Police Brutality?

Vocabulary Activity 1

colonial, agencies, demand, communities, crime, public safety, engagement, discretion, organization, accountability.

Rank These Words from (**1**) Least familiar (**5**) Most Familiar.

After Ranking These Words, pick **5** Words to Define.

Word	Ranking	Definition
Colonial		
Agencies		
Demand		
Communities		
Crime		
Public safety		
Engagement		
Discretion		
Organization		
Accountability		

Vocabulary Activity 2: Check for Understanding. Write a Paragraph using five new words from your new vocabulary list. Paragraph must be at least five sentences long.

Unit 1: Police Brutality and the Black Lives Matter Movement

Lesson 1: Policing and Police Brutality?

Anchor text: Role of Police in America

Comprehension Questions

1. Where was the first centralized police department created?

2. What is the average amount of law enforcement officers for every individual living in the United States?

3. How does the article define community policing?

4. How does the article cite as the reason for community policing failing?

Unit 1: Police Brutality and the Black Lives Matter Movement

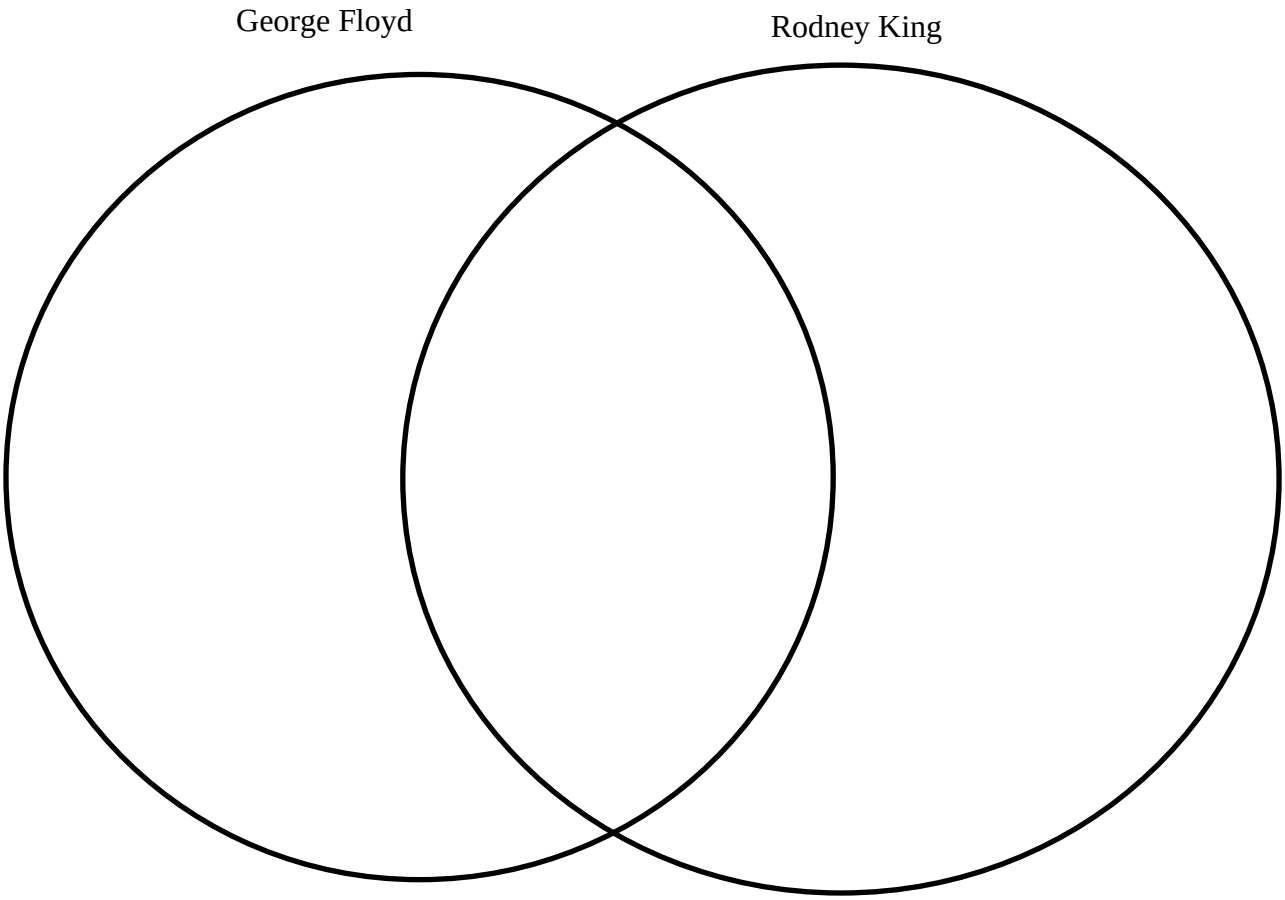
Lesson 1: Policing and Police Brutality?

Writing Prompt: Write a Summary on the anchor text, Role of Police in America. **NOTE:**

Your summary should be a paragraph which should be at least 5 sentences.

Unit 1: Police Brutality and the Black Lives Matter Movement

Lesson 2: [Compare and Contrast Past and Present]



Prompt: Use this **Venn Diagram** to record the similarities and differences between the George Floyd case and Rodney King. Discuss with your group the details of the case, any legal action taken, and community reaction.

Unit 1: Police Brutality and the Black Lives Matter Movement

Name: _____ **Class Period**: _____

Lesson 3: [Police Brutality and How it Affects the Community]
Anchor Text: Black Americans 2.5X More Likely Than Whites to be killed by Police.

Comprehension Questions:

1. What incident started the mass protest around the United States summer of 2020?

2. Which three states have the highest rate of discrepancies?

3. What was the percentage of police violence in 2019?

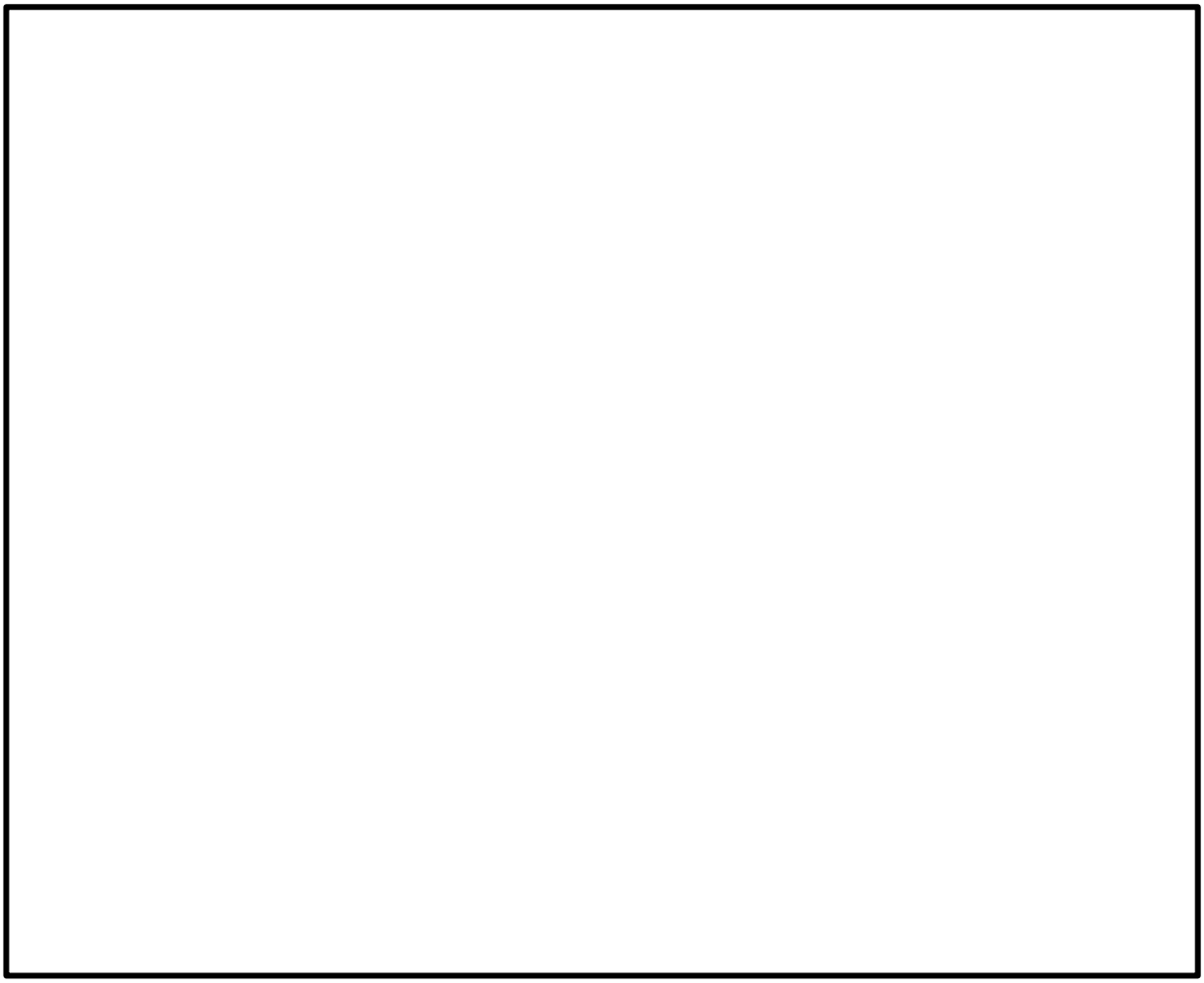
4. Look at the Map of The United States on the website? What is the percentage of discrepancy between each state's African American population and percentage of Blacks killed by the police in 2019?

Unit 1: Police Brutality and the Black Lives Matter Movement

Name: _____ **Class Period**: _____

Lesson 3: [Police Brutality and How it Affects the Community]

Writing Prompt: Interact with the **Know their Names Black People Killed by the Police in the US website** and answer the writing prompt. Are you familiar with these names? Read through the victims of police brutality and write about a victim of police brutality that you have not heard of. Write down what you noticed about their case. Further research this person and the impact that their death has had on their community.



Unit 1: Police Brutality and the Black Lives Matter Movement

Lesson 4: [Bringing Awareness: Final Introduction/Research Skills]

Exit Ticket: Find at least three primary and secondary sources for the bibliography. Identify if each source is primary or secondary.

1. Source:

2. Source:

3. Source:

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