



November 2011

[Nebraska Department of Education](#)

Office of Multicultural/Native
American Education

www.education.ne.gov/mce

This is the time of year when the promotion of Indian stereotypes and myths seem most prevalent.

Thanksgiving fairy tales are passed down from generation to generation. Dozens of children's picture books about Thanksgiving

middle school in Goddard, Kansas who decided to have Indian dress up day during their recent "spirit week."

This was disappointing because the last two years I had spent time at that school teaching 7th grade history classes about Native culture,

pictures and to read about Native American culture. That they chose to have spirit week in honoring Indians meant a lot."

It's always interesting to me when people use the supposed ancestry that they have with a particular ethnic group to validate their arguments. It doesn't seem to matter that they themselves know little to nothing of that culture and history.

What really happened here was an adult endorsed a bad idea by students to dress up for "spirit week." Let's call a spade a spade. The students did not decide to

do this in an attempt to honor Native American people. It was just a chance to put paint on their faces and feathers



We're a culture not a costume, and this is not okay.

in their hair. The adult in this instance did this without taking into consideration the possibility that there were Indian students at their school who actually knew their history and culture and would be offended by this activity. It is time to stop playing Indian.

Thanksgiving, Mother Goose and Other Fairy Tales

*Written and printed with permission
Jeff Watkins, Wichita Public Schools*

depict generic Indians harmoniously dining with Pilgrims masking history.

What we call Thanksgiving was actually a negotiation between the Pilgrims and the Wampanoag people for land. It lasted 3-5 days and the Indians brought most of the food. Today it is fantasized as a common sharing of cultures and food.

Indians have actually celebrated Thanksgiving for 1000's of years. The Green Corn Festival is celebrated by many tribes thanking the Great Spirit (WanKanTanka) for food, clothing, shelter and life.

Then there is the local

history and stereotypes.

The StuCo sponsor who was in charge of organizing "spirit week," made the following comments when answering a parent of Native American students who questioned the activity.

"My family is Native American as my grandmother's mother is full blooded Cherokee. My mother looked full blooded Native American. I thought the kids had a wonderful idea and came to me with no disrespect intended. If they had come up with Cinco de Maya (sp), I would have felt the same way. What a wonderful way for students to learn culture, to look at authentic





“What do you get out of hating people, out of having this bitterness in your heart always. “

-Peter Abrahams (U.S. novelist, 1947-)

One of the most popular misconceptions about American Indians is that they are all the same -one group of people who look alike, speak the same language, and share the same customs and history. Nothing could be further from the truth.

I also doubt very much that any actual dialogue took place regarding Indian culture and history. This was just an attempt to justify a poor decision after being confronted about why the school was having such a day.

Finally, there is Chrissie Holmes and Fred Sharman, from Blackfield, Hampshire (pictured below) who recently got married. Chrissie got married wearing a bright blue tribal outfit in an attempt to demonstrate her love of Native American culture. They created what they call their “Native American” names. She is known as “Little Bear” and he is “Walks Slow.” They even spent their wedding night in a teepee.

Fred stated: “It’s been a long-term hobby and interest for both of us, so it just felt right to wear this on our wedding day. This is what we do. It’s not really dressing up for us because this is who we are. These people were so clever, they were called savages, but their life was very involved and very spiritual.”

If you notice Fred talks about Native American people in past tense wording, along with remembering we were called “savages, and they were so clever.” There was no acknowledgment however that Indians still exist, living in modern society, which only perpetuates current stereotypes.

From the costumes and the “teepee” reference, I guess they’re copying the Lakota or another Plains culture. That is what everyone copies when they’re pretending to be Indians.

The message the Sharman’s are sending to his community and the world: Indians are gone so we can appropriate their identities. Ultimately that will lead to non-Indians defining what is and what is not Indian, even for Indians. When this happens, the last trace of real Indian society and Indian rights will disappear. Non-Indians will then claim to “own” our heritage and ideas as thoroughly as they now claim to own our land and resources.



Social justice generally refers to the idea of creating a society or institution that is based on the principles of equality and solidarity, that understands and values human rights, and that recognizes the dignity of every human being. *Wikipedia Encyclopedia*

Curriculum Ideas

Using Photographs to Teach Social Justice

Grade Level: 6-12, includes introductions, objectives, photo, activities for several lessons.

Sometimes photographs may tell a story or statement about a greater concept or ideal. What does the photo message convey?

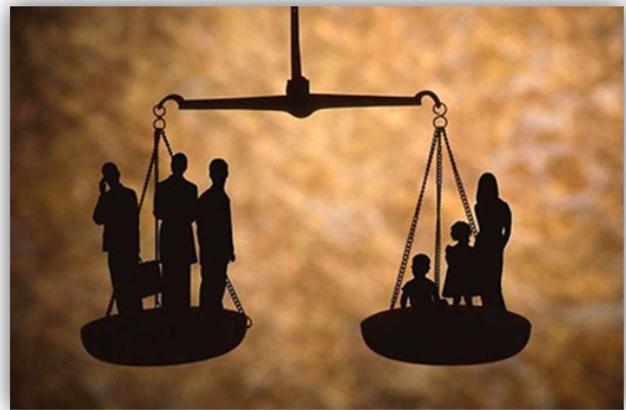
Teaching Tolerance: <http://www.tolerance.org/activity/using-photographs-teach-social-justice>

Speeches on Social Justice

A complete list from the First Inaugural Address sin 1862 to the Mandela Nobel Peace Prize Address in 1993. Listen or read from Susan B. Anthony, Williams Jennings Bryan, Malcolm X, Abraham Lincoln, Franklin Roosevelt, Shirley Chisholm and Carrie Chapman Catt. <http://www.sojust.net/speeches.html>

Social Justice Quips and Quotations

by author and presenter Paul C. Gorski. Gorski has created a long list from all walks of life regarding famous and not so famous quotes on social justice. <http://www.edchange.org/multicultural/language/quotes.html>



What does it mean to teach for social justice? It means recognizing oppression in its multiple forms, and then taking action in the classroom to interrupt the cycles of oppression. Social justice education is both a process and a goal. This means that the way social justice education happens is as important as the outcome it achieves. When teachers teach for social justice they are working to end the cycle of oppression. It is about empowering students, giving them a voice, and preparing them to become full participants in a democratic society by helping them to recognize bias, see multiple perspectives on an issue, and to speak up when they recognize injustice.

<http://mrc.spps.org/uploads/NewsletterWinter08.pdf>



“It’s easy to be brave from a safe distance.”
 -Aesop , 620-560 B.C.

While America was once tops in education, we are now ranked 15th in reading, 23rd in science and 31st in math.

WHAT HAPPENED? How can we dig ourselves out of this deep hole?

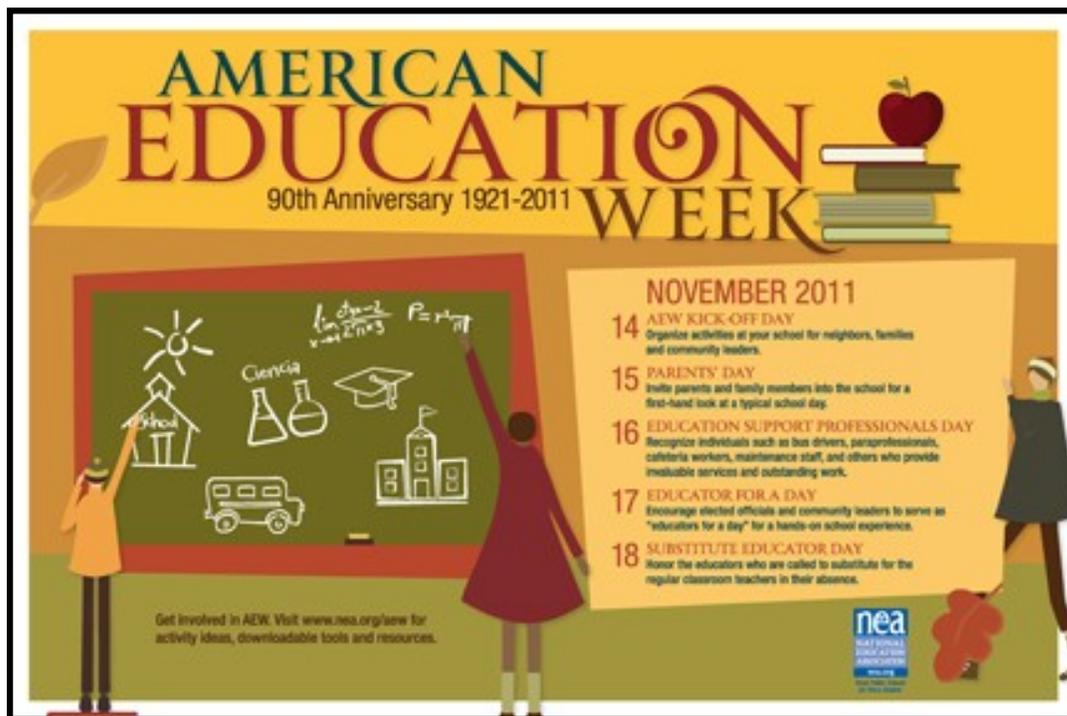


A CNN article and short video worth reading and seeing.

<http://globalpublicsquare.blogs.cnn.com/category/education/>

Article excerpts from CNN article.

**FIXING
 EDUCATION**



The National Education Association was one of the creators and original sponsors of American Education Week.

Distressed that 25 percent of the country's World War I draftees were illiterate and 9 percent were physically unfit, representatives of the NEA and the American Legion met in 1919 to seek ways to generate public support for education

The conventions of both organizations subsequently adopted resolutions of support for a national effort to raise public awareness of the importance of education. In 1921, the NEA

Representative Assembly in Des Moines, Iowa, called for designation of one week each year to spotlight education. In its resolution, the NEA called for: "An educational week ... observed in all communities annually for the purpose of informing the public of the accomplishments and needs of the public schools and to secure the cooperation and support of the public in meeting those needs."

<http://www.nea.org/grants/41184.htm>

ADL: Anti Defamation League (<http://www.adl.org>). **A World of Difference Institute** contains four components; A Classroom of Difference, A Campus of Difference, A Community of Difference and A Workplace of Difference. A anti-bias education and diversity training program.

The 2010 report card reveals widespread lying, cheating, bullying and other high risk behavior in high school students. The Josephson Institute conducts a survey every two years from across the country. The **Ethics of American Youth** measures their self-reported values, attitudes and behavior from 40,000 students.

- Teen cheating linked to adult dishonesty
 - 23% said they are prejudice toward certain groups.
 - 21% said they mistreated someone because he/she belonged to a different group
 - 42% used racial slurs or insults
 - 1/3 stole from a store in the last year
 - Over 50% cheated on a test
 - 50% said they bullied someone within the last year
 - Almost 50% said they were bully victims
- <http://characters.org/programs/reportcard>.



John F. Kennedy Presidential Library and Museum -- Archivists digitized more than 200,000 pages, 1,200 recordings, and 300 museum artifacts, as well as reels of film and hundreds of photographs. -- <http://www.jfklibrary.org/> and <http://www.jfklibrary.org/Education/Teachers.aspx>



What's Racism? That's Harder for Youth to Answer Than You Think

http://colorlines.com/archives/2011/06/whats_racism_thats_harder_for_youth_to_answer_than_you_think.html



“People everywhere enjoy believing things that they know are not true. It spares them the ordeal of thinking for themselves and taking responsibility for what they know.”

-Brooks Atkinson, U.S. dramatic critic, (1894-1984)

Why States' Rights is the Wrong Answer

Author James W. Loewen says that most of the teachers he meets believe—wrongly—that disagreements over states' rights caused the Civil War. He demythologizes this argument using firsthand sources in an article that will be useful to both teachers and students. Don't miss the passionate online reader discussion at the end of the article. In fact, join in! <http://www.tolerance.org/magazine/number-40-fall-2011/getting-civil-war-right>

Want to Know Your Students? Ask Them to Write a Play

When blogger Kathleen Melville asks her students to write plays, the exercise is both creative and practical. Through student-written dialogue, she learns their thoughts and finds it easier to open a discussion about tough issues. "And through this process, I've noticed that my students usually listen very carefully to one another," she writes. "I often find that I'm able to step back and observe as my students grapple with issues of race, class, gender and power." <http://www.tolerance.org/blog/student-plays-get-discussion-rolling-race>

Engage Students with Photographs and Teach Social Justice

A picture is worth a thousand words and makes a wonderful tool for teaching middle and high school students about social justice. This summer, Teaching Tolerance introduced a series of lessons entitled Using Photographs to Teach Social Justice. These 12 lessons touch on issues ranging from immigration and marriage equality to collective bargaining and the civil rights movement. They are designed to stand alone or to supplement other activities or readings. <http://www.tolerance.org/activity/using-photographs-teach-social-justice>

Am I the Classroom Bully?

Most anti-bullying programs focus on student behavior. In "[Bully at the Blackboard](#)," we address the problem of teacher bullying. [Take the Teaching Tolerance survey](#) to assess your own classroom behavior.

Learning Emmett Till's Story Again

Blogger Kim Blevins knew about [Emmett Till](#). She had taught about his lynching many times. But a [recent journey to Mississippi](#) brought the event alive as nothing had before. "This was only the first day of our trip," she writes, "and I was just beginning to see that, although many might wish it, the past was not buried but was here in the stories of a local, in the bricks of the courtroom and in every cotton gin fan like the one that was placed around Emmett's neck."

TEACHING TOLERANCE



Poverty Rises for Black in Omaha

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CNN's Thelma Guterrez reports on the disproportionate rate of poverty among African-Americans in Omaha. Short video factual. <http://www.cnn.com/video/#/video/us/2011/10/19/gutierrez-bia-omaha-tale.cnn>

First Peoples of the Plains

Traditions Shaped by Land & Sky
 Morrill Hall, University of Nebraska
 Exhibit opening September 30, 2011

The First peoples of the Great Plains lived upon and moved across the “land beneath the sky.” They transformed the natural products of this diverse region into tools, food, clothing, and shelter. In turn, their solutions to the challenges of life on these vast grasslands became cultural traditions that also shaped language, marriage, artistic expression, and religion. Discover these enduring traditions in this exhibit gallery that celebrated Native American cultures of the past and present.



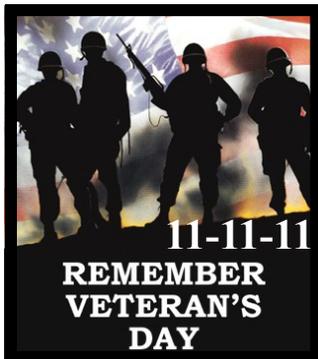
Photography by Don Doll

Fontenelle Forest Nature Center celebrating

American Indian HeritageMONTH

Explore cultures of the past with history trail hikes and collaborative exhibit honoring Native Americans.

www.fontenelleforest.org



Richard E. Cavazos
 the Army's first Hispanic
 four-star general



Our military history to protect our country and interests have been served by all racial groups. Beginning with the War of 1812 through recent Iraq conflicts, you will find brave men and women that serve our country. Remember our veterans on November 11 from all walks of life and culture.

African Americans http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Military_history_of_African_Americans

Hispanic/Latinos http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hispanic_and_Latino_Americans#Military_and_intelligence

Native Americans <http://www.history.navy.mil/faqs/faq61-1.htm>

Asian Americans http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Military_History_of_Asian_Americans



332nd Fighter group
 Italy 1945



"Not only was I not born to be a slave; I was not born to hope to become the equal of the slave master."

-James Baldwin (U.S. Writer 1924-1987)



**Cyberbullying,
Social Networking and Other High-Tech Challenges for K-12 Educators
December 5-ESU #-Omaha
Speaker Dr. Justin W. Patchin from the
Cyberbullying Research Center**

Kids have been bullying each other for generations. The latest generation, however has been able to utilize technology to expand their reach and the extent of their harm. This phenomenon is being called cyberbullying, defined as: "willful and repeated harm inflicted through the use of computers, cell phones, and other electronic devices."

This presentation will cover a broad overview of cyberbullying, including issues educators need to know about how youth use and misuse technology to cause harm to their peers. The presentation will define and provide examples of cyberbullying and discuss the role to teens and adults in preventing and responding to inappropriate online behaviors. It will also describe many of the online environments popular among adolescents today and strategies to use to make sure they are used safely and responsibly.

Registration fee: \$45 ESU 3 members, \$55 NON ESU 3 members. Email registration to registration@esu3.org

How Do Our Views About Hair Affect Children?

From Barbie, Britney and Rapunzel to Pocahontas and Beyoncé, matters related to hair can be quite complicated when it comes to race, gender and class. A special issue of [The Lion and the Unicorn](#) will look at how hair affects the politics of identity in children's literature and for children generally. Submit essays of 15-20 pages (4,500-6,000 words) and a 250-word abstract by noon July 1, 2012, to editor [Neal A. Lester](#), Dean of Humanities and Professor of English at Arizona State University.



CLASSROOM/SCHOOL GRANT OPPORTUNITIES	Award	Eligibility	Deadline
<p>Fund for Teachers The Fund for Teachers provides funds for direct grants to teachers to support summer learning opportunities of their own design http://www.fundforteachers.org/about-us.php</p>	\$5,000 max	Teachers who work with students in grades pre-kindergarten through 12; 3 yrs min teaching experience, 50% of time in classroom	Varies by state (usually January)
<p>Libri Foundation: Books for Children The Libri Foundation Books for Children Grants donate new, quality, hardcover children's books for small, rural, public libraries across the country. http://www.librifoundation.org/apps.html</p>	varies	Libraries in a rural area, limited operating budget, and an active children's department. The average total operating budget of a Books for Children grant recipient must be less than \$40,000	1/23/2012
TEACHER AWARD AND STIPENDS	Award	Eligibility	Deadline
<p>NSTA/Vernier Software & Technology: Vernier Technology Awards National Science Teachers Association Vernier Technology Awards recognize the innovative use of data collection technology using a computer, graphing calculator, or handheld in the science classroom. *Maximum award: \$1,000 toward expenses to attend the NSTA National Conference, \$1,000 in cash for the teacher, and \$1,000 in Vernier products. http://www.nsta.org/about/awards.aspx?lid=tnavhp#vernier</p>	\$1,000*	Teachers of science grades K-College	11/30/2011
<p>AAPT: High School Physics Teachers Grants American Association of Physics Teachers High School Physics Teachers Grants enable high school physics teachers to compete for small grants that will support innovative physics programs or activities that seek to increase student enrollment or to enhance student achievement in physics. http://www.aapt.org/Programs/grants/hsgrant.cfm</p>	\$500 max	high school physics teachers who are AAPT	12/1/2011
<p>Earthwatch Institute: Fellowships The Earthwatch Institute offers educators fully-funded fellowships for hands-on learning with leading scientists doing field research and conservation on one of over 100 projects around the world. Maximum award: fully-funded fellowship. http://www.earthwatch.org/aboutus/education/edopp/</p>	See description	elementary, middle, and high school educators and administrators of any discipline	2/13/2012

Our website has a long list of tuition/scholarship information.

<http://www.education.ne.gov/mce/Grants.html>

\$2,500 ESSAY CONTEST

[Reconnecting the Circle](#) Essay Contest. This national high school student essay contest awards a **\$2,500 prize to 10 winning students!** The topic this year is: **"Why is reconnecting the circle with Native Americans important today?"** Deadline: January 20, 2012

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



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