

DreamYard

Art Center

The activist (artist + activist) uses her artistic talents to fight and struggle against injustice and oppression—by any medium necessary. The activist merges commitment to freedom and justice with the pen, the lens, the brush, the voice, the body, and the imagination. The activist knows that to make an observation is to have an obligation.

From It's Bigger Than Hip Hop by M. K. Asante

ACP | TA | Handbook

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www.dreamyard.com

Dear Teaching Artists:

Welcome home to DreamYard Project!

Whether this is your first time working with us or you have been part of our community for many years, we are happy you are sharing your art with our young people. This Handbook was assembled to (re)orient you to our programs and educational ideology. It summarizes why we work as we do and is your guide for a teaching practice that is centered in the activist spirit. The ideas we present here come from many years polishing our model; they are what makes us uniquely DreamYard. Thank you for reading, reflecting on and referencing the Handbook as part of your practice at the Art Center, and for your commitment to young people.

ACP Program Staff

"Writing, knowing in part that no matter how trivial your words may seem, someday, somewhere, someone may risk his or her life to read them...somewhere, if not now, then maybe years in the future, we may also save someone's life, because they have given us a passport, making us honorary citizens of their culture."

*Edwidge Danticat,
**Create Dangerously,
The Immigrant Artist at Work***

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DREAMYARD PROJECT MISSION STATEMENT & VISION

DreamYard collaborates with Bronx youth, families and schools to build pathways to equity and opportunity through the arts.

DreamYard programs develop artistic voice, nurture young peoples' desire to make change and cultivate the skills necessary to reach positive goals. By committing to sustained learning opportunities along an educational pathway, we support young people as they work

toward higher learning, meaningful careers and social action. We believe that young people in the Bronx need a continuous set of supports to help them towards positive outcomes as they navigate their educational pathway. We have every expectation that through offering sustained and meaningful supports our youth will develop the tools to become creative and engaged citizens, life-long learners and the leaders and innovators of the 21st century.

ACP MISSION STATEMENT, PROGRAMS & HISTORY

The mission of the DreamYard Project Art Center Programs is to empower all those who are a part of the work to be confident, creative leaders through rigorous artistic practice, academic enrichment, and a commitment to social justice.

ACP is comprised of a mix of after school and Saturday programming for young people, from kindergarteners to high school students. What connects all ACP Programs is our commitment to social justice and our belief that art is a unique tool to imagine, envision and shape a better world.

PROGRAMS

- **MINIs** – after school arts, empowerment and academic support facilitated as a rotating series of 8 week classes (kindergarten to fifth grade)
- **ACTION Project** (Art Community Teens In Our Neighborhood) - 4 year art activism and youth development (high school)
- **BeatYard** - beat-making and music production for creating original music using innovative audio techniques (high school)
- **Bronx Acting Ensemble** (B.A.E.) - pre-professional theatre training program (high school)
- **Bronx Art Collective** (B.A.C.) – visual arts program including sketching, painting, collage and other mediums (high school)
- **Bronx Poetry Project** (B.P.P.) - performance poetry program (middle & high school)
- **Dance** – exploration and performance of a multiple dance movements and expressions (middle & high school)
- **Fashion** – blending creative expression and critical examination of the fashion industry while developing basic digital, design and construction skills (middle & high school)
- **Maker** – digital, hands-on creativity blending design and technology (middle school)

ACP HISTORY IN BRIEF

2008	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The ACTION Project is linked with BAE and BAC to become the Out of School Programs (OSP). Former OSP Director Robyne Walker Murphy and her staff share an interest in using art to work for social change and see the potential of helping youth recognize the intrinsic, historical link between artists and activists. Their conversations plant the seeds of our social justice mission.
2009	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> DreamYard Project (DY) moves to the Art Center and OSP expand to include BPP and the Bronx Rhyme Factory. OSP identifies our core social justice themes – Empower, Create, Connect – and implement the Social Justice Pedagogy Team (SJPT). SJPT is facilitated for our teaching artists five times a year to examine critical social issues and learn best practices from experts in the field of social justice youth development.
2010	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Located on the ground floor of a residential building, residents approach DY about enrolling their children in our programs. Our MINIs project is thus born. Using a grant from the <i>MacArthur Foundation</i> we implement Digital Learning Programs (DLP) for middle and high school students.
2011	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To further deepen our ties and demonstrate commitment to our local community, the following year, ACP hosts our first annual <i>Back-to-School Movie Night</i>, during which we distribute free backpacks to over 300 young people.
2012	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The White House recognizes OSP with the <i>National Arts and Humanities Youth Program Award</i>.
2013	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> OSP and DLP merge to become the Art Center Programs (ACP).
2014	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The College Access Program is formally launched, helping us to be more strategic about providing college guidance to our high school members.
2015 on	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ACP continues to shift and grow in nurturing young activists!

MINIs attend ACP Tuesday to Friday. They are divided into three groups by grade: K & Grade 1, Grades 2 & 3, and Grades 4 & 5, and each is assigned the name of a featured artist (for example, *Mini Pearls* for the dancer Pearl Primus, *Little Diegos* for the painter Diego Rivera, and *J-Jordans* for the writer June Jordan). Our staff, TAs and interns work closely to facilitate activities that begin as soon as the young people enter the Art Center. Children are dropped off to their designated Homeroom to get snack. (Parents/guardians are invited to wait in our café, participate in activities created for them, or just relax.) The **Positive Community Guidelines** are played (audio attached below) to signal snack time is coming to an end, and is followed by the singing of **Build a Nation** as the youth move into formal activities. These rituals enhance community building, support our social justice values and help youth transition from casual to focused activities:

- **Empower Hour** is an activity for exploring social justice issues and fostering youth activism.
- **Art Making** is a rotating series of 8-week classes in dance, theatre and visual arts.
- **Homework Help** gives youth time to work on school assignments or play mind-building games.
- **Special Friday Classes** include capoeira, creative arts and chorus.

Positive Community Guidelines

- One Mic: Only one person speaks at a time.
- Do what we are born to do
- Share our talents
- Help each other
- Share with one another
- Be friends
- Say Please, Thank You and May I
- Please keep your hands and feet to yourself
- No judging
- Don't talk negatively about other people's work
- Have fun!



Build a Nation Song

We're gonna build a nation
A beautiful nation
A black brown nation . . . in this place

Sooo look out people 'cause here we come

Ain't nothing gonna stop us
Yébo, I said Yébo
Yébo!

(Yebo means "yes" in the Zulu language of South Africa.)

MIDDLE SCHOOL & HIGH SCHOOL

Our programs for middle and high school students operate Tuesday to Thursday and on Saturday. Young people participate in a formal art class (e.g., Fashion, Maker, BeatYard, Dance, BPP) on Tuesday and Wednesday, and on Thursday can also attend **Open Studio**, our drop-in space where participants can work on individual and group projects of their choosing. The ACTION Project, BAC and BAE take place on Saturday (with lunch included).

Youth participate in 25 weekly classes from October to May. Every class has two *sharings* and two *critical responses* during which they present and get feedback on their emerging art. Four times a year ACP hosts *Townhall* that brings together all of our middle and high school age youth to build community across programs.

To support participants' academic aspirations, the College Access Program (CAP) activities are offered throughout the year. CAP facilitates a workshop series on the admissions process, financial aid, and navigating the challenges of campus life. Participants also go on college tours, and high school seniors receive one-on-one assistance with their college applications. Guidance on how to help their children access higher education is also provided to parents/guardians.

ACP programs for middle and high school students close out the school year with a festival showcasing their visual art, dance, theatre and poetry works. During the summer we facilitate ACTION Project, BAE, and BAC intensives, and for recent alumni, a college readiness immersion called *College Bootcamp*.

CRITICAL RESPONSES & SHARINGS

An essential method for developing one's art is by presenting it to others to receive constructive criticism. Leading up to the end-of-year festival that features young people's final artwork, ACP hosts Critical Responses and Sharings during the year.

- During **Critical Responses** youth present a short piece as practice in advance of a Sharing. These take place a month before Sharings and provide space to explore:
 - What was meaningful, evocative, touching, or challenging? (There's no detail too small!)
 - Time for young people's questions (What do you want to ask the audience? What do you want opinions and feedback on?)
 - What constructive criticism is there for this piece? Are there any suggestions or possibilities you would like to offer?
- **Sharings** are the more developed performances/presentations. The festival is the most polished version of a Sharing. The DY community, friends and families are invited to see both works-in-progress and final exhibitions.

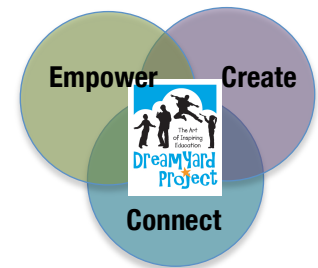
A rubric of specific indicators (within and across discipline) has been prepared to assess what young people have collectively achieved from attending the class/program, and accordingly, identify how TAs might rework their practice to support youth's creative development. As always, evidence of the Social Justice Framework as a reflective lens is always of import. The rubric was generated by ACP TAs exploring the question, *What do we hope to see during Sharings and Critical Responses?*

- [ACP Sharing-Critical Responses Observation Guide](#)

Our **Social Justice Framework** emphasizes our mission of achieving equity through the arts. The three themes and corresponding points of inquiry remind us of the myriad factors mediating our lives and that working toward justice requires constant reflection and action. The Framework is a primary lens through which you will create and assess your lesson plans and teaching approach.

EMPOWER

- **Who Am I?** PERSONAL STORIES/HISTORIES/CULTURE
 - Who are my ancestors?
 - What is my superpower/kryptonite?
 - When do I feel powerful/powerless?
- **Where am I?** LIBERATING/OPPRESSIVE FORCES IN LIFE
 - What do I see?
 - How does it make me feel?
 - How am I affected?
- **What can I do?** AWARENESS OF PERSONAL POWER TO TRANSFORM
 - What are root causes of the issue?
 - What are the solutions?
 - What skills/knowledge do I have/need to make change?



CREATE

- **Who/What inspires me?** ARTISTS/THEMES
 - What work do I admire?
 - Why do I like it?
 - What does it inspire me to create?
- **What do I want to say?** POINT OF VIEW/PERSPECTIVE
 - What am I experiencing?
 - What is my opinion?
 - What is my response?
- **How can I effectively express myself?** MEDIUM/GENRE/SKILL BUILDING
 - What do I want to say?
 - Who is my audience?
 - What tools do I want to use?

CONNECT

- **What is community?**
 - What is our community?
 - How can I contribute to shaping my community?
 - What have I learned from my community?
- **Who and What do I care about?**
 - What do we share?
 - How do we create a space where people are listening and being heard?
 - How do we engage community?
- **What builds and breaks down community?**
 - What am I doing to build/break down community?
 - What is the history of our community?
 - What are the negative and positive forces in our community?

The *Six Elements of Social Justice Curriculum Design* below highlights important intentions to keep in mind when teaching and learning within a social justice framework.

SIX ELEMENTS OF SOCIAL JUSTICE CURRICULUM DESIGN (Bree Picower, 2007)

1. **Self-love and Knowledge:** Teachers provide opportunities for students to learn about who they are and where they come from. A sense of dignity in their culture, heritage, ethnicity/race, religion, skin tone, gender etc. is cultivated in the classroom. Students learn about different aspects of their identity and history associated with it. Negative stereotypes about students' identities are deconstructed.
2. **Respect for Others:** Teachers provide opportunities for students to share their knowledge about their own cultural background with their classmates. The goal is to create a climate of respect for diversity through students learning to listen with kindness and empathy to the experiences of their peers. Students deconstruct stereotypes about their peers' identities.
3. **Exploring Issues of Social Injustice:** Teachers move from "celebrating diversity" to an exploration of how diversity has differently impacted various groups of people. Students learn about the history of racism, sexism, classism, homophobia, religious intolerance etc. and how these forms of oppression have affected different communities. Teachers make links that show how the historical roots of oppression impact the lived experiences and material conditions of people today.
4. **Social Movements and Social Change:** Teachers share examples of movements of iconic and everyday people standing together to address the issues of social injustice they learned about in element three. Rather than leaving students feeling overwhelmed and defeated, teachers help students understand that working together, ordinary people have united to create change.
5. **Raising Awareness:** Teachers provide opportunities for students to teach others about the issues they have learned about. This allows students who feel passionately about particular issues to become advocates by raising awareness of other students, teachers, family and community members. It is important to recognize that while raising awareness is a necessary and important pre-cursor for action, it by itself does not translate into change.
6. **Taking Social Action:** Teachers provide opportunities to take action on issues that affect students and their communities. Students identify issues they feel passionate about and learn the skills of creating change firsthand.

Also useful is the [SJ 101: The Ultimate Beginner's Field Guide to Social Justice Integration](#) developed by Cydney Gray, a former DY staffperson.

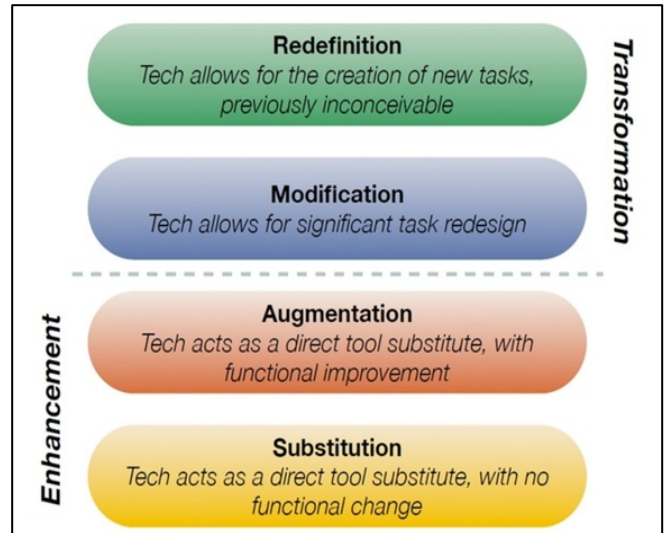
A companion resource for TAs is the **Instructional Voice Handbooks** (see Resources). Though designed for an in-school setting, the Handbooks have a range of ready-to-use workshops from which you should draw inspiration.

By integrating **digital learning** tools and practices into our existing programming, DY is working to close the digital divide and amplify the creative voices of young people. Naturally, the goals in this area align with our Social Justice Framework:

- **Empower** - MEDIA LITERACY: Young people are able to critically consume and navigate a range of media and information.
- **Create** – MEDIA PRODUCTION: Young people are able to critically produce and present via a range of creative media.
- **Connect** – SHARING: Young people are able to reflect on and document their creative/academic work and share it with a wider audience.

Using the SAMR model designed by Ruben Puentedura (on the right) that outlines four increasingly transformative ways for employing technology, we encourage TAs to explore how digital tools can enhance teaching and learning (see [SAMR Worksheet](#)). TAs are also supported to integrate an online portfolio model (in the form of a *Tumblr* blog) as a method for tracking their pedagogy and helping students document and curate their art. Other potential uses of technology include:

- Google docs
- Wall projection
- Digital collage
- Podcast
- Social media campaign
- Mobile app
- Video letter
- Animated GIFs
- E-book
- Websites
- Word animation
- Animated slideshow



The ACP READER features three critical thinkers and creators known for connecting the personal to the political/universal through their art in order to lift up important social issues. Their work embodies activism and through their words the themes of our Social Justice Framework become tangible and relatable. In ***The Transformation of Silence Into Language and Action***, a talk given by Audre Lorde, we contemplate the roots of individual and collective silence and why it is critical for our sense of empowerment to push against these constraints. In his essay ***The Creative Process***, James Baldwin describes artists as “disturbers of the peace” whose role is to reveal societal truths toward freeing humankind. The poem ***The Concrete River*** by Luis J. Rodriguez speaks to the complexities of connection and community as physical spaces and frames of mind, as places/people we call home and from where/whom we are dispatched into the world.

EMPOWER

The Transformation of Silence Into Language and Action - Audre Lorde

Delivered at the Lesbian and Literature panel of the Modern Language Association’s December 28, 1977 meeting then published in *Sister Outsider*.

I have come to believe over and over again that what is most important to me must be spoken, made verbal and shared, even at the risk of having it bruised or misunderstood. That the speaking profits me, beyond any other effect. I am standing here as a black lesbian poet, and the meaning of all that waits upon the fact that I am still alive, and might not have been. Less than two months ago, I was told by two doctors, one female and one male, that I would have to have breast surgery, and that there was a 60 to 80 percent chance that the tumor was malignant. Between the telling and the actual surgery, there was a three-week period of the agony of and involuntary reorganization of my entire life. The surgery was completed, and the growth was benign.

But within those three weeks, I was forced to look upon myself and my living with a harsh and urgent clarity that has left me still shaken but much stronger. This is a situation faced by many women, by some of you here today. Some of what I experienced during that time has helped elucidate for me much of what I feel concerning the transformation of silence into language and action.

In becoming forcibly and essentially aware of my own mortality, and of what I wished and wanted for in my life, however short it might be,

priorities and omissions became strongly etched in a merciless light and what I most regretted were my silences. Of what had I ever been afraid? To question or to speak as I believed I would have meant pain, or death. But we all hurt in so many different ways, all the time, and pain will either change or end. Death, on the other hand, is the final silence. And that might be coming quickly, now, without regard for whether I had ever spoken what needed to be said, or only betrayed myself into small silences, while I planned someday to speak, or waited for someone else’s words. And I began to recognize a source of power within myself that comes from the knowledge that while it is most desirable not to be afraid, learning to put fear into a perspective gave me great strength.

I was going to die, if not sooner than later, whether or not I had ever spoken myself. My silences had not protected me. Your silence will not protect you. But for every real word spoken, for every attempt I had ever made to speak those truths for which I am still seeking, I had made contact with other women while we examined the words to fit a world in which we all believed, bridging our differences. And it was the concern and caring of all those women which gave me strength and enabled me to scrutinize the essentials of my living.

The women who sustained me through that period were black and white, old and young, lesbian, bisexual, and heterosexual, and we all shared a war against the tyrannies of silence. They all gave me a strength and concern without which I could not have survived intact. Within those weeks of acute fear came the knowledge— within the war we are all waging with the forces of death, subtle, and otherwise, conscious or not— I am not only a casualty, I am also a warrior.

What are the words you do not have yet? What do you need to say? What are the tyrannies you swallow day by day and attempt to make your own, until you will sicken and die of them, still in silence? Perhaps for some of you here today, I am the face of one of your fears. Because I am a woman, because I am black, because I am myself, a black woman warrior poet doing my work, come to ask you, are you doing yours?

And, of course, I am afraid— you can hear it in my voice— because the transformation of silence into language and action is an act of self-revelation and that always seems fraught with danger. But my daughter, when I told her of our topic and my difficulty with it, said, “tell them about how you’re never really a whole person if you remain silent, because there’s always that one little piece inside of you that wants to be spoken out, and if you keep ignoring it, it gets madder and madder and hotter and hotter, and if you don’t speak it out one day it will just up and punch you in the mouth.”

On the cause of silence, each one of us draws her own fear— fear of contempt, of censure, or some judgment, or recognition, of challenge, of annihilation. But most of all, I think, we fear the visibility without which we also cannot truly live. Within this country where racial difference creates a constant, if unspoken, distortion of vision, black women have on one hand always been highly visible, and so, on the other hand, have been rendered invisible through the depersonalization of racism. Even within the women’s movement, we have had to fight and still do, for that very visibility which also renders us most vulnerable, our blackness. For to survive in the mouth of this dragon we call America, we have had to learn this first and most vital lesson— that we were never meant to

survive. Not as human beings. And neither were most of you here today, black or not. And that visibility which makes you most vulnerable is also our greatest strength. Because the machine will try to grind us into dust anyway, whether or not we speak. We can sit in our corners mute forever while our sisters and ourselves are wasted, while our children are distorted and destroyed, while our earth is poisoned, we can sit in our safe corners as mute as bottles, and still we will be no less afraid.

In my house this year we are celebrating the feast of Kwanzaa, the African-American festival of harvest which begins the day after Christmas and lasts for seven days. There are seven principles of Kwanzaa, one for each day. The first principle is Umoja, which means unity, the decision to strive for and maintain unity in the self and community. The principle for yesterday, the second day, was Kujichagulia— self-determination— the decision to define ourselves, name ourselves, and speak for ourselves, instead of being spoken for by others. Today is the third day of Kwanzaa and the principle for today is Ujima— collective work and responsibility— the decision to build and maintain ourselves and our communities together and to recognize and solve our problems together.

Each of us is here now because in one way or another we share a commitment to language and to the power of language, and to the reclaiming of that language which has been made to work against us. In the transformation of silence into language and action, it is vitally necessary to teach by living and speaking those truths which we believe and know beyond understanding. Because in this way alone we can survive, by taking part in a process of life that is creative and continuing, that is growth.

And it is never without fear; of visibility, of the harsh light of scrutiny and perhaps of judgment, of pain, of death. But we have lived through all of those already, in silence, except death. And I remind myself all the time now, that if I was to have been born mute or had maintained an oath of silence my whole life long for safety, I would still have suffered, and I would still die. It is very good for establishing perspective.

And where the words of women are crying to be heard, we must each of us recognize our responsibility to seek those words out, to read them and share them and examine them in their pertinence to our lives. That we not hide behind the mockeries of separations that have been imposed upon us and which so often we accept as our own: for instance, “I can’t possibly teach black women’s writing— their experience is so different than mine,” yet how many years have you spent teaching Plato and Shakespeare and Proust? Or another: “She’s a white woman, what could she possibly have to say to me?” Or, “She’s a lesbian, what would my husband say, or my chairman?” Or again, “This woman writes of her sons and I have no children.” And all the other endless ways in which we rob ourselves of ourselves and each other.

CREATE

The Creative Process - James Baldwin

from *The Price of the Ticket: Collected Nonfiction* © 1962 James Baldwin

Perhaps the primary distinction of the artist is that he must actively cultivate that state which most men, necessarily, must avoid; the state of being alone. That all men are, when the chips are down, alone, is a banality—a banality because it is very frequently stated, but very rarely, on the evidence, believed. Most of us are not compelled to linger with the knowledge of our aloneness, for it is a knowledge that can paralyze all action in this world. There are, forever, swamps to be drained, cities to be created, mines to be exploited, children to be fed. None of these things can be done alone. But the conquest of the physical world is not man’s only duty. He is also enjoined to conquer the great wilderness of himself. The precise role of the artist, then, is to illuminate that darkness, blaze roads through that vast forest, so that we will not, in all our doing, lose sight of its purpose, which is, after all, to make the world a more human dwelling place.

The state of being alone is not meant to bring to mind merely a rustic musing beside some silver lake. The aloneness of which I speak is much more like the aloneness of birth or death. It is

We can learn to work and speak when we are afraid in the same way we have learned to work and speak when we are tired. For we have been socialized to respect fear more than our own needs for language and definition, and while we wait in silence for that final luxury of fearlessness, the weight of that silence will choke us.

The fact that we are here and that I speak not these words is an attempt to break that silence and bridge some of those differences between us, for it is not difference which immobilizes us, but silence. And there are so many silences to be broken.

Biography of Audre Lorde:

<http://www.biography.com/people/audre-lorde-214108>

like the fearless alone that one sees in the eyes of someone who is suffering, whom we cannot help. Or it is like the aloneness of love, the force and mystery that so many have extolled and so many have cursed, but which no one has ever understood or ever really been able to control. I put the matter this way, not out of any desire to create pity for the artist—God forbid!—but to suggest how nearly, after all, is his state the state of everyone, and in an attempt to make vivid his endeavor. The state of birth, suffering, love, and death are extreme states—extreme, universal, and inescapable. We all know this, but we would rather not know it. The artist is present to correct the delusions to which we fall prey in our attempts to avoid this knowledge.

It is for this reason that all societies have battled with the incorrigible disturber of the peace—the artist. I doubt that future societies will get on with him any better. The entire purpose of society is to create a bulwark against the inner and the outer chaos, in order to make life bearable and to keep the human race alive. And it is absolutely inevitable that when a tradition has been evolved, whatever the tradition is, the

people, in general, will suppose it to have existed from before the beginning of time and will be most unwilling and indeed unable to conceive of any changes in it. They do not know how they will live without those traditions that have given them their identity. Their reaction, when it is suggested that they can or that they must, is panic. And we see this panic, I think, everywhere in the world today, from the streets of New Orleans to the grisly battleground of Algeria. And a higher level of consciousness among the people is the only hope we have, now or in the future, of minimizing human damage.

The artist is distinguished from all other responsible actors in society—the politicians, legislators, educators, and scientists—by the fact that he is his own test tube, his own laboratory, working according to very rigorous rules, however unstated these may be, and cannot allow any consideration to supersede his responsibility to reveal all that he can possibly discover concerning the mystery of the human being. Society must accept some things as real; but he must always know that visible reality hides a deeper one, and that all our action and achievement rest on things unseen. A society must assume that it is stable, but the artist must know, and he must let us know, that there is nothing stable under heaven. One cannot possibly build a school, teach a child, or drive a car without taking some things for granted. The artist cannot and must not take anything for granted, but must drive to the heart of every answer and expose the question the answer hides.

I seem to be making extremely grandiloquent claims for a breed of men and women historically despised while living and acclaimed when safely dead. But, in a way, the belated honor that all societies tender their artists proven the reality of the point I am trying to make. I am really trying to make clear the nature of the artist's responsibility to his society. The peculiar nature of this responsibility is that he must never cease warring with it, for its sake and for his own. For the truth, in spite of appearances and all our hopes, is that everything is always changing and the measure of our maturity as nations and as men is how

well prepared we are to meet these changes, and further, to use them for our health.

Now, anyone who has ever been compelled to think about it—anyone, for example, who has ever been in love—knows that the one face that one can never see is one's own face. One's lover—or one's brother, or one's enemy—sees the face you wear, and this face can elicit the most extraordinary reactions. We do the things we do and feel what we feel essentially because we must—we are responsible for our actions, but we rarely understand them. It goes without saying, I believe, that if we understood ourselves better, we would damage ourselves less. But the barrier between oneself and one's knowledge of oneself is high indeed. There are so many things one would rather not know! We become social creatures because we cannot live any other way. But in order to become social, there are a great many other things that we must not become, and we are frightened, all of us, of these forces within us that perpetually menace our precarious security. Yet the forces are there: we cannot will them away. All we can do is learn to live with them. And we cannot learn this unless we are willing to tell the truth about ourselves, and the truth about us is always at variance with what we wish to be. The human effort is to bring these two realities into a relationship resembling reconciliation. The human beings whom we respect the most, after all—and sometimes fear the most—are those who are most deeply involved in this delicate and strenuous effort, for they have the unshakable authority that comes only from having looked on and endured and survived the worst. That nation is healthiest which has the least necessity to distrust or ostracize these people—whom, as I say, honor, once they are gone, because somewhere in our hearts we know that we cannot live without them.

The dangers of being an American artist are not greater than those of being an artist anywhere else in the world, but they are very particular. These dangers are produced by our history. They rest on the fact that in order to conquer this continent, the particular aloneness of which I speak—the aloneness in which one discovers that life is tragic, and therefore unutterably beautiful—could not be permitted. And that this

prohibition is typical of all emergent nations will be proved, I have no doubt, in many ways during the next fifty years. This continent now is conquered, but our habits and our fears remain. And, in the same way that to become a social human being one modifies and suppresses and, ultimately, without great courage, lies to oneself about all one's interior, uncharted chaos, so have we, as a nation, modified or suppressed and lied about all the darker forces in our history. We know, in the case of the person, that whoever cannot tell himself the truth about his past is trapped in it, is immobilized in the prison of his undiscovered self. This is also true of nations. We know how a person, in such a paralysis, is unable to assess either his weaknesses or his strengths, and how frequently indeed he mistakes the one for the other. And this, I think, we do. We are the strongest nation in the Western world, but this is not for the reasons that we think. It is

because we have an opportunity that no other nation has in moving beyond the Old World concepts of race and class and caste, to create, finally, what we must have had in mind when we first began speaking of the New World. But the price of this is a long look backward when we came and an unflinching assessment of the record. For an artist, the record of that journey is most clearly revealed in the personalities of the people the journey produced. Societies never know it, but the war of an artist with his society is a lover's war, and he does, at his best, what lovers do, which is to reveal the beloved to himself and, with that revelation, to make freedom real.

Biography of James Baldwin with 4-minute video:
<http://www.biography.com/people/james-baldwin-9196635#early-life>

CONNECT

The Concrete River - Luis J. Rodríguez

From *The Concrete River*, published by Curbstone Press. © 1990 by Luis J. Rodríguez

We sink into the dust,
 Baba and me,
 Beneath brush of prickly leaves;
 Ivy strangling trees--singing
 Our last rites of *locura*.
 Homeboys. Worshipping God-fumes
 Out of spray cans.

Our backs press up against
 A corrugated steel fence
 Along the dried banks
 Of a concrete river.
 Spray-painted outpourings
 On walls offer a chaos
 Of color for the eyes.

Home for now. Hidden in weeds.
 Furnished with stained mattresses
 And plastic milk crates.
 Wood planks thrust into
 thick branches
 serve as roof.
 The door is a torn cloth curtain
 (knock before entering).

Home for now, sandwiched
 In between the maddening days.

We aim spray into paper bags.
 Suckle them. Take deep breaths.
 An echo of steel-sounds grates the sky.
 Home for now. Along an urban-spawned
 Stream of muck, we gargle in
 The technicolor synthesized madness.

This river, this concrete river,
 Becomes a steaming, bubbling
 Snake of water, pouring over
 Nightmares of wakefulness;
 Pouring out a rush of birds;
 A flow of clear liquid
 On a cloudless day.
 Not like the black oil stains we lie in,
 Not like the factory air engulfing us;
 Not this plastic death in a can.

Sun rays dance on the surface.
 Gray fish fidget below the sheen.
 And us looking like Huckleberry Finns/

Tom Sawyers, with stick fishing poles,
As dew drips off low branches
As if it were earth's breast milk.

Oh, we should be novices of our born days.
We should be scraping wet dirt
with callused toes.

We should be flowering petals
playing ball.

Soon water/fish/dew wane into
A pulsating whiteness.

I enter a tunnel of circles,
Swimming to a glare of lights.
Family and friends beckon me.

I want to be there,
In perpetual dreaming;
In the din of exquisite screams.
I want to know this mother-comfort
Surging through me.

I am a sliver of blazing ember
entering a womb of brightness.

I am a hovering spectre shedding
scarred flesh.

I am a clown sneaking out of a painted
mouth in the sky.

I am your son, *amá*, seeking
the security of shadows,
fleeing weary eyes
bursting brown behind
a sewing machine.

I am your brother, the one you
threw off rooftops, tore into
with rage--the one you visited,
a rag of a boy, lying
in a hospital bed, ruptured.

I am friend of books, prey of cops,
lover of the *barrio* women

selling hamburgers and tacos
at the P&G Burger Stand.

I welcome this heavy shroud.
I want to be buried in it--
To be sculptured marble
In craftier hands.

Soon an electrified hum sinks teeth
Into brain--then claws
Surround me, pull at me,
Back to the dust, to the concrete river.

Let me go!--to stay entangled
In this mesh of barbed serenity!
But over me is a face,
Mouth breathing back life.
I feel the gush of air,
The pebbles and debris beneath me.
"Give me the bag, man," I slur.
"No way! You died, man," Baba said.
"You stopped breathing and died."
"I have to go back!...you don't
understand..."

I try to get up, to reach the sky.
Oh, for the lights--for this whore
of a Sun,
To blind me. To entice me to burn.
Come back! Let me swing in delight
To the haunting knell,
To pierce colors of virgin skies.
Not here, along a concrete river,
But there--licked by tongues of flame!

Biography of Luis J. Rodriguez
<http://www.luisjrodriguez.com>

7-MINUTE REFLECTION

Choose one of the themes from the Social Justice Framework as an inspiration.

How is it represented in your work or how might it be in the future?

How does the corresponding reading inform your musing?

Sketch or write your ideas below.

ACP was created to spark, enrich and showcase young people’s creativity. These ends cannot be achieved without the contribution of TAs who share their craft, passions and visions for social justice while modeling the professionalism we seek to nurture in our youth. TAs are expected to:

BE PLANFUL & PREPARED

- At the start of the year or session, develop an outline for your “course” and share it with ACP staff. Your plan will naturally change as a result of issues and ideas raised by youth and current events, but identifying the main theme and how you will scaffold your approach from the start gives you a clear direction.
 - For MINIs – Develop a plan for the 8-week session.
 - For middle & high school programs – Develop a plan for each semester. You might also consider breaking your “course” into smaller units and outline your plan accordingly.
- For each week, submit an overview of your planned activities to ACP via *Google Docs*. This information is necessary in making sure staff knows what materials you need in advance and for providing any feedback.
 - For MINIs - Submit your plan on Mondays by end of day.
 - For middle & high school programs – Submit your plan a week prior to their classes.
- Make sure you are aware of upcoming meetings and tasks, as well as what is expected of your participation in them. It is *your* responsibility to keep track of important dates.
- If you are unable to make a meeting your pay may be docked. Please be overly communicative about conflicts in scheduling as they arise.

BE ON TIME

- Arrive to your session in time to set-up, troubleshoot and transition yourself into the work.
- Arrive to meetings on time.
- Meet deadlines for submission of any materials/documents

BE RESPONSIVE & PROACTIVE

- Regularly check and respond to DY email within 1-2 business days.
- Give ACP staff sufficient notice if you are unable to attend a session (at least 2 weeks, barring an emergency).
- In the event you need to miss a class it is your responsibility to find a qualified substitute. Please communicate with your Program Coordinator and the ACP Director.

BE OBSERVANT

- We are a team! Please pitch in, ask for help, give shout outs and offer suggestions for strengthening ACP.

Supervision of Teaching Artists

During class observations (approximately 4 per year), every TA receives feedback from ACP staff to support, guide and improve their practice. Using a rubric of key indicators ([ACP Teaching Artists Observation Guide](#)), staff observes for the integration of DY core values; quality of teaching; ability to engage children and to hone their confidence and independence; and use of multiple media to enhance teaching and learning. A one-on-one meeting with the TA follows each observation during which they are given feedback and suggestions. Any issues of urgent concern are immediately addressed, and all discussion notes are provided to the TA in written form as a reminder.

DREAMYARD MATERIALS

- [Instructional Voice Handbook: Theatre, Dance & Music](#)
- [Instructional Voice Handbook: Poetry](#)
- [Instructional Voice Handbook: Visual Arts, Theatre, Poetry](#)

ARTICLES, BLOGS, BOOKS, WEBSITES (in alphabetical order)

Art in the Public Interest – an archive of stories, interviews, essays and other resources
<http://apionline.org>

Artivism Links and Resources in Teachers and Writers Magazine
<http://www.teachersandwritersmagazine.org/artivism-links-resources-500.htm>

The Brotherhood/Sister Sol – curriculum and writings from a youth leadership development organization
<http://brotherhood-sistersol.org/shop/products/books-publications>

- **Brother, Sister Leader: The Official Curriculum of The Brotherhood/Sister Sol** – educational strategies, Rites of Passage activities and 50 workshops for helping middle and high school youth explore critical social issues and develop leadership skills
- **Why Did That Happen? Content, Perspective, Dialogue: A Workshop Model for Developing Young People's Reflective Writing**
- **Off the Subject: The Words of the Lyrical Circle of The Brotherhood/Sister Sol** – a poetry anthology

Creative Dangerously, The Immigrant Artist at Work by Edwidge Danticat

Cultural Organizing – a site exploring the relationship between transformational social change and art
www.culturalorganizing.org

Cultural Politics: Social Movements & Art – a listing of online and library resources
http://culturalpolitics.net/social_movements/art

Education for Liberation Network features links to open source art curriculum on a wide range of topics such as Civil Rights struggles in the Latino community, Mexican and Chicano mural movement, hip-hop and education, Negro spirituals and the blues, and racism/gender in graffiti.
<http://www.edliberation.org/resources/lab/records/edsearch?getCategory=Arts>

Essays from **anti-racist educator, author & educator Tim Wise**
<http://www.timwise.org/category/essays/>

Facing History in Ourselves – resources and training opportunities for teaching history and exploring racism, prejudice and antisemitism
<https://www.facinghistory.org/for-educators/educator-resources#bottom>

Hope, Healing and Educational Change by Shawn Ginwright
<http://static1.squarespace.com/static/52edb5f5be4b0ecd2401d5262/t/548a1271e4b01aa5bebe1e37/1447454709064/Hope+%26+Healing+Among+Youth.pdf>

- Also see Ginwright's book, **Hope and Healing In Urban Education, How Urban Activists and Teachers are Reclaiming Matters of the Heart.**

An Inevitable Question: Exploring the Defining Features of a Social Justice Art Education by Marit Dewhurst

- Also see Dewhurst's book, ***Social Justice Art, A Framework for Activist Art Pedagogy***.
- http://maritdewhurst.com/?page_id=6

NYCoRE (New York Collective of Radical Educators) – features resources developed by and for teachers, students and parents working for social change <http://www.nycore.org/resources/>

- ***Transforming Mainstream Curriculum into Social Justice Teaching***
- ***Write On!: Writing for Social Change*** - <http://www.nycore.org/wp-content/uploads/Write-On.Rise-Up.Book.Sp.2012.pdf>

Pedagogy of the Oppressed by Paulo Freire is the seminal book on popular education that centralizes the experiences and knowledge of the people. Freire inspired countless activists and scholars, including:

- ***Methodology of the Oppressed*** by Chela Sandoval with foreword by Angela Y. Davis. <https://caringlabor.files.wordpress.com/2012/09/methodology-of-the-oppressed-chela-sandoval.pdf>
- ***Theatre of the Oppressed*** by Augusto Boal

A People's History of the United States by Howard Zinn

- For Zinn's biography, articles, interviews and other materials also see <http://howardzinn.org/news/>

The ReThinkers – a New Orleans youth organizing and leadership development organization that uses participatory action research methods. See “Media” link for videos highlighting their various activities. <http://www.therethinkers.org>

Rethinking Schools – an activist publication with articles written by and for teachers, parents, and students <http://www.rethinkingschools.org/publication/index.shtml>

SAMR Resources

- Common Sense Media: <https://www.commonensemedia.org/videos/introduction-to-the-samr-model>
- Lesson examples: www.emergingedtech.com/2015/04/examples-of-transforming-lessons-through-samr/

Shades of Youth - a film made at The White Privilege Conference Youth Institute where high school students gathered from across the US to explore issues of race, power, identity, oppression and social change. It offers multiple views and experiences, giving youth and adults entry points to discuss and better understand how institutional racism affects all our lives. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=STgtyvAjs-Q&noredirect=1>

SOUL (School of Unity and Liberation) – manuals and training for developing social justice organizing skills <http://www.schoolofunityandliberation.org>

Teaching Tolerance – a source for news, conversation and resources on diversity, justice and equity issues <http://www.tolerance.org>

Teachers & Writers – offers resources and publications to support learning through the literary arts <https://www.twc.org>

This Teacher Taught His Class a Powerful Lesson About Privilege

<http://www.buzzfeed.com/nathanwpyle/this-teacher-taught-his-class-a-powerful-lesson-about-privil#.crnEy8P3QZ>

Third World NewsReel - activist filmmaker collective and source for activist films <http://www.twn.org>

Young, Gifted and Black: 15 Artists, Activists and Creatives Repping for Afro-Latinidad

<http://remezcla.com/lists/culture/young-afro-latino-creatives-you-should-know/>