

Supporting TDSB educators and students engaging in learning about the insurrection on Capitol Hill, January 6, 2021



Photo by [Andy Feliciotti](#) on [Unsplash](#)

Toronto District School Board (TDSB) has a long standing commitment to addressing issues of inequities. We are committed to supporting educators in responding to historical and current day acts of oppression and injustice as they arise. On Wednesday, January 6th 2021, we witnessed such an act, with the insurrection that took place on Capitol Hill, in Washington D.C. This act highlights violence and the various forms of hate that are a direct result of white supremacy, antisemitism, and anti-Black racism. Although the insurrection took place in the United States, Canada continues to be impacted by violence and issues of white supremacy, antisemitism, and anti-Black racism.

The aim of this resource is two-fold. First, the resource encourages educators and students to explore and deepen their understanding of global and local acts and its connections to their lived experiences. Second, this resource is developed to support educators to focus on key questions as they engage in lessons and conversations regarding the insurrection that took place in Washington D.C.

01

Before the Conversations: Educator Critical Consciousness

It is important for educators to deepen their own [critical consciousness](#) prior to building the critical consciousness of the students in their classes:

1. What professional learning have educators engaged in to further their understanding white supremacy, antisemitism, and anti-Black racism?
2. In what ways have educators deepened their knowledge of the historical and present-day context of issues of oppression?
3. How have educators engaged in critical self-reflection around their own ideologies, beliefs, and comfort in addressing issues of oppression within the classroom?

02

Preparing for Conversations: Knowledge of Students

Knowing how students self-identify and understanding their lived experiences supports educators in positioning conversations around social inequities, such as the insurrection:

1. In what ways have educators utilized students' lived experiences to inform the exploration of the content?
2. How are educators establishing school and classroom conditions to facilitate courageous and challenging conversations around systemic inequities, injustices, race, and racism (e.g. classroom agreements, [brave spaces for dialogue](#), school climate scan, etc.)?
3. What resources are educators selecting to support the teaching and learning of oppression in the classroom (e.g. [TDSB Equity Toolkit](#))? How do these resources extend the curriculum?

03

Engaging in Conversations

It is essential for educators and students to examine the historical and present-day manifestations of oppressive beliefs, practices, and structures. Educators should be responsive to students' questions and challenges:

1. How do educators connect the historical and present-day contexts in ways that directly addresses the issue and/or content discussed (e.g. referring to the insurrection not as 'civic disengagement', but as an act of Black voter suppression, antisemitism, and white supremacy)?
 - a. In what ways do educators highlight the oppressive beliefs, practices, and structures that frame the issue and/or content?
2. In what ways are educators making visible the connections between the learning experience and the curriculum?
3. How are educators utilizing community educators, organisations and members to enhance the learning for students?

04

Extending the Conversation

Educators are encouraged to provide opportunities for self- and whole group reflection around the learning:

1. What opportunities and spaces are provided for students and educators to process the learning experience both individually and as a class in order to support further learning?
2. How are educators using student voice and student leadership to inform next steps in the learning process?
3. Based on student voice, what continued professional learning does the educator need to extend this learning?

For further support in questions to consider, please see the "Teaching Controversial and Sensitive Issues" resource provided.

PUBLICATION	RESOURCE TITLE & LINK	BRIEF DESCRIPTION
TDSB	Teaching Controversial and Sensitive Issues	A TDSB staff-created resource that outlines guidelines and approaches to discussing controversial and sensitive topics in K-12 classrooms, including example lessons, as well as selecting and using age-appropriate resources.
	Toolkits for Selecting Equitable and Culturally Relevant and Responsive Resources	With the aim to promote student success, this tool supports the development and selection of learning, instructional and well-being resources from an Equity and Culturally Relevant and Responsive stance.
	How to look at the events in Washington DC from a lens of antisemitism	This site provides resources to support educator and student understandings of the insurrection from a lens of antisemitism.
	Expected Practices for Understanding and Dealing with Discrimination	This guide was developed to support TDSB staff when dealing with incidents of discrimination and harassment in our schools and workplaces.
Teaching Tolerance	Let's Talk	These guides support educators in facilitating conversations about the historical and present-day manifestations of discriminatory practices. These resources include webinars, lessons and further links to deepen understanding of various inequities and plan classroom learning experiences.
	Leading Conversations After a Crisis	
Rethinking Schools	The Uprising and Our Schools	The linked article within this publication examines the "Year of Purpose" by Black Lives Matter at School. The " Year of Purpose " provides educators reflective prompts in engaging in anti-racist practices and strategies to center Black lives in their classrooms.
Facing History	Responding to the Insurrection at the U.S Capitol	This resource supports educators in moving through self-reflection, co-planning, considering adaptations for remote learning, initial classroom responses, moving into student-reflection and planning for next steps.
	Fostering Civil Discourse: A guide for Classroom Conversations	Moving through educator reflection, reflective classroom community, setting conditions, creating space for student reflection, and the implementation of effective teaching strategies, this article explores ways to engage in difficult conversations while increasing critical thinking skills, empathy, and civic responsibility.
Canadian Encyclopedia	Voting Rights	A collection of articles that address specific markers of voters rights in Canada. This collection speaks to how these experiences shape the landscape of who has the right to vote and the factors that permeate these decisions. Black Voting Rights in Canada provides educators with an overview of Black Canadians who were influential in shifting the inequities that exist.
Co-Authored By: Colinda Clyne Debbie Donsky Judy McKeown Melissa Wilson Valerie Carnaghan Zohrin Mawji	Annotated Bibliography: A Resource for Ontario Educators Learning about Racism"	To build educator critical consciousness, this annotated bibliography includes a list of resources regarding addressing whiteness, anti-Black racism in Ontario, anti-Indigenous racism in Canada, reports about racism in the Ontario public education system, and online podcasts, learning modules, and other important archives.