Teacher Activism: Social Justice in Classrooms, Schools, and Communities

8:30-9:45 a.m. Introduction to Teacher Social Justice Activism- OISE Auditorium

Keynote Panellists

8:30 - 9:45 Keynote panel: “Introduction to Teacher Activism.”
OISE Auditorium
--Jenny Chen (Riverdale CI, TDSB), Belinda Longe (Nelson Mandela Park PS, TDSB & OISE/UT), John Portelli (Professor, Theory and Policy Studies, OISE/UT), Helen Victoros (Runnymede PS, TDSB; ETFO/ETT), and Ayan Ga’al and Tharmini Ananthanayagam (Students at L’Amoreaux C.I., TDSB)

10:00-11:45 Concurrent Workshops -- Session #1

Education for Development (Global Education) – helping your students make real change in the world -- Claire Pitt (Former teacher - TDSB, UNICEF Canada) (PJ/JI/IS) RM: 2-213

This workshop will introduce pre-service teachers to global education (or education for development) and will provide hands-on activities (for all age groups) and best practices for engaging students in social justice and activism. Activities related to topics like HIV/AIDS, child rights, and poverty will be highlighted. Participants will gain practical ideas for a multidisciplinary approach to learning that empowers young people, challenges them to explore the causes of global poverty and inequity, and encourages them to envision the possibility of a better world.

Challenging homophobia in school settings: working with lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and queer (lgbtq) communities. -- Vanessa Russell (York University) and Tim McCaskell (TDSB) (PJ/JI/IS) RM: 2-296

In this interactive workshop, we will explore the nature of homophobia and how to actively challenge it in K-12 schools. Support for teachers in classroom work, and administrators in the implementation of equity and safe school policies will be discussed in relation to lgbtq parents, community groups and organizations.

Reframing (Dis)ability as Activism: Challenging ableism in our classrooms -- Meredith Lordan (Coordinator in Initial Teacher Education, OISE/UT) (PJ/JI/IS) RM: 2-295

As teachers, how can we challenge stereotypical and marginalizing views about disability? With particular attention to challenging ableism (the view that people without disabilities are the norm and discriminatory treatment of people with disabilities), this interactive workshop provides a brief overview of key moments in the struggle for equitable anti-ableist teaching and learning through concrete activities. Mindful that an
approach that challenges ableism applies to all teaching contexts, not just Special Education, participants will be provided with selected resources and classroom ideas.

**Creating Language Proficiency: Accessibility, Relevance, and Cognitive Skill Development – Moira Wong** (Instructional Leader, Equity TDSB) (PJ/JI/IS) RM: 2-286

The best teacher activists are teachers who keep their eyes on the 'big picture" and more importantly making the 'big picture' accessible to their students. This workshop looks at the 'big picture' in a variety of ways: analysis of 'achievement gaps', issues of language proficiency demands implicit in our curriculum, strategies to make curriculum accessible to all language learners (and all students are language learners!), questions of curricular relevance, and strategies to develop cognitive skills. This workshop is appropriate for middle and secondary panel teachers (candidates).

**Tools For Equity – Strategies for the Beginning Secondary School Teacher Activist -- Jill Goodreau** (Teacher, UGDSB) and **David Montemurro** (Initial Teacher Education Instructor, OISE/UT) (JI/IS) RM: 4-410

This interactive workshop will highlight some of the most commonly used equity/social justice/activist strategies that can be modified for classroom use across subjects and grades. Modelled activities will include: The Power Triangle, If The World Were 100 People, The Power Flower, Where Do You Draw The Action Line? Musical Chairs, and more….

**Homelessness: Confronting Social Issues Through Children's Literature -- Melanie Tait** (OISE/UT) (PJ/JI) RM: 2-279

This workshop will model how social justice topics can serve as a springboard for authentic literacy activities. Using children's literature to explore the challenging issue of homelessness, this workshop will emphasize children’s involvement in advocacy for change.

**Inner City Model Schools: The Nelson Mandela Park PS Experience -- Jeffrey Kugler** (Centre for Urban Schooling) and **Elizabeth Schaeffer** (Nelson Mandela Park PS) (PJ/JI) RM: 2-212

Staff from Nelson Mandela Park P.S. will describe the experience and process that they have undertaken in becoming a model school for inner cities. Their diverse perspectives include those of early years classroom teachers, special education teacher, literacy coordinator and the model school lead and administration. The presentation will centre the five essential components of the Model School vision: innovation in teaching and learning, social justice, commitment to share successful practice, schools as the heart of the community, and research review and evaluation.
Power, Privilege and Action: Inclusive Teaching Practices -- **Soni Gill** (Vice-Principal) and **Sheila Macleod** (Guidance Counsellor) from Ruth Thompson Middle School, Peel District School Board (PJ) RM: 4-426

Two educators, drawing on their teaching experiences, will present daily strategies and resources that can be implemented in making your schools and classrooms more equitable through sharing many inclusive teaching practices. The focus will be on looking at power and privilege, promoting action and social change, while creating a welcoming and safe learning environment.

**Black Teacher, White Spaces: Creating Networks of Support in our schools** - **Alyson van Beinum** (Teacher, DDSB) (PJ/JI/IS) RM: 2-281

This workshop draws on experience and research developing a Black Educators Network in the Durham District School Board. Participants will work through a brainstorming/project sharing session to generate action plans for similarly focused networks of educators.

**Children’s Health and the Environment: Educating for a Just and Healthy Future** -- **Dorothy Goldin Rosenberg** (MES, PhD) (JI/IS) RM: 2-211

In this session, children's environmental health will be discussed as a field of education, advocacy and policy change that link health and the physical environment with the worlds of school, home, community, workplace and the media. The session will help participants to develop critical thinking, and practical skills to better understand and take action toward both lifestyle and public policy changes for primary prevention. Practical resource materials from the Canadian Partnership on Children's Health and the Environment will be provided.

**Opportunities for social justice activism within the context of Canadian teacher unions** -- **Cindy Rottmann** (OISE/UT), **Michelle Maloney Leonard** (TDSB), **Lynda Lemberg** (OSSTF), **Helen Victoros** (Teacher, TDSB; Elementary Teachers of Toronto) and **Anna Willats** (Community Activist) (PJ/JI/IS) RM: 4-418

Teacher unions have been some of the major organizational sites of social justice leadership in K-12 education. Unfortunately, this historical contribution has been overlooked in many pre-service teacher education programs. This session will familiarize students with some of curriculum resources, organizational structures, and advocacy opportunities currently available in Canadian teacher unions/federations/associations in relation to social justice teacher activism.

**Teaching for Global Justice, Activism…and meeting Curriculum Expectations? How?** – **Antonino Giambrone** (City View Alternative School, TDSB) (PJ/JI) RM: 4-414

This workshop involves concrete examples of how take mandated curriculum topics in the Language, Social Studies (Grades 1-6), and History and Geography (Grade 7 & 8)
curriculum, and making them authentic learning experiences for justice – local and global.

Working within the University to Promote Socially Just Educational Activism – Discussion chair: Nina Bascia (Chair and Professor, Theory and Policy Studies, OISE/UT) (PJ/II/IS), George Dei (Chair and Professor, Sociology and Equity Studies in Education, OISE/UT), Njoki Wane (Professor, Sociology and Equity Studies in Education, OISE/UT), Tara Goldstein (Associate Chair, Professor, Curriculum, Teaching, Learning, OISE/UT) RM: 4-422

In this session you will hear a diverse group of activist academics share their insights and strategies for promoting educational equity. They will also answer questions from the participants about combining scholarship and social justice work within the university and beyond.

11:45-12:45 Equity Resource Fair & FREE Lunch

12:45-2:30 Concurrent Workshops -- Session #2

Activism and Aboriginal issues in the classroom and beyond – Kerry Potts (Teacher, Seneca/Humber Aboriginal Studies) (IS) RM: 2-212

This workshop will provide a brief overview of the history of Aboriginal issues in Canada and touch on teaching strategies and problem solving when teaching about Aboriginal peoples through many opportunities for discussions and meaningful dialogue. Focus will also be on how to integrate an anti-racist approach into teaching practice and how to engage students to become socially conscious learners and activists. This will be an interactive workshop with lots of opportunities for discussion.

Connecting Equity Issues with the Curriculum: Building an Inclusive Climate – Jeffrey Wilkinson (Elementary Teachers’ Federation of Ontario - ETFO) (PJ/II) RM: 4-414

This workshop will explore "Who is included?" and "Who is left out of our curriculum?" Issues of power in classroom structures will be examined as well as how to engage students from who they are, not what they need to know. This interactive workshop will provide many hands-on resources including a review of ETFO publications and how they can be used to build an inclusive classroom.

Survival of “the Richest”- working with students on challenging class bias – Jenny Chen and students (Riverdale CI, TDSB) (IS) RM: 2-214

Participants of this interactive workshop will see different strategies students are using to begin challenge class bias in a school setting. We will be highlighting a life size board game; a student directed video; and other practical tools teachers can use to start what can
be difficult, but meaningful dialogues with students, staff, administrators, and the broader community.

Exploring issues of social justice and equity through mathematics — Bev Caswell and members of the Inner City Option— (PJ/II/IS) RM: 2-281

This interactive workshop will provide hands-on experience in bringing social justice issues into your mathematics lessons.

From Apathy to Activism: The Making of a Student Social Justice Club -- David Ast (Instructional Leader - Equity, TDSB), Marian Shehata and students (David & Mary Thomson CI, TDSB) (IS) RM: 2-213

In this interactive workshop, participants will gain grounding in social justice activism and how it pertains to doing social justice work in secondary schools. Specifically, participants will acquire strategies for starting and sustaining a student social justice club, as well as strategies on how to overcome barriers for doing social justice work with secondary students. The workshop will also feature a presentation from Students Taking Action Together in Society (STATIS) co-winner of last year’s TDSB Equity Studies Anne Hope Award for Student Social Justice and runner-up for the OSSTF District 12 Human Rights Award.

Raising Awareness and Promoting Activism in Non-Urban Elementary Schools – Coleen Stewart (Simcoe County District School Board) (PJ) RM: 2-296

In this workshop we will look at barriers to social activism in non-urban elementary school. We will look at practical strategies for heightening awareness and for promoting activism in both global and local contexts in the classroom and the school community.

Learning Human Rights and its Connections to Teaching through Scenarios -- Patricia Hayes (Human Rights, TDSB) (PJ/II/IS) RM: 2-279

Focusing on real-life scenarios, participants will look at strategies to address human rights issues in the classroom and be introduced human rights, rules and regulations as well as supports that exist in school boards such as the Toronto District School Board to enable all people within your school communities to be protected.

Popular Theatre In The School Community – Nadya Weber (Ph.D candidate, OISE/UT) (JI/IS) RM: 2-295

This workshop will outline the pedagogy of popular theatre and offer participants a variety of methods for bringing popular art and theatre to the classroom.

Youth and Global Activism – Lalita Krishna (In Sync Video) (JI/IS) RM: 4-420
This workshop will explore ways in which global activism can be brought into the classroom and how to get kids involved. Participants will watch a sample video and then work in groups to brainstorm ways to use this type of media in the classroom.

**Mobilizing Youth Leadership For Social Justice In Your Classroom** – **Janis Galway, Eileen Nemzer and Community Builders student leaders.** (PJ/JI/IS) RM: 4-410

Community Builders is an NGO that has been training students, teachers and parents to be community leaders and social activists in different school communities in Ontario for the last 11 years. They will share some key elements of their program for activists as young as 10 years old, including how to recognize distress patterns that activists encounter (such as chronic hopelessness), how to hold the powerful perspective on challenging situations, how to build alliances across group identity lines, and how to use the skills of listening and appreciation to move people forward.

**Express Yourself: Challenging Islamaphobia in Diverse Ways** – **Nadeem Memon** (Ph.D candidate, OISE/UT) (PJ/JI/IS) RM: 4-426

Post 9/11 young Muslims have found new ways of challenging media sensationalization, misrepresentation, and overt discrimination against Islam. Moving beyond the strategies of “awareness seminars” and “outreach programs” this workshop will highlight some strategies that young Muslims have employed to dynamically engage audiences about what Islam means to them through pop culture, music and comedy. Through creating a space for self-expression the creative arts can be a powerful teaching strategy to encourage social activism among students and challenge media stereotypes.

**Diversity Education and Youth Culture in the Classroom** -- **Yasmin Razack** (Harmony Movement) (JI/IS) RM: 2-211

Educators will learn how to empower their students and address prejudice in the classroom as it relates to youth. Through highly interactive activities we will give educators useful resources for the classroom, school and community. We will be discussing the idea of privilege and how individuals can and should respond to difficult questions of why they would want to share the power they have as an educator. Participants are challenged to explore how their own identity affects their attitudes and behaviours towards diverse student populations.

**Teaching to Challenge Class Bias** -- **Terezia Zoric** (TPS Faculty and Equity Advisor, OISE/UT) (PJ/JI/IS) RM: 2-286

What does it mean to 'challenge classism' in our teacher education classes? What does anti-classist curriculum look like (K-12 & post-secondary)? How can we link the issue of socio-economic justice to other equity, diversity, and social justice approaches? This workshop will answer these questions in an interactive format, and will highlight Challenging Class Bias, a 222-page teaching/learning social justice resource available free to all OISE/UT instructors and teacher candidates.
Concurrent Workshops -- Session #3

Preparing Your First Classroom for Social Justice -- Lynette Spence (Equity and Human Rights Mentor, OISE/UT) (PJ/JI) RM: 2-213

Participants will learn how to relate issues of equity and diversity to classroom practice, explore the components of an equitable classroom and examine effective tools and pedagogies for establishing a social justice classroom.

Teaching Green: The Middle Years -- Tim Grant (co-editor of Green Teacher magazine and 6 books, former teacher) (JI/IS) RM: 2-295

To address the challenges of the 21st century, we need a model of education long advocated by environmental educators that uses integrated, thematic learning to develop critical thinking and places value on long-term outcomes such as environmental responsibility, community service and active citizenship. This presentation outlines eight guiding principles to help reform education but much of this session introduces participants to a variety of innovative learning activities that explore food systems, calculate ecological footprints, develop respect for other points of view and demonstrate our connections to the world’s peoples and ecosystems. Participants will take away copies of these activities.

Survival of “the Richest”- working with students on challenging class bias – Jenny Chen and students (Riverdale CI, TDSB) (JI/IS) RM: 2-214

Participants of this interactive workshop will see different strategies students are using to begin to challenge class bias in a school setting. We will be highlighting a life size board game; a student directed video; and other practical tools teachers can use to start what can be difficult but meaningful dialogues with students, staff, administrators, and the broader community.

Teaching On The Edge: Resisting, Surviving And Thriving While Educating For Change -- Susan Kasurak (Teacher, Western Tech, TDSB) (JI/IS) RM: 4-426

This workshop will focus on the challenges of being a teacher activist in the classroom and the promotion of social/political consciousness and action among students. Highlights will include: linking progressive educational theory and practice; drawing on the political inherent in all curriculum; creating alternative spaces in the mainstream, resisting the authoritarian tendencies of the institution; and choosing your battles.

This is how L’AM does it: Equity and Social Justice Club at L’Amoreaux C.I, TDSB – Michelle Forde and students (IS) RM: 4-418

This student organized and student facilitated workshop will delve into the issues students feel are important in equity organizing in school such as what they knew when
they began their work, what they learned, what challenges and resistance they faced and how all of this was reflected in the action they took and continue to take in their school community.

**Change in self, Change in others: Survival, Success, and Sustainable Activism** -- **Joanne Johnston** (M.A. student in CTL and CIDE) (PJ/JI/IS) RM: 2-281

This workshop will centre what change looks like in you while also thinking about how we can best encourage and support change in others linking change and self to activism; sharing self-change illustrations; brainstorming strategies for activism that include the self and other. The focus will be on the three S’s: survival, success and sustainable to build strategies on how we can continue to grow as teachers, educators and support the same in others.

Film Screening of "Granito de Arena" (*Grain of Sand*) – **Tim Heffernan** (Teacher, TDSB, Educators for Peace and Justice) (PJ/JI/IS) RM: 4-414

"Granito de Arena" (*Grain of Sand*) is an award-winning documentary film by Jill Friedberg about the 30 year struggle of Mexican teachers and their communities for a well funded public education system. There will be a facilitated discussion that follows.

**Fair Trade – Making change one mouthful at a time** – **Suresh Tumkur** (EQUITA – Oxfam Fair Trade) (PJ/JI/IS) RM: 2-279

Through hands-on activities, which can be used to inspire action with students of all ages, participants will explore the principles and importance of Fair Trade and Ethical Consumption. This will be contrasted with the current system of Free Trade and globalization which is devastating the economies of developing countries. Resources, activities, websites, and more will also be shared.

**Breaking it Down: Teaching Social Justice in ESL Classrooms from ESLA to ESL E** - **Jamie T.S. Berrigan** (Secondary Teacher, TDSB) (PJ/JI/IS) RM: 4-410

This concrete skills centred workshop will focus on introducing participants to the levels of ESL education and students learning English as a multiple language while drawing from several social justice resources as well as techniques to make it part of all four areas of ESL education in Ontario schools: reading; writing; oral and visual communication; and socio-cultural competence.

**A First Nation Perspective on Social Justice and Diversity** – **Joanne Dallaire** (Healing Works) (JI/IS) RM: 2-296

Through discussion and dialogue an overview of issues facing First Nation peoples will be provided including how these issues transcend the diverse cultures in our schools and society. We will explore First Nations perspectives through a social justice approach that respectful acknowledges the individual needs of students.
Race, Culture and Identity – Alice Bhyat (secondary school principal, Toronto Catholic DSB) (JI/IS) RM: 2-286

This workshop for teachers will work with the dynamics of race, culture and identity. How does the teacher have high expectations of students and still deal with the day-to-day grind of classroom management, student behaviour and the curriculum? And how do race, culture and identity come into play? These are some questions that will be addressed through interactive activities.

Diversity Education and Youth Culture in the Classroom, -- Yasmin Razack (Harmony Movement) (JI/IS) RM: 2-211

Educators will learn how to empower their students and address prejudice in the classroom as it relates to youth. Through highly interactive activities we will give educators useful resources for the classroom, school and community. We will be discussing the idea of privilege and how individuals can and should respond to difficult questions of why they would want to share the power they have as an educator. Participants are challenged to explore how their own identity affects their attitudes and behaviours towards diverse student populations.