How to Be an Effective Ally to Adult Students

What does it mean and how do we do it well?
What do we mean by allyship?

To *act* in solidarity. An ally is a person who acts in solidarity with a marginalized group that they are not part of.

“5 Tips for Being an Ally” by Franchesca Ramsey

1. Understand your privileges.
2. Listen.
3. Speak up but not over.
4. When you make a mistake, apologize, commit to changing your behavior, and move forward.
5. Ally is a verb. It requires action.
If you have come here to help me, you are wasting your time. But if you have come because your liberation is bound up with mine, then let us work together.

Lilla Watson, aboriginal leader
Contributors

Riva Pearson
Coordinator
ABCD Mattapan

Sophie Tan
Project Manager
United Way of RI

Christy Schramski
Instructor
Pima Comm. College

Cristina Cabrera
Education Director
English for Action

Kathy Budway
Civics Coordinator
Pima Comm. College

Lisa Gimbel
ESOL Instructor and Advisor
Community Learning Center
Contributors

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ESOL Instructor and Advisor
Community Learning Center
Supporting Muslims In and Out of the Classroom

• Action for Boston Community Development, Mattapan, MA

• 80% Haitian students. Other students come from Cape Verde, Dominican Republic, Honduras, and Puerto Rico
Listening Isn’t Just about Ears

• Know about the cultures and traditions of your students.
  – When is Ramadan?
  – What might be your students’ observations of dietary law or restrictions on music?

• Have relationships with Muslims and Muslim organizations outside of school.

• Check in with students about their safety.
Check Your Biases

- Think about how negative portrayals of Muslims are affecting how you and your students think about and interact with Muslims.

- Distinguish, and help your students distinguish, between religious and cultural practices.

- [www.enjoingood.org](http://www.enjoingood.org) for resources on common misconceptions and other information.
“Normalize” Islam and Muslims

• Talk about religions with equal respect. Acknowledge religions that are not in the room.

• Use stories and images of Muslims in class.

• Allow time and space for students to talk about things that are important to them.

*Break-time crochet lesson*
English for action

In partnership with United Way of RI
Presenter: Cristina Cabrera
English for Action: The Organization

- **Mission**: is to create transformative learning communities inside and outside the classroom in order to effect meaningful and community-based social change through language learning, community building and leadership development.

- Based on **popular education** developed by Brazilian educator **Paulo Freire**.

- An approach to education where participants and educators are co-learners who critically reflect on the issues of their community and then take action to change them.

- EFA develops **learner leadership** by training learners with varying English levels to participate in the **Action Committee**. The AC engages in community organizing, delivers KYR workshops, and provides training of trainers.
How We Learn From Each Other

• Content and education is not neutral.

• Content comes from our own experiences as class participants/learners.

• We enter in dialogue.

• We pose problems. We ask questions.
  - What do you see? How do you feel?
  - Is there a problem? What is the problem?
  - Do you know of anyone who has/had this problem?
  - How would you start solving this problem?
How We Learn From Each Other

• We reflect
• We take action
• We create community-based & community-led transformation
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<th>Freirian Principle</th>
<th>Explanation</th>
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| 1 | Education is not neutral | Education is either designed to maintain the status quo, imposing on the people the values and culture of the dominant class or education is designed to liberate people, helping them to become critical, creative, free, and active. | - Problem Tree  
- Power Analysis  
- Theater of the Oppressed  
- Codes |
| 2 | Content comes from the participants | People will act on the issues on which they have strong feelings. Education that starts by identifying the issues that people speak about with excitement, hope, fear, or anger will have greater success in reaching those involved. | - Sick Tree  
- Caracol  
- Theater of the Oppressed  
- Brainstorming  
- Collective Writing  
- Community Mapping |
| 3 | Dialogue | No one has all the answers! Each person has different answers based on his or her own experiences. To discover valid solutions everyone needs to be both a learner and a teacher. Education must be a mutual learning process. | - Codes  
- Debates  
- Role Plays  
- Forum Theater  
- Peer Interviews  
- Class Discussions |
| 4 | Problem-solving education | Participants are thinking, creative people with the capacity for action. A facilitator can help participants learn by providing a framework for thinking and creativity. By posing questions instead of lecturing, a facilitator engages the participants in an active way. | - Codes  
- Problem Tree  
- Forum Theater  
- Pop Scenarios  
- Power Analysis |
| 5 | Reflection/Action | By continually engaging in a cycle of reflection and action, a group can celebrate their successes, analyze critically their reality, mistakes, and failures - and use this information to act again. This allows a group to become more capable of effectively transforming their daily life. | - Power Analysis  
- Socio-Dramas  
- Collective Action Plans  
- Collective Strategy  
- LEA (Language Experience Approach) |
| 6 | Transformation | Education should work to transform the quality of each person’s life, the environment, the community, the whole society. This is not an individualistic academic exercise, but a dynamic process in which education and action are interwoven. | - Collective Visioning  
- Changing the Story  
- Moving the Money  
- Collective Action  
- Systems Change |

Problems Tree

Roots: Root Causes

Lack of Jobs/ Unemployment

- No skills/ no access to education
- Discrimination/ Racism
- No car/ no driver’s license
- Outsourcing
- Language barrier
- Computer/ Tech Barrier
- Driver’s licenses for undocumented workers

Leaves: Effects/ Consequences

- Harassment/ Extortion/ Threats
- Separation of families
- Family conflict
- Extreme Poverty
- Self-deportation
- Hunger
- Alcoholism/ violence/ domestic abuse
- Depression/ stress/ mental illness
- Hunger
- Long-term unemployment
- Alcoholism/ violence/ domestic abuse
- Separation of families
- Family conflict
- No access to education
- No skills/ no access to education

Trunk: Community Issue/ Problem

- High School drop-out
- In-state Tuition
- Access to undocumented students to a RI college
- Underemployment/ higher taxes
- Tuition
- Comprehensive Immigration Reform
- Driver’s licenses for undocumented workers
- No papers
- Outsourcing
- No contacts/ no dominant network
- Discrimination/ Racism
Questions and sharing
Christy Schramski and Kathy Budway

ABECC - Adult Basic Education for College and Career,  
*Pima Community College*  
*Tucson, AZ*

**Acknowledgement of Colleagues:**

- MaryAnn Phininzy, former AmeriCorps Coordinator
- Mireya Escamilla, Civics and Student Leadership Asst. Coordinator
- Civics team members: Ana Chavarin, Xail Hernandez, Ellen Swanson, Mari Guillen
- Student Leaders and AmeriCorps members
“You can’t teach the truth unless you’ve lived it, or admit to it.”

Willie Bonner, MFA, Master artist and educator
Allyship

1. Allies on the institutional level
   Microaggressions
   • From Students
   • From Teachers
   • From Colleagues

2. Allies in the classroom

3. Allies throughout the school
Microaggression

A statement, action, or incident regarded as an instance of indirect, subtle, or unintentional discrimination against members of a marginalized group.

From Students

“Oh, that’s why you’re so smart. Your husband is German.”
“Why do you speak English so well?”
“Can I touch your hair?”

From Teachers

“You’re the smartest black student I’ve ever had.”

From Colleagues

“...the look on her face!”
“Are you here to take the test?”
“You’re so articulate.”

Disregarding religious traditions or their details (Ex. Impacts of fasting).

Directing students into career pathways based on racial/cultural stereotypes.
How to be an ally when confronting microaggression

• Always allow the person to whom the microaggression is directed to speak first.

• Ask the person if he/she is okay with the statement.

• Address the issue directly: “I’m not comfortable with that statement” - explain why.
How to be an ally when confronting microaggression

• Understand the difference between intention and impact.

• Be aware of your own assumptions.

• Be aware of how colorblindness can make students feel.
Building allyship in the classroom

The impact of teaching inclusive, true history and the dispelling of stereotypes

Testimony from an advanced ESL writing class from Shoreline Community College, Seattle, WA

View the film *Who Paved the Way* at:
[https://vimeo.com/40630589](https://vimeo.com/40630589)
Before Studying African American History

JASON: My stereotype about African Americans was negative.

AMAR: The media shows you that black people are gangsters and they carry guns.

JANE: My white real estate agent told me [that finding] a location without black people was the most important factor.

MILA: When I came here, I couldn’t understand blacks. I thought, “Why are they talking about racism too much?”

After Studying African American History

ALEX (studied the prison system): I was shocked when I was doing research.

ASTER: Black people contributed to America. [They] are doctors, scientists, professors. I was so surprised.

JACKIE (studied black wall street): What [black people] have done—they never talk about in history.

SARINA: If you want to live in the U.S. or study in the U.S., I think [you] must study the history of African Americans.

Kathy Budway is the Civics and Student Leadership Coordinator for Pima College Adult Basic Education in Tucson, AZ.
Explore *The Change Agent’s* issue on *Race*.

**Handout #4: Research Projects**

Follow up on one of these topics or develop your own topic.

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<td>Doctors and inventors</td>
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**Connect to the Present**

How does the topic you researched connect to present-day issues? What does it help you understand about current events?

**Resources for studying Black Wall Street:**

"Black Wall Street" is the name given to a thriving black community in Tulsa, Oklahoma. In the early 1920s, this community was violently decimated by white race rioters.

- **Related Films:** Documentaries on Youtube: "Black Wall Street, Little Africa, Tulsa, Oklahoma.
- **Feature film:** "Rosewood" (not set in Tulsa Oklahoma but depicts one of many U.S. race riots where a false accusation was used as an excuse to destroy a successful black community), from the history channel (available on Youtube): "The Night Tulsa Burned."

**Reading:** *Mega City* - a novel by Jewell Parker Rhodes: *Darl* is a *Promised Land*, a non-fiction account of the Tulsa riot by Scott Sikorski.

**Internet Resources:** If you google Black Wall Street you will find many links, but here is one that students found to be helpful as a starting point: <blackwallstreet.rense.com>.

Student research and presentations

[changeagent.nelrc.org/issues]
School-wide Civic Engagement

• Documentary films: Screenings and discussion
• In-class Digital Stories
• Participation in community events: YWCA’s Stand Against Racism
• Student leadership activities
School-wide Civic Engagement

*Under Arpaio* screening and center-wide discussion with students/instructors.
School-wide Civic Engagement

*Barrios and Barriers* screening and center-wide discussion with students/instructors, PCC leadership. (Coincided with National Day of Service)
School-wide Civic Engagement

*What is America to me?*
In-class Digital Stories Institute with beginning level ESL students
School-wide Civic Engagement

Stand Against Racism

- **Allyship 101** by Ana Sofia Moreno of Arizona Serves (an AmeriCorps Program)

- YWCA-sponsored national event
Questions and sharing
RI Adult Education practitioners organized
Sophie Tan, United Way of RI

Immigration + Adult Education meetings

• Conversation to compare experiences and gauge interest in organizing
• Presentation by immigration lawyer and representative from Learning Community Charter School
• PD workshop for instructors

Collaborative effort of Mimi Budnick, Lisa Clark, Janet Isserlis
RI Adult Education practitioners organized

Incorporating KYR Material in the Adult Ed Classroom
Model lesson plan by Cristina Cabrera, English for Action

- Bill of Rights matching activity
- CHIRLA Know Your Rights video: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5_Z5tSsUs
- Role plays
- Reflection & problem posing
- Summarize dos & don’ts
- Reflection & wrap up
- Immigration lawyer for learner questions
RI Adult Education practitioners organized

Incorporating KYR Material in the Adult Ed Classroom
RI Adult Education practitioners organized

Action steps from Immigration + Adult Ed meetings

- Google Group to share resources and updates
- Communication with RI Dept of Education (RIDE) about data gathering
- Drafting of field-wide statement of support for immigrant learners
- Idea for train-the-trainer workshops to share accurate information with service providers
Lisa Gimbel, Community Learning Center

City of Cambridge Department of Human Services Programs

Mission: “The Community Learning Center helps adults improve their lives and increase their community participation through free educational programs and services.”
White supremacy operates at all levels.

Classrooms
Our programs
Our communities
The USA
We can do work at all levels!

Organizational Networks

Developing the Field

Operations
Organizational Networks

City Departments

Small organizations

Networks of teachers

Funders
Developing the Field:

Supervision and Professional Development

Materials and curriculum
Professional Development

• Create opportunities for staff to learn how to be allies better.
  – 1:1 supervision
  – In your organization
  – In your region
  – Across the field

*Note: You don’t have to do this perfectly!!
Materials and curriculum

• Textbook publishers request feedback from practitioners before going to print. Give it!
• Write the Scope and Sequence for your program.
• Share good curriculum widely. This field needs it!
• Influence your programs’ textbook purchases.
• Have students write for the Change Agent.
Operations

Procedures

Forms

Physical Space

Hiring Processes

Program Development
Make sure all staff know the procedures if ICE or Police come to your English program or request information.

This includes full time and part time workers, receptionists, administrators, custodians, advisors, bookkeepers, etc.
We can make sure forms have safe options for all students.

We can have our **physical spaces** meet all students needs.
Push for student input at all levels of the program, including curriculum, program growth, calendars, etc. Respond to it!
Hiring
Does the staff look like the student body?

Terms and Conditions:
• Low pay
• Part time work
• No benefits
• 33 weeks a year

Master’s Degree

Terms and Conditions
You must agree to our Terms and Conditions in order to continue.

Ok
We need to do this work at all levels in every context. Identify your privilege and USE it. Ally is a verb!
Questions and sharing

THE POWER OF THE PEOPLE IS STRONGER THAN THE PEOPLE IN POWER.
What can we do to support and grow this work?
The Change Agent is available in print (individual or bulk subscriptions), and online, where selected articles are available in audio.

changeagent.nelrc.org
Thank you!

An archive of this webinar, along with referenced resources, will be available on

www.nelrc.org