

Preparing Today's Students to Be Citizens of the World

WHILE NAVIGATING A CHANGING LANDSCAPE

"Individually, we are one drop. Together, we are an ocean."
~ Ryunosuke Satoro

As we move through this time of a worldwide anti-racist protest movement and calls for change against the backdrop of the COVID-19 pandemic, we have been heartened to see communities and individuals pulling together to support each other across the nation. The pandemic upended school life, and we spent vast amounts of time and care working with families, teachers, staff, and administrators in making the switch to online learning. With the death of George Floyd, the national dialogue quickly shifted to racial justice, spearheaded by the Black Lives Matter movement, which seeks to dismantle systemic racism at all levels of our communities, including in our schools.

In many ways, these crises have brought to the forefront the inequities of our communities and challenges faced by both schools and families in providing education in this new reality. Our commitment to inclusive practices in education remains as important as ever while the demographics of schools across the United States continue to rapidly shift. How do we foster the senses of belonging, ownership, social justice, social-emotional growth, and personal connection in the learning experiences of students coming from backgrounds and homes that vary by race, ethnicity, culture, sexual orientation, gender identity, socio-economic status, locality, age, level of education, disability, language use, and other social conditions?

In this issue of *Odyssey*, compiled prior to the COVID-19 pandemic and the worldwide protests, professionals and families share stories and experiences on a multitude of topics. Gloshanda Lawyer, Cheryl Shahan, Leala Holcomb, and David H. Smith discuss how to integrate principles of social justice into a teacher preparation program. Arathy Manoharan discusses the anti-bias curriculum related to young adult literature that she utilizes in her high school English classroom. LaShawna Sims, who is part of a military family, shares how she acquired services and support for her children with cochlear implants. Flavia Fleischer, Rachel Friedman-Narr, and Will Garrow explain the importance of Deaf Community Cultural Wealth for deaf students with disabilities. Also included are articles about promoting gender inclusivity in schools, a parent's journey from identifying her deaf-blind daughter's medical issues to finding the appropriate educational placement, making arts education accessible for deaf children with multiple disabilities, and how to utilize Universal Design for Learning. Evon J. Black reflects on the theme of this issue in her endnote, sharing how embracing diversity and inclusion in our schools empowers everyone and how there is still much work to be done.

Next year's *Odyssey* issue will focus on transformative practices in education, collaboration, and administration. We must direct our focus to the profound and vital changes now taking place in education—not only through innovative approaches involving interpersonal and technological skills but also, more importantly, through leveraging strategies and committing to new practices aimed at dismantling systemic racism and other forms of inequities in our schools and educational programs. Please share your stories with us at Odyssey@gallaudet.edu.

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