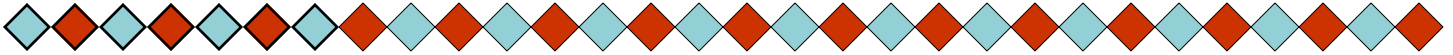




# What's the *IDEA*?

*GA NAME seeks to Inform, Dialogue, Engage, and Advocate for critical education for all.*

Volume I, Issue I, Fall 2010



## What is GA NAME?

Vera Stenhouse and Mari Roberts

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Started in 1990, the founders of the National Association for Multicultural Education (NAME) envisioned an organization that would bring together individuals and groups with an interest in multicultural education from all levels of education, different academic disciplines, and diverse educational institutions and occupations. National has chapters from coast to coast and border to border representing over 20 states.

GA NAME became an official chapter in 2001. As a local chapter, we aim to grow a strong presence in Georgia and serve as an organized structure to help interested, committed advocates address issues related to equity and social justice in education. GA NAME is not confined to the traditional definition of education. Our view of education involves communities, PK-12 education, and higher education. Our

membership includes representatives from a variety of disciplines, pedagogical approaches, as well as various counties, institutions, and organizations across the state, and we welcome more members daily.

GA NAME's goals regarding education include (1) providing opportunities for professional development for K-16 educators in Georgia, (2) producing and disseminating information germane to improving the educational experiences of practitioners and students in Georgia, and (3) supporting the educational well-being of Georgia's students inside and outside the classroom.

GA NAME acknowledges that change is a continual process. We engage in that process through action, encouraging a mosaic of perspectives regarding the definitions and goals of this type of work. We commit to continuing

educational dialogue and see it as a healthy part of advancing, interpreting, and implementing our association's goals and objectives.

Therefore, we invite you to come out to our meetings, add your perspectives to our voice, and further the work of GA NAME.

**To learn more about the National Association for Multicultural Education, Georgia Chapter, visit our website or email us:**

**Website:**

[www.ganame.org](http://www.ganame.org)

**Email:**

[ganame2010@gmail.com](mailto:ganame2010@gmail.com)

## A Letter from the President

Dear Educators:

Since 2001, GA NAME has committed to offering educators from multiple disciplines, interests, and forums a place to connect and advocate for improving the educational experiences of learners in Georgia. A staple of our work has come in the form of annual conferences, semi annual events, and monthly chapter meetings.

Today we introduce our inaugural eNewsletter, *What's the IDEA?*, at a time when an educated citizenry is paramount to fulfilling the rhetoric of democracy in the U.S. The newsletter serves as a venue to keep people informed, to foster dialog, to engage issues, and for continued advocacy for educational justice in Georgia.

We see the newsletter not as competition to other practitioner and research focused resources, but as an additional resource for people interested in, affected by, and engaged in education. We define

educators broadly and know they can include a wide range of teaching and learning experiences in and out of classroom settings.

The newsletter features include commentary on current/timeless educational issues; explorations of terminology; and spotlights on educators, organizations, artists, and research. In addition, we plan to offer a listing of resources, GA NAME events, and links to other opportunities to participate in ongoing work in diversity, multicultural education, equity, and social justice. Reviews of books to inform and supplement your work are also provided and are intended to connect practice and theory. Rotating features will address issues in global/international education that affect the local and national trends in the U.S., commentary in the form of visual art, and resources for birth-16 and families. We view these pages as catalysts for further critique and we hope this work serves to encourage deeper exploration of the information provided.

Reasons why you need this newsletter can certainly be made by reporting a series of U.S. Census Bureau statistics that reflects the dynamic diversity in Georgia; by witnessing the demographic segregation among Georgia's schools; by recounting influential local news stories that involve the misuse and abuse of children, school failures, corruption, fiscal fallout, and healthcare implications; or by highlighting the significance of global matters such as immigration, outsourcing, or the federal deficit. While all these reasons and more should pique your interest in wanting to include this newsletter as part of your education, we humbly hope to provide a multidisciplinary resource space that blends the practical and theoretical, provides research based information along with opinions, and is a place to celebrate what is going right in education.

We think that's a good IDEA.

Vera Stenhouse

## News Watch: Who are the Real Cheaters? Mari Roberts

*Cheaters* is a popular reality show that claims to expose heart-wrenching stories of infidelity. On this program, a team of private detectives follows suspected cheaters, and when they've got the goods, *Cheaters* host Joey Greco takes the accuser to confront the "cheater" in an often dramatic, and sometimes violent, fashion. At that time, there is usually a big hullabaloo, and the cheated-upon partner vows to

"never have anything to do with that scum again!"

Recently, however, a former employee exposed the show and it's participants as false. So now we are left to ask, who is really cheating whom here?

In February of 2010, the Atlanta Journal Constitution, in the role of Joey Greco, broke a story that identified 74 Georgia elementary

and middle schools as the culprits of widespread Criterion Referenced Competency Test (CRCT) answer-sheet tampering. Atlanta Public Schools (APS) was given the role of worst offender, since alleged cheating appeared to have occurred in 37 of its 55 elementary schools, the majority of which were lower income and minority. This finding, of course, created a

Continued on page 3

## Who are the Real Cheaters, cont'd. from page 2

bit of a hullabaloo, and Beverly Hall, teachers, and administrators are still being castigated for their allegedly inappropriate and immoral actions.

Recently, a “Blue Ribbon Commission” probe of the incident included 11 commission meetings; 300 interviews; reviews of 50,000 e-mails, data, hotline reports, test logs, and school “badging” to see who went in and out of schools and used their APS badge for entry; and an examination of the CRCT chain of command. The commission absolved APS of cheating in the majority of the disputed schools and posited that only a few teachers and administrators (the usual scapegoats) were actually at fault. Predictably, there has been a loud local outcry to censure these individuals and “never have anything to do with that scum again!” Recently, the governor added his voice to the rabble by insisting that he would appoint a “special investigator with subpoena power” to get to the bottom of the entire matter.

Now, cheating is an important moral issue with which we should deal. Yet, I believe many of us are

losing sight of what’s important in the rush to our torches and pitchforks. Perhaps the best way to approach this issue, which at its heart should be about providing the best academic environment for our children, is not through throwing stones in the form of questionable accusations at overburdened teachers and principals. This recent testing scandal, whether valid or not, alerts us to the enormous pressure that public schools are under thanks to punitively-structured legislations such as Race to the Top and NCLB. This becomes glaringly evident when we find that Georgia is not the only state suffering from this predictable fallout. Investigations of cheating allegations are also afoot in Texas, Indiana, Massachusetts, Nevada, and Virginia—all in systems that placed extraordinary pressure on schools to produce high test scores. Our children are drowning in multitudinous tests, and politicians are attempting to place blame for the resulting poor school performance on principals and teachers instead of looking at the actual culprit, which is, in part, the year-long test prep our students are receiving in lieu of an education.

Oh yes, the smell of corruption is in the air, but we should be asking more about who’s actually cheating. Can anyone honestly recall the last time such intense attention, time, and resources were dedicated to things that have been proven to improve academic outcomes for students such as smaller class sizes, increased extracurricular activities, or long-term staff development? In fact, Labor Commissioner Michael Thurmond was recently quoted as saying, “Fewer teachers will be teaching larger numbers of students; that is just the reality. As this recession continues to wear on, you will see additional cuts.”

*Cheaters* is an entertaining show, and makes for great TV, yet the reality is that the show may not be legitimate. Indeed, the very individuals who claim to be willing participants in the drama may be misleading us. And the state, in their rush to underfund valid educational reform and dedicate valuable resources to this cheating “scandal,” appears to be leading us in a similarly wrongheaded direction.

I too, feel cheated.

## Community Focus: The Ben Marion Institute for Social Justice

The Ben Marion Institute for Social Justice, Inc., seeks to promote behaviors that encourage an inclusive society where individuals and groups embrace differences and value kindness, authenticity, empathy, compassion, and fairness.

The Ben Marion Institute is an educational tax-exempt, nonprofit organization that educates for a more compassionate world.

The Institute looks to a promising, just future by offering specialized training to individuals and groups in observation, interaction, and

coaching. The Institute guides our participants in solving the real-world problems they experience in their schools, workplaces, and communities.

From the beginning, the Institute’s purpose was and is to promote an

Continued on page 4

## Community Focus: The Ben Marion Institute for Social Justice, cont'd. from page 3

ethically safe and healthy climate that will support all individuals' rights to be authentically who they are; one where they develop positive social and emotional learning through a social justice lens.

We offer real and measurable change. The Institute brings together experts from education, child development, mental health, and the social sciences to help develop these sustainable programs. We know real change takes time. We are patient.

The Ben Marion Institute pro-

vides educational support in ethical, social, and intellectual development:

- School Climate Improvement
- Peer Mediation/Communication
- Bullying/Behavior Change
- Leadership Training
- Professional Development

The Institute welcomes participation and partnering by individuals, organizations, and educational institutions that find the

mission of the Ben Marion Institute aligned with their values, ethics, and intellect. We invite you to learn more about the Institute by visiting the website at [www.BenMarionInstitute.org](http://www.BenMarionInstitute.org).

### The Ben Marion Institute for Social Justice, Inc.

985 Citadel Dr, NE, Suite A,  
Atlanta, GA 30324

Phone: 404-320-0985

Fax: 404-320-0105

## Book Review, Alyssa Dunn

*Teaching for Joy and Justice: Reimagining the Language Arts Classroom* (2009) by Linda Christensen is the classroom resource that every teacher should possess. This sequel to her bestselling *Reading, Writing, and Rising Up* (2000) provides exceptional resources for integrating social justice into all content areas and for all ages. Though the book was written for middle and secondary language arts, Christensen's descriptions of the lessons, her philosophy, and the handouts enable teachers to tailor and adapt the lessons for students in other subjects and age groups.

As with Christensen's first book, *Teaching for Joy and Justice* contains a cross-section of autobiographical sketches, curriculum materials, and student examples.

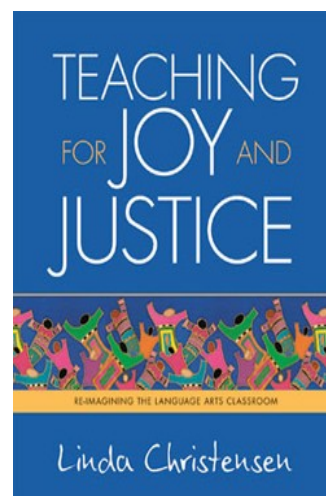
For each activity proposed, the author begins with a short narra-

tive about the way she taught the lesson and its impact on her students. She includes relevant and easily reproducible handouts and materials and, most importantly, student examples. The best part of the text for teachers—and inevitably students—is to see the creative work of other children who have been able to transform their experiences into meaningful poetry, narratives, and essays. These examples can be distributed in class as each new group sets about crafting its own stories.

All of the lessons in Christensen's text hold social justice at their center. Social justice is not, as many districts see it, an "add on" or something to discuss only when the "real" curriculum has been covered. Students' lives and the resources they bring into the classroom are seen as vital components of planning and instruction. Whether utilized on its own or in

conjunction with other materials from *Rethinking Schools*, *Teaching for Joy and Justice* is a "must-have" text for teachers devoted to critical and culturally-responsive education.

Christensen, L. (2009). *Teaching for joy and justice: Reimagining the language arts classroom*. Milwaukee, WI: Rethinking Schools.



# Our Curriculum: Incomplete at Best, A Mis-Education at Worst

Vera Stenhouse

Recently, I was talking with someone about the 2010 Census, for which a “Middle Eastern” category was being considered. I asked, what is the Middle East in between that puts it in the middle and from whose perspective is it in the east? I have asked the same question to my students preparing to be teachers. As part of a larger lesson on examining perspectives, we analyze a variety of maps. The map selections include those traditionally used in U.S. schools that place the U.S. in the center, disproportionately larger, and the continent of Africa disproportionately smaller in relation to the rest of the world.

As cartographers know, it is a challenge representing the Earth’s sphere on a two-dimensional piece of paper. The same can be said of a school’s curriculum. It can be challenging to take multidimensional events, people, places, and methods and represent them in a way that is not static and one-dimensional. When acknowledging this dilemma, some of my teacher education students respond to the map activity by saying that their job is to “just teach the curriculum.” I question what they mean by “curriculum” and “just” because a curriculum is not neutral and what is taught is not always “just.” No education is neutral—who, what, and how something is taught guarantees

that an education is not perspective-free.

The issue is not if but how we are taught. To borrow a refrain from Rodgers and Hammerstein’s South Pacific lyrics, “you have to be carefully taught.” While students are learning selective core content, they also learn what is and is not valued. Students are often carefully taught that some of them are gifted and others are not. They are taught that speaking more than one language is only valued if their first language is English and they gather that some are destined for the prison system and others are college-worthy. They also learn that standardized testing is paramount while the arts, physical education, and recess are unessential. Unfortunately, they learn that some inherently deserve less than the best because of how they speak, how they look, where they live, or the type of family they come from, and accordingly, others assume

that they inherently deserve the best because of how they speak and look, where they live, or their family circumstances.

Decades of research supports that teachers knowledgeable in the tenets of multicultural education are more likely to teach carefully about the perspectives and values that

shape curriculum context, the educational environment, and one’s worldview. Can a curriculum be all things to all experiences? Perhaps not, but it is equally egregious to assert that “the truth” is on one side and “indoctrination” is on the other. Critiques of multicultural education suggest that such teaching is a form of student indoctrination that imposes a limited and disingenuous view of school content. To the contrary, multicultural education is about broadening and adding perspective, not limiting. Affording one perspective is incomplete at best, a mis-education at worst. Regardless of whether an approach is considered “conservative,” “liberal,” “progressive,” “basic,” or “radical,” curriculum is intensely value-laden and political.

So why examine the position of the Middle East? In part, this examination is meant to expose what perspectives are present and absent within a curriculum. The question is also intended to emphasize the influence of a curriculum that includes the walls, halls, school environment, and the perspectives of the students, teachers, and other personnel. Consequently, we need to think about the ways we are taught carefully. History has repeatedly shown that leveraging this thinking through an incisive multicultural education bolsters the U.S. toward its greatest potential as a successful democracy.

*“A curriculum is not neutral and what is taught is not always ‘just.’”*

# The Campaign against Solitary Confinement Cells in Georgia Public Schools

Mary Hollowell

School seclusion is the practice of using solitary confinement cells in schools to punish disruptive students. It is an egregious human rights violation and it is predominantly used in the field of special education. Students with Autism, ADHD, and Severe Emotional Disorder are the primary victims of school seclusion. It is an issue that has recently come to the attention of state policymakers.

The event that sparked the anti-seclusion campaign in Georgia was the death of a child in a solitary confinement cell in a Gainesville school in 2004. Jonathan King hanged himself, inside a cell, using a rope that a teacher had given him as a belt. At this time, I was collecting evidence in another Georgia school. I wrote eye-witness accounts of solitary confinement of students with disabilities and I also took photographs. One particularly vivid photograph showed graffiti written in blood inside a cell. The cell was small and dark with exterior locks.

I chronicled these discoveries in a book manuscript entitled *The Forgotten Room: Inside a Public Alternative School for At-Risk Youth*. An early version of the manuscript won second place in nonfiction at a 2004 Sandhills Writers Conference, but I still struggled to find an editor and

expose the practice to a wide audience. Several editors told me that the material was “too grim.”

The parents of Jonathan King sued the school system but lost, and the injustice spurred me to become a more fervent advocate against school solitary confinement. I joined the ranks of parents and special educators whose children and students had suffered from the secretive practice of school solitary confinement. We participated in online forums, letter-writing campaigns, and advocacy workshops. I developed a website, testified before the State Advisory Panel for Special Education, and presented at Georgia NAME conferences. Some school administrators, however, lobbied to retain the practice of secluding disruptive students.

*The Forgotten Room* was published in 2009, and it was named as a finalist in the education/academic category of the 2010 International Book Awards. The book has garnered interest as far abroad as Russia and China. Finally, on July 8, 2010, the State Board of Education voted to ban

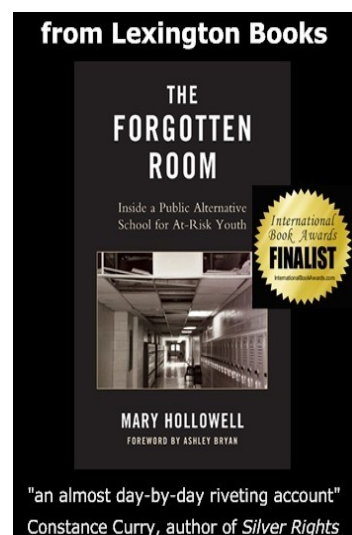
school solitary confinement in Georgia.

More advocates, across the nation, are now taking digital photographs of school cells using

iphones. The body of evidence is growing, and the problem has come to the attention of federal legislators. *The Preventing Harmful Restraint and Seclusion in*

*Schools Act*, SB 2860, is now under consideration in the U.S. Senate. I have high hopes that the bill will soon be signed into federal law.

“One particularly vivid photograph showed graffiti written in blood inside a cell. The cell was small and dark with exterior locks.”



*The Forgotten Room*, Mary Hollowell

# Upcoming Events: Save the Date

## **Locally:**

9/24/2010: GA NAME Meeting, 1:00-3:00, Ben Marion Institute

10/8/2010: GA NAME Meeting, 1:00-3:00, Fulton County Library, Krikwood Branch

10/16/10: GA NAME, 9:00-4:30, Theme: Doing the Work: Building Coalitions for Action, Policy, and Practice," Clayton State University

## **Conferences:**

10/6-10/8/10: Georgia Association of Teacher Educators (GATE) Conference, Holiday Inn Select Atlanta-Perimeter/Dunwoody, <http://www.gaate.org>

10/8-10/9/10: Annual Georgia Association of Young Children Conference, Gwinnett Center, Duluth, GA, <http://gayconline.org>

11/3-11/6/10: NAME, 20th Anniversary International Conference, Theme: Empowering Children and Youth: Equity, Multiculturally Responsive Teaching, and Achievement Gaps, Las Vegas, Nevada, <http://nameorg.org>

11/3-11/6/10: National Association of the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) Conference, Anaheim Convention Center, Anaheim, CA, <http://www.naeyc.org>

1/27-1/29/11: 62<sup>nd</sup> Annual Conference of the Southern Early Childhood As-

sociation, Hyatt Regency in Savannah, GA.

2/11-2/12/11: 10<sup>th</sup> Annual Southeastern Conference on Cross-Cultural Issues in Counseling and Education, Coastal Georgia Center, Savannah, GA, <http://ceps.georgiasouthern.edu>

3/6-3/9/11: 22<sup>nd</sup> Annual National Youth-At-Risk Conference, Georgia Southern University, Hyatt Regency in Savannah, GA, <http://ceps.georgiasouthern.edu/conted/nationalyouthatrisk.html>

4/8-4/12/11: 2011 Annual AERA Meeting, New Orleans, Louisiana, <http://www.aera.net>

## GA NAME eNewsletter: Call for Submissions

**Got something to say? *What's the IDEA?* welcomes and encourages submissions from our readers and those interested in and dedicated to social justice and critical multicultural education.**

### **Submission Guidelines and Considerations**

**Sections for Submissions:** Please send us the work you are doing as related to the following categories:

- **News Watch:** Features commentary on current/timeless educational issues. Commentary must include the various perspectives on the issues followed by the author's position and supporting arguments.
- **Doing the Work:** Educator, Community, Research: Spotlights educators/teaching, organizations in the community, or researchers doing critical educational work.
- **Visual Art:** Highlights visual commentary on educational issues.
- **Additional Arts Representation:** Features arts-based commentary through poetry, monologues, written music/lyrics, and so forth.
- **Book Reviews:** Reviews of current texts to inform and supplement understanding of ideas, concepts, and issues. Reviews should connect practice and theory.
- **Resource Highlights:** Details birth-16 resources for families, educators, and students relevant to multicultural education.
- **International/Global:** Addresses issues in global/international education affecting education trends.

**Content:** Submissions should address the following considerations:

- Must speak to excellence and equity in education.
- May offer issues, concerns, or problems, but must include solutions and problem-solving ideas/initiatives or critical questions for further inquiry.
- Links to the genres of multicultural education within or across content area/sphere of influence.

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## Call for Proposals: GA NAME Fall 2010 Event

**Theme:** "Doing the Work: Building Coalitions for Action, Policy, and Practice," Saturday, October 16, 2010, 9:00-4:30, Clayton State University

### Proposals for Poster Presentations

**Due:** Friday October 1, 2010, to Mari Ann Roberts, at [ganame2010@gmail.com](mailto:ganame2010@gmail.com)

**Content:** Proposals should respond to the conference theme, particularly one of the following strands: 1) building coalitions in PK-16 pedagogy, 2) building coalitions in schools and communities, and 3) building coalitions to change policy. Proposals for poster presentations should include objectives, significance, and outcomes.

Please see GANAME website, [www.ganame.org](http://www.ganame.org), for complete directions. Questions should be directed to Mari Ann Roberts, proposal chair, at [mariroberts@claytonstate.edu](mailto:mariroberts@claytonstate.edu).

**Presenters must be registered by October 7, 2010.**

## Submission Guidelines, Cont'd. from page 7

**Format:** Submissions should follow the following format:

- Include title of article, name of author(s), any affiliation(s), and contact info (email/phone);
- Indicate section of newsletter for submission (See pg. 6);
- 250-300 words (for written submissions);
- 12-point font (Times New Roman or Old Century Schoolbook);
- Please refer to APA 6<sup>th</sup> edition for reducing bias in language/terminology, <http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/560/14/>;
- Use citations/references where appropriate (include reference list); and
- Provide permission for visual images.

**Submit to:** [ganame2010@gmail.com](mailto:ganame2010@gmail.com), Subject line: Newsletter Submission, OR [RMeeler@gsc.edu](mailto:RMeeler@gsc.edu), Subject line: GA NAME Newsletter Submission.

Your submission will be reviewed for the newsletter and subject to editorial edits by Newsletter Team members. Content will be vetted by several factors including alignment with chapter/national mission, quality of the representation of ideas, language bias, and length.

## IDEA Highlights: Technology Resources

As line with our first Newsletter, we want to say hello in many different languages. Check out these websites and learn to "Say Hello to the World": [www.ipl.org/div/hello/](http://www.ipl.org/div/hello/); <http://users.elite.net/runner/jennifer/s/hello.htm>; <http://wilderdom.com/games/descriptions/HelloInDifferentLanguages.html>.

### Educators:

**EdChange:** [www.edchange.org](http://www.edchange.org)

This site includes professional development, research, and resources for diversity, multiculturalism, and cultural competence.

### **Tech & Learning:**

[www.techlearning.com](http://www.techlearning.com)

Tech & Learning's ENewsletter and web resources serve the education community with practical resources and strategies for transforming education through digital technologies.

Check out: *Free Resources: A Baker's Dozen for Social Studies*

<http://www.techlearning.com/article/5688>, and check out [www.free.ed.gov/index.cfm](http://www.free.ed.gov/index.cfm), where more than 30 agencies make federally supported teaching and learning resources easier to find.

### Family & Community:

**50 Incredible Social Sites for Social Change:**

<http://www.clearvieweducation.com/blog/2009/50-incredible-social-sites-for-social-change>

This is a collection of 50 social sites created to connect volunteers, students, charities, entrepreneurs, and individuals, as well as make it fun and easy to learn about the causes and campaigns impacting our world.

### Students:

**Kids Around the World:**

<http://www.katw.org/index.cfm>

This site introduces students to the lives, customs, and cultures of children in countries throughout the developing world.

**Kids Web Japan:** <http://web-jpn.org/kidsweb/index.html>

Introduce children to Japan. They can explore Japanese culture, folk legends, games and an annual calendar.

### Other:

**Peace Corps:**

<http://www.peacecorps.gov>

The Peace Corps offer a wide range of resources for all: stories, games, multimedia, educator resources, lesson plans, an ENewsletter, and much more. Check out the videos on avoiding cultural gaffes:

<http://www.peacecorps.gov/wvs/mul>

