



# The Bark

Fall 2016

## Teaching Justice Oriented Citizenship by Cathryn van Kessel

### News & Events

November 13-19 – [Bullying](#)

[Awareness Week](#)

November 16 – [International Day for Tolerance](#)

November 20 – [Universal Children's Day](#)

November 18-20 – [Parkland](#)

[Institute Conference: Shifting Gears. Transitioning to the Future Economy](#)

November 25 – [International Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women](#)

November 29 – [International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People](#)

December 01 – [World AIDS Day](#)

December 02 – [International Day for the Abolition of Slavery](#)

December 03 – [International Day of Persons with Disabilities](#)

December 10 – [Human Rights Day](#)

January 15-21 – [National Non-Smoking Week](#)

January 18 – [Weedless Wednesday](#)

January 27 – [International Day of Commemoration in Memory of the Victims of the Holocaust](#)

February – [Black History Month](#)

February 04 – [World Cancer Day](#)

Many organizations, including the Aspen Foundation, speak of a sustainable society's need for engaged citizens, but what does an engaged citizenry look like?

Traditional citizenship education tends to focus on unity, examines the structure and roles of the branches and their officials, and seeks to develop an appreciation for our system of government. The values, then, are centred on activities such as voting and community service. These forms of individual and mainstream participation are beneficial in many ways, but are insufficient on their own because they are unlikely to reduce social and economic inequality.

Useful to this discussion is how Joel Westheimer and Joseph Kahne (2004) differentiate forms of citizenship. They name three types: personally responsible, participatory, and justice oriented citizens. *Personally responsible* citizens act responsibly in their communities—they work, pay taxes, obey the law, recycle, give blood, donate to charity drives, and so on. *Participatory* citizens take citizenship a step further. They are active members of their community—they take the initiative to organize efforts to care for those in need, clean up their environment, and other activities that make a difference in people's lives.

To put it another way, personally responsible and participatory citizens will take part in the socially conscious activities of others (e.g., donate to a food drive), and perhaps even initiate their own activities (e.g., organize a food drive). Although these are admirable activities that can and should be continued, they do not address why such charity work is needed—the systemic reasons for injustice are not addressed.

This is where *justice oriented* citizens play an important role. They “critically assess social, political, and economic structures to see beyond surface causes,” and thus uncover areas of injustice and seek ways to make systemic change (Westheimer & Kahne, 2004, p. 240). Justice oriented citizens will inquire into root causes, such as questioning why some people starve in a world of plenty, rather than only seeking the immediate remedies (e.g., donating to food banks).

Critical to developing justice oriented citizens is to talk frankly about the forces that determine who becomes interested in deeper political and social issues, and who does not, and how these forces successfully maintain current power structures. These are difficult conversations to have with each other, but vital if we want to maintain the hope that we can live together more peacefully and equitably.

Reference:

Westheimer, J., & Kahne, J. (2004). What kind of citizen? The politics of educating for democracy. *American Educational Research Journal*, 41, 237-269.



# Aspen Foundation for Labour Education



## Social Justice Learning Grants 2016-17

We are excited to share that the Aspen Foundation Social Justice Learning Grants for 2016-17 have been announced! Visit our [website](#) to see a list of this year's recipients and read about their projects. We are pleased to support some of the fantastic work being done by students and teachers across the province. Congratulations to this year's recipients and thank you to all who applied!

## Alberta Education Curriculum Consultation

Alberta Education is inviting Albertans to participate in an [online curriculum survey](#), which closes November 18, 2016. There are also face-to-face sessions and opportunities for non-profit group participation. To learn more, visit their [website](#).

## Opportunity for Involvement

Are you a Grade 6 teacher interested in helping other teachers make the social studies curriculum come alive? We are inviting teachers with creative and engaging ideas to help guide the development of a new social studies resource tentatively titled, *Citizens in Action: More Than Voters*.

The Aspen Foundation is developing this resource with a focus on helping students become active and engaged citizens—ones who work with others to have a positive impact on issues affecting them and their world.

If you are interested in being part of the advisory committee, please contact Gary Hansen at [afle@telus.net](mailto:afle@telus.net). Please state the reasons for your interest and provide your qualifications.

## Aspen Foundation Annual Appeal

Once a year, the Aspen Foundation asks that you consider donating or becoming a member to help support our work. Learn more, [here](#).

## Aspen Foundation Feedback and Participation

We value your comments, please send them to us. If you would like to write an article regarding social justice work in the classroom, talk to us. If you would like to participate in some way in our work, please contact us.

We believe that it is important that schools teach about building new, fairer, kinder, and more just workplaces and communities. Friends like you make our work possible.

Your support is key to offering Social Justice and Labour Education in schools

Aspen Foundation is a registered charity and provides **income tax receipts** to individual donors.

**Click here to support our work!**

## Resources and Links

- ✓ [Stand by Me, Playing for Change](#)
- ✓ [VIDEO: What Have the Unions Ever Done for Us?](#)
- ✓ [ATA Social Studies Council](#)
- ✓ [ATA Global, Environmental and Outdoor Education Council](#)
- ✓ [VIDEO: The Trump Effect](#)
- ✓ [Aspen Foundation Teaching Resources](#)
- ✓ [Reconciliation in the classroom](#)

\*Always review resources before using them in class.

**Visit us on [Facebook](#) or [Twitter](#) for more resources**



The Aspen Foundation for Labour Education

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