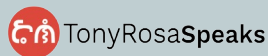




# Bearing Witness and Empowering Students: Educators' Roles in Addressing Anti-Asian Racism

Grace S. Kim, Ph.D.  
Boston University  
Tony DelaRosa (he/siya)  
@TonyRosaSpeaks



1



# Being Allies and Role Models: Educators' Roles in Addressing Anti-Asian Racism

Grace S. Kim, Ph.D.  
Boston University



2

## Thinking and Re-thinking about the Role of Education

"Let's Talk!"

- **What made you want to become an educator?**
- **What is the role of education?**
- **Education as a vehicle for transformation** – empowering people in order to transform the society, not just to increase critical thinking to fit in better in the society we live in (see Freire, 1993; hooks, 1994, and others for inspiration).



3

## Racism and Its Impact in Educational Settings

"Let's Talk!"

- Racism as trauma (Helms et al., 2012; Lowe et al., 2012) -
  - Remember: Students' past race-based trauma affects their current experience of trauma.
- Everyday racial microaggressions in light of legacies of past racial trauma.
- Findings from the bullying literature (Cooc & Gee, 2014; Grossman & Liang, 2008; Wang et al. 2021) -
  - Asian Americans and bullying experiences at school
  - Stereotypes such as model minority and perpetual foreigner have impact on student-teacher and student-student peer relationships.



4

## The Power of Bearing Witness and Advocating

"Let's Talk!"

- Findings from numerous trauma studies highlight the **significance of social support** for someone who experiences trauma.
- On the other hand, there can be **secondary trauma** resulting from one's story not being heard or acknowledged when they confide about racism.



5

## Covid-19 & Asian American Experiences

"Let's Talk!"

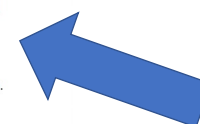
### Black and Asian Americans most likely to report adverse experiences due to their race or ethnicity since the coronavirus outbreak began

*% saying each of the following has happened to them because of their race or ethnicity since the coronavirus outbreak*

	People acted as if they were uncomfortable around them	Been subject to slurs or jokes	Feared someone might threaten or physically attack them	Someone expressed support for them
All adults	20	12	11	24
White	13	8	9	18
Black	38	21	20	51
Hispanic	27	15	10	29
Asian*	39	31	26	28

\*Asian adults were interviewed in English only.  
 Note: White, Black and Asian adults include those who report being only one race and are not Hispanic. Hispanics are of any race.  
 Source: Survey of U.S. adults conducted June 4-10, 2020.  
 \*Many Black and Asian Americans Say They Have Experienced Discrimination Amid the COVID-19 Outbreak\*

PEW RESEARCH CENTER



6

## What Not to Do

"Let's Talk!"

- When supporting an individual who has experienced an act of racism, **DO NOT do the following:**
  - Do not try to minimize. (Remember the cumulative effect of racism!)
  - Do not dismiss. (Focus on the impact, not what you think may have happened or why something may have happened.)
  - Do not intellectualize. (Don't try to explain or rationalize because you are surprised or not sure what to do.)
  - Do not give advice prematurely. (Check with the students whether they would want the advice or want to strategize; you may need to follow-up.)
  - Do not question the validity of the incident. (Remember some racial microaggressions may seem ambiguous or covert.)

From Lowe, S. M., Okubo, Y., & Reilly, M. F. (2012). A qualitative Inquiry into Racism, Trauma, and Coping: Implications for Supporting Victims of Racism. *Professional Psychology: Research and Practice*, 43(3), 190-198.



7

## What to Do

"Let's Talk!"

- When supporting an individual who has experienced an act of racism, **DO the following:**
  - Actively listen.
  - Empathize or sympathize.
  - Validate students' feelings and interpretation of the event.
  - Stay with the tough emotions.
  - Be mindful of your own reactions.
  - If applicable, you may want to share your feelings and similar experiences (Be careful, however, to not center your own experiences, or to compare your experiences with your students).



8

## What to Do (continued)

"Let's Talk!"

- Be willing to mobilize for future action.
  - Being an ally requires standing along with people who experience injustice.
  - Check in with students about what students would want first.
- Explore racial and ethnic networks/resources in the local community for yourself as well as your students.
- Mentor younger people by being a role model about coping with racism and/or being allies.
- Respect the wishes of the person who has experienced racism.

From Lowe, S. M., Okubo, Y., & Reilly, M. F. (2012). A qualitative Inquiry into Racism, Trauma, and Coping: Implications for Supporting Victims of Racism. *Professional Psychology: Research and Practice*, 43(3), 190-198.



9

## How do I educate about racism without adding to the burden and trauma?

"Let's Talk!"

### Curricula Issues to Consider:

- What does your overall curricula look like, in terms of equity, diversity, and inclusion, and social justice content? Whose experiences do you center in your teaching?
- Other than content that may connect to racial trauma, what other things about Asian American experiences do you teach? Are the portrayals three-dimensional?
- What are the developmental stages of your students? What is their developmental capacity for understanding about race and racism? [Note – Do not underestimate how much students can learn and talk about these topics].
- What is the timing within the curricula and within the schedule of the day/week – What are you doing before/after? Do you have enough time to support students who may experience challenging feelings?



10

## How do I educate about racism without adding to the burden and trauma? (continued)

"Let's Talk!"

### Pedagogical Issues to Consider:

- Do you have a trusting, caring, and positive relationship with your students?
- Are your teaching processes (e.g., classroom management, course policies, relationships with your students) equitable?
- Do you create a space for students to be whole people? (people with emotions and all?)
- What subtle things do you do that will signal to students that you are an ally to your Asian American students?
- Do you encourage your students to be curious about, and articulate their needs?
- To what support systems are you connecting your students?

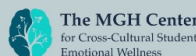


11

## What about Situations in the Classroom?

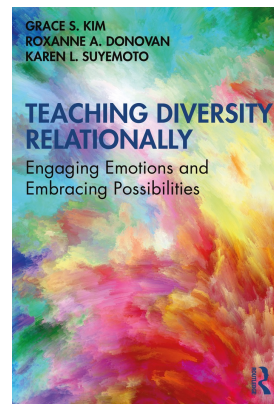
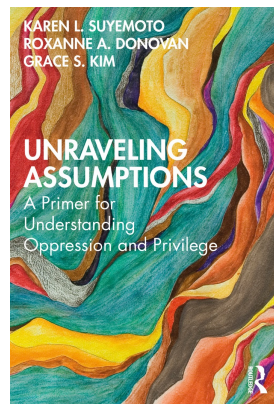
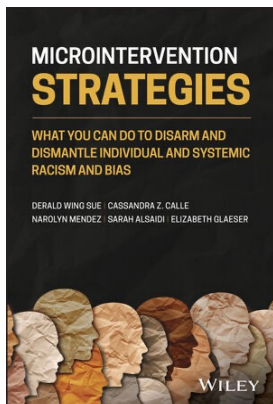
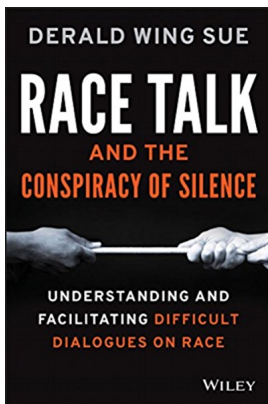
"Let's Talk!"

- **The impact of racism will enter the classroom and relationships in educational settings.**
- Major issues to consider:
  - First and foremost, become aware of your own social identities, positionality, power, and privilege.
  - Work to create empathic, supportive, and respectful relational environment.
  - Educate yourself on how to manage difficult discussions, and how to provide interventions for microaggressions.
  - Be thoughtful about what issues to open up in the classroom versus what not to, and how to open up and support students.
  - Work together with others in the school to address racial trauma.



12

## Resources



Currently available from Wiley

Forthcoming, June 2022, from Routledge



13

## Final Thoughts



- On knowing your power as an educator

**“The most common way people give up their power is by thinking they don’t have any.”**

– Alice Walker



14





"Let's Talk!"

# Thank You!

**BOSTON UNIVERSITY**

 **The MGH Center**  
for Cross-Cultural Student  
Emotional Wellness

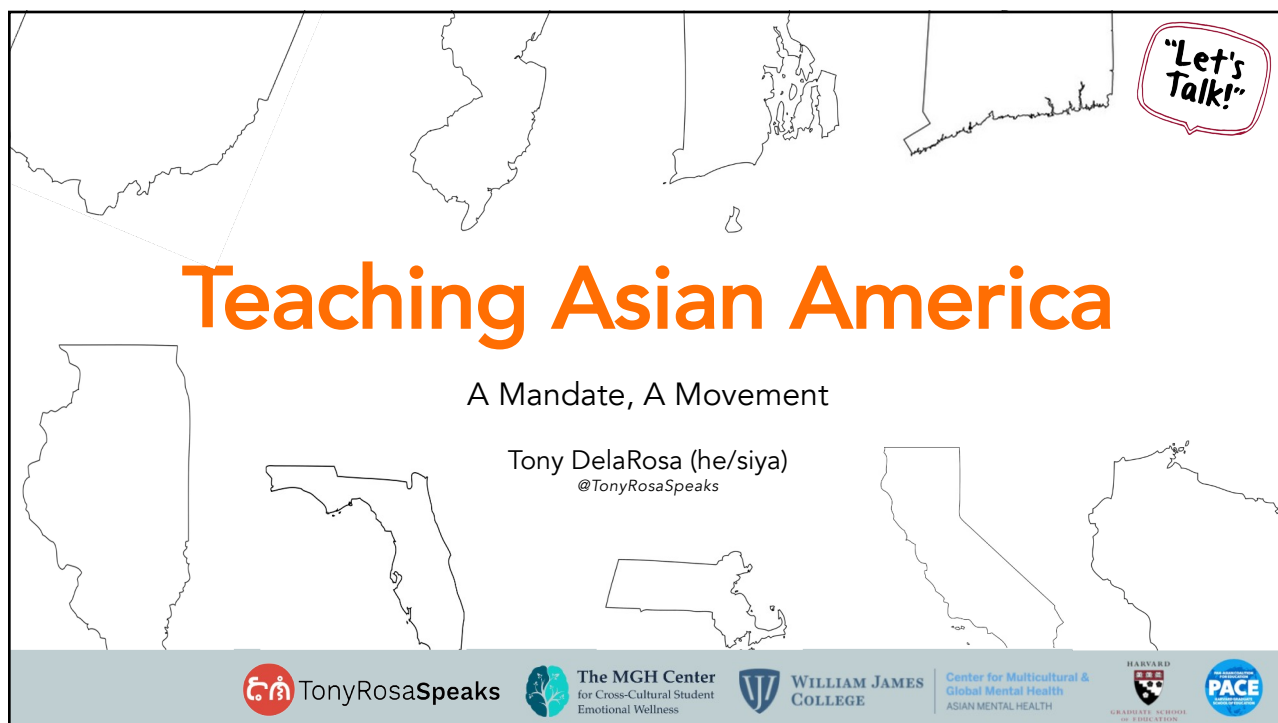
 **WILLIAM JAMES COLLEGE**

**Center for Multicultural & Global Mental Health**  
ASIAN MENTAL HEALTH

 **HARVARD**  
GRADUATE SCHOOL  
OF EDUCATION

 **PACE**  
PROFESSIONAL AND COMMUNITY  
ADVANCEMENT CENTER

15





"Let's Talk!"


# Teaching Asian America

A Mandate, A Movement


Tony DelaRosa (he/siya)  
@TonyRosaSpeaks


 **TonyRosaSpeaks**

 **The MGH Center**  
for Cross-Cultural Student  
Emotional Wellness

 **WILLIAM JAMES COLLEGE**

**Center for Multicultural & Global Mental Health**  
ASIAN MENTAL HEALTH

 **HARVARD**  
GRADUATE SCHOOL  
OF EDUCATION

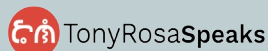
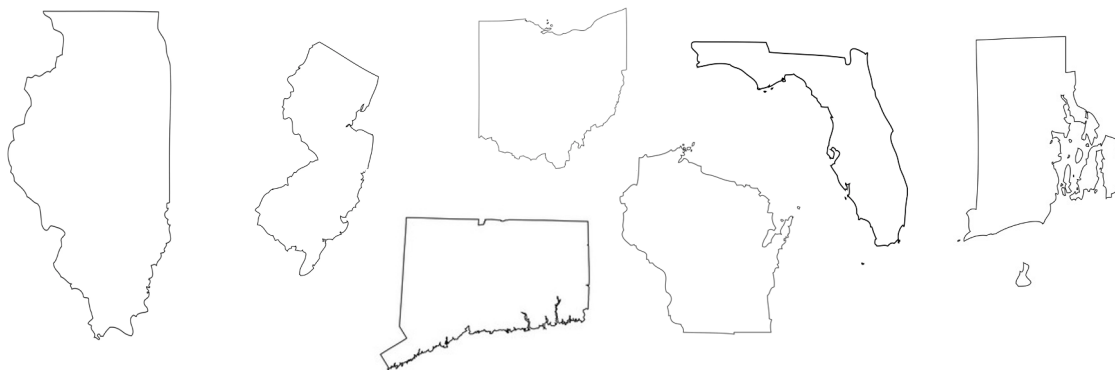
 **PACE**  
PROFESSIONAL AND COMMUNITY  
ADVANCEMENT CENTER

16



# Asian American Ed Policy

"Let's Talk!"



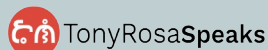
17

# Example Asian American Ed Policy

"Let's Talk!"

ENTER [HB 0376 \(IL\)](#)  
"The TEAACH Act"

*Teaching Equitable  
Asian American  
Community History*



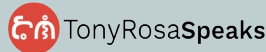
18

## Example Asian American Ed Policy

"Let's Talk!"

Sec. 27-20.8. Asian American history study.

(a) Beginning with the 2022-2023 school year, every public elementary school and high school shall include in its curriculum a unit of instruction studying the events of Asian American history, including the history of Asian Americans in Illinois and the Midwest, as well as the contributions of Asian Americans toward advancing civil rights from the 19th century onward. These events shall include the contributions made by individual Asian Americans in government and the arts, humanities, and sciences, as well as the contributions of Asian American communities to the economic, cultural, social, and political development of the United States. The studying of this material shall constitute an affirmation by students of their commitment to respect the dignity of all races and peoples and to forever eschew every form of discrimination in their lives and careers.

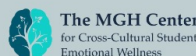
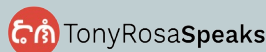


19

## Example Asian American Ed Policy

"Let's Talk!"

(b) The State Superintendent of Education may prepare and make available to all school boards instructional materials, including those established by the Public Broadcasting Service, that may be used as guidelines for development of a unit of instruction under this Section. However, each school board shall itself determine the minimum amount of instructional time that qualifies as a unit of instruction satisfying the requirements of this Section.



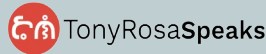
20

## Example Asian American Ed Policy

"Let's Talk!"

(c) The regional superintendent of schools shall monitor a school district's compliance with this Section's curricular requirements during his or her annual compliance visit.

(d) A school may meet the requirements of this Section through an online program or course.

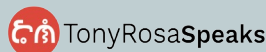


21

## Strengths & Weakness of Ed-Policy

"Let's Talk!"

Strengths	Weaknesses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>-Local Autonomy in Implementation</li><li>- A requirement to teach the local history of Asian Americans per state.</li><li>-There are content resources</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>-Too Broad</li><li>-What happened to Middle School?</li><li>-It says the formal implementation of these bills will happen in 2022-2023</li></ul>

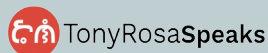


22

## What can educators do?

"Let's Talk!"

- 1) **SELF:** Don't wait for 2022 or APIDA Heritage Month (May) to start weaving APIDA narratives in your lesson plans.
- 2) **SELF:** Self-Assess your knowledge of APIDA racial literacy by asking yourself:
  - a) When was the first time you learned anything APIDA in your education?
  - b) When was the last time you taught anything APIDA in your classroom?
  - c) What are the top 5 images that come to mind when it comes to APIDA? Why is that?
  - d) Have you learned of APIDA communities in relation to other ethn racial communities? Why or why not?
  - e) What questions do you have about APIDA racial literacy?
- 3) **COMMUNITY:** Reach out to administration about their plans in supporting APIDA racial literacy development, especially amongst a movement around combating Asian American violence.
- 4) **SYSTEMS:** Find out if your state is advocating for APIDA education policy. If so, reach out to your representatives to see how you can help. If not, reach out to your representatives to advocate for this type of policy in your state.

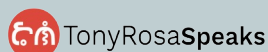


23

## Build Your Library / Resources

"Let's Talk!"

- 1) Learn more about the Asian American education policy bills [here](#).
- 2) Learn more about Asian American PK-12 Literature [here](#).
- 3) Asian American PK-12 educational leaders to follow on social media:
  - a) @AsianLitforKids
  - b) @immigranthistoryinitiative
  - c) @advancingjustice\_aajc
  - d) @TeachandTransform
  - e) @smithsonianapa



24

## Stay Connected with Tony



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



[@TonyRosaSpeaks](https://twitter.com/TonyRosaSpeaks)



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

