

COLLEGE BEHIND BARS



EDUCATIONAL RESOURCE GUIDE

TABLE OF CONTENTS

About the Film	3
Recommended Audiences	4
How to Use This Guide	5
About the Context	6
About the People in the Film	10
Classroom Lessons	13
Lesson I: An Introduction to <i>College Behind Bars</i> – What is the Bard Prison Initiative?	14
Lesson II: Access to Education as a Basic Human Right (Episode 1)	19
Lesson III: Narrative through the Lens of the Tragic Hero (Episode 2)	27
Lesson IV: The Unique Roles and Challenges for Women in the US (Episode 3)	33
Lesson V: The Power of the Spoken Word (Episode 4)	39
Extension Activities & Project Prompts	45
Take Action	47
Additional Resources	49
Standards Alignments	50
About the Team	54

ABOUT THE FILM

College Behind Bars is a documentary film series directed by award-winning filmmaker Lynn Novick, produced by Sarah Botstein, and executive produced by Ken Burns. Delivered in 4 one-hour episodes, *College Behind Bars* tells the story of a small group of incarcerated men and women struggling to earn college degrees and turn their lives around in one of the most rigorous and effective prison education programs in the United States – the Bard Prison Initiative. Shot over four years in maximum and medium security prisons in New York State, the four-hour film takes viewers on a stark and intimate journey into one of the most pressing issues of our time – our failure to provide meaningful rehabilitation for the almost two million Americans living behind bars. Through the personal stories of the students and their families, the film reveals the transformative power of higher education and puts a human face on America’s criminal justice crisis.



RECOMMENDED AUDIENCES



College Behind Bars is perfectly suited for secondary school classrooms. It explores topics like systemic bias, social inequity, and criminal justice reform. However, while foundational criminal justice and legal studies might not be commonly taught in secondary school, this film doesn't just look at abstract, political, or policy-based issues – it raises essential questions that adhere to Common Core, C3, and subject-area teaching standards, adding value and rigor to any high school humanities classroom.

The film encourages students to look at the world around them through many topical lenses, including literature, philosophy, civics, sociology, media literacy, economics, and others, and poses essential questions such as: As a society, what do we use prison for? Who in this country has access to educational opportunity? Who among us is capable of academic excellence? What is the correlation between academic access and socio-economic mobility? How do the arts shape an individual's role in society? What is justice?

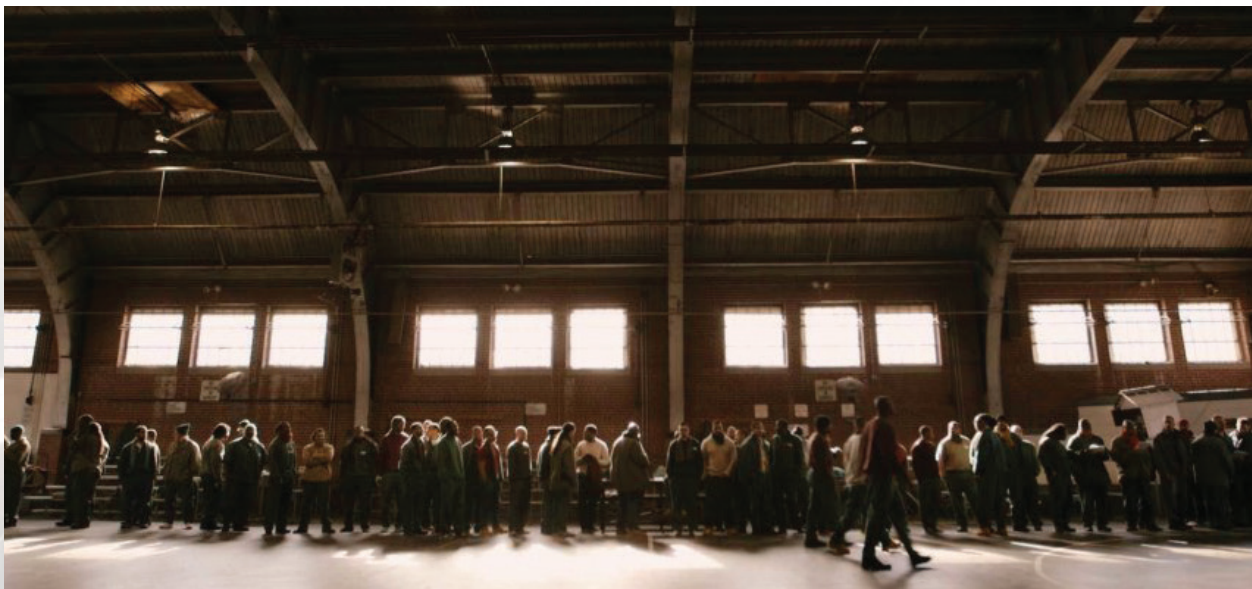
While the main message of *College Behind Bars* is one of resilience, redemption, and growth, the film also uses mature language and explores very difficult issues, including domestic abuse, gang violence, substance abuse, and gun violence, and therefore educators should consider all these factors when deciding which segments to screen in the classroom, and what aspects of this film are appropriate for their students. The film, when paired with the lessons in this Educational Resource Guide, provide an opportunity for classroom and community educators to explore all of these issues with young adult and adult learners in the context of a number of educational standards, including civics, language arts, world history, art, media studies and media literacy, and social studies, just to name a few.

HOW TO USE THIS GUIDE

The men and women who share their stories in *College Behind Bars* do so in order to humanize the debate around complex national policies, and therefore, this is an ideal film to begin an informed dialogue about the dysfunction of the United States' criminal justice system, including: the inequalities within our public education system; mass incarceration of people of color and the systemic racism that denies them access to their basic constitutional rights; and the impact of intergenerational trauma and the many ways that these factors affect our society and economy as a whole.

This Educational Resource Guide was created with educators in mind and can be used in a variety of ways both in the classroom as well as in informal educational settings such as library events, after-school programs, museum events, or professional development sessions. The first lesson serves as a general introduction to the film, and can be used by itself or paired with any of the subsequent lessons to provide context about the film before going deeper into the themes and stories found in the movie. Because the film itself is four hours long, the lessons (aside from the introductory lesson) are arranged by 1-hour episode. From there, they reference a shorter clip within the episode. While each activity is flagged for a particular subject area, in truth, they are cross curricular, and could be used in a variety of classrooms depending on the specific teacher and/or course.

College Behind Bars explores very complicated issues through the personal narratives of individuals whose lives are affected by them. To provide more context, there is a section that includes some very cursory background information on the different cultural and political experiences represented in the film. There is a section containing Extension Activities and Project Prompts that can be used as research assignments, long term projects, or independent learning assignments as well as a section of social action ideas for students who want to use what they learned to make a difference.



ABOUT THE CONTEXT

A Brief Introduction to Criminal Justice and Justice Reform in the US

The United States comprises only 4.25% of the world's total population, yet nearly 25% of the world's incarcerated are located there. That means the U.S has the largest prison population in the world, with approximately 1.8 million people incarcerated as of 2021. There are over 6.8 million Americans in jails and prisons, on probation, and parole: 1 in every 35 adults. That is 1 in every 35 adults. Women are the fastest growing segment of the incarcerated population, increasing at nearly double the rate of men since 1985.

America has a long history of systemic and intersectional discrimination across race, gender, and socioeconomic status. This is especially true in our approach to corrections and within our criminal justice system. Years of federal and state policies targeting Black communities, inequity in the educational and school system, and continuous, virulent, and shifting racism and xenophobia have helped to create today's biased justice system – a system that unfairly targets low-income communities and communities of color. In addition, as the U.S. legal system has expanded definitions of criminality – from the Black Codes of 1865 to the War on Drugs in the 1980's to the criminalization of unauthorized border crossing today – its prison system has exploded. America's prison population has risen 500% over the past 40 years – calling into question the use of captivity as a tool of control and punishment by a public growing increasingly uncomfortable with the proliferation of prisons and detention centers, the racial injustices of the incarceration industry, and the harm to communities and families of mass incarceration.

The Bard Prison Initiative (BPI)

Founded in 2001, the Bard Prison Initiative (BPI), part of Bard College, has worked diligently to provide quality college education inside New York State prisons. The success of BPI has brought attention to the availability and affordability of higher education in prison, while promoting rigorous academic standards. BPI has created groundbreaking opportunities for college education in prison and is now a model throughout the United States for other college prison programs. BPI's college programs transform the lives of the incarcerated students by providing access and opportunity to higher education.

Today, BPI enrolls over 300 incarcerated students full-time in programs that culminate in degrees from Bard College; it offers extensive support for its alumni in and around New York City; and it has developed the BPI Summer Residency, an intensive, experiential, and hands-on series of workshops on the nuts and bolts of college-in-prison for new and emerging practitioners led by BPI staff and alumni. The Residency leads to an ongoing community of practice that builds on over a decade of cultivating a nationwide network of leading universities and colleges in the field, through the Consortium for the Liberal Arts in Prison.

ABOUT THE CONTEXT (CONT.)

In 2009, BPI established the Consortium for the Liberal Arts in Prison to facilitate the further establishment of college-in-prison nationwide, calling for those programs to be of the highest quality, ambition, and rigor. The programs that make up the Consortium represent fourteen colleges and universities and stretch across ten states. BPI's newest initiative, the Bard Microcollege, expands yet further the scope and impact of this work, delivering high-quality liberal arts education to communities outside of prison through partnerships with community-based institutions. All partners make a fundamental commitment to liberal arts learning that aims to transform individual lives by putting academics first. <https://bpi.bard.edu/our-work/national-engagement/>

The Pell Grant

The Pell Grant is the largest federal grant program offered to undergraduates and is designed to assist students from low-income households afford a higher education. A Federal Pell Grant, unlike a loan, does not have to be repaid, except under rare circumstances. To qualify for a Pell Grant, a student must demonstrate financial need through the FAFSA, which is a free application. Until 1994, incarcerated students were able to access higher education through Pell Grant assistance. The 1994 Crime Bill removed their eligibility, making it virtually impossible for an incarcerated student to afford a college education. Almost immediately, the number of prison education programs in the United States dropped from 772 in 1994 to only 8 remaining in 1997. In 2015, President Obama's administration launched the Second Chance Pell experiment, which provided Pell Grants to incarcerated students in 67 higher education prison programs.

Since then, over 22,000 have enrolled in Second Chance Pell Programs in 30 states and the Federal Bureau of Prisons. The goal is for programs in all fifty states with a variety of postsecondary educational opportunities that serve a diverse population of students.

In 2020, after a campaign led by formerly and currently incarcerated students and their families, and aided by educators, advocates, and social justice organizations. The passing of this Act gave hope and opportunity to the incarcerated community that they could finally participate in educational opportunities and earn their college degrees. Formerly incarcerated individuals with college degrees have a lower recidivism rate and a higher chance of finding well-paying employment and stable housing. Incarcerated students who participate in college programs are 48% less likely to return to prison. National reduced recidivism rates could cut state prison spending by as much as \$365 million annually. <https://www.ed.gov/news/press-releases/us-department-education-announces-it-will-expand-second-chance-pell-experiment-2022-2023-award-year>

ABOUT THE CONTEXT (CONT.)

Women and Incarceration

Over the last 25 years, there has been an alarming increase in the number of women incarcerated throughout the United States. According to a 2019 report by the Prison Policy Initiative, there are approximately 231,000 incarcerated women in the United States. The current rate of female incarceration is at a historic and global high, with approximately 133 women incarcerated per every 100,000 women in the US. In recent decades, women's incarceration rates have increased by nearly twice the rate of men. This increase is a direct result of stiffer drug sentencing laws and post-conviction barriers to reentry, many of which adversely affect women. Since 1986, the percentage of women incarcerated for drug offenses has increased from approximately 12% to just over 26% (2018) compared to 13% of incarcerated men. Most of the total incarcerated population in the US are in state prisons. This is not true for women, who are disproportionately housed in jails. A quarter of these women have not yet been tried and convicted, but are held because their lower income makes it impossible to afford bail, which is often as much as a woman's entire annual income.

Eighty percent of women in US jails are mothers, and the primary or sole caretakers with children under 18 at home. This separation punishes the entire family unit, including the children, by placing them in foster care or with non-family members. Mothers are often underrepresented and ignored in the conversation about incarcerated parents. This is even true with the number of visits a mother has with her children. Incarcerated fathers report many more visits with their children than incarcerated mothers do. Usually when a father is incarcerated, the mother still has custody of the children. As caregivers, mothers continue to make sure their children visit their incarcerated fathers. When mothers are incarcerated, children are less likely to live with their father, and foster care parents or extended family members either don't have the resources or desire to make sure children visit their mothers.

Intergenerational Incarceration

"Intergenerational incarceration" is when family members from more than one generation are involved with the criminal justice system. Often the cycle is repeated beyond the two generations of a parent and child, and can include third, fourth and fifth generations. The impact of intergenerational incarceration can affect families for decades. Children with incarcerated parents face the biggest risk of incarceration, which is one of the reasons that siblings are often justice-impacted.

It is hard to know how a child with a currently incarcerated parent will react to the trauma, challenges, and difficulties of their family separation. Children with currently incarcerated parents are at risk for economic hardship, traumatic living situations, homelessness, abuse, addiction, foster care placement, emotional and psychological difficulties, antisocial behavior, suspension

ABOUT THE CONTEXT (CONT.)

or expulsion from school, and criminal activity. It becomes even more difficult when both parents are incarcerated or a parent is repeatedly in and out of prison. More than 5 million children in the United States have had one or both parents incarcerated while under the age of 18 years old. <https://nrccfi.camden.rutgers.edu/>

The School-To-Prison Pipeline

The School-To-Prison Pipeline describes the disturbing national trend where minors and young adults of color from disadvantaged backgrounds are funneled out of public schools and into the juvenile criminal justice system. This often leads to adult incarceration. Many of these students are victims of poverty, abuse and neglect. Others have learning disabilities. Instead of being punished and isolated, these students need additional educational programs, tutoring, and/or therapeutic counseling services. The pipeline was created by zero tolerance policies and an increase of police in school. "Zero-tolerance" policies criminalize minor infractions of school rules and behavior issues that should be handled inside the school. Instead, these students are suspended or expelled. These extreme policies highlight the educational and disciplinary inequality in the United States.

Recidivism and Reentry

Recidivism is the percentage of formerly incarcerated people who are rearrested and sent back to prison. Reentry refers to the transition of incarcerated people from prisons or jails back into the community. Reentry programs are intended to help returning citizens successfully reenter society after their incarceration, since reentry is a complex process and involves many issues, such as: family reintegration, housing, employment readiness, workforce development, completing education, financial understanding and planning, healthcare needs, substance abuse treatment, trauma treatment, and mental health services. Successful reintegration focuses on removing or reducing barriers which make reentry difficult, so that people can return home, support themselves and their families, and contribute to their communities.

Within three years of release, two out of three formerly incarcerated people are rearrested and more than 50% are incarcerated again. Five years after release, the recidivism rate in America goes up to 70%. Interestingly, the rate of recidivism is directly related to educational attainment. The higher a person's level of education, the lower their recidivism rate. Most incarcerated people do not receive any resources or connections to housing, employment, mental health, or other services prior to their release. In most states, the responsibility falls on the individual and their family to cope with the mental, physical, and financial burdens of release. <https://nationalreentryresourcecenter.org/>

ABOUT THE PEOPLE IN THE FILM

The following are short biographies of the students who appear in the clips featured in this guide, not of all the students in the film.

SEBASTIAN YOON

Sebastian Yoon earned a Bard College bachelor's degree in Social Studies through the Bard Prison Initiative in 2017. Now the Acting Program Officer at the Open Society Foundations, Sebastian is a part of the Democracy Fund, which is working toward a more inclusive and accountable democracy by supporting organizations that seek to protect and expand voting rights, and to ensure fair, independent, and diverse courts. He is a public speaker, speaking to audiences around the country about his life-changing experience with education, the need for equal access to quality education, and the importance of mentorship. He is also pursuing an MPA at Baruch College. He currently resides in New York City with his family.

GIOVANNIE HERNANDEZ

Giovannie Hernandez is a social justice advocate, public speaker, and consultant whose life was forever changed by the pursuit of his college degree in prison. Since returning home, he has since worked with organizations such as the Brooklyn Community Bail Fund, New York Immigrant Freedom Fund, and Good Shepherd Services to address the issues of disenfranchised communities and those impacted by incarceration. He is a founder of Emergent Works, a tech nonprofit, serving the justice-involved community and creating inroads into the tech industry. As a frequent, national public speaker, he speaks at conferences and academic institutions, sharing his personal experiences, his belief in the transformative power of higher education in prison, the benefits for individuals and society at large, and the need for improved educational access.

RODNEY SPIVEY-JONES

Rodney Spivey-Jones graduated from BPI in 2017 with a degree in Social Studies. He was a founding member of the BPI Debate Union team, which made international news for beating Harvard in 2015. His BPI senior project, *Messianic Black Bodies*, was recently edited to include current events and published as *Black Disfigurement and the American Hieroglyphics of Race*, in the A-line Journal. He returned home in 2021 and lives in New York state with his family. He is currently studying for his LSAT and plans to apply to law school in 2022. <https://alinejournal.com/vol-3-no-1/black-disfigurement-and-the-american-hieroglyphics-of-race/>

ABOUT THE PEOPLE IN THE FILM (CONT.)

JULE HALL

Jule Hall graduated from BPI with an undergraduate degree in German Studies in 2011. Upon his release in 2015, he continued his education by enrolling in a graduate-level, Public Health specialization and in 2015 became a BPI-Tow Public Health Fellow. He also tutored youth for their high school equivalency examinations at the Brownsville Community Justice Center.

Since returning home, Jule has worked in both the private and not for profit sectors. He was employed as a campaign coordinator at Picture Motion, where he created social impact campaigns for award-winning documentaries examining prison reentry, gun violence and racial inequality in America. He served on the Documentary Selection Committee of NBCUniversal and AFI DOC's 2017 Impact Lab. From 2017 until 2020, he worked at the Ford Foundation, where he was the first formerly incarcerated person to be hired full time, and provided data analysis and strategy development for its work around Gender, Racial and Ethnic Justice. He then worked at Ascendium Education Solutions Inc, as a program officer, who funds high-quality, post-secondary educational programs in prisons across the nation. Currently, Jule is the Sr. Manager of Diversity for Talent & Acquisition at Amazon, Inc.

DYJUAN TATRO

Dyjuan Tatro graduated from BPI in 2018 with a BA in Math. He was also a member of the BPI Debate Union team that defeated Harvard in 2015. He is a publicly recognized legal reform advocate and strategist who has worked to bridge the gap between policy and practice. As an alumnus of Bard Prison Initiative (BPI), Dyjuan has leveraged his education and experience to shift public policy in favor of expanding college in prison. He has worked on successful, national social impact campaigns in favor of Pell Restoration and to enact legal reforms at the municipal, state, and federal levels. He is an active member of the Fortune Society's Board of Directors, a skilled government affairs professional, and an experienced project manager. He now serves as the Senior Adviser of Strategic Outreach at the DCCC, working on a number of issues at the nexus of politics, diversity, equity, and inclusion. Originally from Albany, NY, Dyjuan currently resides in NYC where the City Council has honored him for his work in the criminal justice space.

ABOUT THE PEOPLE IN THE FILM (CONT.)

TAMIKA GRAHAM

Tamika Graham graduated from Bard Prison Initiative (BPI) with an Associate's Degree in Liberal Arts. Since her release in 2017, she has devoted herself to not only making a change in her community but also making a change in our nation by advocating for an end to mass incarceration, ending homelessness and is a passionate advocate for the youth because she strongly believes they represent our future. She is also a zealous advocate for access to higher education for incarcerated and formerly incarcerated people, because she knows that education is a gateway to social and economic mobility.

Tamika Graham actively utilizes her public speaking skills, lived experience, and humble personality to motivate others to action. She has engaged in advocacy with Equity Alliance of Staten Island, BPI, #CLOSErikers and other campaigns and organizations. Tamika is currently the Canvass Director at JustLeadershipUSA and the Lead National Organizer for Beyond the Box Initiative. Before joining JLUSA she was teaching high school equivalency classes at the Brownsville Community Justice Center, and Dreams YouthBuild in Crown Heights, Brooklyn, NY with the BPI-TASC program. She is also a Rehabilitation Through the Arts alumna, and sits on their Alumni Advisory Committee.

SHAWNTA MONTGOMERY

Shawnta Montgomery graduated from Bard Prison Initiative (BPI) with an Associate's Degree in Liberal Arts. She was the Taconic BPI graduation commencement speaker, which can be seen in the documentary. Since returning home, Shawnta has worked for the Fortune Society as a Peer Recovery Coach. She has also assisted both men and women with their reentry needs, including their job search and housing needs. She is a public speaker on issues around higher education in prison, women and incarceration, sharing her personal experiences with students and communities across the country. She speaks about the importance of education, which she says, "changes your whole outlook on the world." Shawnta is currently relocating to Virginia, where she plans to continue her education and work in the community.

ABOUT THE PEOPLE IN THE FILM (CONT.)

JAMES KIM

Following his return home in 2020, James Kim completed his Bachelor's Degree in June 2021, with a senior thesis titled, *The Myth of Immigrant America and the Federalization of Immigration Control*. Since then, he has been working as a college tutor, and has recently been named the Learning Commons Lead & Student Recruitment Specialist with the Bard-BPI Microcollege at Brooklyn Public Library. The micro-college serves non-traditional college students, adult learners, and others lacking access to or underserved by the current system of higher education. Through his work and public speaking, James is committed to redressing systemic exclusion by promoting greater diversity and equity in educational settings. He is also a participating fellow in the BPI Public Health Fellowship, where he is working on a focused study of the effect of the Covid-19 Pandemic on the undocumented population of New York City. He currently lives in New York City.

TAMARA BARLEY

Tamara Barley graduated from BPI with a Liberal Arts degree in 2017. Since returning home, she has worked with One World Center where she focused on meeting the needs of less fortunate community members. Currently she works for VP Supply, a locally owned business in her community. She plans to go back to school to complete her psychology degree and is in the process of starting a podcast with a focus on conversation with positive role models for youth and teens struggling with mental health concerns. She is working to build a safe space for teens to talk about the issues young people are dealing with today. She currently lives in New York.

CLASSROOM LESSONS

Each of these “lessons” might best be described as a “mini-unit”, requiring approximately 2-3 class periods to complete, but because they are modular, educators can easily pick and choose what to utilize in their existing classroom instruction. These lessons are formatted for classroom use, and can be used in secondary, college, or adult-learning classes. They can also be used for breakout groups or subsequent convenings at a professional development event or workshop. They can be used as standalone lessons or as an opportunity to focus more closely on one segment of the film after watching it in its entirety. The lessons align with Common Core and C3 teaching standards. Please refer to the Sample Standards Alignments section of this Guide for specific standards alignments.



CLASSROOM LESSON 1

An Introduction to *College Behind Bars*: What is the Bard Prison Initiative (BPI)?

Lesson Preparation

- Prepare a monitor, internet access to the film *College Behind Bars*, cued to the first episode, from the beginning of the film to timecode 15:08
- Prepare copies of *Student Handout* for distribution

Requirements

Materials:

- Whiteboard and markers, chalkboard and chalk, or chart paper and markers
- Monitor/projector, computer with internet access, or downloaded file of the documentary, *College Behind Bars*
- Notebook paper
- *Class Set of Student Handout: Walt Whitman's Song of Myself*

Time:

- 2 class periods

Techniques and Skills

Vocabulary building, reading comprehension, large group discussion, problem solving, critical and analytical thinking, supporting ideas with examples, comparing and contrasting information sources, literary analysis, media literacy, listening skills, expository, creative, and responsive writing.

Curriculum Connections

This lesson aligns well with coursework in English/ language arts, social studies, civics, sociology, media literacy, film education, among others.

CLASSROOM LESSON 1 (CONT.)

Procedures

1. On the chalkboard, whiteboard, or smart board, write the word SELF.
2. Allow a few minutes for students to free-associate with this word aloud, as a group. Chart their responses in a word-web.
3. Then, conduct a short discussion with the class, using some or all of the following questions as a guide:
 - When you think of your “self” what do you think of? How do you define yourself? How do you self-identify?
 - What aspects of yourself are independent of your background, upbringing, and experience? Which aspects are contingent or dependent on these things? Explain.
 - How is the “self” fixed and static? How is it changing and evolving?
 - How is your definition of “self” the same as, or different from, the “self” that others see when they look at you?
4. Tell the class that they are going to see an excerpt from a film called *College Behind Bars* that follows a group of people who are attending college while they are incarcerated. Explain that the film explores many themes – among them, the definition of the “self” as it relates to a person’s environment, and how knowledge and information can shape how a person experiences both themselves and the world around them. Tell them that this clip introduces both BPI (Bard Prison Initiative), a college program that takes place inside a prison, as well as a few of the students who are enrolled in that program.
5. Play the clip of *College Behind Bars* start from the beginning of the first episode to timecode 15:08.

Note: In this clip, we meet some of the students enrolled at BPI. We learn about the program, and a bit about the prisons that host the program.

6. Conduct a discussion about the clip, using some or all of the following questions as a guide:
 - Why does the filmmaker choose to start with the students memorizing *Moby Dick*? How might this assignment, and the content of the novel, set the tone for the rest of the film?

CLASSROOM LESSON 1 (CONT.)

- What is BPI? Why is BPI described in the film as an “experiment?”
- What do you learn about the students in the film by the way they describe and maintain their living areas?
- What do you learn about the students in the film by the way they describe and maintain their school materials?
- Compare the way that the students in the film maintain their living environments and their school materials to the way that you maintain yours. What can you extrapolate about the students in the film, vs. you and your peers, based on the way they maintain and talk about their living environments and their school materials?
- How is school a “buffer” against prison life for the students in the film?
- Who are the students that are introduced in the first 15 minutes of the film? What do Rodney, Giovannie, Jule, and Sebastian have in common, and how do they seem unique?
- What does it mean for a student to be educated in a way that is “meaningful to them?” What sort of education is meaningful to you?
- What do the statistics that are shared in the film – how many people are incarcerated each year, how many have access to college programming, how many are released from prison each year, and how many will return – mean to you? What do they tell you about the efficacy of our criminal justice system?
- Knowing that these students are currently incarcerated, how might Giovannie’s interpretation of the Walt Whitman quote, “I contain multitudes”, be particularly relevant? Specifically, consider when he says, “what I do today might affect what someone is capable of doing tomorrow and vice versa,” and explain.
- What surprised you about the students you meet in these first 15 minutes? Why did this surprise you?

CLASSROOM LESSON 1 (CONT.)

- How do you think the students in the film would describe themselves? Do you think they see themselves as static or evolving? Why is this important?
 - How does Sebastian reflect on the meaning, purpose, and use of time? How did you feel when you heard him describe time in this manner?
7. Distribute *Student Handout: Walt Whitman's Song of Myself* to the class.
 8. Explain that this is an excerpt from a 52 – stanza poem by Walt Whitman called “Song of Myself.” The poem explores the complicated issue of “self” as it relates to one’s community, one’s country, the world, and nature. Remind the class that they heard Giovannie refer to this poem in the excerpt they saw of *College Behind Bars*.
 9. Read this excerpt aloud as a class a few times over, allowing different volunteers to read the lines to the class. After the class has heard the excerpt a few times, conduct a short discussion about what they think it means. Use some or all of the following questions as a guide:
 - Who do you imagine the speaker to be?
 - Not having read any of the rest of the poem, what do you imagine the poem might be about?
 - When the speaker says, “Listener up there!” - who is he speaking to?
 - The line, “I contradict myself, I am large, I contain multitudes” is one of the most famous lines that Walt Whitman ever wrote. Aside from the context of the poem, what does this line say about “the self”?
 - How do these lines align with your own understanding of your “self?” How do you contradict yourself? Do you, as a person in the world (school, friends, family, alone) contain multitudes? Explain.
 10. Instruct the students to complete the writing assignment on the handout for homework.

STUDENT HANDOUT

WALT WHITMAN'S SONG OF MYSELF

Directions: Read and annotate the following excerpt from the poem *Song of Myself* by Walt Whitman. Then, write a short analysis of this poem as it relates to the first 15 minutes of the film *College Behind Bars*. Use the questions below to guide your analysis.

51.

The past and present wilt—I have fill'd them, emptied them,
And proceed to fill my next fold of the future.
Listener up there! What have you to confide to me?
Look in my face while I snuff the sidle of evening,
(Talk honestly, no one else hears you, and I stay only a minute longer.)
Do I contradict myself?
Very well then I contradict myself,
(I am large, I contain multitudes.)

Use some or all of the following questions to guide your analysis of this poem:

- Who is the speaker in this poem? Who is the "Listener?"
- How is the relationship between time, space, and the self explored in these lines?
- What can you discern from the speaker's environment from these lines?
- What can we infer about the self when the speaker says, "I contain multitudes"?
- How does the exploration of "the self" in this poem relate to the self-exploration that the men in *College Behind Bars* are experiencing?
- How do the students in *College Behind Bars* relate to their past, present, and future? What does time and the passage of time mean to them? What does it mean to the speaker in the poem?
- How do the students in the film "contain multitudes?"
- How do the students in the film relate to their environment – before they were incarcerated and now that they are in prison? How does their environment shape their sense of self?
- How do they create an environment for themselves in prison that supports their sense of self?

CLASSROOM LESSON 2

Episode 1: Access to Education as a Basic Human Right

Lesson Preparation

- Prepare a monitor, internet access to the film *College Behind Bars*, cued to the first episode, timecode 18:15 – 40:19
- Copy and cut *Student Handout: UN Declaration of Human rights (UNDHR) Small Groups Activity*
- Prepare copies of *Student Handouts* for distribution

Requirements

Materials:

- Whiteboard and markers, chalkboard and chalk, or chart paper and markers
- Monitor/projector, computer with internet access, or downloaded file of the documentary, *College Behind Bars*
- Notebook paper
- Individual slips of paper from the *Student Handout: UN Declaration of Human Rights Small Group Activity* – copy and cut prior to class

Time:

- 2 class periods

Techniques and Skills

Vocabulary building, reading comprehension, large group discussion, small group work, problem solving, critical and analytical thinking, supporting ideas with examples, comparing and contrasting information sources, research, textual analysis, media literacy, listening skills, expository, creative, and responsive writing.

Curriculum Connections

This lesson aligns well with coursework in social studies, civics, sociology, American history, and global studies classes, among others.

CLASSROOM LESSON 2 (CONT.)

Procedures

1. Tell the class that in 1948, all the nations in the United Nations passed a document called the UN Declaration of Human Rights. It was drafted as a reaction to World War II and the Holocaust, and in it, the governments of all the nations agreed on 30 basic human rights: rights that each person on the planet is entitled to, regardless of age, gender, socio-economic status, citizen status, or nationality.
2. Ask the class: "What do you think some of the rights that the UN chose as the 30 basic human rights were?" Allow volunteers to call out responses. Chart responses on the board or on chart paper.
3. Ask the class: "Why did you think of those specific human rights? Why do you think every human being should have those rights? Why are those rights important for all humans?"
4. Distribute the slips of paper from *Student Handout: UN Declaration of Human Rights – Small Group Activity*. Give each student one slip of paper. Explain that each person in class received an abbreviated version of one of the Articles from the UNDHR.
5. Allow time for the students to read their Article and write about it in their notebook for 5 minutes. Their writing should include: their interpretation of the meaning of the Article, why they think it was included in the UNDHR, and an example from history or current events that illustrates the meaning of the Article: either a time when that right was threatened or violated, or a time when it was held up, or proven necessary.
6. Once students have had a chance to reflect on and write about their assigned Article, arrange them in small groups of 4 - 6 students.
7. Allow 10 minutes for students to work in their small groups. Each student should read their Article to their group, and explain the meaning of their article and why they think it is included in the basic 30 of the UNDHR. Once every student has shared their Article, reconvene as a whole group.
8. Conduct a short, whole group discussion, using all or some of the following questions as a guide:
 - What did you learn about the UNDHR from this activity?
 - How did you feel about the Article you received being included in the 30 basic human rights as defined by the United Nations? Explain.

CLASSROOM LESSON 2 (CONT.)

- Why is a document like the UNDHR important?
 - Why is it important that citizens have basic human rights, such as the right to freedom from slavery, the right to employment, and the right to education?
 - Imagine that a citizen does not have the right to employment. What might happen to that person as a result of not being able to work or earn a living?
 - Imagine that a citizen does not have the right to an education. What might happen to that person as a result of not being able to learn?
 - Look at the Article on your slip of paper. What other rights and freedoms are related to your Article? How does the right or freedom on your slip of paper ensure access to other freedoms?
9. Tell the class that they are going to see an excerpt from a film called *College Behind Bars* that follows a group of people who are attending college while they are incarcerated as part of a program called the Bard Prison Initiative. Explain that the film explores many themes – among them, the importance of the right to an education. The clip examines some of the ramifications that can occur when an individual is denied that basic human right, and the successes when given access to it.
10. Distribute *Student Handout: Graphic Organizer*. Instruct students to take notes on the handout as they watch. They should pay special attention to details that show how equal access to an education can impact an individual (positively, when one has access, and negatively, when one is denied access), and how access to an education relates to other human rights.
11. Play the clip of *College Behind Bars* from the first episode; timecode 18:15 – 40:19. Remind students to take notes in their graphic organizer while they watch.
- Note:* In this clip, we see a new class of students starting their BPI journey, and being encouraged to interact in brand new ways with challenging content.
12. After the class has viewed the clip, conduct a short discussion using some or all of the following questions as a guide:
- Why does Brian think that getting into BPI will change his life? Why does he feel like he “needs” to be accepted into the program?

CLASSROOM LESSON 2 (CONT.)

- What is the importance of the students knowing that school is a full time, long term commitment?
- Why is it important that the school judge each student as a student, not as a prisoner?
- What was Shawnta's attitude about education growing up?
- What is the importance of the students learning about what makes a "satisfying life?"
- Why is it challenging for the students when their instructors ask them to give their own opinions?
- Why do the students need to be brave when they start school?
- When the professor states, "the world we are inhabiting just expanded a great deal", she is speaking about the literature they are reading – but she's also speaking about her students in a way. How is this so?
- Once they have started school, how does the students' definition of meaningful work change?
- How do the students describe their attitudes and behaviors when they did not have access to BPI? Why is their behavior different once they have access to an educational program?
- How do the people in this clip relate access to education to mental health, and hope?
- When the students talk about their life before BPI, what was their attitude towards education? Did they view it as an important right? Why or why not?
- Based on the experiences communicated in the clip, how are communities impacted when individuals do not have access to a quality education?
- Based on the experiences communicated in the clip, how does educational access relate to citizenship and civic involvement and responsibility? How might this relationship play out in communities that are traditionally underserved or underrepresented?
- What does the student in the clip mean when he says, "this is not the norm." Why is it not the norm?

CLASSROOM LESSON 2 (CONT.)

- How did educational access for people who are incarcerated become a political issue rather than a human rights issue? How did this affect access to education for incarcerated individuals?
 - How is education a theme for these students – as a reason they ended up in prison, a way to make the most of their prison term, and as a role in their success once they are released?
 - Are the politicians in this clip viewing education as a basic human right? Explain.
 - What is the tension between the lack of education in prisons and the name of the department – “corrections?”
13. For homework, students should research the sociological impact of quality education on individuals and communities over the years. Generally speaking, how do communities fare when their young people have access to a free, quality education? How are other sociological signifiers affected, such as average income, crime statistics, etc? Consider what they know anecdotally, and from watching the clip from *College Behind Bars* as well. Students should use their preliminary research, their notes from class, and their own observations to write a one-page research reflection that answers the following question:

How does access to a quality education have the power to change the course of a person’s life – and in turn the future of a community as a whole?

STUDENT HANDOUT

UN DECLARATION OF HUMAN RIGHTS SMALL GROUP ACTIVITY

Directions for the teacher: Prior to class, make a copy of this handout and cut along the dotted lines so that each Article is its own slip of paper to be used in the activity as a handout.

Article 1: Everyone deserves the right to their own thoughts and ideas.

Article 2: The rights in the UDHR belong to every human.

Article 3: We all have the right to life, and to live in freedom and safety.

Article 4: Everyone deserves the right to freedom from slavery.

Article 5: Everyone deserves the right to freedom from torture.

Article 6: Everyone deserves the right to legal protection.

Article 7: The law is the same for everyone, and must treat us all equally.

Article 8: Everyone deserves the right to legal support if we are treated unfairly.

Article 9: Everyone deserves the right to freedom from unlawful imprisonment.

Article 10: Everyone deserves the right to a fair, public, independent trial.

Article 11: Everyone deserves the right to be presumed innocent if they commit a crime.

Article 12: Everyone deserves the right to freedom from intrusion: no one can enter our home, open our mail, or intrude on our families without good reason.

Article 13: Everyone deserves the right to move freely within their country, and to visit and leave other countries when they wish.

Article 14: If we are at risk of harm we have the right to go to another country to seek protection.

Article 15: Everyone deserves the right to be a citizen of a country.

Article 16: Everyone deserves the right to marry and have a family if they want, as soon as they are of legal age.

STUDENT HANDOUT P.2

UN DECLARATION OF HUMAN RIGHTS SMALL GROUP ACTIVITY

Article 17: Everyone has the right to own property, and no one has the right to take this away without a fair reason.

Article 18: Everyone has the freedom to think or believe what they want, including the right to religious belief.

Article 19: Everyone has the right to their own opinions, and to be able to express them freely.

Article 20: Everyone has the right to form groups and organize peaceful meetings.

Article 21: Everyone has the right to take part in their country's political process.

Article 22: Everyone deserves the right to access work, involvement in cultural activity, and the right to social welfare.

Article 23: Everyone deserves the right to employment and to be paid fair, equal pay, without discrimination.

Article 24: Everyone has the right to rest. There should be limits on working hours.

Article 25: Everyone has the right to enough food, clothing, housing and healthcare for ourselves and our families.

Article 26: Everyone has the right to education.

Article 27: Everyone has the right to get involved in their community's arts, music, literature and sciences, and the benefits they bring.

Article 28: We all have the right to live in a peaceful and orderly society.

Article 29: Everyone deserves the right to live in a society that guarantees human rights and allows everyone to enjoy the same mutual respect.

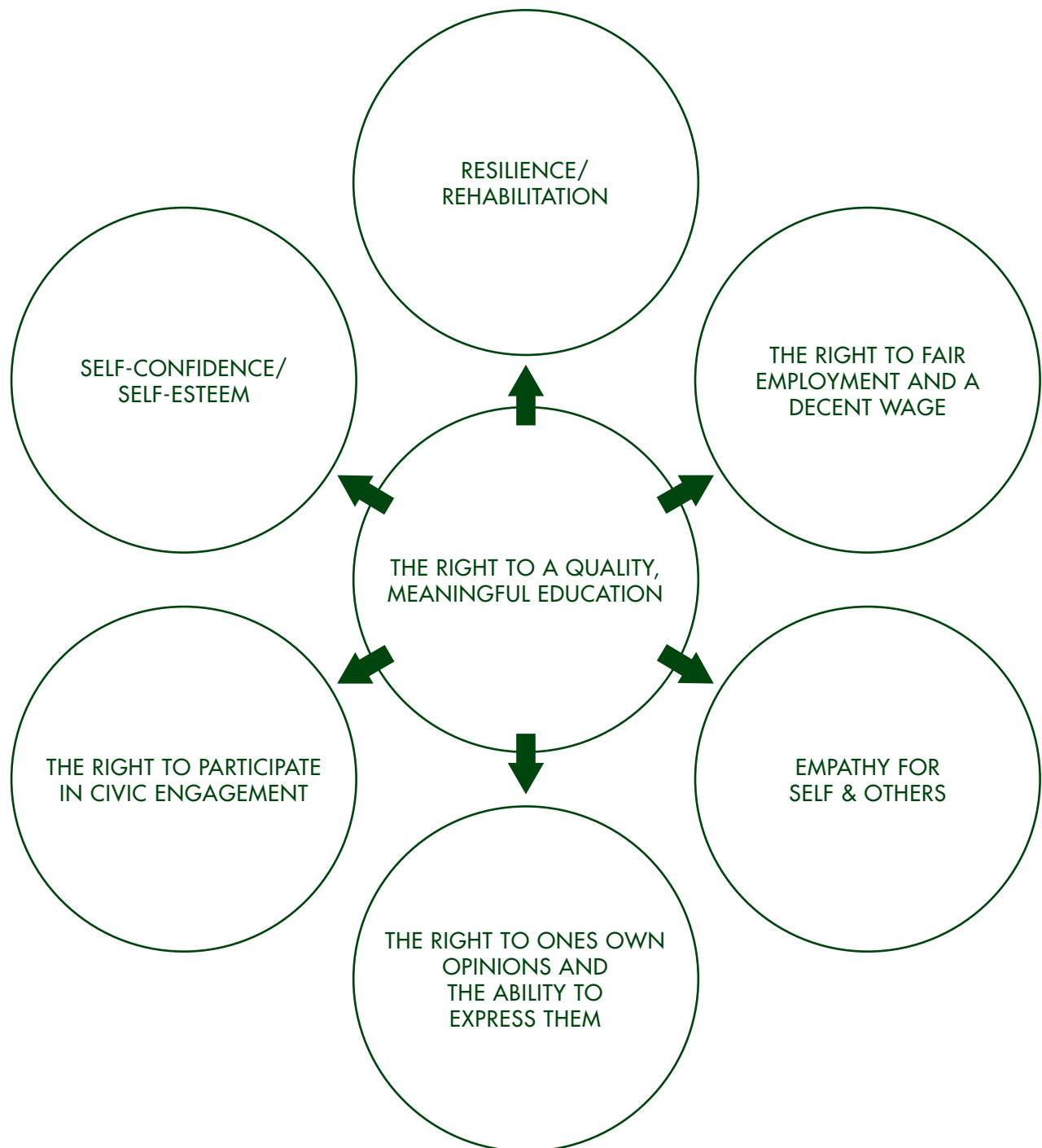
Article 30: No government, group or individual should act in a way that would destroy the rights and freedoms of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

STUDENT HANDOUT



GRAPHIC ORGANIZER

Directions: As you watch the clip from *College Behind Bars*, take notes in each bubble on moments in the film, quotes, people, or your own thoughts and reactions that relate to the topic within the bubble. Consider how access to the basic human right of an education has a lasting impact on the students, as well as on all of the other people in their lives, and how it relates to accessing other basic human rights.



CLASSROOM LESSON 3

Episode 2: Personal Narrative through the Lens of the Tragic Hero

Lesson Preparation

- Prepare a monitor, internet access to the film *College Behind Bars*, cued to the second episode, timecode 17:26 – 47:24
- Prepare copies of *Student Handouts* for distribution

Requirements

Materials:

- Whiteboard and markers, chalkboard and chalk, or chart paper and markers
- Monitor/ projector, computer with internet access, or downloaded file of the documentary, *College Behind Bars*
- Notebook paper, pens
- Class sets of *Student Handouts*

Time:

- 2 class periods

Techniques and Skills

Vocabulary building, reading comprehension, large group discussion, small group work, problem solving, critical and analytical thinking, supporting ideas with examples, comparing and contrasting information sources, literary analysis, media literacy, listening skills, expository, creative, and responsive writing.

Curriculum Connections

This lesson aligns well with coursework in literature, English, language arts, media arts, film education, creative writing, and media literacy classes, among others.

CLASSROOM LESSON 3 (CONT.)

Procedures

1. Write the following terms on the chalkboard, white board, smart board, or chart paper:
 - Hubris – Excessive pride
 - Hamartia – Tragic bad judgement
 - Peripeteia – Fall from grace because of bad choices
 - Anagnorisis – Realization/ amends
 - Nemesis – Unavoidable consequence
 - Catharsis – Empathetic likability
2. Explain that these are Greek terms that were developed by Aristotle, who used these terms to define the general characteristics of a tragic hero. Tell them: a tragic hero is a character or person who exhibits all or almost all of these behaviors or traits. In other words, a tragic hero is someone who: exhibits excessive pride or an exaggerated sense of self; has tragic bad judgement; experiences terrible consequences because of this bad judgement; realizes their mistakes and tries to make up for them; continues to struggle with their pride and bad judgement; and is likeable and sympathetic in spite of their tragic flaws.
3. Discuss each of these characteristics with the class in the context of characters in books they've read, movies they've watched, or even people in real life. Elicit a list of characters from the class and chart them on the board all around the list of terms.

Note: Some examples of tragic heroes might be: Oedipus, Bill Clinton, Romeo Montague, Anakin Skywalker, Batman, Jay Gatsby, Odysseus, Holden Caulfield, Othello, and others.

4. Conduct a short, whole-class discussion about the concept of the tragic hero, using some or all of the following questions as a guide:
 - What makes these characters tragic? What makes them heroic?
 - How might it simply be human nature to have these negative characteristics, such as pride, bad judgement, and the rest? Does everyone have these traits to some degree?

CLASSROOM LESSON 3 (CONT.)

- In the journey of the tragic hero, what does the role of Anagnorisis, or the realization and making amends play? What characteristic in the hero's journey do you think is the most important, and why?
5. Distribute *Student Handout: Tragic Heroes*. Allow 5-10 minutes for students to complete the first two rows of the grid using characters of their choosing, and describing the traits that make them tragic heroes. Once students have had time to fill in the first two rows, allow time for a few volunteers to share their answers with the class as examples.
 6. Tell the class that they are going to see a clip from a film called *College Behind Bars*. This documentary follows a group of college students who are working towards a degree while incarcerated. In this clip, we learn a bit about each of the students, and their life pre-incarceration. We also see them analyzing classic texts through the lens of their own experiences.
 7. Explain that as they watch, students should use the handout as a "thought catcher". Students should consider each student in the film through the lens of a tragic hero, taking notes on the grid as they watch.
 8. Play the clip of *College Behind Bars* from the second episode; timecode 17:26 – 47:24.

Note: In this clip, we learn more about the lives of the students in the film, and we begin to understand the emotional journey they all had to embark upon, in order to be able to commit to their studies at BPI.

9. After the clip has ended, conduct a whole-group discussion on what they just watched, using some or all of the following questions as a guide:
 - What did you notice about the theme of multi-generational trauma in this clip? How do the students in the film relate their choices and experiences to the experiences of, and their relationship with, their parents and grandparents?
 - How do the students in the film relate to their pasts, their presents, and their futures?
 - What did you notice about the theme of pride and shame in this clip?
 - What examples of hubris (feelings of invincibility) did you notice in this clip? What examples of anagnorisis (realization/amends)? What examples of nemesis (negative consequences)?
 - How might the students' close analytical reading of *Moby Dick* through the lens of their own experience help them understand their own "tragic flaws"?

CLASSROOM LESSON 3 (CONT.)

- How is the theme of *The Odyssey* – the journey home – mirrored in the personal narratives of the students in this clip?
 - How does Giovannie communicate his own desire for anagnorisis (making amends) in this clip?
 - Did you experience “catharsis” – or empathy for the people depicted – while watching this clip? Why do you think this was the case? What was it about these students, or the choices of the filmmaker – that helped you feel sympathetically towards them?
 - How does the study of literature help us understand philosophy, political science, and world history? How does the study of philosophy, political science, and world history help us understand literature? How do all of these studies help us better understand ourselves and the human condition?
 - Have you ever conducted a close reading of a literary work through the lens of your own experience? What piece of literature? How did this kind of close, personal reading affect your appreciation and/ or comprehension of the text?
 - What struck you the most about Tamara’s story? John’s? Brian’s?
 - Is it characteristic of a tragic hero to have to learn life lessons, as James Kim says at the end of the clip, “the hard way?” Explain your thinking.
10. After the class has discussed the clip, divide the class into small groups or pairs. Once with their partners, students should “pair-share” the notes they took in their grid while watching. Allow time for students to share their observations with one another, and explain their reasoning. To help guide their conversations, write the following questions on the board:
- What did you notice about each student in the film, particularly as it relates to where they are in their “hero’s journey?”
 - Which student(s) in the film fit most easily into the archetype of “tragic hero?” Why do these people seem more easily matched with this archetype?
 - Which of the students in the film seem more tragic, which more heroic, and why?
11. Encourage students to add to their notes and expound on their observations based on their conversations with their peers.
12. For homework, instruct students to complete the Questions for Further Thinking on Page 2 of their handout.

STUDENT HANDOUT

TRAGIC HEROES

Directions: Choose 2 characters that you're familiar with from literature, film, or real life who you think qualify as a "tragic hero/ heroine." Fill out the top 2 lines with their names and information. Then, as you watch the clip from *College Behind Bars*, write down how each of the students featured in the clip fits the characteristics of a tragic hero. Take notes as you watch until the entire grid is filled in.

Name	Hubris Excessive pride	Hamartia Bad judgement	Peripeteia Self-inflicted downfall	Anagnorisis Self-reflection realization	Nemesis Unavoidable consequences	Catharsis Sympathetic nature
Sebastian						
Dyjuan						
Giovannie						
Brian						
Jule						
Tamara						
John						

STUDENT HANDOUT P.2

TRAGIC HEROES

QUESTIONS FOR FURTHER THINKING

1. Why do you think the students featured in the film *College Behind Bars* can (or cannot) be characterized as tragic heroes/ heroines? Explain.
2. How do you think the filmmakers used the classroom content in the film (e.g., *Othello*, *Moby Dick*, *King Lear*, *The Odyssey*) as a device to highlight the heroic struggles of the students? Explain how these works of literature might be seen as a reflection of the student journeys in the film.
3. How might these same works of literature serve to help the students in the film explore their own journeys of self-awareness? Consider how Sebastian reflects on his study of *Othello*, or how John reflects on his own journey home in the context of his reading of *The Odyssey*.
4. How might we all have some aspect of the tragic hero/ heroine within us? Use specific examples from your own life in your response.
5. How do these works of literature, as viewed in the context of the film, encourage the viewer to empathize with the students? In other words, by thinking about these students within the context of these larger works, how does the viewer's "catharsis" become heightened? Why is this an important function of the film?
6. Write a one-page expository essay exploring the interchangeability of personal narrative and literature in *College Behind Bars*. How did the filmmakers use literary analysis side by side with personal narrative to develop an empathetic viewer-response to the film? How does this "meta-dynamic" create a feeling of connectedness, empathy, and a heightened sense of humanity between the people depicted in the film and the audience, and how might that feeling potentially have an impact on the viewers' real-life attitudes and behaviors around criminal justice policy and reform, and justice-impacted people and communities moving forward?

CLASSROOM LESSON 4

Episode 3: The Unique Roles and Challenges of Women in the US

Lesson Preparation

- Prepare a monitor, internet access to the film *College Behind Bars*, cued to the third episode, timecode 24:50 - 40:24 and 47:51 - 55:27
- Prepare copies of *Student Handouts*

Requirements

Materials:

- Whiteboard and markers, chalkboard and chalk, or chart paper and markers
- Monitor/ projector, computer with internet access, or downloaded file of the documentary, *College Behind Bars*
- Notebook paper, pens
- Class sets of *Student Handouts*

Time:

- 3 class periods

Techniques and Skills

Vocabulary building, reading comprehension, large group discussion, small group work, problem solving, critical and analytical thinking, supporting ideas with examples, comparing and contrasting information sources, literary analysis, media literacy, listening skills, expository, creative, and responsive writing.

Curriculum Connections

This lesson aligns well with coursework in women's studies, gender studies, sociology, literature, English, language arts, media arts, film education, creative writing, and media literacy classes, among others.

CLASSROOM LESSON 4 (CONT.)

Procedures

1. Write the following quotation on the chalkboard, white board, smart board or on chart paper. Tell the class that they will have 10 minutes to free-write a personal response to the quotation in their notebooks or journals.

“Men have had every advantage of us in telling their own story. Education has been theirs in so much higher a degree; the pen has been in their hands. I will not allow books to prove anything.” – Jane Austen

2. Once the class has had time to write and reflect on this quote, tell them a bit about the author, if they do not already know.

Note: Jane Austen was a groundbreaking female writer who published in England, primarily in the early-1800's. She is famous for helping to define the Romantic/ Victorian era novel, establish the conventions of the modern novel, and make room for the female voice in popular fiction. In a time when writers were almost exclusively men, Jane Austen truly opened the door for subsequent female writers to find their place in the European literary canon.

4. With this information, allow 10 minutes for a whole group debrief. Ask the class to consider what Austen meant when she said of men that “the pen has been in their hands.” How could the phrase “I will not allow books to prove anything” be interpreted as an act of brave resistance?
5. Write the following terms on the board and ask the class to copy them into their notebooks:
 - 1) The intersectionality of race, class, and gender
 - 2) Patriarchy and male privilege
 - 3) Reproductive justice
 - 4) Violence against women
 - 5) Sexuality and queerness
 - 6) Mothers and daughters, motherhood, cross-generational trauma
6. Ask the class to count off by 6's. Tell students to jot down and remember their number.
7. Arrange the class in small groups so students of one number are all together (1's are in one group, 2's are in another, and so forth). Assign each group one of the topics on the board. Allow 15 minutes for the students to work together to come up with a working definition for their topic.

CLASSROOM LESSON 4 (CONT.)

8. Allow 10 minutes for small groups to report back to the class with a few main points from their conversation. Ask each group to share the topic they were assigned, a working definition, and one example of how that topic might manifest in the world.
9. Tell the class that they are going to watch 2 clips from a film called *College Behind Bars*. This documentary follows a group of college students who are working towards a degree while incarcerated. In this clip, we meet a group of women who are in class, and incarcerated, together. We learn a bit about each of the students, and their life pre-incarceration. We also see them interacting with each other, their professors, and their families.
10. As they watch, instruct students to look for moments that relate to their small group's topic, and they should jot down those moments and those connections in their notebooks as they notice them. Remind them to take clear notes as they'll be using them later in small groups.
11. Play 2 clips of *College Behind Bars* from the third episode; the first clip from timecode 24:51 – 40:24, and the second from 47:51 – 55:27.

Note: In these clips, viewers get to know the female students of BPI. We learn about their pre-incarceration lives and we see them interacting with their families.

12. Once both film clips have concluded, conduct a short, whole group debrief. Use some or all of the following questions as a guide:
 - The students in the film are discussing women writers, specifically Mary Shelley and Jane Austen. The professor says, “these writers show us things we otherwise could not see.” What do you think she means by this? In your experience, what do marginalized artists show us that we otherwise could not see?
 - How has education empowered these women?
 - What are some of the traditional female roles that the women in the film are struggling with? How are they keeping, or shedding, these roles? What impact does the keeping and/or shedding of the roles have on their beliefs about themselves, as well as their relationships with others?
 - What did you notice about Tamika, Tamara, and Shawnta's relationships with their mothers? How might these relationships have affected their development as women in the world? How might these relationships have affected the choices they made, pre-incarceration?

CLASSROOM LESSON 4 (CONT.)

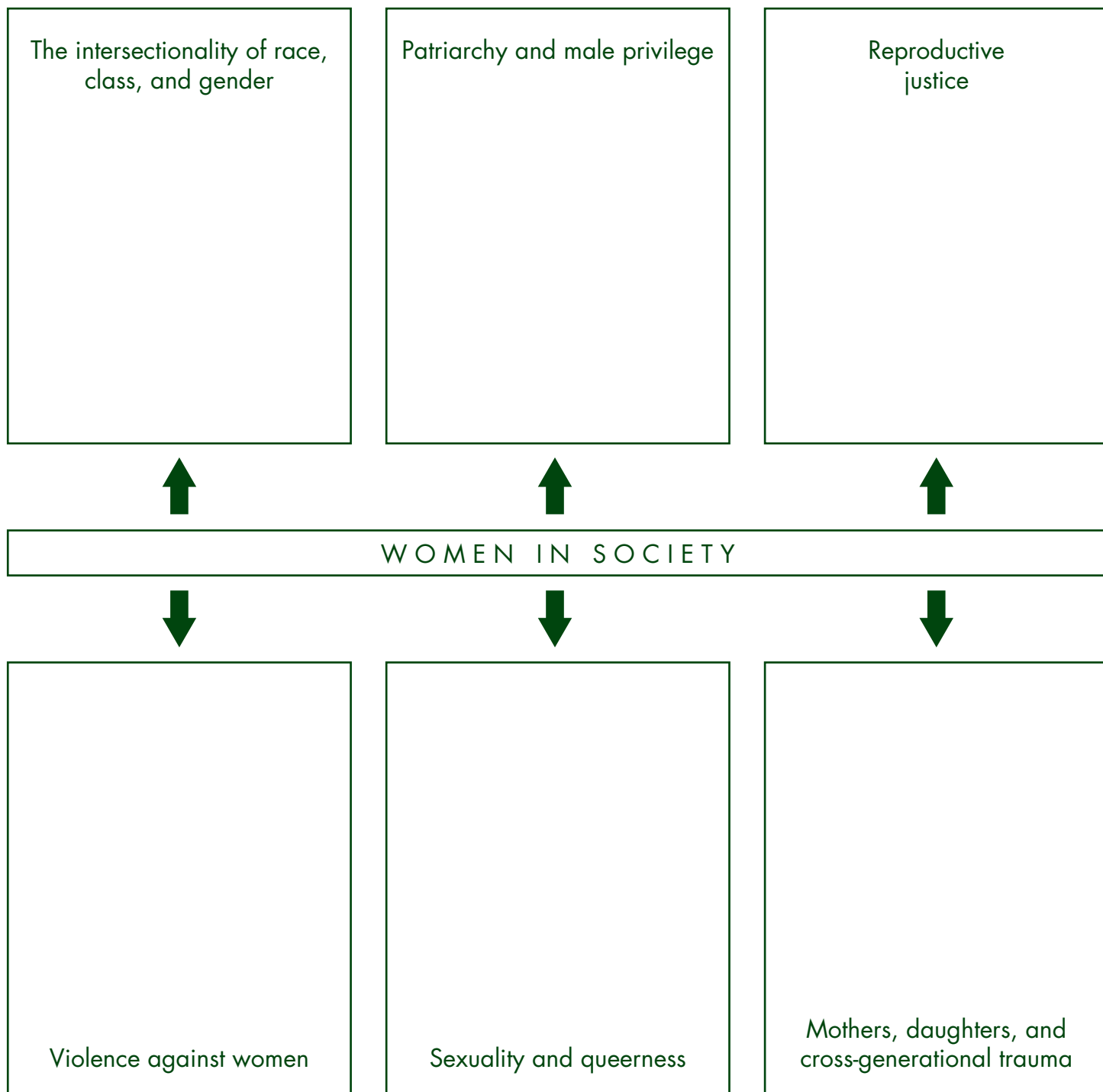
- Shawnta refers to the archetype of the “knight in shining armor.” What is this archetype, and how has it traditionally disempowered women?
 - Shawnta mentions that her parents were both “in and out of prison” and that she and her sisters started having kids really young. How does this relate to the disempowerment of women of color in our society?
 - What did you notice about the language that “B” used when he abused and controlled Shawnta? How did he manipulate traditional gender roles to his own benefit?
 - How does Rodney’s relationship with his sister speak to gender roles in the family?
 - What does it mean – to Shawnta and as a statement about the importance of equitable educational access – when Shawnta says “I am a woman of worth” ?
13. Instruct students to reconvene in their small groups and revisit their topics with the film clips they just viewed, and the class discussion they just had, in mind. What specific details did they notice as they viewed the clips through the lens of their assigned topic? How does their topic relate to the film clips and the women featured?
 14. After 5 minutes in their small groups, jigsaw the groups so that the class is now arranged in new small groups, each group comprised of one person from each of the “expert groups.” Each new group should consist of one member from the 1’s, one from the 2’s, one from the 3’s, one from the 4’s, and so forth.
 15. Once the class is arranged in these new groups, distribute a copy of *Student Handout: Unique Challenges for Women in US Society* to each student. Instruct students to take turns presenting to the members of their new group on their topic, and what their expert groups discussed in terms of how their topic relates to the film clips. As each student presents to their new small group, the other members should take notes on their handout, until everyone has comprehensive notes on the film, the topics, and how they relate personally to both the topics and the film clips. Allow 20 minutes for students to share in this way, and for everyone in the new, jigsawed groups to hear from each student from the “expert groups.”

STUDENT HANDOUT



UNIQUE CHALLENGES FOR WOMEN IN US SOCIETY

Directions: As each member of the group presents, take notes in the corresponding square. Add your own observations, thoughts, ideas, questions, and insights as well. Use these notes to inform your expository written response (page 2).



STUDENT HANDOUT P.2



UNIQUE CHALLENGES FOR WOMEN IN US SOCIETY

Directions: Based on the thinking graphed on page one of this handout, write an expository essay in response to the following prompt.

In the film *College Behind Bars*, one of the BPI students, Tamika Graham, recites a poem she wrote:

"I used to be a people pleaser until I realized I am who the people should be pleasing. I may be good enough for you, but never good enough for myself. Some may see a proud, strong, happy mother. I see a mother that has failed at my blessed title and all the subtitles, like nurturer, protector, provider. I won't always tell you what you want to hear, but I'll always tell you what you need to hear because I am a true friend indeed, but when it comes to me, I'll be honest about my bad and let you seek out my good because if I lose my good, I'll be no more good."

How does this poem, and the film clip it is excerpted from, speak to the unique challenges that women in society must grapple with on a daily basis?

CLASSROOM LESSON 5

Episode 4: The Power of the Spoken Word

Lesson Preparation

- Prepare a monitor, internet access to the film *College Behind Bars*, cued to the fourth episode, timecode 13:58 – 21:43 and 37:34 – 50:35
- Prepare copies of *Student Handouts* for distribution

Requirements

Materials:

- Whiteboard and markers, chalkboard and chalk, or chart paper and markers
- Monitor/ projector, computer with internet access, or downloaded file of the documentary, *College Behind Bars*
- Notebook paper, pens
- Class set of *Student Handouts*

Time:

- 2-3 class periods

Techniques and Skills

Vocabulary building, reading comprehension, large group discussion, working in pairs, problem solving, public speaking, oral arguments, critical and analytical thinking, supporting ideas with examples, comparing and contrasting information sources, literary analysis, media literacy, listening skills, expository, creative, and responsive writing.

Curriculum Connections

This lesson aligns well with coursework in Language Arts, Speech, Communications, Debate, sociology, media arts, film education, and media literacy classes, among others.

CLASSROOM LESSON 5 (CONT.)

Procedures

1. Tell the class that they are going to start class by viewing a clip from a film called *College Behind Bars*. This documentary follows a group of college students who are working towards a degree while incarcerated. In this clip, we watch the Bard Prison Initiative debate team face off against the debate team from Harvard.
2. Instruct students to pay close attention to the use of, and references to LANGUAGE in this clip. How is language used to promote growth, to label, to isolate, to connect? How is it used to communicate, and how does it get in the way of communication? How is language in this clip a reflection of culture? Of experience? Where do you notice spoken language? Written language? Tell the students to take notes on their observations in their notebooks or on notepaper as they notice them. Remind them to take clear notes as they'll be using them later.
3. Play the clip of *College Behind Bars* from the fourth episode; the first clip from timecode 13:58 – 25:04.

Note: In these clips, viewers see the BPI debate team in action. We see them preparing for a big debate against Harvard, and winning.

4. Once the film clip has concluded, conduct a short, whole group discussion about what they just viewed, using some or all of the following questions as a guide:
 - At the beginning of the clip, Rodney said that having to defend their motion was a handicap. Why do you think he felt that way?
 - How did the BPI team use language as a “weapon” in this debate?
 - What did you notice about the language that the BPI students used – the words they used – during the debate? What about the Harvard students? Were there any words used that surprised you? Why did you react this way?
 - After BPI wins, there is a montage of news clips and headlines about their win. In almost every headline, “Harvard” is presented as one team while “prison” is presented as the other – not Bard College or BPI – just “prison” or “prison inmates,” or “prisoners.” Why is this relevant? What messaging does this language convey?
 - Why is winning this debate more powerful than if they had won a soccer match or a chess tournament? How does this question relate to the observation posted on twitter (and shared in the montage) “never confuse intelligence with education”?

CLASSROOM LESSON 5 (CONT.)

- At the end of the clip, Dyjuan muses about what his life would have been like if he had been able to articulate himself the way the Harvard students did at their age. How might the lives of underrepresented or justice impacted young people be different if they were taught to simply articulate themselves at an early age?
5. Tell the class that they will now watch another clip from *College Behind Bars* where language plays an important role.
 6. Instruct students to consider the new uses and applications of language in this clip, as compared to the first one.
 7. Play the second clip of *College Behind Bars* from the fourth episode; the from timecode 37:34 – 50:35.
 8. Once the film clip has concluded, conduct a short, whole group discussion about what they just viewed, using some or all of the following questions as a guide:
 - How is language used differently in this clip than in the debate clip? How does mastery of language empower the students in this clip?
 - What stuck out for you in this clip, when viewed through the lens of language?
 - What particular words – or use of particular words – struck you as particularly powerful or unique?
 - What emotions did you observe from the students before and after their presentations and/or speeches? How did they feel before and after speaking about their research and/ or personal experiences?
 - What is the importance of the oral defense for the students who have completed their senior projects? Why is the oral defense a unique challenge, separate from the research and writing?
 - Consider Sebastian’s relationship to language – both his mother tongue (Korean) and his adopted language of English. How might these two languages shape his experience? How might his relationship to these two languages have informed his senior project?
 - In considering the speeches you heard in this clip, as well as the senior project presentations, how did the students use their education to speak about their own experiences? About their hopes, aspirations, histories, and cultures?
 - Do you think they would have been able to communicate in this way prior to their education? Why or why not?

CLASSROOM LESSON 5 (CONT.)

- Shawnta describes “home” in her graduation speech not as a place – but as a concept. How do you think her understanding of this concept has changed as her relationship to language has changed?
9. Divide the class into pairs. Distribute 2 copies of *Student Handout: The Language Debate* to each pair (1 per student).
 10. Allow 15 minutes for students to work in pairs to discuss both sides of the argument presented on their handout.
 11. Explain that they will be participating in a class debate, and therefore, as they defend or refute each side of the argument with their partner, they should take careful notes on the back side of the handout, or in their notebooks or on notebook paper.
 12. While students are working in pairs, label one side of the room “FOR” by writing it on one side of the board, or taping a sign on the wall. Label the other side of the room “AGAINST” in a similar manner.
 13. Once the students have had ample time to explore both sides of the language debate, instruct everyone to stand up.
 14. Explain that they will be participating in an informal debate. Divide the pairs so that one person is on the “FOR” side of the room and the other is on the “AGAINST.” In this way, half of the class is on the “for” side, and half is on the “against.”
 15. Tell the class that volunteers from both sides will have an opportunity to argue their side. As the rest of the class listens, they should stand on the side that they agree with. As students argue, the rest of the class can move back and forth from one side to another, based on the strength of the current argument.
 16. Flip a coin to decide which side goes first. Ask for a volunteer to begin. The volunteer should stand in the front of the room and argue their side. As they argue, the rest of the class may move to their side, stay where they are, or, if they aren’t sure what they think, they can stand in the middle of the room.
 17. After 1-2 minutes, ask for a volunteer from the other side. Again, encourage students to move about the room as their opinions change.
 18. Repeat this a number of times, until the movement has stopped or the students have exhausted their arguments.

CLASSROOM LESSON 5 (CONT.)



19. After the debate, students should return to their seats and debrief on the experience. Use some or all of the following questions as a guide:
- How did it feel using language as a tool?
 - How did their opinions change with the different debaters?
 - How do they better appreciate the clip about the debate team after participating in this activity?
 - What is their opinion on the relationship between language and experience after participating in this debate?
 - What did they learn about language from this activity?
20. For homework, students should write a 1-2 page personal response to the following quote. As they write, ask them to consider how learning the skill of language – owning their words and gaining the ability to eloquently share their thoughts and experiences – inherently changed the students in the film, and how their personal relationship to language shapes the ways they experience and interact with the world.

“Without language... one cannot share their hopes and aspirations, grasp their history, appreciate their poetry, or savor their songs.”
- Nelson Mandela



STUDENT HANDOUT

THE LANGUAGE DEBATE

Directions: In pairs, develop support statements for both sides of the linguistic determination motion. Write out your notes on the back of this paper in preparation for an informal class debate.

MOTION:

Linguistic determinism is real. Language and its structures limit human knowledge, comprehension, experience, perception, and thought.

FOR:

Language defines experience. Without the language to describe it, a person cannot truly experience something. For example, in Russian, there are two words for different shades of blue. Russian-speakers are faster at discriminating between the shades than are English-speakers. In English, we don't have a word for the subtle difference in hue, and therefore, we can't see it. Language is a lens through which we experience the world and we see the world through the perspective that our language enforces.

AGAINST:

Experience defines language. It is said that the Inuit people have thousands of words for "snow." As the indigenous peoples who have traditionally inhabited the farthest northern regions, over generations they have experienced so many different kinds of snow, that their language has adapted to accommodate their observations. Life happens, the world as we see it exists, and we develop language to communicate these observations and experiences.

EXTENSION ACTIVITIES/ PROJECT PROMPTS

The following prompts can be assigned as a culminating assessment, for extra credit, to provide a “deeper dive” as a unit extension, or as a longer term, small group project.

- Write a carefully researched 3-5 page paper on the history of formal, classroom education in America. When did public education for all citizens become policy? How did access to a good, public education – and the ideas of underrepresented schools – become a political issue? Why do some children in this country get a free, quality education while others are forced into failing, crowded schools? How is this an economic and racial issue, as well as a political one? What solutions have been offered, and what solutions would you suggest for this ongoing problem? In the context of this research, consider what your education means to you? Is it a responsibility? A chore? A gift? A privilege? How has your own life experience shaped your attitude about education?
- Motherhood is not just a biological concept but is also a societal concept, and one which, as a purely female experience, has historically been used in patriarchal societies to control women. Consider motherhood through this lens. Think about how motherhood affects women in the United States in terms of their access to medical care, economic support, earning potential, education, freedom of movement, independence, and more. Consider the mothers and children we see in *College Behind Bars*. How do the choices – or lack of choice – for the mothers affect their children? How do we see the mothers and children in the film struggling with this reality? We hear them share their definitions of motherhood (“to nurture, protect, and provide”) - how have the mothers’ behavior has measured up against that definition? How does the theme of motherhood uniquely affect women who are experiencing incarceration? How does this impact their experience of re-entry?
- Many of the conversations in these clips explore the relationship between a patriarchal society and the women who are featured in the film – from the very personal experience of domestic violence, to the systemic issues of inequity and access in a women’s prison vs. a men’s prison. How does patriarchy affect women in society, and how can education undermine or enforce its impact?
- Research the Sapir-Whorf hypothesis, which argues that individuals experience the world based on the structure of the language they habitually use. How does language shape the way we experience the world? Consider the language that permeates our national debate regarding criminal justice reform: prisoner, felon, convict, corrections, reform, rehabilitation, justice. Do these words accurately reflect the things they signify? As a country, are our perceptions of justice-impacted people and communities affected by the language we use? After you complete your research and develop your own hypothesis, present your findings and your opinions to the class in an oral report.

EXTENSION ACTIVITIES/ PROJECT PROMPTS (CONT.)

- Many of the students featured in *College Behind Bars* have collages on their walls that represent their lives pre-incarceration; the people, places, and ideas they want to remember and preserve; and their hopes, dreams, and aspirations for their lives after they are released. Create your own vision board: a collage or visual representation of all the things you care about in the world. If you were to create a board that represents everything you value, what would be pictured there? What do these pictures say about your values and your world view? Create the board with photos, images, drawings. Be as creative as you can! Then, on the back of the board, explain what each image symbolizes and why you included it.
- Consider the impact of family: what it means to an individual, how it has evolved as a social construct – from the earliest times to now. What role does “family” have in the natural world and the animal kingdom? In society, how does a family affect – for better or worse – all of its members? How has “family” changed in recent history? What is the “nuclear family?” Think about your own family. What does your family expect of its members? What does your family expect when it comes to education? Politics? What does it mean to belong? Present your findings in a report, a presentation, or a personal essay – combining your sociological research and your own personal reflections to present a holistic statement about the history and impact of family.
- Persistence vs Frustration – Growth vs. Stagnation. Write about one (or both) of these psychological conflicts. How do the two seemingly contradictory things work together? How do these conflicts relate to your own life experience? Share a time when you have dealt with one or both of these conflicts and how you resolved it.
- Consider the invisible, systemic limitations and inequalities that exist in American society. **Labels:** Society places people in categories. Sometimes these categories can hold us back. List some of the categories that you think society uses to contain or label people. **Systems:** How do systems in our society work against portions of our population? Think about the systems that you or your family members might come into contact with: immigration, education, criminal justice, medical, social programs. How do these systems help and hurt various members of our population? **Access:** How does access shape a person’s experience? What are some of the inequalities in access that you notice in our culture? How can access change a person’s life? Connect these questions to the people, places, and systems represented in *College Behind Bars*. Connect them to your own experience. Present your findings in a 5 page, research based, expository essay.

TAKE ACTION

This section provides a few specific, hands-on ways to get involved in the issues that are explored in the film *College Behind Bars*. The following activities can be assigned as a culminating class project, or simply shared with students who are eager to take their learning and apply it to the world around them, in order to make a difference.

Organize a Book Drive.

Host a book drive at your school to collect books for a school or community center in an underserved part of your community. Share the purpose of your book drive and remind people to donate by creating posters and flyers. Set up book collection boxes around your school, with signs explaining who the books are for. On the day of the drive, organize an information and collection table in the lobby of your school, where you can share information about educational access for everyone in your community, and you can collect books from students wishing to donate.

Be a PSA.

Design an awareness campaign about one of the issues you explored in your study of *College Behind Bars*: criminal justice reform, educational access in underserved communities, higher education for incarcerated individuals, women's issues, and more. Design a logo, a "tagline," and a call to action. Create posters, flyers, informational handouts to share at school. Write a PSA that can be delivered in morning announcements or included on the school's closed captioned TV station. Help your peers understand the issues you've been exploring, and make sure to share at least one way they can get involved.

Host a Backpack Drive.

We heard from the students in *College Behind Bars* about their educational experiences prior to incarceration. So many of the students, once they were given access to a meaningful education, were able to make connections between how their sub-par elementary and high school education added to their feelings of being disenfranchised as a student and, eventually, a citizen. Help support an underserved school, or a student with an incarcerated parent, by holding a "backpack drive" at your school. Collect new or gently used backpacks and fill them up with school supplies: pencils, paper, notebooks, pens. Stick a note inside each backpack with words of encouragement for students who might need to hear them. Donate the backpacks to a local organization working with underrepresented schools, or to an organization that supports justice impacted students.

TAKE ACTION (CONT.)

Raise Money.

Hold a fundraiser at your school and donate the funds raised to an organization that's doing work in one of the issue areas that *College Behind Bars* explores. Then, decide what your fundraiser will be. You can hold a bake sale, or sell pens or pencils at a small profit. You could even combine an awareness campaign and a fundraiser – for example, for every dollar donated, the student's name is written on a small certificate and posted on a "Justice Wall" so other students can see that they supported. Choose one from the organizations listed in our Additional Resources section – or find one on your own – and identify one program of theirs that you want to support. Then, send in your collection so that they can continue making meaningful differences in the lives of individuals and families who are justice impacted. Make sure when you send in the donation, you let them know that it was collected by and from a school community!

Use Your Voice.

One of the best ways we can effect change is by using our voices to bring attention to, and raise awareness about, the issues that are important to us. Find a way to speak up and speak out that is meaningful to you: join a local march or demonstration. You can search for events in your area online or go to <https://www.rallylist.com/> to find an event near you. Find your local representative at <https://www.house.gov/representatives/find-your-representative> and take a few minutes to write a letter, an email, or even a text to share your thoughts on issues surrounding access and representation. Organize a letter writing campaign at your school so that other students can also reach out to your local Congresspeople. Or, go to [change.org](https://www.change.org) to sign an existing petition, or start your own. Collect enough signatures and you could make a real difference!

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

The following is a list of organizations that are doing important work on the issues that *College Behind Bars* explores, including, but not limited to: educational access, support for justice impacted individuals, families and communities, and criminal justice reform.

A New Way of Life (CA) – <http://anewwayoflife.org/>

American Civil Liberties Union – ACLU (National) – <https://www.aclu.org/>

All Of Us Or None (National) – <https://www.prisonerswithchildren.org>

Brennan Center for Justice (NY) – <https://www.brennancenter.org/>

Center for American Progress (DC) – <https://www.americanprogress.org/>

College and Community Fellowship (NY) – <https://www.collegeandcommunity.org/>

Communities in Schools – <https://www.communitiesinschools.org/>

Critical Resistance (CA) – <http://criticalresistance.org/>

Education Justice Project – <http://bit.ly/EJP-DirectoryOfPrisonHigherEdPrograms>

Ella Baker Center (CA) – <https://ellabakercenter.org/>

Families Against Mandatory Minimums (National) – <https://famm.org/>

Free Minds Book Club (DC) – <https://freemindsbookclub.org/>

Just Leadership USA (National) – <https://jlusha.org/>

Justice Mapping Center (National) – <https://www.justicemapping.org/>

Justice Policy Institute (National) – <http://www.justicepolicy.org/>

Prison Fellowship – <https://www.prisonfellowship.org/>

Prison Policy Initiative (National) – <https://www.prisonpolicy.org/>

Sentencing Project (National) – <https://www.sentencingproject.org/>

The Petey Greene Program – <https://www.peteygreene.org/>

The Real Cost of Prisons Project (National) – <http://www.realcostofprisons.org/>

Vera Institute of Justice (National) – <https://www.vera.org/>

STANDARDS ALIGNMENTS

The following is a sample list of standards that illustrate how the educational use of *College Behind Bars* and the content in this Guide supports standards-based instruction.

Content Area Standards (McRel)

Social Studies: World History

- Standard 44 Understands the search for community, stability, and peace in an interdependent world
- 44.5 Understands the role of political ideology, religion, and ethnicity in shaping modern governments

Social Studies: Civics

- Standard 9 Understands the importance of Americans sharing and supporting certain values, beliefs, and principles of American constitutional democracy
 - 9.1 Understands how the institutions of government reflect fundamental values and principles
 - 9.2 Understands the interdependence among certain values and principles
 - 9.3 Understands the significance of fundamental values and principles for the individual and society
- Standard 10 Understands the roles of voluntarism and organized groups in American social and political life
 - 10.5 Understands issues that arise regarding what responsibilities belong to individuals and groups and the private sector, what responsibilities belong to the government, and how these responsibilities should be shared by the private sector and the government
 - 10.6 Knows the historical and contemporary role of various organized groups in local, state, and national politics

Language Arts: Writing

- Standard 1 Uses the general skills and strategies of the writing process
 - 1.5 Uses strategies to address writing to different audiences
 - 1.6 Uses strategies to adapt writing for different purposes
 - 1.7 Writes expository compositions

STANDARDS ALIGNMENTS (CONT.)

- 1.8 Writes fictional, biographical, autobiographical, and observational narrative compositions
- 1.9 Writes compositions employing persuasion
- 1.10 Writes descriptive compositions
- 1.11 Writes reflective compositions
- 1.12 Writes in response to literature

Language Arts: Viewing and Media

- Standard 9 Uses viewing skills and strategies to understand and interpret visual media
 - 9.1 Uses a range of strategies to interpret visual media
 - 9.2 Uses a variety of criteria to evaluate informational media
 - 9.3 Understands the conventions of visual media genres
 - 9.7 Understands how images and sound convey messages in visual media
 - 9.8 Understands effects of style and language choice in visual media
 - 9.9 Understands how literary forms can be represented in visual narratives
- Standard 4 Gathers and uses information for research purposes
 - 4.2 Uses a variety of print and electronic sources to gather information for research topics
 - 4.3 Uses a variety of primary sources to gather information for research topics
 - 4.4 Uses a variety of criteria to evaluate the validity, reliability, and usefulness of primary and secondary source information
 - 4.5 Synthesizes information from multiple sources to draw conclusions that go beyond those found in any of the individual sources

STANDARDS ALIGNMENTS (CONT.)

Common Core and C3 Standards

- **CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RI.9-10.4**
Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, including figurative, connotative, and technical meanings; analyze the cumulative impact of specific word choices on meaning and tone (e.g., how the language of a court opinion differs from that of a newspaper).
- **CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.11-12.2**
Write informative/explanatory texts to examine and convey complex ideas, concepts, and information clearly and accurately through the effective selection, organization, and analysis of content.
- **CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.9-10.2**
Determine the central ideas or information of a primary or secondary source; provide an accurate summary of how key events or ideas develop over the course of the text.
- **CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.9-10.2**
Determine the central ideas or information of a primary or secondary source; provide an accurate summary of how key events or ideas develop over the course of the text.
- **CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.11-12.7**
Integrate and evaluate multiple sources of information presented in diverse formats and media (e.g., visually, quantitatively, as well as in words) in order to address a question or solve a problem.
- **CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.9-10.4**
Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, including vocabulary describing political, social, or economic aspects of history/social science.
- **CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.11-12.1.B**
Work with peers to promote civil, democratic discussions and decision-making, set clear goals and deadlines, and establish individual roles as needed.
- **CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.11-12.1**
Propel conversations by posing and responding to questions that probe reasoning and evidence; ensure a hearing for a full range of positions on a topic or issue; clarify, verify, or challenge ideas and conclusions; and promote divergent and creative perspectives.
- **CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.11-12.2**
Write informative/explanatory texts to examine and convey complex ideas, concepts, and information clearly and accurately through the effective selection, organization, and analysis of content.

STANDARDS ALIGNMENTS (CONT.)

- CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.9-10.2
Determine the central ideas or information of a primary or secondary source; provide an accurate summary of how key events or ideas develop over the course of the text.
- CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.11-12.7
Integrate and evaluate multiple sources of information presented in diverse formats and media (e.g., visually, quantitatively, as well as in words) in order to address a question or solve a problem.

Media Arts/ Media Literacy Standards

- MA:Re7.1.IIa
Analyze and synthesize the qualities and relationships of the components in a variety of media artworks, and feedback on how they impact audience.
- MA:Re7.1.IIb
Analyze how a broad range of media artworks manage audience experience, create intention and persuasion through multimodal perception.
- MA:Re8.1.II
Analyze the intent, meanings, and influence of a variety of media artworks, based on personal, societal, historical, and cultural contexts.
- MA:Re9.1.8
Evaluate media art works and production processes with developed criteria, considering context and artistic goals.

ABOUT THE TEAM

ABOUT THE FILMMAKERS

College Behind Bars is a production of Skiff Mountain Films and WETA, Washington D.C. In association with Florentine Films. It is directed and produced by Lynn Novick; produced by Sarah Botstein; and executive produced by Ken Burns. Edited by Tricia Reidy, ACE produced by Salimah El-Amin & Mariah Doran, Cinematography by Buddy Squires, ASC & Nadia Hallgren. Original music by Jongnic Bontemps; assistant editor Charles Horton; associate producer Stephen Sowers; post-production supervisor Megan Ruffe; research/production associate Jonah Velasco.