

“The Chance to Be Brave, the Courage to Dare”

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Grade levels: 8th grade – high school

Expected length: 4 – 6 class periods

Activist artist Linda Stein said in a lecture titled “The chance to be brave, the courage to dare” at Georgetown College in 2011: “Bravery is not the lack of fear. It’s proceeding in spite of it” (Box 1 AX: SP: 10094:0410005: Linda Stein Art Education Papers: script: Georgetown College, 3/3/11; *Fluidity of Gender: Sculpture by Linda Stein*, Anne Wright Wilson Fine Arts Gallery, March 3-April 7, 2011). She also emphatically states that her goal as an artist is to use her art “to transform social consciousness and inspire activism for peace, equality, and diversity” (www.lindastein.com). Identified as one of “21 Leaders for the 21st Century” by *Women’s ENews* (2018, p. 23), Stein says: “Art opens minds and encourages the meaningful exchange of ideas. It brings to light new concepts and inspires participants to turn ideas into actions. With art as a starting point, I aim to empower people to more easily reach their personal authenticity and, beyond themselves, accept diversity in others. I do this specifically by addressing issues of persecution and protection, and by focusing on oppression of the ‘other’ through the lens of anti-bullying and gender justice” (Box 2 AX:SP:10094:0410005: Linda Stein Art Education Papers: 2018: *21 Leaders for the 21st Century*).

Words are powerful, as are the people who use them to support, uplift, protect, and upstand for those who are oppressed. We speak our values and beliefs. Sometimes, we are also hurt by the words of others. When we witness the hurtful words of others, what can we do as bystanders? Using Linda Stein’s art and words as inspiration, this lesson empowers learners to be upstanders and to pay homage to upstanders in their lives.

LEARNING OUTCOMES Part I:

Students will be able to identify incidents of implicit bias and microaggressions.

Students will apply brave upstander strategies for disarming and disrupting microaggressions.

Studio Inquiry: Students will create a photographic self-portrait depicting a written message of a microaggression they have encountered.

National Visual Arts Standard: CREATING

Anchor Standard: Organize and develop artistic ideas and work

Enduring Understanding: Artists and designers experiment with forms, structures, materials, concepts, media, and art-making approaches

Art Criticism Inquiry: Students will interpret heroic brave upstanding incidents depicted in activist artist Linda Stein's *Holocaust Heroes: Fierce Females* series to uncover how words complement the women heroes' actions.

National Visual Arts Standard: PRESENTING

Anchor Standard: Convey meaning through the presentation of artistic work.

Enduring Understanding: Objects, artifacts, and artworks collected, preserved, or presented either by artists, museums, or other venues communicate meaning and a record of social, cultural, and political experiences resulting in the cultivating of appreciation and understanding.

ARTWORK:

The powerful stories of upstanding women heroes in Linda Stein's *Holocaust Heroes: Fierce Females* series used their voices to disrupt the horrors of the Holocaust. Many saved lives with their words and voices. **Anne Frank** gave a powerful account of over more than 700 days in hiding with her family before dying of typhus in the Bergen-Belsen concentration and death camp in Germany at the age of 15. Her diaries were discovered and published for the world to learn about her and her family's experiences during one of the darkest times in human history. For more information, including video documentation of Anne Frank, visit <https://www.annefrank.org/en/anne-frank/who-was-anne-frank/>.



One of Anne Frank's diaries



Anne Frank 808
2014; 5' x 5' x 2"; archival pigment on canvas, acrylic paint, fabric, leather, metal, mixed media, wood poles

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(<https://www.annefrank.org/en/anne-frank/who-was-anne-frank/>)

Another woman in the *Holocaust Heroes: Fierce Females* series to powerfully use words was **Noor Inayat Khan** who became the first female radio operator to be sent from Britain to aid the French resistance. Communicating in Morse code and writing letters in code, she was eventually captured. She did not stop using her words for good. Scratching encouraging

messages onto the surface of her food bowls, she communicated with other women prisoners held captive before she was executed.



Noor Inayat Khan 813

2014; 56.5" x 58.5" x 2"; archival pigment on canvas, acrylic paint, fabric, leather, metal, mixed media, wood poles

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Zevia Lubetkin used her words as a leader of the Jewish underground in Nazi-occupied Warsaw to testify as a witness at the war crimes trial of Adolf Eichmann, one of Hitler's high-ranking officials of the Nazi party who was tasked with facilitating and managing the mass deportation of millions of Jews to the concentration and death camps.



Zivia Lubetkin 811

2014; 56.5" x 58.5" x 2"; archival pigment on canvas, acrylic paint, fabric, leather, metal, mixed media, wood poles

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DISCUSS:

Using copies of *Holocaust Heroes: Fierce Females* (copies can be purchased as an ebook or in hard copy at www.lindastein.com), group students in teams to identify how the 10 heroes in the series used words for their brave upstanding heroism. An 11th tapestry of Raymond Learsy's mother can also be found at <https://www.lindastein.com/series-h2f2-heroic-tapestries>. The story of life as a child fleeing pre-WWII France and adjusting to life on the move, and his mother's brave upstanding action, can be viewed at <https://www.lindastein.com/videos-raymond-learsy-interview-full>.

Construct individual **Idea Generators** with each hero and their corresponding heroic tapestry created by Linda Stein. Include the following directions and questions:

Read the essay about (*name of hero*), then answer these questions. Be prepared to share what you find with the rest of the group.

Why was your assigned woman considered a hero during (or after) the Holocaust?

How did she use her words as brave upstanding action? What stood out to you the most?

Looking at the tapestry for your hero: how do the accompanying symbols and images enhance the upstanding actions of this brave upstanding hero?

CREATE:

Now, it is time to develop our own upstander identities.

The Accidental Upstander

Like everyone else in the subway car, I am ignoring the four teenage girls fighting with each other. In New York, you don't mess with something that could trigger racism, classism or worse.

One girl has another in a stranglehold. The strangled girl breaks loose, screaming, "I'm going to kill you."

They go back to pummeling each other.

A third girl: "We're in a subway. Act civilized."

More fighting.

No agonizing over whether to get involved. I just stand up, walk over to them and say, "She's right. You're in a subway. Act civilized."

One girl: "What right does that lady have to talk to me?"

Another girl: "She's right."


They stop fighting.

Who knows what happened once they got off the subway.

But, unexpectedly, Linda Stein's message of standing up to bullying has transformed me from Bystander to Brave Upstander — standing up against bullies.

That felt good. I'm up for more. Wish me luck.

— Amy Stone



Na'amat Woman's fearless correspondent Amy Stone in Stein's body-swapping armor.

We will discover strategies on becoming everyday brave upstanding heroes. Teaching strategies for being upstanders while young is vital to becoming comfortable in that role as children grow into civic-minded adults who then will be prepared to participate in an equitable and inclusive democracy. Learning about **implicit bias**, and how to recognize and disarm/disrupt **microaggressions** are upstander things we can do every day.

VOCABULARY:

Implicit (or unconscious) bias: Pervasive and unintentional bias about certain individuals or groups of people (e.g., based on race, age, dis/ability, gender, demographics, political affiliation, etc.) that occur automatically and affect our behaviors, judgments, and decisions. Implicit biases are underlying attitudes and stereotypes that affect how we understand and interact with people.

Microaggressions: “Microaggressions are the everyday slights, indignities, putdowns, and insults that marginalized group members experience from well-intentioned individuals who are completely unaware that they have engaged in an offensive or demeaning manner toward a targeted group” (Derald Wing Sue, as cited in Kantawala, 2023, p. 48). For example: people of color experience microaggressions in daily interactions with generally well-intentioned white Americans who may be unaware that they have engaged in racially demeaning ways.

Microinterventions: Actions that disarm or counteract the effects of microaggressions by challenging perpetrators; they subtly or overtly confront and educate the microaggressor.

MATERIALS:

Thick dark-colored markers

Paper: minimum size 8 1/2” x 11”

Camera

Show a 8:10-minute [video](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OoBvzl-YZf4&t=6s) (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OoBvzl-YZf4&t=6s>) in which the concept of implicit bias is explained. Examples and testimonials about experiences with implicit bias are included to help viewers understand its impact.

Then, pass out small pieces of paper. Ask students to write incidents of implicit bias they have witnessed in their life. Ask that they do not include names of individuals. Next, ask that they crumple up the papers, and throw them into a designated spot on the floor in the room. Mix up the crumpled papers. Direct students to pick one, and one by one, read aloud the incidents of implicit bias. Read the “temperature” of the room—would it be more

powerful to stay silent, letting the oppressive weight of all of the examples do the “talking”? Or are they anxious to discuss the examples further? If the latter, lay down a ground rule: *no names of people will be shared*. This will create a safe space for difficult discussion.

We will next look at microaggressions and microinterventions. Read aloud the definition of a microaggression. Show a few examples of microaggressions (many are available on the internet). A few to start:



For each ask *what is the microaggression?* Is “talking a certain way—‘like you’re Black’—imply that talking another way (the white way) is superior? Let’s “unpack” these examples and have open, honest conversation in a safe space. Remember our ground rule: no names.

Next, discuss microinterventions, the strategies to disarm and disrupt microaggressors. A microintervention is something we can do to be a brave upstanding hero every day in supporting targets of microaggressors. Here is a breakdown of two methods:

Disarm, Educate, (and Report if necessary)

Initial steps:

Remain calm

Give the microaggressor the benefit of the doubt (“maybe you didn’t mean to say this, but...”)

Ask for clarification

1. DISARM:

- Express disagreement
- Be clear about why the microaggression is a problem
- Interrupt and redirect (“Excuse me, did you mean to say...”)
- Describe what you see happening
- Restate your upstander values
- Use exclamations (“Oh, I have to disagree!”)

- Use non-verbal communication, too

2. EDUCATE:

- Explain intention versus impact (“I don’t know if you know it, but what you actually said was....and probably/maybe made them feel as if....”)
- Promote and model empathy

3. REPORT (when necessary)

- Document and notify leadership if the problem behavior persists
- Suggest resources (there are abundant resources online about microaggressions)

Make clear that you are an upstander (at every opportunity!)

Another microintervention method:

R.A.V.E.N.

From: How to Respond to Racial Microaggressions When They Occur, by Frank Harris III and J. Luke Wood:
<https://www.diverseeducation.com/opinion/article/15106837/how-to-respond-to-racial-microaggressions-when-they-occur>

1. Redirect the interaction with the goal of immediately stopping the conversation to prevent further harm from occurring. (“I think we need to take a pause on this conversation that might be hurtful to someone before we pivot to another topic.”)

2. Ask probing questions to the aggressor to help them understand their statements and actions and how they can be perceived as rude, threatening, or harmful.

3. Values clarification is the third step in the R.A.V.E.N. Values clarification involves identifying shared organizational values (e.g., trust, diversity, inclusion, safe spaces, welcoming environments, treating everyone with dignity and respect) and conveying to the aggressor that their actions or statements are not aligned with these values.

4. Emphasize your own thoughts and feelings is the next step in the model. Oftentimes aggressors fail to recognize that a racial microaggression is not only harmful to the person or persons who were directly targeted but also to those who are present to observe it.

5. Next steps is the final action, where one suggests what the aggressor can do to correct or change their behavior moving forward.

Follow up discussion:

It's important to remember: If gone unchecked, microaggressions can result in racial battle fatigue, sexist battle fatigue, homophobic battle fatigue, ableist battle fatigue, etc., fatigue which manifests as physical and psychological stress that comes from being immersed in chronically racist, sexist, homophobic, ableist, and other oppressive environments. Do you know anyone facing these oppressive conditions? Remember to speak up for others, but not *over* them. Knowing our privilege is important—use it wisely. And, when we make mistakes (and we all do), apologize, and do better next time.

Now students are ready for a microaggressions trading card activity:

ACTIVITY: Identifying, Responding, and Upstanding to Microaggressions
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STEP 1. Let's work together as a group to explore what upstander steps we could take to disarm a microaggressor, and how to check in on the person's well-being who endured the microaggression. We will do this by examining a "trading card" of a person holding a statement of a microaggression they endured (5-10 min). Using the provided card, questions to discuss:

1. What is the microaggression?
2. If you witnessed this happening in our school or classroom, how would you carry out a microintervention? Remember: Disarm....Educate.....Report (if necessary)
3. Or, what would the R.A.V.E.N. method look like in action in this case, if applicable?

R=Redirect the interaction

A=Ask probing questions

V=Values clarification

E=Emphasize your own thoughts and feelings

N=Next steps: where one suggests what the aggressor can do to correct or change their behavior moving forward.

STEP 2. Microaggression expert group (3-4 students): With your group, using your "trading card" of a person holding a statement of a microaggression they endured, discuss the three questions above (5-10 min):

1. What is the microaggression?
2. If you witnessed this happening in our school or classroom, how would you carry out a microintervention? Remember: Disarm....Educate.....Report (if necessary)
3. Or, what would the R.A.V.E.N. method look like in action in this case, if

applicable?

R=Redirect the interaction

A=Ask probing questions

V=Values clarification

E=Emphasize your own thoughts and feelings

N=Next steps: where one suggests what the aggressor can do to correct or change their behavior moving forward.

STEP 3. Mix up the groups! Take your “trading card” with you. You are the expert, where you serve as the only expert on the microaggression “trading card” from your last group. Show your card and share what your expert group discussed. After each expert shares their “trading card” (5 minutes each), open the group to additional discussion. Keep dispersing the experts to groups as time allows.

NOTE: see **Additional Resources** for suggested “trading card” images. Print on cardstock for durability.

CREATE: Microaggressions Trading Cards



Studio example: Caleb Hughes

Steps:

1. Pair up with a classmate. Using bold marker, write a microaggression you have experienced.

2. Pose with your quote, choosing the background wisely, and have your partner take your self-portrait with your cell phone holding your sign. Do you need a hall pass to pose in the bathroom? To be out in the hallway? Do not include anyone else in your photo.

3. Return to class and upload your image to our class folder (to a secure password-protected cloud-based platform like One-Drive or Google Classroom).

4. Teachers: By the next class: Make a set of microaggression trading cards for each student in the class, pre-cut into small “trading card” sizes. Have a whole-class discussion using the cards. Review microinterventions, repeating the processes shared the previous day, using students’ own examples. NOTE: if any microaggressions are particularly sensitive, approach the student first to discuss the incident with them. Be prepared to report/refer the incident to appropriate school personnel and ask for support if necessary. Make sure the student receives the support they need. What will you do as the upstander teacher?

PART II: Upstander Embroidery Collage

LEARNING OUTCOME:

Studio Inquiry: Students will create a collage of an upstander they admire using a photograph, paper, and simple embroidery techniques.

National Visual Arts Standard: CREATING

Anchor Standard: Generate and conceptualize artistic ideas and work.

Enduring Understanding: Creativity and innovative thinking are essential life skills that can be developed.

DISCUSS:

Now that students have reflected on the meaning of microaggressions, and how everyone can be a brave upstander by performing microinterventions, it is time to think of someone they personally admire who is an upstander.

Ask: Who do you know that stands up and supports others when they are oppressed? Who uplifts others through their actions to inspire peace and justice? Is there someone in your friend circle who is always there to defend others in the face of bullies? Is someone in your family an “unsung” hero who doesn’t get the recognition they deserve for constantly uplifting and supporting everyone else? It can be someone you know personally or not (e.g., a famous person). We are going to create an homage to them through embroidery collage. “Homage” means special honor or respect shown publicly.

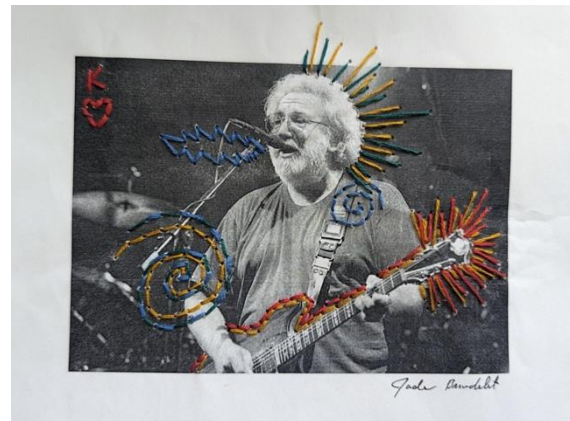


Caleb Hughes: Upstander Dolly Parton: "I chose Dolly Parton because of her literacy program where families can sign up to have their child(ren) receive a book every month from birth to age five. She also funded the Moderna vaccine."



Jordan McConnell: My Sister, My Upstander Hero

Jade Brundel: Upstander Jerry Garcia: "I chose Jerry Garcia as my hero because he stood fast in his values of joy, vulnerability, and adventure in the face of unbridled success in the music industry. Jerry's integrity inspires generations of Deadheads to carry on his music in order to make the world a better, more colorful place."



MATERIALS:

Sewing needles with long oval eyes (larger than standard sewing needles)

Embroidery floss

Images of students' upstander heroes printed on copier paper; the size of the images should be small enough that space is left on the papers for easier handling

Extra copier paper for backing

Tape

Embroidery Collage Steps:

1. Find a picture of your upstander hero. Make a copy of it on regular copier paper, in either black and white, or in color. (Teachers: make copies for the students via images sent to you if students do not have access to printers).
2. To begin, layer a piece of copier paper behind the upstander paper so the surface is less flimsy by adhering a few pieces of tape between the papers. The tape will be removed once the first few securing stitches are made.
3. Think about colors that will enhance the hero. Think about how to highlight them. How will you pay *homage*? If students wish, they could lightly sketch lines with pencil lines they wish to embroider. Use embroidery floss and a needle (carefully) to sew directly through the paper, surrounding the upstander hero with colors in any manner the student wishes. NOTE: curves are harder to achieve than straight lines. It is recommended they practice first on paper to get the feel for the embroidery process on paper, as it has less “give” than fabric.
4. Show students how to separate individual strands from the 6-strand floss. It is recommended they work with two or three strands, as one strand only does not show up well. A helpful video on separating strands:
https://www.google.com/search?q=how+to+use+embroidery+floss&rlz=1C5GCEM_en&oq=how+to+use+embroidery+floss&aqs=chrome..69i57j0i512l5j0i22i30l4.5612j0j7&sourceid=chrome&ie=UTF-8#kpvalbx=_vr_OZP2MG_HBOPEPobWdgAU_28
5. It is easiest to have a small pillow or other soft item on your lap underneath your work while sewing. Some find it easiest to first puncture the implied “line” with various dots (similar to punching dots on jack-o-lanterns prior to carving) and then connect the dots with the embroidery floss.
6. Once filled with the desired adornment of floss, decide how to mount the completed work.

Modifications:

Students who are non-verbal or minimally verbal can use their augmentative and alternative communication (AAC) devices to communicate their color choices, to indicate who their hero is, etc.

Students with low vision may benefit from larger images, with holes pre-perforated. Yarn may be easier to handle than the tiny format of embroidery floss.

Plastic needles come in a variety of sizes and can be used in place of small metal embroidery needles. Punch holes in advance for larger plastic needles and use skinny yarn instead of floss.

For students with motor disabilities, use a low count cross stitch fabric and plastic needles with the image already transferred onto the fabric.

Additionally, Smart-Fab as an alternative to paper may be easier for some students to work with.

REFLECT: Artist's statements

Provide students this prompt to help them write an artist's statement to accompany their upstander embroidery collage: *Why do you consider this person an upstander?*

Display the collages along with the statements to create a gallery in which we pay homage to our upstander heroes.

RESOURCES:

(Hard copy \$35 or eBook \$17.00): *Holocaust Heroes: Fierce Females: Tapestries and Sculpture by Linda Stein* (2016). Edited by Linda Stein, Foreword by Gloria Steinem. Old City Publishing. Available for purchase or download at: <https://www.lindastein.com/books/>

Kantawala, A. (2023). Unveiling the invisible: A conversation with Derald Wing Sue on addressing racism and microaggressions in educational settings. *Art Education*, 76(3), 48-51. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00043125.2023.2203666>

Additional resource for older learners:

For older learners (18+): **Project Implicit** (<https://implicit.harvard.edu/implicit/takeatest.html>). Project Implicit was founded in 1998 by three scientists. Project Implicit is a non-profit organization and international collaborative of researchers whose mission is to educate the public about bias and to provide a "virtual

laboratory" for collecting data on the internet. Project Implicit scientists produce high-impact research that forms the basis of our scientific knowledge about bias and disparities.

The IAT measures the strength of associations between concepts (e.g. Black people, gay people) and evaluations (e.g. good, bad) or stereotypes (e.g., athletic, clumsy). The main idea is that making a response is easier when closely related items share the same response key.

This series of tests (designed for people ages 18 and higher) is designed to help test-takers reflect on their own potential forms of implicit bias.

Images for trading card activity:



