

Classism in the Classroom

On Wednesday, Kerstin (Lower Elementary Teacher), Rebecca (Children's House - Willow Room Assistant) and I attended a training at the Vermont Learning Collaborative on "[Classism in the Classroom](#)". At Hilltop, we work consciously to address diversity and inclusion in many ways. In Southern Vermont, we do not have as much opportunity to experience racial and ethnic diversity but we strive to whenever possible. We do have more diversity of family structures and many members of our community who are gay and lesbian. We also have the opportunity to be sure to be inclusive of the economic diversity that we have. And, as we are thinking about expanding that economic diversity, we want to be aware of all the potential class biases that we might have. This training, in conjunction with the discussions we have been having with students, faculty, and the board, are informing how we move forward with increased awareness and inclusion. It is important to ask: "Is this accessible to all students?" "Are we excluding people with this curriculum/book/action?"

Much of the training served to reaffirm the cultural curriculum and peace curriculum that is a part of our programs. And, there is always room to analyze, update, and improve.

Some of the topics that come up in this context include:

- how can fundraising be handled in an inclusive, respectful way
- how directly should we be addressing class differences in the classroom with children at different program levels
- what books and materials could we add at different levels to be sure to be including people of different classes
- how could the "fundamental needs" curriculum of Lower Elementary be augmented to more directly address class differences
- additional fees for extra things (after care, pizza lunch, etc.) can exclude some, despite our attempts to include all the fees in the tuition
- would a sliding scale of fees for some things be a way of being more inclusive

We will be continuing to look at these topics within the current context of our community and looking to the future.

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