



One Drop of Love
A Guide for Educators

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The overarching themes in One Drop are: racial construction and identity, reconciling family relationships, and overcoming racial and economic oppression

Other themes include: immigration, the lengths to which people go to find community, exploring how race was constructed historically in the U.S. – including the influence of the one-drop rule, and using historical context to better understand our present lives

Questions for exploration:

A) On racial identity/race as a social construct:

1. The United States census began in 1790, and has always included racial categories. Since then (the census being taken every 10 years), the racial categories have changed twenty-four times. Why do you think these categories have changed so much? What specific events in U.S. history that you know of may have contributed to these changes?

2. On June 26, 2000, Former President Bill Clinton announced some of the findings of the Human Genome Project, including this statement: “I believe one of the great truths to emerge from this triumphant expedition inside the human genome is that in genetic terms, all human beings, regardless of race, are more than 99.9 percent the same.” Do you agree or disagree with this statement? What are some specific examples from your life that have led to your opinion on this? Why do you think he had to use the word ‘race’ in the quote, if his point was that we are all the same? (source: Fatal Invention pg. 50)

3. Did you ever feel like you had to dress, talk or act a certain way in order to fit into a particular cultural or ethnic group, or do you know someone who has? Where and how do we learn these behaviors? What are the benefits to having the ability to do so? Are there any drawbacks?

B) On Family Relationships:

1. Do you know why your parents (or guardians) chose the name they gave you? Did you ever feel you had a responsibility to ‘live up to your name’? Or have you changed your name, or prefer a nickname over the one you were given? Why was this important to you?

2. How much do you know about your parents’ (or guardians’) histories? What were some of the choices they made early on that still have a lasting effect on you? Why did they make those choices? What are some things that you will probably do



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differently when you're a parent (if you plan to have kids), and what are some of the things you might do that are the same?

C) On overcoming oppression:

1. Have you or someone you know had to overcome great odds for you to be where you are today? What were some of the strategies that you and others have used to help you get here?

2. Does the concept of the 'American Dream' still exist? Do you feel that everyone in the U.S. has an equal opportunity to achieve it? If yes, what examples do you have of this? If no, why not?

Quotes to ponder and discuss (these are often printed in One Drop programs):

"Race is the product of racism; racism is not the product of race." Dorothy Roberts *Fatal Invention*

"Love recognizes no barriers. It jumps hurdles, leaps fences, penetrates walls to arrive at its destination full of hope." Maya Angelou *The Power of Hope*

"The old 'one-drop' rule continues to apply in how many people divide whites from blacks — any black ancestry makes you black... By using our race categories decade after decade, the Census Bureau reinforces categories that are nothing more than the results of a racism-tainted tale of who got to America first and who followed — combined with a hefty dollop of 18th-century European colonialist thinking. The attempt to put everyone into a totally fabricated, socially constructed box also means that the growing number of mixed-race Americans have to make a choice or become 'other.'" Arthur Caplan "Time To Drop Racial Categories on the Census" *Chicago Tribune*

"The dramatic recent rise in the American Indian population recorded by the census signals how thoroughly new imaginations of selves and reclamations of family heritage can conspire to change racial choices." David R. Roediger *How Race Survived U.S. History*

"...those of us who are "white" can only become part of the solution if we recognize the degree to which we are already part of the problem — not because of our race, but because of our possessive investment in it." George Lipsitz *The Possessive Investment in Whiteness*



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Additional resources:

If you would like to test yourself for your own biases (racial/ethnic/gender...), go to:
<https://implicit.harvard.edu/implicit/>

In developing *One Drop of Love*, playwright Fanshen Cox DiGiovanni was strongly influenced by the work of Anna Deavere Smith, Sarah Jones and John Leguizamo. Here are some YouTube clips to familiarize you with their work:

Anna Deavere Smith: <http://youtu.be/KR8SwPmCFd4>

Sarah Jones: <http://youtu.be/sucza6EOIf0>

John Leguizamo: <http://youtu.be/4c-llkZ9HRc>

After seeing *One Drop of Love*, discuss in what ways you believe these storytellers influenced Fanshen. What are some of the techniques they use that are similar? What are the differences?

Fanshen strongly recommends the following resources if you are interested in learning more about the themes in the show, or are interested in using art to tell your story:

Books:

Fatal Invention: How Science, Politics, and Big Business Re-create Race in the Twenty-first Century by Dr. Dorothy R. Roberts

The New Jim Crow by Michelle Alexander

Letters to a Young Artist: Straight-up Advice on Making a Life in the Arts – For Actors, Performers, Writers and Artists of Every Kind by Anna Deavere Smith

Websites:

www.MixedRootsStories.org

www.LovingDay.org

www.MixedRaceStudies.org

www.CriticalMixedRaceStudies.org