

# Social Justice Watch 0531

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# 图集精选

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Queens District Attorney Melinda Katz, Queens Borough President Sharon Lee  
and the Mayor's Office to End Domestic and Gender-Based Violence

**PRESENT**

# **VIRTUAL TOWNHALL**

# **DOMESTIC**

# **VIOLENCE**

# **RESOURCES**

## **DURING COVID-19**

**Thursday, May 14, 2020**

**11:00 AM - 12:30 PM**

Learn about Queens resources for survivors  
of domestic violence during the COVID-19 pandemic.

**PRESENTERS:**

Mayor's Office to End Domestic and Gender-Based Violence  
Queens District Attorney Melinda Katz  
Queens Borough President Sharon Lee  
Safe Horizon  
Violence Intervention Program



**You  
are not  
*alone.***

**RSVP** by **Tuesday, May 12** at  
[www.queensbp.org/RSVP](http://www.queensbp.org/RSVP)  
to participate in the webinar.



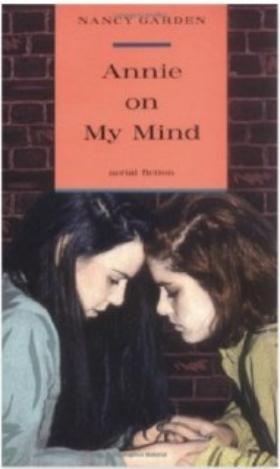
Non-participants can tune-in via  
live stream at [www.queensbp.org](http://www.queensbp.org)



Mayor's Office to  
End Domestic and  
Gender-Based Violence



OFFICE OF THE  
QUEENS BOROUGH PRESIDENT  
CITY OF NEW YORK



## Annie on My Mind

by Nancy Garden

★★★★★ 3.98 · Rating details · 39,850 ratings · 1,962 reviews

This groundbreaking book is the story of two teenage girls whose friendship blossoms into love and who, despite pressures from family and school that threaten their relationship, promise to be true to each other and their feelings. The book has been banned from many school libraries and publicly burned in Kansas City.

Want to Read

Rate this book



Preview

Of the author and the book, the Margaret A. Edwards Award committee said, “Using a fluid, readable style, Garden opens a window through which readers can find courage to be true to themselves.” [\(less\)](#)

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[source](#)



Siddharth

@DearthOfSid



Men whine about "feminazis" essentially because equality feels like oppression to the oppressor. They define a "moderate" and an "extremist" feminist to discourage women from identifying as feminists. The "moderate" feminist has to disown the word and prove she doesn't hate men.

1:58 AM · 01 Nov 19 · [Twitter for Android](#)

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## **U.S. DEATHS NEAR 100,000, AN INCALCULABLE LOSS**

They Were Not Simply  
Names on a List.

Numbers alone cannot possibly measure the impact of whether the coccinellids are on America, whether it is the number of patients treated, jobs interrupted or lives uprooted. As the survey states a gross estimate of 160,000 will be affected in the next year. The New York Times reported infections and death notices of the victims. The 10,000 people have left just 1 percent of the total American insurance members.

“They were us”

明日NYTimes，这种直观震撼真的是白纸黑字一个个印上才能感受到。再

次想起华盛顿越战纪念碑上的那些名字，在巨大事件中寻找群体（数字）和个人（故事）之间平衡点的努力尝试。[source](#)

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# **there are roughly 4,000 fake abortion clinics across the US.**

Women's Reproductive Rights Assistance Project (WRRAP)

53 mins ·

Like Page

Fake health centers are fake health-care clinics that lie to, shame and intentionally mislead women about their reproductive-health-care options to block them from accessing abortion care.

A woman facing an unintended pregnancy deserves medically accurate, comprehensive and unbiased information.

Fake health centers try to trick women into entering these facilities by masquerading as full-service women's health clinics. Some even claim to provide abortion care to get women in the door, and then use lies and manipulation to try to dissuade them from considering abortion.

There are more than 4,000 fake health centers across the country.<sup>1</sup> In at least 12 states, fake health centers receive direct state funding to mislead women. Government support for these anti-choice organizations creates the false impression that fake health centers are part of the mainstream medical community. They are not. And many fake clinics place themselves as close as possible to real clinics and most are UNLICENSED and have zero medical staff. The government should not support anti-choice fake health centers. Women should have all the facts to make the best decisions for themselves and their families. #AbortionIsHealthcare #AbortionIsNormal



A line of almost all white women formed between police officers and black protesters at Thursday night's rally in downtown Louisville calling for justice in the death of Breonna Taylor. - Photo by: (Photo: Tim Druck)  @勿怪幸

一群白人（几乎全是女性）组成人墙，面对警察，将警察和后面的抗议的黑人隔开。[source](#)

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# 消息精选

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[telegra.ph/Why-American-Students-Havent-Gotten-Better-at-Reading-in-20-Years-05-07-2](https://telegra.ph/Why-American-Students-Havent-Gotten-Better-at-Reading-in-20-Years-05-07-2)

Telegraph

Why American Students Haven't Gotten Better at Reading in 20 Years

Schools usually focus on teaching comprehension skills instead of general knowledge—even though education researchers know better. NATALIE WEXLER APRIL 13, 2018

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The Half of It: <https://www.netflix.com/title/81005150>

Director Interview:

<https://www.facebook.com/thecommonwealthclub/videos/1126332294367190/>

Netflix

The Half Of It | Netflix Official Site

When smart but cash-strapped teen Ellie Chu agrees to write a love letter for a jock, she doesn't expect to become his friend — or fall for his crush.

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分享一段黃阿麗Ali Wong的有声书，讨论她生完孩子放弃做全职妈妈的心路历程。Ali曾经最大的梦想就是做全职主妇，她甚至提前排好了每天的日程。可等到孩子出生，她才遭受到现实的痛击，那些名人ins里营造的一切都是虚幻，而最重要的是她需要自己挣钱。。。行文和舞台上的Ali一样风趣老辣，但会更深刻地体会到生育女性在事业和家庭上的两难，太难了。

[t.cn/A6AWn7Qx](https://t.cn/A6AWn7Qx) source

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Compared to cisgender men, cisgender women are more liberal, even within the

LGBTQ community.

Within the LGBTQ community, bisexual people are less liberal than lesbians and gays.

transgender-identified individuals are less liberal than their fellow LGBTQ community members and even than cisgender men.

Conversely, non-binary individuals — who are often lumped in with transgender people under the “T” — are significantly more liberal than either trans men or trans women.

“This is a much understudied area and we just don’t know enough about these groups to make broad sweeping claims,” Worthen says. “This study is just one piece of the story.”

[telegra.ph/Study-finds-transgender-people-are-more-conservative-than-cisgender-men-05-13-2](https://www.telegraph.co.uk/Study-finds-transgender-people-are-more-conservative-than-cisgender-men-05-13-2)

Telegraph

Study finds transgender people are more conservative than cisgender men  
A recently published study on LGBTQ political leanings finds that transgender individuals are “significantly less liberal” than even cisgender men. The study, “A Rainbow Wave? LGBTQ Liberal Political Perspectives During Trump’s Presidency,” was conducted...

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[source](#)

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你当然可以结婚，但别假装女权。

你当然可以享受婚姻，但别假装不受压迫。

做奴隶的人，别再假装自己不是别人的所有物。 [\[假装在伦敦\]的微博视频](#) [source](#)

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<https://youtu.be/ed4ryYokLzU>

YouTube

Why I Changed my Opinion on China

Hey Laowinners! I've lived in China for over 10 years, and over that time, my opinion of the Chinese government and society has drastically changed. Here's w...

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Pick up the Rainbow Fluft icon bundle for 1 BE in support of International Day Against Homophobia, Biphobia, and Transphobia and get sweet homeguard trails when you equip a Fluft icon until the end of June!

[#IDAHOTB2020](#)

[source](#)

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[#殊途同行# vol. 4 印度](#)

“在印度，每15分钟就有一起强奸案件发生，而这还仅仅只是上报的数据，很多女性选择沉默。”Aditi是Girl Up印度及南亚地区代表及TEDxDUCIC演讲者，本期她为我们带来身在对女性如此不友好的国家中，印度女性所面临的性别平等问题：

印度女性面临的挑战

有关强奸文化

获得资源的平等机会

家暴与新冠疫情

直播精华版送上，“家暴不应该成为禁忌话题”。[GPTE殊途同行的微博视频 source](#)

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If someone says, “You Chinese are killing us,” I am in that moment Chinese. Whether I give the other person a piece of my mind or not — awkward, perhaps, from six feet away — my instinct should be indignation, not deflection. Because one of many lessons I’ve learned from the pandemic and its consequences is that focusing on being misidentified by a xenophobe is nothing better than trying to negotiate a more accurate insult.

[telegra.ph/Why-Ive-Stopped-Telling-People-Im-Not-Chinese-05-20](https://telegra.ph/Why-Ive-Stopped-Telling-People-Im-Not-Chinese-05-20)

Telegraph

Why I've Stopped Telling People I'm Not Chinese

Mid-February, when the world was starting to go pear-shaped, I had to travel to an area where I'd previously experienced anti-Asian sentiment. So a few days before the trip, I emailed my (white) hairdresser frantically: "I know this sounds crazy but can you..."

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频道/群组合集: <https://bit.ly/35UdTae>

投稿请联系: [@b4cxb](#)

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<https://telegra.ph/Japanese-women-demand-right-to-wear-glasses-at-work-11-09>

Telegraph

Japanese women demand right to wear glasses at work

Japanese women on social media are demanding the right to wear glasses to work, after reports that employers were imposing bans. In the latest protest against rigid rules over women's appearance, the hashtag "glasses are forbidden" was trending on Twitter...

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崔娃深度解读一系列种族歧视事件引发#美国暴乱#。纽约中央公园白人女

子假报警，到明尼苏达黑人男子被跪压致死事件，他引用马尔科姆·格拉德威尔的社会合法性三原则，探讨社会的组成是一种契约，执法者和公民需要在公平公正地前提下遵守契约。而当执法者首先破坏契约时，就没有立场去指责他人不守规则。种族歧视，就是执法的一方首先破坏规则。18分钟，非常值得细看。[source](#)

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NYPD officer just called a female protester a “stupid fucking bitch” and threw her to the ground. The cop pushed her so hard at Barclays & she flung back. She is tiny. Now she’s in the ER after a serious seizure. I’m waiting for updates but have to wait outside because of COVID-19. Please keep my protest sister in your thoughts. [source](#)

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# Japanese women demand right to wear glasses at work

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The backlash follows a similar one earlier this year against companies making female staff wear high heels. Photograph: Kim Kyung-Hoon/Reuters

Japanese women on social media are demanding the right to wear glasses to work, after reports that employers were imposing bans.

In the latest protest against rigid rules over women's appearance, the hashtag "glasses are forbidden" was trending on Twitter in reaction to a Japanese television show that exposed businesses that were imposing the bans on female staff.

"These are rules that are out of date," one Twitter user said, while another described the reasons given by employers as "idiotic".

One woman who works in restaurants tweeted that she was repeatedly told not to wear her glasses because it would appear "rude" and they did not go with her traditional kimono.

"If the rules prohibit only women to wear glasses, this is a discrimination against women," Kanae Doi, the Japan director at Human Rights Watch, told the Thomson Reuters Foundation on Friday.

Earlier this year there was a call for Japanese companies to stop forcing female staff to wear high heels. More than 21,000 people signed an online petition started by a female actor in what has become known as the #KuToo movement.

In response, a Japanese minister said dress code expectations were “necessary and appropriate” in the workplace.

Japan was ranked 110 out of 149 countries in the World Economic Forum’s latest global gender gap report, well behind other developed countries.

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# **Study finds transgender people are more conservative than cisgender men**

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A recently published study on LGBTQ political leanings finds that transgender individuals are “significantly less liberal” than even cisgender men.

The study, “A Rainbow Wave? LGBTQ Liberal Political Perspectives During Trump’s Presidency,” was conducted by a University of Oklahoma sociology professor Meredith Worthen in the weeks after the November 2018 elections.

Worthen surveyed an online representative sample of 3,104 adults in the United States to gauge their political beliefs and how strongly they embrace liberalism. About half, or 1,555 individuals, identified as LGBTQ non-heterosexual people.

The survey examined people’s self-reported ideologies, asked them whether they identified as “feminist,” and gauged their support for laws and policies that support people in poverty, racial or ethnic minorities, immigrants, and women.

According to the study’s findings, lesbian, gay, bisexual, pansexual, and asexual people are significantly more liberal than their cisgender heterosexual counterparts.

Compared to cisgender men, cisgender women are more liberal, even within the LGBTQ community.

Within the LGBTQ community, bisexual people are less liberal than lesbians and gays.

But perhaps the most surprising finding is that transgender-identified individuals are less liberal than their fellow LGBTQ community members and even than cisgender men.

Conversely, non-binary individuals — who are often lumped in with transgender people under the “T” — are significantly more liberal than either trans men or trans women.

Worthen notes that there has been a shift among younger generations toward identifying as non-binary, particularly among those who are more liberal.

In the sample, the mean age of non-binary individuals was 33 years old, yet just over half (50.5%) of non-binary individuals were under age 35.

Worthen hopes to further examine the difference between non-binary and trans-identified individuals in a yet-to-be-published article.

In 2018, Worthen proposed a dual-layered social justice and empathic concern theoretical framework that she utilizes in her analysis.

That framework proposes that liberal perspectives among LGBTQ people are constructed from personal experiences with stigma, and their empathy for other stigmatized people.

As such, LGBTQ people writ-large may be more likely to identify with an empathize with other “underdogs” who lack power or influence when considering social justice issues.

That may translate into stronger support for policies geared towards uplifting historically marginalized groups such as racial or ethnic minorities, immigrants, and women.

Asked why transgender people do not align as strongly with liberal attitudes as other LGB individuals, Worthen suggests that trans people may have a different

relationship with liberalism than cis men or women do.

She notes that if younger, more liberal people are identifying more with the “non-binary” label, that may result in making the group of people who identify exclusively as trans more conservative.

She says more research is needed to delve into the details of transgender versus non-binary people’s political attitudes.

“This is a much understudied area and we just don’t know enough about these groups to make broad sweeping claims,” Worthen says. “This study is just one piece of the story.”



Meredith Worthen – Photo courtesy of Meredith Worthen.

That said, just because someone has a more conservative ideology doesn’t mean they necessarily wholeheartedly embrace conservative candidates when it comes to voting behavior.

For example, she says, someone who identifies as conservative may be more liberal when it comes to LGBTQ issues or other social policies.

Worthen clarifies that her survey did not specifically ask about party affiliation or support for Trump.

But, she notes, the Trump administration's record of action against transgender people — from the ban on transgender troops to efforts to its proposal to eliminate transgender nondiscrimination protections in the Affordable Care Act by defining "sex discrimination" as based on a person's assigned sex at birth — may push some transgender people to vote for Democrats.

"The point of this research is to take a look at what's going on with these differences," she says. "It's surprising that this came about. But just because trans women are less liberal than these other groups doesn't mean they're conservatives voting for Trump.

"There is something going on here, where trans women are not feeling that their needs are best met by liberalism," she continues. "It doesn't mean they're running over to Trump, it just means these examinations of their liberal identities are revealing these types of differences. ... I do think that the voices of trans people need to be heard, much more so than they have been. We really just need more research about this topic generally."

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# Why American Students Haven't Gotten Better at Reading in 20 Years

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Schools usually focus on teaching comprehension skills instead of general knowledge—even though education researchers know better.

NATALIE WEXLER

APRIL 13, 2018



GERI LAVROV / GETTY

Every two years, education-policy wonks gear up for what has become a time-honored ritual: the release of the Nation's Report Card. Officially known as the National Assessment of Educational Progress, or NAEP, the data reflect the results of reading and math tests administered to a sample of students across the country. Experts generally consider the tests rigorous and highly reliable—and the scores basically stagnant.

Math scores have been flat since 2009 and reading scores since 1998, with just a third or so of students performing at a level the NAEP defines as “proficient.” Performance gaps between lower-income students and their more affluent peers, among other demographic discrepancies, have remained stubbornly wide.

Among the likely culprits for the stalled progress in math scores: a misalignment between what the NAEP tests and what state standards require teachers to cover at specific grade levels. But what’s the reason for the utter lack of progress in reading scores?

On Tuesday, a panel of experts in Washington, D.C., convened by the federally appointed officials who oversee the NAEP concluded that **the root of the problem is the way schools teach reading**. The current instructional approach, they agreed, is based on assumptions about how children learn that have been disproven by research over the last several decades—research that the education world has largely failed to heed.

The long-standing view has been that the first several years of elementary school should be devoted to basic reading skills. History, science, and the arts can wait. After all, the argument goes, if kids haven’t learned to read—a task that is theoretically accomplished by third grade—how will they be able to gain knowledge about those subjects through their own reading?

The federal No Child Left Behind legislation, enacted in 2001, only intensified the focus on reading. The statute required states to administer annual reading and math tests to students in grades three through eight and once in high school, and attached hefty consequences if schools failed to boost scores. The law that replaced No Child Left Behind—the Every Student Succeeds Act, enacted in 2015—has eased the consequences but has hardly weakened the emphasis on testing.

What is tested, some educators say, gets taught—and what isn’t doesn’t. Since 2001, the curriculum in many elementary schools has narrowed to little more than a steady diet of reading and math. And when test scores fail to rise after third grade—as they often do, especially in high-poverty schools—subjects like history and science may continue to be relegated to the far back burner through middle school.

**To some extent, it does make sense to focus on reading skills in the early**

**years.** One component of reading is, like math, primarily a set of skills: the part that involves decoding, or making connections between sounds and the letters that represent them.

But educators have also treated the other component of reading—comprehension—as a set of skills, when **in fact it depends primarily on what readers already know.** In countries that specify the content to be taught at each grade level, standardized tests can test students on what they've learned in school. But in the United States, where schools are all teaching different content, test designers give students passages on a variety of topics that may have nothing to do with what they've learned in school—life in the Arctic, for example, or the disappearance of Amelia Earhart. The tests then ask questions designed to assess comprehension: *What's the main idea of the passage? What inferences can you make?*

On a daily basis, teachers have their students practice skills and strategies like “finding the main idea” or “making inferences.” And teachers select books that match the given skill rather than because of the text’s content. Rarely do the topics connect: Students might read a book about bridges one day, zebras the next, and clouds the day after that.

Cognitive scientists have known for decades that simply mastering comprehension skills doesn’t ensure a young student will be able to apply them to whatever texts they’re confronted with on standardized tests and in their studies later in life.

One of those cognitive scientists spoke on the Tuesday panel: Daniel Willingham, a psychology professor at the University of Virginia who writes about the science behind reading comprehension. Willingham explained that **whether or not readers understand a text depends far more on how much background knowledge and vocabulary they have relating to the topic than on how much they've practiced comprehension skills.** That’s because writers leave out a lot of information that they assume readers will know. If they put all the information in, their writing would be tedious.

But if readers can’t supply the missing information, they have a hard time making sense of the text. If students arrive at high school without knowing who won the Civil War they’ll have a hard time understanding a textbook passage about Reconstruction.

**Students from less educated families are usually the ones who are most handicapped by gaps in knowledge.** Another panelist—Ian Rowe, who heads a network of charter schools serving low-income students in New York—provided a real-life example during his remarks. A sixth-grader at one of his schools was frustrated that a passage on a reading test she'd taken kept repeating a word she didn't understand: *roog-bye*. The unfamiliar word made it hard for her to understand the passage. When Rowe asked her to spell the word, it turned out to be *rugby*.

The implication is clear. **The best way to boost students' reading comprehension is to expand their knowledge and vocabulary** by teaching them history, science, literature, and the arts, using curricula that guide kids through a logical sequence from one year to the next: for example, Native Americans and Columbus in kindergarten; the colonial era and the American Revolution in first grade; the War of 1812 and the Civil War in second grade, and so on. That approach enables children to make sense of what they're learning, and the repetition of concepts and vocabulary in different contexts makes it more likely they'll retain information. Not to mention that learning content like this can be a lot more engaging for both students and teachers than the endless practice of illusory skills.

Another panelist—Timothy Shanahan, an emeritus professor at the University of Illinois and the author or editor of over 200 publications on literacy—went on to debunk a popular approach that goes hand in hand with teaching comprehension skills: To help students practice their “skills,” teachers give them texts at their supposed individual reading levels rather than the level of the grade they’re in.

According to Shanahan, no evidence backs up that practice. In fact, Shanahan said, recent research indicates that **students actually learn more from reading texts** that are considered too difficult for them—in other words, those with more than a handful of words and concepts a student doesn't understand. What struggling students need is guidance from a teacher in how to make sense of texts designed for kids at their respective grade levels—the kinds of texts those kids may otherwise see only on standardized tests, when they have to grapple with them on their own.

That view was endorsed by Marilyn Jager Adams, a cognitive and developmental psychologist who is a visiting scholar at Brown University. “Giving children easier texts when they’re weaker readers,” she said during the

panel discussion, “serves to deny them the very language and information they need to catch up and move on.”

The failure to build children’s knowledge in elementary school helps explain the gap between the reading scores of students from wealthier families and those of their lower-income peers—a gap that has been expanding. More affluent students may not learn much in elementary school, but compared to their disadvantaged peers their parents **tend to be more educated and have the money to provide knowledge-boosting perks like tutoring and trips to Europe.** As a result, those wealthy children are far more likely to acquire knowledge outside of school. Poorer kids with less-educated parents tend to rely on school to acquire the kind of knowledge that is needed to succeed academically—and because their schools often focus exclusively on reading and math, in an effort to raise low test scores, they’re less likely to acquire it there.

The bottom line is that **policymakers and advocates who have pushed for more testing in part as a way to narrow the gap between rich and poor have undermined their own efforts.** They have created a system that incentivizes teachers to withhold the very thing that could accomplish both objectives: knowledge. All students suffer under this system, but the neediest suffer the most.

The NAEP is a valuable educational barometer, but it’s important to understand that while standardized tests can identify a problem, they can’t provide the answer to it.

While some elementary teachers have embraced the approach advocated by the NAEP panel, it’s clear that most have been trained to in methods that aren’t supported by research, and that many are resistant to change. The University of Illinois’s Shanahan noted that when he speaks to teachers around the country, they’re aghast at the idea of giving struggling readers grade-level books—even when their state’s literacy standards call for doing so.

Still, schools in some parts of the country are embracing the kinds of insights offered by the panelists. Louisiana has not only created its own curriculum but has also asked the federal government for permission to give tests based on that curriculum rather than passages on a variety of randomly selected topics. If that movement spreads, the National Assessment of Educational Progress may finally live up to its name and the American education system may at last be able to

unlock the untold potential of millions of students.

NATALIE WEXLER is a journalist based in Washington, D.C. She is the author of *The Knowledge Gap: The Hidden Cause of America's Broken Education System—And How to Fix It*.

资料来源：The Atlantic

<https://www.theatlantic.com/education/archive/2018/04/-american-students-reading/557915/>

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# Why I've Stopped Telling People I'm Not Chinese

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When confronted with racism toward anyone, our instinct should be indignation, not deflection.

Mid-February, when the world was starting to go pear-shaped, I had to travel to an area where I'd previously experienced anti-Asian sentiment. So a few days before the trip, I emailed my (white) hairdresser frantically: "I know this sounds crazy but can you make me blonde? I'm traveling next week and I'm worried about being mistaken for Chinese and blamed for the coronavirus."

Let's skip the ridiculousness of the idea for a second to focus on the important bit: Why had I worded my request so offensively? I could have just said I was worried about xenophobia. Why was I throwing people of Chinese descent under the bus? It's like that old joke about the two people running away from a bear:

You don't have to outrun the bear, you just have to outrun the other guy. Except in this case: You don't have to deal with racism; you just have to make people racist at someone else.

My panic was a humbling reminder that I should never be overly confident that I would do the right thing in the face of fear. Sure, wanting to avoid racial profiling is a survival instinct. But survival instincts are often amoral and, if unchecked, can easily turn ugly.

I ended up not dyeing my hair because a sudden allergy attack made it ill advised. Also, it was stupid.

But I shared my anxiety with a half-Chinese-American, half-white friend. What if I get stopped at the airport for extra screening? I asked. She messaged, “Carry around a copy of your books to prove you’re Korean.” (Two of the books I wrote have the word “Korean” in the title.) She added: “I’m serious.”

I messaged “LOL,” dismissed her idea for about 10 minutes … and then put copies of my books in my carry-on bag.

What was my plan? To run up to someone hurling epithets and say, “Hey I think we can all agree this Covid stuff is all China’s fault, but good news, I’m Korean! You know, the ones who brought you BTS? So we’re good, right?”

This impulse isn’t exactly new, even if the pandemic has brought out its most sinister form. I’ve been doing it since I was a child. Worse, I was *taught* to do it.

When I was a kid in late-1970s suburban Chicago, anti-Chinese taunts were a daily occurrence. It was a frequent topic at Korean church — the only place we clapped eyes on other Koreans outside our own homes. Our parents and Sunday school teachers told us that the correct response was, “I’m not Chinese; I’m Korean.” (This didn’t even work, it should be noted: When I informed a mean kindergartner that I was Korean, he responded, “There is no such place.”)

None of us kids were proud of being Korean-American back then. The grown-ups tried to counter this shame by instilling ethnic pride. But despite their good intentions, they invited pride’s ugly sibling: implied permission to step on other people.

For an inarticulate child, maybe “I’m not Chinese” isn’t an especially

meaningful retort. But a grown woman should know better.

So what finally brought about my moment of self-reckoning? It was a T-shirt.

Last month, a Chinese-American friend of mine posted on social media about a targeted internet ad that had outraged her. In the wake of Covid-19, some clothing vendor saw a business opportunity: a series of T-shirts with slogans like, “I’m Asian but I’m not Chinese,” “I’m not Chinese, I’m Korean,” “I’m not Chinese, I’m Malaysian,” etc. Her friends’ comments under her post were equally indignant. (So much for predictive algorithms, by the way.)

My first thought was, “I wish we’d had these shirts when I was a kid.”

And then I stopped myself, horrified.

By way of context — not justification — Asians have been siccing people on other Asians for ages. In World War II-era America, some Asian-owned businesses posted signs in their windows specifying that they were not Japanese. I have even met a few Asians of that generation who currently believe that it made political sense for Franklin D. Roosevelt to put Japanese-Americans in internment camps. Just the Japanese.

Which is not to say that mislabeling isn’t dangerous; it can even be deadly. In Highland Park, Mich., in 1982, there was an incident that all Asian-Americans of a certain age remember vividly: A Chinese-American named Vincent Chin was murdered in a strip club by two white autoworkers who assumed he was Japanese — one of the people who, they believed, had destroyed the American auto industry.

It was a tragic case of mistaken identity. But to respond to that horrific incident with “Vincent Chin wasn’t even Japanese!” is to create a dangerous distraction from the core issue: It is never OK to attack anyone based on their race.

For as long as I can remember, I’ve bristled at the Asian-American label. I found it frustratingly meaningless, lumping together diverse groups under one heading in a way that promoted precisely the kind of generalizations we want to prevent. “You all look the same,” or, “I bet you love Excel and bad driving.”

But what I’ve come to realize over the past few weeks is that even if I don’t identify with that designation and find it overly broad, like it or not, it shapes

how people see me. The only path forward for any of us requires a united front.

If someone says, “You Chinese are killing us,” I am in that moment Chinese. Whether I give the other person a piece of my mind or not — awkward, perhaps, from six feet away — my instinct should be indignation, not deflection. Because one of many lessons I’ve learned from the pandemic and its consequences is that focusing on being misidentified by a xenophobe is nothing better than trying to negotiate a more accurate insult.

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