

◆ Classroom Spice ◆

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What's the Significance of April 15, 1947?

Immigrant Students and School

That was the first time an African American athlete, Jackie Robinson, played in the major leagues. Today it seems impossible to think of a time when races and ethnicities other than Caucasian were not welcome on the baseball field

Jackie, the youngest of five children raised in poverty by a single mother, would not have seemed likely to change society. Growing up in Pasadena, California, he faced racism regularly. He did not readily or quietly accept racism. If someone called him a derogatory name, he called them one back. If they threw rocks at him, he threw them back (that's where his athleticism paid off). Although Pasadena passed Jim Crow laws stipulating where Blacks could live, where they could sit in theaters, and when they could swim in the city pool, it did allow integrated schools. While he was a gang member (by today's standards it was not much of a gang—no drugs or violence), his love of sports gave him a way out. He was recruited by Pasadena Junior College and played four sports, and then went on to UCLA as only the third African American to play for the Bruins, and the first student to win varsity letters in four sports! Financial issues forced him to drop out in 1941, and shortly after he joined the Army. He served as a second lieutenant from 1942-1944, but he never

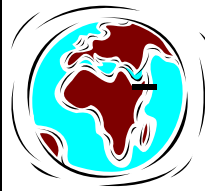
(Continued on page 3)

Immigration, regardless of where it originates, must be taken into account by schools. Children who have immigrated to the United States are attending schools, some more successfully than others. Part of their success is related to the school's sensitivity to other cultures. Some children may come to school with little or no English skills. Some languages may use none, all or most of the English alphabet, but even in the latter case the letters may be pronounced differently. Syntax, grammar, and pronunciation may differ greatly, or only minimally from English. Some children may be literate in the language of their home country, others may not. Some children, regardless of their age, may never have been to school, even in their native country.

Culture will dictate to the children and their parents what is respectful and what is not, not only in their actions but in "yours." Simple gestures may be understood totally differently than the teacher, student, or parent intended. Some children, even of the same culture, may be uncomfortable working together (for example in some countries boys and

girls are not educated together). Food offered in the cafeteria or at a class function may be offensive to some cultures. These are just a few concepts teachers and schools of immigrant students must consider.

Admittedly, many think of Spanish speaking immigrants when the term immigrants is used, and yet immigrant children come from a wide variety of countries. This article will focus on children from Somalia and things that



teachers should consider. Even if you don't have students from Somalia, it is a fast growing segment of English Language Learners in the United States, and you may have some in the future. But even if you never have children from Somalia, this article may help you become more sensitive to what you should consider when dealing with any immigrant student in your school.

First, can you locate Somalia on the map? On the globe pictured above it would be about the left edge of the short horizontal line. Somalia has a long history including Arabs and Persians during the 7th-10th centuries, and

later British occupation and settlement by French and Italians. In 1960 Somalia gained its independence, but unrest followed and from 1991-2000 Somalia had no working government. Since then the government has been tentative, with violence, unrest, and civil war the norm. Add to this, drought and starvation, and perhaps you can better understand why many have left, including the families of your students, and how this past has forever impacted their lives.

Somali is the official language, although there are at least two primary dialects. A written symbolic representation of the Somali language did not exist until 1973, thus the literacy rate is extremely low. The Somali language uses all the English alphabet (except p, v, and z), but they have an additional seven consonants which do not match (c, dh, kh, q, r, x, and ʻ). Some doubled consonants are pronounced more forcibly in Somali than in English. Somali vowels have only one sound (true with a number of other languages as well, which makes learning English more difficult). Like many of the

(Continued on page 4)

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What Famous People had Disabilities?

Match the famous person with his/her disability using the answer bank at the bottom.
*(**Answers are available on page 4.)*

1. Agatha Christie, famous mystery writer
2. Michael J. Fox, actor/activist
3. James Earl Jones, actor
4. Thomas Edison, inventor
5. Mary Tyler Moore, actress
6. Greg Louganis, Olympic swimmer
7. Frida Kahlo, Mexican artist
8. Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart, composer
9. Itzhak Perlman, violinist
10. Julius Caesar, Roman Emperor
11. Arthur Ashe, U.S. tennis player
12. Albert Einstein, scientist
13. Charles Schwab, financier
14. Harriet Tubman, anti-slavery activist and women suffragist
15. Wilma Rudolph, first (African-)American woman to win three gold medals in one Olympic game
16. Walt Disney, cartoonist
17. Tom Cruise, actor
18. LaDonna Fowler, Chairperson of the Subcommittee on Disability, National Congress of American Indians & Co-Founder, American Indian Rehabilitation Right Organization of Warriors
19. Stephen Hawking, astrophysicist
20. Franklin D. Roosevelt, thirty-second President of the United States
21. Ludwig van Beethoven, 18th century composer

Answer Bank

- | | | |
|--|-----------------------|---|
| A. Tourette's Syndrome | B. Seizure Disorder | C. Lou Gehrig's Disease (Amyotrophic Lateral Sclerosis) |
| D. Learning Disability | E. Polio | F. Speech Impairment/Stuttering |
| G. Paraplegia | H. Hearing Impairment | I. HIV/AIDS |
| K. Parkinson's | L. Dyslexia | J. Epilepsy |
| O. Spinal Cord Injury (Wheelchair bound) | M. Depression | N. Diabetes |

Information was derived from

http://www.adl.org/education/curriculum_connections/fall_2005/fall_2005_lesson5_sb_famous.asp

(Robinson—cont'd from page 1)

saw combat as he was court-martialed after refusing to move to the back of a segregated bus during training in Texas. Eventually he was acquitted and given an honorable discharge.

He went on to play baseball in the Negro Leagues, and in 1945 the Brooklyn Dodgers' vice president asked Jackie to help integrate major league baseball. Jackie first had to promise not to fight back when confronted with racism. He started with the farm team. The racial slurs and abuse, even threats, came not just from the crowds, but often from his own teammates as well. While his .349 batting average and .985 fielding percentage his first year led to the big leagues the next year, racism followed him. Teammates and opposing teams threatened not to play. Not everyone hated Jackie; there were white teammates, particularly Pee Wee Reese, who welcomed him onto the team. And Dodger manager Durocher saying he would sooner trade the dissidents than Robinson helped to quiet some of the antagonism. But the best weapon against racism was Jackie's talent. His first year he hit 12 home runs, led the National League in stolen bases, helped the Dodgers win the National League Pennant, and was named Rookie of the Year. In 1949 he was named the National League's Most Valuable Player.

Jackie used his success to help promote inclusion of African American athletes, civil rights, and social and political causes. He retired from baseball in 1957. Later he served on the board of the NAACP. He was the first African American inducted into the Baseball Hall of Fame in 1962, and his Dodger Uniform number "42" was retired in 1972 (he died later that year). In 1997 his number 42 was the first and only number to be retired by Major League Baseball, meaning no future player on any major league team could wear it.

Martin Luther King, Jr. said Robinson was "a sit-inner before sit-ins, a freedom rider before freedom riders." And writer Jonathan Eig said, "Robinson showed black Americans what was possible. He showed white Americans what was inevitable." And that is why April 15, 1947 is important.

The Literature Connection

In some ways there are too many books that address disabilities in children's literature to include a comprehensive review here, and in other ways too few. There are books which stress the person first and the disability second, that promote empathy and not pity, that promote respect and acceptance of those who are different, that stress accomplishments and abilities, and that feature friendships, challenges, and the daily lives of those with disabilities. However, these must be actively searched for as they tend to be more the exception than the rule.

In this issue, instead of book reviews you will be introduced to resources which include annotated bibliographies for a wide range of disabilities. For example, the Anti-Discrimination League (ADL) has an excellent website with an annotated bibliography of 34 books for students from K-6th grade and includes disabilities such as deafness, blindness, dyslexia, ADD, learning disabilities, and cerebral palsy. Go to <http://www.adl.org/bibliography/default.asp?whichCat=2&whichSubCat=54>.

Another great source for teachers is found at <http://www.state.nj.us/humanservices/dds/publications/Master%20Biblio-childrens%20disabilitybooks.pdf>.



This is a 53-page annotated bibliography of children's literature addressing disabilities, categorized by age PK-5, 6-11, and 11-14. It covers a **wide range** including muscular dystrophy, diabetes, epilepsy, dwarfism, arthritis, Tourette's, and cancer.

A publication of the National Dissemination Center for Children with Disabilities (NICHCY) at <http://www.nichcy.org/pubs/bibliog/bib5txt.htm#autism> includes a bibliography on AD/HD, autism, blindness, hearing impairment, Down syndrome, learning disabilities, physical disabilities and other serious medical or life-threatening conditions. A related site lists books for 1984-1994 at <http://www.kidsource.com/NICHCY/literature.html>.

The Council for Exceptional Children sponsors the Dolly Gray Award for Children's Literature in Developmental Disabilities recognizing authors, illustrators, and publishers of high quality fictional children's books that appropriately portray individuals with developmental disabilities. Go to http://www.ddcec.org/secondarypages/dollygray/Dolly_Gray_Children's_Literature_Award.html.

Note—For some interesting "research" on this topic, visit <http://www.edchange.org/multicultural/papers/literature2.html>.

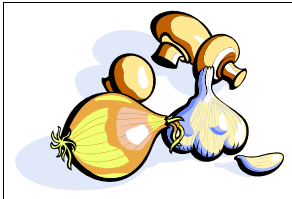
What's So Special About David Paterson?

Relatively few people in the United States had heard of David Paterson until March 2008. David is 53 years old, has a law degree, is an adjunct faculty member of Columbia University, has lived in Harlem until recently, and will probably move back after his current job. He is African American, blind, and oh, yes, the Governor of New York.

Mr. Paterson has been blind since the age of 3 months when an ear infection spread to his optic nerve. He is sightless in his left eye with 20/400 in his right. He does not read Braille, and has never used a seeing-eye dog or a cane. He can read for short periods with material very close to his face, but relies primarily on voice messages and dictation. He has learned to memorize speeches, be a good listener, and to think deductively. He loves physical activities, including running mara-

thons and basketball.

He has served as the representative from Harlem in the New York State Senate for 20 years (the youngest senator in New York history). He was the first non-white minority leader of the New York State Senate, and in 2004 made history by addressing the Democratic National Convention. In 2007 he was elected as New York's Lieutenant Governor. He has been active in the fight for stem cell research, renewable energy sources, the prevention of domestic violence, the promotion of minority- and women-owned businesses, and advocacy for the visually and physically impaired. Surprising many, he is an advocate of Hillary Clinton. So what's special about David Paterson? Quite a lot! Keep an eye on his career.



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available at our website:
<http://www.usao.edu/Classroom-Spice>

Answers for page 2 quiz: 1-d, 2-k,
3-f, 4-h, 5-n, 6-l & m, 7-g, 8-a, 9-g,
10-b, 11-i, 12-l, 13-d, 14-j, 15-e,
16-l, 17-d, 18-o, 19-c, 20-e, 21-h

In This Issue...

Immigration; April 15th; Disability Quiz; David Paterson; Literature Connection; Blind Gov.

Who was the First Legally Blind Governor?

Surprise, it was not David Paterson. It was actually Bob Riley. As Lt. Governor, he became the interim governor of Arkansas for 11 days in January 1975, between Governor Bumpers' resignation to join the U.S.

Senate and successor Governor Pryor's taking office. Riley was blinded in WWII. He "dictated" his doctoral dissertation and became a college professor of political science. His portrait hangs in the Governor's Conference Room with all the other Arkansas Governors.

(Immigration—Cont'd from page 1)
romance languages Somali has definite articles with gender suffixes. In Somali, differences in gender, number, or case are denoted by a change in "tone," thus making use of apostrophes by Somali students to show possession difficult. In Somali, there are only four prepositions; in English there are many. Verbs usually come at the end of a Somali sentence; and Somali use proverbs liberally and may try to force translated Somali proverbs or newly learned English sayings into conversation inappropriately.

Meat is rarely eaten by Somali and pork is never eaten. Meat must be slaughtered in a certain way, so in the U.S., "kosher" foods are usually eaten. Many Somali still eat using three fingers of their "right" hand.

Handshakes are only done

between the same genders, and only with the right hand. The left hand is used for hygiene.

In Somalia, there is a definite caste system, based in part on clan affiliation, occupation, and color of skin. There is also a specific division of labor between the genders. Somalis in general believe in many American values: independence, democracy, and individualism. They also are very proud and find saving face very important. They are often opinionated, respect strength, challenge others, and do not believe in expressing their appreciation verbally. Traditionally, women are expected to submit to men (although women have recently gained status), wear full length dresses, and though the Muslim veil is not required, a head scarf is. Generally women do not socialize with men in public places. Note that school girls are allowed to wear trou-

sers, shirts, and scarves.

Children are raised in a strict but loving home, frequently by a single parent. Somalis seldom celebrate birthdays. Children are taught to work, be self-reliant and independent starting at about age five, with little time for play. Boys and girls are kept separate until marriageable age. Education has historically been limited, especially for girls.

Teachers must be aware of language, values, child rearing methods, food, and socialization practices when working with immigrant families. Also, they should be aware of the psychological state of mind shaped by the life that was left behind.

To find additional information on Somalia, and some basic Somali vocabulary and phrases, go to <http://www.cal.org/co/somali/sintro.html> or <http://www.somaliculture.net/language/index.html>.