

A special thanks to Sharon Chappel of Franklin-McKinley School District in San Jose, California; Susana Loza, of The California Council for the Humanities; and Rebecca Schultz of Young Audiences of Northern California.

This handbook is dedicated to Jack, his cartooning, and his humorous wisdom.

With his blessings,  
may we use his cartoons to  
stop hurting each other and ourselves.

Emi Matsuoka Young and Megumi



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# The Challenge

Instead of resorting to revenge, “Sketching Justice” challenged youth to educate the prejudiced.

We asked them to answer:

- How are you going to educate people who have reduced you to a bunch of stereotypes?
- How are you going to educate them that you are much, much more, with unique talents, personality, and feelings?

The Jack Matsuoka’s story and his sketches in *Poston Camp II, Block 211* inspired youth to examine their own personal experiences of social injustice and their fears, outrage, and sadness.

"Sketching Justice" evolved from *Poston Camp II, Block 211*, and gave youth hope and life skills for themselves through writing and sketching. These skills allowed them to make concrete plans for working towards social justice, and discover that this process can be fun.

# Preparation

## Objectives

Students will create (sketch and write)

- pencil<sup>1</sup> one-panel<sup>2</sup> sketches with
- stories in dialogue format (within “bubbles”), or descriptive paragraphs.

Students will gain an understanding of

- ineffectiveness of violence and revenge to combat injustice
- non-violent conflict-resolution

Students will recognize

- injustice they have personally experienced,
- their feelings about the injustice they experienced, and
- their grand and creative ability to plan for justice (“positive social action”)

Students will gain an appreciation for their own and other students’

- stories,
- sketches, and
- writing

## Time Requirements

- for the lessons, one class period a week for five weeks (say, every Monday)
- to complete the assignments, one to four additional class periods per week.

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<sup>1</sup> optional: pen, colored pencils

<sup>2</sup> optional: multiple panels

## What You Will Need

### Flexibility

The five lessons were originally designed to be completed in five class periods, over five weeks. Students then can use the four days in between to complete the assignments, receiving whatever help they need.

Depending on the motivational, educational, and/or experiential level,

- students may need more time to complete their work (sketch, write, and mount their work.)
- students may need one-on-one help.
- you may need more staff: aids and volunteers.

### Minimum Materials

- Jack Matsuoka’s *Poston Camp II, Block 211*
- 8-1/2”x11” lined sheets of paper
- 8-1/2”x11” blank sheets of paper
- pencils, erasers

### Materials for Exhibition

- colored poster board or matte board<sup>3</sup>
- 3M Heavy-Duty Mounting Squares, 1” Square, Double Stick Foam Tape<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> A local framing shop may be willing to donate their left-over pieces.

<sup>4</sup> Through trial-and-error, we discovered that any other tape was too weak to reliably keep the pieces from falling apart for any period.





## Lesson Plans vs. *What Really Happened*

### When, Where, Who, and What:

- *School Year:* 2003-2004
- *Timeline:* five weeks
- *Students:* thirteen 8<sup>th</sup> grade students of various ethnic backgrounds, in San José, California.
- *Staff:* Megumi, four CityYear volunteers (college age)
- *Exhibition of student sketches and writing at:*
  - a school-wide "Multi-Cultural Fair," and
  - Japanese American Museum of San José

# Lesson 1:

## Jack's Story, Our Stories

### ***The Lesson Plan:***

- Show Jack Matsuoka's (and other artists') sketches and narratives.
- Brainstorm/discuss what experiences students may want to sketch and write about. Inform that any topic is acceptable (e.g., incarceration, questioning authority, smoking, being challenged socially and academically in school, overcrowded living conditions, all of which are depicted in Jack Matsuoka's stories and sketches).
- Minimize shame or unease about the challenges in students' lives.
- Identify strengths students witness in their communities to counteract the difficulties (e.g., festivals, sports, ethnic pride, family gatherings, respect for their cultures, customs, elders).
- Students will individually decide on what life story to sketch and write about.

### ***What Really Happened:***

#### **Identifying with Jack**

After I introduced myself, I started the lesson by announcing: "In this class, you'll be sketching and writing about your own personal story about injustice and justice,

a real story about you. When you finish your project, your work may be exhibited at a museum in downtown San José.



You will learn about a teenager named Jack who decided to sketch and write about the injustices he experienced. Years later, he published a book about it to educate us about it. He worked toward justice by educating us all. Your assignment is to sketch and write about your experiences with injustice and how you plan to work toward justice, like Jack."

I spent the majority of the session telling the story of Jack Matsuoka. We interacted with students (e.g., audience participation) at any point of the story to keep their attention interest.

To involve all students, I asked questions they can answer by raising their hands (e.g., "Jack was born and raised in Watsonville. Raise your hand if you've been to

Watsonville.” “Jack loved sports. Who here likes sports?” “Jack wanted to go to college. How many of you are planning to attend college?”).

To engage their interest at a higher level, I asked direct questions, too (e.g., what would you take to a prison camp if you could take only what you could carry?).



I requested **name tags** be placed on their desks, so I can call on each student individually.

I validated any answers they gave (e.g., I'd take my GameBoy). I told the stories of teenagers having similar “impractical” ideas about taking what they considered “necessities” (e.g., Harry Kitano, a noted UCLA Sociology professor, who took his trombone against his more practical mother's wishes. He started a band, and was able to leave camp for a day to play for a high school prom in town.)

I added bits of history as needed (“World War II was a war that most of Europe and Asia was fighting. United States at first stayed out of it, but when Japan bombed

Pearl Harbor, the entire country was so hysterical, President Roosevelt had a pretty easy time convincing Americans to join the war.”)

I ended the lesson by repeating the announcement at the beginning, and adding a bit more: “In this class, you'll be you will be sketching and writing about your own personal story about injustice and justice, a real story about you. When you finish your project, your work may be exhibited at a museum in downtown San José. Today, you learned about a teenager, named Jack, who decided to sketch and write about the injustices he experienced. Years later, he published a book about it to educate us about it. He worked toward justice by educating us all. Be thinking about what story you'd like to tell.”



I found that when I used **humor**, students relaxed, withdrew their skepticism easier. They became more open to new ideas, willing to try unfamiliar strategies, and used creative problem-solving skills.



The first day ended having time to do no more than introduce myself and storytelling about Jack. At first, I was disappointed at how little I accomplished. Later, I realized that this personal and emotional connection to Jack and his story was perhaps more important than anything else. By identifying with Jack, his sketches, and his story, students probably were better able to grasp the vision of this project and felt empowered for the work ahead.

I added history facts because I saw blank looks when I referred to World War II. Students seemed confused about the definitions of prejudice, justice, and injustice, so I asked the CityYear volunteers, and they told us they were planning to work on definitions of words this week.

## Lesson 2: Write Our Stories

### ***The Lesson Plan:***

- Write four paragraphs about those incidences using these four prompts:
  - 1) What happened?
  - 2) How did you feel<sup>5</sup>?
  - 3) What did you do?
  - 4) Justice (Positive Social Action)<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> Make sure students use words that describe feelings, such as mad, sad, and happy, not “I felt like punching him,” or “I felt like spitting in her face.”

- Explore three types of narratives: titles, “dialogue bubbles,” and descriptive paragraph.
- Practice exaggerating physical features, sketching various facial expressions, body postures, foreground and background.
- Create first drafts of narratives.

### ***What Really Happened:***

#### **Popular Belief: Justice = Revenge?**

#### **Introducing: Justice ≠ Revenge**

We spent this session having each student tell a personal story of when s/he experienced social injustice, how s/he felt, and what they did about it. Then I worked with each story to help students choose a “Positive Social Action.”

The students seem to understand and come up with personal stories experiencing “Injustice,” especially in terms of racism. I decided to focus on racism and put aside social injustice of other types (e.g., socioeconomic class, age, learning styles, physical disability.)

The challenge came when I asked how they might reverse that injustice, and work towards justice. Most students wanted revenge, violent revenge. No matter how many examples of social justice I gave, students equated “justice” with “revenge.” They were completely stumped when I told them that their social action needed

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<sup>6</sup> We substituted the term, “justice” with “positive social action” so students could disengage their solid conviction that the only way to achieve “justice” was through revenge.

to be positive. I pointed at the posters of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. and Cesar Chavez hanging in their classroom. I asked how they worked for “justice.” No student offered an answer. Hmm . . .

I was speechless for a few seconds. I’d worked with younger students who had said the same thing, but I expected these older students to have a more mature attitude. *Wrong! They’re more entrenched in the popular notion that Justice = Revenge!* This was easy to realize, in hindsight.

JUSTICE = REVENGE?



To lose your teenage audience:  
Use hypothetical and generalized stories of injustice.

Like a total clueless academician, I asked them: If you took out your frustration and anger against the offenders

violently, what will happen? When you are harassed or insulted, will fighting and running away make the offenders stop doing “that” again? Might our violence or avoidance make us feel “less than” *and* “strengthen” their prejudice against us? I asked the students to consider the consequences of violence, and how violence fails to correct the offenders’ prejudices against the students and the ethnicity they represented. *They fell asleep.*

JUSTICE ≠ REVENGE



To connect with your 8<sup>th</sup> grade audience:  
Use *their* stories!

I took each of their stories, one-by-one, in front of the class, and had the students hypothesize the consequences of revenge, their future. I took the story of a boy who said a stranger drove by and called him a name. His idea of “justice” was to get his cousin as an

ally and beat up the offender. I asked, “And, how would that help? Would it stop him from calling you names again? Or, would it convince him that you are evil, deserving of the name he called you?”

As I worked each personal story, the students began to voice their prediction that revenge, particularly, violence had little power to change the offending behavior of others. They remembered the cycle of name-calling escalating, recalled other non-physical threats and attacks leading to more violence. Walking away stopped the escalation, and so was better than violence, but accomplished nothing.

With time running out, I postponed talking about “Justice (Positive Social Action)” until later. When I passed out the paper to have students begin writing their stories of injustice, these students, who had been sharing their stories with much animation, became hesitant. All I was asking was for them to write:

- 1) What happened?
- 2) How did you feel?
- 3) What did you do?

It seemed that many of these students had great difficulty with spelling, sentence construction, and expressing themselves through writing. I looked to the CityYear volunteers to help them with the writing task the rest of the week. Was it too much?

## Lesson 3: Sketch Our Stories

### ***The Lesson Plan:***

- Create first draft of sketches.
- Learn about sketching techniques and vocabulary of sketching terms (e.g., exaggerating physical features, shading, perspectives, foreground and background, caricatures, cartooning, rough draft and final draft).

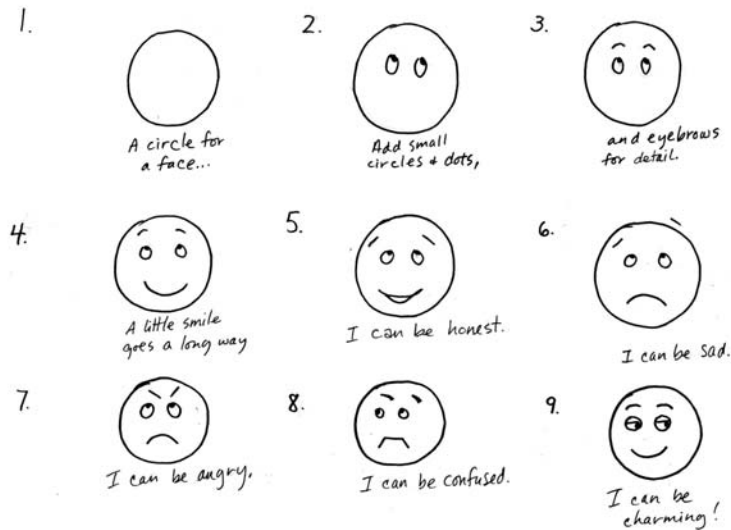
### ***What Really Happened: We Can All Sketch!***

We took a break from talking and writing about Justice (Positive Social Action) for this session. The CityYear volunteers told me that having students write was “like pulling teeth,” and they needed more days to write the first three paragraphs of 1) What Happened, 2) How Did You Feel, and 3) What Did You Do. So we sketched.

With me demonstrating on their whiteboard, we covered various sketching techniques. I started with a simple “smiley face” and progressed by adding features such as eyebrows, eyelids, and hair. A majority were trying, and “getting it.”

We also practiced stick figures, and I noticed many had glazed looks. Due to the lack of time, I quickly reviewed

shading and perspectives without waiting for each student to try these concepts on their own sheets of paper.



When I asked the students how their stories were coming along, they looked at me as if to say, “What stories?” Apparently, they didn’t have time to work on them since the last lesson.

I asked them to make some preliminary sketches for their stories, since even I remembered most of their stories. For those students who claimed they’d forgotten their stories, I had the rest of the class remind them.

I saw that the CityYear volunteers had made big posters of the prompts:

1) What happened?

- 2) How did you feel?
- 3) What did you do?
- 4) Positive Social Action

After class, I scanned the worksheets and quizzes the students completed on definitions. They know “racism,” but have a hard time defining words like “class,” “ethnicity” and “justice” even with multiple choice questions.

## Lesson 4: Final Drafts

### ***The Lesson Plan:***

- Sketch and write final drafts
- Mount final drafts on poster paper or matte board
- If time allows, and materials are available, experiment with adding color (colored pencils) to hand-written stories and/or to sketches.

### ***What Really Happened:***

#### **If Justice isn’t Revenge, What is it?**

We were nowhere near writing final drafts. Most students had only barely written first drafts of the first three paragraphs based on the first three prompts,

- 1) What happened?
- 2) How did you feel?
- 3) What did you do?

The challenge for each of the students was in planning a “Positive Social Action.” I had a student tell me of his story of a stranger who drove by and called him a name. I asked the student, “Do you think he’d do this if he knew all your wonderful qualities?” He smiled like he thought I was a nut. On the other hand, I noticed his face light up. So I took a chance. Although it must have been embarrassing, I remarked, “He must not know how wonderful you are!”

The rest of the class laughed, but I didn’t take that as an insult. It was a sign that they were paying close attention.

## Might prejudice be based on ignorance?

I asked the student, “Might his prejudice be based on ignorance? Would this guy who called you a name reduce you to a bunch of stereotypes if he knew all of your wonderful gifts?” I asked if he was good at dancing, martial arts, football, and a whole lot of other things, and he admitted he was “okay” at basketball.

I said, “Well, he doesn’t even know you, does he? You aren’t just a stereotype! He’s ignorant!” Other students were smiling and giggling, but I didn’t know if they were agreeing with me, or thought I was entertaining.

I took a chance, and went on with my convincing: “If prejudice is based on ignorance, then you could educate the ignorant, right? Let them know how great you are, right?”

More giggling. Lots of bright faces. They liked me, and I had their attention!

“What can you do to let him know that Mexicans aren’t automatically bad? How can you educate him/her/them that you are a person with talents, personality, and worth treating with respect?”

## How are you going to educate the people who have reduced you to a bunch of stereotypes?

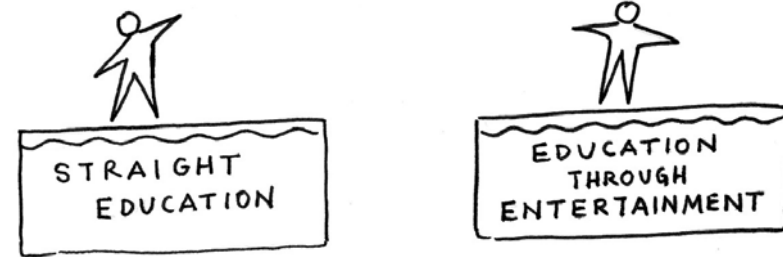
## How are you going to show them that you are much, much more, with talents, personality, and feelings?

The last question stomped them. They were ready to use their imagination, but needed a formula to plug into. They were bombarded with formulas for responding with revenge in the popular culture (e.g., “The Terminator” series). They needed a different formula to “educate/show the world” that they were much much more than a bunch of stereotypes.

The formula was straight-forward: I worked with each student and his/her personal story, in front of the entire class. I wrote on the whiteboard two broad categories of “education” from which they could choose: A) *Straight Education* or B) *Education through Entertainment*.

A) *Straight Education* included: confronting and educating the person who treated them unjustly about their cultures; teaching classes to students; training for teachers; community teach-ins; demonstrations and picketing

B) *Education through Entertainment* included: organizing fairs or festivals featuring their cultures; teaching, performing, promoting ethnic dances (martial arts, visual arts) or organizing their exhibition; writing, directing, producing, promoting movies or plays about their culture; writing, directing, producing, hosting a TV talk show or sit-com featuring their culture.

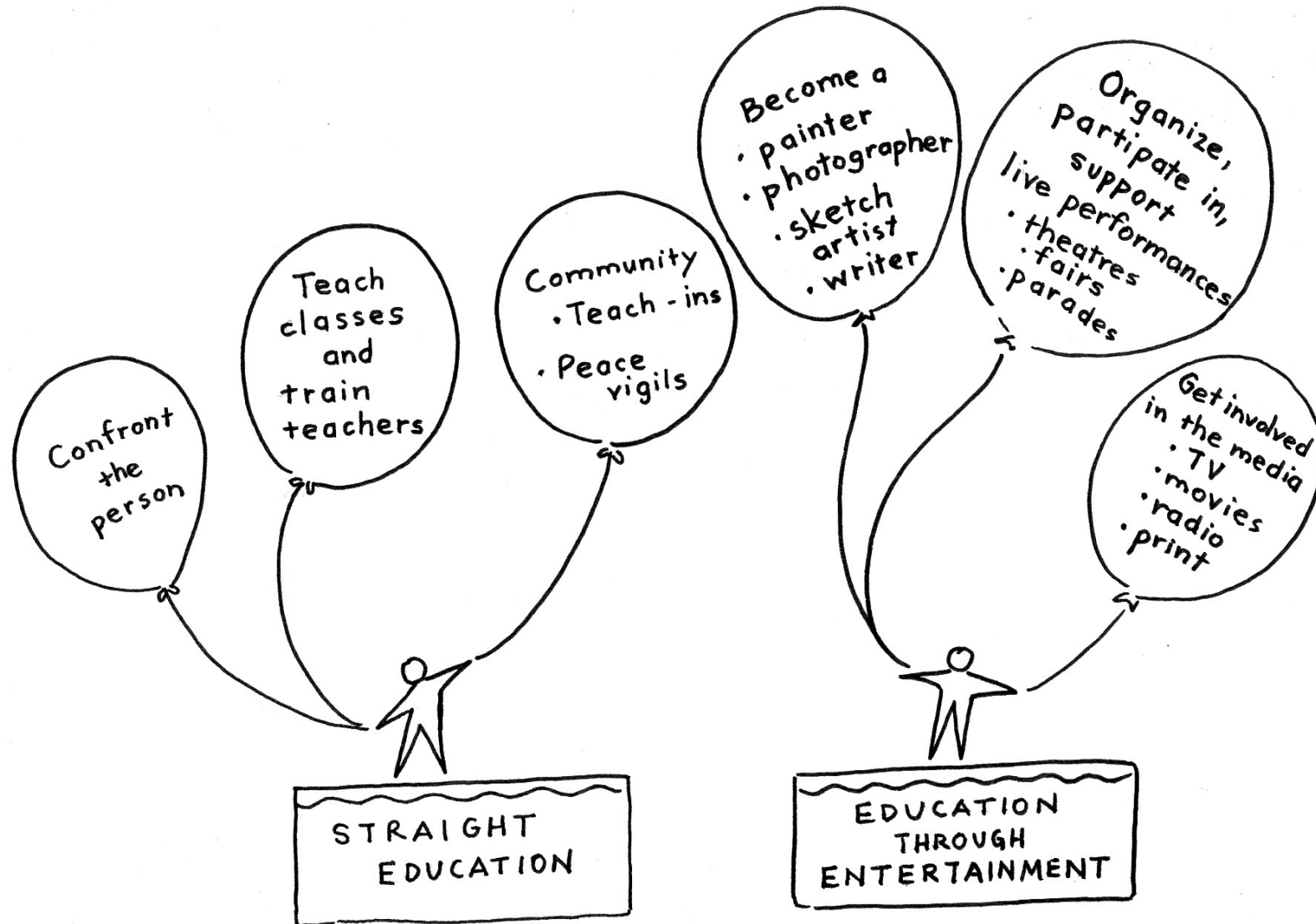


I told them to “go wild” with their imagination; anything was possible. Use fantasy! They could go back in time and react differently than they did. They could go ahead in time, and they were famous this-or-that. I lead them through each choice, and then had them describe in detail their plans. If they chose “hosting a TV talk show featuring their culture,” for example, I asked them what education they may need to become a talk show host, what time the show would air, who the talk show guests might be, etc.

Freely laughing or deadly serious about their far-fetched and not so far-fetched ideas, students seemed absorbed in planning their future. I was thoroughly impressed with the students’ enthusiasm and energy.



Some ways to educate people who have reduced you to a bunch of stereotypes.  
Some ways to show them that you are much much more, with talents, personality, and feelings.



# Lesson 5: Critique

## ***The Lesson Plan:***

Evaluate their own and each other's stories and sketches. First, stories and accompanying sketches are distributed to tables, one student work to a table. A critique sheet, with space for three students to comment, is placed next to each student work. Then, students take three rounds *in silence*, circulating through the classroom, writing comments on the blank sheets of paper.

A) Each sketch will receive evaluation comments from a limited number of students (e.g., three) due to time constraints.

Round 1: Specific Commendations

e.g., "I think these (words, faces, etc.) really express your (feelings, determination, etc) well."

Round 2: Specific Recommendations

e.g., "I think your message would be stronger if X."

Round 3: The impact of story/sketches/narrative on you.

e.g., "This artwork helped me understand X"

B) If time allows, this final session will end with students making a class presentation with their sketches/narratives, making three points:

- 1) The part of this residency I like the best was . . .
- 2) The part that was the hardest was...
- 3) The most valuable thing I learned was...

## ***What Really Happened: Feedback Time***

The CityYear volunteers worked one-on-one intensively with each student to assist them in writing, sketching, and mounting their work. The stories and sketches were impressive, especially because every single student had a "positive social action" plan!



Scanning sketches is much easier *before* mounting them on poster boards or matte boards!

I wondered if the students really took their justice plans to heart. Perhaps ideas, such as becoming a TV talk show host was so far out of their individual identity that they could not invest in such plans.

Two of the students had plans that were immediately executable, because the prejudiced were people they knew. One student wrote that the prejudiced person was her own mother, and she would confront her, that she'd tell her she felt the right to date boys who weren't her ethnicity.

I asked, “Wow, are you really going to confront your mother?”

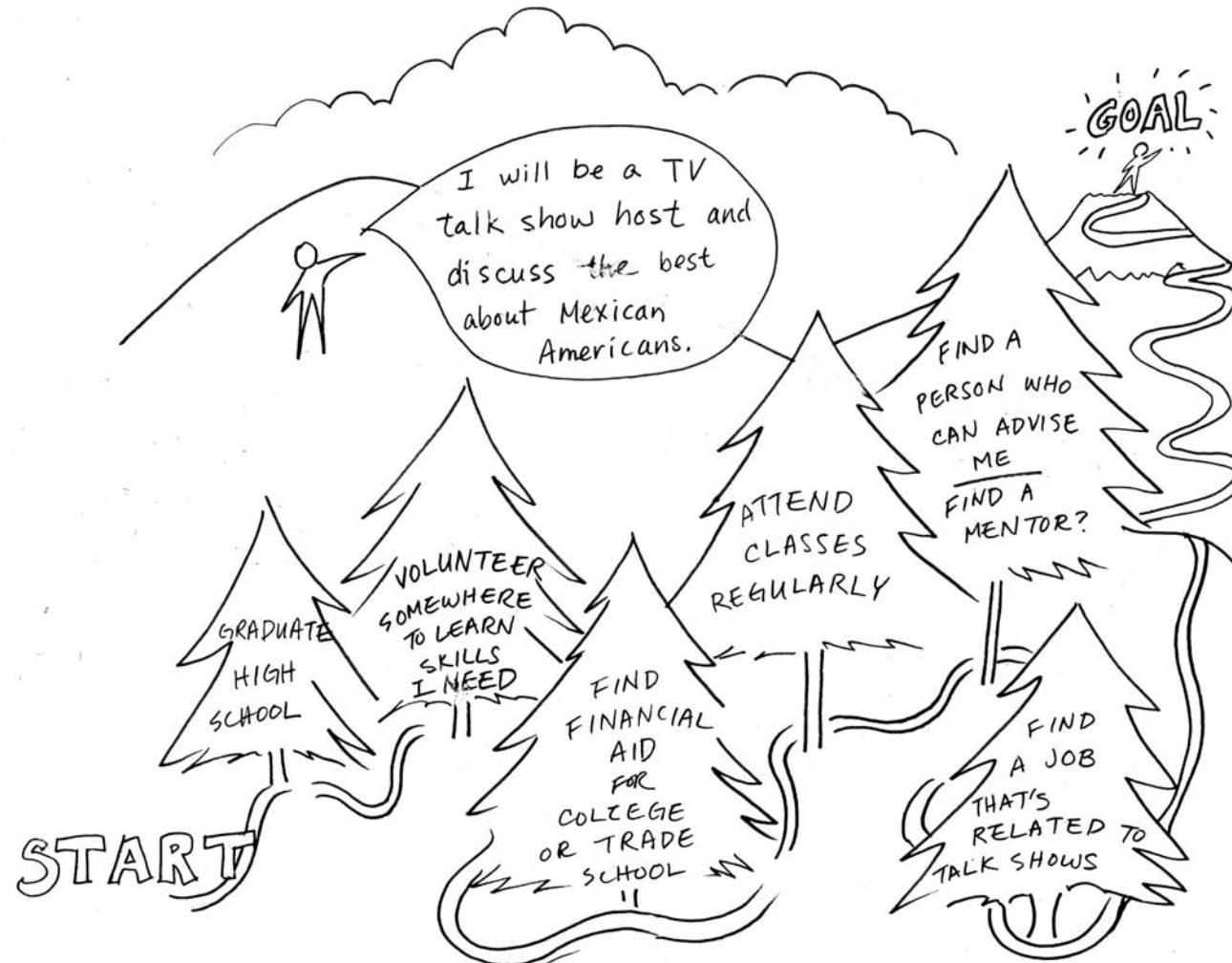
She answered simply, and confidently, “I already did.”

We had time to complete Part A, but not B. Students had difficulty outwardly showing appreciation of their own or each other’s work, and we had to repeatedly remind them that this was a *positive* critique session. They resisted listing specific details that made the sketches and the writing positive. I felt discouraged that they didn’t show a little more enthusiasm. Perhaps we needed more time to teach them about positive critique.

On a more cheerful note, they gave me a clear indication that they thought that their own work was worth exhibiting. Every student except one signed a permission form for me to exhibit their work at Japanese American Museum of San José.

Although the projects came out beautifully – the writing was eye-opening and emotional, and the sketches reflective of these students, I wondered what impact this project had on their day-to-day lives, long-term. I suppose all teachers have those questions.

## Optional Activities



## 1. Celebration and Exhibition

### ***The Lesson Plan:***

#### Celebration

- Can be as simple as an in-class celebration with positive critiques
- Can be elaborate as an all-school multi-cultural fair, or a reception at a museum

#### Exhibition

- Can be as simple as exhibiting, with push pins on class walls, the completed work to show to classmates and teachers at Open House

Can be as elaborate as an exhibition at a museum with proper mounting techniques.

### ***What Really Happened: Two Exhibits, at the Students' School and at a Real Museum!***

Student work was exhibited at their middle school during a "Multi-Cultural Fair," which the CityYear volunteers organized. I could not attend it, but have the CityYear volunteers' report that it went well.

A Japanese American Museum of San José board member selected seven out of the original thirteen student work and exhibited them at the museum, beginning June 2004. CityYear volunteers came to see the exhibit on their own time, and enjoyed seeing the fruits of their and students' labor publicly shown.

Sadly, we were unable to organize a field trip for the students to see it. We don't know if any of the students have visited the museum on their own.

Happily, five of the seven student work are still on display currently, per request of the Museum board of directors.

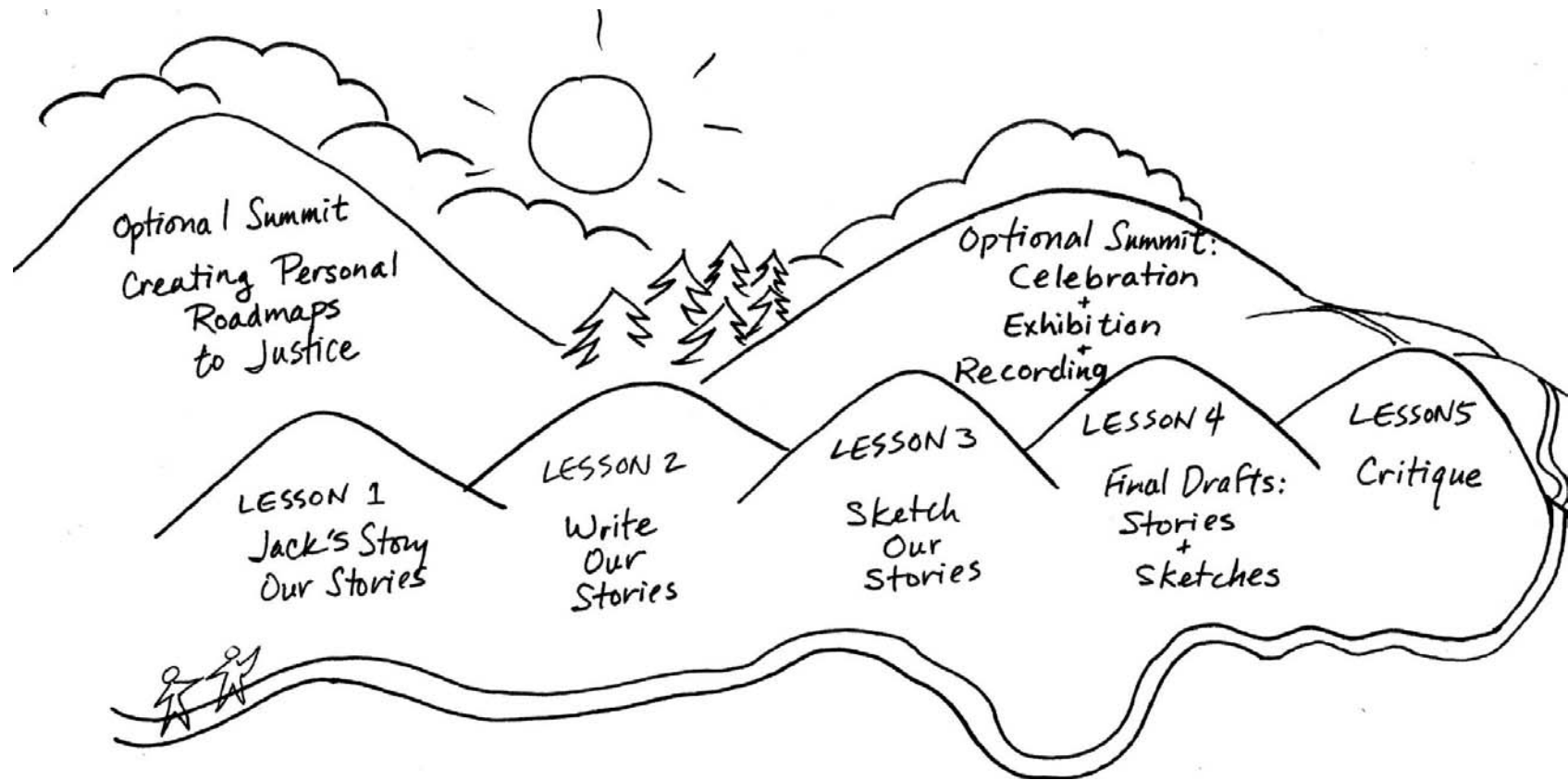
## 2. Creating Personal Roadmaps

A logical follow-up to "Sketching Justice" would be to work with students to create their own conflict-resolution plan for injustice. Perhaps it could be called "Creating Personal Roadmaps to Justice." It's a good idea that was outside the scope of this project. On the other hand, there are already good resources available!<sup>7</sup>

- Can be as simple as assigning students to sketch and write about the specific steps they will take to realize their "Positive Social Action"
- Can be as personal as mediating a meeting with the offender
- Can be as elaborate as instituting a school-wide conflict-resolution program

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<sup>7</sup> National Youth Violence Prevention website <[www.safeyouth.org](http://www.safeyouth.org)>.



## “Sketching Justice” in a Nutshell

*The project is based on students' experience with injustice, and their plans to work towards justice. Our students, once they heard Jack's story, were able to recall incidences when they were treated unfairly, or called insulting names and harassed, because of prejudice.*

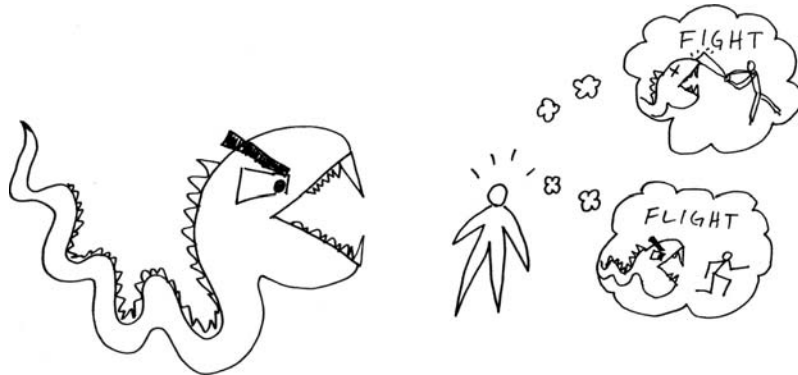
### What happened?

*We've all experienced injustice. For some of us, this unfair treatment by someone is a common occurrence. For others of us, one such experience has been enough to leave a highly charged impression.*



## How did you feel?

*It's natural to want to fight or run away when we face conflict. Suddenly faced-to-face with a saber-toothed snake, we would have welcomed that rush of adrenalin we call the "fight-or-flight" response. With that energy, we had a better chance of surviving, by fighting the beast, or running away. "Fight" and "flight" are instinctual, survival reflexes that have helped us survive as a species, and still serve us if we are physically threatened or attacked.*



The problem is that most of our conflicts are *not* immediate physical threats or attacks. Fighting and fleeing cannot solve the problem of the prejudiced treating us unfairly, abusing us verbally, or harassing us non-physically.

*We can all be honest about our feelings, like Jack.* When students hear the story of what Jack saw and experienced during World War II as an American teenager, they are completely entranced.

Captivated by the humorous yet mad-sad-confused sketches, they felt Jack's panic as a teenager as the FBI pounded on the door. They felt Jack's sadness and anger as he and other Japanese Americans were torn from their homes. Students identified with the teenage Jack, and honestly opened up to their own feelings.



## What did you do?

*As innocent as Jack was, and as wrong as internment was, Jack couldn't do fight or run away from it.* When explained, students understood that Jack could not fight the United States government, or run away from the camp. They "get it" that his trying to use violence, or escaping would have been used against him as a twisted evidence that he was dangerous and guilty.

The fight-or-flight response would have only gotten Jack in more trouble, and he would not have gotten the United States government to treat him better. Students identified with Jack's fear and sense of powerlessness.

## Positive Social Action



*We can take Positive Social Action, like Jack. Jack was able to fight the prejudice he experienced as a youth by creating a book of sketches and writing of his internment experiences. He educated the prejudiced, those who thought he was simply a spy, saboteur, or an enemy of the United States solely based on his Japanese heritage. He educated them that he was a complex, unique person. Using Jack Matsuoka as a role model, we equated “Working for Justice” as “Positive Social Action,” which we defined as “educating the offender.”*

**Justice = Positive Social Action = Educating the Prejudiced**

# Biographies

Jack Matsuoka was a 16-year old when interned in a World War II internment camp in Arizona, administered by the War Relocation Authority. He is a retired professional cartoonist with many community projects to his credit. Through California Civil Liberties Public Education Program he recently republished his book, *Poston Camp II, Block 211*, a collection of sketches and writings about camp life.

Emi Matsuoka Young is an adult education ESL instructor, multiple-subject credentialed teacher, a corporate interpersonal and technical skills trainer, and volunteer presenter at Fremont schools. And yes, she's Jack's daughter.

Storyteller Megumi, also known by her legal name, Grace Fleming, shares her talent by giving a sensitive and powerful voice to the struggles and strengths of the Japanese Americans. She's definitely a member of the Jack Matsuoka fan club.



Jack Matsuoka



Emi Matsuoka Young



Megumi