

L.A. youth teacher's guide

Publishing Schedule

L.A. Youth will begin arriving Wed. March 26

Key to using the March-April 2008 issue:

ARTICLE and PAGE NUMBER	KEY TEACHING POINTS
<p>How accepting is your school of gay students? p. 5 Reacting to the murder of 15-year-old Lawrence King, L.A. Youth staff writers say their schools could be more accepting places for gay and lesbian students.</p>	<p>How do students at your school treat gay and lesbian students? What could students do to help gay teens feel accepted?</p>
<p>Essay contest: What do you think of friendship? pp. 6-7 Our winners write about meeting true friends on a volleyball team and an unexpected friendship.</p>	<p>Enter our new essay contest, "What's your favorite day of the week?" See page 7 in the newspaper for details and contest deadline.</p>
<p>VJ for a day pp. 8-9 Hosting Mi TRL on MTV's Latin-influenced channel was a dream come true for Jennifer.</p>	<p>Could you imagine yourself on TV? What show would you want to be on?</p>
<p>COVER STORY p. 10 Stacey was excited for her first date and had a great time, despite being nervous and talking too much.</p>	<p>How do you know when you're ready to date? What has influenced your ideas about dating?</p>
<p>Alone again p. 11 Daniel tries to get over being dumped by his girlfriend. (Re-published from 1997 as part of our 20th anniversary.)</p>	<p>Have you ever been dumped by someone? What helped you get over the disappointment?</p>
<p>A journalist in the making pp. 16-17 Jennifer says a disorganized journalism class and being censored still taught her about being a reporter.</p>	<p>What career or careers are you interested in? How can you get experience in those fields while in high school?</p>
<p>A better school p. 19 With new books, fewer fights and smaller classes, Jo'Visha is learning more at her new school.</p>	<p>See lesson plan on page 2.</p>
<p>In memory of Shiri pp. 20-21 After Fred's best friend died of a rare form of cancer, he dedicated himself to fighting the disease.</p>	<p>What can you do now about a cause you care about? Even if it seems impossible, what problem do you want to tackle?</p>
<p>Anywhere but home pp. 22-23 I ran away to escape my problems but life on the streets wasn't what I expected.</p>	<p>How do you deal with your problems? How does having someone to talk to when you feel sad or depressed help?</p>
<p>Tuned out p. 25 Chelsea admits she had stopped paying attention to the war in Iraq because it was depressing and distant.</p>	<p>Is it important for teens to know what's going on in Iraq? What can you do to stay informed?</p>

A better school

How smaller classes and more discipline create a better learning environment

A lesson plan based on “A better school” from the March-April 2008 issue of L.A. Youth, in which Jo’Visha McGee wrote about how she thinks her new school, which emphasizes small class sizes and discipline, has helped her learn more.

By Mike Fricano, editor

Grades: 7-12

Subjects: Language Arts, Life Skills

Suggested Time Allowance: 45 minutes-1 hour

Overview: Students will identify what makes a school a good learning environment and ways to make their schools better.

Resources/Materials:

- copies of the L.A. Youth article “A better school” (one per student)
- pens/pencils and paper
- white board or black board

Warm-up discussion:

Ask the students why an education is important and write the answers on the board. They might say to get into college, to get a good job, to contribute to society, to learn things or to be a better person. After writing the list, ask the students what a school should have to provide a good environment for learning. Write down their answers to this question in a separate space. They could say: good teachers, small class sizes, working computers, new books, a safe environment or quiet classrooms.

Now discuss with the students whether their school provides the environment, materials and resources that they just said a school ought to.

Activities:

Reading: Ask your students to read

the article, “A better school” by Jo’Visha on page 19.

As a discussion or as a written assignment, ask students to answer the following questions about Jo’Visha’s article:

What did Jo’Visha think needed improvement at her old school?

- The classes had too many students.
- The administrators didn’t enforce the dress code.
- There was gum under the desks.



- There weren’t enough textbooks.
- The textbooks had tagging in them.
- The students didn’t get enough homework.
- There were too many fights.

How did the conditions at her old school affect Jo’Visha?

- She didn’t feel like paying attention or learning.
- She talked in class too.
- Her grades started to drop because she didn’t do her homework.

How are things different at her new school?

- The school is stricter with the dress code and gum chewing.

- There are new books for every student.
- The classes are smaller.
- The teachers assign more homework.

Why does Jo’Visha think that a stricter school is good?

- She’s learning more because the students behave and teachers can spend time teaching. For example, she can speak in sentences in Spanish class.
- A challenging school will better prepare her for college.
- She’s given more homework and more challenging homework, which mean she’s learning more.

Discussion:

Do students think that they would do well in a strict environment like Jo’Visha’s school? Why or why not? How does Jo’Visha’s school compare to theirs? Do they want their school to be more like her new one? Why or why not?

Assignment:

Have students write a letter to their school’s principal describing ways that they would like to see their school improved. Use Jo’Visha’s story and how she uses specific examples to support her statements as a model so that their letters can maximize their persuasiveness.

Extension activity:

Using the letters to the principal as a basis, invite the principal to the classroom to discuss the students’ suggestions. Organize a meeting at the school among students, teachers, administrators and district officials to discuss ways to improve the school.



Would you like a speaker from L.A. Youth?

Editors Laura Lee and Mike Francano speak about journalism, current events, working as a reporter, how to be a better writer and how students can get involved in L.A. Youth.

Call Laura or Mike at (323) 938-9194 or e-mail llee@layouth.com or mfricano@layouth.com.

THANKS TO TEACHERS who contributed letters to the editor and essays: Jolie Augustine, Wilson MS in Glendale; Alicia Gonzalez, Santa Monica HS; Jacqueline Hartt, East Valley HS in North Hollywood; K. Jackson, Birmingham HS in Van Nuys; Keith Kesler, Excel Charter Academy; Marc Ketchem, Workman HS in City of Industry; Carol Schneider, Gabrielino HS in San Gabriel; Tom Stover, North HS in Torrance; Sarah Ternes, Skirball MS; April Wall, Virgil MS; and Sara Wasaka, Drew MS.

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Next Newcomer's Orientation: Saturday, April 12, 11 a.m.-noon at L.A. Youth 5967 W. Third Street Suite 301, L.A. 90036 (between Fairfax and La Brea)

Call Amanda, Laura or Mike at (323) 938-9194.

L.A. youth

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As a teacher who receives L.A. Youth and believes in what we do, we urgently need your support. We lost our lease and must relocate our office. Your support will help us relocate without disrupting our journalism training program and the quality of the publication you receive six times a year. Your donation will be applied to our anticipated moving expenses, which include first and last month's rent, security deposit, facility upgrades and equipment and furnishing costs.

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