

Assignment for Freedom Fighters Assemble Episode 3

Diversity in the newsroom: How DEI principles can support equal representation

Learning objectives:

The class will hear moderators Cathy Kuhlmeier and John Tinker talk with Myesha Phukan, a 2024 winner of the Student Press Law Center's Courage in Student Journalism Award and now an advocacy intern with the SPLC while a freshman at University of California, Berkley. Her major is legal studies and minor is journalism. While growing up, Phukan watched the news with her family, and creative writing was something she enjoyed. She didn't think about becoming a journalist because the ones she saw on television and in column byline mugshots didn't look like her. Most were men and white. But in high school, creative writing wasn't an option, so she chose to take a journalism class instead. That was the start of an important realization: If marginalized and underrepresented people didn't become journalists, who could really tell their stories? So this became her goal: To ensure her college paper, the *Daily Californian*, and other media she could influence continued to take steps for inclusivity and tried to tell the stories of a diverse community.

Materials needed:

Access to the podcast and computers (or other means to react and apply what students have heard), Notetaking template and copies of Phukan's "Newsroom Diversity Checklist" are included.

Warm-up/prep:

Listen to the 30-minute conversation between Cathy Kuhlmeier, plaintiff in [Hazelwood v. Kuhlmeier](#), and John Tinker, plaintiff, along with his sister Mary Beth, in the [Tinker v. Des Moines Independent School District](#), and Myesha Phukan, [advocacy intern for the Student Press Law Center](#).

Activity 1:

Depending on group size, Activity 1 could be for the entire class if it's a small one or in teams if it's large. Students will use the notetaking template to help them remember important points and where to find them for future reference. Use only the NOTETAKING TEMPLATE for this activity. DO NOT HAND OUT MYESHA'S DIVERSITY CHECKLIST YET.

Your situation: Think of the diverse populations in your school – ethnicity, race, religion, socio-economic situation, etc. Then think of the articles in your student media this year. Whose interests and concerns do you think were covered well? Whose were not? Make a list of what you might be able to do to address this issue and be more inclusive in your coverage. Use Myesha's suggestions you wrote on your notetaking template.

Activity 2:

NOW hand out Myesha's Diversity Checklist. First in your groups and then as a class or media staff as a whole, make your own list for getting better diverse coverage next year.