



TED TALKS

EDUCATION REVOLUTION

TED Talks: Education Revolution
Premieres Tuesday, September 13, 2016, on PBS

Featuring Sal Khan, Anna Deavere Smith, Baratunde Thurston, Sara Ramirez, and Others, the Special is Part of the American Graduate Initiative



*Hosts Baratunde Thurston and Sara Ramirez
Credit: Ryan Lash/TED*

SAN FRANCISCO – Hosted by best-selling author and comedian Baratunde Thurston and actress, musician and activist actress Sara Ramirez, [TED Talks: Education Revolution](#) explores new and innovative approaches to learning and teaching. **TED Talks: Education Revolution** premieres Tuesday, September 13, 2016, 10:00-11:00 p.m. ET ([check local listings](#)) as part of SPOTLIGHT EDUCATION week on PBS and is funded by the Corporation for Public Broadcasting (CPB), as part of “American Graduate: Let’s Make It Happen,” a public

media initiative to help communities ensure more students graduate ready for college and careers.

Filmed live at New York's The Town Hall theater, these new **TED Talks** brings together a wide range of cutting edge thinkers, performers, entrepreneurs, and educators.

Featured speakers include:

- Entrepreneur **Sal Khan**, the former hedge fund manager who went on to create the celebrated Khan Academy, shares new ideas about how we can transform classroom learning by giving students the tools they need to master concepts, which leads to character-building and heightened creativity.
- Author **Julie Lythcott-Haims** challenges parents to stop micromanaging their children and focus on creating lives centered more on love than conventional concepts of achievement and career success.
- **Dr. Victor Rios**, author and educator, recounts how a dedicated and empowering teacher rescued him from a life of poverty and prison.
- Acclaimed performer **Anna Deavere Smith** recently traveled across the country to find out why so many children living in poverty wind up out of school and in the criminal justice system. In her unique theatrical style, Smith presents the powerful

words of two young people she met during her visit to Baltimore in the wake of the death of Freddie Gray.

- **Nadia Lopez**, founder and principal of the Mott Hall Bridges Academy, located in one of the most underserved and violent neighborhoods of Brooklyn, shares how her school helped transform struggling students into eager scholars with newfound hope and purpose.

TED Talks: Education Revolution features performances by singer/songwriter **Meshell Ndegeocello** and host **Sara Ramirez**, and three original short films produced by Independent Television Service (ITVS):

- *Modern Classroom*, by **Greg Whiteley**, which proposes a radical rethinking of the traditional classroom model, largely unchanged since the Industrial Revolution;
- *Freedom University*, by **Heather Courtney** and **Anayansi Prado**, about an alternative college program in Georgia for undocumented students shut out of the state's university system; and
- *Unconscious Bias*, by **Geeta Gandbhir** and **Perri Peltz**, about how bias can sneak up on us when we least expect it.

TED Talks: Education Revolution is a co-production of TED and ITVS for PBS. **TED Talks: Education Revolution** is curated by Chris Anderson and Juliet Blake. The executive producer is Juliet Blake and Allen Kelman is the producer. TED content director is Kelly Stoetzel. Executive producers for ITVS are Tamara Gould and Sally Jo Fifer. **TED Talks: Education Revolution** is directed by Linda Mendoza. Funded by the CPB, this special is the third in a series of three **TED Talks** specials for public media in 2016.

More information is available at pbs.org/tedtalks.

SPOTLIGHT EDUCATION is a week of primetime programs on PBS and WORLD Channel focused on this challenges facing America's education system and why many of our students are still failing. Starting Monday, Sept. 12, PBS stations will lead a national dialogue on-air, online and across communities, and explore ideas and solutions to improve outcomes for all America's youth. Funding for these programs is provided by the Corporation for Public Broadcasting as part of the public media initiative [American Graduate: Let's Make It Happen](#).

ABOUT THE HOSTS

BARATUNDE THURSTON is a futurist comedian, writer, and cultural critic who helped re-launch *The Daily Show with Trevor Noah*, co-founded *Cultivated Wit* and the *About Race* podcast, and wrote *The New York Times* bestseller *How to Be Black*. Baratunde is a highly sought-after public speaker, television personality, and thought leader who has been part of noteworthy institutions such as Fast Company, TED, the MIT Media Lab, The Onion, and the gentrification of Brooklyn, New York.

Baratunde has an uncanny ability to crack the shell of any uncomfortable topic through a personal, accessible, and intelligent point of view. With an ancestry that includes a great-grandfather who taught himself to read, a grandmother who was the first black employee at the U.S. Supreme Court building, a computer-programming mother who took over radio stations in the name of the black liberation struggle, and an older sister who teaches yoga at her donation-based studio in Lansing, Michigan, Baratunde has long been taught to question authority and forge his own path.

His creative and inquisitive mind, forged by his mother's lessons and polished by a philosophy degree from Harvard, have found expression in the pages of *Fast Company*, the screens of HBO, Comedy Central, CNN, MSNBC, BBC, the sound waves of NPR and roughly one bajillion podcasts, including *Our National Conversation About Conversations About Race*, which he co-created with Raquel Cepeda and Tanner Colby. He has hosted shows on Discovery's Science Channel, Yahoo!, AOL, YouTube, and Pivot TV, where he was co-host of *TakePart Live* with Meghan McCain and Jacob Soboroff.

Far from simply appearing in media, Baratunde is also helping define its future. In 2006 he co-founded *Jack & Jill Politics*, a black political blog whose coverage of the 2008 Democratic National Convention has been archived by the Library of Congress. From 2007 to 2012, he helped bring one of America's finest journalistic institutions into the future, serving as Director of Digital for *The Onion* and then did something similar as Supervising Producer for digital expansion at *The Daily Show with Trevor Noah*. He has been a judge for the Knight Foundation News Challenge, an affiliate at the Berkman Center for Internet and Society, and a director's fellow at the MIT Media Lab. In 2012, he co-founded Cultivated Wit, a comedic digital company on a quest to merge comedy and technology into a new genre of creative expression, with Brian Janosch and Craig Cannon. The company produces *Comedy Hack Day* during which developers and comedians collaborate to make intentionally funny tech projects that humanize technology while offering social commentary on the world at large.

The ACLU of Michigan honored Baratunde "for changing the political and social landscape one laugh at a time." He was nominated for the Bill Hicks Award for Thought Provoking Comedy. *The Root* named him to its list of 100 Most Influential African Americans, and *Fast Company* listed him as one of the 100 Most Creative People In Business. He has advised the Obama White House and serves on the National Board of BUILD, an organization that uses entrepreneurship-based experiential learning to propel underserved youth through high school on to college and career success.

Tony Award© winner **SARA RAMIREZ** is best known to viewers for her ten year portrayal of orthopedic surgeon Dr. Callie Torres on ABC's top-rated television drama *Grey's Anatomy*, and her five years playing Queen Miranda on *Sofia the First* on Disney Junior. In Spring 2011, Ramirez captured a whole new audience when she performed the most prominent songs on the special music event episode of *Grey's Anatomy*. The songs she sang are available on iTunes, as well as her own EP which launched March 27, 2011, topping the iTunes overall chart within the first week of release. Her single "Rollercoaster" was released in Sept. of 2015 and can be purchased online as well.

In 2016, Sara was nominated for a People's Choice Award for Favorite Dramatic Actress. In 2011, she was nominated for an NAACP Image Award for Outstanding Actress in a Drama Series. The cast of *Grey's Anatomy* received a Golden Globe Award for Best Television Series — Drama (2007), a Screen Actors Guild Award for Outstanding Performance by an Ensemble in a Drama Series (2007), a Producers Guild Award for Best Episodic Television Drama (2007) and a People's Choice Award for Favorite Television Dramatic Series (2007 and 2016). Sara was in the Broadway smash-hit *Monty Python's Spamalot* as Lady of the Lake, for which she earned both a Tony Award® for Best Performance by a Featured Actress in a Musical and an Outer Critics Award for Outstanding Featured Actress in a Musical.

Ramirez graduated from the Juilliard Drama School. Shortly after graduation, she made her Broadway debut starring as Wahzinak in Paul Simon's *The Capeman*. Following that, she starred in Gershwin's *Fascinating Rhythm*, for which she received an Outer Critics Circle nomination for Best Actress. In 2001, she starred in Broadway's *A Class Act*, a musical biography based on the life of Ed Kleban. Off Broadway, she has performed in *The Vagina Monologues*.

Ramirez's concerts have included "Martinis" at the Martin, "Sara Ramirez with Hollis Resnik at the Ravinia," "Bravo Bernstein" (MTW's 20th Anniversary Gala Concert) at the Hudson Theatre, and The Barrington Stage Company Gala, where she sang "Wanting Her More" from *The Game*.

In 2015, Sara was awarded the Ally For Equality Award by the Human Rights Campaign Foundation. She supports non-profit organizations like Familia: Trans Queer Liberation Movement, Immigration Equality, HRC and the California Writing Program's "I Write the Future" campaign. Sara is a proud member of the True Colors Fund board of directors.

ABOUT THE PARTICIPANTS, IN ORDER OF APPEARANCE

SALMAN KHAN is the founder and CEO of Khan Academy, a not-for-profit with the mission of "providing a free, world-class education for anyone, anywhere." Khan Academy is a learning platform that comprises practice exercises, instructional videos, dashboard analytics and teacher tools that empower learners in and outside of the classroom to study at their own pace. Khan Academy has over 15 million registered users, is in over 190 countries and is available in more than 28 languages and covers subjects from basic math through economics, art history, computer science, health and medicine and more. Khan holds three degrees from MIT and an MBA from Harvard Business School. He has been profiled by CBS's *60 Minutes*, featured on the cover of *Forbes*, and recognized as one of *Time Magazine's* "100 Most Influential People in the World." In late 2012, Khan released his book, *The One World Schoolhouse: Education Reimagined*.

JULIE LYTHCOTT-HAIMS is deeply interested in humans living lives of meaning and purpose, which requires figuring out what we're good at and what we love, and being the

best version of that self we can be. She wrote *How to Raise an Adult*, she says, “because too many adolescents and young adults seem to be on a path of someone else’s making, while being subjected to a lot of hovering and lot of help to ensure that particular path is walked, all in furtherance of a very limited and narrow definition of ‘success.’”

Lythcott-Haims majored in American Studies at Stanford University (1989) and studied law at Harvard (1994). She practiced law in the Bay Area in the 1990s before returning to Stanford to serve in various roles including Dean of Freshmen and Associate Vice Provost for Undergraduate Education. Since leaving Stanford in 2012, she has been pursuing an MFA at California College of the Arts in San Francisco.

In addition to nonfiction Lythcott-Haims writes creative nonfiction, poetry, short stories, and plays. Her work has appeared on TEDx Talks and in the *Chicago Tribune*, *Forbes*, *The New York Times*, *Slate.com*, *Time.com*, and *The Huffington Post*. She lives in the San Francisco Bay Area with her husband, teenagers and mother.

VICTOR RIOS is a Professor in the Department of Sociology at the University of California, Santa Barbara. He conducts research on young people’s experiences with policing, education, and adversity. His book *Punished: Policing the Lives of Black and Latino Boys* analyzes how juvenile crime policies, punitive policing, and criminalization in the education system affect the everyday lives of urban male youth. Rios has worked with local school districts and community centers to develop programs and training aimed at improving the quality of interactions between authority figures and youths. Using his personal experience of living on the streets, dropping out of school, and being incarcerated as a juvenile — along with his research findings — he has developed interventions for marginalized youths aimed at promoting personal transformation and civic engagement. These programs have been implemented in Los Angeles, Calif. (Watts), juvenile detention facilities, and high schools. He has written a memoir for young adults titled *Street Life: Poverty, Gangs, and a Ph.D.* Rios received his Ph.D. in 2005 at the University of California,

ANNA DEAVERE SMITH is perhaps best known to television audiences as Nancy McNally on *The West Wing* and Gloria Akalitus on *Nurse Jackie*. In addition to her work in television and film, Smith is said to have created a new form of theater. Following her interviews with scores of individuals, usually on a topic of civic and political interest, she creates theater works in which she plays many characters — as many as 52 in one production — representing multiple points of view. When granted the prestigious MacArthur Award, her work was described as “a blend of theatrical art, social commentary, journalism, and intimate reverie.”

Smith is University Professor at New York University, where she teaches at the Tisch School of the Arts. She is the founding director of the Institute on the Arts and Civic Dialogue, dedicated to supporting artists whose works address social issues and engender civic engagement. Smith is also the recipient of numerous awards, among them the National Humanities Medal, presented to her by President Obama in 2013. She has been the recipient of the prestigious MacArthur Award, The Dorothy and Lillian Gish

Prize, two Tony nominations, and two Obies. She was runner-up for the Pulitzer Prize in Drama for her play *Fires in the Mirror*.

Her character studies featured in **TED Talks: Education Revolution** are part of Smith's newest work, "The Pipeline Project," which examines the lack of opportunity and resources for many young people living in poverty, and how these circumstances often lead them into the criminal justice system. From her interviews of almost 200 individuals, including educators, students, parents, incarcerated youth, law enforcement officers, and judges, Smith has created a play, *Notes From the Field: Doing Time in Education*. An in-progress version of *Notes From the Field* enjoyed critically acclaimed and sold-out runs in Berkeley in July 2015 and Baltimore in December 2015.

Educator **NADIA LOPEZ** is pioneering a path of inspired leadership to show the world how under-privileged communities can beat the odds and create positive institutions that have a global impact. As the founding principal of Mott Hall Bridges Academy, a New York City public school, Lopez became internationally known after the popular blog Humans of New York (HONY) featured one of her students. This student told HONY founder Brandon Stanton that the greatest influence on his life was Principal Lopez. Lopez's story became a viral sensation as millions of people around the world became impressed with the positive learning environment, high expectations, and growing success rate at a school right in the middle of one of the most underserved communities in America. Two days later, Stanton launched a fundraiser that raised \$1.4 million to fund college trips that included Harvard University, summer STEAM programs, and college scholarships. The story was shared through numerous media outlets and resulted in Lopez appearing on *Ellen*, visiting President Obama at the White House and receiving the Medal of Distinction from Barnard College. In addition, Lopez was honored, alongside First Lady Michelle Obama, with the Change Agent Award at the Black Girls Rock show hosted by BET Networks.

Despite the adversities she faced in opening Mott Hall Bridges Academy in 2010, Lopez is encouraged and inspired to see children overcome the "beautiful challenges" of Brownsville and ensuring that they are admitted into some of the most competitive high schools in New York City. Understanding the power of programming, Lopez continues to impact the lives of children through her "She Is Me" and "I Matter" initiatives, which have served thousands of youth throughout Central Brooklyn by providing workshops, forums, and mentoring. She is the co-author, with Rebecca Paley, of *The Bridge to Brilliance: How One Principal in a Tough Community Is Inspiring the World*.

ABOUT TED

TED is a nonprofit organization devoted to Ideas Worth Spreading, usually in the form of short, powerful talks (18 minutes or fewer) delivered by today's leading thinkers and doers. Many of these talks are given at TED's annual conference in Vancouver, B.C., and made available, free, on TED.com. TED speakers have included Bill Gates, Jane Goodall, Elizabeth Gilbert, Sir Richard Branson, Nandan Nilekani, Philippe Starck, Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala, Sal Khan and Daniel Kahneman. TED's open and free initiatives for spreading ideas include TED.com, where new TED Talk videos are posted daily; the Open Translation Project, which provides subtitles and interactive transcripts as well as

translations from thousands of volunteers worldwide; the educational initiative TED-Ed; the annual million-dollar TED Prize, which funds exceptional individuals with a “wish,” or idea, to create change in the world; TEDx, which provides licenses to thousands of individuals and groups who host local, self-organized TED-style events around the world; and the TED Fellows program, which selects innovators from around the globe to amplify the impact of their remarkable projects and activities.

The spirit of openness is foundational to TED’s mission of spreading ideas. What was once simply a closed-door conference devoted to Technology, Entertainment and Design has become a global platform for spreading ideas across a wide variety of disciplines. Founded in 1984, the first TED conferences were held in Monterey, Calif. In 2006, TED experimented with putting TED Talk videos online for free – a decision that opened the doors to a radically new model for sharing ideas: Today there are nearly 2,000 TED Talks available for free on TED.com, which are viewed close to a million times a day, with more than two and a half billion views total. Thanks to the support of thousands of volunteer translators, there are nearly 70,000 published translations of TED Talks in 107 languages. TEDx, the licensing program that allows communities to produce independently organized TED events, has already seen nearly 12,000 such events held in 166 countries. For more information about TED Talks Live, visit go.ted.com/tedtalkslive. Follow TED on Twitter at twitter.com/TEDTalks, on Facebook at facebook.com/TED or Instagram at instagram.com/ted.

ABOUT CPB

The Corporation for Public Broadcasting (CPB), a private, nonprofit corporation created by Congress in 1967, is the steward of the federal government's investment in public broadcasting. It helps support the operations of nearly 1,500 locally owned and operated public television and radio stations nationwide. CPB is also the largest single source of funding for research, technology and program development for public radio, television and related online services. For more information, visit cpb.org and follow us on Twitter [@CPBmedia](https://twitter.com/CPBmedia), [Facebook](https://facebook.com/CPBmedia) and [LinkedIn](https://linkedin.com/company/cpb).

About American Graduate

[American Graduate: Let's Make it Happen](http://AmericanGraduate.org) was launched in 2011 with 25 public media stations in high need communities to spotlight the high school dropout crisis. Today, more than 125 public radio and television stations in over 48 states have partnered with over 1,700 community organizations and schools, as well as Alma and Colin Powell's America's Promise Alliance, Everyone Graduates Center at Johns Hopkins University School of Education, Alliance for Excellent Education, Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation and Newman's Own Foundation. With primetime and children's programming that educates, informs and inspires, public radio and television stations are important resources in helping to address critical issues facing today's communities. According to a report from the Everyone Graduates Center at Johns Hopkins University School of Education, American Graduate stations have told the story about the dropout crisis in a way that empowered citizens to get involved, and helped community organizations break down silos to work more effectively together.

ABOUT PBS

[PBS](#), with 350 member stations, offers all Americans the opportunity to explore new ideas and new worlds through television and online content. Each month, PBS reaches more than 103 million people through television and over 33 million people online, inviting them to experience the worlds of science, history, nature and public affairs; to hear diverse viewpoints; and to take front row seats to world-class drama and performances. PBS' broad array of programs has been consistently honored by the industry's most coveted award competitions. Teachers of children from pre-K through 12th grade turn to PBS for digital content and services that help bring classroom lessons to life. PBS' premier children's TV programming and its website, [pbskids.org](#), are parents' and teachers' most trusted partners in inspiring and nurturing curiosity and love of learning in children. More information about PBS is available at [www.pbs.org](#), one of the leading dot-org websites on the Internet, or by following [PBS on Twitter](#), [Facebook](#) or through our [apps for mobile devices](#). Specific program information and updates for press are available at [pbs.org/pressroom](#) or by following [PBS Pressroom on Twitter](#).

ABOUT ITVS

ITVS funds, presents, and promotes award-winning documentaries on public television, innovative new media projects on the Web, and the Emmy Award-winning weekly series *Independent Lens* on Monday nights at 10:00 p.m. on PBS. Mandated by Congress in 1988 and funded by the Corporation for Public Broadcasting, ITVS has brought thousands of independently produced programs to American audiences. For more information, visit [itvs.org](#).

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For further information and photos visit <http://www.pbs.org/pressroom>