



Curriculum Units by Fellows of the Yale-New Haven Teachers Institute
2005 Volume II: The Challenge of Intersecting Identities in American Society: Race/Ethnicity, Gender and Nation

Why Is Ethnicity Valued, or Is It?

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by Judith D. Dixon

Introduction

I am currently teaching at East Rock Global Magnet School. For the past seven years I've been a special education co - teacher in the regular education classroom. There have been various colleagues that I have worked with. I am currently co - teaching in the 5th grade. Inclusion or co-teaching classrooms include regular and special education students. The disabilities can range from learning disabled (LD) to intellectually disabled (I.D). In between we have speech and language impaired-emotionally disturbed (passive to aggressive range) and OHI-other health impaired ADD-ADHD fall into this category. What I have learned in my teaching experience is that we must educate the whole child. Children have issues and problems that some of us have never been exposed to. They're growing up in a very different society than the environment that we grew up in.

Demographically we have Latino, African American, Caucasian and (ESOL) students who are from other countries. These students are taught the English language. They are part of the regular classroom but spend 1-2 hrs. a day with the ESOL teachers. We also have hearing impaired students who are in regular education classrooms. Our school is unique because we have two classes where there are multiple-handicapped students. Some of them are mainstreamed into classes that are age appropriate to their needs. For example, an autistic child who is eight years old, and has some verbal reasoning skills, can count numbers and complete activities (e.g. puzzles, matching objects or coloring) could be placed in the kindergarten class for 1-2 hours a day, with a one on one aide. The student's age may not meet the chronological requirements, but the mental equivalent.

The two groups that make up the majority of the population I teach are African American and Latino students. They will explore and learn the similarities and differences about their cultures. In total East Rock School houses approximately 850 students. Half of the population of students are African American, $\frac{1}{4}$ are Latino, and $\frac{1}{4}$ are Asian American, Caucasian, and other nationalities such as Kenyan and Nigerian. We've also had Vietnamese students from Laos, as well as Turkish, Russian, and South American. Often times they are refugees and East Rock is their first school experience. All of the students are taught English and are placed in regular education classrooms. The ESOL teachers collaborate with the students to best serve their needs. As you can see our school has a very diverse population.

Rationale

I'm preparing this unit to give my students a better understanding of themselves and those that are of a different ethnic group. I also hope to bridge the generation gap between the students and their parents.

This unit can be taught to students from grades 4-6. For the fourth and fifth grade students, the novels I have chosen can be read by both grade levels. The sixth grade students will need their reading materials adjusted to fit their reading levels. However there may be some 6th grade students who could possibly be on a 4th or 5th grade reading level. This unit will be taught for one marking period, which in our school district is 45 days. The lessons will be taught by integrating Language Arts (reading, grammar, and expository writing), and Social Studies (History, Geography). Part of the fifth grade curriculum for the New Haven school district is to study the history of New Haven.

My unit will focus on ethnicity. I will explore the cultural values of the majority of the populations I teach. This will include African American and Latino students. They will investigate how the two groups are similar and different from each other. They will learn how immigration began in America, connecting the two ethnic groups as to when they migrated to New Haven. Students will learn how generations of peoples' values have changed and/or stayed the same from 1975-2005. The students will make connections to their own families. They'll be involved in making generational comparisons about clothing, hairstyles, music, movies, and art.

Objectives

The students will:

- 1 have an understanding of the meaning of culture, race and ethnicity.
- 2 have knowledge of different ethnic groups
- 3 gain knowledge related to particular time periods
- 4 gain knowledge of the history of where they live.

Strategies

The students will learn through a multisensory approach. The unit will integrate social studies, language arts, and reading. Students will read novels centered around African American and Latino stories involving family as well as individuals; utilizing a variety of reading strategies through teacher guided instruction, and read aloud stories and poems. Biographies will be completed by students through oral and written presentations. This will

give a clear indication of what my students strengths are. In pursuing a multiple sensory approach I will gear my lessons toward a kinesthetic and visual-spatial approach for lessons involving art, music, and poetry. In using this approach the students who have difficulties with written communication skills will have the opportunity to participate and contribute to the lesson. For discussion lessons I will use the verbal-linguistic approach. Many special education students struggle in this area. They have a difficult time processing information. Sometimes it takes awhile for their brain to piece things together.

In order to evaluate whether my unit was successful I will conduct teacher observations throughout different lessons. How did the students respond to the information? Were there any connections made between what knowledge they acquired about the ethnic group that we studied? Measurable evaluation will consist of the students' written responses to teacher-made questions from novels and content area. The library media specialist and teacher will collaborate together to formulate a rubric to address all the students' needs. My class is comprised of regular and special education students. Oral reports will be observed and evaluated by the teacher. There will be four areas where points will be earned: information, eye contact, diction, and creativity, (for the oral reports).

In pairs they will research projects on New Haven history, immigration of ethnic groups with assistance from the library media specialist. Geography lessons will focus on mapping and locating important places. Students will explore various types of art, creating their own murals. They will view a variety of different movies critiquing and creating their own short play. Another hands-on activity will be cultural suitcases. Students will interview family members and present their findings to the class. Working in groups fosters a peer-tutor relationship, collaboration and helping the special-needs students to be successful.

Classroom Activities

The following lessons can be taught in two class periods, 60 minutes for each lesson. It can be taught in isolation as a social studies lesson or as an integrated lesson using my literacy strategies and social studies. (More time will needed if used as integration lessons). Approximately one week can be given for students to complete the various tasks.

Ethnicity denotes a group of people who perceive themselves and are perceived by others as sharing cultural traits. The traits can be language, religion, family customs and food preferences. Race is perceived in the same way by people. However race possesses hereditary traits which are loosely bound together by historical and social elements. These elements are significant to a person's ancestry and/or morphology. (Lopez p.9) (Ore p.9).

Lesson

Introduction Lesson - Who am I?

The purpose of the "I am" exercise is to have students be able to identify how they see themselves. Usually

the first three things people write down are: what dominates their personality. Interestingly when Professor Tatum conducted this exercise with her college students, the white students didn't put that they were white. The reason is that the element of identity is taken for granted by the dominant culture. The dominant culture's inner and outer experience are in harmony with one another, there the attention isn't focused on them in terms of identifying oneself. (Tatum p.21).

Teacher will define the following terms to students: identity, ethnicity, race, culture. Definitions will be placed on poster boards. Students will be given a "I am" worksheet. The students will list five things they see themselves as.

Group Work - Students will divide into groups of three. Each group will be asked to create a list of cultural things they can make a connection to an experience they have had within their culture. Each group will report their information to the teacher. Use a Venn diagram to display the terms culture, foods & celebrations. (Tatum p.20,21)

differences

similarities

differences

Immigration: U.S. & New Haven, CT

The first wave of immigration began in 1815. By 1820 151,000 new immigrants arrived in the U.S. The U.S. population was then approximately 9.6 million. Many Europeans came to the U.S. due to financial struggles in Europe. In 1846 Irish people of all classes came to the U.S. due to the famine in their country. The U.S. population grew again in 1900. There were 75,994,575 people living here. In 1910 the Mexican Revolution forced thousands to the United States seeking employment. The U.S. emerged as a possible world power. Embassies were established in countries all over the world. Immigrants were then able to apply for their visa in their respective countries' American Consulate. There they could fill out the necessary paperwork and have their medical inspections completed. In 1954 massive immigration ended and Ellis Island closed.

As New Haven is general population changes from 1990 to 2000, we're almost the same as national and state trends. The population grew at a higher rate for African Americans, Asians, Latinos, Native Americans, and Pacific Islanders than it did for the population of non-Hispanic Whites. During this time period the African American population decreased by 5.2%. Latinos however had the largest numerical growth than any other group. They now represent 21.4% of the general population in Connecticut. New Haven has the third largest population of Latinos in Connecticut and the seventh largest in New England. On a national scale the Latino group grew between 1990-2000. The largest group is Puerto Ricans (66.9%).

Connecticut had become an industrialized state in the late 19th century. Cities, in particular New Haven, Waterbury and Hartford, were popular places for immigrants to come and begin a new life. People from Italy, Ireland, Poland, and Eastern Europe migrated here. Many Jewish people settled in Connecticut as well. By 1910 immigrants made up 30% of Connecticut's population. By 1941-1945 Connecticut was among the leading states in the manufacture of military equipment. Thus jobs were available through Pratt and Whitney, Cheney factories and Electric Boat submarines. By 1960 Connecticut held the title of highest per capita income in the U.S.

In the 1960's Connecticut became a predominantly suburban, middle class state. During this time many African Americans and Latinos came to live in these major cities. However their living conditions were significantly different than whites. In New Haven there has been an African American community since the seventeenth century. Economically African Americans were limited to the types of jobs they could have and where to live. The better paying jobs went to the immigrants who were Irish, German or Italian. When the immigration era ended, an industrial boom began because of World War II. Many of those jobs went to blacks in the 1940's. The people couldn't live outside of the Newhallville area. The black community in New Haven grew from 5,000 in 1930 to 10,000 in 1950; by 1960 there were 23,000 African American people living in New Haven. Most of the people were from the South; particularly North Carolina. In the 1950's-1960's families continued to settle in the Newhallville area. The neighborhood received its name from George T. Newhall. He owned a Carriage Emporium in 1855. It was the largest manufacturer of carriages in the world. The Olin plant manufactured guns. In 1954 6,500 African Americans were employed through this company. Change was sought through the Civil Rights Movement.

While the overall population declined and people were moving to suburbs; the African American & Latino population continued to grow. In 1980 40,000 African Americans lived in New Haven. In 1997 there were more than 47,000 African American people living in New Haven. In the 1960's an influx of Latinos, mainly from Puerto Rico, came to live in New Haven. Many Latinos were not educated and didn't have any skills. Poverty engulfed the city and in 1980 the federal census found New Haven to be the seventh poorest city in Connecticut and in America.

Lesson #2- History of New Haven

Utilize the KWL instruction strategy: Prior knowledge of the topic; what the student wants to learn; what the student learned from the lesson.

Objective

The students will learn how, who, and when people migrated to New Haven.

Teacher created information worksheets.

Group Work

Shared Guided Reading non-fiction book, Migration to America, by the National Geographic Scholastic Series. Students are divided into three reading groups. Each group reads at the groups own pace.

Oral discussion follows after each chapter.

Students write chapter summaries as a homework assignment.

Lesson #3-Cultural suitcases

Whole Class Instruction

a) Students will revisit the meanings of culture, race and ethnicity. Definitions will be reviewed again in game form.

Team A Divide the class in half Team B

Each team will have the definition of the words written on sentence strips. The words will be scrambled up. (OPTIONAL - You can laminate the strips, cut words up & put velcro on back. Attach them to a felt board up on the blackboard).

Each team has five minutes to match the terms with definitions. The team to complete task first are the winners.

b)Extension/Homework-To be completed with parent(s)

Each student must prepare a cultural suitcase of their family. Use construction paper to make a container for any items needed for presentation purposes.

Students are to gather any information using the following list:

- 1) family recipes
- 2) family traditions related to holidays
- 3) family sayings
- 4) family heritage (examples: something from their native land)
- 5) family pictures/photos

Culminating Activities

Diversity Day - We have different activities, exhibits and foods that are shared with the student body. The ESOL teachers help to put together the various displays according to various nationalities that will be represented on this day. Students help to set up displays and participate in the activities with each class. The classes are scheduled at various times during the day. Depending upon how many displays and activities there are the time could be 15-20 minutes for each class. We use our Library Media Center.

Fashion Show put on by the students, it could be done in the evening in order for parents to participate. The PTO (Parent Teacher Organization) could be in charge of arranging the affair.

Fashion Show

From my class the students will participate on a voluntary basis. Other students from the school can also volunteer as models or helpers. The PTO will be asked to also help with the legwork. The students will model styles of informal/casual wear & formal wear. Students will make comparisons of how clothing's popularity affects students positively or negatively.

Clothing Styles

Prior to the actual show, students will research clothing styles of the late 70's, 80's and 90's. They will investigate if styles were different between Latino Americans and African Americans. Students will present

visuals/pictures along with the written information. In their research designer labels will be investigated. How did they begin? What age group

do they serve the most? What clothing labels are the most popular among adolescents?

Music

The music of the generation of my students is Rap & Hip Hop. The latino culture listens to reggaeton, which is Spanish rap with a reggae beat. My students will work in groups of 5. Each group will be responsible for researching music of a particular time. 1975-1980 will be one section, 1980-1990, 1990-2000, 2000-2005 will be the other sections. Using different resources to listen to the music students will make comparisons. The one question to be answered is, has the style of music changed? Is it more instrumental, lyrical or both. The written part of their research will be to find out when these types of musical styles began and when they ended.

"Hair" We Go Again

Students will investigate how and why our hair grows, integrating a science lesson on the human body. Students will differentiate between hair types, textures, color and lengths among the population of students in the class. They will learn how various styles were created, and did the styles stay popular? How often do styles change over time? They will compare past and present styles, how different and/or similar they are. We will graph information about female/male styles. Who changes styles the most?

Family Cultural Values

In early America, women of color experienced oppression within the patriarchal society. However they weren't given the protection and buffering of a patriarchal family as the white women were. As a result their families suffered. Slavery was the country's cheap labor force. Much exploitation occurred in this setting. There wasn't much attention to the slaves' family and community life. It didn't balance out. Many hours were spent by the slaves, who were the major contributors to the productivity of the economy.

Without the support for their families socially, legally and economically, tensions were created and many relationships were strained. The woman's role was to reproduce a higher volume for purposes producing more laborers. Another factor that further made family for slaves was the institutionalized pattern of rape by white men. It was used as a weapon of control and terror to undermine and divide the slave family.

Although the father was allowed to be the head of his family, the sons were named after their fathers and blood relatives as a way of maintaining family ties. In some cases where the family had been disrupted there would be a new slave community that established the type of family and kin ties that later became the example of black family life in the south. There were certain beliefs that were practical and taken seriously, like the importance of marriage being a long term commitment. The American slaves developed a system of kinship ties and obligations that were quite extensive. (Hines p.85,86).

During slavery times, slaves formed their own culture. They told stories, sang songs and it was their way of surviving and communicating with each

other. Music became one of the ways to communicate important information on the Underground Railroad. Music was the thread of life. Black women had an important role during this time. They were involved in the formation of two major music forms. African

music took on a new form when integrated with European instruments and musical idioms. It produced jazz, ragtime, and other music of that era. Another form of music was sacred mixed African rhythms. This combination came to be what we now call spirituals. (Hine & Thompson p.87).

Mexicans were a people who were colonized and Chicanos emerged from the colonization of Mexico; there were several indigenous populations (Maya, Aztec, etc.) & following colonization by the Spanish & northern conquest of Mexico by the U.S., people who were mestizo (mixed) came to be called Chicanos or Mexican Americans. The Chicano population was mostly peasant people. Their life was a daily struggle due to a feudal economy. The patriarchal families were important to community life. The nuclear family units through an elaborate system of a strong kinship and good parenting were closely linked together. The traditional life consisted of hard work and a clearly defined pattern of sex-role segregation. Mexican women were valued for their household qualities. The man's ability to work and provide for his family produced a great sense of pride. Children were included in the work aspect of family life. They were taught to rise early and to discipline themselves. These attributes were highly respected and valued.

Mexican women who lived in the country weren't paid for their labor. They grew and prepared food, made adobes and plastered houses with mud. Clothing was made for the children to wear to school. They taught the children hymns and prayers for church.

(Ore p.217).

World War I caused great changes for Mexicans. The life they had lived as mere country people changed significantly. Families were uprooted, some migrated to California to work on the railroads, mining was another source of work for them. Chicano workers were paid low wages. Many times the entire family had to work. Both African American and Latino women play multiple roles in the lives of their families, as laborers, mothers and wives.

Lesson #4a-Reading/Writing

Objective-

The students will use critical thinking skills to make connections to themselves and one character from the story.

Whole Class

Students will read aloud with teacher the book called *The Skin I'm In* , (Approximate reading time is 1 week)

Group Work

Students will break into groups of five (to be determined by teacher)

Discussion: Questions to be answered,

- 1) How did the main character handle her dilemma?
- 2) What would you have done differently?
- 3) One person from each group will record answers.

4) Twenty minutes to complete task.

5) Class comes together to share responses.

Homework -- connection worksheet; write about one of the characters and how you can relate to them using details from to complete your answers.

Lesson #4b

Objective

The students will use critical thinking skills to make connections to themselves and any particular character from any of the short stories read.

Whole Class

Students will read aloud with the teacher four short stories from the book called *Salsa Stories* .

Group Work

Each student will create their own short story, relating some aspect of their own families. They can also draw pictures to accompany this assignment.

What's In A Name?

In the United States the general use of the term Hispanic has been going on for more than a decade. People who have an ancestry from Spanish speaking countries fall into that category. Many of these people have various national backgrounds. However they're categorized into one ethnic group, Hispanic. Nothing is taken and put into perspective such as the various racial, class, linguistic, or gender experiences. The term blankets over specific reasons for immigrants coming to the U.S. Some people came because of political exile from their country, for example the Cubans in 1960, who cannot be placed under the same Hispanic umbrella with the refugees from El Salvador.

The U.S. census and other government agencies, along with social scientists and institutions have created more confusion with the term "Hispanic". Nothing is explained or clarified. The media and the general public perpetuate the situation.

There are twenty-three million people who have ties to the Caribbean, Central and South American countries. These people are citizens, residents, refugees and immigrants. This label lessens their ability to identify with their own unique backgrounds. If a person's ancestry is any of the following he/she is of Spanish/Hispanic origin: Mexican, Mexican American, Chicano, Puerto Rican, Dominican, Ecuadorean, Guatemalan, Honduran, Nicaraguan, Peruvian and Salvadoran; are all Spanish speaking countries of the Caribbean, Central or South America or Spain. (Oboler p.3).

Ancestry and/or morphology categorized in what one might call chance or coincidence. Meaning something not subject to human will or effort. We have no control over what we look like or to whom our parents are

when we're born.

Social construction of race reduces this notion of chance. Context is the social setting in which races are recognized, constructed and contested; where situations allow people to have experiences that may or may not be positive. In some instances a person can lose focus on who they are trying to fit in with or be a part of within a particular group.

In the construction of racial identity the context of passing can be the most graphic illustration of choice a person can make. Passing means the ability of a person or persons to change race. Thus many encounter psychological changes. They must renounce all family ties, severing all communication and relationships with their community. Ending all of their religious and civic affiliations can be very traumatic. Passing demonstrates the power of racial choice. Choices that are made concerning racial identity comes from within. The context of our racist American society. (Lopez p.14).

Historically racial categories and the meaning of race have been given value by specific social relations who are anchored into our society. In the United States the black / white color line has remained fixed and continues to be enforced. The meaning of race is constantly being challenged in society both collectively and in personal practices. Racial categories are constantly being formed, transformed, reformed, or simply destroyed. Racial formation is the process by which the racial categories are determined by people with political, social and economic power. These people make the rules and set the tone of the importance of how racial meanings are utilized. (Ore p.21).

Identity is shaped by characteristics, family dynamics, historical, social and political

factors. Identity is a process of formation. Who you start out as, will evolve into what you can become. Adolescence plays a key role in developing identity. People interact with us. They reflect back to us who they think we are or should be.

Identity is also a multidimensional concept. There are seven categories of "otherness" in the United States.

- Race/Ethnicity
- Gender
- Socioeconomic Status
- Sexual Orientation
- Age
- Mental/Physical Disability
- Religion

The students will be given a survey to be completed with their families; containing questions that will give insight to their family values. Student will compile information from surveys and formulate a graph (of teacher's choice: bar, circle or graph) to show the similarities in each student represented in my classroom.

Teacher's Bibliography

Books:

Bernal, E. Martha and Knight P. George. (State University of New York Press, Albany, 1993).

This provides broad coverage of the various research approaches that have been used to study the development of ethnic identity in children and adolescents and the transmission of ethnic identity across generations.

Espinoza, Leslie G., Latino/a Identity and Mult-Identity Community and Culture,

(Virginia Journal of Social Policy and the Law:23,1994)

The article discusses identity, multi-identities, labeling, race, and gender.

Faulk, W. William. Rooted in Place Family and Belonging in a Southern Black Community. (Rutgers University Press, New Brunswick, New Jersey, 2004).

This book reflects years of research on the Americans south especially the rural south.

Hine, Clark Darlene and Thompson, Kathleen. A Shining Thread of Hope: The History of Black Women in America. (Broadway Books, New York,1998).

This book gives accounts of the lives of black women from indentured servitude in early American colonies to the triumphs of the Civil Rights Era.

Lopez, Ian F., The Social Construction of Race: Some Observations on Illusion, Fabrication and Choice (29 Harv.C.R.-C.L. Rev. 1 1994 Harvard Civil Rights).

The article defines terms concerning issues of race and identity.

Oboler, Suzanne., Hispanic? That's What They Call Us (Ethnic Labels, Latino Lives, University of Minnesota Press, 1995).

Ore, Tracy E., The Social Construction of Difference and Inequality: Race, Class, Gender, and Sexuality. (Mcgraw-Hill Companies, New York, 2003)

This book is a coherent conceptual organization which examines how and why the categories of race, class, gender, and sexuality are constructed, maintained, experienced, and transformed.

PH.D.,Tatum, Beverly Daniel, Why Are All the Black Kids Sitting Together in the Cafeteria? (Basic Books, 1997).

The book provides a way in which race can be talked and thought about among adults as well as children.

Vasquez W. Donald. Latinos in New Haven, Connecticut. (University of Massachusetts Boston, MA, March 2003). The Maurico Gaston Institute for Latino Community Development and Public Policy.

Zambrana, E. Ruth. Understanding Latino Families: Scholarship Policy and Practice. (Sage Publications Inc. 1995, Thousand Oaks, California).

This book presents a dynamic new approach to the study of Latino families. It centers on the strengths of Latino/Hispanic groups, structural processes that impede their progress and cultural and familial processes that enhance adaptations generationally.

Internet:

<http://en.wikipedia.org/HistoryofConnecticut> (Information about Connecticut and how it became a state)

www.businessweek.com/chapter/finnegan.htm (This is an excerpt from Cold New World a book with information about New Haven)

<http://bmj.bmjournals.com/Cgi/content/full/309/6950/286>

<http://surfaquarium.com/Miinvent.htm> (Multiples Intelligences Survey)

Children's Book List:

1. The Skin I'm In, Sharon G. Flake . "The first time I seen her, I got a bad feeling. The book tells the story of a young girl's struggle with self-esteem and how her teacher's example of tolerance helps her to overcome her issues.
2. Bud, Not Buddy, Christopher Paul Curtis It's 1936, in Flint, Michigan. This story depicts a young African American boy with a wonderful imagination during the Depression Era.
3. The Watson's Go To Birmingham 1963, Christopher Paul Curtis. The book is a story of a family's experience of going south during the Civil Rights Movement.
4. Possibles ,Vaunda, Micheaux Nelson.
5. Cousins, Virginia Hamilton. Cammy loves her family except for her cousin Patty Ann. This book is a story about an African American family's love and forgiveness of one another.
6. Any Small Goodness, Tony Johnston. This book tells the story of a boy's experience as a Latino.
7. The Salsa Stories', Lula Delacre. This book is a collection of short stories and linocuts that depict family life in the Latino culture.

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