



Puerto Rico: Americanization, Assimilation and Diaspora through Literature and Film

Curriculum Unit 09.02.12

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Unit Overview

This unit will examine the migration of Puerto Ricans to the United States after the Jones Act of 1917 to today. This will include looking at a variety of literature from authors born in Puerto Rico and Puerto Ricans born in the United States. This will allow students to evaluate the effects of assimilation and diaspora and how Puerto Ricans would re-identify themselves in terms of their American selves.

Initially, students will define vocabulary necessary for the unit. They will then look at different texts to see the causes and the effects of Americanization of Puerto Rico, and the assimilation and diaspora that occur to Puerto Ricans who live in the United States. I want students to consider how Puerto Ricans attempt to maintain their cultural identity while becoming a part of the American experience. I want them to question: How does American occupation of Puerto Rico influence Puerto Rican culture on the island? What are the cultural conflicts that occur between American culture and Puerto Rican culture? How does American society and experiences influence mainland Puerto Rican's film, literature, and language? What ways do Puerto Ricans maintain their native identity through film, literature and language?

Student Body

This unit will be taught to juniors enrolled in Honors 11 English, and Advanced Placement English Language and Composition. Cooperative Arts and Humanities High School is a college preparatory magnet school. In order to enroll in an Honors course, students must have a B- average or higher previously in that academic field. Consequently, my unit will be taught to highly motivated students, who work well independently and cooperatively. Because of this, students will do most of the reading at home and are expected to come to class prepared to have scholarly discussions about the reading. Students are encouraged to think outside the normal parameters when learning in order to become independent thinkers and learners.

Additionally, this unit could be taught to all level juniors. The reading material is not difficult so that students

can focus on analyzing and examining the experiences of each artist rather than attempting to interpret difficult language. This will become very resourceful for teaching classes in urban districts where many struggling readers tend to be Hispanic students with deficiencies in English. These students can then read through the material and still exhibit critical thinking and analytic abilities.

Currently, Cooperative Arts and Humanities High School consists of 450 students with a ratio of 7 to 1 girls to boys. Classroom sizes are approximately 22 students. Coop school is an arts magnet school and all students study traditional academics along with either theater, dance, creative writing, visual arts, strings or choir. Students choose one of these art disciplines and continue studying and practicing it for their entire high school career. Students are encouraged to work across academic and artistic lines and must complete an interdisciplinary project during their senior year in order to graduate. Because of this, students are expected to evaluate both written and visual texts in order to experience all types of literature. This includes introducing students to the social and historical climate during the time the literature was written in. Additionally, to promote artistic expression, students will create an artistic piece based on Gardner's Multiple Intelligences for this unit. This will allow students to incorporate literature with their art discipline.

Rationale

The current statistics on the New Haven Public School's demographic is as follows:

20,759-student enrollment Asian American: 1.24% African American: 54.82% Hispanic: 30.95%
Indian American: 0.05 White: 11.08% Other: 1.86%

These numbers demonstrate the amount of Hispanic students within our district from various Latin American and Caribbean countries. This influx has caused a need for more bi-lingual education along with English as a Second Language support for students who have difficulties adjusting to the English Language expectations and standards set forth by the State of Connecticut. This unit will give students who deal with the effects of assimilation and diaspora an opportunity to contextualize their experience. Additionally, native students will have an opportunity to become familiar with the circumstances that affect their peers and others within their community.

Furthermore, there is very little Puerto Rican Literature taught at our school. This is often because many English teachers do not know the nuances and complexities of the Puerto Rican experience or the difficulties with assimilating into the United States. However, it is essential that a district with over a third of its students identified as Hispanic expose its students to a diverse Hispanic literature. Our school does teach Mexican authors such as Sandra Cisneros, Dominican authors, such as Julia Alvarez, and Columbian authors such as Gabriel Garcia Marquez to expose students to a variety of literature. Yet many of our students have not been exposed to Puerto Rican authors, which is disheartening because most of our Hispanic students are Puerto Rican. This unit will allow me and my colleagues an opportunity to expose our students to different Puerto Rican artists whose experiences here vary as much as our students' experiences vary.

Teaching Strategies

Throughout the unit I will implement different teaching strategies to ensure success is achieved for all students. This includes teacher lectures, student centered instruction, independent learning, cooperative learning, and modeling, using multi-model texts. I will differentiate the instructional strategy based on the learning outcome expected by the end of the lesson.

Objectives

Throughout different parts of the unit I want students to be able to master the following objectives based on Bloom's Taxonomy.

- Define appropriate vocabulary to have an understanding of the unit.
- Examine several texts by Puerto Rican authors using close reading strategies
- Identify different examples of the Americanization of Puerto Rico
- Evaluate the effects of the Americanization of Puerto Rico on island Puerto Ricans
- Correlate the difficulties in assimilation and diaspora by Puerto Ricans in the United States
- Compare the cultural conflicts that arise between being Puerto Rican and American

These objectives will be addressed at different points in the unit, but will allow students to recognize the previous and current struggles Puerto Ricans confront because of Puerto Rico's complex relationship with the United States.

Essential Questions

Throughout the unit students will focus on answering the following essential questions:

1. What role did the Americanization, assimilation and diaspora play in how Puerto Ricans were able to identify themselves in the United States?
2. What are the cultural conflicts between American culture and Puerto Rican culture?
3. How do Puerto Rican's maintain their identity within American society?

Assessments

In order to ensure that students have mastered the objectives, I will use the following assessments throughout the unit.

Journal Writing

Students are expected to write in journals consistently throughout the year. These writings usually take place during class where students answer daily essential questions, writing prompts, and note taking. Students will also be expected to keep any significant passages discussed in class in their journals. Additionally they are expected to close read the passages and write commentary on what the message conveyed. Students get credit for any informal writing they do in their journal. Journals are checked once a week. In order for the grading to not become overwhelming, I will ask students to place a sticky note at two journal entries they want me to grade. This will allow students to showcase the work they feel better demonstrates their understanding of the material.

Responses

Students will be responsible for handing in written responses based on what they have read throughout the course of the unit. In the responses, students should focus on literary and rhetorical devices used in the text. This includes but is not limited to theme, motif, symbols, character, and setting. I want students to consider what these devices reveal about the authors experience and relationship with the United States and Puerto Rico. It will also allow me to determine who is keeping up with the reading or not. Before class students will hand in responses and retrieve corrected ones. Students will write 350 word response three times a week.

Artistic Project

This project will be based on Gardner's Multiple Intelligence. Because our school is an arts school, students are encouraged to engage in interdisciplinary projects. Students will be expected to create their artistic project based on their art discipline. This does not necessarily have to be a project on Puerto Rican culture, rather any group that has had to assimilate into American society. This will allow some students an opportunity to examine their own experience and American students an opportunity to sympathize with another group that has assimilated into American culture. Students will be expected to present their projects to the class at the end of the unit.

This unit will be broken up into three sections. Section I will focus on the causes and effects of American occupation of Puerto Rico. Section II will examine the difficulties with assimilation and the cultural conflicts that occurred for Puerto Ricans into mainstream American society. Section III will examine the results of assimilation and diaspora. After examining both historical events and literature I believe that students will have a better understanding of the Puerto Rican experience both on the island and in the United States.

Section I: Americanization

I believe that in order for students to gain insight into the complex relationship between Puerto Rico and the United States they must examine the Americanization of the island. This includes Jones Act of 1917, relief effort during The New Deal, and industrialization efforts during Operation Bootstrap. Before students began reading any literature, they are going to research the historical events in order to contextualize the literature. Students can find information and pictures on the Library of Congress websites in order to visualize the historical events as well. I want students to begin consider how Puerto Ricans felt about American occupation on the island during these time periods. I want them to question: What changes occurred on the island because of American occupation of the island? How were Americans received by Puerto Rican because of their occupation? How did these factors determine how Puerto Ricans would perceive the United States?

I also chose the chapter "The American Invasion of Macun" from Esmeralda Santiago's memoir *When I Was Puerto Rican* for this part of the unit. I want the students to read an actual account of the Americanization of a Puerto Rican school from the perspective of a child. In this excerpt, the narrator observes changes occurring as Americanos come to the island to instruct parents and students about proper living conditions. The first stages of the Americanization begin in the classroom the narrator's teacher struggles to teach the students American geography and English by using the song "America the Beautiful". These slight changes do not seem to bother, the narrator, Negi. However, when all the mothers of Macun are instructed during a Saturday seminar on hygiene and nutrition, Negi begins to question the purpose of the Americanos in "ties and white shirts" who distribute toothpaste and food to the mothers.¹ It isn't until the school begins to provide Americanized breakfast do we see Negi's anger towards the changes occurring in her life. She refuses to complete a glass of milk she knows is sour and blurts out her opinion of Americanos to her teacher. She then runs home where she will fight the sickness from the milk for several days. Upon returning back school she discovers the elections are over and there is no more American food at her school. ²

This chapter will allow students to evaluate how American imposed itself on a rural area. As students read I want them to consider how it made the community feel to have Americans informing Puerto Rican women on how to raise their children.

Students will also read an essay by Esmeralda Santiago entitled "Island of Lost Causes". In this essay, Santiago examines the ambiguous state of current day Puerto Rico. She discusses the previous failed attempts at independence a nationalist leader who was also her uncle. She then discusses the current state of unemployment that plagues the island, crime rates, and the growing dialect of Spanglish grown out the Americanization of the island. She ends the essay by contending that it is Puerto Rico's inability to choose that between statehood and an independent nation that hinders the country. ³

This essay will allow students to evaluate whether or not they believe the Americanization of the island was effective. Students will be expected to write a response on the topic using the historical information they have studied in the beginning of the unit in order to support their claim.

Section II: Assimilation

Once students are able to identify different economic motives and pressures that caused a large migration of island Puerto Ricans to the United States. I want them to consider the difficulties when a group must adapt to the popular culture within a society. I want students to question: Were Americans welcoming to the large migration of Puerto Ricans into the United States? Why or why not? How did this effect the way Puerto Rican perceived Americans? More importantly, how did this effect they way they perceived being Puerto Rican?

I chose the chapters "Konk" and "Babylon for Babylonians" from Piri Thomas's novel *Down These Mean Streets*. Both of these excerpts deal with different types of difficulties faced when assimilating into mainstream American society by a young Puerto Rican male.

In "Konk", the narrator Piri, saves up enough money to chemically treat his hair so it resembles white people's hair. In the opening passages he admits to different methods in which non-white people tried to alter their own features to look like whites. This included bleaching their skin and pinching their noses so they were smaller. Once he gets to the shop Piri allows the barber to begin the process of straightening his hair. The experience is painful, Piri realizes, once he begins to feel his scalp burning from the lye in the konk. Nonetheless, Piri becomes excited about his straight hair which can now be styled into a pompadour. Yet this excitement turns to embarrassment and shame when he heads back to his neighborhood. Once in the house his siblings ridicule him and his mother questions his motives behind altering his "beautiful hair". After being told by his mother to not be ashamed of his coarse hair and she would not "trade him for any blanquito", Piri decides to shave his head. ⁴

This excerpt will allow students to analyze the difficulties non-white immigrants faced when coming to the United States. Piri's hair texture was a constant reminder of his race and class. In straightening his hair he attempts to emulate the popular white culture of the time. However, the painful process along with the ridicule that occurs after reduce him to shame for trying to hide his coarse hair, a characteristic of his cultural identity. I believe that many of my students can empathize with Piri's situation as societal standards on what ideal beauty currently causes many students to question their own looks.

In "Babylon for Babylonians" Piri is faced with the difficult transition from Harlem to Long Island. His parents have saved enough money to buy a house in a nicer neighborhood with better schools than Piri is use to. Although he understands that moving will allow him better opportunities, he becomes frightened by living in a world almost void of Blacks and Puerto Ricans. At first his experience is good; he begins to make friends with some white students and joins the baseball team. However, when he tries to court Marcia, a white girl, he realizes the differences that exist between whites and himself. After being categorized as being Black because of his skin, he asserts his Puerto Rican identity. Yet, that doesn't stop Marcia and other students from calling him a nigger. It is then that Piri decides to ostracize himself from all whites, which included ending his friendship with Angelo, a white student who befriended him. ⁵

This excerpt will allow students to examine the cultural conflict that occurs between suburban white America and Urban Puerto Ricans. Although Piri has heard stories about the large differences between whites and minorities, it wasn't until he moved to Long Island did he become a victim of discrimination. Despite claiming being Puerto Rican, the kids continue to call him a nigger. I want students to see the complexities of being a Black Puerto Rican where you are judged by whites to be black, regardless of your ethnicity. I want students to recognize the cultural conflict this causes Piri and how it shapes his American experience.

After the students read both excerpts I want them to consider the methods that Piri attempts to assimilate into American society. I want them to consider: what worked for Piri? What didn't work? What was the cultural conflict he experiences? What were his misconceptions and realizations about assimilation? How did these misconceptions shape his American experience as a Black Puerto Rican in New York City? Students will write a thesis driven response to these questions using evidence from the text to support their thesis.

Students will then watch the film "Every Child is a Poet: The life and work Piri Thomas" In showing this film I want the students to see the adult Piri reflecting on the difficulties growing up Puerto Rican in New York City in the 40's and 50's. ⁶ Additionally I want students to witness what different cultural elements helped shape Piri's experiences. This includes being the son of immigrants, growing up in racially diverse neighborhoods, being imprisoned and ultimately becoming a writer and activist.

Section III: Diaspora

In this section I want students to recognize the effects of being removed from one's native land and the necessity to create a new identity within one's new surroundings. Here students will look at new materials and then synthesize it with information they have already studied at different points within the unit. I want students to consider: How did the term Nuyorican develop? Why was it necessary to create a new Puerto Rican identity in the United States? What cultural conflicts does this create between the United States Puerto Rican and Puerto Ricans native to the island?

Students will watch the film "Soy Boricua Pa' Que Tu Lo Sepas". This film begins by examining the origins of the Puerto Rican Day parade in New York City, as film director Rosie Perez revisits her family's history beginning in Puerto Rico and ending in New York. Throughout the film Perez examines the complex relationship Puerto Rico has as a colony of the United States and how it culminates into the growth of the Nuyorican that exists in New York today. This includes the question of statehood vs. independence on the island. Perez explores the early movements in the early to mid 20th century that attempted independence from the United States and were countered with violence. Still Perez sees the importance of the American experience and how shapes the way mainland Puerto Ricans have established themselves in the United States ⁷.

Students will also read the prologue from Esmeralda Santiago's memoir When I was Puerto Rican entitled "How to Eat a Guava". The students will have had some exposure to her experience from section one of the unit. This excerpt shows Santiago grappling with the reality of diaspora. As she stands in an American supermarket she notices guavas for sale and begins to reminisce on her experiences as a child eating guavas in Puerto Rico. She decides not to buy the guava because she is "no longer a child" and decides to instead buy "the apples and pears of my adulthood" ⁸. I want students to examine this excerpt and consider the different literatures they have been exposed to. I want them to question: How has diaspora influenced the way Santiago reflects on her childhood in Puerto Rico? What can be inferred by her inability to buy the guava in the United States? Was her choice a good one?

The final reading assignment will be the poem "nuyorican" by Tato Laviera. In this poem Laviera reflects on the distance diaspora has caused between him and Puerto Rico. Laviera prose demonstrates his vulnerability and shock by the island's lack of empathy for him being a Puerto Rican from New York. This is illustrated

through admittance of feeling "bad, indignant" as Puerto Rico "scorn[s] me," and "attack[s] the way i speak" despite the fact Puerto Ricans are "eating mcdonalds in american discotheques" ⁹. Laviera contends that he only can find cultural comfort in New York which still honor's Puerto Rico's "presence, preserving all of your values" ¹⁰ I want students to examine the complexities about Puerto Rican diaspora posed in the poem. Students should question the irony in the Americanized Puerto Rico harshly judging the nuyorican's. I want students to question: How does Laviera respond to returning to Puerto Rico? Is his reaction valid? What are the positive and negative results of Puerto Rican diaspora based on the reading?

In using these three pieces to end the unit, students will be able to see multiple instances of diaspora within the Puerto Rican community. I want them see that experiences and reactions vary.

Sample Lesson Plans

The following are sample lesson plans I plan to implement during the unit. Each sample unit addresses one of the essential questions.

Sample Lesson Plan 1 (Addresses Essential Question 1)

Objectives

Students will be able to:

Respond to prompt in journals

Read "American Invasion of Macun" by Esmeralda Santiago

Compare and America's values with Puerto Rico's

Evaluate the relationship between the Americanos and the people of Macun.

Assess the validity of the "American Invasion of Macun"

As a pre-reading exercise, I will ask students to answer the following prompt that will be on the board in their journals:

Imagine politicians decided that your country was going to be annexed onto another country. They then decided they were going to change what you learned in school and change the national language. They even decided what you were going to eat at school and try to change what your mother feeds you at home. How would you respond? What would you do to preserve the ways that you had previously experienced school? What would you say to your parents who were being told to change as well?

In using this prompt I want students understand what was done in schools in Puerto Rico in an attempt to

Americanize the island. It is important for students to connect to the literature they are going to read. Often when students read about character's problems in literature they respond "I wouldn't allow that" or "If that was me, I would...". It is important that as teachers we present the problem to students before they actually read the text so students see the difficulty with simplistic statements as those given. In this case we not only see young Negi being convinced of the importance of an American way of life, but also her mother. Using this prompt will ask students to really consider what would happen if even their parents were told to do something they didn't believe in. If my students could conceptualize their parents not having a choice, they could understand the frustration and anger that Negi felt about the "invasion" of Americans way of live being imposed on her way of life. ¹¹

After reading "The American Invasion of Macun" I will give the students the following passages for close reading:

"La Buena nutrition is muy importante para los ninos". In heavily accented, hard to understand Castillian Spanish he described the necessity of eating portions of each of the foods on his chart every day. There were carrots and broccoli, iceberg lettuce, apples, pears, and peaches. The bread was sliced into perfect square, unlike the long loaves Papi brought home from the bakery in San Juan, or the round pan de manteca Mami bought at Viti's store. There was not rice on the chart, no beans, no salted codfish. There were big white eggs, not like the small round ones our hens gave us. There was a tall glass of milk, but no coffee. There were wedges of cheese, but no balls of cheese like the white queso del pais wrapped banana leaves sold in bakeries all over Puerto Rico. There were bananas but no plantain, potatoes but no batatas, cereal flakes but no oatmeal, bacon but no sausages" ¹²

"But señor," said Dona Lola from the back of the room, "none of the fruits or vegetables on your chart grow in Puerto Rico". ¹³

"The centro communal had been decorated with posters. Dick and Jane, Sally and Spot, Mother and Father, the Mailman, the Milkman, and the Policeman smiled their way through tableau after tableau, their clean, healthy, primary-colored world flat and shadowless" ¹⁴

I want students to recognize the distinct cultural differences between the United States and Puerto Rico. Once students are able to identify the differences they can then analyze the reasons the United States wanted to Americanize Puerto Rico. I want students to question: Was it effective to instill American ideology of good nutrition and hygiene onto Puerto Ricans? Did the Americanization attempts cause animosity or appreciation among Puerto Ricans? I also want students to examine the way that the Americanos went about approaching the Puerto Ricans to change their living conditions. I want them to evaluate the types of food the Americanos chose to educate the Puerto Rican women. I also want them to examine Negi's family and compare it to the Dick and Jane family. Is the Dick and Jane family attainable for Negi's family? Why or why not? I will then ask students to work in groups come up more effective strategies to have educated Puerto Ricans about good nutrition and hygiene that are attainable. Students will then present their ideas to the class. Individually students will write a response evaluating the effectiveness of the strategies used in the text.

Sample Lesson 2 (Addresses Essential Question 2)

Objectives

Students will be able to:

Read "Konk" by Piri Thomas

Close read passages in groups

Identify external cultural conflicts and internal conflicts in text

As a pre-reading exercise, I will ask students to respond to the following prompt that will be on the board in their journals:

What does mainstream society consider beautiful/handsome? What evidence do you see of this? Consider advertisements, celebrities, and current fashion trends. Is this perception of what is beautiful/handsome attainable? Why or why not?

Once students have written for approximately ten minutes I will allow them time to share out some of their answers before moving to the group work section of the lesson.

I will then break the students into groups of three and give each group one of the following passages from "Konk" by Piri Thomas:

Passage one:

"When I was a kid, many folks spent a lot of time, effort, and money trying to pass for white. Very few homes did not have some kink of skin-bleaching cream. If poverty prevented its purchase raw lemon juice would suffice. Cream or juice was liberally applied to the skin with the hope of turning it yellow, which was light, if not white." ¹⁵

Passage two:

"Running neck and neck were hair-straightening and coloring effects. The very poor made up batches of Vaseline, lye, and harsh brown octagon soap for their hair-straightening. For those who could afford it, there were jars of heavy white cream with "You too can have beautiful hair" advertised on the label."

Passage three

"Even more money could buy a marcel, which straightened curly hair by pressing it out with iron-hot combs after dipping one's head in oil. The smell of burnt hair often overpowered the odors of garbage-littered alleyways. Even comic books carried ads for beauty care. One could earn a Red Ryder B.B rifle or a bicycle if one sold enough of a particular brand of lightening cream."

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Passage four

"I'm Roy, bro. What's yours?"

"Mine's Piri," I answered, my eyes glued to his own natural unprocessed hair. Roy put on some rubber gloves like doctors use when they have to touch something they don't really want to.

"Umhh." He frowned. "This won't do...won't do at all."

I wondered if my Puerto Rican hair was going to be left out of konk too. "What's the matter?"¹⁸

Passage five

"A lot of bad can happen if it's not done right." My artist brother droned on, con

fidant in his art. "If you want white man's hair, there's a price you gotta pay.

Whatcha say? Now's the time to stop or go."

I smiled bravely and said, "Go, bro. But say, man. How come you don't konk your hair, seeing as you're in the business?"

Roy just mumbled. "No way, man. Konks or marcel's ain't my stick. I just do it for others 'cause it's part of my living wages." ¹⁹

Passage six

The noise brought in Momma, followed by Poppa still chewing on his supper. Suddenly everybody was silent. I walked slowly over to the sofa and plunked down heavily on it, feeling old and tired at fourteen and wondering my strong young legs refused to hold me up.

Poppa shook his head. He knew what my hurting was all about. Momma sat down by my side and caressed my wilted, abused hair. Then hugging me close, she allowed my tears of hurt and shame to be absorbed by her big momma breasts. She whispered to me, "Hijo, what have you done to your beautiful hair?"

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Passage seven

"Oh, Moms," I whispered back. "I just didn't want to be different anymore. I'm so tired of being called names. I ain't no raisinhead or nothing like that."

Momma hugged me very closely and said out loud, "Don't you ever be ashamed of being you. You want to know something, negrito? I wouldn't trade you for any blanquitos." The next day found me playing stickball with a red bandanna around my forehead, sporting the baldest head in town." ²¹

I will give each group a large piece of paper to write down their passage. Then I will ask students to close read their passage and interpret the message that Thomas is trying to convey about assimilating into mainstream American culture. I will ask students to discuss what motivates the external cultural conflicts that exist between white America and Puerto Ricans? How does it create internal conflict in Piri's decision to straighten his hair? I will give the students about fifteen minutes to discuss their passage and write what they think the

passage conveys about assimilation into mainstream American. Then they will present their passages to the class.

As a closure exercise I want the students to write exit slips commenting on another group of students presented to the class. This will require students to recall other student's passages, but also evaluate another passage in the story where Piri struggles with the difficulties of assimilation.

Sample Lesson 3 (Addresses Essential Question 3)

Objectives

Students will be able to:

Read Tato Laviera's "nuyorican"

Identify main idea of the poem

Explain how Laviera's word choice convey the main idea

Write a response examining Laviera's experience with diaspora

I will begin by asking students to listen while I read the poem aloud. I will not pass out copies of the poem because I want students to listen before they begin close reading. Often I find that students will attempt to interpret a poem without listening to it in its entirety. After I am done, I will ask the students for their reactions. I want students to share what struck them as I was reading.

After students are done sharing, I will pass out the poem and ask the students to read the poem silently. As they are reading, I want students to circle any words that they found they convey the effects of assimilation and diaspora. I want students to write down in the margins why they feel these words assimilation and diaspora. These close reading skills will help them when they write a response to the poem for homework. After about 10 minutes I will ask students to share their answers while I write them on the board. Once students realize that they have written down some of the same answers I will ask: How do these words express Laviera's perception of the Puerto Rican diaspora experience? Additionally, I want students to question: How do Nuyoricans preserve their Puerto Rican culture in the United States? What are the consequences of being a Puerto Rican in the United States? Does Laviera feel these consequences are fair? Why or why not? Students will respond to these questions in a written response for homework.

Standards

The following Connecticut Content Standards for Language Arts will be adhered throughout the unit.

Standard I:

- A. Students use appropriate strategies before, during and, after reading in order to construct meaning.
- B. Students interpret, analyze and evaluate text in order to extend understanding and appreciation.
- C. Students communicate with others to create interpretations of written, oral, and visual texts.

Students will adhere to Standard one by reading a number of Puerto Rican authors and examine how their experiences in Puerto Rico and the United States shape the way they identify themselves. Students will also engage in group work and present their findings to the class. Furthermore students will write assignments that gauge their ability at analyzing and evaluating various texts.

Standard II:

- A. Students recognize how literary devices and conventions engage the reader.
- B. Students explore multiple responses to literature.
- C. Students recognize that readers and authors are influenced by individual, social, cultural and historical contexts.

Students will adhere to Standard two by reading memoirs and essays in order to interpret different accounts of the Puerto Rican experience. Additionally, students will identify and examine how these accounts were influenced by the Americanization of Puerto Rico and the assimilation of Puerto Ricans into mainstream American culture.

Standard III:

- A. Students use descriptive, narrative, expository, persuasive and poetic modes.
- B. Students prepare, publish, and/or present work appropriate to audience, purpose and task.

Students will adhere to Standard four by writing formal and informal responses to various texts.

Notes

¹ Esmeralda Santiago, *When I was Puerto Rican* (Vintage Books 1993), 63-83.

² Esmeralda Santiago. "The American Invasion of Macun" *Boricuas* ed. Roberto Santiago (Random House 1995), 162.

³ Esmeralda Santiago, "The Island of Lost Causes"(Random House 1995),22-24.

⁴ Piri Thomas, "Konk"(Random House 1995), 127-131.

⁵ Piri Thomas, "Babylon for the Babylonians" (Random House 1995), 96-101.

⁶ "Every Child is Born a Poet.DVD. Directed by Jonathan Robinson.(2005,Customflix)

⁷ Sherman Rogers, "Soy Boricua Pa Que Tu Lo Sepas, DVD. Directed Rosie Perez.(2006, Independent Film Channel)

⁸ Esmeralda Santiago. *When I was Puerto Rican* (Vintage Books 1993)

⁹ Tato Laviera. "nuyorican",qtd in Juan Flores, *Bomba to Hip Hop*. 54

¹⁰ Tato Laviera. "nuyorican",qtd in Juan Flores, *Bomba to Hip Hop*. 54

¹¹ Esmeralda Santiago. "The American Invasion of Macun" *Boricuas* ed. Roberto Santiago (Random House 1995), 159-177.

¹² Esmeralda Santiago. "The American Invasion of Macun" Boricuas ed. Roberto Santiago (Random House 1995), 162.

¹³ Esmeralda Santiago. "The American Invasion of Macun" Boricuas ed. Roberto Santiago (Random House 1995), 162.

¹⁴ Esmeralda Santiago. "The American Invasion of Macun" Boricua ed. Roberto Santiago (Random House 1995), 169.

¹⁵ Piri Thomas, "Konk"(Random House 1995),126.

¹⁶ Piri Thomas, "Konk"(Random House 1995),126.

¹⁷ Piri Thomas, "Konk"(Random House 1995),126.

¹⁸ Piri Thomas, "Konk"(Random House 1995),127.

¹⁹ Piri Thomas, "Konk"(Random House 1995),128.

²⁰ Piri Thomas, "Konk"(Random House 1995),131.

²¹ Piri Thomas, "Konk"(Random House 1995),131.

Bibliography

"Every Child is Born a Poet: The Life and Work of Piri Thomas" DVD. Directed by Jonathan Robinson 2005 United States: Customflix.

This documentary chronicles the life of author Piri Thomas. This includes looking at his difficult childhood growing up in New York in the 40's and 50's.

Laviera, Tato. "nuyorican", quoted in Juan Flores, *From Bomba to Hip-Hop*.(2000):54

In this poem Laviera examines the difficulties with Puerto Rican diaspora after visiting the island and feeling rejected. He concludes after witnessing the paradoxes in Puerto Rico that the paradoxes of being a Nuyorican are just fine.

Santiago, Esmeralda. "The Island of Lost Causes" *Boricuas*. Edited by Robert Santiago. New York:Vintage Books,1995.

In this essay Santiago examines Puerto Rico's current commonwealth state and how its ambiguity is more of a hindrance rather than a declaration of any autonomy. She discusses the cultural and social problems that exist on the island and contends that choosing status quo is not actually making any choice at all.

Santiago, Esmeralda. "The American Invasion of Macun" *Boricuas*. Edited by Robert Santiago. New York:Vintage Books,1995.

In this chapter from Santiago's memoir, she recounts American occupation in her rural town. This includes introducing American standards of living, which included what Americans perceived as good nutrition and hygiene. However, when a teacher tries to convince Negi to drink milk she knows is spoiled she refuses, and becomes angry about the American present in her town.

Santiago, Esmeralda. "How to Eat a Guava" *When I Was Puerto Rican*. New York: Vintage Books, 1993.

While in an American grocery store, Santiago notices guavas on sale and reminisces on when she ate guavas as a child. This reflection reminds Santiago of her adult life in the United States. Although tempted by the fruit, she notices their color which compares nothing to the guavas in Puerto Rico, and goes towards the American fruit that have become a part of her American identity.

Sherman, Roger. "Soy Boricua Pa Que Tu Lo Sepas.DVD. Directed by Rosie Perez and Liz Garbus 2006, United States: Independent Film Channel.

In this film, Director Rosie Perez examines the origins of the Puerto Rican Day parade. She also chronicles her own family's journey from Puerto Rico to the United States and evaluates the complexities of Puerto Rico being a commonwealth.

Thomas, Piri. "Babylon for Babylonians" *Boricuas*. Edited by Robert Santiago. New York:Vintage Books,1995.

In this short story Piri moves from Harlem into a suburb in Long Island. It is here he experiences a life void of Puerto Ricans in which he is discriminated against.

Thomas, Piri. "Konk" *Boricuas*. Edited by Robert Santiago. New York:Vintage Books,1995.

In this short story, Piri goes to a barbershop to straighten his hair. After the painful process, Piri goes back to his neighborhood and is ridiculed. This causes him to feel an immense shame in his attempt to look more like white boys and he ultimately cuts off his hair.

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