



Windows of the World: Family Identity, and Socialization

Curriculum Unit 93.03.05
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I presently work with middle school students, primarily sixth and seventh graders. The class consists of self-contained special education students who are labeled either SEM (socially and emotionally maladjusted) or LD (learning disabled). These students exhibit difficulty incorporating interpersonal skills in daily activities. In addition, many of these students have problems processing information due to learning disabilities.

In this curriculum unit, dramatic presentation and evaluation of multicultural theater will be integrated and incorporated through the several academic areas. This will enable students to develop an interest in learning about other cultures while improving in the areas of expressive language, receptive language, and reading proficiency.

The major themes of the curriculum unit will focus on the understanding of the family, identity, and socialization. Students will have the opportunity to participate in dramatic readings, play examinations, and presentations as a positive examination of three plays that reveal a glimpse into different cultures: "The Oxcart" by Rene Marques, "And the Soul Shall Dance" by Wakako Yamauchi, and "A Raisin in the Sun" by Lorraine Hansberry. Through the study of these plays, students will have the opportunity to generate discussions relevant to the major themes of this unit.

My goals and objectives of this unit will be:

Academic Goals:

I. Students will improve in their reading skills:

Objectives:

1. Students will identify new vocabulary words from the reading selections.
2. Students will develop improved oral reading skills.
3. Students will develop improved reading comprehension.
4. Students will increase their ability to understand character's point of view.
5. Students will increase their ability to use contextual clues in decoding semantic meaning within the text.

Social Goals:

II. Students will become more self aware through dramatic activities.

Objectives:

1. Students will be better able to express themselves orally and in writing.
2. Students will be better able to express themselves physically and spatially in relation to others.

III. Students will improve their interpersonal skills through dramatic activities.

Objectives:

1. Students will work together cooperatively in reading selections from the plays.
2. Students will work together as a cooperative group to act out scenes from a play.

Cognitive Goals:

IV. Students will identify thematic ideas from the plays:

Objectives:

1. Students will identify and discuss the term culture.
2. Students will identify different cultures and cultural values.
3. Students will discuss the formation of the family.
4. Students will discuss the idea of identity.
5. Students will discuss the role of gender in relation to family and society.

Family

We are in an era when the family and family values are being defined and discussed at length by everyone, most conspicuously the politicians. Certainly, we need to talk about family values but in a way that doesn't limit our understanding and appreciation of the complex dynamics involved. The author/psychologist Salvador Minuchin says that the historical, ideal family is a point in history that never existed. Minuchin continues by saying that family must be studied in a social context when we detail what family and family values should be. (Minuchin 20)

When families are viewed in a social context they can then be discussed with regard to values that may include tolerance, support, responsibility to others, and accommodation. These values will exist in different forms, in different social groups, and in different social contexts.

Indeed, the American family is changing. Some of these changes have important implications for children and their development. In 1955, 60% of households matched the traditional pattern of one father, one mother, and two children; today, 7% of the households have this configuration. Out of 80 million households today, 9.5% million are headed by a single parent, 16% of whom are under age 25, and 50% of whom are unemployed. Sixty-one percent of the mothers with children under 18 work, and this figure rises to 68% for mothers who are also single parents. (Eggen 125)

What impact is all this having on children? Research offers some insights into this problem. The presence or absence of a preschooler's working mother is less important than the quality of day care provided. (Eggen 125) Another example shows that while divorce is difficult for children, they are better off in happy single-parent households than they are in two-parent families filled with stress and disharmony. (Eggen 126) Some researchers argue that the primary problem with single-parent households is not the lack of a second parent, but rather lowered income and poverty that is present. It would seem the structure of the family unit is not as important as the quality of the interaction within it.

All individuals share a universal bond in common: We are all part of a family. The family is the basic building block of every culture. The dynamics that form each family's cultural values and standards are unique and diverse. Families vary greatly from culture to culture. Within a culture, a family will also vary in size, members, and financial status. However, the family unit itself shares basic similarities as a common thread.

The students in my class are at a critical point in their own lives. They need knowledge of their culture, who they are, where they came from, and where they are going. The greatest source of strength for them, their families, is often their greatest source of anxiety and disappointment. This unit will then provide an opportunity to discuss family life and values with regards to differences and commonalties, not in terms of better or worse. The implications for teachers are clear, to nurture the social and emotional needs of the students, particularly when the family environment for certain children is lacking.

The study of literature allows teachers and students to discuss diversity and development in a non-threatening manner. Students are much more likely to discuss sensitive topics and gain some insight into themselves when they refer to characters in a book. The characters allow students to see that change and diversity are universal characteristics of all humans.

Hopefully this unit will begin to make them think about their own family experiences, how they act in their family and how they are acted upon. I would like them to develop an awareness of their emotions and their

own “values” as they relate to the family situation as members of an entity and as individuals. Essentially, I would like this unit to help my students get to know themselves in a more mature and reflective manner.

Identity

Each member of a family has a designated or self-appointed role that requires expectations of the other members or expectations of one’s self. Such roles may be expected gender related behavior. In addition, relationships are naturally developed and instinctively assimilated. These factors greatly affect the development of the individual’s personality, and more specifically, self-identity.

As children reach the stage of adolescence, they begin to think more abstractly. This ability in development is the most substantial stage of cognitive growth. During this stage, children are able to begin exploring life’s possibilities. They are able to think of various solutions to everyday life situations. Adolescents begin to think how the process of making choices will effect future outcomes.

They begin to develop opinions and beliefs about their environment in areas such as political, social, and religious spectrums. Metacognition or reflective thinking assists the adolescent to develop reasoning strategies relevant to analysis in critical thinking and development. As a result, the adolescent begins to form his self-concept and self-identity.

The concepts of family and self-identity are certainly contingent upon one another. Interactions within the family unit will play a major role in the adolescent’s personality or self-concept formation. The exposure to cultural norms, as well as individual adaptations, lays the foundation for influential modeling and acceptance of social orientations.

Through a study of the families in the three plays, and more specifically individual characters, my hope is to develop in my students, an awareness about the formation of self-concept and identity. Moreover, an understanding of other cultures will break down the walls of social prejudices or negative stereotypical beliefs. Students will see people of different cultures as unique individuals with diverse cultural and environmental backgrounds.

Socialization

As a result of this cooperative learning project, students will have the opportunity to develop stronger interpersonal skills through the process of working together for a common goal. Socialization will be accomplished and enhanced by group activities such as theater games and warm up exercises. I will use these activities much as like the stretching and aerobic exercises used by athletes; to provide practice as well as physical and emotional conditioning for the main event (the reading, discussion, and acting out of the plays).

Apart from the benefit of conditioning, these activities will be valuable in and of themselves. They will serve as important exercises in promoting positive socialization of the students. The students I work with need to strengthen not only their academic skills, but their interpersonal skills as well.

Rationale

I envision incorporating this unit in three lessons a week over a time period of two semesters. I plan to integrate the materials in the subjects of Reading, Language Arts, and Social Development. The students will actively take part in learning the material while developing academic skills. This approach will tap into each student's creative side while holding individual interest levels.

The plays I have chosen were selected for their strong family message, their high interest, vivid characterizations and readability. These plays depict three families from different ethnic backgrounds (Hispanic, Japanese-American, and Hispanic). The families have similar problems relating to money, mobility, acceptance role/gender issues, and prejudice. Each confronts these problems in different ways and with different results.

I plan to present the plays in the following order: "The Oxcart", "And the Soul Shall Dance", and "A Raisin in the Sun". I chose "The Oxcart" first because of its high interest and easy readability. These elements are essential in establishing motivation at the beginning of the unit. "And the Soul Shall Dance" will be studied next. This play is difficult in terms of language and concepts. This will require a great deal of concentration and teacher direction. While both of these plays will be studied in depth, they do serve as "warm ups" to a more thorough examination of the final play, "A Raisin in the Sun". This play incorporates all the elements that I hope to teach my students about family and identity.

Before reading, discussing, and writing about the plays, I will introduce the class to several essential elements found in all plays. These elements will continually be reinforced throughout the unit. They will be invaluable in focusing the students on their readings, in structuring their writing assignments, and in assisting them through their "performances". The elements of a play to be discussed are:

- 1) Plot
 - a. conflict
 - b. climax
- 2) Setting
- 3) Characters
- 4) Main Idea

Introduction to the Plays

With the introduction of the plays, the students' personal experiences will become connected to those of the characters involved in the dramatic social experiences to be studied. There will be questions at the beginning and end of each reading to help the student make those connections more insightful, to help them build the bridge between the world of the purely personal and the universal.

The Oxcart

"The Oxcart" by Rene Marques is a play about a Puerto Rican family's attempts to find a better life for themselves. They move from a small, mountainous region to a slum in San Juan. Eventually they move to the Mainland, again to a slum, this time in New York City.

The following is a brief description of the main characters in the play:

Chaguito: a streetwise adolescent; he steals, is aggressive and disrespectful, eventually ends up in jail

Juanita: an innocent who through the transforming forces of experience and insight evolves into a strong challenging personality

Dona Gabriela: mother of Juanita and Chaguito; a widow, who against her better judgment moves the family from the mountains to the city

Don Chago: Dona Gabriela's widowed father who refuses to follow the family from the mountains to the city; he represents the traditional values of the family

The story is told in simple, straightforward language (English translation) and should be suitable for students reading on grade level or below, grades 6-8. The theme of "The Oxcart" is universal. It will have a strong, immediate emotional appeal to any student who takes the time to become familiar with the "thoughts" and "feelings" of this family and its dreams for a better life.

A Synopsis of "The Oxcart":

The action takes place in a rural, mountainous region of Puerto Rico. The family is preparing for the move to San Juan. The play indicates that the family once owned a large farm but because of storms and later government acquisition, they now live on three acres in a small house. The father has passed away and the family's economic situation deteriorates to the point that they can no longer pay the mortgage. Luis, now the head of the family, decides that the only way to find their fortune is the move to the city of San Juan.

The family moves to a slum in San Juan. This new home is a tremendous disappointment to the entire family. They live in a shack without any land. Luis is unsuccessful in maintaining jobs in the city's factories and eventually ends up as a gardener. Chaguito becomes seduced by the streets, steals, and eventually ends up in jail. Juanita like Chaguito begins to be corrupted by the city. She unsuccessfully attempts suicide after an abortion. Dona Gabriela remains sad and anxious concerning the family's move from the country to the city. In

spite of this she accepts Luis's suggestion of yet another move this time to New York City.

Finally, the family moves to a low income apartment building in the Bronx. Luis works very long hours in a factory to maintain the family. Juanita, although working, resorts to prostitution. She no longer lives at home. Chaguito remains in San Juan after being arrested for theft. Dona Gabriela is overwhelmed by all the dramatic changes in her family and gradually begins to slip into a state of resignation.

The play ends tragically when Luis is killed as a result of an accident at the factory. As a result of his death, Juanita finds within herself an inner strength. She along with Dona Gabriela decide to return to the mountains of Puerto Rico to bury Luis and begin a new and better life for the family.

I would approach the reading of this play using one, 45 minute period per day, three times a week. The play would be completed over the course of about five weeks, with some time spent acting out selections from various scenes. These "acting out " scenes will actually be walk throughs without the benefit of scenery or memorization, but enough in the way of "production" to give the students a feel for performance. I think the readability of this play, coupled with the immediacy of the characterizations will serve to maintain a high level of interest amongst the students. It will also lend itself naturally to a close examination of the themes of family and identity.

Representative Lesson Sequence and Development for "The Oxcart":

Sample Lesson 1:

As an introduction to the unit, the major themes will be discussed: family, identity, and socialization. Students will be asked to brainstorm and generate a list of ideas concerning what the above mentioned themes mean to them. They will be given a "Theater Journal" to describe and detail their ideas. This journal will be used throughout the unit for specific writing exercises and activities related to the ideas being discussed.

Sample Lesson 2:

Theater activity: Three Changes

Purpose:

To improve players' powers of observing.

Focus:

On other player to see where changes were made.

Description:

Full group counts off into teams of two players each. All teams play simultaneously. Partners observe one another, noting dress, hair, accessories, and so on. Partners then turn backs on each other and each makes three changes in personal appearance; they part hair, untie a shoelace, switch watch to the other arm, etc. When ready, partners again face each other and each tries to identify what changes the other has made. (Spolin 62)

*This activity may be changed in a variety of ways to maintain interest.

Sample Lesson 3:

Students will be given a vocabulary list from “The Oxcart” prior to the reading selection. The words will be written on the board. Students will copy the words into their theater journals. Teacher will give students the opportunity to generate possible meanings of the words. After this discussion, the appropriate meanings will be modeled through example sentences. Students will also copy these sentences in to their theater journals. As a homework assignment, students will be required to write dictionary meanings as well as an appropriate sentence for each word.

Vocabulary List 1:

accommodate, mangrove, cockroach, dwelling, parallel, asthma, ambition, conform, dignity, humble, exaggerate, peasants, advantage, mortgage, suffocate

Sample Lesson 4:

Write comprehension questions on the board as a guide to understanding the reading selection. Discuss questions prior, during, and after the reading of the first part of “The Oxcart”. Teacher will direct student participation within the reading of the text. Students will be assigned a role to read for a given day. Those who are not given a role to read for the day will read along silently. They will be encouraged to read a role in a following lesson. In addition, the teacher will act as narrator/coach.

The following questions are representative of this selection:

What is the setting of the story in Act 1?

What financial status do you think this family is in?

Why does Dona Gabriela appear to be anxious?

Why is the family leaving their farm?

Sample Lesson 5:

The class will read the next selection from “The Oxcart”. Before reading the passage, students will be directed to think about the structure of this family in relation to its members and roles within the family unit. Guide questions will be placed on the board to focus the students in this activity. The students will read the selection silently. After the reading of the selection, students will write in their theater journal about how this family is the same/different with their own family?

Guide Questions:

Who are the members of the family?

Who is the head of the family?

How do the older characters differ from the younger characters?

Describe the gender roles of this family?

What role does money play in this family?

Sample Lesson 6:

As an incentive towards understanding and appreciating a different culture, students will prepare a Puerto Rican meal. It will be a cooperative project for the entire class. In addition, parents will be invited to participate and attend in the festivities.

Sample Lesson 7:

As one of the final lessons, students will be involved in a writing/investigative project. They will be encouraged to think and then write about all the places they have moved to in their life. They will answer such questions as:

Where did you move?

Why did you move?

When did you move?

Who did you meet when you got there?

What did you like about the place?

What did you dislike about the place?

Students will then be asked to interview their family in an attempt to get the same information. As a result, the students will be able to develop a brief “Family Tree of Movement”. The goal of this activity is to have the students begin to think about the influence of moving and environment on their lives. A strong connection will be made between this activity and discussions concerning the movement of the families from the three plays.

And the Soul Shall Dance

“And the Soul Shall Dance” is a play that takes place in Southern California in 1935, in and around two small farms in the Imperial Valley. It provides a glimpse into the Asian-American culture. It presents an interesting comparison between Asian and American cultural norms and expectations. The characters in this story represents two distinct generations: The Issei (Japanese born Americans) and Nisei (children of the Issei). The conflict between the Japanese and American way of life is portrayed through the longings of the Muratas for their homeland. This conflict is embodied in an even deeper sense through the actions of Emiko. The reality is that they must remain in America due to economic considerations.

The following is a brief description of the main characters in the play:

Murata: 40 year old Issei farmer; he is a good husband father, and friend; although down on luck, maintains dignity and positive outlook

Hana: Issei wife of Murata; loyal and even tempered; desires to return to Japan but is realistic about financial situation.

Masako: 11 year old daughter of the Muratas; represents Americanized values, sometimes to the

displeasure of her parents

Oka: 45 year old Issei farmer; neighbor and friend to Muratas; arrival of his daughter deepen an already bitter marriage with his second wife

Emiko: 30 year old wife of Oka; sister of Oka's first wife; sent to Oka as a punishment for her dishonorable behavior; lost in a fantasy world of her youth

Kiyoko: 14 year old daughter of Oka; her arrival elicits deep resentment and jealousy from Emiko;

Kiyoko represents traditional Japanese values

The vocabulary and the readability of this play may be difficult for some students. Lessons will be developed to assist in concept formation.

Background Information:

There was much prejudice against Japanese-Americans in America, even before the war. The author Wakako Yamauchi says, "You just tried to live quietly and not call attention to yourself." (Berson 128) The play details several instances of this. The play also shows prejudice of a more domestic kind, the very chauvinistic attitude of the Japanese men toward women. This is most clearly embodied in the character of Oka in relation to Emiko. The author states, "I didn't consciously decide I was going to write the play from the point of view of women, but that was one of the things I wanted to show, that feeling we had; 'You can step on us, but you haven't got us yet!'" (Berson 130)

A Synopsis of "And the Soul Shall Dance"

The play begins with a conflict between the Muratas and their daughter Masako. She burns the bathhouse down as a result of her carelessness. Her parents admonish her but are quick to forgive. In fact, they are unemotional about it.

The smoke of the fire attracts the attention of their neighbor Oka. He rushes over to the farm to assist. He offers the use of his bathhouse on his farm.

This encounter leads to the revelation that Oka is on the way to sell his only horse. He needs the money to send for his daughter, Kiyoko, from Japan who he has not seen for many years.

This leads to a deeper revelation that Oka had been married many years before to a woman named Shizue. Shizue was the sister of his present wife, Emiko, and the real mother of Kiyoko. He also mentions that Emiko was sent from Japan by the parents at the time of Shizue's death as a "replacement" for Shizue.

The family takes Oka up on his offer to use his bathhouse. They bring with them sake and their Victrola. When they arrive at the house, they are warmly greeted by Oka but Emiko makes little effort to be sociable. She remains detached. She only becomes somewhat animated when she is reminded of her youth in Japan by the music of the Victrola. "She becomes wrapped in nostalgia and memories of the past." (Berson 142)

Everyone goes outside except Emiko. Masako plays a song called, "The Soul Shall Dance". This draws Emiko outside where she begins to sing along with the record. She becomes almost lost in the dreams of Japan. She reveals to Hana that her parents were very strict. They didn't like her singing, her dancing, and her preferred lifestyle. It was extremely taboo for proper women to act this way in Japan.

Oka is embarrassed by his wife's actions. This incident is the catalyst that vents all his pent up frustration and rage concerning Emiko. He confronts her with the knowledge of her former life as a "tainted" woman. He also confronts her with his first wife's death. He blames Emiko and her family for this. Even after all these accusations, Emiko is still not repentant and vows to return to Japan to live her former life.

Kiyoko arrives from Japan. Oka is very proud. Emiko is disturbed by her arrival. This after all, is her sister's daughter. She is very cold to Kiyoko. The Muratas are very kind to her except for Masako. Masako initially dislikes Kiyoko for a variety of reasons. She appears to be too grown-up, too conservative, too shy, and especially too "Old World".

Kiyoko witnesses the deterioration of the relationship between Oka and Emiko over the course of several months. They begin to drink heavily and become physically abusive. Finally, one night, Kiyoko seeks out comfort from the Murata family. Masako now begins to realize the miserable situation that Kiyoko is in. She initiates steps towards forming a relationship with Kiyoko.

Tentatively at first, Masako begins to become protective of Kiyoko. She understands Kiyoko when other students at school do not. Masako makes light of this, but her father Murata, sees the significance of this growing relationship.

This story culminates around two main ideas. The first is that Emiko has been stealing money from Oka in the hopes of returning to Japan. Oka has discovered this money and spent it on his daughter. Emiko knows now that finally she will never return to Japan. This is the final stab in her "heart".

The second idea that concludes the story is the developing relationship between Emiko and Masako. She sees in Masako as a reflection of her own soul. The final scene of the play belongs to Emiko and Masako. Masako stares at Emiko as "she breaks into a dance, laughs mysteriously, turns round and round acting out a fantasy." (Berson 173-174)

I would approach the reading of this play using one, 45 minute period per day, three times a week. The study of the play would be completed over the course of about three weeks. All study of this play concentrate on readings and analysis, revolving around the important elements of a play (see rationale).

Sample Lesson 1:

Students will be given a list of Japanese vocabulary words/sayings from the play "And the Soul Shall Dance". They will be given Japanese-American materials to investigate the terms used in the story. The students will write out the correct meaning. To evaluate the students understanding of the terms, the students will write a short story of their own. They will integrate the Japanese vocabulary words/sayings within the story.

Recommended Japanese Vocabulary Words/Sayings:

Issei, Nisei, shikata ga nai, baka, furoba, yoshi, detchi-boko, Kago no Tori, kitchigai, natori, washi baka ni shite, kaire, kuso, jora, saru shibai, aho, pakkai

Sample Lesson 2:

In the play, “And The Soul Shall Dance”, the characters illustrated the use of body language as a means of non-verbal expression. The following activity will be useful in helping students to get more in touch with their physical selves in relation to their environment.

Activity:

Pantomime

For this activity, there should be at least five students. One person starts by getting into the middle of the circle; he should decide on a piece of machinery he wishes to pantomime (idea cards with written directions or illustrations may be helpful; also, coaching is essential).

Once he has decided, he will select one part of that machine and move his body as if he were that part. For example, if he decides to be a clock he might stand in the middle, bend down and swing both hands as if he were the pendulum on a large grandfather clock. After this first person begins to move, the other people in the group join in the center when they think they’ve figured out what the machine is. Each person pantomimes a different part (again, coaching is essential here). There should be no talking, although sounds are sometimes helpful (clapping hands for the tic-toc of the clock, etc.). When all or many (your call) of students are involved and moving together (or moving), stop and see if the students were thinking of the same machine; then find out what they were doing to imitate a particular part. This activity is fun and will generate lots of energy. Try repeating at least three or four times with a different person beginning each time.

Processing Questions:

1. When did you know what the machine was? How many parts (persons) were needed before you knew?
2. How did your part move? Would anyone else do that movement differently?
3. How did your movement affect other people’s movement? How did other people’s movement affect yours?

A Raisin in the Sun

Some of the primary reasons that I chose “A Raisin in the Sun” for my curriculum unit are the diversity and richness of characterization and family issues that it provides. Also, it is in many ways the story that comes closest to mirroring the family situations of my students.

“A Raisin in the Sun” is a story about a poor black family in Chicago. It provides a wonderful description of a grandmother, her two adult children, her daughter-in-law, and her grandson.

The following is a brief description of the main characters of the play.

Lena: matriarch of the family; represents traditional views of the family

Walter: son of Lena, Father of Travis; experiencing deep problems in and around his leadership role within the family

Ruth: wife of Walter, mother of Travis; supportive of family, but worn down by life's disappointments

Beneatha: daughter of Lena; search for identity; desires to break cultural/gender norms and become a doctor

Travis: son of Walter and Ruth; youngest member of the Younger family; through innocence, youth, and potential represents the hopes and expectations of the entire family

The reading level of this story is suitable for grades 6-8. The story plot is simple and direct. The characters are realistic and interesting enough to hold the interest of most students. However, some of the vocabulary may be difficult to understand.

A Synopsis of "A Raisin in the Sun"

The setting indicates that the family lives in an impoverished physical environment. They struggle together to maintain a decent lifestyle. Within these circumstances they have not given up their hopes and dreams. The true beauty and strength of the Younger family is the unwillingness to accept poverty and prejudice. They have their "eyes on the prize" and they are individually at first, and then collectively going to attain it.

The main protagonist in the story, Mama, is the true soul and the backbone of the family. She gives the family an inner strength and radiance that inspires each member to maintain attributes unique to the formation of the individual identity within each member of the family.

Walter Lee, Mama's son, is the most frustrated with the family's financial situation. He wants to be able to support his wife Ruth and their ten year old son Travis on his own. Walter reflects back on his life and feels nothing but a lack of accomplishment. However, he is given an opportunity to make an investment that he feels will give him the self-respect he so desperately desires.

Even though his mother Lena wants Walter to take pride in his life accomplishments, she does not show support for Walter's dream of investing in a liquor store. Lena believes that such an investment would be against her moral values.

During the story, Mama receives a ten thousand dollar check from her late husband's insurance policy. Walter feels that this money is somehow owed to him so that he could be successful in the eyes of his family. Mama desires to use the money to put a down payment on a house that they could call their own. She no longer wants to pay rent on the two bedroom ghetto apartment that is infested with insects. She wants a yard so that she could plant the garden she has always wanted. Most of all, she wants her grandson to be able to grow up in better living conditions. He presently sleeps in the living room on the couch. She wants him to have the comfort and security of a home he could call his own. In addition, Mama would like her daughter Beneatha to follow her dream of going to medical school. She is a little confused about some of her daughter's goals and

aspirations. However, she plans to support her daughter's decisions in search of her identity.

The entire family is anxious about how the money will be dispersed. Ruth finds out that she is pregnant. She considers an abortion due to the family's already struggling circumstances. She is unable to approach Walter about her confusion because of his emotional state of mind. Walter has begun to drink heavily and constantly verbalizes his unhappiness.

When Walter realizes that Mama has decided to use the money to buy a house in an all white neighborhood, he feels betrayed. Mama feels the intensity of his frustration and decides to give him a portion of the remaining money. She also trusts him to deposit Beneatha's college money. He takes all of the money and invests it in the liquor store. Unfortunately, his friend disappears and cons Walter out of all of his money.

The family is devastated by the news. They feel that all of their dreams have been crushed. Walter calls the representative from the neighborhood where they have purchases the house. He has made an offer to buy the house back due to the prejudice of the surrounding neighbors. Walter considers redeeming the offer due to the financial loss he has suffered. Mama allows Walter to make the ultimate decision. Even though Walter decides to turn the offer down. He earns the respect of the family for his powerful and courageous decision. The line from a Langston Hughes poem "What happens to a dream deferred? . . . (Hansberry viii) fortunately does not now have to be answered in the negative. This family had the courage to act upon their dream and now it is a "dream realized", an affirmation.

I would approach the reading of this play using one, 45 minute period per day, three times a week. The play would be completed over the course of about six weeks, with some time spent acting out selections from various scenes. Most of these "acting out" scenes will follow the same format as used with "The Oxcart" and "And A Soul Shall Dance"; walk throughs without the benefit of scenery and memorization. However, I will select several brief scenes in which I will encourage the students to memorize their lines. In addition, some props and scenery will be used in a mini production.

Representative Lesson Plans for "A Raisin in the Sun"

Sample Lesson 1:

Activity:

Family Interview

Purpose:

Students will become more familiar with members of their family outside of their "traditional" role in the family.

It is interesting and fun to learn things about people, even people we think we already know. Ask someone from your family the following questions and see how many new things you learn.

1. What is your full name?
2. What was your name before you were married?

3. Where were you born?
4. What is/was your favorite subject in school?
5. What is/was your school like?
6. Who is your best friend?
7. What do you like to do with your free-time?
8. If this is an older relative (parent, aunt, uncle, parent) ask What are some things you liked to do as a young person?
9. Where is the most interesting place you have ever lived?
10. Where is the most interesting place you have ever been? Why?
11. What do you think is most special about you?
12. What is your favorite food?
13. If you could change one thing about yourself or about the world, what would it be? Why?
14. Is there anything not on this interview that you'd like to tell me about yourself?

Sample Lesson 2:

Activity:

Developing Positive Self-Concepts:

Goal:

To make students feel wanted and valued in your class, to improve positive self-concept and identity.

Procedure:

Students are asked to write autobiographical sketches and bring in pictures of themselves when they were younger. They list their strengths and weaknesses and describe what they want to be when they grow up.

Variation:

Students are asked to write biographical sketches and bring in pictures of some member of their family when they were younger and a recent photo. They detail why they chose this family member and the members importance to them.

Variation:

Students are asked to write a brief “biographical sketch” of some member(s) of the Younger family. They are also asked to draw pictures (photographs) to connect with the biographical sketches.

Sample Lesson Plan 3:**Activity:**

Vocabulary Meaning Through Contextual Clues

Students will be given a list of vocabulary words from “A Raisin in the Sun”. They will be asked to listen for these words as they are used in a brief paragraph. They will need to attend to contextual clues to figure out their meanings. The teacher will read the paragraph to the class. Students will try to figure out what each word means, and write the definitions on their worksheet. Example:

Vocabulary Words:

sternly, oppression, vindicated, mutual, appreciation

His mother says *sternly* , “If you don’t take this comb and fix this here head, you better!” Travis puts down his books with a great sigh of *oppression* . He finally puts the books down, turns around, and rolls his eyes at her, knowing the mood has changed and he is *vindicated* . They face each other and embrace in a display of *mutual appreciation* .

Discuss the meaning of the words. Have students support their definitions with context clues from the selection. If they have difficulty defining a word, reread that part of the selection. Then ask for synonyms for the vocabulary word. Finally, have volunteers suggest other sentences using the words.

Sample Lesson 4:**Activity:**

Role Playing Students with Positive and Negative Self-Concepts

Goal:

To relate what we know about concepts of positive and negative identity to realistic situations.

Procedure:

The role playing works best with one or more groups of six players. Begin by writing “positive” on three slips of paper and the word negative on three slips of paper. Fold the six slips of paper and put them in a box. Each role player picks out a slip of paper but does not reveal to the others the word he or she has picked. If you picked “positive” your job will be to role play a person with a positive self-concept (however you define it). If you picked negative, your job will be to role play a person with a negative self-concept (however you define it). Students do not know beforehand what role the other group members are assigned although you do know that the three members have picked positive and three have picked “negative”.

When the role playing is over, each player might pick out one other member of the group and describe the behaviors which that member exhibited in the role-playing skit (in this manner each role player’s behavior is described by another member of the group). Next each role player can discuss, in turn, the problem he encountered, if any, in portraying the assigned role. Also, it might be helpful to re-role play the situation, this time exchanging roles.

As with any role playing activity, students will need much encouragement, support, and example. Be prepared to model what you expect by being actively involved as participant and coach.

Variation:

On index cards, write out several examples drawn from the play “A Raisin in the Sun” that illustrate characters involved in either positive or negative behaviors. Students pick an index card and are encouraged to role play the situation.

Sample Lesson Plan 5:

Students will be involved in a creative writing exercise. They will use their theater journals (introduced previously). They will be encouraged to think about what may have happened to the Youngers after they moved into their new neighborhood. They will write several short scenes detailing the Youngers’ “new” experiences.

Sample Lesson Plan 6:

As a culminating activity, the students will have the opportunity for preparation, rehearsal, and production of a scene from “A Raisin in the Sun”, Act III, pages 142-151. (When Walter turns down Mr. Lindner’s offer to buy their house back.)

All students will be able to take part in this activity. Students can take one of a variety of roles: actor, actress, narrator, assistant director, cue card holder, prop carrier/scene changer, video recorder, audience, etc.

In this scene, minimal props will be used. In addition, the performance will be videotaped so that the students will be able to enjoy viewing the final product.

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