



## **The Responsibility Is Ours: Preserving Intangible Heritage**

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### **Introduction/Rationale**

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The sun rises high into the brilliant blue sky beginning to heat up the cold morning. Snow-capped, rugged mountains surround the little town, which seems practically insignificant. *Cock-a-doodle-do, bawk, bawk.* Multi-colored chickens, black, brown, and white peck at the dirt, trying to scavenge any morsel they can find to eat. *Oink, oink* pigs move down the dirt-packed lane while a young, shoeless boy runs behind them yelling, "Yah, yah" helping them to move up the lane away from the town's center. A neighbor comes out of her one-room home. Turning on the *grifo* (faucet), water begins to flow into the metal *hoya* (pot) that she has - potatoes, rice or quinoa will be prepared for the noon-time meal. The two men dressed in old, sun-drenched, long-sleeved shirts, baggy work pants, and rubber boots slowly walk towards the fields stop to ask her when the cheese she makes will be ready. They carry *bombas* (metal pesticide containers) on their backs, hoses in their hands ready to spray the potato plants on which their livelihood is dependent. The faint smell of coffee lingers in the air.

Looking out over the valley, the green and brown patchwork resembles a hand-made quilt. Pieces sewn together, different hues: lime, forest, moss, kelly, coffee, bronze, russet, and chocolate blending together demonstrating the tedious, hard, and ritualistic work of the lives stitched into the terrain.

The daily life routine of my town, Fernandez Salvador, begins.

What makes where I served in the Peace Corps, Fernandez Salvador, unique? Was it because of my perspective, everything seemed so exotic, different, or perhaps even strange - from a chicken pecking on the ground in the morning to seeing it in a soup later that evening? Was it the practice of townspeople throwing buckets of freezing water on each other in celebration of Carnival? Was it the Sunday mass led by a priest who drove in on a motorcycle each week? Was it the idea that people "borrowed" what they wanted never to be returned? Was it because what I had taken for granted as familiar no longer was? My students face a similar situation in that they are new to this country/area and are beginning their journey of making the unfamiliar familiar just as I did during my time in Fernandez Salvador.

*Delaware's Geography Standard Three* states that students will develop an understanding of the diversity of human culture and the unique nature of places. The curriculum materials that we are to use for teaching highlight the beginnings, the development of culture including cultural hearths - epicenters from which

distinct cultures originated. Throughout the year, our studies focus on different places and peoples over time trying to apply this concept to the ancient civilizations. However, the materials do not delve into helping students make a connection to their own cultural heritage/culture which is so important, especially for my students whom are all recent immigrants or migrants to our area. In this proposed unit, students will focus on the guiding questions: ***What makes a place unique? What cultural aspects help to create its uniqueness? Why and how can this uniqueness be preserved?*** and ***How does the role of making the unfamiliar familiar play a part in the uniqueness of place?***

My students are English Language Learners (ELLs) who share Hispanic ethnicity. These adolescents moved to this country and were not part of the decision-making process. Most will never return to live in their country of origin. They will be "stuck in between" two countries, cultures and languages. The National Geographic standard states that students must have a clear understanding of the uniqueness of *Place* as it helps to "enrich their own sense of identity" - essential for my students in particular. Their acclimation process to a new place is vital to the preservation of their own culture, language, and memory of where they came from as well as to the understanding that there is a place for them here too. In the proposed unit, I would like for the students to read literature that highlights the uniqueness of New Orleans as a model to inspire two sets of writings (1) descriptive pieces that demonstrate the uniqueness of *their original place*, their homeland and, (2) where they are now. It is essential for them to understand that space can be crafted. They have agency in defining their place. In doing so, they will have opportunities to focus on these two places and to develop their writing skills in English. Students will then apply what they have learned first to their own lives and then to each of the ancient civilizations that we learn about throughout the year.

## Demographics

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Conrad Schools of Science (CSS) is a school in the final stages of changing into a science/biotechnology magnet school serving students in grades 6 - 12. This past year it finally housed all of these grades making the school population close to 1000. It is considered an urban school, situated on the outskirts of the most populated city in the state of Delaware. This school houses one of the two middle level transitional bilingual programs (Spanish/English) in our district. At CSS, this special program is indeed a "school within a school" serving approximately 85 students in the sixth through eighth grades. They are the only students in the building who do not need to opt into the school by completing an application and interview process since this school is considered their feeder pattern which was established before the transition to a magnet school began. Although it is mandatory for our students to attend this school, it is a very positive learning environment for them. Throughout the transition, there has been an increase in student achievement by all those in the building and improved student behavior. All are recent immigrants from Latin American countries (mostly Mexico) or migrants from Puerto Rico. These students have all of their content area classes - English Language Arts (ELA), social studies, mathematics, and science) with the program's teachers. I am one of these teachers. These native Spanish speaking ELLs face many challenges as they enter middle school: reading pressures escalate due to more demanding texts and they must learn the English language in addition to the content area information.

This particular unit is designed for sixth grade students just entering our school for the first time. They will be transitioning from elementary to middle school. Most likely there will be about 25 students in the class. Over the past years we have noticed that there seems to be two times as many boys than girls in the class.

Additionally, as in the past, I imagine that their English language and cognitive differences will vary greatly.

## Geography/Place

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The study of geography is quite frequently divided into five themes: location, place, human-environment interaction, movement, and region. In the past, I have worked with my students to better comprehend geography through these themes. These youngsters begin to understand at a basic level that a geographer examines a place by examining the human and physical characteristics of such place. For these young ELLs, they are most likely to list examples such as bridge or house as human characteristics and mountains or volcano as physical characteristics. This is a good beginning but what I really want for them to be able to do is to delve deeper into the meaning of a *place*. Not just the tangible of what we can see such as house or a volcano but the intangible, that which exists only in connection with something else connection with meaning?

<sup>1</sup> In the seminar syllabus, our seminar leader Joe Roach points out that United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) defines intangible heritage to include "oral traditions, performing arts, social practices, rituals, festive events, knowledge and practices concerning nature and the universe, and knowledge and skills to produce traditional crafts." <sup>2</sup> This intangible heritage is passed down from generation to generation. "This living heritage, known as intangible, provides each bearer of such expressions a sense of identity and continuity, insofar as he or she takes ownership of them and constantly recreates them." <sup>3</sup> This intangible heritage is "fragile" <sup>4</sup> in that it could be very easily lost especially for these students who may not return to the place where these originate. These examples are what I would like for my students to think, reflect upon, talk and write about in regard to their area of origin. I would like for them to capture the specialness of these places in their descriptive writings.

One commonality that my students have with each other is that although they may be from various countries in Latin America, they all share a deep allegiance to where they are from. In our classroom, one sees countries' flags on notebooks, jackets, t-shirts, and baseball caps. When one reflects on where they come from, whether it is a city, homeland, area, or town, there usually is a strong sense of emotion – perhaps good or not so good, depending on the situation. When I ask my students to talk or give me details about their "home" they usually refer back to where they originated from, not where they live now no matter how long they have been in the United States. For them, despite their young age, there is still a strong sense of emotion, connection, belonging, much like you might feel about a loved one or family pet. In Piazza's, *Why New Orleans Matters*, he writes about the love people feel for the city is much like the love one feels for another.

"New Orleans inspires the kind of love that very few other cities do. Paris, maybe Venice, maybe, San Francisco, New York....The list is not that much longer. New Orleans has a mythology, a personality, a *soul*, that is large, and that has touched people around the world. It has its own music (many of its own musics), its own cuisine, its own way of talking its own architecture, its own smell, its own look and feel." <sup>5</sup>

How can students express their feelings about their homeland, the equivalent of the author's "city" in such a way that preserves the uniqueness of the place beyond the displays of their countries' flags? This deep allegiance, love, soulfulness is again expressed as written in Piazza's work,

"A friend told me of a conversation she had had with an Australian journalist in which she had begun enumerating some of those problems –terrible poverty and hard living conditions for so many of the residents, often within a block of opulent mansions, one of the highest murder and crime rates in the nation, public schools falling apart physically and socially, a police department that in some seasons can be scarier than the city's criminals, official corruption at every level, not to mention weather that for at least seven months a year is equivalent to wearing a towel soaked in steaming hot water wrapped around your head. The Australian listened to the list with mounting alarm, finally saying, 'My God, it sounds like a horrible place to live.' 'Are you kidding?' my friend said. 'It's a great place to live!'" 6

This reminds me of my Peace Corps tenure. Looking back at my personal journal, I have entry after entry of trauma, drama, and angst. Yet, I walk around telling people it is undoubtedly the best experience of my life, the richest time in which I learned so much, most of all how to love my town, Fernandez Salvador. Entries below explain what I felt about my town right before leaving and upon my return to the United States. Using these with my students will help them to know that others, their teacher, may have feelings similar to their own. My students should have an opportunity to think and write about the good and the bad that come together to create the distinctive nature of their place of origin and of where they are now. Discovering the uniqueness of Delaware, of what it has to offer them will also help them to create a place for themselves. These personal Peace Corps entries demonstrate that with time, one can come to love a place for the good and the bad.

*November 20, 1988*

1. Fix living room curtain so people do not look in
2. Sew button on green shirt
3. Put out venom and peanut butter to kill the rats
4. Burn trash
5. Give food scraps to neighbor for her pigs
6. Get plastic bag back from Carmelina to use for market in San Gabriel

I have to do all of these things. I mean really, really...buy poison to kill the rats living under the floor boards of where my bed is located? Of where I am sleeping each and every night with a flashlight next to my head in the hope of keeping them off of my head – aaaah! How can this be my life? What am I doing here? I miss everything and everyone from home. I cannot believe that I have so much longer to go – how many months...let's see 23..., to live in this town where everything is so hard...washing my clothes, talking to these people, trying to figure out what my work should entail.

*October 13, 1990* I felt a little weird today – about the fact that I will soon be leaving. I think I need to read the letter I had sent to Eileen about change and how it is good...it seems every time I get used to my life and seem to like it – it changes. I feel sad about leaving this town, my town. In some ways, how easy-going the life is here. How, in *realidad* (reality), my work is easy or I have what I do under control. I like it here – my friends, the people. I think about all this and it still doesn't seem real. I can't believe that I'm leaving here in one week – FOREVER. Of course I'll come back to visit. But it can never be as it is now. I won't have my bed, my house,

my things, my job, my position in the community. When I spoke with Lisa and she said to me, "But, you will be able to visit", I realized that even one of my best friends couldn't understand how I feel about all that has occurred to me here.

*January 12, 1991* I think about everyone and everything down there - A LOT. What am I to do? It's hard to explain to anyone. It's as if something has been ripped from my heart...like I can actually feel my heart hurting. Two and a half years of my life were spent there in that small town. Fernandez Salvador was my town and no one here can ever understand fully what I experienced there - no words are sufficed to explain Carmelina, Jorge, or Hernan to anyone. All that I learned from them, all that I experienced with them, how funny they are, how wonderful and that makes me sad that this wonderful and very big part of my life cannot be a part of anyone's life here.

Perhaps for my students I can begin much like seminar leader, Joe Roach did at the beginning of our seminar. He had us look at maps of New Haven to orient ourselves to the "mapping" of a city, this city, this place. From the landmarks where people would gather to the nodes in which two or more pathways connect, to the boundaries or borders, the invisible lines that separate neighborhoods or parts of the cities developed over time by customs. Then, we walked outside of the classroom to see these landmarks, nodes, and boundaries. Comparing a 2-D map - the physical layout of the city - to the 3-D map - the pop-up map according to Roach is a transition that I can make with my students. Referred to as a map of desire, this type of map is one constructed in the mind involving all of the emotion that is connected to the memories one has of the place. Each place not only can be described physically such as by giving an address, the coordinates or so but more importantly it can be described by the sensory details vividly remembered such as the medicinal aroma of the eucalyptus as the wind blows gently through the lined up trees on either side of the cobblestone road or the heat of the aji pepper sauce the neighbor makes as it stings the nose and mouth as it is eaten. A map of desire evokes emotion because it is personal in nature and reflective of one's thoughts, ideas, and memories. This experience of going from the concrete, 2-D, to the abstract, 3-D, would be beneficial for my adolescents.

## Culture

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Students must have a strong understanding of the culture-related terminology that will help them with the understanding of a culture and its application to their own culture. The complex nature of culture is looked at from the viewpoints of many social scientists: geographers, anthropologists, sociologists, and psychologists, among others. Each of their perspectives may be somewhat different. In this case, with my students, we will view culture from the human geography perspective which is defined as "...the specialized behavioral patterns, understandings, adaptations, and social systems that summarize a group of people's learned way of life." <sup>7</sup> All that encompasses a person's way of life is a way to simplify this for my students. Culture can be divided into a hierarchical relationship of four levels: Trait, complex, region, and realm. Students will benefit from understanding this as it will afford them an opportunity to connect, visualize the connections between the four hierarchical terms. "A particular group's individual skills, customs, and ways of doing things are called cultural traits." <sup>8</sup> Some of these elements are visible and can be equated with the physical characteristics of a place. Examples of these physical characteristics include houses, bridges, food, and clothing, amongst others. Students will have an easy time with these types of cultural traits as they are more concrete. However, much of what would comprise a culture is invisible, not able to be seen, such as "spiritual beliefs, ideals, ideas about

right and wrong." <sup>9</sup> Providing students with a graphic organizer, a list of the universal cultural traits will assist them in the creation of visual representation of places in their minds. For them, the ability to list examples of cultural traits such as language, religion, dress, technology, architecture, government, cuisine, economy, dance, gender roles, grooming, music, sport, law, education, medicine, agriculture, land tenure, and kinship system <sup>10</sup> will allow them to "put together" these pieces to form a whole picture of a place. The next level of culture is referred to as culture complex. These are "individual cultural traits that are functionally interrelated" <sup>11</sup> An example from Fernandez Salvador is potato farming. From this information, one can understand about the people's diet and wealth. How much land does one own for potato farming informs others of a family's resources. The third level is Region, which describes an area that "shares common cultural characteristics." <sup>12</sup> Ecuador, Peru, and Colombia share the Quechua language of the people native to the area. Region will be most familiar for my students as we consider it the fifth theme to our study of geography. Lastly, at the top of the hierarchy - the big picture - is culture realm. It is a "set of culture regions showing related culture complexes and landscapes." <sup>13</sup> Latin America is an example of this level.

"In many respects, your culture defines your essence, and yet you tend not to think about it until perhaps, you find yourself in a geographic setting where your culture either doesn't work, or marks you as being different from others." <sup>14</sup> This begins for my students as they enter the country and our schools. Their struggle to maneuver between the two cultures is evident. Often, geographers refer to people adjusting to their new environments as adaptation, a difficult process, for certain. As a Peace Corps volunteer there was some instruction regarding this acculturation process during our training period. As stated, during my time in Fernandez Salvador I would experience unconscious incompetence in which I was ignorant of the cultural norms such as sipping a "traigo" (the equivalent of grain alcohol). Instead, I drank each cup as it came my way becoming quite intoxicated in a very short time period, of which the townspeople never let me forget! The next stage, conscious incompetence, was the time period when I became somewhat aware of some of the cultural differences but still had very little understanding as to the why. An example of this stage was when I would go to the *Casa Comunal* (Community House) for our Mother's Group meeting. I would sit around for over two hours, waiting for the women to show up to the meeting. Sense of time is very different in my town of Fernandez Salvador! Conscious competence is the beginnings of understanding cultural differences and specific "behavioral adjustments". That was when I realized the time differences we had and told the Mother's Club members that I would be at my home and when they had convened at the Casa Comunal to send a messenger and I would come over for the lecture and demonstration regarding that week's topic. and, lastly, unconscious competence without knowing, automatically following social and cultural norms without actively thinking about them. <sup>15</sup> I knew that I had reached this stage when my friend came to visit from the United States. My students follow a similar path during the process of cultural awareness. Additionally, people's response to them follows along this pattern as well.

"What is it about New Orleans that makes it more than just the sum of the events that have happened there? What gives it a meaning and a soul so that it is known throughout the world as a place to visit to revive the spirit? What is it about the spirit of the people who live there that could produce a music, a cuisine, an architecture, a total environment, the mere mention of which can bring a smile to the face of someone who has never even set foot there? What is the meaning of a place like that, and what is lost if it is lost?" <sup>16</sup>

This quote from *Why New Orleans Matters*, resonated with me when I reflect on my Peace Corps experience and those of my students. For me, I think about when I first arrived to Fernandez Salvador. I kept a huge wall calendar in which I listed how much time I had left to serve. At the beginning, I remember looking at the

calendar and thinking, "What? How can I survive? I have 23 more months here." Over time, when it was nearing the end of my tenure, I remember thinking, "What? Only two more months left. How can I leave?" Time, adjustments, cultural understanding changes many things including one's perspective. For them, I think about this from two perspectives. One, I want to be certain that my young adolescents have an opportunity to express their feelings through oral and written language about what is special about their homeland. For those whom never return, it may be the only recording they have for remembering their intangible heritage years from now. If it is lost, it is part of themselves that they lose. Two, I want them to have an opportunity to do the same for where they are now. For them to see that there is a place for them here, they can/do belong and that this place also holds a specialness that they can appreciate.

## Cultural Change

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Cultural changes occur. This is not usually a quick process, more of a slow drawn-out one. Essential to the study of culture is this fact. Students can begin to think about how these changes occur as they are a part of the process. Students are changing as individuals as well as assisting in the gradual process of cultural changes on a bigger level, shaping what Delaware will look like in our case. There are a few ways in which change can occur. Innovation refers to the "Changes to a culture that result from ideas created within the social group itself and adopted by the culture." <sup>17</sup> Diffusion "process by which an idea or innovation is transmitted from one individual or group to another across space." <sup>18</sup> My students move and they and their families take their culture with them (transculturation). They bring their favorite food recipes and continue to enjoy the traditional meals they were accustomed to such as arroz con gandules or enchiladas poblanas. Contagious is the term for a second way in which culture changes. This refers to how it affects all uniformly from the source (e.g. infectious disease) sensitive to time and distance. <sup>19</sup> Another means of cultural change is referred to as hierarchical. In this case, it means "the transfer of information from the important to less important; big to smaller e.g. large metropolitan city to smaller cities to towns to rural communities." <sup>20</sup>

## Objectives

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Our state's recommended curriculum units are created following the Understanding by Design (UbD) model based on research and theory by Grant and Wiggins. The overarching idea is to teach for understanding beginning from the end, focusing on what you want students to know. Enduring Understandings are the big ideas of the unit and are vital to students' comprehension of content and concepts. They have lasting value and help to make the content meaningful. However, it is my understanding that the state of Delaware is aiming to change this format to follow Learning Focused. This is "a comprehensive continuous school improvement model that: provides schools with consistent learning and exemplary strategies instruction, and integrates research-based exemplary practices." <sup>21</sup> In practical terms, it is a graphic organizer that highlights many of the same things as the UbD model such as essential questions and highlighted vocabulary to include in the instruction. For this unit, students will recognize that a place is unique with distinct human and physical characteristics. In addition, they will realize that they are unique people who come from unique places with distinct cultural aspects. All people are unique. Moreover, they will understand that intangible heritage is the

cultural heritage of humanity. It is fragile and must be "understood, protected, respected" and preserved. Lastly, good readers are able to make connections to the text and be able to express these in oral and written language.

## Essential Questions

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1. What makes a place or people unique?
2. Why and how can this uniqueness be preserved?
3. How am I unique?
4. How can I preserve the uniqueness of myself and where I come from?
5. How is intangible heritage defined?
6. How do good readers use the texts to make connections with themselves, other texts, and the world?

## Strategies

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Incorporating literacy skills into each lesson is essential to my students' success. This is especially true for adolescent ELLs who are reading well below grade level. If students receive additional reading instruction in the content areas, they will be able to transfer these skills to the other subject areas. I have seen this occur in my own classroom in which I am responsible for English and Social Studies instruction. The literacy skills students learn in English class are successfully transferred to our Social Studies class. My ultimate goal is to enable students to be successful both linguistically and academically when they are mainstreamed into a regular education classroom.

### **Proficient Reading Strategies**

This unit will be taught during the early weeks of the beginning of the school year. All of the students are new to our school and class. They will need assistance to become proficient in the use of the reading strategies. They are able to learn these strategies by having a teacher explain, demonstrate, and apply them while reading. I will do just that with introductory cultural readings. It is vital to allow for opportunities to practice the strategies with the students, providing feedback and time for discussion. ELLs' use of proficient reader strategies (predicting, making connections, questioning, inferring, visualizing, determining the main idea, and summarizing) to assist them before, during, and after reading is critical to their comprehension of complex texts. All of these strategies can provide ELLs with the tools they need to construct meaning from the complex texts, such as some of the literature pieces that we have read in the New Orleans seminar that I will require them to read as well as the easier piece - the children's literature book of a country.



## Graphic Organizers

A graphic organizer is "a visual and graphic display that depicts the relationships among facts, terms, and ideas within a learning task." <sup>22</sup> In my classroom, two of the first words students learn in English are "graphic" and "organizers"! Using graphic organizers helps to make content more supportive for students, scaffolding the information to be learned and giving them access to content that otherwise might be too difficult for them. This also helps to organize complex information into a much easier-to-read format <sup>23</sup> which is helpful to ELLs. In our case, we will use graphic organizers to organize the general information pertaining to culture so that they can get a visual picture of the important concepts related to this subject matter. Additionally, they will complete cultural graphic organizers of the information that they read as create them for their homeland descriptive writing pieces.

## Collaborative Learning/Groupwork

Students need to learn how to work together to accomplish goals - those set by the teacher and by themselves. This is a basic requirement for many positions or jobs that they will hold in the future. Working together, relying on each other helps to build team working skills. In collaborative learning, each group member is accountable to each other, dependent upon each other and contributes the established goals. Everyone has some strength to share. <sup>24</sup> Together, more is accomplished. Opportunities to learn about each other before and while working help to promote the camaraderie and cohesiveness necessary to work well together. Individual and group evaluations are necessary to monitor the group's work (product) and their progress in teamwork.

## Descriptive Writing

Much less emphasis is being placed on writing within our curriculum. It is area in which I continually seek counsel so that I can improve my teaching abilities. My ELLs need to learn how to write well. Descriptive writing, the ability to describe a person, place, thing, or event so that the reader can picture it in their minds is a type of writing that students will be able to enable students to focus on an area which too little emphasis is placed. Students will become informed about and practice writing that includes sensory details, figurative language, is precise and organized. <sup>25</sup>

## Classroom Activities

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### Lesson One - Place

*What makes a place different from another? What are the physical and human characteristics of a place and how do they attribute to its' uniqueness?*

This introductory lesson gives students an opportunity to learn about the geographer's definition of place (one of the five themes of geography).

*Anticipatory Set:* Have students brainstorm facts about where they come from - their place of origin. Write these down on an ABC graphic organizer in which they have to list their facts within squares labeled with a letter of the alphabet. *This may be used later to create ABC books of their homes/places of origin. It will also*

*be used to prompt them for their writing pieces.* Have them share these facts with their table partners.

*Directed Instruction:* Introduce the geography theme of place. View PowerPoint about Place and take notes on graphic organizer. Have students work with their table partners to look at the lists they have generated about their home/place of origin and categorize these into physical and human characteristics using the information learned from the PowerPoint.

*Activity:* Students will be divided into pairs to read and discuss a children's literature book about different places (each pair will have a different one). Students will use their Proficient Reading Strategies to better comprehend what they are reading. They will categorize the physical and human characteristics of the place they are reading about on a graphic organizer. Afterwards, each pair will partner with another to compare and contrast their observations to better understand the uniqueness of a place.

*Assessment:* Students' *Check for Understanding* in which they will need to explain what makes the place where they come from unique.

## **Lesson Two - Culture**

*What is culture? What are cultural traits? How do cultural traits contribute to the uniqueness of a place, of a person, of yourself?*

This lesson focuses on the idea of culture - how it can be defined and better understood.

*Anticipatory Set:* Have students view the National Geographic Society video, *Cultures*. This video demonstrates the cultural traits through a series of photographs. There are no words to this video, just music. This is part of the video's beauty. It also makes it helpful for students to concentrate on the content, especially ELLs. Students should list the things they see in the video - e.g. school/education, family, work, war, birth, death, etc. Students should share what they have recorded with their elbow partner and then their tablemates. Share out as whole class.

*Directed Instruction:* Introduce the definitions of culture and cultural traits. Then, show the culture video on Discovery Education Streaming. Have students take notes on a graphic organizer. Review this information afterwards as a whole group, after students have had an opportunity to share with their tablemates.

*Activity:* Give students the Culture Wheel graphic organizer that divides up cultural traits into categories. Have students refer back to what they have brainstormed about their home/place of origin and fill in the Culture Wheel graphic organizer with information about their home/place of origin.

*Assessment:* Students' *Check for Understanding* consists of their Culture Wheel graphic organizer. Does it demonstrate an understanding of their cultural traits?

## **Lesson Three - My Place**

*How do I preserve the uniqueness of the place from which I came?*

This lesson focuses on descriptive writing component of students writing about the place where they come to help them preserve the "intangible heritage" of this unique place.

*Anticipatory Set:* Have students look back at their original brainstorm list of the descriptors of where they

come from. Have students choose three to five of these by circling them.

*Directed Instruction:* Introduce descriptive writing with a PowerPoint presentation – what it is, examples, characteristics, and the importance of using details. Have students take notes on a graphic organizer. Review this information afterwards.

*Activity:* Have students select one of their three to five circled choices to elaborate upon. Have them follow the model demonstrated for describing a person, place, or thing.

*Assessment:* Students' *Check for Understanding* consists of their description. Does it follow what was presented? Is it well organized, have precise language, and a variety of sensory details?

Follow up lessons will consist of having students create a series of descriptive pieces to represent the uniqueness of their place of origin. These will also include interviews with family members and friends to research more information about these subjects. Additionally, we will work on a series of writings which describe the uniqueness of where we live now, Delaware. In this manner students will begin to write their place here, learning that they do belong, that they are able to love two places – their homes of origin and their homes now. A comparison of the two should prove interesting.

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Piazza, Tom. *Why New Orleans Matters*. New York: HarperCollins, 2005. This delightful book includes many essays categorized into

themes such as food, music, and death all demonstrating the unique nature of the city of New Orleans. This text is easy to read and may be used by teachers and students alike in the modeling of descriptive writing pieces.

Ritchie, Donald A. *Doing Oral History A Practical Guide*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2003. Excellent teacher resource that explains how to conduct oral history. The chapters are divided so that one may only use one or two for their purpose. Using it in this manner, it could also be a good resource for high school students.

*United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO)*

[http://portal.unesco.org/culture/en/ev.php-URL\\_ID=34325&URL\\_DO=DO\\_TOPIC&URL\\_SECTION=201.html](http://portal.unesco.org/culture/en/ev.php-URL_ID=34325&URL_DO=DO_TOPIC&URL_SECTION=201.html) (Accessed July 12, 2011). Provides information about culture, intangible heritage, and world heritage.

Venveo. *Learning Focused*. 2010. <http://www.learningfocused.com/> (accessed July 16, 2011). This site gives information regarding the Learning Focused structure that Delaware is adopting.

## Appendices

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### Appendix A

DE ELA Standard One: Use written and oral English appropriate for various purposes;

DE ELA Standard Two: Construct, examine, and extend the meaning of literary, informative, and technical texts through listening, reading, and viewing.

DE ELA Standard Three: Access, organize, and evaluate information gained through listening, reading, and viewing would be addressed in this unit.

DE Geography Standard Three: Develop an understanding of the diversity of human culture and the unique nature of places.

In this unit students will be viewing and reading (ELA #2) various types of texts which they will organize the information acquired (ELA #3) to comprehend the uniqueness of a place (GEO #3). They will make connections to themselves (#4) in their discussions with their group members and write a series of descriptive pieces representative of the uniqueness of their place of origin (ELA #1 and GEO #3).

## Notes

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2. United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, <http://www.unesco.org/culture/ich/index.php?lg=en&pg=00001> (accessed July 15, 2011).
3. Ibid, (accessed July 17, 2011).
4. Ibid, (accessed July 17, 2011).
5. Piazza, xvi.
6. Piazza, xix

7. Jerome Fellmann, Arthur Getis, Judith Getis, *Human Geography: Landscapes of Human Activities*, 34.
8. Ibid, 78.
9. Ibid, 78.
10. Heatwole, 207.
11. Jerome Fellmann, Arthur Getis, Judith Getis, *Human Geography: Landscapes of Human Activities*, 36.
12. Ibid 36.
13. Ibid, 36.
14. Heatwole, *Geography for Dummies*, Hungry Minds, Inc., 206.
15. Lane, "Metacognition and the Development of Intercultural Competence."  
citeseerx.ist.psu.edu/viewdoc/download?doi=10.1.1.100.5642 (accessed July 14, 2011).
16. Piazza, 9.
17. Jerome Fellmann, Arthur Getis, Judith Getis, *Human Geography: Landscapes of Human Activities*, 59.
18. Ibid, 55.
19. Ibid, 56.
20. Ibid, 56.
21. Venveo, *Learning Focused*, 2010. <http://www.learningfocused.com> (Accessed July 16, 2011).
22. Hall and Strangman. "CAST Universal Design for Learning: Graphic Organizers." 2002.  
[http://www.cast.org/publications/ncac/ncac\\_go.html](http://www.cast.org/publications/ncac/ncac_go.html) (accessed July 12, 2008).
23. <http://www.enchantedlearning.com/graphicorganizers/> (accessed July 13, 2009).
24. <http://www.studygs.net> (accessed July 13, 2009).
25. (<http://www.booknutsreadingclub.com/descriptivewriting.html>) accessed July 18, 2011.

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