



YALE NATIONAL INITIATIVE

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Curriculum Units by Fellows of the National Initiative
2020 Volume I: American History through American Lives

American Heritage: Unmasked, Unpacked & Uncloaked

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Introduction

How many times have you reflected on the things that you learned in elementary school and beyond? Have you taken a moment to think about our country; The great United States of America? Have you traced the events since before the birth of this nation to the present? If you have, how do you feel about what you learned? Do you feel that you and your culture were well represented? Would you question your learning today? Would you challenge the texts of old? This is what I ask of my students. Even though they are younger in age, they deserve the best educational experience at all times, therefore I inquire of them... “Who is America? How was she built? What is her heritage?”

This unit sets out to answer the question of who America is and how she came to be. From her very beginnings to the current events of late. How did we arrive at the present? Does it match what has been taught? Are there consequences of omitting truth from content that is meant to eventually create productive citizens for today’s society? Is there evidence of the United States’ Constitution being the nation’s guide for Americans of every race and culture? In a society where people are less empathetic and seemingly more judgmental due to the emphasis on academic credentials, certifications and the like, it is imperative that schools across the country strive to provide a thorough and respectful snapshot, inclusive of all peoples’ trials, contributions and accomplishments as a part of the nation’s historical journey. Examining this information and paying homage to the struggles that each culture endured or caused is the key to a functional and cohesive future in which every individual feels he or she can thrive. Making connections from the past to the current, is a way that students can comprehend not only who they are, but who they would like to become as responsible United States citizens.

This unit will focus solely on two historically disparate groups, Native Americans and African Americans. Each has experienced physical and emotional atrocities as well as systemic oppression that has discouraged progress and set them apart from what is perceived as the “All American” majority race and culture. Over a period of five weeks, students will participate in a historical journey that begins with a thorough examination of primary sources such as The Declaration of Independence, The United States Constitution and Bill of Rights, The Emancipation Proclamation, slave narratives including slave documents and freedom papers, and Native American narratives among others. The goal is to look into the depths of this country’s activities from the viewpoint of the minorities that endured the pain, strife and struggle from America’s youngest moments, to

the present. The reasoning is to foster a well-rounded understanding of three specific ideas; how far we have come, if and how we have grown, and how we will proceed, together, as a nation.

Several major historical events will be part of the unit's focus. 1492 and Columbus's arrival to the "new land," The American Revolution and The Civil War. As we journey through these events, we will touch on other happenings in America's history, such as the Lewis and Clark Expedition, The Trail of Tears and the Civil Rights Movement.

Rationale

In order to scaffold learning and true comprehension, it is highly important to see just what the children know about America and how we function as a country. This very simple question will be asked at the onset of our sessions in this unit. Additionally, the students will share their individual race and culture/ethnicity and what it means to them to be identified under these specific headings. Each child will have a chance to share with their classmates orally as well as in writing. Also, students will research each other's race/culture, working in small teams. As they gather information, the children will be able to work through the questions that arise together. This is a way to garner a more authentic learning experience in which wonder, empathy, acknowledgement and growth come together as a student led, deep inquiry process.

As we continue through the unit, the students will take part in several activities in order to scaffold what they are learning about American history. The intention is to promote the importance of America's asset of diversity, while deflecting the mentality that there is one majority that minorities live in the shadow of. It is at this moment that the students will experience one of the pinnacle points of the unit. The conversation called "Why This Hurts!" Too many times, young students absorb comments, microaggressions and even blatant insults and internalize them silently. This lesson will draw on and mold students' sense of empathy and acceptance. Under carefully guided discussion, and the usage of Restorative Practices, the children will express all of their pride and all of their hurt, revealing the true character of their role as a citizen in the United States of America.

To help tie everything together, in order to express thoughts and ideas which showcase the culmination of their learning, students will partake in several writing activities. From poetry to informational as well as fictional and response writing, the children will have a multitude of opportunities to process thinking and share with classmates. This is an effort to provide support, strength, acknowledgement and celebration throughout this in-depth and poignant unit.

The young learner is amazing in heart and intelligence. Even after twenty years of teaching, students never cease to surprise me with their questions, curiosity, maturity and thoughtful words. Though there are unpleasant topics to include and courageous conversations to have, my students have enough love and yearning in their hearts to endure. They are kind, sensitive and inquisitive. Many have taken a stand in their own lives to promote the well-being of their classmates. They've marched, they've stood up for their rights, and they've stood up for each other. I feel that in this uncommon and unparalleled time, our children and young learners deserve to use their voice and express themselves. Learning about their country and sharing their own ideas of heritage, pride and patriotism as they solidify their knowledge of their home is an alluring aspect of this unit. The understanding and acknowledgement of the struggle that the two focus groups of

Native Americans and African Americans endured, though in varying formats and events, is imperative in fostering the consideration and perception of citizenship in our country. The truth that is shared by the students as they research various cultures, review narratives and discuss their findings with each other is an activity that will produce lifelong learning for each child, and hopefully guide their future endeavors as they continue on as American citizens.

Restorative Practices

In recent years, there has been a large push for what has been deemed “Restorative Practices” in schools. Some of the reasoning for the push has been the existence of the racial achievement gaps across the country. These gaps don’t only show up in the areas regarding test scores, but also in places such as Special Education Recommendations, behavioral recommendations for Emotional Support specifications and punitive actions such as suspensions and expulsions. Historically, the group most affected has been the black male, but black females and other students of color have been drastically affected too. In addition to abolishing patterns such as the ones listed above, Restorative Practices can be both proactive and reactive forms of building relationships and fostering community within a school setting. For most writers on restorative justice the basic tenets centre on the importance of repairing harm and restoring relationships.¹

In deep discussions on the topic, Costello, Wachtel and Wachtel (2010) assert the notion that the circle is a potent symbol. Its shape implies community, connection, inclusion, fairness, equality and wholeness. Furthermore, when examining Restorative Practices and Circles that are successful within school and cultural communities, Costello, Wachtel and Wachtel (2010) teach that the use of circles for meeting and discussing issues has evolved in almost every culture. The first human circles resulted from the natural formation of people sitting around a fire, providing the best way to efficiently distribute access to heat and light. When schools and other groups arrange people in a circle there is no fire, but instead an issue or topic that is relevant to everyone gathered around.

In American society today, it is more important than ever to rid ourselves of the achievement gaps that later create gaps in opportunity with students and young people of color. High suspension rates in my current district have all but disappeared since the inception of Restorative Practices. When students have strong attendance during the school year, they tend to be more successful as opposed to when they are out of school for suspension etc. Creating relationships and offering choices that are more positive when confronting behavioral or academic issues has proven to garner better results, therefore offering more opportunity for historically marginalized groups.

A primary goal of restorative practices is to foster participatory and cooperative community. When authorities do things with people, rather than to them or for them, the results almost always tend to be better.²

The very act of genuinely listening to what people have to say changes the atmosphere and the dynamics in any situation.

The most critical function of restorative practices is restoring and building relationships. Because informal and formal restorative processes foster the expression of affect or emotion, they also foster emotional bonds.³

Educational Philosophies

Because education is such an intricate and sometimes very political practice that touches the lives of every American citizen, it is highly important to examine the pioneering aspects and philosophies that have occurred over time. In the following sections, I will introduce multiple approaches to fair and meaningful teaching and learning that has been put forth by scholars of all sorts. The following educational philosophies only touch on the full assemblage available for study and implementation. Some, like Culturally Relevant Teaching, are put to use during the lessons that will occur during the five-week period and some, such as Abolitionist Teaching, have yet to be put into practice on a regular basis from all faculty and staff throughout the district.

The philosophies discussed below are not only intriguing but take a multifaceted approach to education today. The fact that several of the theories have withstood the test of time, from Dewey to Freire, Horton and Billings, is a disquieting reminder that education reform is still in need of attention that is imperative to the success of contemporary schooling.

Culturally Relevant Teaching

Pertinent not only to these lessons, but across classrooms and school districts in every corner of the United States of America, Culturally Relevant Teaching and Pedagogy is an educational philosophy using the theoretical framework that teaching should be inclusive of students' ethnic and cultural backgrounds, and engage them in a pathway toward academic success. *The National Council of Teachers of English* adds that "although it certainly includes inviting in the voices of those who are generally overlooked in the texts and curricula of US schools, culturally relevant teaching also means recognizing and celebrating those students who show up to our classrooms daily, welcoming their voices, demanding their reflection, and encouraging them toward self-discovery."⁴

Though discussions based on this topic began in 1995, more recent trending on the subject has taken over educational debates in districts everywhere. Gloria Ladson-Billings (2009) shares that over the past ten years there has been increased interest in looking at ways to improve the academic performance of students who are culturally, ethnically, racially, and linguistically diverse.⁵

Additionally, inequities noticed in Native American education were analyzed in a recent study. Ladson-Billings (2009) describes the differences in interactions between Native American students and their white and Native American teachers. A study revealed that the teachers who were most effective in communicating with the students used an interactional style that the authors termed "culturally congruent." This notion of cultural congruence is meant to signify the ways in which the teachers altered their speech patterns, communication styles, and participation structures to resemble more closely those of the students' own culture.⁶

When analyzing the classroom stylings of three different teachers, Ladson-Billings discussed what she viewed as five tenets of implementing Culturally Responsive Teaching authentically and responsibly, in a manner that embraces students that have been traditionally excluded from educational formatting and delivery. These tenets are a guide to successfully including, celebrating and engaging the students of all ages.

1. **Students whose educational, economic, social, political, and cultural futures are most tenuous are helped to become intellectual leaders in the classroom.**
2. **Students are apprenticed in a learning community rather than taught in an isolated and unrelated way.**
3. **Students' real-life experiences are legitimized as they become part of the "official" curriculum.**
4. **Teachers and students participate in a broad conception of literacy that incorporates both literature and oratory.**
5. **Teachers and students engage in a collective struggle against the status quo.**⁷

In this way, children experience a quality learning experience that is inclusive of who they really are! Students can take ownership and feel proud of their accomplishments. Furthermore, the children can partake in healthier relationships with teachers, classmates and curriculum in order to achieve a level of learning that otherwise was not in reach for everyone. Native American educator Cornel Pewewardy (1993) asserts that one of the reasons Indian children experience difficulty in schools is that educators traditionally have attempted to insert culture into the education, instead of inserting education into the culture.⁸

The importance of including the cultural background of all children when planning and implementing lessons is imperative to a healthy learning environment in which all students feel that they are relevant and represented. According to Ladson-Billings (1995) Culturally relevant teaching requires that students maintain some cultural integrity as well as academic excellence. Culturally relevant teachers utilize students culture as a vehicle for learning. Ladson Billings continues to share the significance of the development of a "broader sociopolitical consciousness," which is helpful in allowing the students to tap into critical thinking and teaches them to critique the cultural norms, values, mores and institutions that produce and maintain social inequities.⁹

So many times, in the past, attempts have been made to control the narrative of various races' lived experiences throughout history. This is evident in textbooks and other educational sources. Whether it was left out as a whole or grossly distorted in its inclusion, the injustice created seems unconquerable. Implementing a culturally relevant and fully inclusive curricula allows students to develop the ability to think critically as they immerse themselves in the text. Richard Milner, (2010) states that educators who create culturally relevant learning contexts are those who see students' culture as an asset, not a detriment to their success. Teachers actually use student culture in their curriculum planning and implementation, and they allow students to develop the skills to question how power structures are created and maintained in US society.¹⁰

Despite positive changes in the way Native Americans are represented in the media and in historical texts, students still have a limited understanding of the diversity and complexity of Native American cultures (Fleming 2006; Meek 2006).¹¹ Even today, many students' perceptions of Native Americans are derived from traditional western movies that depict plains "Indians" as the antagonists of civilization and progress (Meek 2006).¹² Another common misconception among students is a view analogous to Jean Jacques Rousseau's concept of the noble savage. In this perspective, Native Americans are viewed as peoples who have a relatively simple wandering-and-gathering lifestyle (Fleming 2006). Both of these perspectives are inaccurate and simplistic caricatures and generalizations.¹³

Abolitionist Teaching

As a newer concept in educational circles, the Abolitionist teaching framework has emerged as a trending philosophy at the forefront of teaching and learning in all settings. Leading the way with this philosophy is Bettina Love. Her work has made a place for itself in this curriculum unit specifically due to its straight-forward nature and attention to marginalized cultures as it pertains to education in America throughout the years. In examining her work, I have discovered that it is imperative to focus on the “mattering” of individuals in order to propel them forward in thinking and succeeding. Similar to Ladson-Billings, Love focuses on scaffolding the achievement of students through the unrelenting teaching of the truths of cultural events and individuals. In her book *We Want to do More Than Survive: abolitionist teaching and the pursuit of educational freedom*, she channels Freirean concepts of individual agency and liberation in education. She states, “abolitionist teaching is the practice of working in solidarity with communities of color while drawing on the imagination, creativity, refusal, remembering, visionary thinking, healing, rebellious spirit, boldness, determination and subversiveness of abolitionists to eradicate injustice in and outside of schools.”¹⁴ (Love, 2019, pg. 2)

Although it is easy to see why many educators may be leery of this newer style of teaching students, it becomes clear that implementing the theory of “mattering” is the key to turning the tide. A students’ self-worth is critical, at times, to their inherent desire to push forward, even in times of distrust or the unknown. Love confirms, to begin the work of abolitionist teaching and fighting for justice, the idea of mattering is essential in that you must matter enough to yourself, to your students and to your students’ community fight. If our everyday repetitive, mundane life decisions are made by racism, Whiteness, and sexism, then so are our curriculums, discipline policies, teacher hiring practices, school-closing decisions, testing, teacher pay, teacher turnover and school leaders.¹⁵ (Love, 2019)

Looking in retrospect at the education process over even the last few, decades, and examining the gaps in achievement and opportunity, Love so gracefully states that when you understand how hard it is to fight for educational justice, you know that there are no shortcuts and no gimmicks; you know this to be true deep in your soul, which brings both frustration and determination.¹⁶ (Love, 2019)

Myles Horton-Founder of The Highlander School

Paulo Freire-Educational Agency and Conscientization

John Dewey-Educative Experience

Three dramatically different educational philosophers, yet similar in many aspects, John Dewey (Educational pioneer and author of *Experience and Education*), Paulo Freire (Brazilian Educational Philosopher and author of *Pedagogy of Oppression*), and Myles Horton (Founder and Director of the Highlander Folk School) were some of the most forward-thinking individuals of their time and within their profession. For Myles Horton, education is integrally related to peoples' struggles against oppression. The Highlander School is devoted to this concept and so stands in contrast to schools of formal and traditional education. He states that you don't give people motivation. You give them experiences that stimulate their motivation-motivation is from within. They learn that they can do things that they never thought they could do before other than read and write. They can talk about their problems with someone that they never knew before. That's a very important learning experience-a step in the right direction from being self-centered and toward having confidence not only in yourself but in

other people, your peers. As they see that, they can begin to see how they can link up with other groups that have the same problems-another community, another state and eventually other people in the world. So, you are empowering people to broaden their horizons to a place where they can grow...You can go to school all your life, you'll never figure it out because you are trying to get an answer that can only come from the people in the life situation.¹⁷

When compared by Bingham, it becomes quite clear that Horton and Freire had similar ways of thinking and acting that pioneered the foundation of schools today as well as enlightened the thoughts of how higher education could benefit from their theories and practices. Bingham shares that Horton and Freire's ideas were to develop through two very different forms of Praxis-Myles's from a small independent residential education center situated outside the formal schooling system or the state, Paulo from within university and state-sponsored programs. Their ideas were to converge not through a series of theoretical deductions but through their interaction with the social context and their involvement with broader popular struggles for participation and freedom. Though both are often credited for what they contributed to these movements, perhaps more significant is the way in which their careers were in fact shaped by social movements themselves.¹⁸

It is amazing to think that during the earlier portion of the twentieth century similar thoughts on schooling and teacher-student relationships as a means for success, within the classroom and community existed in full force. In a surprisingly current way of educational debate and thinking that emphasizes history repeating itself, John Dewey wondered why the school environment of desks, blackboards, a small school yard, was supposed to suffice. There was no demand that the teacher should become intimately acquainted with the conditions of the local community, physical, historical, economic, occupational, etc., in order to utilize them as educational resources. A system of education based upon the necessary connection of education with experience must, on the contrary, if faithful to its principle, take these things constantly into account. Basing education upon personal experience may mean more multiplied and more intimate contacts between the mature and the immature than ever existed in the traditional school, and consequently more, rather than less, guidance by others.¹⁹

Analyzing these education theorists, philosophers and pioneers is a guiding light within this unit. The importance of their stance as well as their acknowledgement of the need to address students of all creeds shows the urgent nature of the jobs of educators today.

Content Objectives (Reading/ELA)

The main objective for this unit is for the students to obtain a sense of knowledge that is inclusive of the aspect of belonging and contribution in not only the historical learning taking place, but in the teaching of it as well. When successfully implemented, each child will have taken time to reflect on their learning process from the beginning to the end and take time to thoroughly analyze their role. This should include how they feel about their representation in the lessons and the garnering of new and enlightening information, in addition to what they feel they were able to share and therefore teach their fellow classmates. They will achieve this by the participation and the completion of several objectives. Students will be able to listen to and show comprehension of the various concepts presented on African American and Native American groups throughout United States history. They will read grade level texts that connect to the various historical topics presented and partner with each other to foster a thorough understanding. Additionally, students will conduct

interviews with family members older than themselves, preferably a parent, grandparent, aunt, uncle, etc., regarding their specific experiences with the subjects of history and/or social studies while in school. They will complete this objective in order to search for any patterns through the education of their elders up to themselves currently.

In order to connect as much as possible and generate analytical discussion, students will listen to, read and discuss several carefully selected WPA narratives and those of Native Americans. Keeping in mind, that the narratives, conducted mostly by whites who may have been relatives of slave owners and the fact that the interviews had occurred several decades after the individuals' freedom had been granted, the purpose for the inclusion of these poignant pieces is to expose the children (in a developmentally appropriate and scaffolded manner) to a more authentic and eye-opening historical view of events in the development of the United States of America through the centuries. Also included will be a brief and general, chronological review from 1492 to the present. This allows for the children to have a well-rounded lot of information which puts into place a more concrete representation of this country, not normally presented at this particular grade level.

Perhaps one of the most critical yet meaningful portions of this curriculum unit is the incorporation, acknowledgement and embracement of the admission and exposure of elements of disappointment and hurt from students to their classmates. These incidents may stem from peers, or members of their school community as well as their local communities. This sharing of information and subsequent discussion will be followed by carefully constructed restorative circles. Students will participate in the "Why This Hurts" discussion and writing process in which they will reflect on a time when a word, action or even learning situation was hurtful or questionable in **their** eyes. Classmates will implement the non-judgmental "thanks for sharing" practice in order to be fully supportive and respectful to their classmates. They will have full choice on whether or not they would like to share orally, have a friend share for them, or simply write about this experience. The children will never be asked to participate or share if they don't want to. As simple observers and listeners to the activity, they are considered participants. Afterwards, the students will participate in restorative circles. In my school district and individual PreK-5 building, the use of Restorative Practices and Courageous Conversations have been in place for several years. The students have participated in multiple circles and are supported by a faculty and staff that provides not only guidance counseling, but additional services such as individual therapy sessions and emotional support through the partnerships of many local agencies. Teachers are trained in scaffolding students through not only academic well-being, but emotional as well, therefore, the students are well prepared and well-practiced in expressing their feelings from joy to anger, which they actually do often and with fervor.

Historical Objectives

With the main goal of this unit being for each student to participate in a learning experience that will enhance their ability to play a new, innovatively major role in the historical exposure garnered in the elementary years, the objectives for the historical/social studies aspect of the unit include the students' abilities to complete, participate and contribute to the following areas of focus. Each child will be able to cite specific textual evidence to support analysis of primary and secondary sources, on a developmentally appropriate level. Additionally, they will be able to recall information from experiences (personal and in class) or gather information from print and digital sources. Students will take brief notes on sources (including the listed primary sources), mentor texts, and discussion in order to sort evidence into provided categories. Moreover,

throughout the unit, the students will be given multiple opportunities to write routinely over extended time frames (time for research, reflection-journaling, and revision) and shorter time frames (a single sitting or a day or two) for a range of discipline-specific tasks, purposes, and audiences. These objectives, paired with those in the ELA subject area are included in order to provide the students with the most in-depth, personal and academic experience within this approach to teaching and learning. The objectives stated in this section will allow each child to pull from multiple resources in order to be active participants in their learning and achieve agency at a much earlier stage in their young lives.

Lessons

It is important to understand that all lessons are adjusted developmentally for this particular grade level. They will be touched on briefly, yet thoroughly as the children indulge in a historical whirlwind journey through several hundred years. All teaching strategies will be used throughout the unit, with a heavy emphasis on journaling and discussion. During this time, students will interview family members on the depths of their race and culture, searching for educational patterns in teaching and learning, to be shared and presented at the culmination of the unit. Lessons will be divided amongst the five-week period of instruction. With week one students will begin to fill out KWL charts and start discussing the inception of slavery. Key points of discussion will include bits on the Revolutionary War as well as The Declaration of Independence, local history (Fort Pitt, George Washington and Guyasuta) and the United States Constitution. The mentor text *A Birthday Cake for Mr. Washington* will be read (aloud-whole group and EEKK). In addition, the class will examine the Seneca and Iroquois Nation.

Week two moves forward to include the Civil War along with the Emancipation Proclamation, with the Cherokee Nation. Key points will touch on the end of slavery in America and includes the examination of slave narratives and primary sources (freedom papers and born-free documents). Mentor texts are also shared with small groups and individual reading and discussion. Students will read *Christmas in the Big House*, *Christmas in the Quarters* and *Moses: When Harriet Tubman Led Her People to Freedom*.

Week three moves ahead through the next one hundred years, touching on World War II and up to the Civil Rights Movement. Students will read *Codetalker: A Navajo Marine of World War II*, *Hannah's Suitcase* and *Remember Not to Forget*.

During week four, the students will read *Brave Girl* and *Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl* to touch on women's roles throughout history. They will also work to complete KWL charts and continue journaling and discussions with family and classmates.

Week five includes presentations of family interviews and the "This is Why This Hurts" exercise. KWL charts will be completed and unpacked as well as journaling, shared with partners. The children will wrap up with Restorative Circles of Love, in which they regroup and embrace one another's personal stories and experiences throughout their historical journey. Students acknowledge each other's importance in the history of America and share the 'L' (what they learned) portion of their KWL chart.

There are three main questions that are the driving factor of this unit and should be referred to thematically. The questions invite student inquiry, discussion, and critical thinking, in order to garner the development of

higher-level thinking skills and strategies. These can be introduced and scaffolded throughout the unit.

Question One-How far have we come?

This question can be asked after all lessons. Students will use Think Pair Share to respond. Proper “Think Time” for processing is recommended as well as time to discuss.

Question Two-How have we, as a nation, grown/if we have grown at all?

With this question, a combination of journal writing and narratives will be used for the final presentations. Students may also include their thoughts along with the thoughts of the family members they are interviewing.

Question Three-How will we proceed together, as a nation?

Teaching Strategies

The following strategies will be of use during this curriculum unit. They are common strategies used within the subject area of English and Language Arts and will be helpful when used in tandem with the classroom activities that will occur during the five-week teaching and learning period of the unit.

KWL Charting-(what I Know/Knew, what I Want to know and what I Learned)

A well-known practice with teachers of students from all grade levels, this type of pre-writing or charting helps to get a sufficient view of the learning process. It provides what, if any, background information students may already have on a specific topic; what they feel they may need in order to add to that learning; and an “exit slip” of sorts with the “what I learned” portion at the end.

Think Pair Share

Students take appropriate wait time to ponder a question or prompt. They then pair up with a partner or small group to process their thoughts and discuss. Finally, the children come back to the larger group and share out on their collaborations. This strategy is a great way to involve all students, and unpack their thinking on a topic. It also promotes student led learning.

Readers’ Workshop

Consisting of Read Alouds and minilessons paired with independent reading time and vocabulary or word study, this practice provides equal opportunity for listening, individual reading time, and oral reading as well as putting into practice various skills learned. Students select books appropriately and show comprehension through numerous forms of response.

Writers’ Workshop

Made up of several activities, this activity consists of the minilesson which provides an opportunity to thoroughly review the prompts for students as well as examples for complete comprehension of the genre and

goal. Sufficient writing time is provided (individual as well as partnering), which is inclusive of prewriting, drafting, revising, and editing. Sharing or Publicizing students' works is essential for completion of the workshop process.

Journaling

Provides students with time to express personal feelings, produce creative writing such as poetry or fictional tales and to respond to a myriad of prompts that end up showcasing comprehension and overall learning. Journaling can happen daily or be paired with specific assignments that provide the instructor with an opportunity to monitor student learning.

Close Reading

This is a strategy that is a staple to the Common Core and promotes students' development of critical analysis of text. Students read and reread with deep discussion that examines patterns, core details and other text features. Students are then able to question the content or structure of the reading as well as construct meaning and build vocabulary.

Analyzation

The ability to break apart writing or reading and take a closer look in order to foster thorough comprehension. Promotes higher level thinking essential to development of students' growth and successful acceleration through the grades.

Inquiry

Teaching that is inquiry based is a reliable way to generate the curiosity of students. It gets them thoroughly engaged in the learning process by promoting agency or ownership of their learning. When education is student led, the children develop an innate sense of gathering and proving information. They also develop higher level thinking skills.

Classroom Activities

There are several activities planned for this exploratory and eye-opening curriculum unit. Some of the pinnacle exercises include the following:

KWL "Starting Point of Our Journey"

Students will chart, discuss and share (Think Pair Share) what they know and what they'd like to know about their cultures (race, ethnicity, etc.). This will be shared through conversation and oral sharing using charts and other visuals.

Mentor Text Studies

Students will take part in several read alouds, and cold reads and partner reads using the EEKK formatting from Daily 5/Café (eye to eye, knee to knee) in order to focus on stories regarding multiethnic subjects topics. Discussion revolving around personal feelings after reading the texts will occur through partners, small groups and whole group.

Journaling

Students will journal on multiple occasions throughout the unit, using personal notebooks and specific topics. They will also have opportunities to free write based upon their feelings on various activities.

“Family and Community Research”

Each child will take time to plan, research and interview family members regarding their race and culture and the representation they feel occurred or did not occur throughout their educational experiences.

“This is Why This Hurts” Activity and Share-out

This activity is a climactic moment for all students and faculty involved. It is carefully planned, implemented and scaffolded based specifically on the fact that we are an institution that has several years of experience with staff, faculty, students and community partners in using restorative practices. Students will reflect on a moment in their life in which something someone said, or did hurt to their feelings in any multitude of ways. The responses for this exercise will be based upon racial or cultural significance, including religious and gender biases.

“Restorative Circles of Love”

Students will use mentor texts, journal share-outs and research to lift each other up and explore the importance of inclusive, culturally relevant teaching and learning. A thorough use of the restorative practices such as direct questioning, responses and explanations will be used during the implementation and process of the circles.

KWL “Recap of Our Journey”

Finalization of the KWL charts, which will include the explanation and sharing of what was learned throughout the unit will be charted and presented as well as student contributions and teachings of areas they feel may still be lacking of their stated race, culture, religion or ethnicity.

Resources

Student Reading List

Student Texts/Mentor Texts

1. A Birthday Cake for Mr. Washington (Ramin Ganeshram)
2. Dave the Potter (Laban Carrick Hill)
3. Christmas in the Big House, Christmas in the Quarters (Patricia C. McKissack & Frederick L. McKissack)
4. Henry’s Freedom Box (Ellen Levine)
5. Moses When Harriet Tubman Led Her People to Freedom (Carol Boston Weatherford)
6. Day of Tears (Julius Lester)
7. The Diary of Anne Frank (Anne Frank)
8. Hannah’s Suitcase (Karen Levine)
9. Yours, Anne; The Life of Anne Frank (Lois Metzger)
10. Remember Not to Forget (Norman Finkelstein)
11. Elly-My True Story of the Holocaust (Elly Berkowitz-Gross)
12. I Am Malala: How One Girl Stood up for Education and Changed the World (Malala Yousafzai)
13. Brave Girl: Clara and the Shirtwaist Makers’ Strike of 1909 (Michelle Markel)
14. Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl: written by herself (Harriet Jacobs)
15. Arrow to the Sun (Gerald McDermott)
16. Code Talker: A Novel about the Navajo Marines of World War II

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Appendix on Implementing District Standards

Pennsylvania Core Standards

The following standards are to be implemented with this particular curriculum unit specifically for their relation to the objectives noted above in the Content Objectives section. They include standards within the content areas of Reading, Writing and Speaking/Listening. Each item is inclusive of skills and strategies which elicit best practices with the aspects of foundational ELA topics such as comprehension, vocabulary, discussion, journaling and sharing orally as well as in writing.

1.1 Foundational Skills

Students gain a working knowledge of concepts of print, alphabetic principle, and other basic conventions.

CC.1.1.3.E -Read with accuracy and fluency to support comprehension.

Read on-level text with purpose and understanding.

Read on-level text orally with accuracy, appropriate rate, and expression on successive readings.

Appendix on Implementing District Standards (cont.)

Pennsylvania Core Standards

Use context to confirm or self- correct word recognition and understanding, rereading as necessary.

1.2 Reading Informational Text

Students read, understand, and respond to informational text—with an emphasis on comprehension, vocabulary acquisition, and making connections among ideas and between texts with a focus on textual evidence.

CC.1.2.3.A -Determine the main idea of a text; recount the key details and explain how they support the main idea.

CC.1.2.3.B -Ask and answer questions about the text and make inferences from text; refer to text to support responses.

CC.1.2.3.C -Explain how a series of events, concepts, or steps in a procedure is connected within a text, using language that pertains to time, sequence, and cause/effect.

CC.1.2.3.J -Acquire and use accurately grade- appropriate conversational, general academic, and domain-specific words and phrases, including those that signal spatial and temporal relationships.

1.3 Writing

Students write for different purposes and audiences. Students write clear and focused text to convey a well-defined perspective and appropriate content.

CC.1.4.3.D -Create an organizational structure that includes information grouped and connected logically with a concluding statement or section.

CC.1.4.3.H- Introduce the topic and state an opinion on the topic.

CC.1.4.3.I- Support an opinion with reasons.

1.4 Speaking and Listening

Students present appropriately in formal speaking situations, listen critically, and respond intelligently as individuals or in group discussions.

CC.1.5.3.A - Engage effectively in a range of collaborative discussions on grade- level topics and texts, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly.

CC.1.5.3.B - Determine the main ideas and supporting details of a text read aloud or information presented in diverse media formats, including visually, quantitatively, and orally.

CC.1.5.3.C - Ask and answer questions about information from a speaker, offering appropriate detail.

CC.1.5.3.D - Report on a topic or text, tell a story, or recount an experience with appropriate facts and relevant, descriptive details; speak clearly with adequate volume, appropriate pacing, and clear pronunciation.

Endnotes

¹ Costello, Wachtel and Wachtel. 2010.

² Costello, Wachtel, and Wachtel. 2010.

³ Costello, Wachtel, and Wachtel. 2010.

⁴ NCTE

⁵ Ladson-Billings. 2009

⁶ Ladson-Billings. 2009

⁷ Ladson-Billings. 2009

⁸ Klug and Whitfield. 2002

⁹ Ladson-Billings. 2009.

¹⁰ Milner. 2010;2011

¹¹ Helms, Hitt, Schipper, and Jones. 2010

¹² Helms, Hitt, Schipper, and Jones. 2010

¹³ Helms, Hitt, Schipper, and Jones. 2010

¹⁴ Love. 2019.

¹⁵ Love. 2019.

¹⁶ Love. 2019.

¹⁷ Graves, Bingham, and Horton. 1979

¹⁸ Graves, Bingham, and Horton. 1979

¹⁹ Dewey. 1938

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