



Boulder County Latino History Project

Lesson Plans

Title: Connecting to the Concept of Identity in Literature and Local Latino Lives

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Overview

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| Lesson Overview | The purpose of the connected lessons that follow are to help students make personal connections to the concept of identity and the potential effects of external forces on identity, prior to transferring their analysis skills to interpreting the concept of identity as seen in literature. (The latter is not described in this lesson plans). Students will examine some of the various ways people identify themselves and the influences upon their identities, culminating in a personal reflective essay. |
| Author(s) | Vanessa Dimiziani-Cascio, New Vista High School |
| Grade Level/ Course | High School, 9-12th, Fully Inclusive, Language Arts, Created for an LA course titled "Concept of Identity in Literature" |
| Standards | Common Core Standards <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Determine central ideas or themes of a text • Cite strong and thorough textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text. • Use technology, including the Internet, to produce and publish writing and to interact and collaborate with others. WIDA: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Outline ideas and details using graphic organizers • Compose narrative and expository text for a variety of purposes • Justify or defend ideas and opinions |
| Time Required | Multi-class, 6+ periods = 4 1-hour long periods and two 2- hour-long periods (can easily be extended) |
| Topics | Culture/identity issues, Education Outline topic: Challenging racism, increasing inclusion, searching for inclusion; racism and discrimination at school; Epilogue, Echoes of the past, voices of the future |
| Time Periods | 1940-1965, 1966-1980, 1980s-1990s, 2000-2013 |
| Tags (keywords) | identity, personal statements, Chicano, Latino, Queer, Trans*, gender diversity, individual's, social construction, language, racism, linguisticism, social markers, discrimination, education, High School, 9-12th, Fully Inclusive, Language Arts, |

Preparation *(Links to worksheets, primary sources and other materials):*

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| Materials | See links below |
| Resources/Links | video of "I am a Somali Woman" written poem "I am a Somali Woman" performance of "Hir" poem on Transgender identity Dixie Lee- racism in school (primary source from Boulder County Latino History Project) Video of Jason Romero performing spoken word- Vato Loco audio interview with Virginia Maestas on losing culture and identity Other resources are hyperlinked in the lesson plans below |

Lesson Procedure *(Step by Step Instructions):*

Lesson 1: (1 hour)

1. Accessing prior knowledge: small intentional groups - on poster paper students create 2 columns: 1 column labeled "markers people use to identify themselves" eg. race, sexual orientation, and 1 column labeled "how/by whom our identities are defined" * have students label these as internal/external forces, eg media (external), write/draw what words/images come to mind (10-15 minutes),* and provide some examples and definitions of what internal and external forces might be.
2. Have students share out and explain why they chose that word/image - be sure everyone shares something so all voices are in the room - use this opportunity to:
 - a. introduce content vocabulary (internal, external, socially constructed, individual, collective etc) and expand on the idea of internal/external forces
 - b. probe students to complicate their thinking. Some potential questions are: how do these concepts show up and how are they received in various cultures, are some markers more accepted than others in various cultures/situations?

Lesson 2: (1 hour)

1. Revisit posters and have students individually draw the same two columns on a piece of paper to use as a note-taking sheet.
2. Watch Jason Romero's performance of "[Vato Loco](#)" (35 minutes into the clip) on Chicano identity as portrayed and criminalized by the media, and as a class fill in the note-taking sheet. Discuss observations and relate back to the ideas of socially constructed identities, internal/external forces, how those external forces, often rife with negative messages, are internalized and taken on as assimilated identity etc.. as you create a Google doc of their ideas - they should add the ideas of others to their own notes.
3. Do the same activity while watching "[I am a Somali Woman](#)", on Somali female identity (1:20 into the clip) and/or the videoed poem "[Hir](#)" on transgender identity (could create choice for students). This time in groups of 3, have students fill in the columns on their sheets.
4. Have students share out with the class and clarify any questions and hear observations.
5. Exit ticket: Which markers of identification have you heard today that you had not really thought about before? What questions do you have about them and what are you wondering



about?

Lesson 3: (2-hour lesson)

1. Follow up on any questions you noted in students' exit tickets.
2. Have students write "I Am Poem" using as many markers as they can. You can provide a [list of character traits](#) to help students out if they need it. Let students know that they will only have to share the lines they are comfortable sharing, but that it is important they divulge themselves as fully as they can within the poem. Collect them as a way to get to know them better.

Have everyone log into padlets and anonymously write as many lines as they can on the padlet. Read the padlet responses aloud to everyone. Large group discussion: What do they notice? Are there common themes? Do they notice themes similar to those they viewed in the performance poetry? What does that say about humanity?

Once you've heard identifiers, choose a few of the most common, preferably those associated with privilege so as not to exclude kids that are typically excluded), and ask those students to leave - be clear that they are being secluded into a group based on their identifying markers - not more than half the class) to read and highlight important points of an [article on exclusion](#) in the study center while the rest of us stay in the classroom to have a discussion. Make the discussion sound like way more fun (the discussion will also be about exclusion).

Bring students back together and ask those that left what they thought about/felt about having to leave and read while the rest of us stayed here to discuss. Probe to elicit frustration and feelings of exclusion and alienation. Allow the conversation to get uncomfortable and help students talk about the effects of exclusion and alienation based on identity and how they in turn affect identity.

Finally explain that this was a social experiment to give them an experience of being the excluded or the exclusionary ones, and so we can begin exploring how identity is affected by social dynamics.

Lesson 4: (1 hour)

1. Read Dixie Lee's letter on racism in school aloud.
2. Have students respond in writing to the prompt: Describe a time you were told you couldn't do something based on your gender expression, the color of your skin, your language, your learning style, your physical attributes etc... Apply at least 3-5 feelings you experienced as a result *this will not be shared out loud but will be turned into teacher. *Could do this on padlet so they could write this anonymously if you think the class is not yet ready to share these types of personal responses with each other.
3. Ask if anyone would like to share.
4. Large group discussion - how do you think Dixie Lee felt about her experiences? Why do you think the teacher excluded Dixie Lee from something that could be so beneficial to her? How did the teacher's exclusion methods affect/influence Dixie Lee's sense of identity?
5. Exit ticket: How do you think exclusion and marginalization affects identity? Try and use a specific example to illustrate your point.

Lesson 5: (1 hour)

1. Listen to interview by Virginia Maestas on leaving culture and identity behind.
2. Have students respond in writing to the prompt: Would you change the markers you use to identify yourself based on your audience or the situation? What markers would you change, in which situation, and why? Describe a time you have hidden/wanted to hide parts of your identity because you felt pressure to fit in. Did you hide it because you thought it would be best for you, your family, your friends etc.. if you did? Explain. Did you hide it because you were afraid of something? What were you afraid of and why? (not to be shared, but turned in)
3. Ask if anyone would like to share their personal connection response.
4. Large group discussion - what are some of the reasons that we hide our identity or leave behind who we are? How does the way in which we are treated by others (family - both extended and nuclear, friends, religion, media, school as an institution) shape our identity-



why or how does this happen?

5. Exit ticket: how has your thinking changed or shifted since this unit began? What new thoughts came to mind, what new perspectives do you see now that you didn't before?

Lesson 6: (2 hour) and beyond: *Depending on the student's skill level and exposure to written reflections, this assignment will take anywhere between 1 and 5 days.

1. Have students create a wordle or an identity wheel that shows the markers they use to identify themselves. These markers may now be different from the I am poem they wrote last week because they will have been exposed to other ways of identifying and will have complicated their thought process around this concept of identity through the resources and activities provided them.
2. They should then write a reflection on that wordle, addressing why they choose particular markers, and why they think they may have left out particular markers. Here is an [example of a reflection](#) that one could use to model (this is my own, and I think it is powerful to use your own rather than someone else's as it builds trust and respect around the constructivist process). Some questions to use in brainstorming for the reflection are: Perhaps they need to answer at least 4 of the following questions.
 - In what ways do you identify yourself?
 - How do you introduce yourself? How does that change based on your audience? How does that change based on your experiences?
 - How does the way society portrays particular markers affect the way you identify?
 - What was the most important marker of identification for you and why?
 - Which markers did you not use and why do you think that was?

Evaluation/Assessment: *(Methods for collecting evidence of student learning)*

formative:

poster share out

I am poem

notes based on primary sources

personal connection responses

exit tickets

summative: personal reflective essay on identity wheel/wordle



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