

Instructional Conversation and Two-Spirit traditions in early sex education lessons

Motivation

As a sex education teacher I intuitively realized that classroom participation would improve learning. I also believed that class participation would foster a safe and respectful learning environment.

As I attempted to have discussions in class I noted that not all students were as likely to participate. Particularly, students representing an age or ethnic minority were more difficult to engage.

Having recently read an article by Sheppard and Mayo Jr (2013) about learning from Two-Spirit traditions, I wondered if a similar lesson plan early in sex education courses would improve the engagement of American Indian students who often represent a low participation group.

IEFA

This open educational resource attends to Standard 5 of the *Seven Standards of Effective Pedagogy*. This lesson outline aims to engage students through meaningful dialogue. The instructional conversation follows book readings in a fashion similar to what is presented in Goldenberg's description of instructional conversation (1992).

Learning Objectives

This lesson aims to teach students the social constructionist view of human sexuality by examining sexuality across cultures and times.

After this lesson students will be able to:

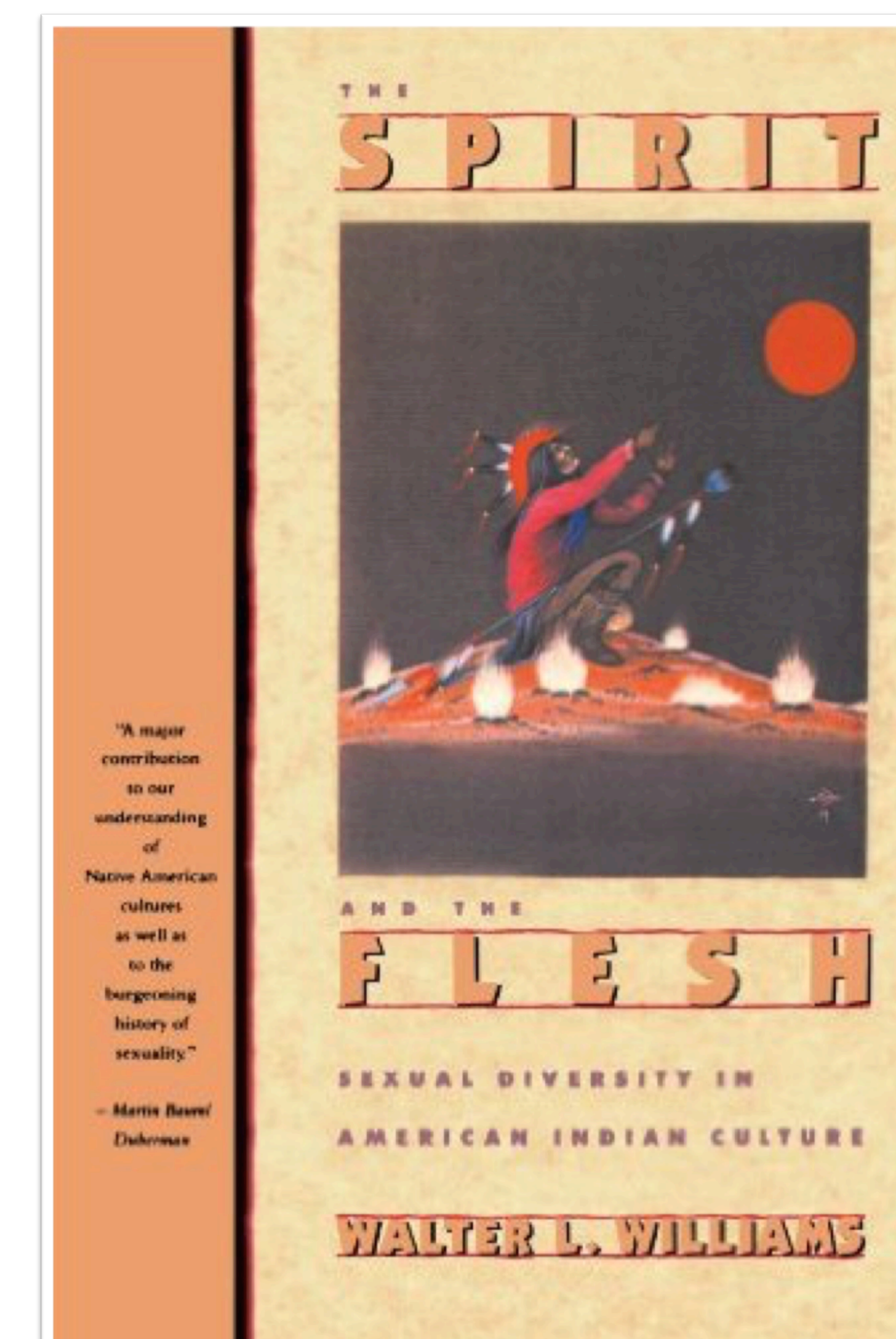
- Present examples of different sexual norms over cultures and time
- Define Social Construction Theory
- Apply the social construction theory to readings about two spirit traditions
- Discuss the relationship between the American Indians' view of gender roles and two spirit people
- Speak honestly and respectfully with peers about topics of human sexuality

75 minute lesson sequence:

- **Room Setup – Arrange seating into small groups (2-3 chairs at a table)**
- **Project slides or refer to notes on a dry erase board**
- **Brief lecture**
 - Examples of sexual behavior across culture and time
 - Ancient Greece
 - Sambians of New Guinea
 - Define Social Constructionism
 - Introduce Two Spirit Tradition
- **Instructional Conversations with Readings from *The Spirit and The Flesh***
 - In your group, discuss where culture comes from. Think of culture as a way of thinking, behaving or working (basic Webster definition). Instructor will move around and facilitate.
 - In your group, speculate about the culture of certain American Indians in the 17th Century.
 - Read section one of Chapter 4
 - Converge into larger groups (4-6)
 - Discuss how the view of the female gender may have influenced the view of two spirit people.
 - Read the first 4 sections of Chapter 7 and converge into a full group
 - Discuss how the Spanish influenced the American Indian culture
 - Discuss the difference between the past and present related to the sexual behaviors and beliefs of American Indians

Materials & Technologies Involved

- **Microsoft Power Point software**
- **Projector and Screen**
- **Group Seating option**
- **Copies of *The Spirit and the Flesh***
- **Human Sexuality Text book**



Reflection & Revision

In my experience, the participation of American Indian students improves with early instructional conversation lessons related to the two spirit traditions and social construction of sexual identity.

References

- Goldenberg, C. (1992). Instructional conversations: Promoting comprehension through discussion. *The Reading Teacher* 46(4), 316-326.
- Sheppard, M., & Mayo, J.B., Jr. (2013). The social construction of gender and sexuality: Learning from two spirit traditions. *The social studies*, 104, 259-270. doi: 10.1080/00377996.2013.788472
- Williams, W.L. (1992). *The spirit and the flesh: Sexual diversity in American Indian culture*. Boston, MA: Beacon Press.
- Yarber, W.L., & Sayad, B.W. (2016). Sexuality across cultures and times. In *Human sexuality: Diversity in contemporary America* (pp. 14-18). New York, NY: McGraw-Hill.

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