**The Biculturalization Community: Intersectionality of Identity in the 21st Century**

Dr. Joseph Todd

TYPE:

This OER is a lesson plan with a creative reflective project as the lesson’s critical assessment.

MOTIVATION:

This lesson and project emerged out of the course EDU 311: C, D, and E in Global Education (Culture, Diversity, and Equality). Specifically we look at the diversity of voices and cultures present in our nation’s history, which may or not be located directly in the curriculum. For this reason students', future teachers especially, need to be aware to omitted or misrepresented voices, including diversity responsibility, and be sensitive to diversity or multicultural education. The text we use is *Diversity Matters* (Spradlin, 2012), which delves specifically into dominant culture and minority culture and helps to first frame then self identify the concept of intersectionality.

IEFA STANDARD:

This project rearticulates IEFA Essential Understanding 2 in that just as there is no single “generic American Indian” identity, there too is no generic identity for any ethnicity or social group, be it Asian, Latino(a), Female, African-American, dominant or otherwise. It seeks to expand this discourse beyond American Indian identity and reassert it as it is first introduced in standard 2 : “Identity is an issue with which human beings struggle throughout their lifetime. Questions of “Who am I?” and “How do I fit in?” are universal questions of the human condition.” Identity is more complex and more representative of the identity politics of intersectionality.

MATERIALS AND TECHNOLOGIES:

* Lecture on dominant/minority culture tensions
* PowerPoint, Google.Slide, etc

LEARNING OBJECTIVE

1. Identify features of dominant and minority cultures
2. Locate one’s own identity or identities within the spectrum of diversity paying particular attention to intersections of dominant/minority culture tension.
3. Narrate this tension with artifacts in Presentation (Appendix A)

LESSON SEQUENCE

1. Lecture
   1. Culture
      1. Ethnicity
      2. Gender
      3. Temperament
      4. Sexuality
      5. Impairment
   2. Dominant Culture
      1. White
      2. Male
      3. Behaviorally weak-willed
      4. Straight
      5. Non-impaired (able-bodied)
   3. Minority Culture
      1. Non-white
      2. Non-male
      3. Behaviorally strong
      4. Non-straight
      5. Impaired (physically or mentally)
2. Discussion
   1. In this section I ask critical questions that try to encourage students to locate and “name” intercultural tension. We look for instances of privilege perhaps intersecting with marginalization.
      1. culture, race/ethnicity, social status, sexual identity, gender
      2. marginalization, oppression, privilege, inequity, discrimination
      3. acculturation and assimilation
      4. identity, individuality, community, group
3. Project
   1. The project we are constructing is a Cross-cultural museum artifact/narrative, based on intrapersonal cultural conflict between dominant and minority group attitudes, beliefs, dynamics, etc. The curator (person in charge of exhibit, i.e. student) should attempt to address the following themes (select those that are relevant) in the exhibit: culture, race/ethnicity, social status, sexual identity, gender, marginalization, oppression, privilege, inequity, discrimination, acculturation, and assimilation). The artifacts or artifacts should represent an internal clash of culture (Biculturalism/Intersectionality) that you, as a member of multiple cultures, experience.

REVIEW and REVISION

The first time I attempted this project it was primarily focused on finding an aspect of minority culture that the student could identify with. This was more challenging for students who more explicitly represented dominant culture and had never critically examined notions of race, culture, equality, privilege, and discrimination. These students who identified with dominant culture had to be coached directly to find where they might in fact inhabit a space of diversity. The second time, by reframing and explicitly naming the identifying features or characteristics of dominant and minority culture, students were able to find instances of tension.

For example, two students, whose stories I will share in the video presentation, were able locate tension and then either develop a narrative or present certain artifacts to showcase this tension.

Student A: This student planned two weddings for a single summer. One was for her brother who was having a traditional Catholic wedding with a partner of the opposite sex. The other wedding was for her best friend who identifies as gay and will be marrying his partner and having a less traditional wedding. This student shared the planning experience and the tension she encountered in a culture that celebrates conservative marriage and is indifferent, suspicious, or oppressive to same-sex marriage.

Student B: This student graduated high school early, enrolled in college at 16 and has maintained employment at a single employer for over 5 years. For this reason she seems wise beyond her years as a student (more adult than those who are technically adult being over 18) and also as an employee. Since she has shown devotion to a single employer and has shown her work ethic she has also been able to earn a management position. She focused on the intersection of youth culture and responsibility. She often finds she is in a position to supervise employees who are older than she, even as much as twice her age. This comes with its own set of stereotypes for youth culture that she must overcome in the eye of the employee. Challenges came in the form of resentment and resistance and even up to insubordination where people have tried to use her youth against her in the face of her managers.

Aside from being women, both of these women identified with dominant culture. However, I am especially proud that they took the opportunity to explore beyond feminist critique of culture and delved into more nuanced aspects to their identity, even if peripheral.

As I become more familiar with the culture we have in Montana, Havre, and at Northern I am able to navigate helping students find intersectional tension. I do find that for those who represent dominate culture OR minority cultures exclusively it is most difficult to find instances of tension. Specifically, the white, male, straight, non-impaired students have trouble locating this tension within themselves, even if they are sensitive to the oppression of diversity. Sometimes they have to find peripheral tension, such as the student who planned two weddings. Each of the men has/had a mother, possibly sisters, and this relationship sometimes begins the critical discussion to discover intersectional tension.

APPENDIX A:

**Museum Cross-Cultural Artifact Project**

EDU 311: Culture, Diversity, and Equity in Global Education

DOMINANT:

White, male, weak, straight, “normal”

MINORITY:

the Other

non-white, non-male, strong, non-straight, impaired

We are constructing a digital museum based on intrapersonal cultural conflict between dominant and minority group attitudes, beliefs, dynamics, etc. The curator (person in charge of exhibit, i.e. **you**) should attempt to address the following themes (select those that are relevant) in the exhibit: culture, race/ethnicity, social status, sexual identity, gender, marginalization, oppression, privilege, inequity, discrimination, acculturation, assimilation, etc. The artifact or artifacts should represent an internal clash of culture (Biculturalism) that you, as a member of multiple cultures, experience.

1. Exhibit Proposal/Application
   1. 1 paragraph explaining the conflict between cultures that is experienced directly and showcased through 1-3 artifacts.
2. Research Package
   1. Rough notes, drawings, brainstorming, graphic organizers
   2. Internet printouts (date, website)
   3. Bibliography/works cited (at the very least the class text)
3. Exhibit Artifact
   1. Build, create, select items to exhibit.
   2. Poster, diorama.
   3. Information card-lists key information and educate viewer of artifact
      1. Describe the cultural context of the artifact in full.
      2. Importance of artifact to the culture.
      3. What cultural issue does the artifact address?
4. Presentation of Artifact by Museum Guide
   1. Explain your exhibit and artifact to the museum visitors.
   2. Prepare/organize what you want to say.
   3. What are the important things you have learned and other interesting pieces of information?