

Realizing Our Inalienable Rights Through Literacy and Citizenship

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The Academic Setting

A teacher at West Mesa High School will encounter any and all of the educational challenges public schooling in the U.S. can present. The Southwest and New Mexico in particular is an area that must contend with large numbers of English language proficiency challenges and the instability challenges from large numbers of immigrants. Our high school has about 74% Latino students, 3% each of Native American and African American students, and nearly 20% Anglo students. The majority of our Native American students are bussed about twenty-five minutes from the nearby Canoncito Navajo Reservation. In Albuquerque Public Schools, native New Mexicans of Hispanic and Native American origins represent the greatest majority of high school dropouts. The challenges faced at West Mesa High School are very accurately captured by Jim Cummins (1988). His work and research with similar students showed that Latino students will consistently score in the 40th percentile in science and math, but will seldom make it above the 25th percentile in the language arts. Similarly, in West Mesa High School's first experience with the recently mandated Terra Nova Test, we found ourselves the second lowest of all the district's ninth graders. These students, however dimly portrayed by standardized tests, are immensely capable, warm, articulate and often exhibit a cynical wisdom beyond their chronological age.

Additionally, Cummins points out that this pattern is repeated across the economic classes and is not easily explained by social class and length of time in the U.S. He further states that linguistic factors in failure should not be accepted without considering the social and political context. He does clearly indicate that any interventions may become possible only when educators define their role in empowering their students. Cummins further asserts that when teachers utilize creativity and imagination in promoting critical thinking for their students, the interaction brings about a reciprocal effect for the teacher. Therein lies a most appropriate rationale for developing a unit in which the final goal is to assist our students and ourselves to distinguish ideal from reality in U.S. governing policies at the community level and in society at large.

This unit will be designed for use in ninth grade English classes. Two of the classes are developmental, which means that the students have a Gates Maginitie Reading score of 14% or lower. The developmental classes are a response by the English department to address those with the greatest needs at a lower pupil teacher ratio. The principles of Re-Learning, developed by the Coalition of Essential Schools are utilized by the English Department at all grade levels. We

have articulated goals for writing which support and build upon each other. Writing portfolios are compiled and added to at each grade level. Essential questions have been developed for each grade, around which reading and writing themes are designed. For ninth graders, the essential question is "Who Am I?" Again, such a theme is ideal for developing the goals and objectives of this curriculum unit. The students will explore this theme of self-discovery, but it will be explored within a greater context of the community, state, and nation.

Narrative

The development of those critical skills of a proficiently literate person is implicit in all that is taught in a ninth grade English class. Lisa Delpit, (1995) defines those skills as useful and usable knowledge that would contribute to a student's ability to communicate effectively in standard, generally accepted literary forms. Far more important, however, is the ability to think critically and creatively so that one would be able to participate meaningfully in society. By acquiring these skills, the student then would possess the tools of the "culture of power." Delpit, nationally recognized for her work in literacy with minority students, contributes one of the four educational philosophies whose principles will guide the objectives of this unit.

Paulo Freire first wrote of this type of student/teacher interaction. Freire first named and made popular the notion of *praxis*. He maintains that *praxis* does not stop when a student confronts reality, but must continue until the student can begin to see reality and themselves in a different way. The profound power of *praxis* and its ability to alter history is seen in the inspiring work done in the Highlander Folk School of the Civil Rights Era. Its developer Myles Horton said that good education is really not about methods and techniques but about respecting the ability of the student to learn and to act and to shape their own life. Cummins, Delpit, Freire, and Horton all wrote of the critical role held by the teacher. Each of them maintains that the liberatory role can be actualized only with the proper attitude that comes when the heart and mind are in the proper place. With the hope of making self-discovery possible, the objectives of this unit will be presented in the following scope and sequence:

- **A personal connection** will be developed through selected readings, discussions and writing assignments. These reading selections will surround the experiences of the three largest minority groups in the United States. They are the ones who have least realized the ideals of Declaration of Independence. Literary works and primary historical sources, as well as periodicals and other journalistic media will be utilized. Additionally written assignments, group work in analysis and class presentation will be the teaching/learning structures.

- **Basic government/constitutional knowledge** will be the goal of the second section. The students will first undertake research on the principle contributors of the Declaration and Constitution. They will prepare formal word-processed reports then will share their research in class presentations. The Declaration, Constitution Preamble and the Bill of Rights will then be read analyzed and discussed.
- **Exploring what constitutes a civil society** will be the goal of the last section. Elections and voting will be examined. The students will develop a survey to examine attitudes and practices of voting by their family. Finally we will explore the concept of equality in the U.S.

Section One: Making the Personal Connection

Sound reading instruction, especially for readers with limited skills, requires that considerable effort be devoted to bridging text with personal experience. A large portion of the content in this unit is abstract and requires rigor and sophistication to analyze, as well as a willingness to contribute seriously to group work. The unit will include activities in a balance of individual and group structures. Reading selections that depict the experiences of minorities in the U.S. are the ones that will best exemplify the distinction between the ideals and reality guaranteed for all citizens in the Declaration of Independence. The largest U.S. minority populations — African American, Native American, and Latino — will be those that the reading selections will be focused upon. Historical information and a brief summary will precede each of the reading selections. The unit overview will follow this section.

Understanding the Native American Experience in the U.S.

Ethnocentrism is a term that is critical for students to understand in regard to the interactions between Europeans and indigenous peoples in the U.S. This perspective is what prevented the European from recognizing that American Indians possessed social organizations, laws, religion, and traditions that were not at all primitive. The study of European/Native interaction could be a year-long, historical course of study in itself. Given the goals of this unit, the students will read, analyze, and discuss five reading selections to analyze for attitudes and behaviors that demonstrate ethnocentrism.

The principle character of the first legend of the United States of America is Captain John Smith and the young Algonkian woman, Pocahontas. Smith writes of great bravery in her willingness to sacrifice her life before her own "Savage and barbarous people" to save the man of superior merit. A more accurate statement

would be that the Algonkian people saved the Virginia settlement out of their own generous and humane spirit. Although not well known, historical scholars have determined that if Powhatan, leader of the tribe could have consolidated his control over tribes in the Chesapeake region without interruption from the Europeans, he could have built an empire similar to the Aztecs (Lauter et al, 1990). The complexity of indigenous society and their militaristic might were not factors that early European settlers would comprehend. It can be questioned if whether Powhatan and other native leaders of the larger tribes such as the Iroquois were even aware of it themselves. The success of the Jamestown settlement, not actually the first one, is owed to the native people. Of the 144 who originally set sail from England in 1607, only 104 survived the voyage and actually landed. By early in 1608, only 38 were recorded to be still living. A considerable portion of those original settlers were wealthy English citizens not accustomed to hard, physical labor. Those who survived were taught by the Indians to hunt fish and cultivate corn and tobacco. This pattern in colonization was repeated a number of times before separatist Puritan settlers ever achieved any measure of self-sufficiency. The New England colonies farther north were faring much better because their populations had greater numbers of working class members. Regardless, it is well accepted now that friendly relations with the Algonkians and surrounding tribes were the major reason that any of the early settlements survived. The native people, however, almost immediately began suffering terrible losses of their people to small pox and other European diseases. Their assistance, fortunate for the settlers, continued for almost twenty-five years, yet alliances of resistance were slowly forming. During this time, native peoples were able to have some Puritan voices of support, however faint.

Colonial Period in European/Native Interaction

The colonial period will contain two readings, both are variations of the same event written in the journals of Smith in different time periods in his life. Very soon after the landing at Jamestown, Smith found himself at odds with others in the settlement. He went on several exploratory missions among the Indians and along the coast. He returned in 1609 and soon left after an injury in an explosion and never returned. In 1614 he was exploring and mapping the coast of a region he named New England, naming himself as its leader. As leader, his efforts in support of New England were to communicate with England in the form of travel literature and to sell himself and his own importance. The two reading selections were written sixteen years apart. They relate his capture by Powhatan, but in the second is the famous addition Pocahontas. She has an increased role throughout his *Generall History* and as a result actually traveled to England as a convert to Christianity and the wife of an Englishman. She became a living symbol of what the British hoped to gain in Virginia. After she died in 1617, Smith turned her life into the first legend of British America and it became a powerful motive for colonization.

Summary of John Smith as captive at the court of Powhatan, version #1

Smith begins with an elaborately detailed and romantic description of the court. He uses words like "naked salvage" (savage) and speaks of the kindness shown to him in the form of an elaborate meal. He relates a conversation between he and Powhatan in which he is gracious enough to allow the emperor to boast of his might, then proceeds to boast of even greater might held by the British. He ends by telling of the generous gifts he is sent back to the settlement with.

Summary of John Smith as captive at the court of Powhatan, version #2

In this version, the opening description is briefer and less detailed. After the meal a conference was held, and Smith was brought to Powhatan to be executed. At this point Pocahontas enters and without entreaty throws herself upon Smith to save him from death. His ordeal of the following two days is described and ends after he cunningly is able to save himself, escape with the help of Pocahontas.

Indian Wars on the Plains

Within thirty years after the American Revolution the expansion westward was well under way. A series of Woodland Indian Wars had to be fought to protect claims of the settlers. By the War of 1812, Americans were in the Indiana Territory and the native people were supporting the British. In 1814 Gen. Andrew Jackson defeated the Creeks then in what is now Alabama. By the mid 19th century the wars spread from the eastern woodlands to the plains, mountains and deserts. The discovery of gold in California (1848) ended hope for any permanent Indian frontier. At first the military policy of the U.S. government was to keep travel routes open. They utilized a system of military posts. By 1850 outbreaks with the Sioux tribes were underway. One of the worst of those battles was with the Minnesota Sioux where 800 lives of settlers were taken. At Sand Creek in the Colorado Territory, U.S. soldiers committed the barbarities this time. Heavy fighting continued into the post-Civil War years. The U.S. government attempted a policy of "conquest by kindness" and President Grant signed many treaties. Many western tribes agreed to settle their people on reservations. Several tribes attempted to flee when the harsh realities presented themselves. The infamous battle of Little Bighorn was fought, and more than 200 U.S. soldiers were slain. Sioux resistance ended with the surrender of Sitting Bull in 1881. The reading selections for this portion of the unit are from a series of narratives made by Black Elk, a Sioux medicine man as told to John Niehardt. The context of the first reading, "Wasichus in the Hills," takes place in the time of his adolescence. The second reading is chapter twenty-four, also from the same book. This account narrates the massacre at Wounded Knee which was caused by an over-reaction on the part of the U.S. Cavalry. The cavalry had been very nervous because there had been rumor of insurrection led by Wovoka, a Piute shaman. He had declared himself a type of messiah. At the time of the reading, the Sioux from the Dakotas had traveled to Nevada to hear him speak. Wovoka claimed that Indians would return to the days of glory joined by their dead brothers, and they would once again live as they used to before the white man. To hasten this event, the Indians were to dance the Ghost

Dance wearing the shirts emblazoned with images of eagles and buffaloes. In the fall of 1890, the Ghost Dance spread through the villages of the Dakotas. Desperate Indian agents at Pine Ridge panicked and wired for help to arrest the leaders, Sitting Bull and Big Foot. Early in December, Big Foot led his people south to Wounded Knee for protection. He was racked with pneumonia and was dying. The army officers attempted to get the Indians to surrender their weapons, but they refused. Mass confusion ensued, and the massacre began. This is the event witnessed by Black Elk in the narrative selected for this section.

The reading that follows takes place almost a century after Wounded Knee, showing that the conditions for Native Americans had remained nearly the same. This final reading brings the focus to a more current time period. It is chosen to demonstrate that advances for Indian people have been very limited, at least for the majority. The practice of taking Indian children from their parents off the reservations to educate them was begun in the early 1900's. It was an intended to provide the opportunity for assimilation into American culture. The coerced isolation of young children from their culture, family, their spirituality has caused untold damage to thousands of native people. Native American students in class will probably have some close relative who can relate the experience personally. The time frame for the reading is the 1970's on the Pine Ridge Reservation. It is a location that hosts the events that set off the American Indian Movement, the Native American version of the Civil Rights Movement.

Summary of "Wasichus in the Hills," narrative of Black Elk, chapter 7

This is a very eloquent description of Lakota society. There is mention of some of the spiritual practices, their purpose, and a revealing of some of the values of the Lakota people. The narrative continues with recollection of alarm as sightings of Gen. Custer (Pahuska) had taken place. This informed the Lakota that the treaty had been broken. This chapter is especially filled with colorful metaphors that will provide an ideal opportunity for teaching such a concept and extracting ethnographic information as well.

Summary of "The Butchering at Wounded Knee," narrative of Black Elk, chapter 24

This is a very brief chapter in which details of the context are actually given in the previous chapter. Black Elk tells of the alarmed ride to the camp of Big Foot, as gunshots are heard long before arriving. His group witnesses the massacre from above the sight. Unable to contain themselves, they enter the camp and begin shooting at the soldiers. The remainder of the chapter is filled with graphic description of the slaughter of women and children and old people. Black Elk's uses a clarity of words that truly captures the grief he is experiencing. He ends the chapter with a matter-of-fact description of the beautiful day that changes as if the earth itself mourns the death and destruction.

Summary of "Civilize Them With a Stick," from Lakota Woman, chapter 3

Mary Crow Dog uses an angry tone throughout the chapter. She utilizes an interesting technique to provide the history of the boarding school practice through the memories of her mother and grandmother. The descriptions of the boarding school are given, as are the insidious practices of corporal punishment that are used unsparingly on the children. In a sharp and cynical tone Mary exposes the hypocrisy of the Catholic nuns and priests who are charged with carrying out the religious education. The chapter ends with Mary running away from the boarding school after being punished for assaulting the priest who had just wrenched her arm as a consequence for insolence. Students reading this chapter will read of the valuable understanding Mary comes to regarding the profound damage of racism for the victim and the perpetrator.

Understanding the Latino Experience

The history of U.S. Latinos really begins more than one hundred years before the events of the Puritans on the East Coast. The landing of Christopher Columbus in 1492 is a historical event commonly taught to all students in public schools. Once again we have the clash of two very different worlds typical of European expansion to the New World. By 1521 the conquest of the indigenous empire of the Aztecs had taken place. The Spanish faced astounding odds in terms of the numbers they faced in this conquest. A number of factors came to play. The most critical of those is that with a few hundred soldiers, Spain could never have achieved such a swift conquest without the aid of neighboring indigenous groups who sought relief from heavy-handed Aztec taxation. A population approaching 30 million in 1492 inhabited the area of Mesoamerica. There were thriving cities in Mexico that were larger than London and Madrid. A virtual holocaust had taken place within thirty years after the landing of Columbus. By 1650, as a result of warfare, disease, poverty and overwork, the indigenous population of Mexico fell by 90 percent (Acuna, 1988). Spain exploited Indian and Black labor to accumulate tremendous wealth. What is different between the colonization policies of Spain and England (later Americans) is that Spain rapidly began cohabitation, and mixture of the races took place. A group known as *mestizos* soon became the numerical majority.

Latinos in the U.S. can, in very broad terms be categorized as central, south and Caribbean peoples concentrated in the eastern half. People of Mexican origins are concentrated throughout the western half, especially in the Southwest. This unit is designed to be taught to New Mexicans. The constraints of time will create the need to focus on the Latino experience of the Southwest.

Historical Background for the Spanish Colonial Period

The first two reading selections are primary sources that reveal once again the concept of the ethnocentric perspective of the colonizers. Spain differed from the English with respect to the native people. England, and later the Americans had very little mixing of the races. Labor being provided by Africans left no real place

for indigenous peoples in the lives of the English and Americans. Not until it became apparent much after the American Revolution that the native people were not going to disappear, did actual policy begin to address the issues. For Spain, conversion of the natives was a major goal from the outset. They would bring about an assimilation, first with forced conversion to the Spanish Catholic Church, second with education sufficient to read the catechisms, and third, cohabitation for the purpose of exacting contributions of agricultural tribute, and back breaking, poorly paid labor.

The first reading is a communication between a missionary and his superior in which he describes the difficulty of carrying out his mission of conversion due to the harsh treatment of the Indians. The events of which he speaks are those that led to the subject of the second reading. In the second reading we learn of the Pueblo Revolt of 1680 through the witness of a Spanish government official. This was an event that shocked the Spanish Empire. Spain had longed assumed that its hold in the New World through the occupation of the southwestern areas was clearly evident. Its brutal domination of the natives led the Spanish to believe that their authority was unquestioned. New Mexico was an area very distant and isolated from major Spanish settlements in Mexico. The governing of the New Mexico was taking place virtually free from the watchful eye of the more "civil" church and government officials. The conditions for the Indian became so intolerable that an amazing plan was devised by Pope, an Tewa Indian man from San Juan Pueblo. He had been severely beaten as punishment for the protest of being over worked. The Pueblo Revolt amazingly brings about a complete ousting of the Spanish for twelve years. The Spanish do return in 1692 with Don Diego de Vargas. He brought with him 200 soldiers and a small company of chaplains. He entered the ruined capital declaring that he had not returned to punish but to pardon and convert (Simmons, 1977). Minor revolts took place in subsequent years, but Spanish presence remained permanent.

Historical Background for the American/Mexican Conflict (third reading selection)

Trade between New Mexico and Chihuahua flourished and Spanish settlements became established. New Mexico was completely Spanish for over a hundred years. U.S. presence in New Mexico did not fully present itself until about the 1820's. Merchants had been entering in attempt to establish trade routes because they recognized the lucrative possibilities in trade with flourishing settlements of the frontier. These events, the discovery of gold in California, and the conviction of Manifest Destiny, motivated the acquisition of southwest territory. The area had become Mexican after their revolution with Spain in 1821. By 1846 the U.S. Congress declared war against Mexico, and U.S. troops entered Mexico City in 1847. By 1848, the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo was signed, paying 15 million dollars to Mexico as well as forgiving a 3.25 million dollar debt. Mexico believed it provided abundant protection for citizens by negotiating for their choice either to move south and continue Mexican citizenship, or to stay and become full U.S. citizens with all the rights guaranteed in the Constitution to all. In addition those

remaining were to be given permanent title to vast land areas they were farming and ranching. The actual realities of these Mexican citizens in becoming incorporated into U.S. citizenship was far less simple. The conflicts and struggles portrayed in the chapter *from Death Comes to the Archbishop* will demonstrate an ethnocentric, superior mentality brought by the Americans into New Mexico. The reading alludes to the struggles for land between the two peoples and the establishing of class hierarchies based on ethnicity.

Historical Background for Present Day New Mexico

Through the preceding reading selection, we are shown again, the collision of two cultures, one dominant, ethnocentric and superior. The establishment and perpetuation of these attitudes into the 20th century leads to a type of "second class citizenship" that many Hispanic New Mexicans currently find themselves in. There are three readings selected. A narrative poem by Luis Rodriguez gives the students an understanding that the civil rights struggles for all Latinos are diverse. We can learn of an important event that gives official birth to the Chicano Movement taking place in California. The final two readings are a poem and novel excerpt by Jimmy Santiago Baca that speak to the social plight many of the students of West Mesa High School currently find themselves in. Through these readings it is possible to see the breach of Constitutional guarantees that will be studied later in the unit.

Summary of the "Report made by Rev. Father Fray Carlos Delgado to our Rev. Father Ximeno concerning the abominable hostilities and tyrannies of the governors and alcaldes mayores toward the Indians, to the consternation of the custodia. The year 1750."

The language of this letter is the flowery archaic form of the day. In it Delgado speaks of the pain he feels at witnessing the treatment the governors are inflicting on the Indians. He tells of the unjust requirement of tribute of the major part of their harvest and how it leads to starvation in the winter. Second he speaks of compulsory forced labor and harsh punishment for protest. The letter is long and detailed and will provide an opportunity for analysis in groups followed by class presentations.

Summary of "Letter on the Pueblo Revolt of 1680" by Don Antonio de Otermin

This letter almost as lengthy as the preceding is written the same language. Otermin devotes considerable time in describing how desperately he tried to prevent and warn of the tragedies. His detail enables one to understand the complexity and brilliance of the plan and of its execution. He ends the letter describing the serious injuries he incurred while courageously escorting a small group of survivors to safety out of New Mexico.

Summary chapter five " Padre Martinez: The Old Order" from Death Comes to the Archbishop by Willa Cather

This book is one considered by some to be a classic. Cather herself extends unequal regard to the characters in that she uses a fictionalized name for Bishop Lamy but uses the real name of Padre Antonio Martinez. Her style is eloquent, making the descriptions of the land, people, and their customs quite vivid. The Mexican/American conflict is made evident in the manner in which the characters are developed. Latour is European, civilized and good. Martinez is dark, Mexican, slovenly and evil. This chapter will provide the opportunity to teach recognition of bias in the choice of language used. The time frame of this chapter in reality covers many years. They were the years of land wars and intense political strife in New Mexico and reference to them is made. The chapter speaks to the final triumph of Bishop Latour over Martinez with the discovery of the illegally acquired wealth of Martinez. Lamy is able to achieve an excommunication of Martinez. It is important to note that each man builds a school. Lamy establishes academies for learning in English, and Martinez for learning in Spanish. Martinez becomes deeply involved in the strife over land and takes part in the event that kills Governor Charles Bent. Lamy builds over 50 church missions during his stay in New Mexico.

Summary of "The Twenty Ninth" a poem by Luis Rodriguez

Rodriguez begins this narrative poem by describing the physical and emotional setting of a peaceful protest march that turns to a riot. He describes the excessive force used by the police in arrests and detainment that will be useful in studying the Bill of Rights later in the unit.

Summary of "So Mexicans Are Taking Jobs from Americans" a poem by J.S. Baca

This short poem will provide discussion of many of the ideas held by mainstream thought concerning the harm caused to U.S. citizens by Mexican immigrants. In a state where resources are limited, those at the lower end of the economic ladder compete fiercely for the few jobs available. This poem will allow an exposure and airing of those fears.

Summary of "Coming into Language" chapter 1, Working in the Dark by J.S. Baca

This chapter was chosen because it brings to light the issue of education and exposes the emotions that often trap humans in a destructive cycle. Baca tells of the chance finding of a photographic history book that reflects some of the very life experiences he himself has had. He tells of being able to replace shame with pride for the first time in his life. The remainder of the chapter takes place in prison. It is an account of an awakening or birth of the part of himself hidden and buried due to his inability to read. The poet-self emerges when he teaches himself to read and write. He relates how language gives him a personal power that enables him to demand and acquire the rights guaranteed in the Constitution for all citizens.

Understanding the African American Experience

In this final portion of the first section, the students will examine unique

experience of the African American presence in the U.S. The unit will begin with a study of slavery and the slave trade. This is a dark chapter in U.S. history. The first slaves came to the east coast of the U.S. from the West Indies, but by the late 18th century they were being brought directly from Africa. The large scale farming plantations in the lower British Colonies required intensive labor for the growing and exporting of tobacco, rice, sugar, and cotton. European immigrants wanted to work their own land and convict labor from England was far from sufficient. An estimated 15 million Africans were transported to the Americas between 1540 and 1850. To maximize profits, the slave merchants carried as many slaves as was physically possible on their ships. A House of Commons committee investigation revealed one slave ship *The Bookes*, was built to carry a maximum of 451 people but was carrying over 600 slaves when it was discovered. Slaves were chained together by their hands and feet and had little room to move. It was estimated that about half of the slaves taken on any voyage perished in the transportation. Death came from diseases and dysentery, suicide by starvation or as a result of crippling. In the 17th century slaves could be purchased in Africa for about \$25 and sold in the American for about \$150. When slavery was declared illegal, prices went much higher. Once slaves were acquired, they were encouraged to have children so that labor would be replenished and, of course, profit could be realized in the buy and selling. The subject of slave life and slave trade is very broad and will be explored by dividing the students into groups and by reading the following autobiographical accounts;

Olaudah Equiano, account written by himself detailing his experiences on the slave ship and his sale in a slave market.

Zamba Zembola, an account of a transportation to the Americas

Thomas Phillips, a slave-ship captain

Thomas Clarkson, interviewed sailor on a slave ship

Dr. Thomas Trotter, a physical working on the slave ship

Brookes, interviewed by a House of Commons committee

The following topics will be covered in lecture due to time

- the slave system (plantations, ownership, markets, reproduction)
- slave life (house and field work, food, clothing & housing, education, punishment, marriage, religion)

The readings selected for discussion and analysis will cover the time frame in African American history from slavery to the 20th century. They are chosen because the recurring theme of self-discovery is present. They will be summarized separately.

Summary of the "Last Flogging"

Frederick Douglass uses sophisticated, eloquent language in describing the punishment of slaves, the disruption family life. He tells of the prohibition for slaves of learning to read and write. Douglass clearly states that the reason he was able to survive the act of standing up to his owner was precisely because he could read. He speaks of his position of respect among other plantation slaves because of literacy. This account will serve as an affirmation of a number of other facts learned through lecture and reading.

Summary of "Coming to an Awareness of Language"

This excerpt from the autobiography of Malcolm X given in his straight forward style, effectively communicates many complex ideas. Malcolm recalls his wasted life before prison as an average hustler and criminal. The laborious task of self education is detailed. In the copying of words out of a dictionary, sounding them out slowly, Malcolm learns to recognize them in text. The articulate speaker and leader of Civil Rights for African Americans was born out of this experience.

Summary of "The Transformation of Silence into Language and Action"

This is an essay by Audre Lorde in which she relates an experience that forces her to evaluate her life and accept the inevitability of death. In recollecting a celebration of Kwanza she relates the seven guiding principles. They are ones that brings about the notion that with rights and power come responsibilities that must be fulfilled with courage. Lorde's powerful command of language and assertion of her presence as an African and as a woman communicates the profound transformation that the race has made since slavery.

Section Two: Constitutional and Governmental Knowledge

Students will begin this section with small group research assignments that will provide knowledge of the foundations of the guiding documents of the U.S. Students will make class presentations of their research and thus teach others this information. The research topics will be as follows;

- Plato
- Aristotle
- Thomas Jefferson
- Benjamin Franklin
- Alexander Hamilton
- Thomas Paine
- John Locke
- Jean Jaques Rousseau
- John Adams
- Samuel Adams

- Abigail Adams
- Patrick Henry
- The Iroquois Confederation
- Thomas Hooker
- Roger Williams

The second phase of this section is to actually read, analyze and discuss the Declaration of Independence, the preamble to the Constitution and the Bill of Rights. Students will be divided into to groups and given a set of study questions for each document. All work will be discussed and shared with the class. The next phase will be to acquire an overview of basic governmental knowledge. This will be taught through lecture and video.

Section Three: What Constitutes a Civil Society

In this section, expected to be around the time of the national election, we will explore the issue of voting. A survey will be developed by the students to learn of the voting practices of their family members and community. The results will be analyzed and compiled with other classes. Guest speakers from The League of Women Voters and Common Cause will be invited to provide information about the election process and election funding. The second phase of this section will be to explore the student's personal views surrounding the notion of equality. The following topics will be essay assignments for this purpose:

What Is Your Racial, Ethnic and Political Identity?
 Why Does the U.S. Continue to Have Racial Conflict?

Activities from *Anti-Bias Curriculum* will be adapted for use with ninth graders. The sections to be uses are from Chapter 4, "Learning About Racial Differences and Similarities" and from Chapter 8, "Learning to Resist Stereotyping and Discriminatory Behavior." The closing of this unit will be debriefing and discussion about the unit as a whole.

Implementation

Unit Objectives

1. Students will be able to have greater understanding and knowledge to answer the essential question "Who Am I?"
2. Students will read short stories, essays, poetry, and primary historical documents portraying the unique experiences of Native Americans, African Americans and Latinos in the Southwestern U.S.

3. Students will demonstrate an understanding of ethnocentrism and the role it plays in cultural and racial conflicts.
4. Students will practice identifying biased language in text.
5. Students will develop research skills
6. Students will develop cooperative learning skills.
7. Students will develop a basic understanding of the content in the Declaration of Independence, the Preamble to the Constitution and the first ten amendments in the Bill of Rights.

Assessment

Performance based assessment measures will weigh the heaviest in the over-all grading. It will be in the format of informal personal essays and formal, word-processed research assignments, and oral presentations. Student developed tests will be given based on the questions they write after various assignments. The fourth form of assessment will be peer evaluations of the contributions that group members make in group activities.

The entire unit is expected to last between fourteen to sixteen weeks, or approximately one semester. Section One is estimated to last six to seven weeks, Section Two should last three to four weeks, and Section Three and debriefing should last about two weeks. The unit is organized to proceed under the following structure;

Weeks 1,2 & 3: Native American Experience

Day One: Introduction and unit overview. Personal Response Essay: What Is An American?, discussion. Homework; Ask the same question of three family members, record the answers.

Day Two: Discussion of homework, chart answers

Days Three through 13: Students will receive copies of the reading selections with study questions. Discussion of each will follow. Video selection will be shown, discussed and analyzed.

Day 14 & 15: Debriefing and evaluation in the form of an essay will culminate this portion. Students can choose one of the following questions to respond to; "Describe how ethnocentrism played a part in English and Indian relations?" or "How do you think history would be different if the English proceed with respect and cooperation?"

Weeks 3, 4, & 5: Latino Experience

Day One: Introduction and overview. Personal Response Essay: Who are Latinos Where did they come from? How are they alike and different from European Americans? Homework: Ask three family members the same questions and record their responses.

Day Two: Discussion of homework. Chart answers.

Day Three through Thirteen: Students will receive copies of the reading selections with study questions. Discussion will follow each. Video lessons will be shown, analyzed and discussed..

Day Fourteen through Fifteen: Debriefing and evaluation in the form of an essay; Describe how your knowledge and opinions are alike and different now and before the reading selections.

Weeks 7, 8, 9 & 10: African American Experience

Day One: Overview of unit. Research topics will be assigned. Presentation and writing rubrics will be explained.

Day Two: Personal response essay; Who are African Americans? How did they get here? How are they alike and different from your own race or culture

Discussion

Days Three through Six: Research in the library and internet.

Days Seven through Ten: Computer lab for word processing of research. Prepare visual aid prop and presentations.

Days 12 through 15: Class Presentations

Days 16 through 26: Students will be given copies of reading selections with study questions. Discussion will follow each. Video selection viewed with discussion and analysis.

Day 27: Debriefing. Writing essay response. What is the most important thing you've learned in this unit so far?

Weeks 11 through 14: Basic Constitutional/Government Knowledge

Day One: Introduction and overview. Essay: Describe an experience where your or your friend's basic human rights have been violated. Discussion

Homework: Ask three persons the same question, record answers.

Day Two: Discussion and charting of responses.

Day Three: Assign research topics, explain grading rubric for research and presentations.

Days Four through Six: Research in the library

Days Seven through Eight: Word Processing in Library

Day Ten: Preparing for presentations

Days 11 through 14: Presentations

Days 15 through 20: Document copies and study questions distributed for reading, analysis and discussion. Video shows and discussed.

Weeks 15 & 16

Day One: Introduction and unit overview given. Essay; Why do democratic people vote? Is it important? What are some of the things an elected

official has to do to get elected? Discussion.

Day Two: Develop survey questions to give to family members

Day Three and Four: PBS Video on Voting in America viewed and discussed. Surveys given out to be administered to family and friends.

Days Five and Six: Guest speakers from local chapters of League of Women's voters and Common Cause

Day Seven: Discussion of information from guest speakers

Day Eight: Tallying and charting results from surveys on voting practices.

Day Nine: Essay response assigned; What are the things that made our country so unsafe? Discussion

Day 10 through 11: Viewing and discussion of Frontline *Class Divided*, and discussion.

Day 12 and 13: Anti-Bias Curriculum Lesson, Chapter 4 and debriefing

Days 14 and 15: Anti-Bias Curriculum Lesson Chapter 8 and debriefing

Documentation

State Standard Requirements

All curricular materials used in English classes will be selected so that the students will be able answer the essential question at each grade. The standards requirements will be addressed in this unit in the following manner;

Writing: At least six personal response assignments and two formal research projects will be required. Special attention will be given to grammar, usage, mechanics, and spelling. Citation format will be taught as a part of the formal research paper set up. Formal work will fulfill the technology requirement.

Reading: The unit will include the fiction genres of short story, poetry, and a novel excerpt. Students will read and research biography and autobiography. Literary analysis tools of point of view, connotative and denotative meaning, sequencing, setting, simile, and metaphor will be taught and applied.

Speaking: The unit will provide

the students two opportunities for formal presentations and numerous opportunities for informally sharing individual/group responses to reading and view material.

Listening: Discussion will be utilized heavily in the unit, giving ample opportunity for developing this skill. The formal class presentations will also require listening as will teacher lectures, as also will the video viewing.

Student Bibliography

Understanding the Native American Experience

Crow Dog, Mary. *Lakota Woman*. New York: Harper Collins, 1990

Neihardt, John. *Black Elk Speaks*. New York: Simon & Schuster, 1932
Chapter 7, "Wasichus in the Hills" is an account of a young boy recalling daily life in a Lakota camp. Chapter 24, "The Butchering at Wounded Knee" is account witnessing tragic killing of women, children and elders by Col. Hotchkiss in an attempts to remove weapons from the group led away to safety by Chief Big Foot.

Smith, John. "A True Relation of Such Occurrences and Accidents of Noate as Hath Hapned in Virginia." *The Heath Anthology of American Literature*, Vol. I Lexington, Ma. D.C. Heath, 1990. 151. Smith as captive at the court of Powhatan, early version.

----- " The Generall Historie of Virginia, New England, and the Summer Isles". *The Heath Anthology of American Literature*. (Vol I) Lexington Ma. D.C. Heath, 1990. 152. Smith as captive of Powhatan, containing the addition of Pocahontas, written sixteen years after the version one.

Suggested Videos: *Lakota Woman*, *Sand Creek Massacre*, *Dances with Wolves*, *Surviving Columbus*, American Experience Series, *Indian Wars*, *Columbus on Trial*, *Aztecs Past and Present*

Understanding the Latino Experience

----- " Coming into Language." *Working in the Dark*. New

Mexico: Red Crane Books, 1992.

A chapter that tell of the author learning to read while in prison. Baca, Jimmy Santiago. "So Mexicans are Taking Jobs from Americans." *Immigrants in Our Own Land*. New York: New Directions Publishing, 1977.

A poem written in prison that speaks to the scapegoating of Mexican Immigrants in the labor market.

Cather, Willa. "Padre Martinez: The Old Order" *Death Comes to the Archbishop*. New York: Random House, 1927. 139-171

Historical fiction about the struggles between a Mexican priest and French Bishop in the time of Territorial New Mexico.

Delgado, Fray Carlos. "Report made by Rev. Father Fray Carlos Delgado to our Ref. Father Ximeno concerning the abominable hostilities and tyrannies of the governors and alcaldes mayores toward the Indians, to the consternation of the custodia. The Year 1750." *The Heath Anthology of American Literature*. Lexington, Ma.: D.C. Heath, 1990.

A historical document detailing the harsh treatment of the Indians in New Mexico under the rule of Spain.

Otermin, Don Antonio. "Letter on the Pueblo Revolt of 1680." *The Heath Anthology of American Literature*. Lexington, Ma.: D.C. Heath, 1990.

A historical document that chronicles the events of the Pueblo Revolt through the witness of a Spanish governing official.

Rodriguez, Luis. "The Twenty Ninth." *The Concrete River*. Connecticut: Curbstone Press 1991.

The poem that gives an account of the first major event in the Chicano Movement in Los Angeles in 1970. It begins as a protest to the Viet Nam War and end up a riot killing a journalist and arresting hundreds of protestors.

Suggested Videos: *Ballad of Gregorio Cortez, Zoot Suit, Mexico through Their Eyes, The Hunt for Pancho Villa, Salt of the Earth, El Norte, La Ciudad, Red Sky at Morning, Milagro Beanfield War, A Bowl of Beings, Latino, No Grapes, American Experience Series.*

Understanding the African American Experience

Douglass, Frederick. "The Last Flogging." *Literature and Language*. Illinois: McDougal Littell, 1994.

Account of Douglass relating his experiences on a plantation and of his decision not to tolerate any further abuse at the hands of his owners.

Lorde, Audre. "The Transformation of Silence into Language and Action." Sister Outsider. California: The Crossing Press, 1984.

Lorde tells of the transformation of her life provided by the power of words and language and the decision to speak out against injustice.

Malcolm X. "Coming to an Awareness of Language." Literature and Language. Illinois: McDougall, 1994.

Malcolm X relates the events surrounding his learning to read and write while serving a prison sentence.

The accounts of Olauda Equiano, Zamba Zembola, Thomas Phillips, Thomas Clarkson, and Dr. Thomas Trotter are taken from the teaching website for Spartacus Internet Encyclopedia.

<<http://www.spartacus.schoolnet.co.uk>>.

Suggested Videos. *Roots Series, Autobiography of Malcolm X, Beloved, Color Purple, Amistad, Eyes on the Prize, American Experience*

Teacher Bibliography

Acuna Rodolfo. Occupied America: A History of Chicanos. New York: Harper Collins Press, 1988.

Bell, B.J. et al. *We Make the Road by Walking: Conversations on Social Change, Myles Horton and Paulo Freire*. Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1990.

Chavez, Fray Angelico. *But Time and Change: A Story of Padre Martinez*. Santa Fe: Sunstone Press, 1981.

Cummins, Jim. "Empowering Minority Students: A Framework for Intervention." *Harvard Education Review* 56 (1984): 18-36.

Delpit, Lisa. *Other People's Children: Cultural Conflict in the Classroom*. New York: New York Press, 1995.

Freire, Paulo. *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*. New York: The Continuum Publishing Company, 1970.

Furnas, J.C. *The Americans: A Social History 1578 – 1914*. Vol 1. New York: Capricorn Books, 1971.

Simmons, Marc. *New Mexico, a Bicentennial History*. New York: W.W. Norton and Company, 1977.

Sparks, Louise D. *Anti Bias Curriculum: Tools for Empowering Young Children*. Washington D.C.: National Association for the Education of Young Children, 1989.

Vigil, James D. From Indians to Chicanos: The Dynamics of Mexican American Culture. Illinois: Waveland Press, 1984.