

SCRIPT

Multicultural Education in the Bilingual Classroom

Introduction: Welcome Participants. Briefly tell the audience about yourself and your experiences with teaching, multicultural education and/or English language learners.

Today's session on creating powerful multicultural lessons came about because many of us who care deeply about issues of diversity and meeting the needs of an increasingly diverse student population feel that schools, and teachers in particular, are in a preeminent position to help produce citizens that will work to create a more caring and just society. We all find ourselves in a political climate that is highly focused on raising test scores (i.e., academic development), but public schools in the United States have been set up to serve as a socializing agent. What I would like to do today is to build a rationale and framework for multicultural education and share with you some strategies for utilizing literature, music and media to create powerful and engaging lessons that prepare young people to deal with issues related to social justice.

First of all, I'd like to give you a little background on where I am coming from – and to begin I would like to share a little about the role of public education in the United States.

Click to Slide 1

Slide 1 The Role of Public Education in the United States

This is so important for us to talk about because we sometimes get so focused on raising test scores that we lose the larger picture of our purpose as educators. Our nation's founding fathers envisioned a social and political democracy.

Read Slide 1

Click to Slide 2

Slide 2 Democratic Citizenship

In addition to enculturating our young people into a social and political democracy, we need to help prepare students to do well in the lives they lead outside of school and work to create a better society.

Read Slide 2

Click to Slide 3

Slide 3 Democratic Education

As teachers concerned about social justice, we should strive to do more than just graduate young people who are knowledgeable (smart). We need to work to prepare a citizenry that shares those democratic values. The schools are a place where we, as a society, have decided to impart those values. Certainly the home and church work with us to develop the character of our young, but citizens have to understand and embrace those values and then work to help narrow the gap between the idealized values and the reality of where we are as a society today – that is what I mean by democratic and multicultural education is all about.

Read Slide 3

Point # 2: That's not saying that we are to create a bunch of little activists, but that if young people really don't like the way something is that they understand that they can have a voice. It is our job to give students the tools needed to be an active participant in society. That's what this democracy is all about – I can write letters, call my congress man or woman, boycott, etc. Rather than just sit back and complain, I can be a part of the solution.

The last – I care enough.... Is just part of that. We live in a very apathetic society where less than 40% of our citizens even vote. This is "the call" for multicultural education.

Click to Slide 4

Slide 4 A Call for Multicultural Education

Read Slide 4

Click to Slide 5

Slide 5 Multicultural Education: Supporting ELLs

So, through multicultural education and some of the strategies that I am going to be sharing with you today, English language learners in particular, but all students, will be supported through:

Read Slide 5

The strategies that we all know as ESL instructors are applicable here today. What we are talking about is increasing opportunities for verbal interaction and comprehension and lowering anxiety in the classroom so that students won't be afraid to participate. Using music, video, or other media sources can be highly

engaging; certainly much more motivating and interesting than opening up a textbook, reading and then answering questions at the end of a chapter. Still further, what a student may not be able to read about in a book, s/he can listen to a piece of music or watch a music video and dialogue about that content – we just might be able to get the students to talk about what they are listening to (and singing) – much of what they may not understand.

Click to Slide 6

Slide 6 Two Specific Strategies Used to Support ELLs

Two strategies that I use, in particular, to support ELLs are imaging and multimedia presentations.

Read Slide 6

When I speak of multimedia presentations I don't mean just power point presentations. For example, you can have students listen to a piece of music and visualize the content of the song. That is a good first step. But for our ELLs, the vocabulary in the song may be unfamiliar (i.e., although they verbalize while singing, they may not comprehend the words). Using a music video can help contextualize the language for them and produce more verbal interaction. The powerful sources that we are going to be talking about today are

Click to Slide 7

Slide 7 Sources for Powerful and Engaging (Multicultural) Lessons

Read Slide 7

I don't know about the schools that you are working in, but in many of the schools in which I am currently working I see an over-reliance on textbooks for teaching the curriculum. Textbooks were never meant to be THE curriculum – like many other sources such as trade books and primary or secondary source documents, textbooks are only to be a resource. Today I will share with you a number of examples, but I also want to share with you some media sources – the internet and television, for example.

Click to Slide 8

Read Slide 8

Slide 8 Music: The Doorway to Emotional Memory

We now know that of all the memory systems, the emotional (or episodic) memory system is the strongest. When we can build a link to one's emotions or feelings (as opposed to just memorizing a passage), the information or experience is more likely to be encoded into long-term memory. Music does just that – it elicits feelings and emotions in the listener. For example, if I were to put on a piece of music from your high school years, I could immediately transport you back to those years (and most like have you sing along). Music, therefore, is a powerful vehicle for learning. As has been stated, lyrics are the text of music and we can analyze them and respond to those in the same way as we would the text of a book. Students that have trouble reading about social and political issues can learn about and subsequently discuss issues in popular music.

ACTIVITY #1: COMPARING LITERATURE TO MUSIC

Materials Needed:

- Chart for Comparison
- Post-it Notes (minimum 3 pks per 50 participants).

Explain to the audience that we are going to do a little activity comparing and contrasting music and literature.

Have the audience get into groups of 3 or 4. Pass out a small stack of **post-it notes** to each group. Tell the group to write on each post-it note a characteristic that uniquely describes music or books or is a characteristic common to both.

Example: Both “tell a story”

MUSIC	Both	Literature/Books

After about 10 minutes, have each group share an idea or post-it note. Place the characteristic into the corresponding column. Discuss results – what you will find is there are more similarities than differences. This is a vivid example of why we can use music to teach.

Click to Slide 9

Slide 9: A Multicultural Approach is Compatible with a Standards-Based Curriculum (see Handout)

In a couple of minutes I am going to share a couple of examples of using music in the classroom, but let's take a moment to talk about teaching within a standards-based curriculum. What I am

suggesting today is not inconsistent or contradictory to a standards-based curriculum. So, if an administrator walks in and asks, “What the heck are you doing playing music when your students should be reading?” – you can respond and support your methodology by pointing to the exact TEKS (standards) that you are addressing in the lesson.

Show Slide 9

Discuss some of the TEKS. For example, in **Reading/ Language Arts:**

K, 1-3: Listening/Speaking/Culture (2 a & b)
Reading/Comprehension (12 b, f & g)

4th -8th: Listening/Speaking/Culture (4 a, b & c)
Reading/Comprehension (10 b, h & i)

In **Social Studies:**

1st: Citizenship (12 a)
S.S. Skills (17 a)

3rd: Citizenship (10 a)
Culture (14 a & b)

Click to Slide 10

Slide 10: Popular Music Examples

Show Slide 10

Activity #2: Share Music and Classroom Activities

Materials Needed:

- Words to Songs (download from internet)
- Classroom Activity Sheets (see handout for example)
- Do at least one for elementary and one for secondary (preschool and kindergarten teachers can share lots of examples with the group because they tend to use a lot of music already.)

** (Note to presenter) Please note that the examples provided are in English. If you speak Spanish you can create similar activities with music in Spanish – this is particularly important for our bilingual teachers and those working with Spanish-speaking teens.

The music is going to elicit a great deal of dialogue from the audience – go with it. Analyze the lyrics and issues of the music.

Make sure to emphasize with students the *main idea* of the songs, *author's purpose*, *conclusions* or *predictions*. For example, in the song, *Don't Laugh at Me*, you want students to understand that we are to suspend judgment of others until we know them – don't prejudge based on outward appearance (i.e., don't judge a book by its cover); this is an opportunity to teach the concepts of discrimination, bullying, justice, etc.

This activity has been done with third graders – they get it. In the discussion you stick with what is developmentally appropriate. If, for example, a second or third grader asks you what the line, “A single teenage mother trying to overcome my past” means, I would simply respond by asking: well, have you ever done something that later you wished you had not done? That's all that means. Whereas, with teenagers, you would have them discuss teenage pregnancy and how it changes one's life.

Walk through the activity sheet provided for Whitney Houston's song, *One Moment in Time*. Stress how a piece of music can be used to build vocabulary (word study skills). Just as we design reading lessons with pre-reading and post-reading activities, we can do the same with music and lyrics. This is a great song to play before the TAKS – getting kids to commit to doing their best.

(After the Activity, Say to Audience) What we really are hoping to develop in students is critical thinking skills by asking open-ended questions that elicit thinking and multiple perspectives rather than single answers. By using cooperative activities, the think-pair-share strategy, etc., we can build vocabulary and comprehension skills in our students. You can even have them brainstorm the similarities and differences between music and literature, just as we did together.

Click to Slide 11

Slide 11: Literature Examples

Let's turn our attention to literature now. Many of you are already using literature in your classroom, especially to teach reading and language arts skills. But the selection of good multicultural literature and what you do with that literature is what is important to me. So much of what students, especially young students, are reading (say in the Accelerated Reader program) in school is void of any meaningful or personally relevant content. You can; however, structure a read-aloud and grand conversation with your students using purposefully selected literature (such as in the booklist in your handout).

Read Slide 11

An example of inaccurate information in textbooks: I was watching a student teacher teaching about water habitats: fresh water and salt

water. The textbook showed a picture of the Great White Heron and said that it lived near fresh water (nothing mentioned about salt water). After the lesson, I asked the student teacher why we see these birds around south Texas (salt water). She too was puzzled. I then proceeded to investigate this further and found out that the Great White Heron thrives in both environments. Textbooks, especially in the elementary school, often try to simplify and condense information so much that what is presented is actually misinformation or inaccurate information. Therefore, it is important for us to do our homework and utilize multiple resources when we plan lessons.

Let me share with you some examples from elementary school, but ones that can certainly be used in the upper grades or as a model for how to use literature to create powerful multicultural lessons.

Activity #3: Share Samples of Literature

Materials Needed:

- Multicultural trade books to share (a table display is good)
- The True Story of the Three Little Pigs
- The Three Little Javelinas (Spanish – similar to 3 Little Pigs)
- Sneetches by Dr. Seuss
- Adelita or Domalita (The Mexican Cinderella Story)

Let's look at **The True Story of the Three Little Pigs**, a book commonly used to teach perspective taking skills. Read or recap the story if the audience is unfamiliar with this version (the Wolf's version) of the story.

Ask: *What do we know/remember about the different types of houses in the original version of the story?* (Right, there was a straw, stick and brick house.)

What were we told about the pigs that built these different houses? (Yes, the pig that built his house of straw was lazy and dumb. The pig that built his house of sticks was a little bit smarter than his brother, but not much. The pig that built his house of brick "must have been the brains of the family." And, he was hard working.

Now, what do young people learn (indirectly) about people who build houses of straw, cardboard or sticks? In what countries are people living in houses like this? Why? Mostly because of economics and resources - bricks are very expensive and are not available in third world countries. Also, the climate or environmental conditions often dictates the type of home you will have. For example, in California you wouldn't want a house made of bricks because of the earthquakes. Brick homes would simply crumble to the ground – there is no give in a brick. The messages are sometimes very subtle, but they do impact the formation of attitudes and beliefs about "other."

Show and read the page with the wolf trying to get at Mr. Pig while the cops show up.

Say: If you look to the end of the story we find that the Wolf is being arrested, and it just so happens that all of the cops that show up on the scene are pigs. I like to ask children the question: *do you think the outcome for Mr. Wolf would have been any different if the cops had been wolves?* You would be amazed how many children, even 5 year olds, will answer “yes.” Then we investigate why they think as they do. We are not suggesting that *institutionalized racism* exists, but it is important for children to consider that people might be treated differently on the basis of who they are (ethnicity, race, gender, etc.).

Show and read the next page – about the news reporters jazzing up the story.

Say: It is important to ask young people if they are to believe everything that is on the news, in the newspaper or on the internet. Introduce the idea of *media sensationalism* and ask: *do you think is it possible that a news reporter would change the facts a little to make a story more interesting or exciting for the listener/reader? How are we to know what is the truth and what is not?* This is an opportunity to discuss primary and secondary sources and documents, author’s credibility and the fact that the media strives to present accurate news, but that it also is in competition for viewers or readers (against other channels or papers) so it is also a money making business. Again, the idea is to judge what is a developmentally appropriate conversation, but not to underestimate the capability of young people to understand or be introduced to social and political ideas related to fairness, justice, liberty and equality.

Looking at **Sneetches** by Dr. Seuss. This book is commonly used in primary grades for rhyming and word patterns (though some educators suggest that it is not a good idea to introduce these books to the young because they are filled with nonsense words – you decide). What we want to look at today is the underlying theme of the book – *discrimination* on the basis of appearance. Another theme that can be investigated by older students is that of *fitting in or acceptance* – and the lengths to which some people will go just to be a part of the in group. Today, young people feel pressure to have the right brand of jeans or tennis shoes, the “in” hairdo, and are often excluded by their peers if they don’t. *Sneetches* is a great book to open this dialogue, even with teenagers. In addition to books, you can find a multitude of popular videos or DVDs that present these themes.

The various **versions of Cinderella** (from different countries/cultures) is a wonderful way to affirm diversity and have young people compare and contrast the stories to the original version. For older students, you can use Bloom’s taxonomy to develop questions that go beyond lower level thinking. For example, *why do you think Cinderella (or any other Cinderella-type character) was treated so differently by her*

stepmother? Do you think it was wise/smart of Cinderella to marry a man she known no more than a few hours? What is love? Are there different kinds of love? How will you know if you should marry someone? Etc.

Select some of your favorite books (or others from the list) to share (e.g., Red Hen – Armadilliy Chili, Manana Iguana; A Mother for Choco).

In the back of your handout you will find a list of suggested multicultural books. There are many published lists available – this is just a start. See how many of these books are currently in your school library. If they are not available ask your librarian to order some off the list.

Let's now turn our attention to the media –and television in particular.

Click to Slide 12

Slide 12 & 13: Television Viewing

You know, as much as we say “turn the television off and read with your children,” the reality is that the television is not getting turned off. This is what the research says about television viewing:

Read Slide 12

** That 27 hours of television that preschoolers are watching per week is not television programming that is targeted at them. It is more often adult programming – you know, the Soaps, CSI, Oprah, Jerry Springer, etc.

Read Slide 13

Click to Slide 14

Slide 14: In Children's Programming

But even in the programming developed for children we have a problem. Stereotyping is all too common.

Read Slide 14

Click to Slide 15

Slide 15: What's All the Fuss About Television?

So, what is all the fuss?

Read Slide 15

If children have positive experiences with diverse others, they may be able to counter some of the negative, stereotypic images they are receiving from television. But for those who are not exposed to diverse others, television may be the only place that they learn about others.

A researcher by the name of Quintana conducted some interesting research with Mexican American children. He interviewed young people of different ages and asked them if they liked being a Mexican. What they liked or didn't like about being Mexican. I found the results to be quite disturbing – many young Mexican Americans say that they do not like being Mexican because “Mexicans are lazy” and “always in trouble with the law.” The images that are presented to young people on television are leaving a lasting impression. They are developing beliefs about themselves and diverse others.

What is also quite disturbing about the media's contribution to current multicultural beliefs, attitudes, understandings and misunderstandings is that hate crimes are still taking place. After a thorough investigation of hate crimes, the American Psychological Association said the following in their 1998 report:

Click to Slide 16

Slide 16: Hate Crimes on the Rise

Read Slide 16

The fact that the main determinant is personal prejudice should be alarming to all of us. What is more disturbing to me is that these young people see little wrong with their actions.

As educators, we need to work smarter. If the television is not getting turned off in the homes, then we need to begin to teach parents and children how to analyze what they are consuming through the television. In the same way that we have suggested using music to teach literacy skills we are suggesting that television programming can also be used. For example, we could bring in a clip from one of the popular children's cartoons (survey your students to find out what is popular) and analyze the literary elements such as setting, plot, characters, problem and solution. We can analyze characters' motives and actions. The television clip (or a script of the programming dialogue) could become the text we analyze. Imagine creating a homework assignment, “Watch Television.” What an opportunity to get parents and children to analyze what they are consuming.

This idea leads us to the next big idea – media literacy, which is now a strand in the language arts standards.

Click and Read Through Slides 17 - 21

Slide 17: Developing Media Literacy

Slide 18: What Can We Do?

Slide 19: Media Education: Media Literacy

Slide 20: Media Education/Literacy cont.

Slide 21: Examples of Using Media (Photos)

Activity #4: Share A Variety of Photographs

Materials Needed:

- Photographs blown up onto poster board

Show Photo 1: Ask the audience a question/prompt for journal writing.

For example, using the photo of the children walking by a soldier with a gun, ask: *where do you think this photo was taken? What is going on in the picture?* Discuss. (This is a photo taken in New Orleans. They may guess this. But before Katrina, the image of a soldier with a gun was unimaginable in the US. To many folks it looks like this is a photograph taken in Haiti).

Show Photo #2: Ask the audience a question/prompt for journal writing.

Tell a bit about the photo. This is a snapshot taken in New Orleans. Many school buses were abandoned in the city while people fled for safety. Thousands of people without the means for getting out were left stranded and without water, food and electricity. Their homes and the entire city were now under many feet of water.

Ask: describe *what do you see in the photo?*

(Note that there is a black man behind the wheel, a white woman holding a black child, and others loading the bus. Tell the audience that the black man was not a bus driver for the city of New Orleans. He took the bus, got it running, loaded it with people and drove them out of New Orleans to safety.

What is important about this photo is that it presents us with a moral dilemma.

We must ask: *Should this man be thrown in jail for stealing the bus? Why or why not?* Young people, especially those in middle and high school, must now come to understand the notion of the letter and the spirit of a law. This is asking students to function on a higher moral level (according to Kohlberg). To those who understand that right and wrong is a matter of what the letter of the law says – this man should be punished because he has broken the law. But for those who understand the spirit of the law and who live their lives by guiding principles – this man is a hero not a thief. The man saved many lives.

Show Photo #3: Two newspaper reports of people in New Orleans.

Have the audience (students, for example) look carefully at the photos. Then read each article. In one, the one showing a Black man wading through the water – the author of this article chose to use the term “looting” to describe the man’s actions. In the second photo, showing two people, who appear to be White, a different author chose to use the term “finding.” Whether one

believes this is a case of racism is not really our point. What we want to point out is the power of words – the *authors' choice of words in these articles presented us with two different images – one of a thief and the other of people trying to survive under some very difficult circumstances. Again, the conversation about values or guiding principles is relevant here. If either individual were to be carrying off a television, we might all agree that even in this situation it were looting (a TV is not needed for survival).*

There are many ways to create powerful, interesting and engaging lessons that teach about social justice. We are only limited by our own lack of imagination or creativity.

**If time, Click and Read Through Slides 22 & 23
Or
Just Conduct a Question and Answer Session.**

Optional Activity to Share – *I Am From* Poem Activity