

## Unit 3: Brown Amerika

### Lesson 3: Assimilation vs. Acculturation and Integration

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#### Background

The movement of peoples to and from the Philippines means that people come into contact with other cultures and must adapt with the differences presented by the new environment. The challenges of assimilation and acculturation are especially apparent in the adaptation of Filipinos in their experience of colonization by the Spanish and the Americans, contact with globalization while in traditional rural areas, as well as their own migration to the United States. The role of the “Filipino American” is also one that must be considered by individuals negotiating both the Filipino and American cultures.

#### Connections to NCSS Standards

*Culture:* The students explore and ask questions about how people create culture, learn about culture, and adapt culture over time. They will also examine how culture is dynamic and changes to accommodate different ideas and beliefs. Students will also understand the complex cultural concepts involved with how culture and cultural systems function.

*Time, Continuity, and Change:* Students investigate the historical roots of people and make connections between how the past may affect present-day circumstances, and may also construct the future.

*Individual Development and Identity:* Students expand their understanding of the relationship between one’s personal identity and social norms. Students explore how people’s identity is shaped by one’s culture, groups, and institutions, and how social processes are in turn affected by people.

*Individuals, Groups, and Institutions:* Students will explain how people and groups organize themselves around common needs, beliefs, and interests, and how social institutions play a role in their lives.

#### Lesson Objectives

The students will be able to:

- Understand and utilize the concepts of assimilation, acculturation, integration, and marginalization
- Experience the feelings and challenges of assimilating to a new culture through a simulation
- Apply their knowledge and understandings in assessing the assimilation and acculturation of Filipino peoples within America
- Present their understanding of the Filipino acculturation experience in the form of a play and share these stories with their families and community

**Time:** Four 1.5 hour sessions

#### Materials

Teacher

- Index cards prepared for simulation activity (have circles, fruits, and numbers drawn on them for *alpha* group; have blank cards and paper badges for *beta* group)
- Butcher paper for vocabulary explanation
- Historical photos of Filipino immigrants to American from books / websites

Student

- Pencil
- Journal books

#### Procedure

##### A. Opening: Simulation of Entering a New Culture

1. Discuss with students if they have ever entered a new group of friends, a new

- neighborhood, or traveled to another country. How did they adapt to the new environment?
2. Explain that they will now be in a simulation, and from this point forward, must act and pretend like they are in a new culture, based on the instructions given.
  3. Separate class into 2 groups: one is called “alpha” and one is called “beta”. The *alpha* group stays in the classroom, while the *beta* group is in another room or in the hallway.
  4. Teacher assigns *alpha* group their cards, and the rules: a) they cannot speak to one another verbally, b) they can only trade one card at a time with one person at a time, c) they can only show the card that they want to trade, not the card that they want. The goal is that they must trade cards to get the most of their fruit category.
  5. Teacher assigns *beta* group their blank cards and the rules: a) this group enjoys socializing and talking about the weather or their families, b) if any member of the group tries to talk about something other than the weather or their families, another member of the group will write a tally mark on their card. The goal is to have the least number of tally marks on their card as possible.
  6. Step one: students interact in their own groups, getting used to their own culture.
  7. Step two: eventually, the teacher will guide two students at a time to be immersed into another culture.
  8. Step three: after being immersed in another culture for a few minutes, the pair of students will return to their original culture and report back what they observe is happening.
  9. Step four: pairs of students enter a new culture and return to their original culture until everyone has had a turn.
  10. Teacher gathers students and leads a large-group debrief: “How did it feel to enter another culture? What were the skills that you used to try to succeed in that other culture? What was the goal of each culture? What frustrations or emotions did you feel while entering the new culture? Do you adapt to the new culture completely, keep elements of both, or were left out?” Debrief carefully and thoroughly, to ensure that students feel at ease after experiencing this simulation firsthand.
  11. Introduce the concepts of: *acculturation* (the general process of modification of the culture of a group or individual as a result of contact with a different culture), *assimilation* (the process of being incorporated into a new culture), *integration* (the process of maintaining ties to your original culture while adapting to the new culture), and *marginalization* (being rejected from both cultures). Explain concepts of a *majority* and *minority* culture.
  12. Allow students to think and reflect on their experience. Encourage students to write a journal entry about: a) their experiences in this simulation, and b) connecting to any experiences they have had, entering a new culture or peer group. Suggest to students to incorporate their new vocabulary about acculturation and assimilation.
- ### B. Filipino Acculturation Stories
1. Explain the historical waves of migration of the Filipinos to America (use Chapter 6 and 7 of Pinoy Teach as a reference). Explore the questions: “why did Filipinos immigrate to another country? What attracted Filipinos to America?”
  2. Encourage students to think about the vocabulary learned about acculturation and assimilation. Discuss as a class: how did Filipinos assimilate or integrate into American culture? How were they marginalized? How were they resourceful and resilient?
  3. Share with students a variety of historical photos of Filipino immigrants from the Cordova book: Filipinos: Forgotten Asian

Americans or from the Smithsonian Filipino American Curriculum website. Invite students to imagine the life and times of these individuals, back in that era.

4. Ask students to write a story based on a selected picture. Suggest to students to utilize the vocabulary learned, and to capture the feelings associated with assimilation, integration, and marginalization that one may experience through the process of acculturation.
5. Emphasize that these feelings of acculturation are a common experience that many people share, and that one can adapt to reach one's goals, even in challenging situations.

### C. Closing: Sharing Our Stories

1. Organize the stories into themes of migration (e.g. for plantation labor, study, etc.) and encourage students to rewrite their work into a format that can be put into a play.
2. Allow students to share their stories with the rest of the class, and invite parents and families of students as well as other classes for a culminating show of Filipino acculturation stories. Display original pictures used around the room or on a digital slideshow so the audience can see the inspiration for these stories.
3. Allow parents, families, and audience members to bring in photos of their own, and share similar stories in an informal discussion or presentation about their migration to America. Encourage students to ask questions about these experiences, and close with the idea that this is a common experience that many people in our community share.

Assess stories and journal entries for their understanding of the experience of assimilation and acculturation of Filipino immigrants, as well as within their own lives. Ask students to write a reflection piece on their experience viewing the stories and pictures from others in their classroom.

### Enrich/Extend

Encourage students to compare events of assimilation and acculturation in other cultures, such as the colonization of the Pacific Islands by European nations, or the movement of other Asian immigrants to Europe or the Americas in search of opportunities and work.

### Resources

#### Print

1. Theodore M. Singelis. Teaching About Culture, Ethnicity, & Diversity: Exercises and Planned Activities.
2. Susan Gage & Don McNair. Colonialism in Asia: A Critical Look.
3. Dr. Garry Shirts. BaFaBaFa: Educational Edition. Simulation Training Systems (STS).
4. Cordova, T. & Espiritu, P. C. Pinoy Teach: Multicultural Curriculum, 4th Ed.
5. Fred Cordova. Filipinos: Forgotten Asian Americans.

### Suggested Assessment