

Unit 3: Brown Amerika

Lesson 4: Discrimination and Racism: A Filipino American Experience

Background

“Discrimination includes a variety of restrictive treatments such as racism, sexism, ageism, etc. To discriminate is human nature. Prejudice, discrimination, and racism are major themes and issues in the history and contemporary experiences of U.S. ethnic groups. Differing values and economic concerns can create tensions and conflict between individual, groups, or nations. Everyone has experienced and practiced some form of discrimination. Filipino Americans were victims of prejudice and discriminatory immigration laws.”

Pinoy Teach: Teachers Manual:
“Racism and Discrimination”
Patricia Halagao and Timoteo Cordova
(2001)

Connections to NCSS Standards

Individual Development and Identity: The students will explain one’s self in relation to others in the society and culture.

Time, Continuity, and Change: The students will expand their understanding of the past and of historical concepts and inquiry. They begin to understand and appreciate differences in historical perspectives, recognizing that interpretations are influenced by individual experiences, societal values, and cultural traditions.

Civic Ideals and Practices: The students will expand their ability to analyze and evaluate the relationships between ideals and practices.

Lesson Objectives

The students will be able to:

- understand the meaning of racism, prejudice, discrimination, and stereotype
- explore and discuss personal experiences with discrimination and racism
- examine discrimination and racism from a Filipino American historical context
- take social action against discrimination and racism

Time: four 1-hour sessions

Materials

Teacher

- 2 large butcher papers
- graffiti wall
- Discrimination Matrix chart
- black markers (water based)
- spray bottle filled with water
- *Pinoy Teach* printed text:
 - “Rising Tides”
 - “Low Tide”
 - “World War II”

Student

- “Journey Around the World” Journal

Procedure

A. Opening: The Writings on the Wall

1. As the students are settled at their seats, in big, bold letters, write on a large butcher paper: PREJUDICE, DISCRIMINATION, STEREOTYPE, RACISM.
2. Allow the students to react to the written words for a minute, then ask the students to share their observations of the first impressions of the class: gasping, laughing, whispering, wide-eyed stares, closed lips, etc.

3. Allow the students to explain their first impressions of the words presented:
 - a. Why did some of us behave in certain ways?
 - b. What feelings did the words give you?
 - c. Did the words remind you of a past experience or observation?
4. As the students point out a word to talk about, allow the students to use the black marker to write descriptive words – adjectives, verbs, nouns, ideas, and feelings next to it, creating a “graffiti wall.”
5. Have the students look at the words on the wall and ask them to help develop a class definition for each of the four words to write on the board:
 - a. Prejudice – a negative or hostile attitude towards a person or group without just or sufficient knowledge
 - b. Discrimination – the restrictive treatment of a person or group based on prejudice
 - c. Stereotype – preconceived or oversimplified generalization about an entire group of people disregarding individual differences
 - d. Racism – a belief that humans can be grouped on the basis of biological traits and that these differences produce inherent superiority or inferiority of one race to another
6. After writing the class definitions of the words, ask the students to think of examples for each term (encourage the students to think and write their out thoughts in their “Journey Around the World” Journal).
7. Ask the class, “What is the difference between prejudice and discrimination?” and guide them to understand their differences:
 - a. Prejudice – an attitude
 - b. Discrimination – the action
8. Tell the students that discrimination includes a variety of restrictive treatments as racism, sexism, and ageism.

9. Write the class definition of “Discrimination” on the top of another sheet of butcher paper and invite the students to add on to the list of discriminating acts.
10. Write the list of “Discriminating Acts” as the first column of the three-column matrix.

B. Discrimination: Student Experiences

1. Ask the students if they’ve experienced or witnessed discrimination, and encourage them to share what happened, what they did about it, and their feelings of their experience.
2. Allow all the students who wish to share their story to do so, and write up the student examples for the second column, “Student Experiences.”
3. Have the students look at the stories and connect them with the list of discriminating acts in column one.

C. Discrimination and Racism: A Filipino Experience

1. Remind the students that we’ve defined Prejudice, Discrimination, Stereotype, and Racism, discussed examples, and shared our personal experiences. Emphasize that we’ve all experienced discrimination at different times and in different ways.
2. Next, tell the students that we will examine discrimination and racism experienced by Filipino’s in America by reading the following texts from Patricia Espiritu Halagao’s and Timoteo Cordova’s student textbook, Pinoy Teach, “Rising Tides,” “Low Tide,” and “World War II” (pass out copies of printed text).
3. After the students have finished reading “Rising Tides,” ask the students to describe the types of discrimination the Filipinos in America experienced and what actions they took. Write the students’ responses in the

third column, "Filipino American Experience."

4. Continue the discussion, talking about the Filipino American experiences as described in the next two texts, and write the students' responses on the matrix.
5. Allow time for the students to connect each experience with an act from column one, and share that in the early period of immigration, Filipinos experienced racial discrimination and were discriminated against at work, on the road, in hotel and restaurants, and in almost any place in the United States.
6. As the class completes the matrix, tell the students that our reactions and responses to an issue, event, or problem are based on our own understanding of what is happening to us. Follow this by asking the students:
 - a. How does discrimination affect an individual (yourself)?
 - b. How does it affect a group of people who are being (racially) discriminated?
 - c. How could the Filipino Americans be treated more fairly?
 - d. How can people change their perceptions about each other?

D. Closing: True Colors

1. Share an excerpt from America Is In the Heart: A Personal History by Carlos Bulosan (1943), a writer, editor, and radical labor organizer, on his experience with discrimination and prejudice as a Filipino in America:

"I came to know afterward that in many ways it was a crime to be a Filipino in California. I came to know that the public streets were not free to my people: we were stopped each time these vigilant patrolmen saw us driving a car. We were suspect each

time we were seen with a white woman. And perhaps it was this narrowing of our life into an island, into a filthy segment of American society, that had driven Filipinos like Doro inward, hating everyone and despising all positive urgencies toward freedom." (Note: Doro was Bulosan's companion in a car on way to Lompoc, California.)

2. Have the students take some time to reflect on one of their personal experiences with discrimination that they've written about earlier in their journal, and allow time for students to share their thoughts.
3. As the students share, have them recall some of the feeling and emotions created by the act of discrimination and include these words on top of the graffiti wall.
4. Finally, tell the class that humans have been grouped into our similarities, which unite us, but we are also grouped by our differences, which makes us diverse.
5. Have a student volunteer take a spray bottle filled with water and saturate the graffiti wall.
6. Have the students take a minute or two to see what happens with the wet wall.
7. End the lesson by asking the class:
 - a. Can we be a diverse people and still be united?
 - b. Is it possible to be a diverse group of people and experience an appreciation of each other rather than be discriminated against?
 - c. In what ways can we show an appreciation for the diversity that is clearly evident in our country?

Suggested Assessments

The students will be able to explain the relationship and differences between prejudice, discrimination, stereotype, and racism, and provide examples for each.

The students will be able to articulate in written format the following questions:

1. Can we be a diverse people and still be united?
2. Is it possible to be a diverse group of people and experience an appreciation of each other rather than be discriminated against?
3. In what ways can we show an appreciation for the diversity that is clearly evident in our country?
4. In what ways can you take action against discrimination and racism?
5. How will this action be helpful in your personal growth? Society?

Enrich/Expand

Using an example from the “Discrimination Matrix” chart, take the point of view of someone who has experienced a different type of discriminating act from their own, and have them write a letter about your feelings, thoughts, and hopes for moving towards a more equal and just America. Some key information for students to keep in mind:

1. Who are you writing to?
2. What is your purpose?
3. Do you want to convince someone of something?
4. To describe an experience, emotion, reflection, observation?

References and Resources

Print

1. Halagao, Patricia and Timoteo Cordova. (2001). Pinoy Teach: Teachers Manual: “Racism and Discrimination.”
2. Bulosan, Carlos. (1943). America Is In the Heart: A Personal History.

Online

1. “Filipino Tragedy Continues.” <http://www.washington.edu/uwired/outreach/cspn/curaaw/aawdoc43a.html>
2. “Movement History: Filipinos Build a Movement for Justice in the Asparagus Fields.” <http://www.lib.berkeley.edu/~ljones/UFW/documents/itliong.html>
3. “The Filipino Americans: Yesterday and Today.” http://www.filipinoamericans.net/yes_today.shtml
4. “The Philippine History Site: Filipino Migration to the U.S.” <http://opmanong.ssc.hawaii.edu/filipino/filming.html>