

Literature Synthesis

Collaboration and diving deep into research are huge parts of honing your skills as an educator. With that in mind, we embarked on a lesson study in which we could research relevant topics and work together to create an engaging, equitable, authentic, and anti-racist lesson. Due to the nature of online learning and the current global pandemic, our research and lesson direction changed a couple times, but we never deviated from our intent to create a lesson in which students were able to showcase and build upon their funds of knowledge, connect with the content of the lesson, and draw similarities between the specific lesson's information and experiences from their personal lives. These goals are in line with abolishing hate and racism through facilitating opportunities in which students can talk about how to respect and value all human beings every day (Delpit et al 2019). An overarching goal we have as educators is to help students realize their power to use learning as a personal and socio political tool to thrive in our world and to help them know themselves (Muhammad 2020).

Through analysis and inquiry, we determined the following research question that would guide our lesson study: How might we effectively encourage students to collaborate and analyze how public art demonstrates the connectedness of communities across time while in distance learning? We were experiencing low participation in our online classrooms and wanted to try to find ways in which students felt comfortable, empowered, and driven to participate through turning on their video, speaking with their audio, or sharing their ideas through the chat function and online forums. We focused on using many different modalities in our lesson in order to provide multiple different ways in which the students could share their knowledge and engage with new concepts and information. The research we completed demonstrated that asking fewer, more thoughtful questions is found to be more effective than asking many questions with a lower cognitive load (Goodwin 2014), so we were very purposeful and meticulous with the questions we asked students and the way in which students were able to respond.

Disrupting the phenomenon of the "vital few and trivial many" was a driving force in how we wanted to create an equitable, anti-racist lesson. This phenomenon states that roughly 80% of the work and speaking in class comes from about 20% of the students (Goodwin 2014). The 20% who typically do 80% of the talking in our classes are predominantly white males. We developed a Theory of Action that we hoped would disrupt this inequitable pattern. The Theory of Action that drove our planning was:

If we create opportunities for students to share their ideas and build on each other's ideas in small group and whole group settings **Then** we give students the chance to discuss and debate in a variety of ways **Resulting in** greater feelings of security in sharing ideas and building upon each other's ideas so that we can make connections in what we are learning about different communities and

highlight that all students have funds of knowledge.

We noticed that multiple sources mentioned that preparing students to be active participants in civic engagement requires the same general competencies as preparing students for college (Hamilton 2015). Designing varied, socially collaborative ways in which all students can make their thinking visible in the classroom prepares students to be confident and practiced enough to do this outside of the classroom. This helped us create the following equity goals:

- Students will listen to, value, and build off of each other's ideas
- Students will have opportunities to share about representation in their communities
- Breakout rooms and small group discussions as well as whole class discussions will be used to share knowledge

The themes we noticed in our research also helped us develop a specific content goal for this lesson. Our content goal was that students will use critical thinking to investigate the history of the Maya and make connections to other communities in the past and the present. Through using all of the information we gathered in our research (reading books and scholarly articles about education, speaking with experienced teachers, and conducting empathy interviews with our students), we were able to design a lesson that disrupted racist thoughts and actions while empowering students to think critically and share their ideas.

Delpit, L. (Ed.). (2019). *Teaching when the World is on Fire*. The New Press.

Goodwin, Bryan (2014). *Get All Students to Speak Up*. Educational Leadership, November 2014, 82-83.

Hamilton, Stephen F. (2015). *Readiness for Civic Engagement*.

Muhammad, G. (2020). *Cultivating genius: An equity framework for culturally and historically responsive literacy*. Scholastic Incorporated.

Annotated Bibliography

Delpit, L. D. (2012). *"Multiplication is for white people": Raising expectations for other people's children*. the new press.

Summary:

In *"Multiplication Is for White People": Raising Expectations for Other People's Children*, Lisa Delpit reflects on educational reforms that focus on the Black/White achievement gap in America's public schools. She reminds educators that no achievement gap exists at birth. Delpit reflects upon years of classroom experience with research and personal anecdotes as a mother and educator. The book lays out key ideas and strategies for raising expectations for minority children, particularly Black youth. There are thoughtful examples of curriculum and stories from successful teachers at all age levels, including elementary school, high school, and college. *Multiplication Is for White People* provides useful information for educators who are working in urban schools and with diverse students.

Delpit, L. (Ed.). (2019). *Teaching when the World is on Fire*. The New Press.

Summary:

In *Teaching When the World Is on Fire*, Lisa Delpit has put together a collection of essays addressing critical issues facing teachers in these tumultuous times. Delpit's wisdom and experience is paired with commentary from beloved, well-known educators, principals, and classroom teachers. These experts are engaging in difficult topics in K–12 schools every day. This collection of honest and complex anecdotes brings together much-needed observations on safety from Pedro Noguera and Carla Shalaby; keen ideas on looking into politics from William Ayers and Mica Pollock; Christopher Emdin's instruction on ways to respect and connect with black and brown students; Hazel Edwards's ideas about safe spaces for transgender and gender-nonconforming students; and James W. Loewen's advice on exploring symbols of the South; and current thoughts from Bill Bigelow on teaching the climate crisis. The variety of experts and the subject matter which they are contributing is rich and critical for all teachers, especially those wishing to expand how they are supporting their students in varieties of ways.

Goodwin, Bryan (2014). *Get All Students to Speak Up*. Educational Leadership, November 2014, 82-83.

Summary:

In the article, Goodwin mentions the phenomenon of the “vital few and trivial many” that management guru Joseph Juran coined in a 1975 research study (Goodwin, p. 82). This phenomenon happens across disciplines and is where 80% of a product comes from 20% of people. In terms of education, this is a trend in which a “small portion of students tend to account for a large portion of the discourse that occurs,” (Goodwin, p. 82). Some ways that have been shown to help dismantle this unfair, oppressive pattern are shifting the position of students in the “action zone” (the area in which students are most apt to engage in discussions, primarily the front and middle rows of traditional classrooms), having small group discussions prior to whole-class discussions (ie think-pair-shares and heads together type activities), providing wait time between asking a question and expecting an answer that is proportionate to the complexity of the topic, and asking fewer, more thoughtful questions.

Hamilton, Stephen F. (2015). *Readiness for Civic Engagement*.

Summary:

Students need to know that what they do and think matters and can make a difference in their world. Schools must foster a sense of agency within each student to prove that involvement in your community and civic engagement are vital parts of being a citizen. Hamilton references the ConnectED, the California Center for College and Career, proposed framework for ensuring college and career readiness for students. The framework has four components that educators should focus on in order to make sure all students are ready for civic engagement: knowledge; skills; productive dispositions and behaviors; educational, career, and civic engagement, (Hamilton, p. 2).

Hammond, Z. (2014). *Culturally responsive teaching and the brain: Promoting authentic engagement and rigor among culturally and linguistically diverse students*. Corwin Press.

Summary:

In this book, Zaretta Hammond pulls from cutting-edge neuroscience research to suggest ways in which educators can design curriculums that are culturally responsive and compatible to the ways in which students' brains work. Her approach is innovative and provides specific examples and instruction on how to create lessons in which students are engaged in various ways. The book includes information on how each person's culture programs their brain to process data and affects learning relationships. Hammond recommends ten “key moves” that will support students' learning, including helping them become more independent learners.

Love, B. L. (2019). *We want to do more than survive: Abolitionist teaching and the pursuit of educational freedom*. Beacon Press.

Summary:

In this book, Bettina Love asserts that educators must teach students about racial violence, oppression, and how to make sustainable change in their communities. She pulls from her life's work of research and teaching in urban schools to make a case that through radical civic action, educators can empower students. She believes that the educational system in the United States profits from the suffering of children of color. Love talks about the "educational survival complex," which she describes as test-taking skills, acronyms, grit labs, and character education that is designed to keep racist, oppressive educational systems in place. Teachers, parents, and community leaders must tackle educational reform with the imagination, determination, and urgency of an abolitionist in order to dismantle the educational survival complex.

Muhammad, G. (2020). *Cultivating genius: An equity framework for culturally and historically responsive literacy*. Scholastic Incorporated.

Summary:

In *Cultivating Genius*, Dr. Gholdy E. Muhammad presents a four-layered equity framework that is grounded in history and literacy education. This framework, which she names, Historically Responsive Literacy, was derived from the study of literacy development within 19th-century Black literacy societies.

Identity Development—Helping youth to make sense of themselves and others

Skill Development— Developing proficiencies across the academic disciplines

Intellectual Development—Gaining knowledge and becoming smarter

Criticality—Learning and developing the ability to read texts (including print and social contexts) to understand power, equity, and anti-oppression

When these four learning pursuits are taught together through the Historically Responsive Literacy Framework, all students receive opportunities for personal, intellectual, and academic success, just as Black people historically pursued these goals. Muhammad includes self-reflective questions for educators and culturally and historically responsive sample lesson plans and text sets across grades and content areas.