Teaching With Cultural Sensitivity Influenced by the Role of Critical Inquiry
For Continuous Transformation in Beliefs and Practices

“knowledge emerges only through invention and reinvention, through the restless, impatient, continuing, hopeful inquiry human beings pursue in the world, with the world, and with each other” (Freire, 1970/1995)

The purpose of this project is to help teachers continue their development of beliefs and understandings beyond course work or in-service programs into practices in the multicultural classroom. This project was based on two joint case studies done by Louise Jennings, University of South Carolina and Cynthia Potter Smith, Rock Hill District Three Schools. The basis for their studies was that “research suggests that courses may influence teachers’ attitudes but not their practices.” Louise’s main goal in her study was be able to interrogate the ideological underpinnings of various approaches to multicultural education. She also examined how an emphasis on critical inquiry in a multicultural education course influenced a teacher’s understandings and practices well beyond the class itself.

The goal of this project is to use these studies as a basis to fuel teachers’ attitudes for integration of cultural sensitivity and cultural relevance into all curriculums through an attitude transformation process of personal beliefs and instructional practices using the mode of critical inquiry (Freire) to develop deeper meanings of things otherwise taken for granted and unquestioned by
reflecting and acting on the world to transform it. The transformation process is to mean a shift in our “repertoires of meanings, language, and actions; all are important for multicultural education.”

The goal of this project is to provide new and experienced teachers with some tools to support transformation of their beliefs and practices in multicultural education using the cycle of inquiry modified for the multicultural classroom to critically interrogate multicultural programs and use insights from that analysis to develop a plan of action to be implemented in their own educational setting toward practices that help students develop responsibility for their own learning.

THE SEVEN PHASES OF A CYCLE OF CRITICAL INQUIRY


1. Examining existing assumptions, knowledge and questions.
2. Gaining (and creating) new information
3. Gaining New Perspectives (two frameworks)
   a. Sleeter and Grant’s (1999) five approaches for multicultural education (1A)
   b. Bank’s Five Dimensions to Multicultural Education
      o Content integration
      o Prejudice reduction
      o An empowering school culture
      o An equity pedagogy which facilitates equitable opportunities for all students
      o Student interrogation for knowledge construction
4. Critical Analysis
5. Sharing what is learned
Examples of Application:

**Case 1.** The first activity involved writing one’s definitions and goals for multicultural education. All but one participant at this point emphasized the need to heighten cultural awareness and appreciation for cultural diversity. Several participants added that multicultural education should address attitude change, to increase tolerance and respect among students. One wrote, “If understanding of different cultures can be taught, fear of differences and resulting problems and inequalities may be eliminated.” Then each participant went through the seven-step phase of the cycle of inquiry and developed an action plan. The action plans submitted at the end of the process indicated a shift in “repertoires for multicultural education” by the participants (See 1B).

**Case 2.** Cynthia’s case shows her journey from the stance of doctoral student fulfilling a course requirement to that of an emergent critical inquirer and transformational educator. Cynthia, for the past several years, had been involved in a special project for her district that involves all third-grade students in a 10-day unit focusing on the daily life of people living in York, County, South Carolina, in early 1800’s. The original unit included a visit to a one-room replica schoolhouse. Previsit activities involved students in learning about the clothing, food, games, customs, transportation, and communication of the period through teacher-directed activities. Postvisit activities included writing letters from the point of view of a child in the 1840s, comparing and contrasting present-day
school in a one-room school of the 1800s, or designing a poster illustrating a rule that was applied in the 1800’s schools. Cynthia was a member of the curriculum writing team, and her job included conducting one of the previsit activities and portraying a schoolmistress in the schoolhouse, guiding each third-grade class through the experiences of a scholar in the 1840s.

After completing the 1st year of this history program, Cynthia had experienced some unsettling feelings about the content and activities of this unit. Through a previous course on diversity and readings she had a growing awareness that the unit was Eurocentric. Only the history and heritage from the European point of view was being presented. Cynthia was one of the student’s in Louise Jennings course, and entered the course with “a repertoire of meanings, language, and practices that were examined, challenged and expanded.

Through the course, Cynthia came to see through the cycle of critical inquiry the importance of providing her young students with opportunities to actively construct knowledge about the contributions of different cultural groups to the social fabric. She recognized how the teacher-directed instructional activities of the original unit prevented students from actively inquiring into historical topics. Furthermore, Banks (1995) framework helped her see how the third-grade unit addressed only popular, media, and mainstream/academic knowledge about South Carolina history. The students had no opportunity to explore personal/cultural knowledge related to the topic.
During the course with Jennings, Cynthia through a group collaborative critical inquiry process, discussion with class members, and guest speakers was led to develop a commitment to transformative multicultural education principles. That belief guided the development of her action plan. This plan included revising the social studies unit to incorporate culturally relevant materials and inquiry-based teaching strategies that allowed students to develop and research their own questions related to the topic. First, she added information on Native American and African American life in the 1840s to “help students develop multiple perspectives on a variety of social and historical phenomena” (Ladson-Billings, 1995, p.162). Through the added content, Cynthia hoped that all students would come to understand the contributions of and the hardships experienced by both African Americans and Native Americans, in addition to European Americans. Also included were suggestions for students to research the location in the world and the activities of Hispanic, Asian, and other cultural groups not living in York County in 1840. She also developed a more culturally relevant unit by adding opportunities for students to make personal connections to their own cultural heritage. To enhance the inquiry component of the unit, Cynthia gathered from the local library a number of books that focused on African American and Native American involvement in American history, which could be used as resources for the children’s research. Teaching strategies from the original unit from teacher-directed activities to discussions and investigations designed to allow the children to develop their own questions about the daily life of the time. During this 5-day portion of the revised unit, the children used the
collected resources to research their questions and to record information in a research notebook.

Cynthia’s plan also included a social action component. Capitalizing on her unique position as a resource for all third-grade teachers in the district, she sought to implement her plan in a way that might lead her colleagues to interrogate their beliefs and teaching practices. Rather than having teachers mechanistically implement the revised unit, she created opportunities for them to critically observe the lessons as led by Cynthia in their classes. She also developed structures and tools that would allow the teachers to compare ideas, raise issues, and reflect on their own beliefs and practices. In her view, such critical inquiry on the part of the district’s teachers was a step toward creating more transformative instructional beliefs and practices within her district.

**Insights:**

In examining the data that captures Cynthia’s professional journey toward transformational approaches to multicultural education, five insights regarding transformational and multicultural education became evident:

- **Insight 1:** Transformation comes from continuous reflection and revision
- **Insight 2:** Transformation and critical inquiry are fostered through dialogue.
- **Insight 3:** Continuous renewal is fostered through educational partnerships.
- **Insight 4:** Critical inquiry can foster broader district changes for multicultural education.
- **Insight 5:** Critical inquiry is a form of praxis, where theory, experience, and reflection interact to produce personal and professional transformations.

By recognizing these two case studies, we have been given insights to how a teacher education course may serve as an important step in a series of
steps to transforming our repertoires of meanings, language, and actions for multicultural education. The two cases point to the importance of tools and structures that promoted practice beyond Cynthia’s participation in the course. This project was developed as an aid to provide us as students in this course with the tools of critical inquiry and a variety of resources that can be used as a to further support each student’s commitment to transformative multicultural education principles in teaching practices with cultural sensitivity. To aid with curriculum and the transformative process we have provided the following material resources for references and aids in the development of culturally relevant lesson plans and to help with transformation of personal beliefs and instructional practices in the future. These resources are just a place to go to find subject matter easily that can be integrated into your curriculum in the following disciplines:

**MATH**

- **Dollars to Doughnuts: Everyone Uses Money**- In order to understand that the use of money is a universal experience, students share foreign money samples and the stories of how their families acquired them. *Lesson plans from website: [http://www.teach-nology.com/teachers_plans/interdisciplinary](http://www.teach-nology.com/teachers_plans/interdisciplinary)*

- **Everybody Needs a Rock**- It seems that all children love rocks, so this was a perfect medium for integrating talents across the curriculum. I’m also always looking for realistic situations in which my students have to measure using metrics. *Lesson plans from website: [www.teach-nology.com/teachers_plans/interdisciplinary](http://www.teach-nology.com/teachers_plans/interdisciplinary)*

- **Graphing Rhythms**- Students will recognize that names have rhythms. Students will compare rhythms of names found in their class and other classes. *Lesson plans from: [www.teach-nology.com/teachers_plans/interdisciplinary](http://www.teach-nology.com/teachers_plans/interdisciplinary)*
- **Grids** - Using major amusement parks throughout the world to locate points on a grid. *Lesson plans website:* [www.teach-nology.com/teachers_plans/interdisciplinary](http://www.teach-nology.com/teachers_plans/interdisciplinary)

- **Cultural Math** - Links to various cultural math subjects, including African, the Americas, Asian and Middle-eastern. Subjects such as Cowrie shells, doubling with Egyptian math, Sona Drawings, Mayan counting, etc… [http://everyschool.org/u/logan/culturalmath/](http://everyschool.org/u/logan/culturalmath/)

- **Connections** - A small amount of information on Egyptian Math, Pi, Mayan Math, Chinese Calendar, and the abacus [http://users.rcn.com/mathroes/cover.html](http://users.rcn.com/mathroes/cover.html)

- **Mathematicians of the African Diaspora. The Ancients.** African Math information, including myths, lies and truths; information on 2 ancient math items, the **Lebombo** and **Ishango** bones; math in Egypt, Pre-Colonial Nigeria and Angola-Zambia; Black Mathematics journals; a link to 49 articles on/about black mathematics and information about North Africa, below the Sahara, the Canary Islands. [http://www.math.buffalo.edu/mad/Ancient-Africa/index.html](http://www.math.buffalo.edu/mad/Ancient-Africa/index.html)

- **Vatican information about math/science.** [http://www.ibiblio.org/expo/vatican.exhibit/exhibit/Main_Hall.html](http://www.ibiblio.org/expo/vatican.exhibit/exhibit/Main_Hall.html)


- **Black mathematicians.**
  - [http://www.math.buffalo.edu/mad/madgreatest.html](http://www.math.buffalo.edu/mad/madgreatest.html)
  - [http://www.math.buffalo.edu/mad/PEEPS/madprofiles.html](http://www.math.buffalo.edu/mad/PEEPS/madprofiles.html)
  - [http://www.math.buffalo.edu/mad/wmad0.html](http://www.math.buffalo.edu/mad/wmad0.html)

- **Black women in math** [http://www.math.buffalo.edu/mad/madhist.html](http://www.math.buffalo.edu/mad/madhist.html)

- **Modern history of blacks in math**
  - [http://www.math.buffalo.edu/mad/AMU/amuchma_online.html](http://www.math.buffalo.edu/mad/AMU/amuchma_online.html)
  - [http://everyschool.org/u/logan/culturalmath/links.htm](http://everyschool.org/u/logan/culturalmath/links.htm)
  - A set of links on African math items

- **Main site for many of the above items.** [http://www.math.buffalo.edu/mad/00.INDEXmad.html](http://www.math.buffalo.edu/mad/00.INDEXmad.html)

- **Yahoo list of math links** [http://dir.yahoo.com/Science/Mathematics/Mathematicians/](http://dir.yahoo.com/Science/Mathematics/Mathematicians/)
Determining Optimal Dimensions of a Refrigeration Unit - This project is designed to make students more aware of cultural differences, and take these differences into account when designing equipment for people to use. At Hussmann Manufacturing, engineers are designing refrigeration units to be used in other countries, and many of the standards required are different than those in our country. For example:

- The noise level generated by the compressor might need to be lower in a more congested city
- The allowable humidity level and the acceptable temperature range might need to be altered
- Even the physical design of the unit might reflect an average shorter stature or smaller arm length than might be found in the U.S.

The objectives for this lesson:
- To discover and describe commonalities within groups
- To develop an increased sensitivity to various groups with regards to their particular needs
- To work in a constructive way with a partner or within a group
- To utilize mathematical principles—such as measurement, conversion from unit to another, area and volume—to solve real world problems.

Website for lesson: [http://www.successlink.org/great/g597.html](http://www.successlink.org/great/g597.html)

ENGLISH/Language Arts

Creative Writing from the Rainforest - Students will gain knowledge of the rainforests around the world. Lesson plans from website: [www.teachnology.com/teachers/lesson_plans/interdisciplinary](http://www.teachnology.com/teachers/lesson_plans/interdisciplinary)

Listening Comprehension Activity-Describing People
(A listening-comprehension exercise for beginners contributed by Anibal Fernando Michado.)

Aim: To provide students with input (have/have got)(be wearing) and to review vocabulary (physical descriptions and clothes).

Students should have been exposed to vocabulary concerning physical description (height, build, color of hair, color of eyes, and clothes (color and pattern))
Procedure: Have students draw a grid in their notebooks or on a separate sheet, so that you can collect them. The grid should include the name of the student being described and these details about the students:

- Height:
- Build:
- Hair Length:
- Hair Style:
- Hair Color:
- Color of Eyes:

Also have students create space to describe three items of clothing being worn. Including the names of the items worn, the colors, and the patterns.

- Tell them that in order to fill out the grid they should choose one of the members of the class to describe, but they mustn't say who they have chosen.
- Give them time to fill out the grid, and when they are finished collect their papers.
- Tell the students that you are going to read the descriptions out and that they must write down the name of the person they think has been described. Make sure that they don't say the names out loud.
- Next read out each form. Your reading should be something like this: “This is a boy/girl. He/she is a tall thin boy/girl with long straight fair hair and blue eyes. He/she is wearing a white and blue striped shirt, jeans. White socks and brown shoes.”

Obviously, the physical characteristics will vary according to each individual and so will the clothes. Although there might be several students with the same physical characteristics, they should have no problems to identify the person described when you get to what they are wearing.

If the class is too large, you might choose to read out half their papers, and leave the rest for the following period. If so, before leaving, ask them to have a look at what everybody is wearing and try to remember for the following day.

The next day, you can read the rest of their papers, but this time when you get to the description of their clothes you will have to use “he/she was wearing” an opportunity to expose them to the past of the verb “BE”. Once you have finished with all the papers, write a similar description to the ones you read (or two if you used the past) on the chalkboard.

Write this on the board:

…..(name of the person) is a…….(height and build) boy/girl with…..(length)…….(style)…….(color) hair and …..(color) eyes. He/she is
wearing…….(color)…….(pattern)…….(item). *the words in parentheses should not be written on the board.

From website, John Korber: One World, One People ESL/TESOL lessons; http://members.aol.com/Jakajk/ESLtwo.html

**HISTORY**

- **Black History-Jacob Lawrence Style** - Students will name and demonstrate at least four characteristics of Jacob Lawrence’s work. *Website: Interdisciplinary Thematic Unit Lesson Plans: [http://www.teach-nology.com/teachers/lesson_plans/interdisciplinary](http://www.teach-nology.com/teachers/lesson_plans/interdisciplinary)*

- **Rethinking Columbus**
  This is a thematic unit that focuses on social studies and allowed students and teacher to create a learning experience that depended on and expanded critical thinking about events 500 years ago. This provides the opportunity not to learn facts, but to question facts and construct a meaningful interpretation of these events with a Hispanic/Latino perspective. The goal of the unit was to study this tumultuous time in history-the arrival of Europeans in the Americas-that led to the formation of a new race-Latinos. A guide in the process was the student/teacher curriculum Rethinking Columbus (Rethinking Schools & the Network of Educators on Central America). The unit compares three perspectives:
  - The European view of “the discovery”
  - The African/Indigenous Indian view of the “invasion”
  - The Latino/Hispanic view of "the birth of La Raza"

A bulletin board was created in the classroom representing the three perspectives and added to it as they class read, discussed, and explored the topic. In addition to reading and writing, discussing, and drawing, the class made a videotape. The students as a group summarized what they had learned-the greed for gold and land that motivated the explorers/conquerors; the destruction of Arawak/Tiano culture; the beginnings of the Puerto Rican “race” through intermingling of Spanish, indigenous and African peoples. The conclusion was that neither Indigenous peoples (Indians) nor people of African origin had much to celebrate related to Quincentennial. Rather, the “Encounter” resulted in the destruction of the Taino people and culture and the enslavement of Africans.

This thematic unit explored the European view by reading the book *The Boy Who Sailed with Columbus* (Foreman 1991). This story focuses on an orphaned Viking boy named Lief; portrays the boy’s capture by Taino Indians, and his adoption of Indian language and customs. At the
book’s end, he has made his way far north with his adopted people after witness the arrival of a fleet of ships that he realized meant a flood of fortune seekers to come.

They then followed by reading *Encounter* (Yolan, 1991), a story told through the eyes of a Tiano Indian boy. This story was particularly interesting to the Puerto Rican students, whose ancestors included Taino Indians. Students were further motivated by the discovery of two errors in this book—one linguistic and one historical in the book. In a description of the sound (chinga-chunga) that the bells, given as gifts to the Tainos made, the students were quick to point out that the onomatopoeic word was actually an obscenity in Spanish. Additionally, the book implied that the Tainos had no weapons, which lead them to some research. They found in fact they had bows and arrows, hatchets, and clubs (Alegria, 1970).

Studying the situation of the Jews in Spain using *The Other 1492* (Finkelstein, 1989) led the class to the realization that if the Jewish presence in Spain endured for fifteen centuries and the Arab/Moslem rule had lasted for eight centuries (beginning in 711) why did history imply that the Spaniards were “white”? Instead, the unit led the class to the conclusion that the Spanish conquistadors were most likely of African, Sephardic, Spanish and other origins. The notion of “La Raza” became more complex as they realized Spaniards were themselves a combination of many peoples.

Activities from *Rethinking Columbus* were used that included:

- Alphabet of Things that the Americans Gave to the World (p31)
  The alphabet was not only a rich resource for vocabulary but history as well.

(This thematic unit was done with middle school Hispanic deaf students, by Barbara A. Gerner, Gallaudet University)

- **The Amistad Comes to Life**—Activities across the grades and across the curriculum bring to life the story of the revolt on the Amistad. *Website:*
  [http://www.hackleylibrary.org/teares.htm](http://www.hackleylibrary.org/teares.htm)

- **A Critical Bibliography on North American Indians**—For K-12 “this comprehensive annotated bibliography of over 800 books is an excellent resource for teachers, librarians, and curriculum designers who want to introduce multiple cultural perspectives and begin to correct long standing misunderstandings in American history.” *Website:*
  [http://www.hackleylibrary.org/teares.htm](http://www.hackleylibrary.org/teares.htm)
**ART**

- While actually a cultural math site, the various links have some information about math in some forms of art, including Seminole patchwork, Navajo rugs, Hopi baskets, totem poles and picture writing; Africa, Americas, Asia, and the Middle East.  
  [http://www.ibiblio.org/expo/vatican.exhibit/exhibit/Main_Hall.html](http://www.ibiblio.org/expo/vatican.exhibit/exhibit/Main_Hall.html)

- **Art Access** - from the Art Institute of Chicago, lesson plans, activities, and multicultural art resources.  
  Website: [http://www.hackleylibrary.org/teares.htm](http://www.hackleylibrary.org/teares.htm)

- **The Vatican.**  Links to archaeology, etc.  
  Cultural arts resource for teachers and students.  

- **The web site for the Texas arts and cultural industry**  
  [http://www.arts.state.tx.us/](http://www.arts.state.tx.us/)  
  Lots of links – not much for actual information, mostly just links to other spots

- **Rambles**  
  [http://www.rambles.net/](http://www.rambles.net/)  
  Information about folk & traditional music, speculative fiction, folklore, concerts, movies & more.

**SCIENCE**

- **Cloudy with A Chance of Meatballs** - The students will understand about certain types of weather, about the food groups, and about immigration.  
  Lesson Plans from website:  [www.teach-nology.com/teachers/lesson_plans/interdisciplinary](http://www.teach-nology.com/teachers/lesson_plans/interdisciplinary)

- **Minorities in science and engineering**  
  [http://www.math.buffalo.edu/mad/special/societies.html](http://www.math.buffalo.edu/mad/special/societies.html)  
  Black and U.S. minority science groups

- **Physics in Africa**  
  [http://www.math.buffalo.edu/mad/physics/index.html](http://www.math.buffalo.edu/mad/physics/index.html)

- **Black Astronomers**  
Growing Vegetable Soup
This is a thematic unit growing vegetables. The author was aware that her students often did not know the names of the foods they see in the U.S., and often they did not even know the names of fruits and vegetables in Spanish, English or ASL — common in the cooking at home. The Unit was built around Lois Ehlert’s book, *Growing Vegetable Soup* (she also has another one on Fruits) which use paper collages which is great for ESL classes. For this unit the teacher had a copy of the Big Book (18 inches by 27 inches) as well as student copies. Activities included work with verbs (the story includes a good selection that are well supported by the illustrations, and writing a shopping list from the recipe given at the end of the book. Each student was responsible for certain things on the list, including getting the right amount. Using the recipe in the story, they prepared and cooked the soup.

Ehlert’s books are like storybook dictionaries as she labels the illustrations with key vocabulary. For example, nouns illustrated and labeled in our story included tools — rake, shovel, hoe; seed package, garden glove, soil, hole; vegetables — corn, carrot, tomato, pea, pepper, green beans, cabbage, broccoli, onion, potato, and zucchini squash, and many others.

The students also had a window sill garden, which they transplanted and used for their group science fair project. They made charts to illustrate their science project — using vocabulary, especially verbs that they had learned through reading the story (plant, give, wait, grow, watch, pick, dig, carry, wash, cut, put, cook, eat).

(This Thematic Unit was designed by Barbara A. Gerner for fourth and fifth grade Hispanic Deaf students with very limited literacy skills in both Spanish and English. The choice for this unit was based on the fact that many of the newly arrived students were from rural areas and working with growing things was a comfortable way to start learning ASL and English)

- **M.I. Smart** — information on working Multiple Intelligences into your science curriculum. Website: [http://www.hackleylibrary.org/teares.htm](http://www.hackleylibrary.org/teares.htm)

- **Mountain Voices** — First hand accounts of how development of mountainous areas affects the culture of the native peoples. Website: [http://www.hackleylibrary.org/teares.htm](http://www.hackleylibrary.org/teares.htm)

- **Experience Antarctica**- Want to know more about Antarctica and Australia’s work in the icy continent? This is a great place to start! *Website:* [http://www-new.aad.gov.au/](http://www-new.aad.gov.au/)

**GENERAL TOPICS**

- **Songs**

  *Almost Heaven, Mother Russia*- You may remember the song by John Denver from the 1970’s. He sings of the longing for his homeland. Needless to say, many immigrant students learning English can relate to the theme.

  Step One: For starters you can present the song to your students as a cloze exercise to be completed while listening to the song, and then have them sing it as a class.

  *Take Me Home, Country Roads*

  Almost heaven, West Virginia  
  Blue Ridge Mountains, Shenandoah River  
  Life is old there, older than the trees  
  Younger than the mountains, flowing like a breeze.

  Country roads, take me home (Chorus)  
  To the place I belong  
  West Virginia, mountain mama  
  Take me home, country roads.

  All my memories gather 'round her  
  Miner’s lady, stranger to blue water  
  Dark and Dusty, painted on the sky  
  Misty taste of moonshine, teardrops in my eye.
I hear her voice, in the morning hour she calls me
Radio reminds me of my home far away
Driving down the road I get a feeling
That I should have been home yesterday, yesterday.

(Chorus)

Step Two: Everyone has a place that they miss. Divide your students into groups, and have them substitute the geographic references to suit their own longings. If you have a variety of different nations in your class like I currently do, this can be fun. For example, the first stanza from a group of Russian students might look like this:

Almost heaven, Mother Russia
Ural Mountains, flowing Volga River
Life is old there, older than the trees
Younger than the mountains, flowing like the breeze.

Step Three: Have each group present their version of the song to the class. They can sing accappella or with the original song playing in the background. If some groups are shy, you might want to sing with them.

Lesson Plan from John Korber: One World, One People ESL/TESOL lessons: [http://members.aol.com/Jakajk/ESLthree.html](http://members.aol.com/Jakajk/ESLthree.html)

- **What Happened on Pa Lia’s First Day?**
  On her first day in a new school Pa Lia felt alone and wanted to make friends. This thematic unit will help students discuss feelings about their first day in a new school and difficulties of making new friends. 11 Jan 2001/ [www.everythingesl.net/lessons](http://www.everythingesl.net/lessons)

- **What’s in a Name:**
  Do your students drop their names in order to become Michael or Karen? Help English language learners develop positive self esteem and pride in their native language names. 25 Aug 2001/ [www.everythingesl.net/lessons](http://www.everythingesl.net/lessons)

- **International Tales of Traditional Values**
• Monsieur Corbett and Monsieur Marmion (French)
• Who Will Save the Emperor? (Korean)
• Rice Bowl Wishes (Chinese)
• Two Sister’s Dowries (Japanese)
• Fox Devils’ Revenge (Russian)

Stories on Website: Making Hearts Sing: http://www.wildgear.com/stories/

ESL Lesson Idea: Talking about our Native Countries
Your students will give talks about their countries. This lesson will help your students increase their knowledge and awareness of the specific cultures represented in the classroom. Website: http://www.eastsideliteracy.org/tutorsupport/ESL/ESL_Countries.htm

ESL Lessons by Country:

China
  Chinese Writing
  Chinese Paper Cutting in Taiwan
  Chinese New Year

City/Country
  Town Mouse, Country Mouse
  City/Country

Costa Rica
  Soccer in Costa Rica

Egypt
  Ancient Egypt

Geography
  The Seven Continents and their Animals
  Special Animals of the Seven Continents
  Landforms around the World

Government
  Types of Government around the Globe

Greece/Italy
  Ancient Greece and Rome

Immigration
  Immigration and Jamestown
  Triangle Trade/New World Slavery

India
  Diwali, The Festival of Lights

Islam
  Understanding the Ramadan Celebration
  A Dance done by Muslims during the Ramadan Celebrations

Japan
  Japanese Origami
Japanese Celebrations

Lebanon
A Learning Center

Mexico
A Learning Center
Mexico: Why we speak English and they speak Spanish
Factors leading to the Civil War
Learning Center II

Pakistan
Pakistan Mosaics

Puerto Rico
A Learning Center

Russia
Russian Faberge Eggs
Russian Pisanki Eggs and Korean Hahoe Drama Masks
Russian Holidays

South Korea
Russian Pisanki Eggs and Korean Hahoe Drama Masks
South Korea Celebrates Buddha’s Birthday

USSR
Space Exploration: The Space Race between the US and USSR

All of these lessons are from the website:
http://www/gamcea.people.wm.edu/ESL

ESL Images
Vocabulary images, grammar image sets, lesson plans ESL store
Flashcards available in English, Spanish and French
(membership $25.00 for 6 months) http://www.esl-images.com/

Internet Lesson (Online)

The CuisineNet Lesson
CuisineNet is a huge site that includes a collection of dining guides with descriptions, photos, and menus for restaurants in many cities.

- Sample Exercise: There are two exercises in the CuisineNet lesson. In the first exercise, the student is directed to a sushi restaurant in New York called the Haikara Grill. Each step of the instructions has links to the relevant site pages so that even a novice will have little trouble following them. The student is given questions to answer at each step of the way. The following are some examples of the questions used in Exercise 1 of the CuisineNet lesson.
- What price categories are there?
- What is the seating capacity of the Haikara Grill?

These questions are very simple with answers that will be obvious to the student. The object of these questions is not so much to get the student to find the answer but to direct the student’s attention to instructive and useful parts of the page.

- What days is this restaurant closed at lunchtime?
- What is the difference in price between the lunchtime and dinner time “chirashi zushi”?

These questions are a little more difficult and may require searching within the page, calculating, or both.

- What is the English name for the Japanese fish called hamichi?

Although all the answers can be found within the site, sometimes an Internet-savvy student will find that finding an answer elsewhere is easier. For the above question, some may choose to go to a dictionary site. This should be encouraged or at least pointed out as a possibility.

- What would you order if you had $50 in your pocket?

These questions involve making personal choices. Some of these can be quite difficult and time consuming because of the searching and calculating that is necessary. This question is even more involved because tipping has to be taken into consideration.

- Can you guess why there is no shell fish on the menu?

Some questions are much more challenging and have answers that involve culture and customs. Not all students will be able to deduce that the answer to the above question is that the Haikara Grill is a kosher restaurant.

Exercise 1 has a total of eleven questions. The time it takes for a student to answer these questions varies considerably. Exercise 2 has ten questions of a similar type.

Other Topics covered:
- Ordering
- Table Manners
- Tipping
Vocabulary

To use these website lessons go to: http://iteslj.org/guides/dining.html
For other Internet lesson ideas go to: http://iteslj.org/Lessons/Vorland-WebGuides.html

Videos

**Alphabet Soup** - Beyond the Borders, Education for all ( $30.00/kit, for needs based scholarship) Taylor High School, Attn: Susan Johnson, 100 G. Washington Ave., Pierson, FL 32180-handbook updates: http://www.beyondtheborders.org

**Voices of Experience: Cross Cultural Adjustment** - If you are looking for a video for use for cross-cultural training, orientation, or classroom discussions of U.S. culture. It is a series of vignettes featuring 20 nonnative and native English speakers from 11 countries, including Japan, Korea, Kuwait, Mexico, Russia, and The United States, speaking about experiences in U.S. culture. (TESOL Journal, Vol 11, No. 4; website: http://www.theseabrightgroup.com/catalog.pdf

Holidays:

**Christmas in Mexico** - This holiday season promote peace and appreciation for the diverse cultures in your school by taking advantage of the natural resource that is in your classroom. Begin with this lesson on Christmas in Mexico. (2 Dec 2001/website: www.everythingesl.net/lessons

**Festival of Light Around the World** - The diversity in many classrooms provides a starting point for children to begin to understand and value the many distinct cultures of the world. What better way to do that than to feature a winter unit on light festivals from around the world. Teach your students about the cultural traditions in France, Sweden, Thailand, Philippines, India, Egypt, Holland and Mexico. (2 Dec 2001/see website: www.everythingesl.net/lessons

**Earth Calendar** - Find out what is being celebrated around the world. Website: http://www.hackleylibrary.org/teares.htm

Fostering An Atmosphere of Inclusion

**Your Language Counts**
Language is an enormously important component of culture. It’s the means with which we communicate our thoughts and feelings. The
language a bilingual individual chooses to express a thought to another bilingual individual is essential to the feel and nuance of the message. By incorporating the heritage languages of our students whenever possible in our school culture, we legitimate the culture the language represents. To many it may seem paradoxical, but to the extent we can embrace the home culture within the school culture, we are creating peaceful culture co-existence.

Throughout the School
(ways to include heritage languages in the school setting)

- Label the significant places in schools with bilingual plaques (i.e. office, cafeteria, library, etc.)
- Introduce a heritage language proverb or saying, along with the translation, once a week or more. This not only includes language but also shares wisdom from the students’ culture.
- Include heritage language words or phrases when appropriate (i.e. songs, days of the week, months, counting, etc. in the native language)
- Teach a song in the heritage language to perform at school assemblies.
- Include songs and plays in the heritage language and from the heritage cultures in musical and theatrical performances.
- Greet students and parents in the heritage language, even if it's just one phrase.
- Have bilingual or heritage language bulletin boards around the school and in the classrooms.

Within the Classroom

- Practice saying the students’ name correctly. Ask him or her to repeat it and ask if you’ve pronounced it correctly. (Do this privately and not in front of the whole class. It can be embarrassing to students to have to correct the teacher in front of a group.)
- If this student is from a country new to your students, or if you have very few non-English speakers in your school, spend some time in empathy discussions with your class. (Even though the student might not understand what you’re saying, you may wish to talk while he/she is out of the room so that looks from other students aren’t disconcerting.) Important topics include:
  - What might it be like to come to a new school in a new country in which everyone is speaking a language you don’t understand?
  - How might we help the student to adjust and be happy and successful here?
How can we include the student?
What might we need to teach the student immediately?
How might we do that?
What would we like to learn from the student/

- Use buddies, both bilingual and English-only
- Show a movie about newcomers’ cultures and discuss it. Have students fill in the prompt, “It would be interesting to visit ________ (name of the student’s home country) because….”
- Have the newcomer student bring in items from the home country and make a bulletin board display, either in the classroom or in a glassed-in hallway showcase.
- Post a map of the newcomer student’s home country. Ask the student to draw examples of common food, dress, the written alphabet, houses and important buildings, regional animals, etc. and post them around the edges of the bulletin board.

(All of these ideas were provided by Catherine Brown, Resource Handbook, Powerful Strategies for Strengthening the Literacy and Academic Performance of Your ESL Students. (Bureau of Education & Research 118th Avenue SE, PO Box 96068, Bellevue, WA 98009, www.ber.org )

- The Value of Diversity

The broad range of experiences and perspectives brought to school by culturally, linguistically, and ethnically diverse students is a powerful opportunity for everyone to learn more—in different ways, in new environments, and with different people. Every single person in this enormously diverse and ever-changing system has the power to serve as an invaluable resource for all others—students, teachers, and the community as a whole. Rather than constituting a problem for students and educators, the growing diversity in U.S. classrooms necessitates and encourages the development and use of diverse and varied teaching strategies designed to respond to each student as an individual.
Adopting a truly global perspective allows to view culturally and linguistically diverse students and their parents or guardians as resources who provide unparalleled opportunities for enrichment. Naturally, we need a greater “repertoire” of approaches to teaching and learning to cope with varied styles of learning. Teachers and students alike must cultivate interpersonal skills and respect for other cultures. The new world economy demands this global view, and the skills of intercultural communication are necessary in politics, diplomacy, economics, environmental management, the arts, and other fields of human endeavor. Surely a diverse classroom is the ideal laboratory in which to learn the multiple perspectives required by a global society and to put to use information concerning diverse cultural patterns. Students who learn to work and play collaboratively with classmates from various cultures are better prepared for the world they face now—and the world they will face in the 21st century. Teaching and learning strategies that draw on the social history and the everyday lives of students and their cultures can only assist in this learning process.

Teachers promote critical thinking when they make the rules of the classroom culture explicit and enable students to compare and contrast them with other cultures. Cross-cultural skills develop naturally in culturally and linguistically diverse classrooms. For such learning to take place, however, teachers must have the attitudes, knowledge, and skills to make their classrooms effective learning environments for all students.
Given the opportunity students can participate in learning communities within their schools and neighborhoods and be ready to assume constructive roles as workers, family members, and citizens in a global society (ASCD improving Student Achievement Research Panel, *Educating Everybody’s Children*, p.49).
12 Key Elements for Effective Teaching for Ethnic and Language minority Students

1. Teachers have a clear sense of their own ethnic and cultural identities.
2. Teachers communicate high expectations for the success of all students, and a belief that all students can succeed.
3. Teachers are personally committed to achieving equity for all students and believe that they are capable of making a difference in their students’ learning.
4. Teachers have developed a bond with their students and cease seeing their students as “the other.”
5. Students are provided with an academically challenging curriculum that includes attention to the development of higher-level cognitive skills.
6. Instruction focuses on students’ creation of meaning about content in an interactive and collaborative learning environment.
7. Students see learning tasks as meaningful.
8. The curriculum includes the contributions and perspectives of the different ethnocultural groups that compose the society.
9. Teachers provide a “scaffolding” that links the academically challenging curriculum to the cultural resources that students bring to school.
10. Teachers explicitly teach students the culture of the school and seek to maintain students’ sense of ethnocultural pride and identity.
11. Community members and parents or guardians are encouraged to become involved in students’ education and are given a significant voice in making important school decisions related to program, i.e. resources and staffing.
12. Teachers are involved in political struggles outside of the classroom that are aimed at achieving a more just and humane society, (Zeichner (1992, Educating Everybody’s Children, p. 49-50.)
Table 1. Sleeter and Grant’s (1999) five approaches for multicultural education

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Approach</th>
<th>Societal goals</th>
<th>School goals</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Teaching the Exceptional and the Culturally Different</td>
<td>“Help fit people into the existing social structure.”</td>
<td>Teach dominant traditional educational aims more effectively by building bridges between the student and the demands of the school” (p. 88).</td>
<td>Focuses on adapting instruction to student differences to help students succeed in the mainstream.</td>
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<td>Human Relations</td>
<td>“Promote feelings of unity, tolerance, and acceptance within existing social structure.”</td>
<td>Promote positive feelings, reduce stereotyping, among students’ self-concepts” (p. 77).</td>
<td>Love, respect, and more effective communication should be developed in schools to bring closer together people from diverse backgrounds.</td>
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<td>Single Group Studies</td>
<td>“Promote special structural equality for immediate recognition of the identified group.”</td>
<td>Promote willingness and knowledge among students to work toward social change that would benefit the identified group” (p. 111).</td>
<td>Developed in an effort to focus attention on specific groups, raise consciousness regarding that group’s oppression, and mobilize for social action for equity.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Multicultural Education</td>
<td>“Promote social structural equality and cultural pluralism. . .”</td>
<td>Promote equal opportunity in the school, cultural pluralism and alternative lifestyles, respect for those who differ, and support for power equity among groups” (p. 155).</td>
<td>Links race, language, culture, gender, disability, and, to a lesser extent, social class, working toward entire school celebration of human diversity and equal opportunity.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Education That Is Multicultural and Social Reconstruction</td>
<td>“Promote social structural equality and cultural pluralism.”</td>
<td>Prepare citizens to work actively toward social structural equality; promote cultural pluralism, alternative lifestyles; promote equal opportunity in the school” (p. 189).</td>
<td>Extends multicultural education into the realm of social action and focuses as much on challenging inequitable social stratification as on celebrating human diversity and equal opportunity.</td>
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<td>Title of Action Plan</td>
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<td><strong>Human Relations and Single Group Studies</strong></td>
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<td>Increasing Awareness of Homelessness for Preschool Children</td>
<td>Introduces a unit on homelessness into preschool classrooms through in-service training for all staff.</td>
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<td>Getting to Know You: Opportunities for Nondisabled Students and Students with Disabilities to Learn More about Each Other</td>
<td>Promotes positive interaction between students with disabilities and those without through an examination of existing attitudes and various intercultural activities.</td>
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<td>Mitigating Fears About International Members of Our Schools and Communities</td>
<td>Introduces a lecture series regarding Middle Eastern cultures at a conservative South Carolina college.</td>
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<td>Implementing a Women's Study Program: School of Hotel, Restaurant, and Tourism Administration</td>
<td>Introduces a woman-centered course to a male-dominated curriculum of management, food services, and tourism.</td>
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<td>An Introduction to Science Careers for High School Females</td>
<td>Develops relationships between a suburban high school and businesses and community resources to encourage girls to pursue science education and careers.</td>
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<td><strong>Comprehensive Multicultural Education</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>A School Plan for Embracing Multiculturalism</td>
<td>School reform addressing parents, students, and teachers through cultural awareness/diversity programs and curricula.</td>
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<td>Changing Church: Taking a Multicultural Perspective</td>
<td>Promotes relationships between members of differing ethnic and socioeconomic groups through weekly church group activities.</td>
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<td>Diversity in Retail: Staff Development</td>
<td>Incorporating a diversity program into an existing corporate training program.</td>
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<td>Building Social Responsibility</td>
<td>Develops an elective course at a private school that focuses on prejudice reduction through group interaction, critical thinking, individual rights, and social action skills.</td>
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<td>A School Plan Embracing Diversity: Tolerance, Character, and Harmonious Intergroup Relationships</td>
<td>School reform that incorporates collaboration, student perspectives, and critical examination of materials with a focus on conflict resolution.</td>
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<td>A Multicultural Inquiry Approach to Teaching High School Government and Economics</td>
<td>Curriculum/instructional changes that focus on independent thinking, social responsibility, and participatory classrooms.</td>
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<td>Bringing Multicultural Education Into the Instructional Kitchen</td>
<td>Integrates multicultural perspectives into an existing culinary arts program.</td>
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<td>Making Connections: Using a Multicultural Approach to College Reading 101</td>
<td>Promotion of adult learners' self-esteem and career goals through critical thinking and self-exploration activities that focus on multicultural themes in a technical college.</td>
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<td>Revising Third-Grade History Curriculum to be Multicultural and Social Reconstructionist</td>
<td>Redesigns a third-grade history unit in one district to be culturally relevant and inquiry based.</td>
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RESOURCES


Jennings, Louise and Cynthia Potter Smith, *Examining the Role of Critical Inquiry for Transformative Practices: Two Joint Case Studies of Multicultural Teacher Education.* (Teachers College Record, Volume 104, Number 3, April 2002, pp. 456-481)