

# **The Human Race: Ready, Set, Go!**

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## **Introduction**

This is not a curriculum unit based only on meeting state content standards. It is not about getting your students to score the highest in the county on standardized tests. Instead it is about creating successful, positive citizens for the future of our ever-changing world. Throughout this curriculum unit, there will be many opportunities to teach true content standards that will meet specific educational goals, but this curriculum unit is created to truly make a difference in your classroom environment and teach your students that they are more similar than different.

## **My Personal Reason**

So, what has driven me to create this curriculum unit? Why do I find it so important to teach tolerance and acceptance? This curriculum unit and goal are close to my heart. When I was young, school was never a place I enjoyed going. Ironically, I made the conscious decision to spend the adult years of my life in school, as a teacher. My memories of school are filled mostly with torment: if I wasn't being made fun of for being an overweight child (a struggle I battled up until five years ago), I was being made fun of for being gay.

As each year ended, I wasn't left with memories of parties, school dances, or social events like most of my peers. Instead, my memories were made of a plethora of horrible names shouted in my direction, physical bruises that had faded over the ten month period, and emotional bruises that sometimes I can still feel. I remember clearly two specific events in high school that really sealed the deal for my utter hatred of being a student.

It was my sophomore year. What an exciting time, right? You get to learn to drive and finally taste some real freedom. Instead, I felt more caged and tied down than ever. By this time, I had been surrounded by my peers for about seven years and they had all my flaws pinpointed and an arsenal of words stored up and to fire at their disposal. It was early in the year and I had just arrived at school. I noticed a gathering of "cool" kids near

my locker. I paid no attention and continued on my way. As I got to my locker I saw they took great interest in what I was doing. As I opened my locker I noticed something white slide out and fall to the floor in front of me. As I bent over to pick it up, the laughter and pointing began. As I stood up with said object in hand, it wasn't difficult to determine that the laughter was directed at me. I stood there holding a training bra in my hand, a fantastically evil bullet to be fired at an overweight young man. I remember the humiliation so vividly and can still feel that rejection if I allow myself to go to that place.

The other event that I remember clearly happened in the locker room during gym class. After the event described above you can only imagine what this weekly torture was like for me, but one day stands out more than the others. I was trying to be invisible. When you weigh well over two hundred pounds, it is funny that you even try to make yourself invisible. It is almost impossible, but I tried. While trying to get my school clothes off and gym clothes on as quickly as possible I found myself surrounded by four boys. They began shoving me and grabbing the fat around my waist. As they did this they shouted things like, "Faggot! Do you like us touching you?" This event also involved some more sexually harassing phrases and gestures too painful and explicit to talk about in this curriculum unit, but I think the most horrifying thing that happened during that day is that I finally worked up enough nerve to go and tell my gym teacher. His reaction stunned me. He said, "Yeah, so? What do you want me to do about it? Boys will be boys?" I quote him exactly because these sentences will be forever engrained into my memory. What I wanted him to do was find it in himself to reach out, to help me, listen to me, and make me feel like someone cares for my well being. He was the adult in this situation and that was his job as the adult, but more importantly as a teacher. He didn't. I vowed from that point on to teach others acceptance and tolerance and to never treat people like I was being treated.

### **Curriculum Unit Application**

The curriculum unit is applicable to any classroom teacher grades kindergarten to first. The unit, its texts, as well as some of the activities can easily be differentiated to meet grades second to third. You will simply have to tweak some of the content to make it slightly more complicated for upper grades.

For you to successfully teach this unit you will have to use some specific books mentioned throughout. They are very popular texts and should be able to be located at your local library. Other than that the materials used are all quite common classroom

supplies, so there is no need to invest in many different manipulatives and materials making it accessible to all classroom teachers immediately.

### *Curriculum Unit Goal*

This curriculum unit holds true to that vow I made so many years ago and even though I'm a different person from that beaten down child, my resolve hasn't changed. I think that those experiences, along with so many others, led me into the field of education. I take my job extremely seriously and push my students academically, but I want to take steps to push them socially and morally. I want to teach them life lessons that are just as important as being able to read and problem solve. I want my students to be able to see each other for their unique offerings and accept their differences. I want to use my knowledge gained in this seminar and the creation of this curriculum unit to create a classroom environment that is nurturing, accepting, and truly a family. I don't want any of my students' first year of school (because I teach kindergarten) to be the beginning steps on the way to what I experienced. I want to use this curriculum unit to teach them to be kind, loving individuals who despite not being the fastest or the most athletic, can still finish first in the little thing we call the human race.

What is the human race? Is it something we must train for? Is it easily won? What kind of shoes should you wear? What happens if you finish last? Are you racing against your mother, father, sister, and brother? These are the questions I anticipate hearing from my kindergartners when I begin teaching my curriculum unit.

Through the seminar "*Gender, Race, and Justice*", I have learned and applied new information to teach my students that we are living in a diverse community and that tolerance is key to creating a successful community both in school and outside the school's four walls. I also want to use this curriculum unit to create an environment within my own classroom that is nurturing, supportive, and truly a family unit. Although the major goal of the unit is to teach gender and race tolerance, I also want students to understand the justice piece of society. I want them to learn why laws are set up, how they are set up, and the consequences that occur when those laws are broken.

The plan for this unit is to span one week of school and is driven by Jamie Lee Curtis' book *Is There Really a Human Race?*, *The Sandwich Swap* by Queen Rania of Jordan, and other picture books. During this week, the theme of tolerance will be a cross-curricular learning sequence for my students. That means it will be showing up in our language arts, math, science, and social studies lessons. This gives the students the

opportunity to express their diversity, as well as learn about other students' differences while successfully meeting the standard course of study objectives set forth by my state's education department.

### *The Cross-Curricular Aspect*

This curriculum unit incorporates many different learning sequences and teaching strategies. I will be incorporating art, music, literature, writing, dramatic play, Socratic Seminar, and mathematics to make sure that my curriculum unit meets the needs of all learning styles.

The most important teaching strategy used in this learning will be Socratic seminar because its goal is to promote communication, understanding, and a comfortable environment where different views, experiences, and opinions can be expressed and debated respectfully. This teaching strategy will be clearly laid out for you when you get to that stage of the unit. It will also be something you will be able to tweak and use in various other instructional moments.

A goal throughout this learning sequence is to act more as a facilitator. As you teach try not to express your opinions or support a student's point of view, instead help guide your students with thought provoking situations and then step back and allow them to drive conversation and learning. I feel that if you do this successfully, it will help create a nurturing environment for the students, as well as teach them a lot about tolerance, and more importantly, acceptance.

This unit will be organized into five sections, one for each day of the school week. The sections are as follows:

- The Starting Line
- Mile Marker 1
- Mile Marker 2
- Mile Marker 3
- The Finish Line

The starting line will be your first day (Monday) and will serve as an introduction to the curriculum unit. Then on each day following, the curriculum unit's goal will be taught within a specific content area. Day two (Mile Marker 1) will be literacy based with the content standard being retelling and sequence, day three (Mile Marker 2) mathematics

based and the content standard being assessed is sorting by various attributes, day four (Mile Marker 3) will be a science focus teaching the content standard of the changes in matter (solid to liquid), and day five (The Finish Line) will be the day you apply the Socratic Seminar strategy to your classroom.

The assessment tool being used during the duration of this unit will be the use of a KWL chart. The day you introduce the unit you will want to assess what your students know about diversity and tolerance (but put in lower grade terminology), as well as questions they may have about unfair treatment and diversity. On the final day of this unit you will want to have a classroom discussion and complete the KWL chart by having your students share what they have learned about the human race, differences, and tolerance.

K

W

L

What we know about people's differences and getting along  
Questions we have about people's differences and getting along  
Things we have learned about people's differences and getting along

### **The Starting Line**

This portion of the curriculum unit is your time to capture your students' attention and truly engage them in the unit. I find with my kindergarten students the best way to get their attention quickly is through a picture book. That is why throughout this unit you will be find that each day starts with a different picture book related to the topic.

The first book you are going to share with your students is Jamie Lee Curtis' story, *Is There Really a Human Race?* Before reading the story (especially for kindergartners), it is important to talk about the textual features of the book. Show them the cover and have them make predictions. You may want to facilitate this by asking them, what do you think the human race is? How do you get ready for it? Discuss who the author and illustrator are, touching on what each person's job is. Make sure that you show and discuss the title page, as well as the dedication page. All of these parts of the book are part of the kindergarten standard course of study. While you are reading this story (particularly to kindergartners), stop to clear up some areas that may be over their comprehension level. When you are done reading, ask the students again what they

believe the human race is. Write down their thoughts on chart paper to reference throughout the week. Use this time to draw on their own personal experiences and I find the best way to do this is to share my own personal experiences with them. This gives them a comfort level and an area of reference to draw on.

Next, we are going to create a human race collage. Have your class gather around a large piece of paper (the paper used to cover a bulletin board works best). I have my students run through this banner at the end of the unit like a finish line ribbon, so I make it rather long. I like to write “We are the human race,” but you can write any message you would like. Supply each student with a magazine, glue, and scissors. Have the students cut out pictures of people of all cultures, races, ages, and genders and glue them onto the paper. Once the students have filled up a large portion of the picture discuss the images you see. Point to several images and ask if that person is part of the human race, and this will reinforce the idea that EVERYONE is part of the human race.

The ending activity today is an art and writing extension. Ask the students how they plan to help the human race when they grown up. Talk about specific community helpers that aid in the protection, safety, and nurturing of the human race. Talk about other things that people can do to help others (pick up litter, volunteer projects, food drives, etc). Next, supply the students with a writing paper. Make sure there is a bottom portion for writing and a top area for an illustration. Have the students write “When I grow up I will \_\_\_\_\_.” Go around to each student and conference with them. You will have to write their thought on a post it for them to copy onto their paper. Once the students have all finished the writing portion of the project, have the students create an illustration to go along with their writing. Have the students divide into small groups and share their pictures and talk about what they are going to do when they grow up to help the human race.

### **Mile Marker 1**

This is the day where the curriculum unit will be taught during your literacy block. The picture book of focus will be *The Sandwich Swap* by Queen Rania of Jordan. If you are not familiar with this terrific story, it is the tale of two girls and their differences. It begins by introducing you to best friends Lily and Salma. They do everything together, including eat lunch. While at lunch one day, each girl expresses her disgust over what the other is eating. Lily finds Salma’s hummus and pita sandwich to be completely repulsive and the feeling is mutual for Salma when she sees Lily’s peanut butter sandwich. This

difference leads to name calling on a much larger scale and even a food fight. The girls end up not speaking for some time until they are once again reunited in the lunchroom. This time, they decide to put aside their differences and even try each other's sandwiches. The surprising thing is that each girl ends up loving the other's sandwich just as much as she did her own. Once reunited, they start a cultural event at their school where everyone shares their favorite cultural cuisine at a school picnic.

This is a terrific story that teaches your students that the girls are more similar than they are different. Before reading the story (especially for kindergartners), it is important to talk about the textual features of the book. Show them the cover and have them make predictions. Discuss who the author and illustrator are, touching on what each person's job is. Make sure that you show and discuss the title page, as well as the dedication page. All of these parts of the book are part of the kindergarten standard course of study.

After reading the story, it is important to review the story and assess your students informally for comprehension. It is very important to give your lower level students another retelling of the story to help them process the story. I usually stick to this skeleton when reviewing any book with my students:

- Can someone tell me what this story was about?
  - What happened first?
  - What happened at the end?
  - Is there anything in the middle we missed?
  - What was your favorite part?

I find that these five questions typically work for my students. If unclear answers are given, it is important to revisit the text and read specific parts over, but only if needed.

If you are adapting this curriculum unit for a third or even fourth grade class, an easy way to do so is integrate the means of effective communication. There are various ways to do this. You could have the students rewrite the story and resolve the conflict before it ever got out of hand by having them apply good communication skills. You could also create and read the scenarios of friends getting into disagreements and have them brainstorm ways the fight could have been avoided. I think the best way and most effective way to teach the idea of effective communication is to divide your class up into small groups and have them create two skits based off the same conflict. Have one version show the conflict being approached with poor communication skills and a lack of

tolerance. Then have the second reenactment represent the conflict being resolved through effective communication and the use of tolerance.

Next, have your students share personal connections to this text. With kindergarten students, you may need to prompt this discussion by asking, “Have any of you ever had a fight with a friend? Why did you fight? Did you fix the problem? How did you fix it?”

After you have reviewed the story and talked to your students about their connections, the next learning sequence involves story sequence. This is a content standard that all kindergartens need to meet. If you haven’t already, introduce the concept of sequence. Please use the sequence cards I created below with your students. If you have high level students you may want to have them create their own sequence cards and switch with a friend to put each other’s cards in sequential order. You may even want to do some basic three-step sequences (ex. seed, sprout, and flower). Also while you are observing and introducing the idea make sure you are using order words like first, second, last, beginning, end, and middle. These are important terms for the students, especially kindergartners to know. Once you have thoroughly introduced or reviewed the concept of sequence, break your students into several small groups. Using the two sets of sequence cards, have the groups work together to put the cards into sequential order. Make sure that you are circulating to each group to check for understanding and mastery of concept.

After the students have completed the task, have them gather again on the carpet and review each set and put them in order and discuss the sequence of events. This will be another time for you to assess individual students and their level of mastery.

The ending activity for today’s literacy block is a lesson to reinforce the idea of hurtful and kind words that I’ve found many versions of online. The best lesson description I found was on [www.kindergartenkindergarten.com](http://www.kindergartenkindergarten.com). This activity’s objective is to have students identify hurtful and kind words. This activity serves as a great tool to build community in your classroom. For this activity, you will need two very large red hearts cut out of paper. You will use the two hearts to record hurtful and kind words.

Start by reflecting back on the connections they made earlier to the story. Brainstorm what words in the story were hurtful. Discuss the words and the actions in the story that took place. As the students list words from the text, record them on the heart labeled hurtful words. Next, have the students share hurtful words that they may have said or have been told. As they tell you, record them. When the students have shared many



hurtful words, take the large heart and crunch it into a ball. Tell the students that those kinds of words hurt and break your heart. Ask the students to describe what the heart looks like. Then open the heart back up and smooth it out. Talk about forgiveness and apologizing. You may have a few students share connections to these terms. Then ask your students to recognize that the heart is still wrinkled, folded, and bent. Use this opportunity to tell students that even though we say we are sorry, or forgive people for hurting our feelings, those words stay in our heart and can make us feel bad for a very long time. Ask your students if that heart will ever look like it did before we wrinkled it up. They will say no and that is the time where they really make the connection that words hurt for a very long time.

Next, have the students list and brainstorm kind words. Record these on the second heart labeled kind words. Once everyone has shared kind words, remind students that these words make our hearts happy and full of love. Have them notice that this heart is smooth, beautiful, and perfect. Tell them as long as kind words are all that are in it, it will stay that way. Hang this heart up in your classroom as a constant reminder of kind words they can share with their peers.

Also have the students create their own personal kind heart. Sometimes our students go home and the only kind words they may hear during their day are the ones we, as teachers, say to them. This could be their reminder that someone thinks they are special. Supply each student with their own small heart and have them copy the kind words that the class brainstormed. You may even want to copy the words down and make copies, if your students are not writing at a proficient level yet. This would also be great for older students because they may have troubled home lives as well and this can serve as motivation that someone thinks they are special.

## **Mile Marker 2.**

This is the day where the curriculum unit will be taught during your mathematics block. The main focus of today's lesson will be teaching students about similarities and differences. The goal will be to teach your students that when all is said and done, we are a lot more alike than we are different. To align this idea with my state's standard course of study, I applied the content knowledge of sorting and counting. To fulfill this portion of the unit all you need is your class, chart paper, and a lot of space.

We will be using the text *The Color of Us* by Karen Katz. This story is about all the different colors the humans can be. It is a great text to introduce/reinforce the ideas of similarities and differences. Before reading the story (especially for kindergartners) it is important to talk about the textual features of the book. Show them the cover and have them make predictions. Discuss who the author and illustrator are, touching on what each person's job is. Make sure that you show and discuss the title page, as well as the dedication page. All of these parts of the book are part of the kindergarten standard course of study.

After reading the story, review the story and assess your students informally for comprehension. It is very important to give your lower-level students another retelling of the story to help them process the story. I usually stick to this skeleton when reviewing any book with my students:

- Can someone tell us what this story was about?
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- What happened at the end?
- Is there anything in the middle we missed?
- What was your favorite part?

I find that these five questions typically work for my students. If unclear answers are given it is important to revisit the text and read specific parts over, but only if needed.

Introduce the idea of sorting and counting. If you have never discussed this topic, you may want to start with a demonstration using any math manipulatives you have on hand. Next, tell your students that the objects you will be sorting and counting will be each other. This will be a great learning sequence in which the students will sort each other by eye and hair color. I always allow my students to come up with other ways to sort themselves as well. They have come up with types of shoes they are wearing, color of shirt, and undoubtedly they decide to sort based on the color of their skin. If your class does decide on this, allow them to navigate it on their own. It will lead to a terrific teachable moment.

Once all the sorting is done, allow your class to move back to a common area for a sorting debriefing activity, where you will incorporate Venn diagramming. This is a concept that I use frequently in my class. However, if it is new to you or would be new to your class, you will need to teach how this type of diagramming works. A Venn diagram is a tool used for comparing and contrasting two ideas or objects. Draw two overlapping

circles and whatever is the same for both goes in the overlapping section and the difference go in the individual circles, outside of the overlapping section. Through the Venn diagram, we will talk about how sorting each other helped us locate our differences, but now we need to find some similarities as well. After we complete this portion of the math lesson, we will then move into picture bar graphing other similarities.

For this portion, you will want to use topics that are relatable to the age group you are using this curriculum unit for. When I use it with my kindergarteners, we do favorite food, favorite pet, favorite colors, etc. I only use topics that they are extremely familiar with. When we have graphed all our results on various chart paper, we discuss the fact that we are far more similar than we are different. This will lead you into the discussion of tolerance and similarities we all share. Some questions you may want to ask your students are:

- What does it mean to treat everyone fairly?
- Have you ever been treated unfairly?
- Why makes us different?
- What makes us the same?
- What would you do if you saw someone being treated unfairly?

### **Mile Marker 3**

This is the day where the curriculum unit will be taught during your science block. We will be using the text *The Crayon Box That Talked* by Shane Derolf and Michael Letzig. This story is about a box of crayons that discovers that although they are very different, they are still all the same. Before reading the story (especially for kindergartners), it is important to talk about the textual features of the book. Show them the cover and have them make predictions. Discuss who the author and illustrator are, touching on what each person's job is. Make sure that you show and discuss the title page, as well as the dedication page. All of these parts of the book are part of the kindergarten standard course of study.

After reading the story, it is important to review the story and assess your students informally for comprehension. It is very important to give your lower-level students another retelling of the story to help them process the story. I usually stick to this skeleton when reviewing any book with my students.

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I find that these five questions typically work for my students. If unclear answers are given, it is important to revisit the text and read specific parts over, but only if needed.

After you have answered the questions and discussed the story thoroughly, ask the students how this book reminds them of *The Sandwich Swap*. Throughout the year, it is easy to focus on text to self connections. However, kindergarten students must learn that there are text to text connections as well. Ask them that even though one book was about people and one was about crayons, there are still similarities. Have the class discuss how the books are similar. You may need to guide them in the direction that the books are both about being more similar to your peers than different. Review how the girls in *The Sandwich Swap* learned this lesson, as well as how the crayons learned this in *The Crayon Box That Talked*.

Now, it is time to meet the kindergarten science objective about the states of matter and how liquids can change to solids and vice versa. To do this, have your students go on a crayon piece scavenger hunt. In the bottom of backpacks, table baskets, and other areas throughout the classroom, have students search for tiny pieces of broken crayon. You may also want to (weeks prior to this unit being taught) have a collection bucket for broken crayons. Once the students have collected a relatively good amount of crayon pieces, gather on the carpet and discuss them. Identify all of the similarities and differences in this pile of crayons. You may even want to sort the crayons to further reinforce the ideas in the math lesson from the day prior.

Once all of the crayons are sorted and you have discussed the idea of similarities and differences, introduce the idea of changing states of matters. First, identify what a solids and liquids are. You may even want to write a list on the board and in their science journals. Then ask the students when they have experienced a solid changing into a liquid. They will probably say things like ice cube melting, popsicles melting etc. Then ask when they have seen liquids turn into solids. Once again they will most likely mention the ice cubes. Now, have them look at the crayons again and ask if they think we can turn crayons into liquids. Have them made predictions and guesses on how we would

do it. Tell them that by often adding heat, solids can often turn into liquids. Start about things they are familiar with: ice cream, popsicles, and candles. Then talk about items like steel and even crayons!

In an old pot, spray cooking spray and put on a small electric burner. Please make sure that this is in a place where the children cannot get to. Make sure to discuss how cautious you must be today. Inform them that we are going to turn the crayons into liquid and explain the steps:

- We are going to place the crayons in this pot.
- Next, we will add heat to the crayons.
- We will observe the crayons.
- We will pour the liquid into molds (I use different shaped ice cube trays).
- We will let the liquid cool.

Ask the students what they think will happen when the liquid is left to cool. Many students will determine that the liquid will turn back into a solid. When I do this first step, we observe the initial step of putting them in the pot, we record a drawing of what that looks like in our science journal. Then after the crayons have started to melt, but not completely, we record another drawing in our science journals. Next, when they are entirely liquid, we draw another illustration in our science journals depicting this change. Last, we record one last drawing of what the crayons look like after we have poured them in the molds and have allowed the wax to cool.

Once all the steps are followed and you have reviewed the changes of matter that the class just observed, pull it back into the idea we are all more alike than different. Remind students that we used several different crayons, they were all different, but when it all came down to it, they were just the same and were able to come together to create something new.

### **The Finish Line**

When planning this curriculum, I knew exactly how I would end it. The entire kindergarten Social Studies curriculum is focused on community and character traits. The objective of this specific learning sequence is to have the students use the knowledge they have acquired over the week to understand that they are part of something much bigger

than just their local community and in order for it to be successful, tolerance is necessary. The students will also learn that there are ways they have already begun and continue to help their school community as well as the entire world. I knew that the text that I would use throughout this curriculum unit had to be rich in ideas to promote enough discussion among all of my students. The book had to be at a level that my struggling students could understand and discuss, but also have enough substance for my more advanced students to dissect and construct critical discussion. That is why, on this last day, you will revisit Jamie Lee Curtis' book, *Is There Really a Human Race?* in order to successfully meet all of my criteria. The reason this book is so useful is that it was read earlier in the week and discussed thoroughly. This allows students of varying levels to have some background knowledge and ideas prior to the activity.

To begin this lesson, reintroduce the story by reviewing what we have been learning about all week. Discuss community and what it means to be a community. Discuss what a community needs to function, community helpers, and the citizens' roles within the community. Allow for more in-depth conversation about citizenship and what it means to be a good citizen. Talk about diversity, tolerance, and acceptance. You may want to refer back to other stories you read this week. Read *Is There Really a Human Race?* to your students and then begin setting up for your Socratic Seminar.

Before moving the students into their seminar groups, predetermine what students will be working together. Based on the knowledge you have of your students, group them based on their personalities and points of view. You do not want a group of your best-behaved, top performing, or an out-numbered cultural group in a single seminar. You want to make sure you have heterogeneous mixtures in order to have many different perspectives.

Once the students are assigned to their groups, have them move quietly into different areas of the room. When the students are arranged comfortably in their groups, go over seminar rules one more time. The rules are:

- Respect each other.
- Only talk when you have the "Speaking Ball."
- If you disagree do it politely by saying, "That's good, but..."
- Stay in your group's area (I find giving each student a hula-hoop to sit in really works to keep the younger students in their assigned area).

Based on the grade being taught, you can supply each group a handout with five questions on it or you can read the question out loud to the class that is to be discussed within their group. Remind students that the first and last question is to be answered by every student (I always mark these two questions with a picture of a robin to represent round-robin questions for the groups that can read the questions themselves). The three questions in the middle are open for free discussion and not all students need to answer, but are encouraged to do so. Discuss that each has a speaking ball (or any object you choose to use), and in order to talk (and to eliminate interrupting) they need to be holding the speaking ball.

Your job now is to go around the room and facilitate seminar discussions by guiding students to a deeper and more clarified idea of the story, a respect for the group's diverse opinions, and to make sure the rules of Socratic seminar are being followed. You may also need to go around and read questions or restate the questions to groups based on the grade you are using this for. It is important that you don't show that you support one child's thoughts or opinions because this could make other children shut down. Stay neutral in all of your feedback.

It is a good idea to have a student leader in each group read the questions on the handout. Also make sure there is time for students to pose their own questions if one is sparked by something said within their seminar. When the students complete their discussion based on the questions, they then create a group poster to share how they can help their classroom/school community and also make a difference to the whole human race. They should be able to use the text and their discussion to really continue to explore the idea of what it means to be an active and positive contributing member of society. When the book is explored thoroughly and their posters are complete, thank the students for their participation, summarize the main ideas and concepts examined during their discussion, and have the students move quietly back to their seats where you can have a final debriefing of the seminar where student groups share their posters.

As an assessment tool, I have the students fill out self-evaluation forms using smiley faces and sad faces. This is so they can express their thoughts on the seminar. I find this extremely useful when planning future Socratic seminars and students groupings. You can also use their group posters to assess their knowledge of different communities based on how they would help their classroom/school community and the much larger community they belong to, the human race.

## Recommended Teacher Resources

" NC Standard Course of Study ." North Carolina Public Schools.  
<http://www.ncpublicschools.org/curriculum/> (accessed October 19, 2009).  
This is a collection of the standard course of study for grade levels k-5 for the state of North Carolina.

FWD Media. "BrainPOP Jr. - K-3 Educational Movies, Quizzes, Lessons, and More!." BrainPOP Jr. - K-3 Educational Movies, Quizzes, Lessons, and More!.  
<http://www.brainpopjr.com> (accessed November 21, 2010).  
BrainPop is a website that covers all core subject areas. This site offers mini video clips that teach a concept through a series of cartoon characters. Along with the video an online activity, hands-on activity, quiz, and an extension activity are offered. BrainPop's focus is math and science.  
Discovery Communications. "Welcome to Discovery Education." Welcome to Discovery Education. <http://www.discoveryeducation.com> (accessed November 21, 2010).  
This site offers reference guides, video, and images . The site has a heavy science and math concentration, however, there are items for language arts and social studies as well.  
Jordan, Sara. *Celebrate the human race multicultural songs and activities for children*. Toronto: S. Jordan Pub., 1993.  
This is a book created to teach young students 4-7 about various cultures through song, art, and dramatic play. The book also has lesson extensions. This is very good for a class that multi-intelligences need to be met. It is great for hands-on learners.

## Recommended Student Readings

Abdullah, Rania. *The Sandwich Swap/Illustrated By Tricia Tusa* . S.l.: Hyperion Books, 2010.  
This book is about two little girls. The girls are of different cultures, but are best friends. One day at lunch that all changes based on their cultural differences and the food they eat. Some mean words are exchanged



and the girls end their friendship. At the end their eyes are opened and they are able to rekindle their friendship.

Curtis, Jamie Lee, and Laura Cornell. *Is there really a human race?* . New York, NY: Joanna Cotler Books, 2006.

This book explains the idea of the human race. It answers common questions asked by students. It also helps teach students about differences and similarities. This book is great for introducing any lesson regarding multicultural or racial elements.

DeRolf, Shane, and Michael Letzig. *The crayon box that talked* . New York: Scholastic, Inc., 1998/1997.

This story tells the story of a box of crayons that talks. None of the crayons get along because they are different colors and they only see their differences. Throughout the story they learn how to work together.

The crayons end up creating a beautiful picture together and they realize they are more similar than different.

Katz, Karen. *The colors of us* . New York: Henry Holt And Co., 1999.

This story goes through the colors of people. It explains that although our colors are not the same we are all the same. This book is another great story to use for Socratic Seminar because it includes everyone and each child will have a connection to the text.

## **Works Cited and Endnotes**

Unknown, Kathryn. "Kindergarten Kindergarten." *Kindergarten Kindergarten*. TypePad, n.d. Web. 28 Nov. 2010.

<<http://www.kindergartenkindergarten.com/>>.

This site is an excellent resource for any kindergarten teacher. This site was created by a teacher and is filled with free resources. There are full lesson ideas and also management tips. This site spans all content areas and everything is downloadable and free.