

## Body and Identity: An approach to cultural understanding among ethnic groups - Hispanic / Latino, African and Asian cultures.

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### Introduction

ESL (English as a Second Language) programs in the USA focus on providing education under the "No Child Left Behind" legislation of 2001. Foreign children from many countries are given the chance to pursue education with equal opportunities. These children are allowed to have formal education regardless of their immigration status. This means even if the child came to the country without authorization he/she is entitled to receive education. This is the same case for refugees who come from countries in which the situation, conflict or war, makes them eligible to receive protection from the United Nations. In other cases, relatives or parents that already live in USA are the ones who process the corresponding documents of the children and bring them by requesting residence or protection. In all cases, these children will attend schools and will be given ESL classes, which are English language leaning classes; Academic Resources Lab; and SIFE (Student with Interrupted formal education) programs. When another language different from English is spoken at home, the child will be given LEP status (Low English Proficiency), but probably will not receive ESL classes anymore.

As an ESL teacher, I have to deal with a very diverse population coming from Asia, Africa and Latin America. These students come from countries such as Vietnam, Laos, Cambodia, Sudan, Kenya, Ethiopia, Somalia, Angola, Honduras, Mexico, and El Salvador, among others. The majority of these students come with refugee status, while others are general immigrants. These children may be older than other students in their grade, or not have previous formal education. In the USA, children primarily go to school not based on their knowledge but their age. So if, a child did not receive any type of formal education, he/she will still be placed in school, where he/she will attend ESL programs and SIFE (Student with Interrupted Formal Education) programs when needed. The children I work with are high school students, from 9th to 12th grade. These students had the characteristics mentioned above, such as older age, SIFE, lack or low language proficiency as well as not knowledge of school environment such as rules and procedures. The majority of ESL students are refugees, so besides the main difficulty of the language barrier they face many challenges and traumas from their home countries. It is necessary for the ESL teachers and content area teachers to be aware of this diversity of cultures, in order to understand the processes and changes these children are facing. American schools have to deal with diversity among their own native population; imagine the further complication of mixing the standard population with foreign students, whose different customs

and culture really makes a difference in the learning and teaching processes in the classroom.

In order to understand the language learning process that occurs for ESL students it is necessary to go to consult some theories about language acquisition. According to Steven Krashen, language acquisition can take from five to seven years to achieve to a full academic language proficiency, which is known as CALP (Krashen 1988)<sup>i</sup> (Cognitive Academic Language Proficiency). This is all the language students need to succeed in content area classes, lectures, test taking such as EOC (End of course test) or EOG (End of grade test) and later pursue a college education. On the other hand, there is the BICS (Basic Interpersonal Skills), which is the acquired in two to three years. While academic development happens, children learn survival language and survival social skills take action, so children will evaluate the language, listening daily, from basic commands and common communication to finally acquire and be able to communicate ideas (WIDA Standards)<sup>ii</sup>.

Besides the linguistic approach to language learning, teachers have to take into account students' cultural background, which is, their protection barrier as well as the basis for the only social skills they know so far. Foreign children are always aligned to their culture and customs. This can be perceived and understood due to the variety of behaviors and diversity. This means, even though they are in a new country and learning a new language, it is not as the saying goes, "when in Rome, do as the Romans do;" their cultural background is very strong. High school students will not easily change how they live; for students that arrive at elementary school or middle school, the adjusting occurs in a faster and easier way. Friends, social groups, behavior, food, even clothes, keep the same structure from their own culture, customs, understanding of social conduct and heritage.

All these Ethnic groups from the countries mentioned above, maintain an ethnically based conception of their nation despite their life as immigrants in United States. The ethnic cultural representations of the Asian, Hispanic/Latino, and African immigrants present in Charlotte Mecklenburg Schools, rationalize the maintenance of a homogeneous society, as keeping their customs, following traditions, and avoiding the entrance or mixture from another culture. This tends to embed daily life and development related to an intimate relationship among contemporary racism, segregation, adaptation and inclusion, in order to maintain values. For instance, Latinos and Hispanics tend to preserve their customs, celebrating festivities from their country; however they also integrate American traditions and cultural traditions such as Thanksgiving. Another example of this is that while the celebration of the sweet sixteen is done in the USA, for the majority of foreign cultures the tradition is to celebrate sweet 15, 14 or 13; what often results is a great party mixing American traditions with the foreign ones, an interesting mix of two cultures in one.

Holidays in other countries have meaningful representation for the people who celebrate it. Holidays are special occasions where people get together and celebrate independence days, religious commemorations, civil struggles etc, only understandable for themselves and their own people. But when the population migrates to another country, this population has no space to observe their own holidays but has to adopt and to accommodate to the ones performed in the host country.

In other states and cities of the USA, spaces for celebrations and holidays are opened and accepted; for instance on November 6<sup>th</sup> Muslims celebrate Eid. It is the day when Hawa and Aden met –first people who came to earth, and pray two times called Rokaah, placing the hands across the chest ; after that there is a celebration with the family and friends all done as a new beginning,. This is he version of Christmas celebration for Muslims. In Charlotte Mecklenburg Schools is regular day with just the note of no exams that day, but in New York City is consider a holiday and there is no school in many areas.

Taking into account that immigrants have their own culture and celebrations and holidays; businesses that provide foreign goods have grown. Many stores make available supplies for such as activities, and for the daily life groceries, clothing, and other general supplies are found in stores like Wal-Mart or Food lion, but special goods are found in small supermarkets. For instance many stores are located in the Asian Corner Mall located in Charlotte. The owners of such stores provide typical goods require for Asian immigrants. They speak English and Vietnamese but provide goods from all Asia. As well as for the Asian people, stores specialized on African clothes, food and religious artifacts too, happened to be in Charlotte. Such stores also belong to African people who saw this business as an interesting projection and opportunity in the city, but also as the understanding of having their own supplies from their own country. The church is another example, I personally have attend some masses and found out how interesting and diverse they are. The pastors perform the mass in Jarai, Bunong, Koho (languages spoken by the Montagnard people in Vietnam) and also English. The same for Muslim people, very few Mosques are found in the area, the prayers are perform commonly in Arabic by the Sheikh (the person to precedes the religious celebration), however this person is able to speak many languages and if required he will perform the religious celebration in any language. This is what immigrant kids have in their life. However in the school things do not make sense at all times. Classes, instruction, school culture, rules, food, dress code etc., are based on American standards that are sometimes below and other times above their understanding.

Foreign students, like all teenagers, like socializing, but they are interested in their unique social groups. Students prefer socializing only with their own identity ethnically group. Based on my observations and analysis, immigrant students do not socialize beyond school environment to other ethnicity even among their own kind of label, for instance, Asians are not all the same, Montagnard do not get along to Vietnamese due to language, beliefs and politic issues. They are still ordered to be in certain social groups.

For instance, Montagnards (from Vietnam) are allowed to date only the ones that parents consider part of the same culture and religious belief. Any other case will be considered a betrayal to their culture. Relatives strive to keep their traditions and beliefs throughout generations, even though children are immerse in a new culture, prone to forget and acquire cultural elements from the host culture.

Nevertheless, the cultural heritage and background is a mainly issue to foreign children. I have noticed that children commonly feel embarrassed of saying where they are from. They do not share their real background, because they feel out of place, rejected, segregated, and not capable to fit in the host culture. Some of the reasons for such phenomena are the lack of language comprehension, lack of understanding, and the fear of being placed in a negative label. For this, children feel embarrassed of their past and are not interested in sharing who they are. They also feel placed in dangerous situations; for instance, Latinos feel scared of persecution due to their undocumented status. To aware and promote understanding among cultures, first it is necessary to understand ours, be proud and having a sense of belonging to somewhere.

Besides all the issues and observations mentioned above, the gender plays an important role among immigrant population. I consider important include this, since it is part of the body and identity in the means of how women and men are seen inside their social groups and outside the host culture. American culture is commonly known as a free will society. Women are powerful; women make decisions, have careers, and are independent. For men it is quite the same, in general the American society is everyday providing equal opportunities for men and women, a situation considerably different in some foreign countries, especially those considered third world or underdeveloped. There, men are still considered the head and primary providers of the household; women take care of the children and the husband. Women are not expected to work, and culturally speaking, their purpose is to get a man that provides for them and the upcoming children. When immigrants come to the USA, the situation is expected to remain the same. And as some are already teenagers, this cultural overview is already made manifest in their minds. For instance, it is very common to see how young Latinas / Hispanic ladies, from Salvador, Honduras and Mexico only think about getting a boyfriend that can take them out, pay for their stuff, getting a way to go a live together and finally having children, as a life goal. There is no need to think about pursuing college education, since they already decided that somebody has to take care of them. Worse is also the case when these girls take care just of their personal appearance until they find the man that will support them, afterwards, they forget about themselves since their life goal is already achieved. The reason why I consider this is important; it is because students can build a real understanding of their cultural heritage that is not described in books or social reviews of their community. Students can explain situations, based on what they have observed and lived.

Since the students have to subsist in this diverse environment, I want them to be able to explore their ethnic and racial background and heritage by focusing on body and identity representation. The general purpose is to understand the different concepts that racial and ethnic identity comes along with. Also to describe the representations that the ethnic groups have on these concepts based on portraits, daily activities and life experiences capture in pictures, stories of life, autobiographies, short stories and art work. In other words, students will help illustrate the different ideas about ethnicity they have, based on the work they create.

The concepts to discuss in this curriculum unit are focused on body and identity, these are based on the understanding that our humanity, ethnicity and cultural background is defined by who we are and what we believe in. Our physical appearance plays part of that nature as well as our identity. The body and identity is part of any humanistic subject discussion and in this case, ESL as a language learning class takes part in reading comprehension, enhancing the language learning process, conceptualization and understanding. Race, ethnic groups, racism, multiracialism, multi-ethnicity, adaptation, institutional racism and implicit bias concepts, are embedded in the reading comprehension exercises and cultural overview of the material in the class. These concepts lend to classification of races and ethnic groups into a breakdown of ethnicities, such as African-Americans or Blacks, Asians and Asian Americans, Americans or Whites, Hispanics and Latinos/Latinas, mixed race and multiethnic Americans. However, it is important to understand that no classification scheme is perfect, because there is minimal scientific evidence for anything resembling our culture's concepts of cultural behavior and background. This means, that sociologists do not have a full answer to classify cultures in terms of just one cultural background. Indeed, our concepts of race can sometimes be based on stereotypes. This is key issue in the USA; American society tends to think of race literally as a black and white issue, without thinking about the nuances of race as they intersect with nuances of ethnic identity. The diversity of races and ethnic values, vary from cultures, populations; mixing them into the common identity known as the melting pot. But not everything gets "melted," and many elements preserve their own properties. It is not only related to the big picture of Latinos, Asians, or Africans, but the religion, cultural background of specific groups, whether from particular countries or tribes. For instance, the refugees from the central highlands of Vietnam come from six ethnically diverse groups called Montagnard, all of them with different dialects and languages, but sharing cultural values and religious beliefs. However, they are absolutely different from Vietnamese people, not even sharing a physical similarity.

The increasing ethnic and racial diversity brings about the chance for the remaking of ethnic boundaries and for new ethnic categorizations and understanding through the dynamic interaction of ethnic integration and host society reception. As the ethnic and generational mix of a society shifts and expands, so the position of boundaries that define larger ethnic clusters might too. In the United States, the formation of group boundaries and ethnic labeling has significant implications for the measurement and analysis of

segregation. Boundaries expand beyond national origins to cover a range of groups perceived to share some structural or cultural traits. The use of “Africans” to describe people, who come from Africa, is an example of this generalization. It is not correct to say "Africans" since all from that continent have a country, a nationality, a culture and their own definite religious beliefs. For Latinos it is the same, since all Latinos are not Hispanic and other kinds of cultural beliefs, creeds, cultural values, nationalities, will represent them. And in the case of mixture of cultures, they will represent those differences and will stand for them. All these elements will be discussed in the curriculum unit for the students to understand, and be proud of the differences.

The consequences of differentiating racial groups through these ethnic categories and putting them in a hierarchy are contradictory. The labels to some extent allow for the political inclusion; on the other hand, they also reinforce the belief in the superiority of some; for instance, the generalizations that Hispanics are undocumented, that Asians are all from China, or all Africans live in a jungle setting, are evidence of disconnection between general cultural knowledge and labeling. In fact, unlike the past understanding we had of the American society as a melting pot, today what we seem to have is the idea that there are impossible cultural differences among groups. We tend to label people who seemed diverse and cultural different. We tend to define them based on misconceptions about their groups. In other words, most of the time people use stereotypes based on appearance to spot an ethnicity or culture. However, these may not be true for those who have been assimilated into the mainstream of American culture; others may be deliberately false. Some may actually be true. However, these stereotypes do have an effect on people's perception process, whether they want them to or not putting things in groups is human nature. For instance, labels such as Asians are smart, Latinos are gangsters or illegal immigrants, Germans are anti-Semitic, Russians are evil communists, French are snobs, Middle East people are terrorists, poor or rural white people marry their cousins, and black people are on welfare, and so on. Many of these common stereotypes with a negative or positive connotation have been adopted by different groups as used to label the same groups. In some cases the use of these labels are to segregate or/and unite people, build community behind a common ethnicity. This means that a negative stereotype can be used to define an ethnicity, make it stronger, even though, and in some cases, does not necessary mean what the community wants to represent.

As a result of the use of various resources and analysis of different representations, cultural backgrounds are present inside people's ideas and beliefs. Students at West Charlotte High School confront the process of Americanization, seeing those who stereotype, generalize and segregate them. Then a process of adaptation and absorption of the American culture begins in order to avoid such as circumstances. But beyond this behavior versus the American culture, they also define themselves against other foreign cultures, segregating themselves according to their own differences in cultural backgrounds.

In this curriculum unit I want students to be able to explore, identify and value cultural differences on one side and also understand about ethnic groups and discrimination. My students have faced and lived discrimination in one side and also they have had a hard time understanding that the cultural differences are also present behind religious beliefs, gender; placing the roles of women and men especially in body ideas for women who face segregation and sexism. Also I want them to be able to use resources such as racial and ethnic groups, online resources, visual representations and art work, and the school and city libraries. They will select an ethnic group from which they belong and recognize as part of their cultural heritage. This is how I would encourage pride of their culture. My Curriculum Unit blends both ideas, asking them to have pride in their own ethnic/racial community, but also asks them to re-examine the ways in which they have possibly created racial hierarchies. The opposite of assimilation should not be simply perpetuating a kind of nationalism that oppresses others but to understand and tolerate diverse beliefs and cultural views.

## **Background**

West Charlotte High School is in the CMS school districts located in the city of Charlotte North Carolina. WCHS or "DubC" (a popular name given to West Charlotte High School), is a school with a lot of history known as the first school for African-Americans in the city of Charlotte. Then, WCHS became a very popular school. The majority of population in 2011 is African American students. The ESL population is made of children from Central America, Vietnam, Cambodia, Sudan, Angola, Congo, among others. These children are mostly refugees. Their ages are from 15 to 21 in the high school grade. They very eager to learn however, their language proficiency in English is zero and also they barely had formal education in their countries, so their leaning process is a challenge for them and their teachers.

## **Specific Key Objectives in this Unit:**

Examine and construct ideas about cultural understanding by asking relevant questions and responding thoughtfully to questions posed in discussion to clarify and extend their own understanding, views and opinions.

Use writing and other forms of representation to explain ideas and experiences, reflect on their feelings, values, and attitudes, then describe and evaluate their learning processes and strategies.

Demonstrate commitment to crafting pieces of writing based on cultural understanding and representations.

Examine the ideas of others in discussion to clarify and extend their own understanding.

Demonstrate an awareness of what writing/representation processes and presentation strategies work for them in relation to audience and purpose.

Students will explore throughout the reading material in the class (Hampton Brown Edge Reading, Writing & Language, Textbook Level B – used for ESL English classes Reading and writing stage) cultural backgrounds. We will use on-line and printed sources to look in depth such material and identify profiling and cultural aspects involved in the readings. Then I expect to compare such finding to students' cultural background and read interpretations and understanding, comparing and contrasting elements, ideas and perceptions.

### **ESL Specific Strategies**

ESL – LEP teaching strategies will be used throughout the unit as:

**Active Learning** – Students are involved in active Learning activities more than just listening. Students are expected to produce output in term of language progress and cognitive understanding. Activities will require higher order cognitive skills such as problem solving and critical thinking.

**Collaborative/Cooperative Learning** – As a language learning class, students are expected to work cooperatively and collaboratively in small groups sharing their understanding, these groups are formed in various criteria such in term of differentiated instruction.

**Critical Thinking** – Students will have to develop activities which require the ability to intuit, clarify, reflect, connect, infer, and judge.

**Discussion Strategies** - Engaging students in discussion deepens their learning and motivation such as discussing will be organized in groups based on a concept chosen. It is also important to check the understanding of the concept and rationale the background and previous knowledge students have on the concept.

**Interdisciplinary Teaching** – I will request some teachers from the area of Social Studies to be involved in the activities develop as speakers.

**Problem-Based Learning** – Students will be given situational cases to review to prove their understanding of the concept and apply the concept to solve a particular situation given in the case. This will also require students to reflect on their understanding.

**Writing Assignments** – as one of the product of this curriculum unit, students are expected to develop various writing assignments and reflections in order to apply critical thinking skills as well as help them to learn the unit content.

### **Classroom Activities**



The classroom activities will be divided in six clusters. These clusters will have as an outcome a series of writing reflections, and then finally a short research paper developed individually by the students in which they will focus on an ethnic group. Besides the papers, students will develop a visual product as a matter of art / visual representation. Each cluster will be developed during a week (5 school days) during 90 minute class time (block classes at West Charlotte High School). The curriculum unit will be completed in a month and a half. Both products the paper and the visual representation, and the stories of life developed in clusters 5 and 6 will be part of the Multicultural Night performed every year at West Charlotte High School on the month of March. It will be also an open option to show the art work and collect in a book the research papers to be presented in the Betchler Museum since this was part of the inspiration for this curriculum unit.

### **Cluster 1 Conceptualization Week 1**

In this first cluster the purpose is talk with the same language. It is necessary to understand the concepts that will be over and over in the unit. In this initial stage the idea is to find out that common language that can guide us throughout the unit. As it was done in the first section of the seminar I consider it is interesting to explore the interpretation of a piece of the Betchler Collection as it explains in a safe way how this can relates to our life.

Essential Question, What holds us together? What keeps us apart? (The clusters will have the same essential question as the purpose is to answer it at the end when developing the research paper).

Day 1: Through paintings, pictures and art work, students describe what they see and how what they see is related to their life. They will respond to questions such as: What do you see in the painting? Is the painting about a specific ethnic group? How do you?, Can we talk about the life of the artist, or the person in the painting based just on what we see? Does the painting include racial traits?. They will use a journal to describe and reflect on this first stage. I will choose a variety of paintings and pictures that can give students different perspectives of how to describe what they see and their relation to their lives. I will use so some famous paints such as *Guernica*<sup>iii</sup>, *la Mona Lisa*<sup>iv</sup>, *Esmeralderos*<sup>v</sup>, and so on. I will use some paintings that they have seen before in social studies books, as well as in the ESL reading books.

Day 2: Student will discuss the concepts related to identity around the general questions of who we are, and, where we are from. After seeing the paintings, students will come out with ideas about their nationalities, and their identities as US Citizens, or refugees etc. These initial concepts will lead to go deeper and explore the following concepts of:

Immigration, immigration to USA, refugee, illegal immigrants vs. undocumented immigrant, race, ethnicity, ethnic groups, racism, multiracial, multiethnic, adaptation,

institutional racism, cultural behavioral patterns, stereotypes and gender role. I will ask the students to find the meanings of the concepts; then, we will discuss them to build a unified meaning. This discussion will be done as a flow of ideas one leading to the other, I will have the words in cardboards and students will have to connect one to the other if there is possible connection. We will also explore if this word exist in their language (I do this because we use a lot of dictionaries; also I have found that many words students learn in the English they have never seen it in their language). We will build a general meaning to each of the concepts.

Day 3. After the understanding of the concepts students will discuss what relations have these concepts with their initial analysis of the pieces of art and their life. Can the paintings have a direct relation to our understanding and the concepts learned? Or do we build the relation according to what we know and believe? Can concepts have different meaning according to what people live and face in their lives? Students will bring into the discussion what the paintings made them think about their own lives.

Day 4. Now, in this day, there is time for a visit the Bechtler Museum of Modern Art, a close encounter to art and life. In the museum, students will have to choose one of the pieces of the collection and them as the first exercise, make a relation with who they are and where they come from taking into account the concepts previously reviewed.

Day 5: Discuss the findings in the Bechtler Museum of Modern Art. Which was the piece chosen? Why? Write a short reflection explaining the reasons why that particular piece was chosen. Then, compare this new finding with the first piece chosen in day one.

## **Cluster 2 Body, Ethnicity and Race Week 2**

After having discussed and gotten into a common idea of concepts, this cluster devotes attention to Ethnicity and Race. Student already have understanding of race traits and ethnicity and differentiation of both concepts based on their own cultural backgrounds. Little by little, these constructions are getting build in order to create a wider background to understand the other without being the other.

Essential Question, What holds us together? What keeps us apart?

Day 6: Discuss- how art represents race? How art represent ethnicity? Is it possible to know the race and ethnicity of an artist based on his/her work? Can the race and ethnicity be represented in art without labeling people or culture? After the visit and discussions at the Bechtler Museum of Modern Art, student will have a base background to start discussing various representations and understanding on art work such as painting and sculptures found in the museum. Student will also try to find out if such as reading based on ethnicity and race can be done with just the referent of an art work, or if this is an assumption of the viewer, or if it is the case the artist can place those values in the art, and how they are placed. The images I will use are the current ones present in the Bechtler collections on the museum webpage<sup>vi</sup>.

Day 7: “Legal Alien” by Pat Mora (poem) Read and discuss the poem, reflecting on questions such as what means to be legal? What does it mean to be an alien? Discuss the right to be or move to a place, country, city, etc. Also, reflect on reasons why people immigrate and how they are received by the host country community. The terms of refugee and protection, immigration policies, and United Nations will be discussed. Why some groups have to be protected? And protected from whom? What does this menace mean? Refugee status is given due a danger the ethnic group is facing, but in the case of other immigrants whose threat and challenges are different but also fall into the situation of becoming an immigrant. What is the difference between immigrant and emigrant? Why are they used different today? Are some immigrants better than other? (students can create their own questions due to the purpose of the exercise is to reflect on the meaning of immigration). The poem chosen is basically about immigrants, and here I also like to take back the concept of illegal immigrants – what makes something illegal?, it should be better consider undocumented instead of the illegal word which is more threatening.

Day 8: Discussion of “*Persepolis*” by Marjane Satrapi. Discuss cultural understanding of wrong and right. In this story, the character has to see how her country is facing changes and challenges bringing with them a new social order in which she has to adapt but then fled away. Reason why I consider relevant this story is because this is the case of some of my students who are refugees that have to leave their countries due to religious or political persecution.

Day 9: *Enrique’s Journey* by Sonia Nazario (Non Fiction Narrative). Based on the story, class, race and ethnicity could be represented in the suffering of immigrants? Are some immigrants better than other? The story of Enrique’s journey is an astonishing true story of a Honduran boy who braves incredible hardship and peril to reach his mother in the United States. With rough determination and a deep longing to be by his mother's side, Enrique travels through hostile, unknown worlds. Each step of the way through Mexico, he and other migrants, many of them children, are hunted. Enrique pushes forward, using his sense of humor, guts, hope and the kindness of strangers. It is an epic journey, one thousands of immigrant children make each year to find their mothers in the United States. As the story of *Persepolis*, here once more immigrants try to pursue a dream.

Day 10: After the great input received by the stories included in this cluster, students will write down their stories of life. Students will be allowed to write them using different names for the characters as a choice. A previous story written by a former student from West Charlotte High School will be used as a model. Appendix 1.

### **Cluster 3 Body, Gender: Female and Male Body Ideals and identification Week 3**

In this cluster, I want to focus on gender, the role of the women and the role of men from immigrant population. Given that immigrants in general do not come from well developed countries, it is common to see how the role of the women is still considered in an old fashioned way: the belief that women belong at home, taking care of the husband

and children, never or rarely allowed pursuing a career or higher education. Also women with the idea of being an object of desire just before marriage, after that there is no need to take care of themselves. In contrast to men, being the provider, the educated in some cases and the strong figure of command and also very commonly seen as better looking or well-preserved than the wife. Also domestic violence is seen as a way to highlight who is the boss. These cases play a really hard role on the female and male figures especially in the new host country, till the point that not even knowing the rules and laws people take advantage of the significant other.

Essential Question, What holds us together? What keeps us apart?

Day 11: Discussions: As an exercise also done during the seminar, I consider appropriate to discuss art and its representation to gender. Questions such as: Can a piece of art represent gender? Does Art have gender? What and how is that related to our gender? Visualization of Art focuses on women and men as figures of power, strength and weakness. It is important to use art as a reference to discuss issues in gender in a safe environment. The art pieces I will use will contain images of women throughout the history.

Day 12: By watching this interesting video by the UNICEF: Girls around the world talk about their lives and their rights, I pretend to discuss how women and men differentiated and see segregation in the different cultures.

Day 13: “*Persepolis*” Marjane Satrapi (The veil) Discuss rights of women according to religious belief.

Day 14: “*Mona Lisa Smile*” Movie: Discuss A free-thinking art professor teaches conservative 50's Wellesley girls to question their traditional societal roles. The reason why I choose this movie, is because although it is an old version of the American society, includes many of the issues some immigrant women face in their cultural groups and at home. I want student to relate what they see on the movie to their perception of reality nowadays.

Day 15: Continue “*Mona Lisa Smile*” Movie. Write down a story map. Find out the theme and the plot. What is the meaning of gender and gender rights? Is there equality of gender? or differentiation of gender? Also how gender varies from races and ethnicities: is it the same to be a white woman than to be a Japanese woman? Does race play a role in gender?

#### **Cluster 4 The War that keeps us apart Week 4**

War is a topic that has implications in anybody's life, just listening about any conflict in the world brings pain and suffering. To imagine that the majority of immigrants in the USA are here due to a variety of conflicts that make them leave their countries, and become migrants to a new land, in some cases as a refugee, which means there is no way they can come back to their country in a long time, touches the deeper fibers of the heart. I wonder many times, how can I talk to my students about war, or the terrible that war is

if I have never been even close to a slightly conflict that could sound like war. Therefore I came to the conclusion that they do know about war, so they can explain what it looks like without using or describing the terms found in books, newspapers or sources.

Essential Question, What holds us together? What keeps us apart?

Day 16: For the first day of this cluster I intend to discuss the conflicts in the world by reviewing them on art pieces from the Bechtler Museum, and identify if there are sample of war issues. Students will describe what they see and how those art works can represent in some extend war or conflict. I want to use pieces from the current collection that the Bechtler has available at the moment. Students will decide if the piece has any relevance to war or conflict issues, explaining how they perceive this.

Day 17: Reading “Montagnards in Vietnam” by Nhien Rocham. Discuss the life of the people in Central highlands in Vietnam and Cambodia and how religious persecution took their freedom away from them. (The essay “Montagnards in Vietnam” was written by a former West Charlotte High School ESL student in 2010 currently working with the Montagnard Association in Charlotte, NC).

Day 18: How can war scars be represented in daily life and in art using the collection of the Bechtler Museum of Modern Art. Identify the stories of life, of those who have suffer and seen the war.

Day 19: Reading “*Ruined*” by Lynn Nottage Reading and discussing of the play. Understand the role of the women during war.

Day 20: Where is my country by Nellie Wong (poem). This poem is meaningful because it is about the life of a person in a foreign country, where this person does not even know if he/she belongs there or there. Reflections: how war has affected many cultures. Has the war affected your culture heritage? Has ever war or is war related to race? Do people fight for race or for ethnicity? Have Ethnic groups disappeared due to wars and conflicts? Does war affect women and men in the same stand? Or is any gender more affected and why?

### **Cluster 5 Personal Readings My Story Week 5**

Essential Question, What hold us together? What keep us apart?

Day 1: From school year 2010 – 2011 students wrote their own journey to the USA; these will be the samples for this year class to write their own journey and shared in class.

Days 2 and 3: Research Paper - Written Product  
Students will identify one or more than one group, they will choose the group with which you most identify or about which you want to learn more. Conduct research to determine when the group immigrated to the United States. Students can interview their own relatives to do use primary sources for this research. The following question will be answered by the students: Did the group face prejudice segregation, racism, or any combination of the three? If so, explaining how and why? Include your research findings

in your essay. Student may search through chapters of the various texts as part of the research. Was the group affected by any of the following forms of discrimination, or did it participate in any of the following forms of discrimination? If so, describe: dual labor market, environmental justice issues and affirmative. Do you culturally identify more with the ethnic group you live and share with?

Days 4 and 5: Light Factory - Visual Product: After the research and identification students will portrait their findings in art work inspired by the collections at Betchler Museum of Modern Art, in which they can express understanding of their own identity and ethnic perception of others. This work can be portraits, paintings, sculptures, graffiti, photography, drawing, food design, clothing or fashion design. The work has to fulfill standards of art, creativity, innovation, elaboration but also connection and understanding of Body and identity. The work will be evaluated by Art and English teachers and exposed for a Multicultural Night Event.

### **Cluster 6 Preparations for Multicultural Day - Week 6**

Essential Question, What hold us together? What keep us apart?

During this last week of the curriculum unit, students will prepare to show their visual product as a part of the Multicultural Night at West Charlotte High School. Multicultural Night was created 2 years ago as an initiative to develop a cultural event that could involve the immigrant students. As an ESL teacher I notice how these students scarcely participated in any school activities. The clubs and organizations were and are open to all school community, but the ESL students felt that due to their lack of language skills they were not able to participate. So as a way of doing inclusion, I created this multicultural event with the support of the ESL department initially. The first year, we have dances, music, contest, cultural displays developed by the students who wanted others to learn about their country. The event was a success, then the second year, we opened a club, Multicultural Club, and this time the event was a night, parents, teacher, the Charlotte community, and the students' participated in a bigger way. Donations from supermarkets were received and the parents of immigrant students that rarely came to school were very involved and proud of seeing their kids performing such event. So I realized that the Multicultural Night is the perfect chance to enhance and open to cultural reflection, cooperation, tolerance and understanding.

In this event, activities such as sharing art work and reflections based on the understanding of cultural background will be presented. In this event not only the essays, pictures and art work inspired in the collection of the Bechtler will be presented, but also posters about the countries of the world in order to decorate and inform the school. (These will be developed by students with teacher's supervision). Traditional Dances perform by the ESL and other students with the participation of the Latino Club. "Fashion show" international traditional costumes; representing the countries. This event is developed from 4 to 8pm in order to have parents' attendance and contributions.

## Resources for the lesson

Bechtler Museum of Modern Art. Charlotte, NC. 2011. [www.bechtler.org](http://www.bechtler.org)

Hampton Brown Edge B Reading, Writing & Language. (Carmel, CA: National Geographic, 2010) Note: English ESL Textbook. This is the ESL books used for reading and writing, literacy projects in general. The language of the book as well as the activities on it, are sheltered, providing the students with tools to understand and succeed,

Mora, Pat. *Legal Alien*. Hampton Brown Edge B Reading, Writing & Language. (Carmel, CA: National Geographic, 2010), 664.

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“UNICEF: Girls around the world talk about their lives and their rights” (Youtube - [www.youtube.com/watch?v=lfMmvr2yw2I](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lfMmvr2yw2I)).

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Wong, Nellie. *Where is my country*. Hampton Brown Edge B Reading, Writing & Language. (Carmel, CA: National Geographic, 2010), 662

Newell, Mike. *Mona Lisa Smile*. 2003 Dir. by Mike Newell. Columbia Pictures, 2003

Anonymous. *Story of Life*. appendix 1 (2009). This writing will be the sample for the student to develop their own stories of life.

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<sup>i</sup> Stephen Krashen published in 1980 *Second Language Acquisition and Second Language Learning* the five main hypotheses: the Acquisition-Learning hypothesis, the Monitor hypothesis, the Natural Order hypothesis, the Input hypothesis, and the Affective Filter hypothesis.

<sup>ii</sup> [www.wida.us](http://www.wida.us)

<sup>iii</sup> *Guernica*. Artist: Pablo Picasso

<sup>iv</sup> *Mona Lisa / Gioconda*. Artist: Leonardo Da Vinci

<sup>v</sup> *Esmeralderos*. Artist: Fernando Botero (Colombia)

<sup>vi</sup> [www.bechtler.org](http://www.bechtler.org)