

## FDR's "New Deal" and the American Identity

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### INTRODUCTION

Franklin Delano Roosevelt's New Deal policies initiated the greatest movement toward social justice in the United States since the Lincoln administration and delivered on the promise of the American Dream to a new generation. The FDR administration set a new course for public policy at a time when one third of America's workforce was jobless. Diverging from the specific, well-conceived plans that had preceded him, FDR's improvisational technique toward solving social ills conveyed a message of hope to the poor and the elderly, and stirred the social imagination of ethnic minorities in anticipation of the Civil Rights movement. As one southern black put it while waiting for the passing of FDR's funeral train, "He made a way for folks when there wasn't no way" (Chafe 80).

How America has broadened its vision of social justice through governmental interventionist policies since FDR is the subject of this unit. Students will learn that government decisions have followed a tradition of inclusion, extended greater opportunities to an increasingly diverse population, and reflected the cultural coalescing of the American identity into a New Deal ethic.

### Purpose and Participation

The purpose of this year long unit in character education is to teach cultural values that were perpetuated in New Deal ideology following the Great Depression, inspiring resilience in WWII and social justice in the Civil Rights Movement. Prepared for a fifth grade bilingual classroom at Lantrip Elementary School in Houston, this character education unit elaborates upon the enduring cultural impact of New Deal values to public policy. The New Dealers presumed that "inclusion," the bringing of more people into mainstream society, was an American tradition.

My goal is to help students construct an American identity in terms of a continued struggle for equality and inclusion, with freedoms that should not be taken for granted. I want my students to understand *citizenship* as active participation in a democratic society, and appreciate it as both a right and a responsibility.

The content of this unit presumes that *liberty* is America's greatest legacy, the decided purpose for schools, and the absolute rationale for "character education." I expect my students to *value participating* in a campus action plan as they study the history of the institutions that symbolize a free society, particularly a critical history of schools and integration. Students will learn that laws that have been intended to preserve liberty also function to shape societal beliefs.

Study of law in elementary school involves helping students understand liberty as a perpetual struggle. Students will learn how U.S. public policy developed to reflect the ideals of tolerance, freedom, and equality that are practiced in a free society. Students will learn how schools have followed a recent tradition of pluralism and diversity with origins in the Franklin Delano Roosevelt administration. This curriculum unit suggests that FDR taught that cooperation is the principle value of an American identity, that cooperation is a value that should be taught in schools, and that the ultimate expression of cooperation is inclusion.

The brief history of school segregation below frames the relationship between policy and culture and informs teachers regarding some of the major points of the scholarly discourse on ethnicity and language. A perceived threat to achieving equity in American schools is explained and California's experience with *bilingual education* is discussed. Finally, an ecological model of culture is recommended as an appropriate alternative to cultural homogeneity.

## **TEACHING THE AMERICAN IDENTITY**

The Civil War, as a defining moment of the national identity, was compelled by questions of inclusion and entitlement. Nevertheless, the ethnic tension that followed the Civil War figured prominently in the Supreme Court's decision in 1890's *Plessy v. Ferguson*.

*Plessy v. Ferguson* challenged the constitutionality of a Louisiana statute that prescribed separate railway carriages for white and non-white individuals. The law stated that, "no person or persons shall be admitted to occupy seats in coaches other than the ones assigned to them on account of the race they belong to" (Brown 64). The Supreme Court, in explicating the doctrine of "separate but equal," also established a precedent for the exclusion of non-white populations in schools.

Not until Franklin Delano Roosevelt's presidency would the vision of an equitable society inspire national leadership to take unprecedented governmental measures in an effort to aid the poor and liberate the oppressed. Yet, as the name implied, the New Deal represented coming to terms about the duties of government and citizen. For FDR, teaching about what constituted appropriate behavior for each was his duty as a leader.

### **Franklin Delano Roosevelt 1933 – 1945**

The essence of reform, according to Franklin D. Roosevelt, is progressive idealism and high expectations. Above all, cooperation was necessary for the welfare of the nation. These core values led to the doctrine that profoundly affected American life and, by the late 1930's, a new set of public expectations had emerged. Americans began to expect their government to regulate the economy, support agriculture, provide job and social security, protect the right of labor to organize, prohibit child labor, develop electric

power, guarantee bank deposits, regulate securities, clear slums, and provide federal aid to public health and social services (Murphy 232).

More than simply presenting the New Deal proposals, FDR expounded upon a model ethic. In speeches and radio broadcasts, The New Deal president instructed Americans about the practicality of his reforms as he promoted his ideology about government. Although “grand expectations” characterized the period of economic and civic progress between 1945 and 1974, the design for government action originated in the New Deal teaching about the American identity (Patterson 8).

### **Leadership, Storytelling, and Resilience**

This narrative suggests that promoting resilience and encouraging a strong sense of personal identity was the predominant concern of the national agenda under Franklin Delano Roosevelt, that storytelling served that agenda, and that schooling in the United States is informed by this model.

*“The nation asks for action and action now . . . ” (FDR, 1933).*

FDR’s inaugural call to action, intended to muster the support of the “common man,” was crucial to staving off his critics on the right and left. Nevertheless, transforming a nation from despair to hope took remarkable salesmanship. The proposed reforms required convincing the nation that his leadership was in accord with traditional American values. Additionally, the New Dealers generated policy with such speed that many were convinced of the new president’s sincerity in taking action and joined the optimistic movement that embraced the “The American Dream” (Vera 169).

In the tradition as ancient as human existence, FDR used storytelling as a means of restoring America’s faith in the popular conviction that America was the land of opportunity and freedom. Just as civilizations throughout the ages have used stories to spell out to members the terms of group membership and to define the group’s shared values, FDR used radio broadcasts of his “Fireside Chat” to instruct Americans regarding his vision for the nation.

Classroom teachers, the cultural transmitters for succeeding generations of Americans, should likewise make explicit to students any taken-for-granted assumptions, mediate contradictions, prejudice, and hypocrisy and expose cultural stereotypes endemic in all stories and storytelling. The lesson plans below examine relationships between storytelling and values.

### **The New Deal Ethic**

Concerned with distancing either the right or the left, FDR outlined broad objectives for domestic reform at the same time as he educated about what he considered to be the

proper role of government. The New Deal reforms – ranging from conservative to radical – appealed to the sensibilities of the American people but reflected FDR’s estimation of the American character. For Roosevelt, individualism and community responsibility were equally valid markers of the American identity. He insisted that Americans had historically embraced individualism within a social framework of opportunity and responsibility.

Government, Roosevelt believed, was the positive agency for the control and molding of society. For Roosevelt, government was society’s servant. Government served society by broadening social and economic opportunities and channeling energy into positive pursuits. Government existed solely to serve the people and had a duty to revitalize human resources as part of the task of rebuilding society. Therefore, government’s role in society was to open the door to economic freedom, providing “an avenue to possess himself a portion of that plenty sufficient for his needs through his work.” Likewise, it was the government’s duty to provide aid for “those suffering hardship from no fault of their own.”

Throughout his campaign for reform, FDR insisted that the government action he endorsed was not revolutionary. Rather, government authority is always necessary to secure free enterprise and competition from the capitalist tendencies of exploitation. Further, any nation-state that is ‘unwilling by government action to tackle new problems caused by the immense increase in population and the astonishing strides of modern science is headed for decline and ultimate death from inaction.’ For Franklin D. Roosevelt, any government that could not provide relief to its poor was meaningless (Murphy 237).

Under this kind of socialization, the New Deal came to be understood as less than a set of policies than an ethic – a belief that individual dreams were attainable so long as America worked together. The origin of the idea that cooperation is an American value is discussed below.

## **COOPERATIVE IDEOLOGY IN PUBLIC POLICY**

Herbert Croly’s *The Promise of American Life*, published in 1909, influenced a number of politicians including Theodore Roosevelt, FDR’s cousin. Croly’s argument for “the subordination of the individual to the demand of a dominant and constructive national purpose” was a position embraced by Theodore Roosevelt’s 1912 Progressive Party campaign. Subsequently, Theodore Roosevelt’s success inspired both FDR’s interest in politics and his political views.

According to Croly, specialization restored a community splintered by technology and the change from an agrarian to an industrial society. Community was restored “by means of a democratic ideal, which shall give consistency to American social life, without entailing any essential sacrifice of desirable individual and class distinctions.”

In other words, *the individual is fully submerged within the organization and identity is determined by an individual's role in the collective endeavor.* A similar message can be heard in John Kennedy's admonition, "ask not what your country can do for you; ask what you can do for your country."

The emphasis of cooperation over competition formed the basis of the philosophy of *the corporate state*, from which the middle school and the comprehensive high school are direct descendants. These two institutions were intended to foster a sense of common purpose using extra-curricular activities and classroom group assignments. Vocational counseling and training leading to specialization completed the design for the socialization process of U.S. schooling.

Schooling toward an individual's unique contribution to society became institutionalized in accordance with the ideology of an elite group of influential activists including Theodore Roosevelt, Samuel Gompers (American Federation of Labor), Herbert Croly, and George W. Perkins (U.S. Steel) as well as members of the National Civic Federation. Teachers were expected to adhere to a prescriptive curriculum and a conservative ideology intended to reproduce an established social order (*Spring 1972 13*).

This ideology did not enhance the success of ethnic, racial, and language minority groups in schools where the social practice of schools reflected ambivalence, if not hostility, toward populations that either would not or could not conform to the desired social order. The prescription for these groups was segregation. The brief history of segregation below helps to explain how this practice has been challenged in courts in the movement toward social justice. Particular attention is given to the practice of segregating language minorities in public schools.

## **SOCIAL REPRODUCTION**

The values of inclusion and multiculturalism became celebrated as American traditions since the Civil Rights Movement of the 1960's. Although the nation has been resistant to extremes on either the right or left, the tendency of a capitalist economy to reproduce the status quo has resulted in frequent struggles between freedom and control. The evidence of this struggle is reflected in the discourse regarding language and identity that has followed the 1954 Supreme Court's decision in *Brown v. Board of Education*.

Although the Supreme Court in *Brown v. Topeka* declared unconstitutional the doctrine of "separate but equal," the decision was specific to the practice of segregation by race. Language segregation continued to be the standard social practice in public schools until the passing of the *1964 Civil Rights Act*. Title VI of the Civil Rights Act prohibiting discrimination led to the creation of the Office of Civil Rights in the Department of Health, Education, and Welfare (DHEW).

## **“The Paradox of Bilingual Education”**

In 1910, Dewey noted a “discrepancy between the conduct of the school and the conduct of social life.” Since this observation the disciplines of psychology, sociology, and anthropology have made significant contributions to understanding success and failure in schools.

Presently, researchers concerned with the discrepancy between the school ideology and the hosting culture have suggested that American institutions may be “marginalizing” minority groups. Additionally, Crawford observes bilingual education as a “paradox” because it has been denied in areas of greatest need and scarcest resources (Crawford 106). While the under-representation of minority groups in higher education and the over-representation of minority groups in prisons may not validate this conclusion, these observations have generated concern regarding the role that institutions may have in reproducing the status quo.

Schools have historically been used to effect language and cultural domination in society. For instance, the conflict that erupted between English and German settlers in the British-American colonies eventually led Pennsylvania to embark upon a policy of ‘cultural Anglicization.’ The 1727 General Assembly required all male German immigrants to swear an oath of allegiance to the British Crown and proposed the restriction of German printers, government documents, and books. English language schools were proposed as a means of countering and suppressing the expansion of German language and culture (*Spring 2001* 19).

## **Language as a Rationale for Segregation**

Likewise, an exclusionary language policy was imposed upon all U.S. territories following annexation with the exception of New Mexico where ethnic group demography and relationships took precedence. The numeric predominance of Spanish speakers within these annexed territories necessitated instruction in both Spanish and English.

As twentieth century migration brought increasingly greater numbers of non-white populations into society, schools began to rationalize the segregation and hostile treatment of Spanish, French, or Native American language speakers. The long-term consequences of this direction of social practice and public policy have been related to observations of low school attendance, high poverty, and low status attainment in these groups.

## **Immigration; Ethnicity; Policy and the Media**

Typically, expressions of anti-immigrant sentiment are associated with perceptions of diminishing resources. Immigrant populations, neglected in periods of prosperity, have historically been singled out in periods of hardship and blamed for declining property

values, jobs markets, and test scores. This attitude has led to practices and policies that have exacerbated the plight of the poor, as economic and educational opportunity are denied to ethnic minority and immigrant alike (Laine & Sutton 97).

In 1924, Congress created the Border Patrol and enforced a 1917 immigration head tax. *The Saturday Evening Post*, with a series of articles and editorials, supported the 1928 Senate hearings on the Restriction of the Western Hemisphere. The large influx of Mexican immigrants, a restrictive immigration policy, and the Great Depression combined to strain ethnic relationships, especially in California.

The *California Post*, with its 2.7 million readership, promulgated substantial anti-immigrant sentiment. For example, one staff reporter explained how “the brown flood of Mexican peon immigration – the immigration of Mexican Indians and Mexican mestizos, or half breeds – had risen from year to year . . . bring countless numbers of American citizens into the world with the reckless prodigality of rabbits.” A frenzy of deportations ensued resulting in hundreds of thousands of Mexican and U.S. citizens of Mexican descent being either deported or repatriated.

## **Social Justice**

Social justice – the protection of civil liberties – has been a corrective force upon American society to help deter social reproduction. For example, the segregation of Mexican American children was a widespread social practice in Texas and California, yet the practice was not upheld legally or challenged until 1931 when the Lemon Grove School board in San Diego, California created an Americanization school for 75 Mexican American students.

On the morning of January 5, 1931, the principal of the Lemon Grove Grammar School, upon directions of the board, turned away 75 of the 169 students of the school. The principal announced that the students were to attend school in a two-room building constructed for Mexicans. The children’s parents sought counsel and, aided by both the Mexican consulate and the Spanish language press, brought suit against the school board.

The 1931 *Roberto Alvarez v. the Board of Trustees of the Lemon Grove School District* case became the first successful desegregation court decision in U.S. history, and was instrumental in defeating the “Bliss Bill.” The Bliss Bill was a California proposal that sought the “power to establish separate schools for Indian children of Chinese, Japanese, and Mongolian ancestry” and argued that Mexican and Mexican American children, since they were Indians, should also be placed in separate schools (Trueba & Delgado-Gaitan 41).

## **REFORM AND CONTROVERSY**

In 1968, DHEW issued Title VI guidelines regarding school system responsibility for equitable education. A 1970 memorandum from the director of the OCR underscored the compensatory nature of the guidelines in districts whose national-origin minority group enrollments exceeded 5 percent. The memorandum prohibited assignment of these groups to mentally retarded classes, or denying these groups college preparatory classes, or tracking them.

### **California and Bilingual Education**

The full significance of the memorandum was not realized until the 1974 *Lau v. Nichols* case. This class action suit filed in San Francisco by the parents of nearly 3,000 Chinese students alleged 14 Amendment and Civil Rights violations (about one third of the students received supplemental English instruction and the rest had no special instruction).

Ironically, the desegregation agenda of the Civil Rights Movement of the early seventies served as a rationale for denying bilingual education to students. The San Francisco administrators in *Lau v. Nichols* argued that by giving LEP students the identical education offered to all students (in English), schools were discharging their obligation to provide an equal education for all.

Although the rationale had been upheld in federal and district courts, the Supreme Court in *Lau v. Nichols* handed down its first and only substantive decision concerning the legal responsibilities of schools serving LEP (Limited English Proficiency) students. The Supreme Court articulated measures to be taken to ensure the delivery of an equal education for speakers of languages other than English and ruled that instructing in a language that children do not understand *constitutes a denial of their right to an equal educational opportunity*.

The ruling in *Lau v. Nichols* prompted California's 1976 adoption of the Chacon-Mascone Bilingual Bicultural Education Act, stipulating that instruction would be conducted in the child's native language and the child would be taught English. This reform – adopted twelve years after the creation of the Office of Civil Rights and 8 years after the passing of the Bilingual-Bicultural Education Act (Title VII of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act) – *was reversed in 1998 with Proposition 227*. That year, a California suburb hosted 450 urban students in grades 4 through 8. The students were bused in from their downtown homes to participate in a one-year, transitional, separate site, newcomer school. Admission was on a “first come-first served” basis.



## HEGEMONY THEORY AND THE LANGUAGE AS PROBLEM PARADIGM

Researchers investigating hegemony theories study group-shared values to learn how people become participants in their own oppression. These values often reflect the nature of decision-making – how resources are invested and how human and financial capital is managed – so that group cohesion *depends* upon shared values and the acceptance of authority for the well-being of the cultural group. How California decided to eliminate bilingual education, despite its large representation of ethnic and language minorities, is discussed below.

In the same course as Proposition 187, which aimed at denying education and health care to undocumented aliens, and Proposition 209, which aimed at ending affirmative action, Proposition 227 brought bilingual education in California schools to an end in 1998, affecting about 1.4 million English language learners and their families.

Informed and partially financed by a local multimillionaire and gubernatorial candidate, Proposition 227's one-year English immersion standard has been criticized as a way of ensuring a future exploitable labor market in California, for perpetuating immigrant blaming, and for oppressing the poor. Nevertheless, the adoption of Proposition 227 is an example of how overwhelming power and influence over American manners, culture, and law can become expressions of American sentiment.

The decision in *Lau v. Nichols* only narrowly diverted a radical agenda from becoming an American institution and remains *the only major legal precedent on language rights in the U.S.*, describing the government's obligation to provide individuals with appropriate language accommodations in order to safeguard other fundamental rights (Crawford 115).

### Cultural and Historical Foundations

Bilingual education, outlawed in California, is practiced in many nation-states preparing for an inevitable world of transnational identities and multiple languages within its political borders. At the moment, there are about 6,000 languages spoken in about 200 countries around the world and an overwhelmingly larger number of bilinguals than monolingual individuals.

Only a handful of languages serve as “link” languages to worldwide communications, and English in post primary courses and English as foreign language (EFL) classes continue to grow in demand. Particularly among the young professional class, English is perceived as an imposed international “lingua franca” – a requisite to professional, economic, and academic achievement (Tucker 3).

While the use of more than one language in the classroom is becoming a standard practice of many countries, the language policy of the United States remains

ultraconservative. Presently, bilingual education in the United States is a political point of contention among nationalists who associate the use of the English language with U.S. citizenship and advocate the dismantling of bilingual educational policy. The content of this unit supports the position that English should be considered the national language of prestige rather than as a metaphor for American nationalism. Students will be taught to value language learning and will view two non-native language films with English subtitles.

### **Reaffirmation Movement**

Since the Civil Rights Movement of the 1960's, cultural homogeneity has been rejected as a guiding principle for public policy. Nevertheless, unprecedented diversity in America has mobilized a powerful "reaffirmation movement" that diffuses multicultural action into a political populist agenda, conflating difference and opposition and supporting exclusionary public policy (Oliver 169).

Describing reaffirmation first among Indian tribes who were attempting to maintain traditional ways following European contact, anthropologists have suggested that the same phenomenon can be observed in a "white ethnic class" who have historically held dominant power in the United States. The anthropologists observe a "core" class of white "ethnics" possessing overwhelming power and influence over American manners, culture, and law, and who deliberately misrepresent and manipulate American sentiment by framing multicultural position into opposition and heritage into separatism (Spindler and Spindler 353).

Cultural elitism and the conflict over capital may explain the campaign waged for Proposition 227. The site of tremendous demographic upheavals and catastrophic genocide, California has traditionally celebrated the rich and powerful and disenfranchised the poor. Spanish conquest, Manifest Destiny annexations, gold rush strip mining, and railroad land interests testify to how California has historically been an object of greed and domination. Culturally ambivalent public policy proceeded from California leadership most notably during the Reagan administration when cutbacks of funding for bilingual education became one of its top priorities.

### **THE PURPOSE OF SCHOOLS**

Schooling perpetuated New Deal ideology as a natural consequence of FDR's leadership and the cultural impact of the New Deal. Likewise, the New Dealers were informed by the social practice of schools. Eastwood Elementary, for example, was renamed Lantrip Elementary to honor a principal whose educational philosophy seemed in step with New Deal ideology. The Lantrip Elementary photographic record documents this Houston school's dramatic demographic change, as it confirms that teaching *cooperation* continues to be a significant part of life in school. Nevertheless, character education

remains a point of contention in public education discourse with arguments over who should decide which values should be taught and why. History informs this discourse.

### **Domination or Liberation**

Spring has suggested an interpretive framework for understanding the purposes of school, including conflicts over cultural domination and attempts to manage ideologies in society. Language, racism, and economics should be considered central themes in the evolution of U.S. schools (*Spring 2001* 3). To a large degree, how teachers understand this struggle over the purposes of schooling will determine what they value, how those values will be manifested in their classrooms, and what expectations they will hold for the school.

For instance, teachers believing that Americans are expected to value the freedom of speech can also expect the school to conform to this standard. Together, the school can offer students plentiful opportunities for students to exercise this freedom and participate in the most fundamental tradition of a liberal education. According to Webster, liberal education is the states' provision of "a large cultural background" and training in the liberal arts. Derived from the Latin *artes liberales*, meaning literally "benefiting the freeman," liberal arts are inherently character education.

This curriculum unit is based upon the premise that an individual's freedom to judge requires a "moral compass" and that ethics is, therefore, education's primary enterprise and foremost concern. Each story presented in class will provide my students with many opportunities to evaluate the decision making process as they acquire a large cultural background.

### **Mediating Culture**

Following World War II, technology and mass media became central points of educational rhetoric. The greatest tension involved the belief that workers were becoming forced into interdependent relationships with machines, and that mass media was undermining the school's socialization goals. Technology was viewed as enslaving by some and envisioned as the creator of the global utopian village by others. Television, some believed, would eventually replace the school (*Spring 1972* 155).

In fact, by the end of their teenage years, the average student has spent more time watching television than in school and has been exposed to extensive stereotypical images and distorted perceptions of minority groups. More than ever, teachers are needed to help students understand their milieu, to challenge students academically, and to teach "appropriate" behaviors. Teachers, in mediating the school culture, are helping students become more American – fashioning both worldview and identity. As part of establishing an environment for critical thought, teachers should be able to assert that schools are "the marketplace of ideas" rather than the states' indoctrination centers.

Schools, the symbolic representation of dominant social mores and values, *need* to promote critical perspectives as they frame the cultural narrative of students. Schools should encourage the questioning of taken-for-granted assumptions and the evaluation of all forms of persuasion, including those truths that are presumably self-evident. Although educational reform in America has concentrated on reducing the dissonance between school and the workplace (Malone & Benson 266), schooling in the tradition of the democratic nation-state has encouraged intellectual freedom as the foundation of liberty while acknowledging the dichotomous goals of individual achievement and collective growth (Danford 13).

### **HISD’S Goals and Core Values**

The Houston Independent School District has stated its core goals and values as “safety above all else, student learning is the main thing, focus on results and excellence, parents are partners, and common decency.” In May of 2003, the district announced the school board’s formation of a monitoring system for HISD’s goals and core values, considered the cornerstone of the district’s record of progress and accomplishment.

The new monitoring system is intended to measure the district’s success in achieving its goals and living up to its values. The action is expected to improve existing policy by making data more accessible to the community in an effort to “give the public the highest possible confidence in the district” (Shadwick 1). The lesson plans below are also intended to build community confidence by rendering these goals and values into an elementary classroom curriculum.

### **CONCLUSION**

This narrative supports teachers of bilingual students with a rationale for multicultural curriculum that is centered on the American identity and social justice. The review of the discourse on ethnicity and language is intended to assist teachers in stimulating critical discussions of history, in explaining the relationship between culture and policy, and in framing citizenship in terms of a struggle for inclusion, participation, and opportunity. Referred to in this narrative as the New Deal ethic, this unit teaches that cooperation is a good way to achieve individual dreams and underscores the values of tolerance and respect. The lesson plans below attempt to connect the values of the home to the values of the school district and the nation.

## LESSON PLANS

### Sample One

#### *Objective*

Students will value *communicative competence* by listening to stories and classroom discussions; reading books, newspapers, and subtitled text in film; public speaking, and writing summaries about what they have learned.

#### *The Plan for the Duration*

*Communicative competence* is a value that will be stressed all year and daily practice is intended to provide a background of successful school experiences. Students will create a school newspaper and secure a venue for publishing stories and art. Rather than print a newspaper in the traditional sense, students will petition school administration for a wall in the cafeteria. The petition is symbolic, intended to generate excitement and campus participation. Parent volunteers and staff will assist students in making this display look like a giant newspaper. A field trip to the *Houston Chronicle* is part of this plan.

#### *The Daily Plan*

The *Houston Chronicle* delivers classroom sets of newspapers twice a week to the classroom and is an excellent resource for teaching these objectives. Students are instructed to read the newspaper for information that they will share in a public address that will be called “presentation time.”

#### *Cooperative learning*

Students in cooperative groups will be directed to write a 75-word summary of the article they presented. Specifying the length of the summary helps students know when they are being successful and allows for a developmental model of language acquisition, as some students may choose to use English or Spanish or may be reticent about writing in English for fear of misspelling words. A second summary will be assigned for homework to be returned the following morning with a parent signature.

Although the students will keep a binder to hold all of their writing samples, the students will bring selected works to The Lantrip newspaper publication standards. Samples of both informal and formal writing will be required for a student portfolio that I will keep on hand for conferences with the student, parent, and administrator.

## LESSON PLANS

### Sample Two

#### *Objective*

Students will value *liberty*. Students will understand liberty as the opposite of tyranny and as America’s greatest legacy, expressed in the ideals of tolerance, duty and

opportunity, respect for the opinions of others, and inclusion. Science and the history of schools, newspapers, radio, television, and computers, will be related to the goals of a just society and its reliance upon communications.

### ***Unit Plan***

*Liberty* is a value that is stressed daily as an extension of the “Pledge of Allegiance.” Students are expected to gain background knowledge about the nation’s struggles for liberty, and the problems of achieving a just society. Students will engage in critical discussion and readings on culture, economy, voting, citizenship, poverty, literacy, jobs and careers, protest and conflict, war, savings, housing, democracy, the Civil Rights Movement, military service, educational opportunities and affirmative action, and The Constitution.

### ***Daily Plan***

Storytelling is the classroom modality. The stories in the books and the documentary, foreign language, and historical fiction films that I have planned will help me frame freedom as both a human and a national objective, and contingent upon the values of tolerance and respect for others.

### ***Media***

Students will be evaluating all forms of media with a written response to a teacher prompt regarding liberty. Since the film selection is an integral part of this unit, the plan below is an outline of the typical procedure for film viewing. The first film selected for this unit is *The 20<sup>th</sup> Century: The 1930’s, The Great Depression*.

The students will review the concept of a biography as they begin learning about the life story of Franklin Delano Roosevelt within the historical context of the Great Depression. This film will be viewed for 30 minutes and stopped. Students will be asked to summarize the main idea of this film in 40 to 50 words. In my experience, specifying my expectations helps the students know when they are being successful. Additionally, students may be asked to work independently or collaboratively depending on how I decide to individualize instruction. Following this writing period (time may vary), I will lead a classroom discussion so the class can reach a consensus about the main idea. Students will be instructed to edit their writing, if needed. Students who do not need to edit their writing will be instructed to collaborate with those who do.

Following this editing period (time will vary), I will give the students a second prompt that asks them to evaluate the condition of liberty that they observed in the film. Students will be directed to write a second paragraph as a response to the following question that I will write on the board: “Was America free when Franklin D. Roosevelt became president? Explain your answer.” Students will be directed to give reasons to support their opinion. Students will be directed to use the index in their social studies textbooks as a resource. In my experience, students enjoy reading about the things that the classroom has been discussing and become eager to share new information with me

and their peers. This writing may need to be taken for homework since my expectations for the length of the final essay is 200 words (in cursive handwriting).

### ***Science Extension***

This lesson will be enriched with the history of the radio. Students will learn how FDR used the radio to teach people how to behave as they listen to the 1938 broadcast of Orson Welles' "War of the Worlds." Likewise, students will learn why the development of the transistor is considered a technological breakthrough as they build a kit radio in class.

## **LESSON PLANS**

### **Sample Three**

#### ***Objective***

Students will value *power*. Students will become aware of how language acquisition is empowering. They will engage in critical discussions about how cultural differences and power are related to conflict in society. Students will learn how the values of social justice became central to the American identity.

#### ***The Plan for the Duration***

*Power* in the classroom is most evident in my discipline plan. The students are encouraged to become a community of learners that is motivated by common goals and guided by policies that the students support. Mediating the discipline plan to students is a large part of life in the elementary school and, as a model of democracy, should be connected to citizenship. That is why students are expected to participate in a campus action plan that involves them in extracurricular activities and school duty.

#### ***The Daily Plan***

Studying power in the classroom involves taking a critical look at history to evaluate the causes of suffering and oppression. The foreign films that I have selected for this unit provide students with an uncommon way of learning about World War II. For example, *Ran* is a highly acclaimed Japanese film that retells the story of Shakespeare's *King Lear*. Students will learn about the history of imperial Japan as they gain an appreciation of both Japanese culture and English literature. Additionally, the students will need to read the English subtitled text and will use the actions of the characters to help them construct meaning.

As with the other films, this film will be observed in 30-minute intervals and the students will help each other write the main ideas. The prompt for the second paragraph however challenges students to read more about Japan in their social studies books and asks, "What was Japan like when FDR became president? How were the U.S. and Japan the same and how were they different. What happened?"

## ANNOTATED BIBLIOGRAPHY

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Danford, a political economist, traces the path of the free commercial society from its roots in Ancient Greece. This excerpt discusses the influence that the teachings of Jesus had upon the Roman Empire.
- Laine, Sabrina W. M. and Sutton, Margaret. "The Politics of Multiculturalism; a Three Country Comparison." *The Politics of Multiculturalism and Bilingual Education, Students and Teachers Caught in the Crossfire*. Eds. Carlos Ovando and Peter McLaren. Boston: McGraw-Hill Higher Education, 2000.  
The authors compare and contrast multicultural policy in the U.S., Australia, and Canada.
- Malone, P. & Benson, N. "Contemporary Theories and Research on Schooling and Work." *Struggles over the Purposes of Schooling in a Democratic State: Selected Readings on the History of American Education*. Eds. R. G. Lyons, J. C. Rodriguez, J. Catalozzi, & N. Benson. Lanham, MD: University Press of America.  
This book contains position statements by historically influential educators such as William Harris and John Dewey as well as recent researchers.
- Murphy, Paul L. "Franklin Roosevelt." *America's Ten Greatest Presidents*. Ed. Morton Borden. Chicago: Rand McNally & Company, 1961.



A concise and informative summary of the FDR administration explaining how its goals and values became national policy and impacted American culture.

Oliver, Kelly. "Identity, Difference, and Abjection." *Theorizing Multiculturalism: A Guide to the Current Debate*. Ed. Cynthia Willet C. Malden. MA: Blackwell Publishers, 1998.

Kelly Oliver argues that identity does not necessarily have to be defined by "the other" and proposes rethinking "identification that is not opposed to differentiation."

Shadwick, Jeff. "Board Creates Monitoring System for HISD's Goals and Core Values." *For Your Information: News for the Employees of the Houston Independent School District*. May 2003: 1.

This is the announcement that HISD employees received about the creation of a monitoring system for district goals and values. This educational reform is intended to improve the community's confidence in its schools.

Spindler, G. & Spindler, L. "Cultural Politics of the White Ethniclass in the Mid-90's." *Fifty Years of Anthropology and Education: 1950-2000*. Eds. George and Louise Spindler. Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, 2000.

These recognized anthropologists use a broad sociocultural perspective to examine group behavior and identify a reaffirmation movement among a "white ethniclass."

Spring, Joel. *The American School, 5<sup>th</sup> edition*. Boston: McGraw-Hill Higher Education, 2001.

This critical history of the American school, in its fifth edition, explains why cultural domination is a central theme of American educational history.

Spring, Joel. *Education and the Rise of the Corporate State*. Boston: Beacon Press, 1972.

This book examines the ideological origins of how schools began to accommodate market demands for labor development, stressing the significance of technology, mass media, and critical perspectives in schools.

Trueba, E. H. & C. Delgado-Gaitan. *School and Society: Learning Through Culture*. Westport, CT: Praeger Publishers, 1988.

This collection of critical histories examines the relationship between school and culture. Alvarez explains the significance of the "Lemon Grove Incident" and the resulting legislation.

Tucker, G. Richard. "A Global Perspective on Bilingualism and Bilingual Education." *ERIC Document ED 435 168*. 1999: 3-4.

This article explains why bilingual education is gaining acceptance as an ideal educational approach.

Vera, Ben. “‘The American Dream,’ Movies and their Cultural Agendas. In *Film and American Values Over the Decades*. Houston: Houston Teachers Institute, 2001. This Houston Teachers Institute Curriculum Unit identifies in film the theme of the “American cultural dialogue” as described by Spindler and Spindler.

Zou, Y. & E. T. Trueba. *Ethnic Identity and Power: Cultural Contexts of Political Action in School and Society*. Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 1998.

A collection of essays examines the relationship of identity to power (including phenomenon such as xenophobia, prejudice, and racism) with several references to the power inherent in media. Explanations of critical pedagogy and cultural therapy are offered.

### **Student Reading List**

Durham, Michael S. *Powerful Days: The Civil Rights Photography of Charles Moore*. New York: Stewart, Tabori and Chang, 1991.

Powerful, disturbing, and graphic photographs cover key events in the Civil Rights Movement from 1965, including the Montgomery bus boycott and the Selma march.

Gallagher, Hugh Gregory. *Nothing to Fear: FDR in Photographs*. Clearwater, FL: Vandamere Press, 2001.

This is a book of photographs chronicling the life of “the greatest American president of the 20<sup>th</sup> century.” Includes images from the Great Depression of the 1930’s and World War II.

Hampton, Henry, and Steven Thayer, Eds. *Voices of Freedom: An Oral History of the Civil Rights Movement from the 1950’s Through the 1980’s*. New York: Bantam Books, 1990.

One of several companion books to the PBS series “Eyes on the Prize,” this book is the result of nearly 1,000 interviews. It allows the story of the movement to be told by the people who were involved.

Harris, Janet. *The Long Freedom Road*. New York: McGraw-Hill, 1967.

The story of the civil rights movement to 1967. This book provides a brief history of African Americans from the civil war to the 1950’s, including chapters on *Brown v. Board of Education*, the Montgomery bus boycott, the sit-in movement, the March on Washington, the Mississippi Freedom Summer, and the beginning of the movement in the North.

Haskins, James. *One More River to Cross*. New York: Scholastic, 1992.

This book presents brief biographies of twelve African Americans who courageously fought against racism to become leaders in their fields, and includes biographies of Fannie Lou Hamer and Malcolm X.

Highwater, J. *Anpao; An American Indian Odyssey*. New York, NY. J.B. Lippincott Company, 1977.

Stories from Native American tradition retold and woven into a single tale. This is the book that I will be reading to the students as I explain the purpose of storytelling.

Levine, Ellen. *Freedom's Children: Young Civil Rights Activists Tell Their Own Stories*. New York: G.P. Putnam's Sons, 1993.

This book contains the stories of 30 African Americans who were children during the civil rights era, and describes their experiences in their own words.

## **FILMOGRAPHY**

*Das Boot (The Boat)*. Directed by Wolfgang Peterson. Columbia/Tristar Studios, 1981. (209 minutes).

Acclaimed as one of the finest German films ever made, *Das Boot* is a realistic portrayal of life aboard a German submarine. Based on a novel by Lothar G. Buchheim, this is an antiwar film that seems like a military thriller. I will use this film to teach about the price of war and the value of cooperation.

*Eyes on the Prize, Parts 1 and 2*. Directed by Henry Hampton. PBS Video, 1987. (120 minutes)

The videos are a comprehensive documentary and multiple award-winning series on the Civil Rights Movement.

*Glory*. Directed by Edward Zwick. Columbia/Tristar Studios, 1989. (122 minutes)

This film about the Civil War explains the participation of African American soldiers in Civil War combat. Based in part on the books *Lay This Laurel* by Lincoln Kirstein and *One Gallant Rush* by Peter Burchard, the film also draws from the letters of Robert Gould Shaw, the 25-year-old son of Boston abolitionists who volunteered to command the all-black 54th Regiment of the Massachusetts Volunteer Infantry.

*Life is Beautiful*. Directed by Roberto Benigni. Miramax Films, 1998. (118 minutes).

*Life is Beautiful* is a poignant story about how racist attitudes motivated the oppression of minority populations during WW II. Set partially in a Nazi concentration camp, this became the highest-grossing foreign language film in the U.S. and will be viewed to help teach the values of tolerance and respect.

*Ran (Chaos)*. Directed by Akira Kurosawa. Orion Pictures Corporation, 1985. (160 minutes).

A film by Akira Kurosawa based on William Shakespeare's *King Lear* but set in medieval Japan. It won the 1985 Academy Award for costume design. This is the first of three films that will be viewed with English subtitles intended to help students become better English readers. This film will also introduce the concept of English literature.

*The 20<sup>th</sup> Century: The 1930s: The Great Depression*. MPI Teleproductions, 2000. (70 minutes).

This documentary footage provides images of the Great Depression and introduces this unit.