



LESSON 5.4 The Culture Circle

Module #5: Exploration of Others

Since having a great high school experience is really all about relationships, it is important for freshmen to explore the values and beliefs of other students – and how they're similar and different. There are dangers in not taking the time to truly understand the people we consider "different" from us – dangers that can have a lifetime of negative consequence.

Enduring Understandings

- I. **Race, gender, ethnicity, and culture are all different and cannot be interchanged. Understanding each is an integral part of getting to know others and what defines them.**
- II. Stereotyping is very common and very dangerous – if not recognized and corrected.

Essential Questions

- I. **What is culture? (I)**
- II. What is stereotyping and what are the dangers of stereotyping? (II)
- III. What is ethnic intimidation? (II)

Lesson Objective(s)

Students will develop an understanding of the differences among racial, ethnic, and cultural groups at school.

Lesson 4.10

Lesson 5.1

Lesson 5.4

Lesson 5.5

Lesson 5.6

Directions:

1. Students will need their "My Culture" worksheets that they completed in Module #4. The information they put inside their circles will be used for this lesson's activity.
2. Using the "Definition of Culture" reading as a teacher resource, discuss the meanings of the terms: race, ethnicity, culture, and gender.
3. The teacher should draw a large circle on a flip chart and write the words "race," "gender," and "ethnicity" at the top of, but outside the circle.
4. The teacher then says "Most people wrongly think of culture as these three things. We now know that these attributes are not, themselves, culture, but they can affect the development of cultural traits. Let's consider what elements can appropriately be included in a definition of culture. Review your previous discussion of culture in Module #4.
5. Ask students to begin sharing what they have written in their "My Culture" circles. Items should include characteristics of:

Religion	Food Preferences
Educational System	Language
Traditions	Rituals
Art	Music
Family Rules	Values
Attitudes	Beliefs
Money	Work Habits
Behavior	Discipline Styles
Coping Strategies	Family Structure
Dress Codes & Styles	Child Rearing Practices
Extended Family	
6. After a discussion of these factors and how these culture elements interrelate, the teacher should lead a guided discussion by asking questions about how these factors outside the circle (race, gender, and ethnicity) are different from the cultural elements within the circle.

Materials & Supplies

- "My Culture" Worksheets
- Chart paper
- Markers
- Masking Tape

**FOCUS
POINT**

Often times we think we know a lot about a person just because of the way he or she looks or what "group" he or she belongs to – but that's just not true. A person's culture is very complex and special – something we should appreciate in everyone.

- Create a "Class Culture" poster. Ask each student to share one specific element from their "My Culture" worksheet and place it in the middle of the class culture circle. Display the poster in the classroom as a reminder of the unique traits and traditions that truly define who we are!

**resources
&
extension**

Definition of Culture

The first consideration in any discussion of culture is to define it and differentiate it from other related terms such as race, nationality, and ethnicity. While these terms are often used interchangeably, they have very different meanings.

Race refers to an anthropological system of classification based upon physical characteristics determined by heredity. People who share a genetic heritage and who, as a result, have very similar physical characteristics constitute a racial group. Racial characteristics include color and texture of hair, color of skin and eyes, stature, bodily proportions and bone structure.

Ethnicity generally refers to a classification of people based upon their national or regional origin, such as “Nigerian,” “Serbo-Croatian,” or “Chinese.” The word “ethnic” is derived from a Greek word that means “national” or “foreign.” Ethnicity and culture are not interchangeable. People from the same ethnic group differ widely in their cultural traits, especially in today’s world with relatively easy and widespread immigration and relocation, and conversely, there are often cultural similarities among people from different ethnic groups.

Culture is more complex than either ethnicity or race. Culture refers to the total system of values, beliefs, attitudes, traditions, and standards of behavior that regulate life within a particular group of people. Culture includes components that organize people into social groups and that regulate both individual and group behavior. It includes norms, which are rules regarding appropriate ways of behaving of certain people based upon their gender, social position, or area of responsibility in the society. It includes spiritual or religious systems and institutions. It includes language, which is the principle tool for communication among group members. Culture also includes the products of life, including the art and artifacts produced by the group.

Gender simply refers to the biological sex of an individual; that is, whether one is genetically male or female. Gender does not refer to sexual behavior or orientation.

Notes regarding Culture

While race is determined by one’s biology and ethnicity by one’s national or regional origin, humans create culture.

Culture is transmitted through learning. Cultural behavior appears to be so natural that it can easily be perceived as instinctive or biologically determined when, in fact, it is learned over a lifetime.

While cultural traditions sustain us, we must be open to learning new ways and integrating change into our lives in order to survive in our changing world.

MY CULTURE

