Lesson 2: Navigational capital
Stories for navigating hostile spaces
Interdisciplinary Unit Plan - 7th grade

Introductory Information:

In “Stories for navigating hostile spaces” students will discuss how images in popular visual culture construct white people as “normal” and people of color as the “other”. They will connect this theme to the chapter in The Absolutely True Diary of a Part-Time Indian when Junior experiences harassment at the Reardan School. Students will interview an elder in their family or community seeking insights about ways in which they have personally navigated prejudice and discrimination. Students will then honor their interviewees by creating an illustrated portrait based on quotes and pictures taken during the interview. Portraits will be displayed together as a “Mural of Community Cultural Wealth”.

Ellen Forney, Love Me!!! (2007)
Lesson 2: Stories for Navigating Hostile Spaces
7th grade

STAGE 1: DESIRED RESULTS

A. ENDURING UNDERSTANDING:
   - Popular visual culture validates systems of oppression by telling stories from the point-of-view of those in dominant groups.
   - By telling personal stories, artists and writers can critique broad and historical patterns of oppression by revealing marginalized points-of-view and experiences.
   - Artists highlight the cultural wealth within their communities.

B. ESSENTIAL QUESTION:
   - What role does popular visual culture play in telling cultural stories?
   - How do artists and writers use personal stories as counter-narrative?
   - What is the role of artists and writers in their communities?

C. STATE STANDARDS ADDRESSED:

Massachusetts Visual Arts Frameworks
- **Standard 6: Purposes and Meanings in the Arts:** Students will describe the purposes for which works of dance, music, theatre, visual arts, and architecture were and are created, and, when appropriate, interpret their meanings.
- **Standard 7: Roles of Artists in Communities:** Students will describe the roles of artists, patrons, cultural organizations, and arts institutions in societies of the past and present.
- **Standard 10 Interdisciplinary Connections:** Students will apply their knowledge of the arts to the study of English language arts, foreign languages, health, history and social science, mathematics, and science and technology/engineering.

Massachusetts English Language Arts
- **Standard 9: Making Connections.** Students will deepen their understanding of literary or non-fiction work by relating it to its contemporary context or historical background.
- **Standard 11: Theme.** Students will identify, analyze, and apply knowledge in the literary work and provide evidence from the text to support their understanding.

Ellen Forney, *Brain and Fish* (2007)
D. LEARNING OBJECTIVES:

- Students will analyze the role of popular visual culture in creating and maintaining cultural and racial hierarchies.
- Students will discuss the relationship between themes found in *The Absolutely True Diary of a Part-Time Indian* and their discussion of visual culture.
- Students will discover and demonstrate the “researcher” role artists and writers play when exposing Community Cultural Wealth.
- Students will collectively design a set of questions to take to their interviews.
- Students will synthesize cartooning skills, interviewing skills, and intellectual analysis of culture and communities by creating a meaningful portrait.

STAGE 2: ASSESSMENT EVIDENCE

A. PERFORMANCE TASK OR FINAL PRODUCT: A successful final project will incorporate the experience of “the interview” by creating an art piece that combines at least one quote with a cartoon-like illustration of the interviewee. The image should reflect the skills learned in Lesson 1, Cartooning for storytelling. The quote (or quotes) should address ways in which the person has navigated hostile situations such as discrimination based on their age, race, heritage, language, sexual orientation, and should provide advice or a “consejo” for the student or the viewer.

B. CONTINUUM OF ASSESSMENTS:

- Students will submit ideas for questions for the interview.
- Students will provide examples of “the Indian” in visual culture.
- Students will write out and turn in their own definition of “navigational capital”.

C. CRITERIA:

- Did the students actively engage, ask questions, and contribute insights during the “Indian” visual culture discussion?
- Did the students make meaningful connections between the discussion and the book?
- Did the student participate in the activities and generate interview questions?
- Did the student synthesize the discussions and the interview successfully into their drawing?
- Did the student choose a quote from the interview that directly addressed the theme of navigational capital?

STAGE 3: LEARNING PLAN

A. MATERIALS AND EQUIPMENT:

- Copies of The Absolutely True Diary of a Part-Time Indian (25)
- Stereotypical or commercialized images of “Indians” in popular visual culture (10-20).
- Notebooks (25)
- Audio recorders (5+)
- Pencils (25)
- Handout of Interview questions (25)
- Drawing paper 18x24 (25)
- Newsprint paper (50)
- Black thin Sharpies (25)

Ellen Forney, My Parents (2007)
B. VOCABULARY WITH DEFINITIONS:

Navigational capital: Refers to the skills of maneuvering through social institutions. Historically, this infers the ability to maneuver through institutions not created with Communities of Color in mind.

Marginalize: To relegate to an unimportant or powerless position within a society or group.

Walt Disney, What makes the red man red? (1937)

C. TEACHER INSTRUCTION:

- Teacher will put up various stereotyped and commercialized images of “Indians” and students about story and point-of-view.
- Teacher will read pages 63 to 64 from The Absolutely True Diary of a Part-Time Indian (Students would have read past this point in the book in their English class).
Teacher will then read pages 67 to 69 and define “navigational capital” in the context of Junior’s conversation with his grandmother.

Teacher will contact parents about the nature of the interview project.

Teacher will demonstrate how to work with audio recorders.

Teacher will present a slide show demonstrating “composition” in photography and portraiture.

Teacher will demo and show benchmark product for final project.

**QUESTIONS TO GENERATE DISCUSSION:**

- What is the story being told about Native Americans through these images?
- What point-of-view is the visual story being told from?
- What assumption does the question “What makes the red-man red?” reinforce? Who’s point of view is it from?
- What is the difference between the terms Native American and Indian?
- What do you think you know about those terms?
- How do you know?
- What is missing from this (visual) story?
- What do you wonder?
- What questions do you have?
- What else would you like to know about Native Americans?
- What would a Native American person think about these images?


**D. LEARNING ACTIVITY:**

- Students will participate in an inquiry-based discussion about images of “Indians” in visual culture.
- Students will discuss the relationships between stories created by visual culture and the harassment of people from marginalized cultures and communities.
- Students will work together to generate questions relevant to “navigational capital” that they would like to ask someone from their community.
- Students will conduct an interview with a member of their family or community.
- Students will practice taking pictures with classmates.
• Students will take pictures of their interviewee during or after their interview.
• Students will audio tape their interview.
• Students will transcribe parts of their interviews as they hear look for the most memorable and relevant quotes.
• Students will create cartoon portraits of their interviewees using the quotes and pictures taken during the interview.

E. VISUAL IMAGE RESOURCES:


Disney, Walt (1938) What makes the red-man red? [Still from film] Peter Pan, Disney.

F. TEXT, MEDIA AND WEB RESOURCES:

