

Bailey Hogan
ED398 Critical Literacy Invitation
Summer 2020
Butler University
Invitation Overview and Rationale:
We Are All Different and We Are All the Same

Theme

At our core, each and every one of us is human. Whether we want to believe it or not, we all have something in common, whether it be a favorite sport or hobby, eye color, family dynamic, or culture. While we all have significant differences that deserve to be celebrated, it is possible to find something in common with anyone. This critical literacy invitation will support students in discussing the ways in which they are unique and the things they have in common with their peers to think more deeply about accepting people of all backgrounds and experiences. Through these different activities and invitations, the students will be able to have a better understanding of the idea that regardless of similarities and differences, we are all human and are all experiencing life in different ways. Overall the theme of this critical literacy invitation is to inspire students to develop a better sense of their cultural identity and celebrate the things that unite us as human beings. My hope is that students will be able to answer the essential question “What makes us unique?” by the end of this invitation.

Rationale

In “Understanding Culture,” the authors claim that “too often, we make assumptions about a person’s beliefs or behaviors based on a single cultural indicator, particularly race or ethnicity, when in reality, our cultural identities are a complex weave of all the cultural groups we belong to that influence our values, beliefs, and behaviors” (Zion-Kozleski, 3). By focusing on the things that unite us and appreciating the things that make us unique, children will be more accepting of those that are different than them and be able to find the similarities that bridge the gap between their differences. If we can foster this mindset at a young age, they will be more equipped for the diversity of the world we live in today and be more accepting of all people.

Four Dimensions Framework

In a critical literacy invitation, there are four dimensions that can influence and support each invitation: disrupt the commonplace, consider multiple viewpoints, focus on sociopolitical issues, and take action (Van Sluys, 15). While creating these invitations, I did not want to limit my invitations to one dimension. Each invitation can be considered from the view of multiple dimensions. In “What makes us unique?,” the activities disrupt the commonplace and ask students to consider multiple viewpoints by presenting students with a text, engage in three activities around the room, and speak with their peers about the physical and experiential similarities and differences they find between each other. In the invitation “What’s in the fridge?,” students can begin to focus on socio political/economic issues and consider multiple viewpoints through the use of two texts about children who eat different foods due to religious or economic reasons. This invitation could also inspire students to take action. “How do you celebrate?” requires students to consider multiple viewpoints by allowing them to explore stations that disrupt the commonplace that show different cultural and religious experiences or traditions around the world. “What makes a family?” is the last invitation and continues the trend of considering multiple viewpoints and focusing on sociopolitical issues by letting students think about the fact that everyone has a family and that it might look different for certain people. I believe all of these invitations can inspire students to take action through educating their peers about our cultural differences and how to accept people of all backgrounds. As Susan Naimark states in “Teachable Moments: Not Just for Kids,” teachers are lucky because “schools are among the few places where we have the opportunity to engage people of different races, ethnicities, economic circumstances, and life experiences” (Naimark, 10).

Four Thematically-Linked Instructional Invitations

The first thematically-linked instructional invitation is titled “What makes us unique?” This invitation will be done through exploring a picture book about welcoming all types of people in our community, then engaging in three activities placed throughout the room. The goal of this invitation is to get the students thinking more deeply about what it means to be a person and finding things in common with their peers, despite any differences they might find. Ultimately, this invitation will get the students to consider questions such as what surprised them, what they would like to learn more about and how they would do that, and what similarities and differences they were able to find between themselves and their peers. This gateway invitation is key in opening the students’ eyes to the vast variety of people that they surround themselves with everyday, how to celebrate many cultures and take pride in what makes them unique.

The second invitation, titled “What’s in the fridge?” focuses on the different foods we eat and how that is influenced by religion, culture, or socioeconomics. Students will have a choice reading between two books, then engage in thought-provoking questions that will enhance their communication skills and fluency in writing based on their own experiences and ideas. Hopefully the invitation will allow students to be more aware of the differences that exist between them and their peers, even with something as seemingly unimportant as food. The reality of food, however, is that many of us have entirely different diets depending on these other factors. Students will develop a better understanding of their cultural identity, compare it to others in their environment, and communicate effectively and respectfully about the topic. The

idea of food and traditions will be a great segway into the third and fourth invitations, although they are not codependent.

“How do you celebrate?” is the title of the third invitation, which focuses on how different cultures and religions celebrate different holidays in different ways. The students will have the chance to engage with videos that demonstrate three different holiday celebrations: the Chinese New Year, Hanukkah, and Dia de los Muertos (the Day of the Dead). After watching the videos, the students will think about why holidays and traditions are so important, learn about what their peers celebrate, and think deeply about these traditions as part of their own cultural identity. By providing videos, students will gain skills that develop their literacy through a new media that is visual rather than written and will expand their ability to communicate about what

The final invitation is called “What makes a family?” This invitation introduces the idea to the students that although everyone has a family, it does not look the same for everyone. The students will read a book about families, then engage in a “sketch to stretch” activity. The activity requires the students to draw their family and where they live on half of the paper, then draw how their family makes them feel on the other half. This will extend their literacy beyond writing how they feel and will provide them with a chance to visually represent their feelings and personal experiences.

Critical Literacy Pedagogy

This set of critical literacy invitations presents students with a critical pedagogy orientation that values, welcomes, supports and engages English language learners through understanding that “educators of *all* racial and cultural groups need to develop new competencies and pedagogies to successfully engage our changing populations” (Howard, 18). By allowing

myself, as an educator, to personally develop, grow, and learn with my students, my pedagogy will better reflect the diverse population that I will teach one day.

Each of my invitations prompt students to talk with their peers after engaging in the activities through the use of some guiding questions. This ‘say something’ method is mentioned by Brooks and Karathanos in their research on “Building on the Cultural and Linguistic Capital of English Learner Students.” They recommend that students with varying levels of English proficiency should turn and talk to one another and to “encourage them to make personal, cultural, real-world, and prior learning connections” (Brooks-Karathanos, 49).

The invitations all require the students to interact with different types of literature and media to better develop their literacy skills. One way to bridge the language barriers in critical literacy is by using visual arts, also written about by Brooks and Karathanos. Having students use this ‘sketch to stretch’ strategy teaches students that “there are many ways to represent personal meanings” (Brooks-Karathanos, 49). If we expose children to these different types of media and show them the broad range of cultures that exist in our world, their eyes will be opened to their own cultural identity. Zion and Kozleski write in “Understanding Culture” that:

“Often, culture is thought of as the foods, music, clothing, and holidays a group of people share but it is actually much larger than just those visible traditions. Culture is a combination of thoughts, feelings, attitudes, beliefs, values, and behavior patterns that are shared by racial, ethnic, religious, or social groups of people. Culture refers not only to those that we are born into (racial or ethnic groups), but also those that we choose to belong to, such as religious or social groups” (Zion-Kozleski, 3).

By giving students the chance to think deeply about culture, they will be more aware of their own culture and the influences in their lives. This can be done through experiences with multiple types of media and literature.

Finally, these invitations celebrate differences and will overall support students in understanding the idea that being different is not a bad thing. In “Latino Youth,” Noguera writes that schools often treat English language learners as though “their inability to speak fluent English is a sign of cognitive and cultural deficit” (Noguera, 82). In reality, this is just another thing that students will come to understand and accept as something that makes them unique and something that will get better with time. By providing the students with the tools to be confident in their own cultural identity, we can begin to teach them that their language and their culture are not deficits, but strengths, in this country.

Indiana Academic Standards

History/Social Studies

3.3.7 Geography: Compare the cultural characteristics of their community within communities in other parts of the world.

3.4.7 Economics: Illustrate how people compare benefits and costs when making choices and decisions as consumers and producers. (Ex: Pros and cons of buying a car)

Language Arts

3.RL.1 Reading Literature: Read and comprehend a variety of literature within a range of complexity appropriate for grades 2-3. By the end of grade 3, students interact with texts proficiently and independently.

3.RL.2.1 Reading Literature: Ask and answer questions to demonstrate understanding of a text, referring explicitly to the text as the basis for the answers.

3.W.5 Writing: Conduct short research on a topic.

3.SL.1 Speaking and Listening: Listen actively and adjust the use of spoken language to communicate effectively with a variety of audiences and for different purposes.

3.SL.2.1 Speaking and Listening: Engage effectively in a range of collaborative discussions on grade-appropriate topics and texts, building on others' ideas and expressing personal ideas clearly.

Visual Arts

3.6.2 Creating Art: Create artwork that communicates personal ideas and experiences.

Annotated Bibliography

Howard, G. R. (2007). As diversity grows, so must we. *Educational Leadership*, 64(6), 16.

This article demonstrates how educators must develop an understanding of the diverse population of students they will work with in their careers. Howard writes about how to keep students in school, regardless of their race, ethnicity, or socioeconomic status. This article was critical to my personal identity development as an educator and taught me how to be mindful of all of my students and their backgrounds.

Indiana Department of Education. (2011, July 29). *Indiana Academic Standards*. Retrieved from

<https://www.doe.in.gov/standards>

The IDOE is an amazing resource that contains all of the standards needed when teaching in Indiana. It is organized by subject and contains all grade level requirements for K-12. This resource allowed me to find the standards I could use for my invitations.

Naimark, S. (2009). Teachable moments: Not Just for Kids. *Teaching Tolerance*, 23(4).

This article is about how adults can educate children and their own peers about being tolerant of all groups of people in our lives. It focuses on how educators can maneuver their way through the field of education and teach more people about white privilege, diverse cultures, and being accepting of everyone. I found it very helpful when writing my four dimensions framework because it reminds teachers to be grateful for the opportunity to reach a diverse range of students.

Noguera, P. (2008). Chapter 5 “Latino Youth” from *The trouble with Black boys: And other reflections on race, equity, and the future of public education*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

In this chapter, Noguera writes about the disparities between white students and minority students that do not speak fluent English. He also notes the vast socioeconomic differences between racial groups in communities and in schools. Noguera reminds teachers that while this is not something we can always control, we can be aware of it and do our best to make the public school experience equal for all students.

Pittman, T. (2019, March 7). 25 Children's Books That Celebrate Differences.

Retrieved May 23, 2020, from

https://www.huffpost.com/entry/kids-books-diversity-differences_n_5b912bd8e4b0cf7b003d3508

This was a blog post type of website that allowed me to find many resources for literature to use during the invitations. I was able to explore new authors and find children's books that cover racial, socioeconomic, and religious topics, as well as many others, that will benefit the development of cultural identity in students.

Zion, S., & Kozleski, E. B. (2005). Understanding culture. Denver, CO: National Institute for Urban School Improvement.

Zion and Kozleski wrote this article to teach educators how to better understand culture for development of their teaching craft. They note that culture is much more than it seems and has a wide range of things that influence it. Some students might have a cross-cultural identity, or a cultural identity that is very different from our own. Regardless of someone's culture, understanding culture in general is key for teachers to reach all of their students equally.

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Student Version: We Are All Different and We Are All the Same

Standards Addressed**History/Social Studies**

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Visual Arts

3.6.2 Creating Art: Create artwork that communicates personal ideas and experiences.

Dear Third Graders,

These activities will help you practice your critical literacy skills. My hope is that you all will think deeply about the topic and reflect on what it means for your life moving forward. I believe that each of you will have something very special to add to these activities and that you will allow yourselves to have an open mind while participating. Explore new ideas, ask questions, and give it your all. Respect your classmates, be proud of your own experiences, and again, keep an open mind! This is a safe environment to share the experiences you have had to contribute to a bigger understanding of yourself and of the world in which we live. I expect you all will enjoy these activities and participate to the best of your ability. Remember to think deeply and be brave enough to take action!

Miss Hogan

What makes us unique?

Everybody in the world is unique! We like different things, we do not all look the same, we wear different clothes, and we all act differently. However, we have much more in common than we think we do! We share similar experiences, we eat some of the same foods, and we might even have the same eye color. No matter who you are or where you go, you will be able to find something in common with anyone you meet, regardless of your differences.

If you choose, engage in the three activities set up around the room at your own pace. You can focus on one or engage in all 3 if you'd like. Follow the engagements at each one and when you are done, feel free to take a look at the book *All Are Welcome*, by Alexandra Penfold, on your tables.

- How did the book represent all kinds of people?
- Did you see someone like you or different than you? How did that make you feel?
- What did this book make you think about?
- Why is reading this book important?
- What surprised you or interested you the most?
- What is something you would like to learn more about? How can you learn about this?

Activity 1: Focus on Someone Else

The camera is set up on a tripod for you to take a portrait of one of your peers. After taking their picture, write down one thing you have in common, one thing you notice that is different than you, and one thing you like about this peer. We will display these pictures and your noticings in the classroom if you are comfortable with your picture being displayed.

Activity 2: Represent Yourself

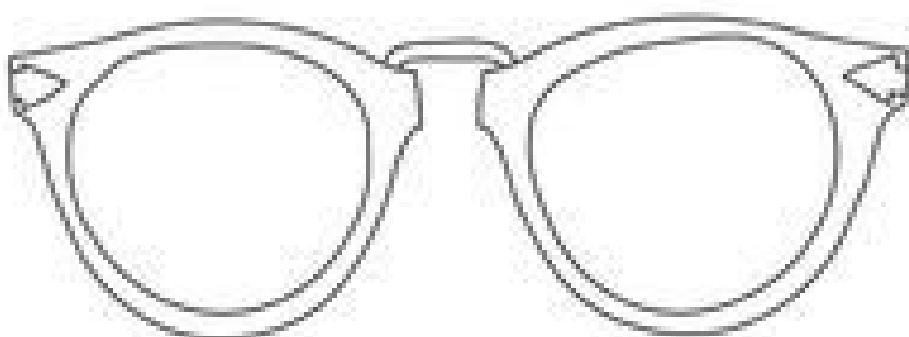
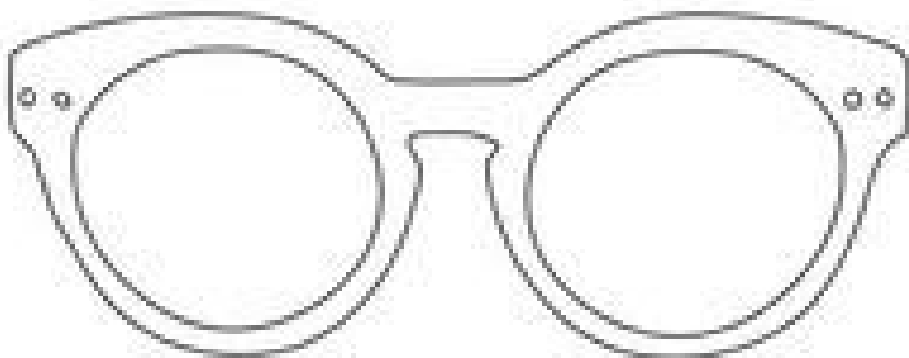
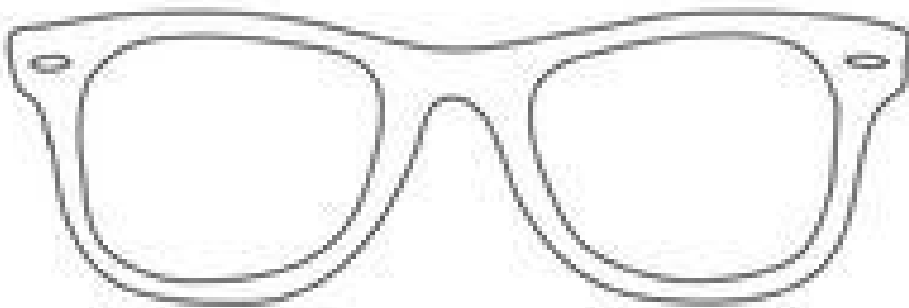
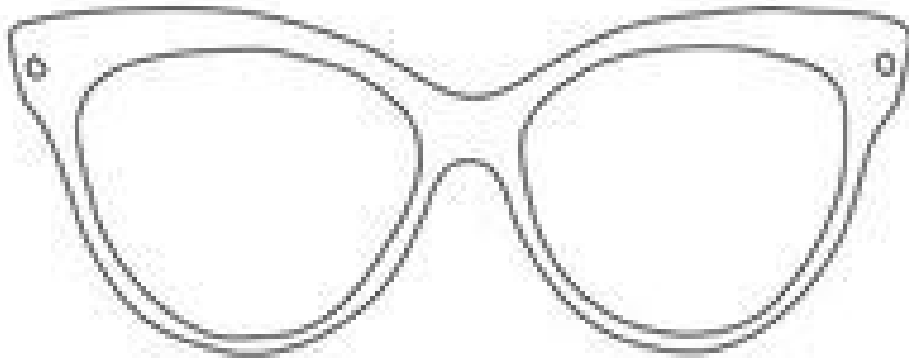
Draw a picture that represents who you are as a person. The only challenge is that you cannot draw a picture of your physical body. Draw things that play a part in your life, your culture, and your personality. Share your drawings with your peers and notice any differences or similarities. Miss Hogan provided an example; feel free to ask her about the things she included in her drawing!

Activity 3: Lenses

Cut out a pair of glasses from the sheets of paper provided. In one lens, write down at least five things you were born with that are a part of you today (gender, race, family, etc.). In the other lens, write down at least five things that you choose to do that are a part of you (hobbies/sports, friends, food, music, etc.) These glasses represent the lens through which you see the world. Talk about it with your peers, compare your lens, and find any similarities or differences you might have. Decorate as you would like. Miss Hogan provided an example; feel free to ask her about the things she included in her lenses!

- ★ How can you talk with the people around you about what you noticed while doing these activities? Do you have things in common? How about differences? Did you learn something new about any of your peers? Why are these activities important?

Cutouts for Activity 3:



What's in the fridge?

Part of having your own culture is the kinds of food we eat. Depending on the religion you might practice, certain traditions your family has, or even how much money your parents have to spend, your fridge might look a little different from mine or from your peers. This is something that deserves to be celebrated and something we should learn more about! We are all human and we need food to survive, but that might look different for each and every one of us.

I have provided two books to read today. If you choose to read these books, gather around with people that read the same book as you and consider these questions.

Lailah's Lunchbox by Reem Faruqi **OR** *Maddi's Fridge* by Lois Brandt

- ★ If something from these books made you uncomfortable, feel free to take a break or come talk to Miss Hogan about it. It is okay to have an emotional reaction to either of these stories.
- Why did Lailah or Maddi's food look different from other people in the book?
- How did this make you feel?
- How can you learn more about the ideas in these books?
- What is important to consider when thinking about food?
- When and why does food look different for certain people?
- How can we educate other people about the differences in food depending on culture?

Consider the food you eat. Are there traditions you have at home when it comes to food? How does food have an influence in your life?

- ★ Could you take some time to think about a specific food that you eat that could be unique to your family and your life? Could you write about your favorite food or a tradition your family has when certain foods are involved? Share with your peers about your writing if you are comfortable doing so. If you do not want to share, take the time to listen to others share and think about how you can relate or the differences you might have with them.

How do you celebrate?

A big part of having a unique culture is celebrating certain holidays and keeping family traditions. Today you will get to learn about different celebrations from around the world and the ways that different people celebrate different things.

Around the room are three stations of iPads with two videos each of different celebrations from around the world and different cultures. If anything looks interesting to you, engage with the videos and be thinking about these questions as you watch.

- What did you see today that was new to you? How can you learn more about it?
- How did these celebrations make you feel?
- When have you experienced something like this?
- How do these celebrations and traditions differ from your own?
- What has been your experience with celebrating holidays and traditions? Does this differ from your peers? What do you have in common?
- What parts of your life influence what you celebrate? Religion, family traditions, culture, etc.?
- If you do not celebrate any holidays, think about why? Which traditions intrigued you and why?
- How can we teach others about these celebrations and be inclusive of all people?

Video 1: Chinese Lunar New Year/Spring Festival

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sDHJhfkQHEI>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=W4ge6vyHBOA>

Video 2: Hanukkah/Festival of Lights

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mXA6TdTdAKk>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3oOZ6SYhCB0>

Video 3: Dia de los Muertos/Day of the Dead

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SxXQL5qPZZ0>

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_sSawpU81cl

- ★ After you watch, talk with your peers about the holidays and traditions that you celebrate. Discuss how they make you feel and why they are important to your identity. Discuss what you want to learn more about and how you can do that. Can we find experts in our class that can teach us more?

What makes a family?

The great part about being a person is that no matter what, you have a family! However, every family looks just a little bit different. Maybe you live with your grandparents, just one parent, two moms or two dads. Maybe you have siblings or you are an only child. Maybe your family is all the same race or mixed races. Maybe your family lives in a big house or in an apartment. Regardless of what your family looks like and where you live, we can all find something in common! It is important to remember this idea and be sensitive to it when interacting with other people.

- ★ If at any point today you feel uncomfortable talking about your family situation or the place you live, take a break or come talk to Miss Hogan. This is a safe space and we will not be judgemental of your experiences because those experiences make you, you!

If you'd like, read *A Family is a Family is a Family*, by Sara O'Leary. After you read, you can take part in the activity. Then, think about the questions I have given you and feel free to talk to your peers about what makes a family.

Sketch to Stretch:

On one half of your paper, draw your own family. Include where you live, who you live with, your pets, your siblings, and anything else that represents your family. Show your peers your drawing and compare what you have in common and what differences you have. Remember to be respectful of your peers and their personal experiences of family.

On the other half of the paper, draw the way reading the book made you feel. Draw what you feel when you think of your own family. This drawing can be done in any way to represent the feelings you have about your family. Again, share with your peers! This is a great way for us to find what makes us unique and learn new things about people in our class.

Think about these questions:

- How did this book and this activity make you feel?
- What do you think makes a family? Is it people, a feeling, your culture?
- How can we be aware of other people's families and learn more about them?
- What did you learn today about families and about your peers? How did that make you feel?
- How is your family part of your culture and your identity?
- How can we teach others about the similarities and differences that we found today?

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