



Outcasts United:

An American Town, a Refugee Team, and
One Woman's Quest to Make a Difference

Written by Warren St. John

LESSONS WITH DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Developed and Written by Christina Shunnarah and Gillian Lee-Fong-Farris

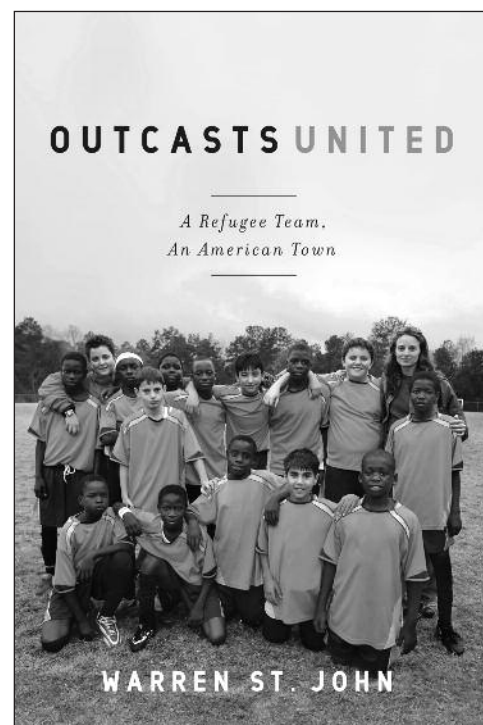
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SELECTED FOR COMMON READING AT GEORGIA TECH UNIVERSITY AND MCMURRY UNIVERSITY,
AND USED IN HIGH SCHOOLS AND COLLEGE COURSES THROUGHOUT THE COUNTRY.

“A brilliant and empathetic depiction of our common quest for meaning and happiness. Warren St. John invites us into the lives of a community of refugees, their bewildered neighbors in a small town, and a Jordanian woman who not only coaches but also mentors, mothers, and inspires some remarkable boys, to create a heartwarming tale about the transformations that occur when our disparate lives connect.”

—Ishmael Beah, author of *A Long Way Gone*

“An uplifting tale celebrating the most old-fashioned of virtues: hard work, self-discipline, regard for others.”

—*The Washington Post*

“Not merely about soccer, St. John’s book teaches readers about the social and economic difficulties of adapting to a new culture and the challenges facing a town with a new and disparate population. Despite their cultural and religious differences and the difficulty of adaptation, the Fugees came together to play soccer. This wonderful, poignant book is highly recommended....”

—*Library Journal*, starred review

“[A] richly detailed, uplifting account of a young Jordanian immigrant who created a soccer program in Georgia for young refugees from war-torn nations ... educational and enriching.”

—*Kirkus Reviews*

• note to teachers

Outcasts United is a perfect teaching tool for any classroom discussing the intricacies of today's global environment. The purpose of these lessons is to educate students about world issues, helping to enhance their understanding of diverse perspectives. Through the example of the characters in the book, many themes emerge: immigration, refugee resettlement, local and global politics, cultural conflict and change, identity and intergenerational issues, biculturalism, creativity, sports, and community building. Accompanying these lessons are discussion questions for reading comprehension and analysis.

Developed by educators Gillian Lee-Fong Farris and Christina Shunnarah, who have significant experience working within the diverse communities of Clarkston, the lessons are also designed for educators and students who have not read the book but are interested in the global themes of human rights, identity, and cultural pluralism. The cultural complexity of Clarkston and the story of the Fugees allow students the opportunity to discuss a range of issues facing the United States currently and in the coming decade.

The four lessons are:

1. The Cross-Cultural Currents of Migration

Students will examine maps and other geographic representations, tools, and technologies to analyze global patterns of refugee migration and compare historical migration patterns with current refugee migration.

2. Moving Beyond Stereotypes and Tapping the Cultural Iceberg

Students will investigate the ideas of tolerance and acceptance of all cultures through the exploration and analysis of their own cultural identities. Through discussion of the metaphor of the cultural iceberg and the creation of an identity box, students will identify the external, superficial views of culture that often lead to stereotypes.

3. Exploring Our Multidimensional Identities

The students will embark on a journey of self-discovery in which they will explore their personal and group identities through the production of a cultural portrait in the form of an artistic or media representation of self, family, and community. This lesson will culminate in a class or community exhibit.

4. Our Global Rights

Students will explore the impact of human rights issues locally and globally, which will culminate in a plan-of-action project.

• about the book

Originating in an acclaimed series of front-page articles in *The New York Times*, this is the long-awaited story of the Fugees, played out against the backdrop of an American town that, without its consent, had become a vast experiment in getting along.

Clarkston, Georgia, was a fading Southern town until it was designated a settlement center for refugees in the 1990s, becoming the first American home for scores of families in flight from the world's war zones. The town also became home to Luma Mufleh, an American-educated woman from Jordan, who volunteered to coach a youth soccer program for Clarkston's refugee children. They named themselves the Fugees.

Driven by the fast-paced narrative of a season that saw the team and its young players pushed to the brink, *Outcasts United* is a brilliantly reported, moving chronicle of a small town struggling to become a global community, the resilience and hope of a group of young refugees, and how we find home in a changing world.

• about the author

WARREN ST. JOHN is a reporter for *The New York Times* and the author of the national bestseller *Rammer Jammer Yellow Hammer*.

The Cross-Cultural Currents of Migration

Grade Level: 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, Higher Education

Subject(s):

- Geography
- Language Arts
- Multicultural Studies

Duration: Approximately five 45 min. classes

“The first refugees arrived in Clarkston in the late 1980’s and early 1990’s from Southeast Asia—mostly Vietnamese and Cambodians fleeing Communist governments. Their resettlement went smoothly, and none of the older residents in town raised any objection, if they even noticed these newcomers. After all, the apartments were still a world away from the houses across town. So the agencies, encouraged by that success, resettled other refugees, survivors of the conflicts in Bosnia and Kosovo and oppressed minorities from the former Soviet Union. World Relief and the International Rescue Committee, both resettlement agencies, opened offices in Clarkston to better serve the newcomers, and brought in still more refugees—now from war-ravaged African countries including Liberia, Congo, Burundi, Sudan, Somalia, Ethiopia, and Eritrea. Between 1996 and 2001, over 19,000 refugees were resettled in Georgia, and many of those ended up in or around Clarkston. The 2000 census revealed that fully one third of Clarkston’s population was foreign-born, though almost everyone suspected the number was higher because census estimates did not account for large numbers of refugees and immigrants living together in Clarkston’s apartments.” (p. 31 & 32)

Description: This lesson requires the class to complete a world map, tracking the movements of refugee populations, represented by the players in the Fugees Family, featured in *Outcasts United*. During the lesson, students will conduct a genealogical research of an ancestor (real or imagined). The research may involve primary and secondary sources, such as interviews, archival and/or online genealogical records, letters, photographs, etc. Teachers should adjust the requirement of the lesson to students’ grade level, availability of resources, and academic needs of their particular student group. If a student is unable to trace his or her family history, that student may choose a historical or famous individual to represent his or her ancestor.

Objectives:

Students will be able to...

1. Examine maps and other geographic representations, tools, and technologies to acquire, process, and report information
2. Analyze global patterns of refugee migration
3. Explore personal (or imagined) family history of migration
4. Identify diasporic movements of different cultures
5. Compare historical migration patterns with current refugee migration

Materials:

- Video: *To Be a Refugee* or UNHCR select video clips on Youtube
- Resource from the UNHCR website
- Wall-sized world map
- Art supplies

• The Cross-Cultural Currents of Migration (continued)

1. In the introduction of *Outcasts United*, the author compares the issue of migration to the game of soccer. What comparisons can you make between the fluidity of soccer and the life challenges of the refugees of Clarkston?
2. Coach Luma is also a Clarkston “outsider” in terms of her nationality. In what ways does her experience as an immigrant compare and contrast to those of her players?
3. Discuss the chain of events that created the migrations of refugees out of Liberia.
4. Discuss the historical inter-connections of politicians. How did the United States’ role intensify the political upheaval in Kosovo? What should the role of other countries be during a crisis such as this? What was the effect on Qendrim’s family?
5. The Ziaty family spent five years in a refugee camp on the Nigeria-Cameroon border. Discuss the experiences of the Ziaty family in camp life. How do you think these experiences might have affected the young children involved?
6. Chapter 3 describes a study led by Harvard political scientist Robert Putnam that states that inhabitants of hyper-diverse communities tend to withdraw from collective life, and distrust their neighbors. Discuss the conclusions made by the study. What could the people of Clarkston have done to better prepare themselves for the sudden influx of refugees into their community?

Procedures:

Part 1: Discussing Immigrants & Refugees

Ask students to describe the difference between an immigrant and a refugee. Record their answers on a flip chart or board. Offer students the following United Nations definition of a refugee:

The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees defines a refugee as “a person seeking refuge in a foreign country because of war and violence, or out of fear of persecution on account of race, religion, nationality, political opinion, or membership in a particular social group. Until request for refuge has been established, the person is referred to as an asylum seeker. Determination of status is left to government agencies within the host countries with refugee camps.”

Show video presentations: *To Be a Refugee* (available free at the UNHCR website) or UNHCR videos available on YouTube. While watching the video, ask students to record things they see, things they hear, and things they think. After the video ask students to share the key points that they recorded. Have students record this list on chart paper or poster board and hang it in a visible location in the room.

Part 2: Geographical Context

Hand out a list of the Fugees Family soccer players and their places of origin. On a teacher-created wall-sized world map, have students place markers identifying the different countries from which the refugee boys of the Fugees Family Soccer Team in *Outcasts United* came. You may use tacks and string, or markers, to color-code the different journeys. You may also have students measure and record distances traveled. After all the countries and migration routes have been identified and marked on the map, place students in small groups and assign a country to each group. Have group members research the following information:

- Conflict that caused the refugees to flee their country
- Number of refugees displaced
- Refugee camp and/or region to which the refugees fled

The completed maps should have markers identifying the countries from which the refugees came, the journey of their flights, and labels denoting the information about each country that was researched.

Name of Player	Place of Origin
Fornatee Tarpeh	Monrovia

List of characters from the book:

- | | |
|--|--|
| Shahir – <i>Afghanistan</i> | Muhammed Muhammed – <i>Iraqi Kurd</i> |
| Eldin Subasic – <i>Bosnia</i> | Quindrem Bushi – <i>Kosovo</i> |
| Bienvenue Ntwari – <i>Burundi</i> | Fornatee Tarpeh, Pince Jeremiah, Kanue Biah and Mandela Ziaty – <i>Liberia</i> |
| Grace Belagamire – <i>Democratic Republic of Congo</i> | Santino Jerke – <i>Sudan</i> |
| Natnael – <i>Ethiopia</i> | |
| Mafowday Jawneh – <i>Gambia</i> | |

Note: Teachers can modify this lesson for younger students by providing a framework and guideline for research; for example, instructors may assign specific questions about the country and use material appropriate for their grade level.

Reading Comprehension & Analysis (continued)

7. After the “Nubian genocide,” compare and contrast the Dikor family’s experience of flight across the Sudan with that of the Ziaty family’s.
8. Discuss the experiences of the Dikor family in Cairo in the context of illegal immigration in the United States.
9. How has the history of migration altered the cultural landscape in your community? Use specific examples.
10. How have the reasons for migration changed over time? What are some of the specific circumstances that led to immigration in your ethnic or national group?

Part 3: Genealogical Research

Have students research their first ancestor who arrived in their particular country. Research can be conducted through family interviews, family records, oral stories, archival and/or internet research. The teacher should remind students that the ancestor being researched may be someone from a recent generation, or someone from hundreds of years ago. Students who do not have access to any family information may research the ancestry of a famous person in history.

Have students research the political environment of the country from which this first immigrant ancestor emigrated in order to discover the impetus for migration to the new country. In the case of an ancestor who is indigenous to the student’s country, the student should try to discover the region from which that ancestor moved, and why. Most students will find that migration is based upon similar conditions regardless of ethnic background; for instance, economic, political, or religious oppression.

What are the historical migration and current immigration trends? What was it like in the early 1900’s and how has it changed? How does the current refugee experience relate to this history? Teachers can also discuss the ideas of global migration, exploration, colonialism, indigenous cultures’ migration patterns, and how these have affected current trends of migration, including refugee migrations. Have students compare and contrast compelling reasons that force people to migrate with the compelling reasons for refugee dispersion.

Conclusion: Have a discussion about the different conditions that caused refugees to flee a country. Have students write a reflection piece from the perspective of a refugee fleeing his/her homeland. Ask students to include their personal viewpoints of the political crises, the flight (including what they were able to take with them), their journey to safety, and their reactions to the place to which they fled.

Assessment:

Were the students able to...

1. Utilize maps and resources to track patterns of refugee migration?
2. Report on personal family history of migration?
3. Identify diasporic movements of different cultures?
4. Compare historical migration patterns with current refugee migration?

Special/Additional Comments: The UNHCR website has a plethora of resources including numerous online videos, posters, games, and teacher materials that can be ordered. Most of the material is free of cost. Ordering and review of these materials should be done in advance. Several UNHCR video clips are also available on YouTube.

A wall-sized world map can be created by placing a clear shower curtain on a wall and using an overhead projector. The image can be adjusted to desired size and traced on the curtain. The teacher should offer instruction and guidance on how to conduct the different areas of research presented in the lesson and extension activity.

If a student is unable to trace his or her family history, that student may choose a historical or famous individual to represent his or her ancestor.

Resources:

Fugees Family: <http://www.fugeesfamily.org>

Migration Information Source:
[http://www.migrationinformation.org/
Feature/display.cfm?id=585](http://www.migrationinformation.org/Feature/display.cfm?id=585)

Office of Refugee Resettlement:
<http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/orr/>

Refugees International:
<http://www.refintl.org/>

UNHCR: The UN Refugee Agency:
<http://www.unhcr.org/cgi-bin/texis/vtx/home>

Moving Beyond Stereotypes and Tapping the Cultural Iceberg

Grade Level: 9, 10, 11, 12, Higher Education

Subject(s):

- Language Arts
- Social Studies
- Multicultural Studies
- Art

Duration: 2-5 days

“It’s like they’re all from my own country,” he said. “They’re my brothers.” (p. 182)

These were the words of Qendrim Bushi, an Albanian Serb refugee from Kosovo. Qendrim was speaking of his teammates on the Fugees Family U13 team. His “brothers” were from Bosnia, Liberia, Burundi, Sudan, and Afghanistan. The U13 team, made up of players who were under 13 years old, had somehow managed to look beyond the surface differences that often create division among race, social, gender, and ethnic lines, to the commonalities that united them. It was not so with the U15 players. These older players brought with them the underlying racism that often develops when we limit our views of others based upon superficial, stereotypical perceptions. *“The Afghan and Iraqi kids would look down at the African kids,” Luma said. “And kids from northern Africa would look down at kids from other parts of Africa...”* (p. 31 & 32)

Description: In this lesson the students will investigate the ideas of tolerance and acceptance of all cultures through the exploration and analysis of their own cultural identities. Through the discussion of the metaphor of the cultural iceberg students will identify the external, superficial views of culture that often lead to stereotypes. Each student will create an identity box to explore more deeply his or her own cultural identity in terms of surface and inner features.

Objectives:

Students will be able to...

1. Describe how the concept of culture relates to their own experience
2. Recognize how stereotypes can be borne from a limited view of culture
3. Identify the features that represent the inner experience of culture

Materials:

- 5-6 different photographs or pictures of people of different cultures/ethnicities (pictures should represent other forms of diversity—age, gender, etc.—as well)
- Enlarged photograph of an iceberg that is visible above and below the waterline
- Worksheet #1: *Features of Culture*
- Teacher sample of identity box and “I Am” poem

Procedures: Divide class into groups of 3-4 students. Hand out pictures/photographs that each represent a person from a different ethnic group or culture to each group. Using the picture they were given, have each group discuss and create a chart in response to the following questions:

1. Where does your person live?
2. What is his/her ethnicity?
3. What is his/her educational level?
4. What does he/she like to do?
5. What are his/her special interests?
6. What type of food does he/she eat?
7. How does he/she practice his/her faith?
8. What kind of music does he/she like?
9. What is his/her family life like?
10. What is his/her occupation, if any?

When all the students have completed their charts, ask them to post their charts on the wall. Have students walk around the classroom, observing the charts, and placing sticky notes on any information that they disagree with or would like to change. Facilitate a class discussion on the choices and changes that were made: What made them select a certain characteristic over others? What were some of the changes made and why? What assumptions were made about the identity of these individuals based upon media or stereotypical images? Teachers may add to these questions.

Part 1: Cultural Iceberg

Introduce the concepts of the cultural iceberg: adapted from *Building Bridges: A Peace Corps Classroom Guide to Cross-Cultural Understanding*. See *World Wise Schools*: www.peacecorps.gov/wws

Have students complete Worksheet #1: *Features of Culture*.

Using an overhead or enlarged picture of an iceberg that is visible above and below the waterline, ask students to tell you the features that will be above water and the features that will be below water. Fill in these features.

Part 2: The Identity Box

How does your personality interact with your culture, beliefs and values, family, and experiences, to shape your character? How do the location, culture, and economics of your upbringing affect how you see yourself and your place in society?

Students will visually and symbolically answer these questions by creating a box that represents important elements of their identity. Their identity box will have one side open to reveal the things that represent the inner/unseen parts of their culture, and the outside of the box will represent the visible parts of their culture. The box they create should provide insight into who they are and how they see themselves in relation to others. The teacher should provide his or her own box as an example. The teacher should also participate in the lesson by sharing aspects of his or her own inner and outer identity.

Procedures: Ask students to find or make a box of any size (i.e.: shoe box or gift box). Students will then collect objects (pictures, words, drawings) that represent how they view themselves on the inside—culturally, religiously, ethnically, nationally, and socially. The teacher should emphasize that the students should go beneath the surface of the cultural iceberg. These objects will go inside the box. The images collected for the outside of the box will represent the manner in which the students perceive they are viewed from the outside. These outer characteristics should be related to cultural components discussed, and might include clothing, ethnicity, language, education, social status, and group memberships.

Students will bring their boxes to the teacher in a bag, so that the owner of each box will remain private. The teacher will display the boxes around the classroom, or in some other location that will allow viewing. The viewing should be conducted without talking, so that these very private displays may be viewed in an atmosphere of respect. After the viewing is completed, each student should choose a box that they are drawn to that is not their own. Ask students to come together in a large circle. Each student will then take an opportunity to share why they were drawn to that particular box and guess to whom that box may belong.

1. In the book, the U15's judged each other based upon outward characteristics. Have you ever been judged based on outward characteristics such as the color of your skin, ethnicity, or gender? Explain.
2. How did the experience of being judged make you feel?
3. Have you ever witnessed a friend being judged or discriminated against based on superficial characteristics? What was your response, if any?
4. The U13's developed a family-like connection free of prejudice or judgment based on their differences. Why were the U13's able to create those connections? What prevented the U15's from doing the same?
5. Describe a time or circumstance in which you felt a family connection to a group of people beyond your immediate family. What were some of the things that helped build this sense of unity and connection?
6. Give some examples from the book that showed the development of camaraderie among the U13 players, as well as the friction between the U15's.
7. How did the camaraderie help the U13 players be successful as individuals?
8. With the arrival of the Somali Bantu to Clarkston, the long-time Clarkston residents became alarmed about changes in their community even though refugees had been resettling in Clarkston since the 1980's. In what ways did stereotypes and xenophobia play into the politics of Clarkston?

• Moving Beyond Stereotypes and Tapping the Cultural Iceberg (continued)

Part 3: Language Arts Connection: "I Am" Poem

In this creative writing activity, students will write a reflection piece in the form of an "I Am" poem. The poem should include aspects of race, ethnicity, region, religion, food, music, arts, sports and other important features they included in their identity box. Completing this reflection piece will help students reveal deeper insight about their inner person, and allow them to learn more about their multi-dimensional identity.

Procedures: Write an "I Am" Poem. Begin by describing two things about yourself—special things that are not obvious (choose something from the inside of your box). Once you have the opening line, you are ready to take off. Here is a line-by-line guide you can follow. It may seem difficult at first to write a poem this way, but give it a try. You may surprise yourself. Some students who have tried this approach have been amazed by the results.

I Am

I am *(two characteristics about yourself)*

I wonder *(something you are actually curious about)*

I hear *(an imaginary sound)*

I see *(an imaginary sight)*

I want *(an actual desire)*

I am *(the first line repeated)*

I pretend *(something that you actually pretend to do)*

I feel *(a feeling about something)*

I touch *(an imaginary touch)*

I worry *(something you actually worry about)*

I cry *(something that makes you sad)*

I am *(the first line repeated)*

I understand *(something you know is true)*

I say *(something you believe in)*

I dream *(something you actually dream about)*

I try *(something you make an effort toward)*

I hope *(something you actually hope for)*

I am *(the first line repeated)*

Conclusion: After students have shared their projects and "I Am" poems with the class or community, review the pictures from the beginning and have students reflect on how their perceptions of culture have changed. Have students discuss what they learned about their own or classmates' identities of which they were previously unaware. The focus of the discussion is to highlight and bring perceptions of culture and stereotypes into conscious awareness.

Assessment:

1. Were students able to give examples of how culture relates to their own experience?
2. Could they identify elements of cultures in terms of the cultural iceberg conception?
3. Were students able to recognize how stereotypes can be formed from limited perspectives of culture?
4. Were students able to complete an identity box and "I Am" poem that identified deeper aspects of their cultural identities?

Reading Comprehension & Analysis (continued)

9. How can the cultural iceberg conception be useful in understanding and addressing the diversity of a city like Clarkston?
10. The refugee community in Clarkston is composed of a conglomerate of religions, ethnicities, and languages. How do the contrasting experiences of the U13 and U15 players relate to the complexities that face the refugee community as a whole?

Special/Additional Comments: This lesson can involve some sensitive and personal issues, so educators should ask students to create ground rules that will allow for respectful discussion of sensitive topics. Educators should also be prepared to debrief and discuss.

Resources:

American Friends Service Committee:
<http://www.afsc.org>

The Carter Center:
<http://www.cartercenter.org/homepage.html>

Center for Multicultural Education:
<http://www.education.washington.edu/cme/k-12.htm>

EdChange/Multicultural Education Pavilion:
<http://www.edchange.org/multicultural>

Educators for Social Responsibility:
<http://www.esrnational.org>

Help Increase the Peace Program:
<http://www.afsc.org/hipp/default.htm>

National Association for Multicultural Education: <http://www.nameorg.org/>

Teachers Against Prejudice:
<http://www.teachersagainstprejudice.org/>

World Wise Schools:
<http://www.peacecorps.gov/wws>

Exploring our Multi-Dimensional Identities

Grade Level: 9, 10, 11, 12, Higher Education

Subject(s):

- Art/Multi-Media Studies
- Language Arts
- Multicultural Studies
- Social Studies

Duration: 5-10 days

“Mandela Ziaty didn’t like thinking of himself as a refugee. Refugees, to his mind, weren’t American. They were poor.... Like a lot of fifteen year-olds, he worried about what people thought of him. On school days, Mandela wore what American kids wore—long t-shirts that hung halfway to his knees, blue jeans so big and baggy they slid off his hip bones and had to be pulled up seven or eight times an hour, and clunky high-tops that he left untied so the laces trailed behind him. But when someone pulled out a camera at home, Mandela would go upstairs to his closet and pull out his church clothes—his clean white dress shirt with the crisp collar, his smooth black pleated slacks and his shiny black shoes. He didn’t want to look like a poor person. You never knew who might see a photograph.” (p.106)

Like many teenagers, Mandela Ziaty was having conflicts with his identity. But for Mandela, and his Liberian teammates on the Fugees Family U15 soccer team, their confusion with identity was twice fold: Not only did they feel the usual angst of trying to fit in as a teenager, but as refugees, they also wrestled with feelings of being American world outsiders. Mandela sought to address his conflict of identity by trying to assimilate into American gang culture, while losing his African identity. Like Ziaty, many teens and immigrants suffer a period of limbo where they are in between two worlds and their sense of identity becomes blurred in the struggle to fit in.

Description: In this lesson, the students will embark on a journey of self-discovery in which they will explore their personal and group identities through the production of a cultural portrait in the form of an artistic or media representation of self, family, and community. This lesson will culminate in a class and/or community exhibit that will represent their multi-dimensional identities.

1. Like many teenagers, Mandela Ziaty was wrestling with identity issues. What decisions did he make in negotiating both worlds? How did these decisions affect his integration in American society? Give examples of how his new life in America affected his sense of identity.
2. In what ways have you experienced similar conflicts in trying to negotiate your own identity in relation with the expectations of your family?
3. Assimilation is when you lose your own cultural identity to blend in with the dominant culture. David Faryen, Beatrice's boyfriend, spoke of the importance of Mandela and other Liberian children respecting their culture. In the context of the definition of assimilation and pluralism, discuss whether or not you agree with this statement.
4. In your opinion, do you feel that the refugee community should assimilate, or do you believe that the people of Clarkston should strive for a pluralistic society? Use examples from the book to support your answers.
5. In Chapter 24, Jeremy Cole, a case manager at one of the refugee agencies in Clarkston, challenged his traditional beliefs by converting to Islam. How were he and other Americans working with the refugee communities challenged in re-examining their own identities based upon their interactions with different cultures?

• Exploring our Multi-Dimensional Identities (continued)

Objectives:

Students will be able to...

1. Evaluate the cultural influences that shape our identity
2. Describe how the concept of culture relates to their personal experience
3. Explain how the many different layers of their identity are influenced by aspects of their environment
4. Create a multi-media self-portrait that integrates their understanding of the influences that shape their identities

Materials:

- Graph of Brofenbrenner model
- Art supplies
- Media equipment (*optional*)

Procedures: Have the students conduct an interview with a partner in the class. You should prepare questions, or have students brainstorm questions ahead of time. The questions should explore ideas of self, family, and community. Some sample questions the students can ask are:

1. Where do your parents come from?
2. Do you speak another language?
3. Describe your family
4. What makes your neighborhood special or unique?
5. What is your earliest childhood memory?
6. Are you part of any other community organizations—religious, cultural, or recreational?

In small groups, and then whole groups, have students share interesting things that they learned about each other. Have students discuss commonalities and differences in self, family, and community.

Introduce the Brofenbrenner's ecological model to the class ([link](#)). Explain how our aspects of identity are influenced by the many different systems or layers of the Brofenbrenner model: self, microsystem, mesosystem, exosystem, macrosystem, and chronosystem.

Project: Students will work on a project based on the Bronfenbrenner's concept of identity that represents their interpretations of self, family, and community. Have students choose a project based upon their personal interests, artistic style, and the resources they have available.

Cultural Portrait Options

1. A visual artistic representation (collage, painting, sculpture)
2. Photo essay (series of photographs that tells its own story)
3. A picture or pop-up book with both words and images
4. Taped oral history
5. 15-20 min. documentary video

Reading Comprehension & Analysis (continued)

- Using the Brofenbrenner model, explain some of the similar characteristics in their identities that helped them to find common ground on which they could build a peaceful, supportive community.
- Why was it important for Bienvenue to keep that particular picture of himself on his bedroom wall? Why was it important for Mandela to keep his Fugee's soccer shirt on his wall even after he was kicked off the team? Were their reasons the same? Why or why not?
- As demonstrated by the Brofenbrenner model, identity is formed and maintained by many different dimensions, such as home life, religion, and social and extended family networks. Which of these elements have been disrupted in the lives of Kanue Biah, Bienvenue, and Shamsoun Dikori?
- Prince was kicked off of the soccer team for not abiding by Coach Luma's rule that no team member's hair should be longer than coach's. Do you believe that Prince had the right to not cut his hair? Why or why not?
- Mandela and other Liberian players experienced conflicts of identity in trying to adjust to their own world. What are some of the issues that a bi-cultural, bilingual student faces?

Assessment:

Were the students able to...

- Evaluate the cultural influences that shape our identity?
- Describe how the concept of culture relates to their personal experience?
- Explain how aspects of identity are influenced by the many different layers of their environment?
- Create a multi-media self-portrait that integrates their understanding of the influences that shape their identities?

Special/Additional Comments: This project can be assigned as a home assignment, over several weeks in class, or a combination of both. Students' projects can be presented as a class and/or school exhibit, or as a community event. The teacher should offer guidance in the length and manageability of the project, and should help students identify availability of media resources, or assist students in acquiring necessary resources for their chosen projects.

Resources:

Aesthetic Realism: A new perspective on anthropology and sociology:
<http://www.perey-anthropology.net/>

Anthropology Education Commission:
<http://www.aaanet.org/cmtes/commissions/aec/index.cfm>

American Anthropological Association: Committee on Refugees and Immigrants:
<http://www.mason.gmu.edu/~cori/corihead.htm>

Huitt, W. (2003). A systems model of human behavior. *Educational Psychology Interactive*. Valdosta, GA: Valdosta State University. Retrieved [date] from <http://www.chiron.valdosta.edu/whuitt/materials/sysmdlo.html>

Human Relations Area Files: Cultural information for education and research:
<http://www.yale.edu/hraf/>

Race: The Power of an Illusion:
http://www.pbs.org/race/000_General/000_00-Home.htm

Rogoff, B. (2003). *The cultural nature of human development*. NY: Oxford University Press

The Society for Applied Anthropology:
<http://www.sfaa.net/>

1. Discuss examples of the human rights violations that some of the families experienced in the book.
2. Charles Taylor's political slogan "He killed my ma, he killed my pa, but I will vote for him" helped him win the election to become president of Liberia. In looking at the human rights violations committed by Taylor, why do you think he was still able to win an election despite the atrocities of war which he committed?
3. In what ways can you compare the use of drugs by Taylor to control the child soldiers of Liberia with the influx of drugs in disadvantaged communities?
4. How does Luma's experience in Jordan compare with her experience in the United States? What are some human rights issues that women face?
5. In Chapter 3, an Ethiopian man is arrested for the circumcision of his young daughter. In some cultural communities, female circumcision is an accepted practice although it is considered a human rights violation. Discuss the cultural intricacies of female circumcision in the context of human rights struggles.
6. Compare and contrast the arrests of Chime and Luma. Discuss the human rights violations involved.

Our Global Rights

Grade Level: 9, 10, 11, 12, Higher Education

Subject(s):

- Language Arts
- Multicultural Studies
- Social Studies

Duration: 3-5 days

"It's you—it's Africans," he said. "I have nothing but problems from you guys. Always love to argue. That's why there is so much crap going on around here—because you guys don't understand I've got a job to do."

Chime felt his face and windpipe swelling from the cayenne oil, and his head was throbbing from the flashlight strike. Jordan (the police officer) never offered to rinse the chemical from Chime's eyes. At one point on the video, as Chime whimpered in the back seat of the cruiser and complained about the chemical, Jordan told him, "I hope it burns your eyes out." (p. 74)

This disturbing scene from the book, *Outcasts United*, describes an example of police brutality, a common human rights violation that occurs throughout the world. In this lesson, students will explore the concept of human rights by researching human rights issues affecting people locally and globally, and will execute a plan of action for a chosen issue.

Objectives:

Students will be able to...

1. Understand the extent of human rights issues worldwide
2. Identify human rights issues in local community
3. Identify human rights issues in the global community
4. Complete a plan of action project

Materials:

- Copies of Universal Declaration of Human Rights document
- Video or scenarios from websites listed
- Art supplies

Background: The Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) was adopted by the UN General Assembly on December 10, 1948. The UDHR is a declaration that guarantees the rights and freedoms of all people and includes economic, social, cultural, political, and civil rights. The Declaration asserts that all people should be treated with dignity and worth. People have a right to equality, liberty, and personal security, a right to an education and an adequate standard of living, and the right to freedom of belief and religion, to name a few of the 30 articles of the Declaration. This Declaration is the foundation of freedom and justice in the world. (<http://www.un.org/en/documents/udhr/index.shtml>)

Procedure:

Part 1: Discuss the UDHR

Begin with a video that represents human rights issues (www.humanrightsproject.org)

The teacher or facilitator can also give the students a series of scenarios dealing with human rights issues to read, share, and discuss (www.un.org/cyberschoolbus)

Reading Comprehension & Analysis (continued)

7. Once a refugee is resettled in the United States, there are still human rights violations being committed: language rights, women's rights, economic rights, housing rights, etc. Discuss the new or continuing human rights issues that a refugee might face upon arrival into the United States.
8. Discuss the problems involved in the Fugees Family's search for a home field. Did the Clarkston government violate their human rights? What about the situation of the Lost Boys and the use of the soccer field? Discuss.
9. Media played an important part in the Civil Rights Movement in the United States. However, many human rights violations go undocumented. What role, if any, did the media play in educating others about the human rights issues in Clarkston?
10. Human rights violations are most often perpetuated against people without power. In what ways were the refugees mentioned in the book powerless, and how did this cause them to be more vulnerable to human rights violations?

Debrief the video or scenarios. Are students aware of their human rights? Were they able to identify human rights violations in the introductory materials presented? Hand out a copy of the 30 articles of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Place students in small groups and have them choose one of the articles to create a poster for. The teacher and students can explore the websites and resources at the end of this lesson for more information. Have students display and share their posters and why they chose that particular human rights article to present.

Part 2: Plan of Action

Have students discuss and brainstorm human rights violations in their communities. What is the impact of homelessness, poverty, racism, crime, domestic violence, child abuse, sexism, and classism in their communities? Is there anything that can be done to address the needs of the community? What are the possibilities?

This is an opportunity for students to raise awareness and make a difference in their lives and communities. Have students examine the communities in which they live. They can talk to their families, neighbors, and civic and community organizations, as well as religious institutions, for some guidance. From the interviews and discussions with community members, students should make a list of needs in their community dealing with social/human rights issues.

Students can explore further by gathering articles and researching organizations in the community that deal with social issues, or if possible, they can interview someone who might have been violated.

Suggested Topics to Explore:

- Child Abuse
- Civil Rights
- The Death Penalty
- Domestic Violence
- Economic Rights
- Environmental Justice
- Gender and Race Discrimination
- Indigenous Rights
- Legal Rights

There can be several options for doing this project, depending on the level of the students: Students can choose a particular subject and work in groups of 3 or 4. Or the class can pick one human rights topic that they feel strongly about and explore it as a group. The plan of action project should include:

- Background information about the human rights issue
- Description of project
- Methods and timeline for implementation
- Perceived obstacles and proposed methods for crossing those obstacles
- Conclusion
- Appendix of resource materials, website information, brochures, etc.

Students should be prepared to share their projects with classmates. Students can raise awareness by one of the following examples, or the class can come up with their own idea

- Embark on letter writing campaigns
- Create posters
- Participate in volunteering or solidarity work
- Conduct information workshops in the community
- Raise funds for an organization
- Plan an event to raise awareness about an issue
- Hold a media/press release

• Our Global Rights (continued)

Assessment:

Were the students able to...

1. Understand the extent of human rights issues worldwide?
2. Identify human rights issues in local community?
3. Identify human rights issues in the global community?
4. Complete a plan of action project?

Special/Additional Comments: Due to the highly sensitive nature of human rights work, teachers should set some ground rules for discussions, research, and plan of actions. Students should be cautioned to not place themselves in dangerous or volatile situations, and should refrain from personal involvement should they come across any human rights violations (but may report them to the correct authorities, or those who are trained and equipped to deal with these issues).

For more background information educators can access the following United Nations document: *ABC: Teaching Human Rights* at http://www.unhchr.ch/html/menu6/2/abc_text.pdf

Resources:

Cyber School Bus:
<http://www.cyberschoolbus.un.org>

Every Human Has Rights:
<http://www.everyhumanhasrights.org>

Human Rights Project:
<http://www.humanrightsproject.org>

Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights: <http://www.ohchr.org/EN/Pages/WelcomePage.aspx>

UNICEF: <http://www.unicef.org/index.php>

United Nation Declaration of Human Rights:
<http://www.un.org/en/documents/udhr/index.shtml>

• about the lesson plan writers

CHRISTINA SHUNNARAH has over eight years of experience working with refugees, both adults and children. After her tenure at Refugee Family Services, she joined the staff of the International Community School (ICS), a Decatur, GA charter school with the mission of educating and integrating American-born and refugee children from all over the world—including Afghanistan, Bosnia, Burundi, Iraq, Somalia, and Sudan. She also teaches courses in educational sociology at Oglethorpe University in Atlanta. She has an M.Ed. in Early Childhood Education from the University of Georgia and an M.A.T. in Teaching from Oglethorpe University. Christina has published articles on the *New York Times* education blog Lesson Plans, as well as Teacher's College Record.

GILLIAN LEE-FONG-FARRIS has a B.A. in English Literature/Creative Writing from Agnes Scott College in Decatur, Georgia and a Masters in Education from Columbia College in South Carolina. Ms. Farris has worked extensively with refugees and other underserved communities as an educator and program developer. In addition to her work in Clarkston, Georgia, Ms. Farris was a Teach for America educator in the Rio Grande Valley. She has over 10 years of experience as an educator teaching subjects ranging from English, history, and creative writing to middle, high school and college students in Texas, Georgia, and South Carolina. She is currently the Adult and Youth Education Manager at Refugee Resettlement and Immigration Services of Atlanta (RRISA). Ms. Farris is the author of a young adult novel based on the Maroons of Jamaica. She is interested in advocating for the empowerment of refugee women and girls through creative self-expression.