

Doctoral Candidacy Examination
Summer 2006
English/ANWS
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Question #2

**Unit Plan:
African Diaspora: Misconceptions, Misinterpretations, and Omissions**

A Language Arts/Social Studies Unit of Study

Grades 9-12

Rationale

“The Jamiacans” “The Haitians”, “the Trinidadians” “the African Americans” These labels separate and divide a people who have shared a common history. It is possible that at some point we were living in the same village or possibly in the same family. What has changed? What has remained the same?

Studying the African Diaspora explores these questions as well as expands the knowledge of the people of African descent. It takes students beyond the borders of the United States into lands and regions familiar and unfamiliar. This unit is designed to broaden and enlighten students’ perspectives of the people who were dispersed from the shores of Africa onto the shores of other places. Studying the African Diaspora will enable us to see ourselves in a different light. To appreciate the struggle, then and now, of a people dispersed with nothing but the memories clocked into their genes to pass on from generation to generation. Students will study the story of the African Diaspora as told by those who share the history and the spirit. By doing so we will clear misconceptions of the African Diaspora people, dispel the misinterpretation of their actions and behaviors, and add the omissions of facts that are normally missing from the pages of history.

Studying the African Diaspora is a major undertaking; admittedly, justice can not be done to a subject of this magnitude in six-weeks; therefore, choices have been made that leave out information important to this study; however, the intent is to raise the students’ awareness to a level that will engender a desire to continue this study beyond this brief introduction. During this six-week period we can only preview aspects of the African Diaspora. After the study, perhaps students will take it upon themselves to learn more, whether through an in depth study, or just reading an additional book. Nonetheless, the intent for this curriculum is to inform the participants of the people, their struggle and the meaning they make of the world in which they live.

Introduction

After surveying students’ knowledge of the African Diaspora and reviewing concepts that are pertinent to this study, this unit will begin a six-week historical/literary study of the dispersment of people of African descent. Students will examine the history, culture, geography and literary components of the African Diaspora. The study will begin with the history of Africa including the various aspect of the slave trade. Students will be

become aware that the slave trade to the Americas was not the first enslavement that Europeans imposed upon African people. They must also be made aware that the discussion of Arabs in this equation is often omitted as well as the fact that some Africans who came to the Americas were Muslims. Included in the unit are the perspectives of the African Diaspora people. After arriving to the Western shores what were the transformations and the formations? These questions are examined in this unit.

The concepts of racism, colonialism are major in this study and students will be given opportunities to research and discuss these concepts that are key to the treatment of people of African descent.

General Objectives

Students will:

- Learn the definition of the African Diaspora
- Know the conditions/circumstances that produced the African Diaspora.
- Examine aspects of Africa history that pertains to the diaspora.
- Recognize the different types of slave trade including the Atlantic slave trade
- Become aware of slavery in Europe before slavery in the Americas.
- Explore racism's historical roots
- Research a selected region/area/country in the diaspora and share findings with others
- Analyze literary elements of African Diaspora literature
- Make a prediction about the people of the Diaspora

Skills

- Research materials from reliable source
- Use effective oral presentation^ techniques
- Integrate the use of technology in the reporting and sharing
- Employ effective discussion methods
- Apply critical thinking strategies appropriately
- Demonstrated effective writing skills

Concepts

Diaspora
Racism
Alienation
Class
Colonialism
Transformation
Pan-Africanism
Creolization
Double consciousness
Back-to-Africa

Format of Class

The approach for teaching this unit will be student-centered where students will be actively engaged in discussions and learning experiences that will foster a better understanding of the social, political, economic, and racial circumstances of the dispersed people of the African Diaspora. The class is formatted for block scheduling; however, a teacher can make adjustments for other divisions of class time. The block of time for this class is 1 hour and 40 minutes. Class structure will consist of warm-up activity, mini-lesson (20 minutes in length), student activity, wrap-up, homework and assessment. This structure is flexible to meet the needs of the class on any given day. Students are expected to engage in active learning through inquiry, research and reporting.

Learning Experiences

Discussion topics:

- What conditions existed which created the African Diaspora?
- How did the dispersed people identify themselves in their new place?
- Based what you know about colonialism, discuss evidence of colonialism in *Things Fall Apart*.
- What was the misconception about village religion that mission expressed?
- What does this misconception reveal about the missionary and the other whites regarding their attitude toward Okonkwo and his village?
- What human characteristic changes do you think were derived from the environmental change for the dispersed people?
- Creolization is often misunderstood in the meaning. What does it mean to you?
- Do we always get the truth from history? Read the “Propaganda of History” by W.E. B. DuBois
- Achebe discussed in the film his reasons for writing *Things Fall Apart*. What is that purpose and in your opinion, did he achieve his goal?

Student Activities

To learn about the African Diaspora, students will:

- Read and analyze research articles pertaining to the Diaspora.
- Read literary works by African and Diaspora authors
- Respond to literary and research works in written and oral form via learning journals and analytical essays
- Discuss and debate issues related to the Diaspora
- Research topics and issues pertinent to African Diaspora study
- Present researched information to whole group
- Pose inquiry into topics and issues related to the Diaspora
- Participate in group activities and projects

Research topics

Students will use the Internet, one book or a journal article to research the following topics that pertain to the African Diaspora.

1. Read the article, “Africa in Europe and the Americas” by Walter Rodney. Report the main points of the article including the practice of slavery in Europe during the 17th and 18th centuries, **before it was introduced to the Americas**. Who were enslaved? What countries were involved? What was life like for those enslaved at that time? Explain the terms endogenous and exogenous as it relates to this slavery system. Develop three discussion questions for the class on this topic. What misconception does this information address?
2. Research the five major Africa Diasporic streams. The first beginning inside and outside of Africa 100, 000 years ago. Christopher Stringer and Robin McKie, *African Exodus: The Origins of Modern Humanity* (New York: Henry Holt and Company, 1996). The second stream 3000 B.C.E. the movement of the Bantu-speaking people. Third movement beginning around the fifth century B.C.E involving the Middle East, and Asia extending to beyond the 7th century. The fourth movement, the Atlantic trade in African slaves. The fifth movement is the movement of Africans and the people of African descent, and their resettlement in, various societies. What is the difference between migration and diaspora?
3. Research the definition of racism. Read and analyze the article, “Race in North America” by Audrey Smedley. Identify the main points of the article. Devise three questions along with your response. Integrate the information from the American Anthropological Association in the report. The American Anthropological Association (AAA)’s statement on “race” <http://www.aaanet.org/stmts/racepp.htm>. Where did the term, “purity of blood” originate?
4. Research colonialism in Africa. Who were the colonizers and what areas did each colonize. Use a map to show the areas colonized. Provide the duration of their colonization. Some believe that colonization was good for Africa. What do you think about this statement? What unknown or little known fact did you discover after researching this topic.
5. Read and analyze the article “African Diaspora: Concept and Context” by George Shepperson. Report the main points of the article along with your own commentary. How do you think Hegel’s point of view impacted the world’s attitude toward Africa? Give a response to the author’s last statement in this article. Why is the Diaspora important to humanity?
6. Research the different religions that arrived with the slaves. Describe the practice and the transformation, the religion made. How does this transformation affect the people? After your research what religion is usually omitted from the discussion of religion. Why do you think this happened?
7. Research the topic, Back-to-Africa Movement, and share your findings with the class. What role did Marcus Garvey play in this movement? Where is Liberia and what significance does it hold to this movement?

8. Research concept of creole and give the history of the concept.
9. Research the concept of Pan-Africanism including the key figures and the purpose of the movement.

Group Project

1. Divide students into working groups of 4-5 students. Give each group an article pertaining to the African Diaspora. Each group will select the main point from their article and report to the large group. After sharing the main points of the article, the group members will conduct a discussion of the article. After each group has completed this process, the whole class will compare the point of view of each article. Noting similarities and differences or conflicting information.
2. Culminating project: Each group of 4-5 students will select a region or country of the African Diaspora. They will research and present this country to the class. They must include information about an African country that could possibly serve as the homeland, and give justification for selecting the related African nation. Presentation must be delivered in a unique and creative manner. All group members must participate and each member must submit a 2 page double spaced paper on what is learned from this project. The following information must be included in the presentation of place: historical information, geographical location, taste of the cultural, and literary contributions. To share the culture of this place you may want to bring, food and music representing the region. Show how music of homeland is similar to the new location.

Home Learning:

Home learning activities will consist of research, reading and journal entries.

Assessment:

To assess the progress students are making in meeting the objectives, a variety of evaluation techniques will be employed. Conduct a pre-survey to assess students' prior knowledge of the African Diaspora and a post-survey to assess change in knowledge acquisition. Other methods will include teacher observation, journal response, reader response, and essays.

Content Outline

Overview African Diaspora

African-Caribbean music

Introduction to *Things Fall Apart* by Chinua Achebe

Interview with Chinua Achebe by Bill Moyer, PBS video

Overview of African History (lecture/ presentation)

DuBois, W.E. B. (n/a)“Propaganda of History,” in *Black reconstruction in America 1860-1880*. Excerpt, pp.727-728

Miller, J. (1999). History is Africa / Africa is history. The American Historical Review, 104 (1) February 1-32 may be used as a resource for this lecture.

Topics: Pre- colonial Africa, Colonialism, Slave Trade, Racism
Students Presentations

- **Olaudah Equiano:**

- [Equiano Foundation Online](#)

"The Equiano Foundation aims to provide a valuable educational vehicle through which to resurrect, restore, and celebrate the meaningful contribution of Olaudah Equiano to Western, African, and African American culture..."

- Excerpts from "Africans in America: America's Journey Through Slavery" Web Site (PBS Online; WGBH Interactive, WGBH Educational Foundation, Boston, Massachusetts)

-- [Frontispiece of Equiano's autobiography \(1789\)](#)

-- [A note about Equiano and an excerpt](#) from Chapter 2 of "*The Interesting Narrative of the Life of Olaudah Equiano or Gustavus Vassa, the African*" (1789)

Fanon, F. (1952) The fact of Blackness, in *Black skin white mask*. London: Pluto Press.

Smedley, A. (1993). *Race in North America: Origin and evolution* of a worldview. Westview Press Chapter 1.

Giroux, H. A. (1999) Rewriting the discourse of racial identity: Toward a pedagogy and politics of whiteness, in *Becoming and unbecoming white: Owning and disowning a racial identity*, Westport. CT: Bergin & Garvey: 224-252.

The American Anthropological Association (AAA)'s statement on "race"
<http://www.aaanet.org/stmts/racepp.htm>

Leone, B. ed. *Racism opposing viewpoints*. St. Paul, Minnesota: Greenharen Press.

Rodney, W. (1975). Africa in Europe and the Americas, in *The Cambridge history of Africa*. Vol. 4 Gray, R. ed. New York:Cambridge University Press.

Discuss Novel *Things Fall Apart* by Chinua Achebe

Novel Chunks: Chapters 1-6;7-12;13-18;19-25

Focus: Pre-Colonial life in village

Colonial atmosphere in the village

Racism evident in the novel

Discussion topics

Topic for debate: Was the village better or worse off after the colonizers?

Present day Africa- Guest Speaker

Perspective of the African Diaspora: Geography, Culture, Literary

Geography: Location, Place, Human-Environment, Movement, Region

Barnabe, J. et al.(1990). *In praise of creolness*. Paris: Gallimard.

Shepperson, G. (n.a.) Africa Diaspora: Concept and context.

Gordon, E. & Anderson, M. (1999). The African Diaspora: Toward an ethnography of diasporic identification. *Journal of American Folklore* 112 (445), 282-296.

Presentations: Back-to-Africa Movement, Pan-Africanism Movement,

Literary: *Breath Eyes Memory*, Edwidge Danticat

Literary: Gomez, M. (2005). Prologue, in *Black Crescent: The Experience and Legacy of African Muslims in the Americas*. New York: Cambridge University Press.

Alford T. (1977). Appendix in *Prince Among Slaves New York: Oxford University Press. pp. 187-204.*

Novels needed:

Things Fall Apart, Chinua Achebe

Kirk? Krak! Edwidge Danticat

Week One -Day One – Introduction of the African Diaspora

Objective:

Students will become familiar with the definition of the African Diaspora

Students will understand the conditions that produced the African Diaspora

Materials needed:

Student journal

Definition of Diaspora

Unit Study Plan

Music, African

Article, “ Propaganda of History”

Student activity:

Introduction: Have students listen to music playing for one minute. Ask if the music is from African or the Caribbean. Ask students to explain their choice.

Warm- up: Students will produce three columns in their journal. Students will write what they know about African Diaspora in the first column and what they want to know in the second column. Students are to leave the third column blank to make entries at the end of lessons. Do a “swept” of class for volunteers to share responses to column one of journal.

- Have students to write a definition of Diaspora and share with a partner.

- Instruct them to borrow information from their partner to enhance their own definition.
- Using the overhead projector display the definition of Diaspora
- Read the excerpt from “Propaganda of History” by W.E. B. DuBois
Instruct students to listen to the passage and identify words that evoke emotions for them. Write those words in their journal. Discuss with students their responses.
- Students will answer the survey questions and place in folder.

Survey questions:

- The first slaves brought to the Americas were from Europe. **True or False**
- What religions did the enslaved Africans bring with them to the new world?
- Humans are biologically divided by race. **True or false**
- When you hear the word “Creole” what comes to mind?

Give students the overview for this study unit including the following:

- List of words and concepts forming the framework for unit study
- General objectives of unit
- Description of culminating activity with rubric
- For group project, form working groups based on mix ability. Groups will consist of 4-5 students in each group.
Give research and writing assignments.

Wrap-up -In the learned column of your paper, write down what you have learned today.

Assessment: Student participated in all class activity.

Homework: Read *Things Fall Apart* by Chinua Achebe- Chapters 1-6- Students will write a response to reading in journal. As you read the story pay close attention to the life style of the village people. Make note of activities that interest you.

Week One- Day two -Overview of African Diaspora History- Africa Objectivities

Students will compare and contrast life style of an African village to their own.
Students will understand the importance of telling their own story.

Materials needed:

Assigned novel
Journal

Warm-up- Present the following scenario to students:

“ I am visiting you in your city. I am from Planet Q. On Planet Q, my life style is totally different from yours. Our religion is different, our way of dress and living is different. Except for rice even the food is different. Although it is hard, I live with you for a year, and after a year, I return to Planet Q and write about my visit with you. I publish my findings in the journals and newspaper of Planet Q. Eventually, I write a book, which sells millions of copies. The story told of you is my version of what I think, based on my interpretation of what I saw. How accurate do you believe this story will be?

Student Activity

Students will respond to this question in an open discussion.

Ask students the following questions:

How different is this story from what actually happened with the history of Africa told by Europeans?

Who should tell your story?

Tell students: “Chinua Achebe understood the need to tell his own story. In *Things Fall Apart* we will find the story that Chinua Achebe tells about his people. In our study of Africa’s history, we will use this novel to give us a view of what life was like in pre-colonial Africa and in Africa during colonialization.

Allow students to voluntarily share journal entry by reading the response out loud. Ask students “As you read *Thing Fall Apart* what surprised you about the life of the village so far”

What similarities and difference did you observe in the African village activities described in the novel compared to your own society?

What conclusion can you draw for this observation?

Wrap-up: Students will make an entry to the “learned” column of their chart.

What are the implications of someone else writing your history? What should you be aware of when you read history?

Assessment- Sharing journal entry- Teacher observation

Home learning:

Reading: Chapter 7-12 *Things Fall Apart*. Write a reader response for your reading.

Week One- Day Three- History of African Diaspora continued (concept colonialism)

Objectives:

Students will analyze nature of colonialism as it was implemented in Africa.

Student will employ critical listen skills while listen to presentations.

Materials needed:

Novel

Request for equipment for presentation must be made one week in advance.

Map (group)

Activity:

Student will identify colonialism as it is presented in *Things Fall Apart*

Group presentation on colonialism

Wrap-up: What conclusions do you draw about colonialism and the role in played formation of African history? What if colonialism had not happened? How would the world be different?

Assessment:

Participation in the discussion of colonialism

Home learning:

Students will write a journal entry for reading of chapters 13-18

Week two- Day One History Of African Diaspora continued (concept racism)

Objective:

Student will employ effective research techniques in researching a topic- the concept of Racism

Activity:

Group reports research findings on racism

Students will identify evidence of racism in the novel *Things Fall Apart*.

Assessment: Define racism

Home Learning: Read chapters 19-25 Things Fall Apart

Week Two -Day Two- History of African Diaspora continued (concept racism)

Objective:

Read and critically analyze research articles on racism

Materials needed:

Articles

Warm-up- Demonstrate how to read an article to find main points

Student Activity:

In cooperative grouping students will look for salient points in the assigned articles

Week Two -Day Three- History of African Diaspora continued (concept racism)

Objective:

After identifying the salient point of a research article, students will present the points found in the article to the whole class.

Students will develop significant thought provoking questions for discussion.

Student Activity:

Each group will share and discuss the salient points of their article with whole class.

After the report, group members will lead a discussion with 3 questions they have designed for discussion. Questions must be opened and significant to the topic.

Class will participate in discussion each student is expected to make a contribution to the discussion.

Wrap-up:

Assessment:

Group will be assessed for their ability to carry out the assignment with accuracy. Class members will be assessed for their participation in the discussion.

Home Learning:

None

Week three -Day History of African Diaspora continued (event- Slave Trade)

Objective:

Warm-up:

Show a clip from roots (the capturing of slaves and the trip in the boat)

Materials:

Video Roots

Assessment:

Home learning:

Week three- Day two- History of African Diaspora continued (event- Slave Trade)

Week three- Day three-Perspectives of African Diaspora: Geography, Culture, Literary Objective:

Students will analyze the African Diapora from the three perspectives.

Materials:

The five themes in geographical study

“Sankofa” film

Warm-up:

Overview- Lecture topic: geography, culture, and literary aspects of the diaspora

Student Activity:

Students take notes

Film “Sankofa”

Wrap-Up: Ask students, “ What are some characteristics of the Diaspora that you have discerned at this point of the study?”

Assessment:

Students will be able to discuss Characteristics of the Diaspora.

Home Learning:

Students will write a response to film

Week Four- Day one Perspectives of African Diaspora

Objective:

Students will analyze the African Diaspora from three perspectives.

After viewing a film students will identify a theme present in the film.

Student Activity:

Students will share their response to the film with a partner.

Film “Sankofa” continued

Instruct students to think about a theme that this film has and write in the journal how that theme is supported in this film.

Students will write a response to film in class and discuss afterward.

Assessment:

Students will be able to identify themes in film.

Home learning:

Student will read *Krik? Krak!* by Edwidge Danticat

Week Four Day Two- Perspectives of African Diaspora (Geography)

Week Four -Day Three Perspectives of African Diaspora (Literary)

Objective:

Students will understand the style of African Diaspora authors

Students will make personal connection to literary works.

Materials needed:

Novel *Kirk? Krak!* By Edwidge Danticat

Critique of Toni Morrison's, *Song of Solomon*

Warm-up:

Lecture topic: Elements of style in African and African Diaspora Writers

Student Activity:

Students will discuss the elements of African Diaspora style in *Krik? Krak!*

Students will read a critique of Toni Morrison, *Song of Solomon*. Noting the author's discussion of style.

Wrap-Up: What purpose do these unique elements of style serve in the African Diaspora literature?

Assessment:

Student will be able to identify element of style and discuss its use in literature.

Home Learning- Finish reading *Krik? Krak!*

Week Five- Day One Perspectives of African Diaspora (Literary)

Objective:

Materials needed:

Assessment:

Home learning:

Week Five- Day Two Perspectives of African Diaspora (Literary)

Week Five-Day Three Perspectives of African Diaspora (Culture)

Objective:

Students will recognize omissions from the historical accounts of African religions.

Students will recognize transformations, which take place in African Diaspora culture.

Activity:

Students will read excerpts from: Gomez, M. (2005). Prologue, in *Black Crescent: The Experience and Legacy of African Muslims in the Americas*. New York: Cambridge University Press.

&

Alford T. (1977). Appendix in *Prince Among Slaves New York: Oxford University Press. Pp. 187-204.*

- After reading excerpts from the two pieces of literary works, ask students:
- Islam is not usually associated as a religion practiced by African slaves. Why do you think this omission is made?
- Dr. Carole Boyce Davies made the following statement about African Diaspora Culture “Each of these cultural forms takes the received African traditions and in the context of place, climate, history and material available creates something distinctly different from what it was originally, even as it carries the traces of the old.” Give an example of a cultural form of the African Diaspora that has gone through a transformation.

Wrap-up:

Give students post survey.

Assessment:

Class participation, discussion

Home Learning:

none

Week Six- Day One -Perspectives of African Diaspora (Culture)

Week Six- Day Two and Three- A Taste of the African Diaspora (culminating activity)

Objective:

Students will demonstrate an understanding of the African Diaspora
Students will write an analysis of what they predict will happen to the region/ country they studied. Based on information learned for past and present what is your prediction for the future of the region/country studied? Two pages typed double-spaced.

Materials needed:

Any requested equipment for presentation

Student Activity:

Each group will creatively present information about the Diasporic place they have selected.

Wrap-up:

Enjoy the experience of the African Diaspora Culture as presented by the group.

Assessment:

Groups followed Rubric for presentation

Home learning:

Continue to appreciate the beauty of the African Diaspora

