

## Some Strategies for Teaching Ethnic Studies to Language Learners

\*EU=Enduring Understanding; EQ=Essential Question; K=Knowledge; S=Skills

- **GALLERY WALK**
  - Post 5-8 chart papers with essential questions, key vocabulary or concepts, copies of primary source documents, historic photos, maps etc. evenly-spaced on the walls around the room. Divide students into equal groups and assign them to stand in front of a chart with a marker. Direct them to respond to the topic on their chart in writing, with pictures, or words. After 2-5 minutes have passed, direct the students to walk in a clock-wise direction with their group to the next chart and begin responding to it. Continue the cycle. When groups have returned to their original poster, direct them to circle the 3 strongest ideas and be prepared to present why they chose those ideas to the rest of the class. Direct groups to present. Extend the activity with essay writing afterwards based on the presentations; note-taking during the presentations; a group essay written on the overhead or computer about the enduring understanding the charts elucidate etc.
- **10-2**
  - Lecture or present whole-class for 10 minutes and stop to give students 2 minutes of processing time with: an oral pair-share on what they have learned so far; a 2 minute quick write on their answer to a unit essential question; ask a question related to the EU you are presenting and ask 5 volunteers to respond; direct students to quick-sketch something related to the presentation that they hearing; direct them to define 1 or 2 content-specific vocabulary words or use them in a sentence etc. Then continue 10 minutes of lecture/presentation and stop for 2 minutes for processing time. Continue the 10-2 cycle.
- **JOURNAL WRITE/SKETCH/DRAW**
  - At the beginning, middle, or end of the period, direct students to, in their notes or learning journal/log, write, sketch, or draw for 5-10 minutes about: what they have learned; what questions they have; what they wonder, what surprised them, etc. Examples: Write/Draw/Share: How would you feel if..? What do you think will happen next? What if.. What do you think caused..? Do you agree or disagree with..? What is most important about..? What is one important thing you have learned so far? What would you do if..? How is this similar or different from life today?
- **TAKE-A-STAND**
  - Temporarily or permanently post 5 bright and visible signs in order, evenly along one wall of the classroom that say: strongly disagree, disagree, neutral, agree, and strongly agree. Any time you are discussing or presenting on a controversial idea; would like students to voice their opinions; a point in history when an important decision was made; when you want students to predict what will happen next, write a statement on the board (e.g. "I would have freed the slaves." Or "I believe freedom of speech is our most important right." Or "I think Congress will pass the law."). Direct students to read the statement as a whole class or individually and then line up under the sign that matches their 'stand' on the statement. Ask volunteers from each line to state why they

chose to stand there; explain that students will need 2-5 reasons or facts to back up why they are standing there. Once volunteers have shared their rationale for where they are standing, offer students a chance to change where they are standing. Extensions include recording their response on the board or a chart paper in the form of a bar graph or a chart where their reasons are listed; if responses are recorded, over the course of the unit, students can weigh-in again and then record how the class is changing (or not) their stand on the issue/statement.

- **DRAMATIC REPLAY**

- This is a way to help students apply what they are learning to real-life, empathize with historical characters and time periods as well as review and retain information and details. Before your lesson, determine who some of the important players were in the history (EU) you will be presenting. This can include politicians but also, the general population. Create signs for 2-5 characters with cardstock paper with 2 hole-punches and string long enough to hang at chest-level on your students with the name of the character (e.g. President Lincoln, a democrat, Iroquois Chief etc.) Stop 1-5 times during the presentation and have volunteers quickly assume the characters, wearing the signs. Give them a scenario (e.g. “You’ve met on the street.” Or “You are on a battlefield.” Or “The law has just passed and you are at a national park.” Or “You’ve time-traveled to the present-day and you have a meeting with the Secretary of State” etc.) Time the students and have them quickly act out the scene. You can require them to re-enact what you just presented and that each person must include 1-3 facts from the lecture or text. This can be a more extensive activity if you want students to create short skits in small groups.

- **NARRATIVE INPUT**

- This is a visual way to tell a story from history. You can choose to highlight certain characters, time-frames, events, cause & effect etc. depending on your EUs and Essential Questions etc. There are several ways to carry this out from low-tech to high-tech. Low-tech: on white or yellow butcher or chart paper, in pencil, sketch out the story with figures of people, settings etc, frame-by-frame in the order you plan to tell the story. If, when you plan to tell the story tracing the pencil with markers (etch-a-sketch brand are best), you want to use a particular color, lightly label the item or frame with that color so you remember. Also add questions you want to ask students at the right spot on the paper so that you remember to stop your presentation and ask students. Lightly write notes to yourself about the story so you remember important details related to the story. Once you have drawn everything, your narrative input is ready to be presented. Tape it up at the front of the room and start your “story-telling” or “lecture” but drawing as you go. One input can be told over several days depending upon the complexity and length of the story. Give students a blank paper to copy their own sketch with colored pencils is best. They will retain a lot of information the more accurately you require them to copy the story. The same can be achieved using an old-fashioned felt

board and felt-board characters and items you can buy online or make yourself with felt or paper with adhesive Velcro backing. Slightly more techy: For the old-fashioned overhead projector, make a transparency on your printer with clip-art of characters, scenes, and visuals to represent concepts, along with words in bold to label and tell the story on the overhead as students take notes and/or manipulate their own set of the pieces in pairs or individually. High-tech: use a drawing program, cartoon-making program, Smart Board, or movie making program to tell the story scene-by-scene. Or skip all of this and download an appropriate YouTube video/cartoon to show in class.

- **GRAPHIC INPUT**

- This is basically a very visual and expanded graphic organizer for important Enduring Understandings and parts of EUs. Think about how you would visually represent a concept or topic in history and start sketching it out chronologically, conceptually, or procedurally. For example, for the EU, *Rights come with responsibilities*, you might abbreviate rights from the US Bill of Rights with a picture (a rifle of the right to bear arms) and then use a heavy chain to connect that to a sketch of a metal detector at a school or airport. Sketch the graphic input in pencil on yellow or white butcher or chart paper. When you are done with the pencil sketch, present the concept to the students tracing over the pencil lines with appropriate-colored markers, highlighting important aspects of the concept(s)/EU. Direct students to copy your sketch with colored pencils as you present it.

- **SKILLS OF HISTORIANS SIGNS**

- Using paint stir sticks (get these for free or very low cost at hardware or chain building supply stores if you tell them you are a teacher) and card-stock signs glued at the top of the stir stick. Label the signs with skills of historians that you are developing in your students: (i.e. (1) Understand the significance of past to own lives, (2) Distinguish between the important and inconsequential, (3) Develop historical empathy, (4) Acquire a comprehension of diverse cultures and shared humanity, (5) Understand change and consequences, purpose and process, (6) Comprehend interplay of change and continuity, (7) Prepare to live with uncertainties, (8) Grasp the complexity of historical causation, (9) Appreciate the tentative nature of judgments about the past and not look to lessons or history as cures for present ills, (10) Recognize the importance of individuals in history for both good and ill, (11) Appreciate the force of the non-rational, irrational, and accidental in history and human affairs, (12) Understand the relationship between geography and history as a context for events, (13) and Read widely and critically. Introduce the skills to students over the course of the semester, offering a couple of examples of the skill, and give a volunteer the sign to hold up when, during class, the skill is being utilized or discussed. You can offer extra credit for each time the student identifies the skill and applies their knowledge of it by holding it up and/or make it a requirement that each student work with a sign a 1-3 days per semester and summarize, in writing, what they learned about that skill from their experience. You can also create signs for EUs you are working toward in

a unit as well as for key vocabulary. Additionally, you can require a student, other than the sign-keeper to explain why the sign-keeper held up the sign at that moment.

- **READING FOR UNDERSTANDING STRATEGIES**

- There are 4 dimensions of classrooms that support reading: social, personal, cognitive, and knowledge-building. The following are activities that will help students become better readers of the texts you provide them in your history classroom. Talk with your students about if they feel safe in class to ask questions or show their confusion in class.

Make changes so they feel safe; Give extra credit to students who tell you what they didn't understand from the reading and more credit for those who can tell you precisely where and how they became confused; Share with them what texts are difficult for you. Share your strategies for solving reading problems; Talk about who reads in society and who does not; Talk about what kind of power you get if you read; Tell them what kinds of books are your favorites and ask them about theirs; Have the class write/talk about their reading habits, likes, and dislikes; Help students become aware of what their mind is doing when they read; Model thinking aloud as you read a passage. Have them read a passage silently and then debrief what they were thinking/doing as they read; Explain that if students can develop stamina, they will become better readers over years and decades just as the teacher has; Practice the following strategies with students: Before reading students should get the "big picture" by scanning and skimming texts; When confused or unsure, break down or chunk texts into smaller parts; Stop and ask yourself if you are understanding what you read. If not, go back and try to summarize or paraphrase what was read.

More strategies to model and suggest to students:

Write in the margins of the text; Visualize what is described in the text; Retell or paraphrase parts of texts; Make a graphic organizer of what one is reading as they read

Before reading, determine what your goal/purpose is for reading; Before reading a difficult text, get students to draw upon their prior knowledge or give them background that will help them make sense of what they are about to read.

Before reading, have students imagine themselves in similar situations similar to those that will be encountered in the text; Before reading, have students explore the conceptual vocabulary that will be encountered; Before reading, review and identify the structure of the text; Use text structures as cues for note-taking and graphic organizers.

- **THINK/PAIR/SHARE**

- Anytime you want students to become aware of their prior knowledge of a topic or EU, ask them to do a think-pair-share. For example, for the EU **rights come with responsibilities**, direct students to think of a right that they have in their home and how that right may be infringed upon if no one remains responsible (e.g. to read a book without being interrupted) and tell their partner or the person sitting next to them one of the rights they have, then listen to their partners right. Finally, volunteers share their responses whole class.

Extensions include writing down the pair-share information, comparing the responses, creating a class survey and tallying the results and drawing conclusions etc.

- **CONCEPT OF THE DAY/WORD OF THE DAY/WEEK/UNIT WITH HAND MOTION**
  - In order to help students recall and to emphasize important recurring big ideas in the curriculum, choose a big idea for your unit and create a hand motion that goes with it. For example, **clash of cultures** with a hand motion of two hands swinging together with interlaced fingers. Post the word or concept on the wall or board for the duration of the unit. Explain the concept, have the students practice the hand motion, and direct them to make the motion anytime they hear or read the concept.
- **STORYTELLING TECHNIQUES**
  - History can be thought of a series of grand stories told well. In order to tell the story well, utilize techniques of great storytellers. Before telling a story from history, plan it out and use the following strategies. If you have time, practice in front of the mirror or film yourself and make changes so that your Enduring Understandings, Knowledge, or Skills comes through. Strategies: The story deals only with the problem set up at the beginning of the story (anything else that does not take the story forward should be excluded); Describe the characters in detail; Don't memorize-improvise; Create an active silence (keeping eye-contact); Before you start the story; After you end the story; After telling a part of the story that will allow the listener to reflect, visualize, imagine etc.; Vary your loudness and tone of voice; Use sound effects; Use gestures; Use props; Stay relaxed and confident
- **PRIMARY SOURCE ANALYSIS WORKSHEETS**
  - Use primary sources in your teaching to help students understand how history is written and constructed as well as engage them in the process of creating history, especially in the case of analyzing local history documents. Download printable document analysis sheets from the National Archives for Written Document, Artifact; Cartoon; Map; Motion Picture; Photograph; Poster; Sound Recording at [archives.gov](http://archives.gov) and practice analyzing a document with the students on the overhead first, then have them work in small groups or pairs. Be sure to have a group discussion of the source(s) to help students refine their analyses from their peer's work and your guidance and understanding of skills of historians.
- **INSIDE/OUTSIDE CIRCLE**
  - In a large space, create an inside circle of students that faces out, an outside circle of students that faces in towards their partner (if there is not enough classroom space, move to a hallway and make a line A and a line B) and the teacher gives directions or asks questions related to the unit EU etc. of one circle and each circle takes turns talking and listening. Can be adapted so that the outside circle takes a step to their right and has a new partner to talk with. Great for review and formal test preparation.
- **K-W-L CHART**

- On chart or butcher paper, create a 3-column chart with the headings: what I know, what I want to know, and what I learned. Prior to beginning a new unit or introducing a new EU, call on volunteers to share what they know about the topic, EU or EQ and record that information in the K column. After the class has exhausted all of their ideas about what they know, ask them to create questions about what they want to know about the topic. Again, exhaust all of their ideas. After working on the unit for a few days, come back to the chart and ask for volunteers to share what they have learned so far as well as any new questions that they may have and record the information. Use the chart as a record of learning throughout the unit. An extension is to ask volunteers to come back to the chart and mark the items in the K column as T for true and F for false as students gain more understanding of the EU. The KWL also serves an assessment tool for you as the teacher because you can learn of student misconceptions at the beginning of the unit that you need to address and also for getting a sense of what students are understanding as the unit progresses so that you can modify your teaching accordingly.
- **GIVE ONE-GET ONE**  
This is a great before, during, or end of unit gathering of information. It also works well as a pre-writing or test study activity. (1) Have students fold a piece of paper lengthwise to form two columns and write **Give One** at the top of the left-hand column and **Get One** at the top of the right-hand column; (2) Have students brainstorm a list of all the things they already know about the topic they will be studying or the text they will be reading, writing the items down in the left-hand column; (3) After they make the list, have them talk to other students about what is on their lists; (4) Have students write any new information they get from these discussions in the right hand column of their lists, along with the name of the person who gave them the information; (5) Once everyone has given and gotten information, have the whole class discuss the information students have listed; (6) Again, have students write any new information they get from this discussion in the right column of their lists.

(adapted from Shoenbach et al., 1999)

- **SMALL GROUP ROLES**
  - When directing students to work in small groups, be it for analysis of primary source documents; solving an historical problem; researching a subtopic of an EU, give them clear roles with guidelines. Review the roles prior to getting them started in their groups and give examples of how they should carry out their roles. The time taken to clearly explain the roles and give examples of how to successfully take on those roles will be worth the more efficient and thoughtful group work that will ensue. Post the role description in a clearly visible place in the class during work time. Give students tags they can wear with their role or make hats, buttons, or table tent signs with their role printed on it.

**Facilitator:** Makes sure everyone in the group understands the task at hand; Makes sure everyone has a chance to participate; Listens to needs and makes decisions.

**Recorder:** Keeps an official record of the group's proceedings; Makes sure that all other members have the notes and information that will be needed.

**Materials Manager:** The only person who *goes to get* materials; Manages and keeps track of the materials.

**Reporter:** Organizes the group's presentation and should see that all the individual efforts are coordinated.

**Harmonizer:** Listens and observes and makes sure everyone's needs and concerns are met; Makes sure everyone gets to participate; Helps to solve conflicts

- **DOUBLE, TRIPLE, QUADRUPLE & ADAPTED VENN DIAGRAMS**

Use Venn diagrams to compare and contrast information whole class, small group, and individually with pencils or post-it notes. Take your EU or a piece of knowledge needed to gain understanding of the EU and break it into 2-4 logical pieces. Use the appropriate number of overlapping circles to compare and contrast aspects of the topic. An adapted Venn diagram is simply using overlapping rectangles instead of circles so that it is easier to write in the overlapping area. If you carry out the compare and contrast Venn diagram whole class, give students individual blank diagrams to fill out as you work that they can then keep in their notes for reference. Venn diagrams are a great pre-writing, during unit processing, or test-prep activity.

- **MAKING METAPHORS, ANALOGIES, & SIMILIES**

- Making metaphors asks students to bring their thinking to a higher level by inviting them to analyze and synthesize information. Metaphors can be student- or teacher-generated. The teacher can offer metaphors to help students get the **big picture** of an historical event, time-period, or issue. For example, a war is a see-saw, with each side winning or losing different battles. For the EU rights come with responsibilities, a metaphor could be a car and gas. The car does not serve a purpose without gas to make it go. During discussion, remind students to think of a metaphor for what you are discussing. Metaphors are also a great tool for structuring an essay. Also, use analogies, e.g. groups are to teams as political parties are to House committees. Finally, similies help students make sense of complex concepts or volumes of information, e.g. Communities are like families - everyone has a job that they need to do to help the family survive and succeed.

- **SUMMARIZING WITH FRAME QUESTIONS**

- At the end of a lesson or period, help students review what they have learned orally or in learning logs in writing by asking them to complete one or more of the following sentences: I still wonder.. Now I understand... I'd like to know more about... Something that doesn't make sense is... Some questions I have are... I agree that... I disagree about ... Extensions include asking students to pair-up and read one another's entries or share their ideas orally. Students can write their sentences on a post-it note and this becomes their "exit ticket" from class that they must complete and hand to you before you leave class.

- **LINK-UP**

- This is a great post-reading, post-lecture, post-viewing review and reflection activity. One student stands in the center of the circle and says, "My name is

\_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ interested me from the lesson/reading/movie/story this morning/afternoon.” Any other student who is also interested in the same thing links arms with that person and says, “I was also interested in (the previous person’s interest) and (another interest)”. The goal is to get the entire group linked up. If necessary, unlink up to get everyone linked again. The last person must make a statement that links them to the first person to complete the game.

- **BECAUSE COOPERATIVE STORIES**

- This is a great review activity after learning about a story from history. Sit in a circle. Explain that we will be reviewing some of the stories that we heard and learned about today/yesterday. Each person will say one sentence in the following order:

Person 1: [Tells something that happened: **First** or **Then**].

Person 2: [Explains why: **Because**].

Person 3: [Gives a probable effect of what happened: **So**]

Continue around the circle until ideas are exhausted or time is up.

- **HISTORY LINE-UP**

- This a great review/test-prep for students and an assessment tool for you to observe what misconceptions or weak spots they may have and need re-teaching. Students recall a historical event or story with an obvious chronology. On an index card, each student writes down one thing that happened at some point in the event (or the teacher creates these cards.) Now the students may not talk. They need to line up in the order the events occurred without talking. When they think they are done, they should do one final non-verbal check for accuracy then they will read their cards in order and make any necessary changes.

- **RECIPROCAL TEACHING**

- For texts that are above student reading level, the following technique is a powerful way to help students comprehend difficult texts:

**RECIPROCAL TEACHING**

**Pairs:**

- 1) Student A reads one paragraph or section aloud. A stops and asks B 2 good questions.
- 2) B answers the questions or asks for clarification.
- 3) A summarizes material for B. A asks B to add to the summary.
- 4) A and B predict what will happen next in the text.
- 5) (repeat and change A & B)

**Groups:**

- 1) Student A reads one paragraph or section aloud. A stops and asks 2 good questions.
- 2) B, C, or D answers the questions or asks for clarification. The group discusses.
- 3) A summarizes material for B, C, & D. A asks each to elaborate on the summary.
- 4) A, B, C, & D each predict what will happen next in the text.
- 5) (repeat and with B reading)



**Summarizing:** What is the gist of the text? What is the most important information?

**Questioning:** Ask a question that could be answered with information in the text. Or ask a question that you'd have to think about yourself.

**Clarifying:** Ask a question about a word or idea you don't think you understand.

**Predicting:** Make a prediction about what you think might happen next.

- **MAKE A GROUP**

- This activity should be done in a large space with room to move around. The teacher calls out a characteristic or a category and tells people to move as quickly as possible, into a group of 2-4 that share that same characteristic. For example, "People who had the same thing for breakfast as you did" or "People who feel the same way about cats as you do" or "People who love history." Call out the categories as quickly as possible so they are always moving (if they don't find a group the first round, they will the next) and be sure to include categories that will include all students.

- **HOT SEAT**

- This works well if you have a student that enjoys the lime-light and helps the rest of the class learn historical empathy and point-of-view for the time period. Because the person in the hot seat stays in character, all of the students must be thinking about events and life during the time period in which the historical character lived. Choose one or several students to come to the front of the room to portray historical characters that you are studying. The rest of the class asks them questions of their own, pre-written questions you've passed out on cards, or study guide questions created for a test. The students in the **hot seat** must answer as if they are that character. Extensions include explaining that the character has time-traveled to the present day. This allows the class to make comparisons between past and present contexts and events. You can also have up to 5 hot seats with 5 people in character who must answer the questions one by one as a discussion panel might. This allows for more complex thinking and connections, especially if you chose people from different time periods and social groups. Some questions that can be written on notecards for students to ask: What is your biggest challenge?
  - How are you a winner?
  - What are the major problems in you life and in society?
  - What do you hear on a day-to-day basis?
  - What do you see on a day-to-day basis?
  - What have you done for people?
  - How would you describe yourself?
  - What are your hopes and dreams?

- **WHAT AM I? CARDS**

- On your index card (don't look at your card!), write the name of a person, place, or idea from the current topic of study or a new topic for which you would like to elicit prior knowledge. Mix them up and pass them out again. Students hold the card on their forehead, facing out. Take turns describing to

another person what their person, place or thing is and try to guess what your own is. If you guess yours correctly, continue helping others guess their own.

- **4-CORNERS VOCABULARY**

- Creating a word-wall for concept vocabulary that students can refer to throughout the unit or semester can help them integrate that language into their understanding and work. They can also use the 4-corners method for a personal dictionary that can be used for reference in school and at home for their work. Show an example on a sheet of paper divided into 4 quadrants (index cards can be used as well). In each corner for one word students create: an illustration, a sentence using the word, a definition, and the vocabulary word. Post these or compile into a personal dictionary.

- **EVERY STUDENT GETS A CHANCE**

- If your students each have a whiteboard and dry erase marker, you can use this all day long for student processing of information and your ongoing assessment of student understanding and knowledge. There are endless opportunities. The following activity is differentiated because all students can respond at their own level of understanding. Show some content/a fact/a vocabulary word, and direct volunteers to read it aloud together. Then, direct students to respond on their whiteboards in writing or a sketch of what the content makes them think of.

- **CONCEPT POETRY**

- To help students make sense of important concepts in history, have them write a haiku about key words and phrases that lead to your EU. Students write a haiku on a topic of 3 lines with 5 syllables in the first line and then 7, then 5. For example,

- **1 to 3 SELF ASSESSMENT**

- Teacher reviews objectives and has students raise 1, 2, or 3 fingers in response to the objective (1=I can't do it; 2=I can't do it but I got closer; 3=I can do it).