



LIBERATED ETHNIC STUDIES

MODEL CURRICULUM COALITION

How Does Normalization Dehumanize?

Time: Three 30-40 minutes sessions

Grade Level: 3rd-6th

Purpose (What will students learn from this lesson?):

- Students will understand how normalization (how people, places, things, and ideas become normal or not normal) affects them and others.
- Students will understand that normalization is a way to take power from people by dehumanizing them.
- Students will understand how to identify normalization in themselves, their classroom, classroom materials, and in society.
- Students will understand how to stop normalization and regain their power to name the world and give respect to all.

Unit Enduring Understandings Alignment:

- We understand and critique the relationship between white supremacy, racism, anti-Blackness, anti-Indigeneity, xenophobia, patriarchy, cisheteropatriarchy, capitalism, ableism, ageism, anthropocentrism, and other forms of power and oppression.
- We understand that while studying forms of oppression, it is also critical to engage ourselves in developing critical consciousness, reclaiming hope and healing.

Lesson Guiding Questions:

- What does normalization look like? Sound like?
- What happens when there is normalization in our classroom/school?
- How does normalization make some people seem less human?
- How can we stop normalization so “normalized” people are not unfairly favored? How can we give respect to all?

Cultural Wealth (Yosso, p. 78):

- I have language I can use to stop normalization and humanize with respect.
- My whole being can help tell me when normalization, dehumanization or humanization is happening.

Ethnic Studies Principles Alignment:

- *Principle 1:* cultivate empathy, community actualization, cultural perpetuity, self-worth, self-determination, and the holistic well-being of all participants, especially Native People/s and people of color.
- *Principle 5:* challenge imperialist/colonial hegemonic beliefs and practices on the ideological, institutional, interpersonal, and internalized levels.

Standards Alignment:

- CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.R.2
- CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.R.7
- CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.SL.6

Materials:

<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Video of Harry Chapin’s song “Flowers Are Red” (5 minutes) with multilingual closed captioning preferred. 2. Lyrics for “Flowers Are Red” 3. Music Video Soy Yo from Bomba Estéreo with closed captioning. (Lyrics in Spanish here and in English here.) 4. Slide deck on normalization with examples. Or photos of normalized and not-normalized people and places. 5. T-charts and response charts in the slide deck. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 6. Computer/LCD projector/Internet access 7. Electronic whiteboard and dry erase markers or chart paper and markers.
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Modifications, Accommodations, Resources for Multilingual Students:

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Modify the slidedeck to respond to the needs of your classroom. Add photos and examples that are familiar to your students and that will be responsive to your students. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● You can shorten or lengthen this lesson depending on the needs of your class.
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<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have bilingual students sit next to monolingual students to translate as needed. 	
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Critical Vocabulary:

CRITICAL VOCABULARY	Definition and Rationale for choosing this word, phrase, or concept	Idea for pre-teaching or front-loading the concept.
normalization	how people, places, things, and ideas become normal or not normal	Show an image of a white, red, and black rose side by side. Ask the students to identify which is the normal rose? Discuss: Which is abnormal? Who should decide? What does normal mean?
dehumanize	To treat someone in a way that makes them seem like they are not as good as other people.	Offer age-appropriate examples of dehumanization from the UN's Declaration of Human Rights .

C1: Cultural Ritual and/or Energizer

Title: Link-Up: Two Feelings

STEP	DESCRIPTION	TIME
Step 1	Sit in a circle on the floor or in chairs. Land Acknowledgement: We remind ourselves that we are sitting on the land of the	2 minutes

	(Indigenous Land) in [City, State]. We do this to remember and how we can respect the people of this land past and present.	
Step 2	Ancestor Acknowledgement. We think about and bring those who have come before us to help guide what we do everyday. Is there someone you know about that you bring with you in your heart today? Share with the class who you bring with you to your teaching work today and why? Specifically, who is someone you know that celebrates you and your community?	1-2 minutes
Step 3	Link-Up: Two Feelings: Tell students that we are going to play a game called Link-Up. They can link-up physically or verbally. Tell the class, “ am Mx. ____ and I feel [feeling] today.” Then share the sentence frame: “My name is ____ and I ALSO feel ____ AND [another feeling].” Any other person who also feels the same way uses the frame and adds another feeling to the sentence until everyone who wants to share or the whole class has shared their two feelings.	10 minutes
Step 4	Explain that today we are going to be talking about how two big words: <i>normalization</i> and <i>dehumanization</i> make us feel.	5 minutes

C2: Critical Concepts

Title: “What is normalization? What is dehumanization”

STEP	DESCRIPTION	TIME
Step 1	Introduce the song “Flowers Are Red” by Harry Chapin. We are going to watch an animated story about the Little Boy in the Song. Play the Video of Harry Chapin’s song “Flowers Are Red” .	6 minutes
Step 2	Use the slidedeck to fill in the post-viewing t-chart. Remind the students that the teacher in the song said that flowers could only be red and green and punished the Little Boy for making flowers so many colors of the rainbow. Even after he was told he could use all the colors he could not anymore. Fill in the t-chart with volunteer responses to the Little Boy’s thoughts and the Little Boy’s feelings.	5 minutes
Step 3	Which is the normal rose? The different rose?: Show the students the image of 3 different color roses. Ask volunteers to share which they think is the normal rose and which is the different rose? Explain that red or white may be normal for	5-7 minutes

	<p>you because that's what you see more or have been told many times, but everyone has a different normal. Which means there is no <i>not</i> normal. How did you decide which was "different." For older students, engage in a deeper discussion: Who decides what is normal and not normal or abnormal? Who should decide? What is normal, anyway?</p>	
<p>Step 4</p>	<p>Share the images in the next slides and ask volunteers the question and discuss their responses:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Which is a normal family: All of these families are normal to those families. Which did you decide was different and why? Discuss: If something is normal than something else is not normal. But this is not true. Which families would you identify as different? Why? ● What is a normal food?: You may be less familiar with some of these foods. You may be vegetarian or vegan or kosher. You may not eat pork. Those foods are normal for the people who eat them. Which did you decide was different and why? ● What is a normal school?: All of these children are learning. Some inside, some outside, some in classrooms and some online. Some are learning about how people who pick the vegetables we eat are living. Which did you decide was different and why? What does that mean for the schools that are "different"? ● Who is a normal doctor? Who is a normal teacher? Why? Which is different? How did you decide which was different? What problems can we have when most people agree on which is normal and which is different? ● Who is a normal American?: It's very important that people feel they belong in this land we now call the United States and that they are treated fairly. Which did you decide was a different American and why? As you look at these pictures of people who live here, think about what you think what an American means? Who did you decide is different? Why does this matter? 	<p>25-30 minutes</p>
<p>Step 5</p>	<p>Ask students to share what it looks like and sounds like when you are treated like you are different? Offer a couple of examples in the t-chart in the slidedeck. Record their responses.</p>	<p>4 minutes</p>
<p>Step 6</p>	<p>Work with students to fill out the next chart that asks students to identify aspects of difference that are normalized and are considered not normal. Explain that there are many normalized people, places, things and ideas. Explain that the normalized things get power from being normalized but those</p>	

	<p>things that are not normalized have less power. Example of normalized/privileged groups: white, male, US citizens, standard English speakers, Christians, wealthy class, heterosexual, adults, able-bodied, business owners etc. Students may have more specific school-based examples like wearing expensive clothes, having a certain type of phone as a sign of class etc. Offer the examples and discuss how the normalized people and characteristics gain more power through their connection with normalcy. We need to question the idea of normalcy to make school and society more fair.</p>	
Step 7	<p>Discuss: Why do people talk about things as normal or different? Using the previous images and student discussion about the images, discuss the reasons why people categorize things as normal and different. Show that people, places, ideas, and things that people call different are ignored and not listened to or taken seriously. People that we decide are different don't get to make choices, have less freedom, and in the end have less power and that this is not fair. When people are considered more normal, they get more, keep more, and have more choices in life.</p>	5 minutes
Step 8	<p>Ask students how it feels when someone treats them like they are different or not normal. Offer examples they may be familiar with. Explain that you would like them to talk about their thoughts, emotions, feelings in their body, and how they think other people feel when people are treated differently or as if they are not normal. There are many ways we can tell when someone is not being treated fairly. We might think, "Wait. That's not fair." We might feel sad. We might get a tight feeling in our stomach. We might look at our friend who knows it's not right either. Ask for volunteers. Record their responses in the chart under the correct column: thoughts, emotions, body feelings, and other people feel.</p>	10 minutes
Step 9	<p>Show the slide: What is normalization? and choral read the definition: <i>how people, places, things, and ideas become normal or not normal</i>. Remind the students that in the "Flowers Are Red" song, the teacher <i>normalized</i> that flowers are only red and green and anything else is not normal and even should be destroyed and punished (i.e. ripping his drawing and making him sit in the corner).</p>	3 minutes
Step 10	<p>Introduce the concept of dehumanization. Show the slide with the definition: to treat someone in a way that makes them seem like they are not as good as other people. Choral read the word and the definition. When we say one thing is normal, we are also saying that another is <i>less</i> normal or even <i>not</i> normal. When we are talking about people, we dehumanize them. Describe the examples offered with the clipart and for</p>	5-10 minutes

older students, continue to a deeper discussion of how dehumanization hurts whole groups of people who are not normalized with the next slide. Explain, when we say one thing is normal, we are also saying that another is *less* normal or even *not* normal. When we are talking about people who we say are not normal, we dehumanize them. Imagine doing this to an entire generation of people. It's a long term process that strips you of your humanity bit by bit. Your humanity is your religion, your culture etc. It starts when you are little and can happen over and over until...imagine you are an 80 year old man and what happens after years of dehumanization? Then think about what does dehumanization do to an entire group of people?

For an even deeper discussion for youth who are ready to make explicit connections between normalization and dehumanization discuss how normalization dehumanizes people.

C3: Community Collaboration and/or Critical Cultural Production

Title: How can we stop normalization and regain our power to name the world in ways that respect everyone and celebrate who we are at home and in our communities?

STEP	DESCRIPTION	TIME
Step 1	<p>In the <u>next slide in the slidedeck</u> explain that what might not be normal for others can be normal for each of us in our different home communities. Ask the students to share what is normal for them in their community that might not be normal for others? Invite a few volunteers to share. Introduce the music video <u>"Soy Yo" by Bomba Estéreo</u> with subtitles in Spanish. Explain that this is a music video about a girl who is proud of what is normal in her home and community. Multilingual students will be able to understand that the main character in the story is proud of who she is without lyrics. You can also <u>post the lyrics</u> in the languages of the students. After viewing the video ask students to share: What do I bring to the community that is normal for me? For example, fasting, not eating, might be a normal celebration for my community. As students share, celebrate the part of their culture that is normal and that they want people to recognize.</p>	

Step 2	Ask the students: How can we stop normalization and give respect to all people, places, things, and ideas? Ask volunteers to share ideas.	2 minutes
Step 3	<p>Explain that in our classroom we will work to stop normalization and give respect to everyone. Here are some ways we can stop it using these sentence starters. Share the sentence starters (from the slide deck) and choral read them: In our classroom...</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">...we respect and celebrate all people, places, things, and ideas.</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">...we pay attention to when people call something normal or not normal and remind them to respect and celebrate everyone.</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">...we believe we get to decide .</p> <p>Mx. Teacher, I noticed that <u>[person/book/game etc.]</u> showed <u>[person, place, thing, idea]</u> was/was not normal and that disrespects them. I celebrate <u>[person, place, thing, idea]</u> and want to treat <u>[person, place, thing]</u> fairly.</p>	5 minutes
Step 4	Offer a few examples with the help of student volunteers. For example, “Mx. Lalia, I noticed that the video we just watched showed chow mein was not normal and that dehumanizes people who eat chow mein. I respect people who eat chow mein and want to treat people who eat it fairly.” or “Mx. Lalia, I noticed that a group at lunch was making fun of Jorge who has two dads, calling him names. They were treating him like he and his dads are not normal which dehumanizes people with same sex parents. I respect same-sex families and want to treat Jorge fairly.”	5 minutes
Step 5	Explain that RZA rewrote the racist ice-cream truck jingle “Turkey in the Straw” that has a racist history and show this short video of RZA explaining his process writing the song . (Another video for teacher background: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Cjng1PQeza4)	
Step 6	Assign students to groups of 3. Show the class the template for a new version of the “Flowers Are Red” song . Direct the triads to agree on an aspect of a dehumanized identity (from C2, Step 6 above) and fill in their choice. Circulate among groups supporting them in deepening their understanding of normalization and (de)humanization. Explain that students will be writing new songs with a humanizing ending for that identity. As needed, co-write an example song with the class. Example song titles could be “Boys Wear Blue” or “Teenagers Don’t Care” or “Parents are Two” or “Rich Is Best” or “Americans Are White” or “Doctors Are Men” etc.	30-40 minutes

C4: Conclusive Dialogue/Critical Circular Exchange

Connection: How is this relevant to students? How is it relevant to the unit? How do you bring back to the PURPOSE of the unit?	<p>Turn and Talk: Take turns telling your partner (or the person sitting next to you): 1) What do you know about normalization and dehumanization?; 2) How can you stop normalization and dehumanization?; 3) How can you celebrate what is normal for your home and community?; 4) How can you take action to advocate for the rights of dehumanized groups?</p> <p>Volunteers share responses they heard from their partner. Ask volunteers to share how it feels when they are respected and humanized? How does it feel to be treated fairly, especially after you have been treated unfairly? HOW does it feel to have your home and community celebrated? Fill out the chart on the last slide in the slidedeck asking for their thoughts, emotions, body feelings, and how people feel.</p>
Assessment: How will the students be assessed?	Invite triads to share their draft rewrite of “Flowers Are Red” and/or share their dehumanized identity and how they humanized them at the close of the song.
Evaluation: How will the effectiveness of this lesson plan be evaluated?	Throughout the year, prompt students to notice and speak up about normalization and dehumanization. Identify when you notice a student name the world on their own terms and show respect to people, places, things, and ideas that have been dehumanized.

RESOURCES AND NOTES

- Resources
[Video of “Flowers Are Red” by Harry Chapin](#)
Additional links in lesson plan above.
- Notes
- Worksheets and Handouts: Include links here.
Lyrics for “Flowers Are Red”
[Template for re-write of “Flowers Are Red”](#)
Additional links in lesson plan above.

Include Links to Background Information, Project Instructions, Tests, Handouts,

Worksheets, and Images.

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