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SCED 546
Assignment 2: Cultural Analysis Plan

I'm going to approach this cultural analysis plan both through the lens of strategies that I would use in a traditional in-person classroom and through how I am trying to modify those strategies for teaching remotely right now. I usually start off the school year building community through many different ice breaker activities. Many of the games are silly but they help students to build rapport with each other and me, learn everyone's names, and feel comfortable sharing their thoughts out loud in class. These activities encourage students to talk to each other in pairs and trios and share different parts of their lives including their interests, family, and experiences as they rotate through multiple conversations. During these activities I try to position myself in the room to hear as many conversations as possible to glean small insights into my students' identities and cultures. I also aim to learn all of my students' names, including correct pronunciation, within the first week.

In a remote setting, I'm approaching community building as virtual circles using Jamboard as a way to respond to prompts in real time and Flipgrid as a platform for students to share important parts of their identity with each other when we're working asynchronously. In Jamboard, I asked students to share one hope and one concern for the school year for one activity and to describe themselves with five 'I am' statements in another activity that we combined into a collective 'We are' poem. These activities illuminated for me what is on my students' minds and how they see themselves. For the first project of the year I asked students to select 5 photos that are important to them and describe why they chose each photo. Students did this through a short writing component and through presenting some of their photos in Flipgrid presentations.

This assignment prompted students to share much more than just the content of their chosen photos serving as an entry point for them to share larger aspects of their identity with me. This first assignment also served as a baseline that I am using to determine which students might hesitate to ask for help, need extra encouragement, lack access to reliable technology or may have other responsibilities like supervising their younger siblings at home.

To build on the information I've learned about my students through these community building activities I'm going to ask my students to fill out a Google Form to learn more about their individual experiences with science classes in the past, what makes them feel supported in class, as well as who would be the best person for me to call to celebrate their successes in my class and what languages are spoken in their home. I'll also ask my students what technology they have access to and other more logistical questions. I'll keep all of this data in a large spreadsheet that I'll add to regularly based on other information my students share during discussions in our 'live' remote classes, in their assignments, and through one-on-one communication like email or the Remind app.

In a regular classroom, I would try to structure my classes so that students were set up to work in small groups or independently for significant periods of time to allow me to conference with each student at least once a month. I would use the conference time to review specific assignments with them, explain written feedback I left them, and collaboratively make an action plan so they know very specifically what they need to do in order to improve their mastery level for our year-long mastery skills. I'd also weave in questions to learn more about their interests and family life. In a remote setting, I'm going to use an extension called 'mote' to record verbal comments on my students assignments in addition to the written feedback I'm leaving on their

mastery skill rubrics since I'm not able to sit down with my students to review their work in person. Additionally, I'm going to set up an Office Hours Google calendar with appointment slots so students can reserve individual appointments with me to get extra help, check-in, or work through an assignment together. These interactions will give me the opportunity to have deeper conversations with my students one-on-one. In these more informal conversations, I hope that I will be able to learn more about my students' perspectives on education, their future, religion, traditions, family origins, and values. I'm also using the 'Private Comments' feature in Google Classroom to have ongoing conversations with my students as they work on assignments, but these conversations are generally more focused on academic work.

Once I get a better sense of the students in my classroom and their cultures, I can deepen my understanding of their cultures by asking them deeper questions about their lived experiences. In general, I think a very valuable next step once I have a general sense of my students and their cultures would be to ask them follow up questions about their identity phrased as, "I'd really love to learn more about _____ (food, interest, tradition, family story, etc.), what book/movie/song/etc. should I read/watch/listen to/etc.?" It will also be really valuable to include my students' families into the conversation by making phone calls home to learn more about my students' experiences. By combining all of these diverse data sources, I will have a more complete picture of the identities and cultures represented in my classes and I will be able to plan my instruction to best support my students by connecting new content to examples from their lives and experiences and creating rituals and routines that support their learning.