RESPECTing Culture with All Learners

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*The goal for social studies teachers is to offer an array of knowledge, skills, and dispositions that fulfill the ten National Council for the Social Studies standards. Powerful learning should be facilitated as specific social studies lessons, integrated across the curriculum, demonstrated throughout social interactions, and should reflect proficiencies as critical thinkers, decision makers, and problem solvers. Engaging in learning experiences within a multitude of contexts increases learners’ abilities to understand and accept themselves, one another, and society as they develop cultural competence. To advance teachers’ and young learners’ comprehension of these expectations, we share a four-part learning experience grounded on the word RESPECT, which serves as the acronym for navigating cultural competence, self-efficacy, and moral development in the classroom. Using the story, “The Sneetches” by Dr. Seuss, participants are guided through a series of hands-on experiences illustrative of social studies that is honest, natural, authentic, and holistic.*

**Key Words:** cultural competence, social studies education, NCSS Standards, self efficacy, moral development, critical thinking

**Introduction**

The goal for elementary school teachers is to develop an array of meaningful social studies learning experiences to instill the knowledge, skills, and dispositions based on the ten standards from the National Council of the Social Studies (NCSS) (National Council for the Social Studies, 2010). Social studies should be facilitated as specific social studies learning experiences, integrated across the curriculum, demonstrated throughout social interactions, and should reflect learners’ self efficacy as critical thinkers and decision makers. For elementary school teachers, social studies essentially serves as the glue that holds their curricular content together.

NCSS Standard 1: Culture encompasses four principles that reinforce the concept and practices of respect: (a) human beings create, learn, share, and adapt to culture; (b) cultures are dynamic and change over time; (c) through experience, observation, and reflection, students will identify elements of culture as well as similarities and differences among cultural groups across
time and place; (d) in schools, this theme typically appears in units and courses dealing with geography, history, sociology, and anthropology, as well as multicultural topics across the curriculum (NCSS, 2010). In this paper, we describe a four-part learning experience founded on respect using the story, “The Sneetches” by Dr. Seuss that introduces teachers to the four principles of culture. During these interactive lessons, learners are immersed in the concept of culture as they examine the constructs of culture and connect the constructs to their own lives, experience changes within culture through a simulation, and transfer their discoveries about multicultural education to learning and living.

Culture

The concept of culture may seem complicated and challenging to understand. For some teachers, the study of culture may appear controversial and uncomfortable, so it is simply easier to avoid. The overarching goal of this four-part learning experience is to mediate the dissonance and provide a mechanism that facilitates and supports the learning.

NCSS Standard 1: Culture is the first standard and forms a purposeful base for all other learning. The word culture embodies concepts, practices, and values relevant to ever-changing contexts. We have selected four researchers to help establish our definition of culture. James Banks (2008) defines culture as the “ideations, symbols, behaviors, values, and beliefs that are shared by a human group” (p. 133). Banks also points out that culture can be defined as the “symbols, institutions, or other components of human societies that are created by human groups to meet their survival needs” (p. 133). Expanding upon Banks’ initial foundation, Geneva Gay (2000) defines culture as a “dynamic system of social values, cognitive codes, behavioral standards, worldviews, and beliefs used to give order and meaning to our own lives as well as the lives of others” (p. 8). She reminds us that culture is “dynamic, complex, interactive, and changing, yet a stabilizing force in human life” (p. 10).

Eugene Garcia (2002) broadens the definition of culture as the “system of understanding characteristics of that individual’s society or some subgroup within that society” including “values, beliefs, and notions about acceptable and unacceptable behavior, and other socially constructed ideas that members of the culture are taught are ‘true’” (p. 73). Nancy Gallavan (2011) adds that social studies guides young learners in knowing, doing, and believing as their horizons expand. At the same time, social studies may contribute significantly to advancing students’ cultural competence, which is their ability to understand and accept themselves and all of society—locally and globally. Social studies offer the opportunity for students to exhibit this expanded competence through their thoughts, words, actions, and interactions. In sum, the keys to pursuing cultural competence are comprehending and maintaining respect, especially among people and situations with which one has no experience.

Many young learners first become aware of cultural similarities and differences when they enter school. Their new encounters make visible surface, intermittent, and deep cultural characteristics in themselves and in other people that they may or may not have realized. As the learners develop both socially and cognitively, Curtain and Dahlberg (2010) have found that students in grades 3-5 become more receptive to learning about people different from themselves. Learning with and about other people occurs best when working in groups in ways that stimulate the imagination and provide opportunities to share ideas verbally (Curtain & Dahlberg, 2010). Jones, Pang, and Rodriguez (2001) state that “development and learning occur within a sociocultural context and that social interaction is critical to children’s development and learning” (p. 35), thus supporting NCSS Standard 5: Individuals, Groups, and Institutions.
Young learners depend heavily on their verbal interactions so their awareness of similarities and differences increases when talking with peers whose primary language, vocabulary, or references may be different from their own. Being different is common across the United States. In a Roper Poll conducted in 2004 by the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (Abbott & Brown, 2006), 25% of Americans live in households where someone is fluent in more than one language. For younger Americans, the percentage increases to 42%. And even when the primary language is the same, young learners encounter a range of differences among their peers that are expressed through their various vocabulary skills and social references that are based on cultural backgrounds and personal experiences. Because language and culture are intricately woven into a child’s worldview, teachers must be attuned to their students’ levels of awareness and comfort with cultural competence to help students communicate with one another as each student shapes his or her individual sense of self efficacy and moral development.

Offering Social Studies that is Honest, Natural, Authentic, and Holistic

The four-part learning experience described in this article offers teachers a framework to engage in social studies in ways that are honest, natural, authentic, and holistic (Gallavan, 2011) with third through fifth graders, although the lessons can be modified easily for older and younger learners. Students flourish when learning captivates their immediate interests, stimulates their growing imaginations, challenges their critical thinking, and brings them rewarding discoveries. This learning experience is straightforward, believable, realistic, and connected to how students learn and live.

In order to provide social studies learning experiences that are honest, natural, authentic, and holistic, social studies teachers should “possess the knowledge, capabilities, and dispositions to use at the appropriate school levels a variety of instructional strategies to encourage student development of critical thinking, problem solving, and performance skills” as stated in NCSS Pedagogical Standard 3 (NCSS, 2004, p. 51). Additionally, social studies teachers “should possess the knowledge, capabilities, and dispositions to use at the appropriate school levels learning environments that encourage social interaction, active engagement in learning, and self motivation” as stated in NCSS Pedagogical Standard 4 (NCSS, 2004, p. 51).

Developing powerful learning experiences that fulfill these standards requires innovation, dedication, and an understanding of child development. Young learners in the third through fifth grades are immersed in the “mythic” stage of development, which Egan (1979) describes as a time when young learners should be engaged in experiences that enable them to interpret what they are learning in terms of their emotions and broad moral categories; initiate building new information in terms of contrasting qualities such as big/little and good/bad; and illustrate clear, unambiguous meaning, such as good and bad” (as cited in Shrum & Glisan, 2010, p. 113). Thus, learning about culture must be crafted carefully for young learners for them to be engaged in critical thinking related to their self efficacy within ever-changing contexts.

Given that this learning experience offers students several interactive opportunities to find out more about themselves by sharing their findings with other students, the teacher is encouraged to talk with the school administrator in advance of scheduling these learning experiences and send notes home to students’ families with copies of the story and handouts. The teacher should explain that the lessons provide essential insights in social studies substantiated by specific state standards and academic expectations.
RESPECTing Culture in the Classroom

This four-part learning experience is grounded on the word RESPECT; each letter of the word represents an essential aspect of cultural competence. Descriptions of each essential aspect, connections to the NCSS Standards, and ways to examine that particular aspect illuminate social studies that is honest, authentic, natural, and holistic. Relating reality, exploration, sensitivity, people, equality, care, and talk to the context of cultural competence, self efficacy, and moral development requires teachers to know the information mindfully, guide their students supportively, provide engaging activities comfortably, and integrate resources comprehensively. The goal is to equip each student with knowledge, skills, and dispositions that promote respect for all people.

Prior to beginning any of the activities, teachers should acquaint themselves fully with each of the essential aspects of cultural competence represented by the seven letters in the word RESPECT. During the activities teachers are encouraged to extend the following descriptions of the RESPECT model with additional information relevant to their courses and students; teachers should also add to the ways to examine each aspect with readily available resources. The respect model is designed to be a recursive approach for reviewing concepts and for connecting practices to learning and living in the context of cultural competence.

R=Reality
The population in the United States continues to change and become more diverse over time. Information showing changes, such as movement and immigration patterns, is available through the census counts and various governmental and research agencies reporting for the nation, states, counties, cities, towns, and schools. In many communities, people speak various languages, one of many uniquely special cultural characteristics. Data reporting the immigration figures and the languages spoken are also available online and from various governmental and research agencies.

E=Exploration
Social studies is powerful when it engages students in their own personalized exploration according to NCSS Standards 4 and 5 (NCSS, 2010). Young learners flourish with opportunities to learn openly about themselves, each other, and all of society around the world, from the past through the present and into the future. In order to contextualize all of the social studies academic disciplines, the learning must be an exploration that begins with the self. Explorations must be active and challenging; they must be conducted to achieve purposeful outcomes that are honest, natural, and authentic through self reflections, interviews, and simulations.

S=Senses, Sensitivities, and Sensibilities
Learning involves absorbing information through all five senses by seeing, hearing, smelling, tasting, and touching. Getting up close and personal with artifacts makes all the difference in comprehension of vocabulary and concepts. Learning also happens when we use our emotions to check our feelings and our brains to follow our thinking. It may seem obvious or logical that senses, sensitivities, and sensibilities (Gallavan, 2011) would all be activated and linked to enhance learning, but too often in elementary school classrooms, young learners are not invited into learning as much as they are informed about the expectations. Sharing artifacts, asking questions, delving into topics and issues from multiple perspectives help young learners build upon their backgrounds, beliefs, behaviors, and their bequests or the gifts they have to
share with other people (Gallavan & Webster-Smith, 2010). By tapping the sources right in front of them, teachers and students can co-construct learning and collaborate to create new outcomes.

**P=People**

Social studies is the science of people. Therefore, social studies is a living, dynamic, and inclusive body of knowledge, skills, and dispositions in ever-changing contexts. Social studies is a school subject that is new every day; every person, place, and event contributes to the depth, breadth, and wealth of richness called the social studies. It is the study of people by people for the people; every person’s story is valuable and should be valued. It is critical that all people are respected for their culture and become acquainted with other people’s cultures (Bowles & Gallavan, in press).

**E=Equity**

The world and the United States have long battled issues of fairness. In classrooms, fairness is called efficacy (Bandura, 1986). Bandura writes about four sources of efficacy we feel students must experience every day. The four sources include (1) mastery experiences, (2) physiological and emotional states, (3) vicarious observations, and (4) social persuasion. Mastery experiences communicate the strongest influence on efficacy. Accomplishing a rigorous objective and receiving constructive feedback from peers significantly fortifies one’s sense of efficacy. Concomitantly, being in an emotional state of positive excitement and internal reward while pursuing the objective, strengthens one’s sense of efficacy.

**C=Care**

Since social studies is the study of people with equity at the core, then care must be present. Care involves moral development (Crain, 1985) defined as the basic elements of autonomy, belonging, competence, and fairness (Nucci, 2009). Becoming involved in social studies requires the independence and self sufficiency to realize that individuals belong in society as members of many different groups. All individuals and groups are entitled to the privileges and power to have voice, choice, and ownership. By taking care of ourselves, we become attuned to our own character, our abilities to think and make decisions, our motivation to get involved and help others by utilizing our senses, sensitivities, and sensibilities.

**T=Talk**

Perhaps as much as teachers want their students to listen, teachers also need to encourage and let their students talk about people, places, and events that matter. Teachers certainly can influence their students to help them determine what matters; likewise, students can determine what matters for themselves. Through guided conversations with partners, in triads or cooperative learning groups, and by working collaboratively on teams, the learning about self, others, and society expands exponentially. If teachers want social studies to be honest, natural, authentic, and holistic, then teachers must empower their learners with opportunities to RESPECT language and culture.

**Four-part learning experience**

The story, “The Sneetches” by Dr. Seuss, can be used in the elementary school classroom to introduce students to the four principles of culture: (1) human beings create, learn, share, and
adapt to culture; (2) cultures are dynamic and change over time; (3) through experience, observation, and reflection, students will identify elements of culture as well as similarities and differences among cultural groups across time and place; (4) in schools, this theme typically appears in units and courses dealing with geography, history, sociology, and anthropology, as well as multicultural topics across the curriculum (NCSS, 2010). During each of the following four interactive learning experiences, learners are immersed in the concept of culture as they examine the constructs of culture and connect the constructs to their own lives, experience changes within culture through a simulation, and transfer their discoveries about multicultural education to learning and living.

Part 1: RESPECT KWLH Chart

To initiate learning about culture and respect, the teacher displays a large copy of the RESPECT KWLH chart. This chart is a modification of the traditional KWL chart that seeks student input prior to the learning experiences related to What We Know Now and What We Want to Know supplemented with input gathered after the learning experiences related to What Did We Learn and How Did We Learn. Our intention is to prompt students to examine the learning process and strengthen their connections throughout the four-part learning experience.

![Figure 1. Blank RESPECT KWLH Chart](image)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Component</th>
<th>What We Know Now</th>
<th>What We Want to Learn</th>
<th>What We Have Learned</th>
<th>How Did We Learn</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Reality</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exploration</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Senses, Sensitivities, Sensibilities</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>People</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Equity</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Care</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Talk</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Introducing each word represented by the acronym RESPECT, the teacher records the students’ initial comments as they brainstorm each concept to guide their upcoming discussions and activities. The teacher highlights the power of language for expressing the thoughts and feelings associated with people and places around the world—locally and globally—evident in personal conversations, media, and fiction and non-fiction literature. Posting this chart and recording additional ideas as students think of examples during the learning experiences and future units of learning extends the activity throughout the school year.

Part 2: “The Sneetches”

The story of “The Sneetches” is one of many outstanding pieces of literature that teachers can feature in their classrooms to study social studies and cultural competence. The teacher begins by reading aloud the story of “The Sneetches” by Dr. Seuss found in the book titled, *The Sneetches and Other Stories* (Geisel, 1961). According to Pantaleo (2002), children’s literature
“generates questions and new knowledge, affords vicarious experiences of other worlds, and provides encounters with different beliefs and values” (p. 211).

In this Dr. Seuss story, there are two groups of Sneetches. One group has stars on their bellies; one group does not have stars on them at all. The group without stars would like stars “upon thars.” Conveniently, Sylvester McMonkey-McBean arrives with his star-on machine, and for a small fee, he places stars “upon thars.” Then the Sneetches who first had the stars ask McMonkey-McBean to remove their stars, and, for a small fee, McMonkey-McBean supplies this service. The story continues with Sneetches asking to have stars on and stars off until all of the Sneetches are confused and no longer care. The Sneetches realize that having or not having stars “upon thars” no longer matters, and they all can get along with one another in unity.

The teacher should ask the students to listen carefully throughout the story and to record one or two ideas in each section of their in the K and W sections of their KWLH chart (Gallavan & Kottler, 2008) related to the characteristics of Star-bellied Sneetches, the characteristics of Sneetches without Stars, or the characteristics shared by the two types of Sneetches.

After recording some characteristics independently, the teacher asks the students to share their notes with two other students. Working in triads allows talking time for each student balanced with listening time to only two other students. Students are encouraged to write additional ideas on their graphic organizers while talking in their triads. Then the teacher asks one member of each triad to share some notes from each triad that are recorded on a larger graphic organizer of a star for the entire class to see. Collaborative learning experiences encourage children to reach their highest potential by increasing their levels of knowledge and even changing behaviors (Vygotsky, 1986).

From this conversation, the teacher summarizes the purpose of the story as an honest analogy of society by showing that people are both similar to and different from one another. The teacher emphasizes the message in the story that having or not having particular characteristics does not make one person better than another person and that people should accept and respect one another and themselves just as they are.

Part 2: The Culture Wheel

After the group discussion about cultural characteristics, the teacher displays a large culture wheel and gives each student a copy.

Morgan (2009) reminds teachers to introduce multiple perspectives at an early age as a way “to reduce problems involving prejudice or discrimination” (2009, p. 219). The teacher tells the class that, although every person has a multitude of cultural characteristics that may be similar to and/or different from characteristics of other people, this wheel helps each of us identify eight of our many individual characteristics: nationality, race, language, family, talents, appearance, age, and gender. The teacher records characteristics about him or herself corresponding to each labeled portion of the culture wheel as sample descriptors to model for the students. Then the teacher guides the students in completing their culture wheels with characteristics describing themselves. As an option, the teacher could send the culture wheels home with students to complete with their families after the teacher has introduced this activity in class.

After students have completed their culture wheels, the teacher reinforces the importance to value and respect all kinds of diverse characteristics in all people just as the Sneetches learned to value having or not having “stars upon thars.” Creating a Culture Wheel supports the National Council for the Social Studies Standard 1, Culture, which states that “social studies programs
should include experiences that provide for the study of culture and cultural diversity” (NCSS website, 2010).

**Figure 2. Culture Wheel**

![Culture Wheel Diagram]

**Part 3: The Power of Language**

The third part of this learning experience begins with the teacher displaying a large blank T-chart labeled Words Meaning Unfair and Words Meaning Fair as an opportunity to hear the language of respect. The teacher gives each triad of students the same blank T-chart and allows time to generate words that they have heard and to write in each column. Students also are asked to talk about the meanings of the words and to be prepared to use them in a sentence that provides an example of the word.

This discussion is especially important for culturally and linguistically diverse students (CLDs) whose cultural understandings and perspectives may vary along with their linguistic proficiency. Weisman and Hansen’s (2002) research points out that many educators believe that social studies should be taught in English only because language is “used as a tool to understand abstract concepts” (p. 181). However, we believe that all languages and uses of language should receive honor and respect in social studies and all other subject areas in elementary school classrooms.

Listing the words in two categories gives students a visual support while brainstorming lowers the affective filter allowing students to listen to the language produced and participate if they feel ready. This activity also supports Egan’s (1979) mythic stages of development by building on students’ interpretations of experiences based on their emotions and broad moral categories. This activity further develops the NCSS Standard 1, Culture, since students “through
experience, observation, and reflection, … will identify elements of culture as well as similarities and differences among cultural groups across time and place” (NCSS website, 2010).

Figure 3. Blank T-Chart With Sample Words Below

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Words Meaning Unfair</th>
<th>Words Meaning Fair</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>biased</td>
<td>racist</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>bigotry</td>
<td>sexist</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>chauvinism</td>
<td>stereotyping</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>discrimination</td>
<td>unethical</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>disrespect</td>
<td>unequal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>favoritism</td>
<td>wrong</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>inequality</td>
<td>acceptance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>intolerance</td>
<td>democracy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>marginalization</td>
<td>equal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>mean</td>
<td>equality</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>narrow mindedness</td>
<td>equity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>one-sidedness</td>
<td>ethical</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>partiality</td>
<td>evenhanded</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>prejudice</td>
<td>just</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>human rights</td>
<td>impartial</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>impartial</td>
<td>logical</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>moral</td>
<td>nice</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>non-discriminatory</td>
<td>reasonable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>reasonable</td>
<td>respect</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>social justice</td>
<td>tolerance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>unbiased</td>
<td>value</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
After an appropriate amount of time has passed, the teacher returns to the large blank T-chart and asks one student from each triad to tell one word and explain what it means by using it in a sentence as an example. The teacher continues until all students in all triads have been given opportunities to share words and meaningful sentences. The list of words provided in Figure 3 will help the teacher steer the class conversation following the simulation and throughout the school year in academic and social settings.

Part 4: A Simulation Related to Power and Respect

In this part of the learning experience, the teacher prepares small stars by cutting them out of six different colors of paper, i.e., red, orange, yellow, green, blue, and purple. Nothing is written on the stars. The students are told that they are going to play a game called a simulation. In a simulation there are specific rules; students will be told some of the rules and they will have to figure out the other rules as the game is played or when the class talks about the game after it has ended.

The teacher continues explaining that the students are going to be Sneetches, just like in the story that the teacher read aloud to them. The teacher announces that each student will be given a small star of a particular color to keep hidden; the color indicates the type of Sneetch that the student will play in the game and the color should be kept a secret. The teacher wears a multicolored star with all six colors featured in it. The multicolored star combines the individual characteristics represented by the six different colors of stars distributed to students.

As the school day proceeds the teacher announces that the red Sneetches will get to sit in rolling chairs. The orange Sneetches will serve as the teachers by writing on the boards, giving directions, and fulfilling other tasks that the teacher needs throughout the day. The yellow Sneetches will get be first in line and to receive distributed items. The green Sneetches will go to lunch ten minutes early. The blue Sneetches will go to recess ten minutes early. The purple Sneetches will have less homework.

And, just like the Sneetches, soon all of the students are confused and a bit upset so the teacher gives all of the students multicolored stars just like the teacher’s star. The multicolored star represents the role of Sylvester McMonkey-McBean and, for no fee, the teacher can use the star off and star on machine to replace all of the single colored stars with multicolored stars. Ultimately all students should have multicolored stars demonstrating the four principles of cultural competence.

This simulation reveals the power of engaging in social studies that explores understanding ourselves, one another, and society—locally to globally. Following the star exchange, the students must be allowed time to talk openly among themselves to relive the simulation. Students will want to talk about how it felt for other students to receive privileges that they did not receive. The teacher should refer to the list of words that mean fair and unfair, so the students can connect with this authentic experience. This conversation should include real world examples about showing respect for all people. This part of the learning experience addresses NCSS Standard 6, Power, Authority, and Governance, which directs programs to “include experiences that provide for the study of how people create, interact with, and change structures of power, authority, and governance” (NCSS website, 2010).

Closure of the 4-Part Learning Experience

At the completion of the four lessons, the teacher and students return to the KWLH chart to record their discoveries related to What Did We Learn and How Did We Learn. Students
connect their background knowledge and initial questions with their newfound learning within the processes of learning. The last two columns in the KWLH chart capture students’ attention as they begin to recognize the presence and power of respecting cultural characteristics in their everyday lives. A completed sample RESPECT KWLH chart shows the results from one fourth-grade classroom (N. P. Gallavan, personal communication, May 5, 2011).

*Figure 4. Sample Completed RESPECT KWLH Chart*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Component</th>
<th>What We Now Know</th>
<th>What We Want to Learn</th>
<th>What We Have Learned</th>
<th>How Did We Learn</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Reality</td>
<td>Our school has many different kinds of people, both girls and boys, who live in all kinds of homes and go to all kinds of places.</td>
<td>How many different kinds of people are in our school? What makes us alike and what makes us different?</td>
<td>Our school has 794 students who represent 13 racial/ethnic groups. Half of the students are girls and half are boys.</td>
<td>We asked the principal to share this information with us. The teacher helped us make graphs.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exploration</td>
<td>I talk, ask questions, listen, and watch people. I watch television and read books. I talk with my parents and other adults.</td>
<td>How do we find good sources to get information that record the numbers of people in different ways for different reasons?</td>
<td>People identify their cultural characteristics in various ways and for various reasons.</td>
<td>We surfed the Internet for more information.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Senses, Sensitivities, Sensibilities</td>
<td>I can share food with other people so we learn about different tastes and smells.</td>
<td>What kinds of questions can I ask other people so I can get to them and not hurt their feelings?</td>
<td>I now know what good questions are and how not to hurt their feelings.</td>
<td>We read in books and on the Internet. We listened to some guest speakers. We also practiced with other students.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>People</td>
<td>The world is full of many different people who live in different ways, wear different clothes, and eat different foods. Not all people like other people.</td>
<td>How many people will live on Earth when I grow up?</td>
<td>The world population is 7 billion and it continues to grow quickly. What happens in one country affects another country.</td>
<td>We looked at all kinds of maps and listened to an expert. We also read books.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Equity</td>
<td>Not all people are treated the same;</td>
<td>How can I find more information</td>
<td>I need to be sure to treat other people as</td>
<td>We talked with one another and</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Throughout the school year, information recorded on the KWLH chart can easily be incorporated into future conversations, social studies lessons, integrated learning experiences, and social interactions related to the concept and practices of culture and respect. With purposeful guidance from teachers, students will increase their text-to-self, text-to-others, and text-to-text connections (Keene & Zimmerman, 1997).

**Conclusion**

Holloway and Chiodo discovered in their 2009 study that the social studies ARE being taught in elementary school albeit most often the lessons are taught as integrated lessons with other content areas. Elementary school students are aware of culture, they are curious to learn more about their own culture and other people’s culture, and they would like to be included in meaningful conversations (Bolgatz, 2004). To respect language and culture, we agree with Bolgatz who recommends that teachers provide provocative materials, ask specific comprehension questions, and allow students to grapple with the implications of the words and stories they hear. As students begin to explore the concept of culture and the processes of and reasons for identifying cultural characteristics, they enhance their sense of self efficacy, moral development, and cultural competence.

In this article we have defined culture according to four researchers and outlined a framework that teachers can use based on the NCSS social studies standards for teaching respect with third through fifth-graders featuring the book, *The Sneetches* by Dr. Seuss. The article
includes the Sneetches’ activity and a discussion on the effectiveness and alignment with the RESPECT framework. Four lessons are detailed exemplifying the importance for social studies that is honest, natural, authentic, and holistic. Finally, we included a list of web-based references to support teachers’ curricular planning and instructional strategies.

It is the authors’ intention and hope that the respect model will be used as a recursive approach for reviewing concepts and for connecting practices to learning and living in the context of cultural competence by meeting the national standards for social studies while engaging students in an activity that is honest, natural, authentic, and holistic.

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**Web-based References**


**Web-based Teacher Resources**

**Critical Multicultural Pavilion**
http://www.edchange.org/multicultural/index.html

**Culture in Second Language Teaching**
http://www.cal.org/resources/digest/0309peterson.html

**Diversity in the Classroom**
http://www.pbs.org/kcts/preciouschildren/diversity/index.html

**Peace Corps: World Wise Schools**

**Peace Education with Dr. Seuss**

**Scholastic: Diversity**
http://teacher.scholastic.com/professional/teachdive/

**Teaching Culture**
Teaching the Sneetches

Teaching Tolerance: Anti-Racism Activity
http://www.tolerance.org/activity/anti-racism-activity-sneetches

Websites for Multicultural Teaching
http://home.csumb.edu/s/sleeterchristine/world/Websites/teacher_resources.html

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