

Utilizing Music and Songs to Promote Student Engagement in ESL Classrooms

Activity “Social Factors and Discrimination”

Lesson Description:

The purpose of this lesson is to identify the social factors that are prevalent in the song *Where is the Love* by the Black Eyed Peas. Students will discuss what social factors are and the reasons why social factors may lead to violence.

Through this lesson students will reflect on “responsibilities of an individual in relationship to society”. The class will engage in higher order of thinking skills in order to gain a better understanding about the political and social factors that are found in music. Also students will reflect on the understanding that “personal choices result in benefits or consequences by identifying and interpreting the cause and effects that lead to violence and discrimination.

Introduction:

I'm going to challenge you to a little bit of a pop quiz. I'm going to simply tell you some quotes. One line quotes taken either from some of my favorite hip-hop songs or some of my favorite Shakespearean plays or sonnets and you're going to tell me by show of your hands whether you think it's a hip hop or Shakespeare.

The first one we'll go for is “To destroy the beauty from which one came.”

If you think that's that's hip-hop raise your hands, please.

(...) It's from a gentleman known as Shawn Carter, better known as Jay-Z.

We'll go for another one “Maybe it's hatred I spew maybe it's food for the spirit?” (...) Does anyone heard of a gentleman known as Eminem? That's from a track Eminem did with Jay-Z actually called “Renegade”.

We'll go for a couple more “Men would rather use their broken weapons than their bare hands”.

(...) That one is from Shakespeare, it's from a play known as “Othello”.

The last quote of the day “Socrates, philosophies and hypotheses can't define.”

(...) That's “Wu-Tang Forever”. The first hip hop album to go number one in the US.

So, as you can see it isn't clear-cut once the context is taken away. If you had poetic aspirations in the 15th century and wanted to reach a broad audience, you became a play writer. So, today you become a rapper.

If you look at many of the central themes of contemporary rap music, many of them are precisely the same themes, Shakespeare focused on his works. Among them: race, religion, socioeconomic status, ethnicity, physical attributes, education level etc.

Step one: Lead classroom in an open discussion about factors in society that contribute to discrimination and violence. Encourage students to use the popcorn method of calling out answers while teacher writes the different factors on the board. (Suggested answers: race, religion, socioeconomic status, ethnicity, physical attributes, education level etc.) Teacher should write answers on the board in a chart method:

Example chart:

Society Factors
Nationality
Religion
Physical Attributes

<i>Location of Residence...etc.</i>

Meanwhile, students should complete a hand-drawn chart on their own note paper.

Step Two: Teacher will need to use popcorn method again and have students lead the classroom discussion. While using this method, teacher will need to add an additional column to the chart. Label this column **Reasons why this would lead to discrimination and violence**. Have students do the same on their own paper. Next, ask students to openly discuss why each of these factors can lead to discrimination

Example chart:

Society Factors	Reasons why this would lead to discrimination and violence
Nationality	<i>Some may believe their nationality makes them superior....</i>
Religion	<i>People don't believe in the same religion, results in religious conflict...</i>
Physical Attributes	<i>Different skin tone/color, different sizes....</i>

Step three: Continue the open-class discussion by encouraging students to chart ways in which a person could prevent discrimination and violence with each factor. Teacher will need to draw a third column for their chart and label it **ways to prevent discrimination and violence**. Using the same method as step one and two, allow students to popcorn answers out loud as teacher fills in the chart.

Example Chart:

Society Facto	Reasons why this would lead to discrimination and violence	Ways to prevent discrimination and violence
Nationality	<i>Some may believe their nationality makes them</i>	<i>Engage in other people's culture so that you can better understand them.</i>
Religion	<i>People don't believe in the same religion, results in religious</i>	<i>Learning about different religious differences and comparing/contrasting their religion</i>
Physical Attribut	<i>Different skin tone/color, different sizes....</i>	<i>Understanding that skin color is a pigment difference, not a biological difference.</i>

Students will be asked to **watch** the music video of the song *Where is the Love* by the Black

Eyed Peas. After viewing the video, students will be guided to the *New vocabulary section where they will be acquainted with new words.*

New vocabulary builder

Task 1. Match the word with its definition. (rearrange them first)

Animosity	a feeling of strong dislike
Irate	angry; enraged
Discriminate	to make a distinction in favor of or against a person or thing on the basis of the group, class, or category to which the person or thing belongs rather than according to actual merit; show partiality
Bound to	certain to
Gravitate	Move towards
Dividends	An unexpected gain, benefit, or advantage
Thy	an old word for 'your' used only when addressing one person

Task 2. Match the following words from the song to their opposites.

Wrong	Love
Overseas	Right
Hate	Be repellent to
Addicted to ...	Domestic
Attracted to	Inaccurate
Straight	Free of ...

Task 3. Guess an abbreviation.

- What does KKK stand for?
 - Ku Klux Klan (racist group against non-whites).
 - Okay Okay (Internet slang).
- What does CIA stand for?
 - Central Intelligence Agency
 - Cash in advance

Task 4. Guess the meanings of the idiomatic expressions.

Idiomatic expressions	Meaning
set someone/something straight	to hide something embarrassing.
practice what you preach	if you turn the other cheek when someone attacks or insults you, you do not get angry and attack or insult them but stay calm instead
have the cares/weight of the world on your shoulders	to behave the way you tell other people to behave
turn the other cheek	to tell someone the true facts about a situation that they had not understood correctly
sweep something under the carpet/ rug	if you look or feel as if you have the cares of the world on your shoulders, you look or feel very worried or sad

Task 5. **Do rhymes.**

() Only attracted to things that'll bring
you trauma
() What's wrong with the world, mama
() I think the whole world's addicted to
the drama
() People livin' like they ain't got no
mamas

() The Bloods and The Crips and the
KKK
() Overseas, yeah, we try to stop
terrorism
() In the USA, the big CIA
() But we still got terrorists here livin'

() And when you hate then you're
bound to get irate, yeah
() But if you only have love for your
own race
() And to discriminate only generates
hate
() Then you only leave space to
discriminate

After working out the new vocabulary, students will be guided to the **Working out the context** section where they will be asked a series of questions which will reflect the open discussion previously. Students are to answer these questions independently and should answer questions in a paragraph format.

Working out the context.

Answer the following questions.

1. What is the tone and mood of this song? What examples can you pull from the lyrics in order to support this idea?
2. What do you believe is the central theme in Black Eyed Peas Where is the Love? What led you to come to this conclusion?
3. Knowing that this song was released in 2003 what current events of the time could influence this song?
4. At 3:36 there is a billboard with a black man and it reads "We are not minority". In your own words what does it mean to be a minority? What is the importance of this billboard in regards to this music video?
5. Who is the suggested audience of this song and why?
6. If the song was released today, what current events issues do you think would have influenced the song writers and artists?