



Trading Card Analysis: Understanding Culture

Contributor

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Objectives

It is critical to examine one's own cultural assumptions before embarking on a study of others' cultures. A good place to start is by examining artifacts of popular culture. In this lesson students critically analyze trading cards (hockey, baseball, basketball, and so on) to understand how people come to think about the assumptions that underlie beliefs about their own culture. In doing this students will begin to understand the complexities of understanding culture.

🕒 Time

✂️ Materials

- a set of 10 to 15 trading cards for each group of four in the class
- large poster paper and felt pens
- Post-it-notes (five per student)

Getting Started

Knowledge Now

Tell students that the concept of culture is sometimes difficult to grasp but that they will be engaging in a thinking activity that will help them understand something about our own culture.

Prime students by asking them questions such as:

1. What do you think Canadian culture might be?
2. What is important in your own life?
3. What do you like to do?
4. What do you believe in?
5. How do we make decisions? Who gets to make them?
6. Do our style of clothes reflect our culture? What is that style?

Record their responses on a piece of flip chart paper and be ready to refer to it later.

Engaging Interest

Organize students into groups of four and arrange them at tables. Provide each group with a set of trading cards and ask them to spread these out on the table. Ask students to pretend that the cards represent a given nation's culture. Everything on both sides of the cards depicts everything about that culture. Anything that is not on the card is not part of the culture.

Instruct students to individually and silently write single words or phrases that generally describe what they see on the cards. Write each observation on a separate Post-it-note. For example a set of hockey cards students might write “each person is wearing a logo,” “numbers are important” or “everyone is male.”

After each student has written five observations, ask them to group similar Post-it-notes together on a large sheet of flip chart paper. Do this by taking turns. In doing this, students will be creating categories. Ask students to label each category using the felt pen. They should have more than ten categories.

Learning Activities

Questions for Critical Thinking

Answer these questions in the groups.

1. How might you describe this culture?
2. What seems to be most important to the people of this culture?
3. Who is important in this culture? How do you know?
4. Is this culture modern or traditional? How do you know?
5. Who is not important in this culture? How do you know?
6. What words are important in this culture’s vocabulary?
7. To what extent do the images and words on these cards reflect our culture? What is the same? What is different? What is missing? Who is missing?

Guide the students toward thinking about the assumptions that underlie what we value, the beliefs upon which we base our culture. Focus the discussion on how we represent or show our culture (i.e. media, school, stores, etc.).

Assessment/Analysis/Application

Follow-up this activity by asking students to create a representation of the culture they identify with most (it could be a country, ethnic group, religious group, and so on). Instruct them to represent their own culture by writing a story, making a picture or collage, creating their own set of culture cards, or making a video tape. Use these representations to deconstruct individual perceptions of culture. They can also become a rich source of exchange among class members. This activity should help students come to better appreciate different culture’ beliefs and values and learn to identify assumptions upon which cultural beliefs are based.

Social Studies 7 Learner Outcomes

7A What is Culture?

Knowledge	Individuals assume a variety of roles—identity
Skills	Identify points of view in pictures

Safe and Caring Topics and Concepts

Respecting Diversity and Preventing Prejudice

Stereotypes Limit Our Perception and Understanding of Other People

Stereotyping Leads to Prejudice, Discrimination and Conflict

- Identifying ways to avoid stereotyping people and situations

Teaching Strategies

Go to www.sacsc.ca for strategy descriptions	Cooperative Learning	Inquiry Learning	Direct Instruction
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cognitive Coaching/ Metacognition 	

Generalization and Transfer	Peer Teaching	Empathy/Affective Education	General Teaching Activities/Ideas