

Lesson Title: Other Faces of Discrimination

Grade Level: 9th -12th

Standards:

PA State Standards

- 1.1.11.G: Demonstrate after reading understanding and interpretation of both fiction and nonfiction texts, including public documents.
- 1.1.11.H: Demonstrate fluency and comprehension in reading.
- 1.2.11.A: Read and understand essential content of informational texts and documents in all academic areas.
- 1.5.11.A: Write with a sharp, distinct focus.
- 1.5.11.B: Write using well-developed content appropriate for the topic.
- 1.5.11.C: Write with controlled and/or subtle organization.
- 1.5.11.E: Revise writing to improve style, word choice, sentence variety and subtlety of meaning after rethinking how questions of purpose, audience and genre have been addressed.
- 1.5.11.F: Edit writing using the conventions of language.

Museum Education Standards and Principles

- | | |
|------------|--|
| Standard 2 | Principle 2: Address and employ a diversity of perspectives. |
| Standard 3 | Principle 3.1: Demonstrate excellence in content knowledge.
Principle 3.2: Incorporate learning theory and educational research into practice
Principle 3.3: Employ a variety of appropriate educational tools to promote learning |
| Standard 4 | Principle 4.2: Set goals and measurable objectives and adopt strategies to achieve and document them. |
| Standard 5 | Principle 5.2: Promote a spirit of inquiry and openness to new ideas and approaches. |

Instructional Objectives:

Students will be able to discuss and write about discrimination that graduates of one-roomed schoolhouses faced after graduating eighth grade and going to high school in the nearby city or town. Students will then relate that discrimination to their own experiences with discrimination or bullying.

Materials

- Handouts #1-#4
- One-room schoolhouse at Pennsylvania German Center
- Blackboard and chalk (in schoolhouse)
- Photographs of students who attended one-room schoolhouses (displayed throughout the schoolhouse)
- Pencils/pens
- Paper

Subject Matter

- Discrimination
- Bullying
- Stereotypes

Procedure

In preparation for the lesson:

- Teacher will arrange a guided tour of the Pennsylvania German Center on the Kutztown University campus. Teacher will pre-arrange with the guide that the tour is to focus on the life of 12-18 year olds in this setting. Teacher will pre-arrange that the last stop on the tour will be the one-room schoolhouse.

Introduction and Motivation

- Students will be instructed to take a walk around the one-room schoolhouse and look at the artifacts, paying special attention to the pictures of students who attended this school.
- Students will be asked to take a seat.
- Teacher/ tour guide will give a brief description of a typical one-room schoolhouse day and a typical one-room schoolhouse student.
- Teacher will pass out handout #1 and ask students to read the selection on the county exams and eighth grade graduation.

Development- Activities- Questions

- Teacher will ask students to recall the students in the pictures and inform the class that some of these students were likely to face discrimination during their lifetime. Teacher will then ask students to brainstorm about what kind of discrimination they faced.
- Teacher will then bring up (if it wasn't mentioned) that the students faced discrimination in high school, which was often in a bigger town. They were considered "country folk" and of a lower social status as the town people.
- Teacher will pass out handout #2 and ask students to read selection on transitioning to high school
- Students will be asked if they have ever faced discrimination or have been bullied because of who they are or where they came from. Students will discuss this in small or large groups for 10-15 minutes.
- Students will be asked to complete handout #3 as a class: a Venn diagram on their experiences with discrimination/bullying in relation to the former one-room schoolhouse students' experiences. Teacher will write answers on the board while students complete their diagrams.
- Students will be asked to complete handout #4: a writing prompt using their Venn diagram asking "How does your experience with discrimination/ bullying compare with the former one-room schoolhouse students' experiences with discrimination? Compare and contrast."

Closure

- After students finish rough draft, they will be asked to share key points on their essays as small groups or large group.
- Points will be discussed in groups, with emphasis on the many types of discrimination and how common of an experience it is.

Assessment

- Informal: Class participation
Venn diagram
- Formal: Rough draft
Completed writing prompt

Assignments

- Students will finish editing their rough draft and writing a final copy for homework.

Self-Evaluation

- At the completion of the lesson, teachers can ask themselves:
 - Did the lesson meet the objectives?
 - Did students gain a broader understanding of the many faces of discrimination/ bullying?
 - What activities worked well?
 - What could be changed for next time?

Handout #1

County Exam and Eighth Grade Graduation

In order to enter high school, students from the country schools were required to take and pass a rigorous one-day achievement test, prepared and graded by the county superintendent's office. Anna Neamand was a teacher in Richland Township, and she recalled the county's guidelines.

"At the end of the year, we had the county examinations. It stated in our instructions that Bucks County had an examination for all applicants to pass to the ninth grade. The exam was given uniformly throughout the county."

This exam was taken late in the spring of the eighth grade, and evaluated in time to determine the honor students of the graduating class. By about 1910 most of the rural school districts held a graduation ceremony.

The importance of the examination was such that the former students recalled the exam vividly, as did Mamie Fluck Kratzer in her interview (Chapter 2). Marian Stumb Renninger told about the county exam as she recalled it in Richland Township.

"At the end of the eighth grade we had to take a test given to us by the county superintendent. That year the children from all of the township schools came to Shelly School to take the test. They could do it all in one school at one time; there weren't that many students. The teachers reported there. The superintendent sent his questions in. He wasn't there himself. The teachers took charge.

"When he had examined the papers, then it was published on the school door who passed and who didn't. I'm telling you that was the day! Some of us didn't have bicycles, but Claude Koder, one in my group, had a bicycle. He said 'This is the day we're supposed to get the results of the tests. I'm going to keep going up there till it's posted, and I'll tell you. I'll come back.' So he did and came down my street in the township putting his hands up in the air. So we all knew we had passed from our area. But then we had two students who didn't pass from our school. Some thirty-five students took that exam.

"Some of those who didn't pass went to work. You could go to work at that time at fourteen in you had a paper signed by somebody at the school board and a teacher. Or I think if the stayed home and helped their father on the farm they didn't have to have working papers."

Sometimes students tied in their scores on the exam. Catherin Benner Bleam recalled a novel way in which a tie was broken: "When we graduated from eighth grade, I was the valedictorian. But then the teacher took me aside and said, 'You know, Catherine, you and Eddie Fox were a tie. So to break the tie, your handwriting was better than Eddie's.'" They had to break the tie somehow. I told that at homecoming, and his mother said, 'I still can't read his writing,' and everybody laughed."



Transition to High School



Derogatory and negative stereotypes (e.g., redneck, hillbilly, hick) frequently blemish descriptions of rural peoples.
- Alan J. DeYoung and Barbara Kent Lawrence, "On Hoosiers, Yankees, and Mountaineers," *Phi Delta Kappan* 1995, 108

When they completed the eighth grade, the students were in early adolescence, and for many the transition from the small country school to the relatively larger and more sophisticated high school was difficult. Many of those whom we interviewed, like Paul Bryan, spoke of anxious and ambivalent feelings when they entered the ninth grade. In several of those stories as seen in Chapter 2, the individuals spoke of the difficulties they faced when they entered ninth grade in a town high school.

Paul Bryan had entered the brand-new Sell-Perk High School in the late 1920s. Mary Dietz attended the neighboring Quakertown High School earlier in the decade. She also felt that the country children were seen as inferior. Like Paul Bryan, her reaction was to prove herself as a student. "Country students were looked down upon by the town students, and I resented it, but that was the attitude. You came from the country, and they thought, 'They can't know very much.' But we just proved to them that we did get what we were supposed to learn.

"Fortunately, I had some very good teachers in the country schools; they were really interested in the children and they tried to help the children get the best education possible. They were all dedicated teachers in the country school. I appreciated them and that's the reason I decided to go back and give them as many possibilities as I could as a teacher, as they had given me. It was a commitment on my own part. I went to high school for four years. My marks were all 85 or above."

Glenn Haring attended Quakertown High School in the 1940s. He spoke of the difficulty of adjustment to the comprehensive high school from the small country school. "Going from a one-room schoolhouse into the ninth grade was a big, big adjustment. Only fourteen kids from the Richland Township schools graduated from high school, and there were thirty-nine that had graduated from the nine one-room schools.

"This is 1940 that I'm talking about. Here you came in from a one-room school with outdoor toilets and outside pump, where you had to carry the coal in. You go into a big consolidated high school where you have big wide corridors and ceramic tile, and these big lavatories. When you get in the homeroom nearly all the kids know each because they went to the same school before. And here you are, thrown in with those kids. You don't know anybody. That's a big adjustment.

"We were called 'county hicksters.' You had to make friends with these people and then you were gradually accepted. But if you didn't make friends easily, then you had a problem. I think by about tenth grade we got to know friends and they accepted us. The teachers didn't treat us differently; perhaps they didn't know we were from the country."

Ed Fox had similar impressions about Quakertown High School when he attended in the 1930s. "My most vivid memories about changing schools were going from country school to high school. That was terrible, because when you went to high school from the country school, we felt like foreigners. We were called 'out-of-towners.' It may have just been our imagination, but we felt we were looked down on. We felt we were inferior because we were 'country hicksters.' It took a long time til you got over that feeling."

Marian Stumb Renninger discussed the transition to the high school. She had attended Quakertown High School after graduation from the country school. "It was difficult socially to go to the high school, because the students already had their cliques and they found out that we come from a one-room schoolhouse. We weren't in with the group at first; we had to earn our way. We weren't invited to their parties and some of them felt they were more in the in crowd because they had a little more money. You felt this at least through the first year. In the second year I started to make my way. But then I had the misfortune of losing two friends, one who died of TB and another whose mother was always giving her medicine."

Evelyn Hendricks Potter reflected upon the transition to the high school in the 1930s. "There were definite disadvantages. Coming into high school, we had no athletics at all. With the country schools closing in March, the town kids had school in April and May, so that made a lot of difference. We had no background in science at all. And the fact that we had to change classrooms was a handicap for me, too, because I wasn't accustomed to piling up my books and

moving from one room to the other. But I don't remember that I thought I couldn't learn. And since my mother was so good at algebra, it was a breeze."

In most of the country schools there was no organized physical education, so ninth-graders from one-room schools generally had no background in team sports, such as basketball, football or field hockey. The latter was a typical female sport in the high schools of Upper Bucks County.

Lamar Feikel felt that the boys from the country were generally physically stronger than the town boys, which compensated for their lack of early training in team sports. However, he felt that there was a discrimination against boys from the country in high school organized athletics at Quakertown High School when he attended in the 1950s. "Not until I got to high school did I see discrimination. That was one of the flaws I saw going to the high school. The kids of doctors and lawyers played in the sports. They played the big names and the people with money versus us country hicks. I can vouch for that! Hey were pre-chosen; they played the big names. Whether they had financial pull with the school board, who knows. I think there was a lot of politics."

Kay Fox attended Quakertown High School for a year in the 1930s after completing eight grades in the one-room Rock Wild School. "The high school seemed cold, very cold. You didn't know anybody. So many of the children were from town. The country folks had all seemed to be closer. It seemed at the time, although maybe we just thought so, that the town children had so much more than we did. They looked down on us, you know. It was a little crazy when you think of it now. It just didn't have the warmth that the little one-room school did."

Ruth Clemmer Giering graduated from a one-room school in 1937 and from high school in 1941. She recalls high school. "Nobody will realize what it was like for a country kid going to high school. I mean, over in the country school everybody was friendly. When we went to high school starting in ninth grade you felt like an outsider. Believe me you did. It was rough.

"Everybody had their cliques and were always together. They'd say hello to you and things like that, but you could never warm up. I did finally warm up to one girl who lived in Richland Township. But I took the commercial course, and the other girl, who had graduated from our one-room school, took the academic course. He other girl never really got into the other crowd even in the four years. It was really hard, I'll tell you."

Martha Tarantino had a number of obstacles to overcome in going to and staying in high school. She was a farm girl who was needed on the farm. "The biggest adjustment was I had to wear high-top shoes, and the rest didn't. Mine were laced up to here [her ankles], and the other kids had modern shoes. My grandfather said, 'Girls shouldn't have an education; they're no good after they have an education you know.' I went two years to high school, but the second year I had to stay home until the corn was husked, so I didn't get the beginning of algebra and Latin. I didn't get the fundamentals. So after the sophomore year I worked at home and started doing housework. I went to work in a shirt factory when I was eighteen."

Arthur Landis had been raised on a dairy farm, and had worked with his father in their dairy. He was disappointed in his course in agriculture in high school and dropped out of high school in the sophomore year.

"I remember the teacher who tried to teach us agriculture. All he knew was what he read out of a book; I could have told him a lot of things he knew without looking in the book. A couple of times he took us out on field trips, one time to a dairy farm. This was a real treat for the town kids, but for me it was just the daily routine."

The transition was less dramatic for those students who went to small high schools. Springfield Township had a small high school. Mabel Koehler had gone to a one-room school and then to the township high school. "I don't recall any problems going to high school. It was just a little high school. Four rooms. It wasn't like a city school. There were two rooms upstairs and two downstairs. There were only fourteen that graduated with me. We had four teachers in that high school.

"I found my eighth-grade commencement program. At Springfield in 1933 we had forty-three graduates from the thirteen one-room schools. Out of these forty-three, only fourteen of us graduated from high school. Some didn't even start high school."





