

Standing in Our Power: Lesson Overview

Context: This lesson was originally taught to an Ethnic Studies class made up of 18, 9th-12th grade students. The majority of these students identified as Mexican and several as Filipinx. All came from working or middle class backgrounds. A handful of these students identified as LGBT+. About 75% were young women. This was the final lesson in our Black Panther unit. Before this unit, our class watched and dissected a two hour lecture on institutionalized racism.

Essential Questions: How can we leverage our individual and collective identities in order to form a strong community that is capable of making change?

Lesson Goals

1. Have students relate to the Black Panther Party by understanding the ways that they experience identity, community, and power in their own lives.
2. Build classroom culture by having students discover, affirm, and celebrate parts of their identity together. Celebrate student voice by highlighting classroom quotes.
3. Develop critical thinking by asking questions about where power comes from in our society's institutions vs ways that we can create power organically.
4. Motivate students by having them connect the issues faced by the Black Panther Party to the issues they see in their community today. Show students the power they have to make change by knowing themselves, knowing their world, and standing together.

Lesson Summary

Class will begin with a community affirmation. Students will then create identity maps on the walls of their classroom that show how they feel connected with or disconnected from different parts of their identity. They will affirm their classmates' identities in a "Solidarity Walk", marking where they have commonalities on each map.

Students will discuss identity and solidarity in order to learn about the creation of community power in the Black Power Movement as well as in their own lives. Through audio and visuals, they will examine the roles and differences between community power and institutional power.

The lesson will culminate when students display quotes that they have collected from their peers throughout the day up on the walls with their identity maps. Each person will read their individual quote as they stand firmly in their power. Class will end with a community affirmation and call to action read in call-and-response style.

Standing in Our Power: Lesson, In Depth

Activity Set-up: Clear off all of the whiteboards around the room or hang butcher paper on your walls so that today's student work can be visible for all to see. Gather enough (expo) markers for each student, including yourself.

Write each of the following directions on an individual slip of paper. Fold and number each one.

1. Draw an arrow and write your race/ethnicity
2. Draw an arrow and write your culture
3. Draw an arrow and write your gender
4. Draw an arrow and write your sexuality
5. Draw an arrow and write if your family is working class, middle class, or wealthy
6. Draw an arrow and write where you were born
7. Draw an arrow and write your religion
8. Draw an arrow and write one word or label that others have placed on you
9. Draw an arrow and write one word or label that you think represents you

****Before class starts, pass out these folded papers to students who you feel are less connected, engaged, or talkative in the classroom. Tell them that you will need them to help you lead an upcoming activity and that they should hold on to these papers and keep them folded.**

*****Anything blue on this document relates to this identity activity.**

Speakers notes: Slides 152-167, approx. 2hrs total

Slide 1: 1-2 min

1. Ask students to pick a partner who is someone who inspires them.
 - a. Make sure that there is an even number of participants so that no one is left out.
2. Quickly explain the significance of the In Lak'ech poem to Latin@x culture
3. Partners should hold hands to say the poem while you lead in call-and-response style.

Slide 2: 1-2 min

1. Ask students to pick a partner who is someone who they want to get to know better.
 - a. Make sure that there is an even number of participants so that no one is left out.
2. Quickly explain the significance of the term "Ashe" in West African culture
3. Partners should hold hands to say the affirmation while you lead in call-and-response style.

4. Each student will need to record, verbatim, as many powerful quotes as they can from this partner during today's lesson. *Anything red on this document relates to this quote activity!

Slide 3 - Quote Opportunity: 2-3 min

1. Take popcorn responses on what, "identity" and "power" means to your students.
2. Writes notes on a section of the board for students to reference

Slide 4: 2-3 min

1. Each student grabs a marker and chooses a space on the wall to create an identity map
2. Each student draws a doodle of themselves and includes an image of their heart.
3. Encourage students to be brave and stay as honest to as they can throughout this process.
 - a. Unless certain identity disclosure may put students in emotional/physical danger

Slide 5: 5-6 min

1. Establish: Students with papers will need to unfold and read their note aloud in the order which they are numbered. As they do so, everyone will be following these directions on their own identity map.
2. As directions are read, the arrow that they draw should be pointed toward their heart if that part of their identity makes them feel powerful and away if it takes power away.
 - a. Remind students of their understanding of "power"

Slide 6 - Quote Opportunity: 2-3 min

1. Take popcorn responses on what, "community" / "solidarity" means to students.
2. Write notes on a section of the board for students to reference

Slide 7: 5-10 min

1. Students circle around the room in a "solidarity walk", writing their name next to one shared identity on every person's map. This should be a silent activity.
2. Students revisit their own map and are able to change the direction of arrows if needed.

Slide 8 - Quote Opportunity: 25-30 min

1. 10 min: Students sit in a circle and journal about the questions on the slide
2. 3-5 min: Students go around the circle so that each person answers question 1
3. 10-15 min: Facilitate a discussion on the rest of the questions

Slide 9 - Quote Opportunity: 5-7 min

1. 1 min: When the discussion comes to an end, play the short video on the slide
2. 4-6 min: Ask and take 1-2 responses per question
 - a. What were they chanting?

- b. Who normally has power in our society? What gives them this power?
- c. What about what the BPP are doing here gives them power?

Slide 10: 5 min

1. On the left is what the members of the Black community were regularly facing
 - a. Police brutality and racist incarceration
 - b. Food, housing, and financial insecurity
 - c. Hate crimes, the list goes on (“remember what we’ve learned”)
2. On the right is members of this movement using the power of their identity and community solidarity to fight for black liberation.
 - a. Claiming power is contradictory and disruptive to these systems of oppression
 - b. Shouting the words, “Black is beautiful; Free Huey” create an emotionally liberating experience while asserting a call for change

Slide 11 - Quote Opportunity: 15 min

1. 10 min: Students sit with their lesson partner and discuss the questions on the board.
2. 5 min: Take 1 share out per question

Slide 12: 3 min

1. Students choose their partner’s most powerful quote from today
2. Students then write this quote on the wall, above their partner's identity map

Slide 13: 5 min

1. Ask your students to stand in front of their quote and identity.
2. Have each student read their quote aloud in a circle around the room

Slide 14: 1 min

1. Have everyone come together in a large circle and lead this new variation of the previous community affirmation in call-and-response style

Slide 15: 1 min

2. Lead the group in reciting a finale quote by Assata Shakur, once again, in call-and-response style

End class with a unity clap :)

