

Speed Dating/Speed Reading Activity

Course: ETHNOGRAPHY OF WORK

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Course Description:

This second course in a two-course sequence, Ethnography of Work introduces students to sociological and anthropological perspectives of work. The course approaches work as a cultural system invested with meanings, norms, values, and hierarchies. Students will investigate concepts related to work through the implementation of ethnographic research methods of observation, interview, document analysis, and auto-ethnographic reflections. Their ethnographic research will help them make sense of the theoretical concepts presented in class. Concepts of work in this class will build on last semester's class, Ethnography of School/Education. The goal of both courses is for students to critically examine the many connections between school and work in their personal lives and in the City of New York.

Note: This is not a Latino Studies course. The lesson provided below uses an article that explores work from the perspective of a Mexican immigrant and migrant worker family. I have tried to diversify the readings within my courses to better explore perspectives, peoples, and histories learned through the *Bridging Historias* Program.

Class Topic

What explicit and implicit lessons about work do you learn from your family?

Lesson Goals (Specifically, what will students learn?)

Students will:

1. Read for comprehension an academic article that investigates the meaning of work for a (im)migrant farmer family.
2. Analyze what the explicit skills the Padilla children have gleaned from their own labor or their parents' labor.
3. Analyze the implicit skills the Padilla children have gleaned from their own labor or their parents' labor.
4. Draw conclusions about the lessons learned from working from the article, apply conclusions to their own work experiences or their parents' work experiences.

Description

This class will have read and annotated the article "The Value of Hard Work: Lessons on Parent Involvement from an (Im)migrant Household" by Gerardo R. López (*Harvard Educational Review*, 71:3) for homework. This article was chosen because it is an academic article, but it is also accessible in terms of reading level for this first year experience class.

The class will warm up for the main activity—Speed Dating/Speed Reading—with a small group discussion on what you have learned from the various jobs you have had. These jobs might be formal employment or informal employment (such as chores, babysitting for family). The small group discussions will feed back to a whole class discussion during which the terms explicit

knowledge versus implicit knowledge will be defined. We will discuss ideas about work to us from our parents. Next we will move onto the text and the speed reading/dating activity described below. Finally, the students will write about the implicit and explicit skills they have learned through a work experience and from their parents' work lives.

Step One

Speed Dating/Speed Reading Activity Step One:

Students take about 15 minutes of class to reread their annotations (from homework the night before) on the article. They are asked to find quotes from their annotations on the following topics:

Topic 1: Find a quote that shows what the children in the Padilla family explicitly learned from working in the fields with their parents.

Topic 2: Find a quote that shows what the children in the Padilla family implicitly learned from working in the fields with their parents.

Topic 3: Find a quote from the article that surprised or shocked you.

Topic 4: Find a quote from the article that summarizes something you believe about work and/or education.

Step Two

After the students have had time to find these four topics (and number them 1, 2, 3, 4 for easy location), the room is set up with chairs facing each other. There must be an equal number of students or the professor has to participate as well. Each student comes and sits down with his/her article. They must have paper copies of the article or their four quotes written on paper if they read electronically.

The professor introduces the activity—this is exactly like speed dating, but instead of meeting someone and flirting to assess compatibility, the students will share one quote with their “date.” They should guide their date to the page number and read the quote out loud, explain what the quote means to them and why they chose it.

The professor models the activity with one student (introduction, handshake, read aloud quote, explain meaning and why it was chosen). Students face their reading “date” and start to talk. After about 4-5 minutes, the professor has them stand and walk around inside the chairs (like musical chairs), yells “SIT!”, and they move on to Topic #2. They rotate for the four topics.

Step Three

After the students go through the four topics/quotes with four different partners, you have them give feedback all together. Some questions for discussion are:

- Who had the same quote as you? Did you have the same interpretation of it and reason why you chose it?
- What was one new idea you took away about the text from your four dates? Explain.
- Did anyone have a quote that you totally disagreed with? Explain.
- What was your overall experience with this activity? Do you feel you know the article better now?

Step Four

Have students go back to their desks. Have them write for about 20 minutes on the implicit and explicit lessons they have learned from working and/or from their parents' experiences working and how their ideas/experiences are similar and/or different from the Padilla family from the article.

Dig Deeper: After students write the above, if any finish early they can address a more complex issue: Does hard work always equal an equivalent return? This article argues that certain types of hard work produce more return than others. Explain what that is (in the article) and if you agree/disagree.

List of Materials:

López, G. (2001). "The Value of Hard Work: Lessons on Parent Involvement from an (Im)migrant Household." *Harvard Educational Review*. 71:3, 416-437.

Comments or Additional Thoughts

This activity is written about on my blog at: <http://readwriteteach.org/2012/12/06/speed-datingspeed-reading-activity/>