Cook the Culture!

**Introduction:**

By using the hands-on activity of cooking, this five-day lesson consisting of research, writing, project making, and presentation preparation focuses on the students’ knowledge about a culture. While featuring some of the major concepts from the English Language Connecticut Common Core Standards, this project will push the students to connect their own culture to what they learn everyday in the classroom. We have chosen to teach this unit because it allows to students to deeply learn while being away from the typical classroom setting consisting of sitting at their desk listening to their teacher. Cooking will permit the students to plan and follow a specific set of rules or guidelines that they've made on their own rather than the teacher telling them what to do. By making this a weeklong process with a final poster board project that captures the major moments, the students will be able to look back and see the step-by-step progression ultimately celebrating their achieved goals which we think is an important life skill.

**Context:**

The lesson will be broken down into five fifty-minute classroom periods plus one crucial homework assignment. It is designed for a fifth grade class because it involves a lot of writing which is a key part of their grade level preparing for the transition into middle school. We see this project running smoothly at a Montessori school type environment because it is very much hands-on and
directed towards specific interests rather than normal in-class teaching methods.

Also, some Montessori schools have kitchens, including the one here in Hartford, built right into the classroom, which couldn’t be more convenient for a project like this.

**Objectives:**

1. Students will develop their intrapersonal skills by working on gathering the information conducted through interview by their family members to create a final poster-board piece
2. Students will gain application, analysis, and synthesis skills through by solving the recipe when cooking and by creating an organized poster-board
3. Students will gain speaking, language, and social skills when conducting a mock interview with a family member and when presenting in front of their peers and family on the final day
4. Students will improve their linguistic skills when writing out their recipe step-by-step in a paragraph

Howard Gardner's Multiple Theories of Intelligence identifies 8 forms of intelligence that are present within students as individuals in the classroom.

Through this specific curriculum, students will develop their intrapersonal skills by working on gathering the information conducted through interview by their family members to create a final poster-board piece. By expanding upon intrapersonal skills within the classroom, students will have a better understanding and knowledge, as well as comfort, to problem solve on their own while incorporating other aspects of their lives outside of the classroom.

In Bloom’s Taxonomy, his model demonstrates 6 levels of learning: create, evaluate, analyze, apply, understand, and remember. Student’s are expected and will elaborate on not only their creative thinking skills, but also their synthesis, application, and analysis skills through their own creativity and understanding of the task at hand. By giving the students a project in which they can control and
manipulate the amount of creativity fostered through cooking and putting together a poster-board project that they will ultimately present to their peers, they will additionally learn about each other’s cultures. The idea surrounding the presentation of knowledge and ideas is regarded of importance by the Connecticut Core Standards as well, where 5th grade students “Report on a topic or text or present an opinion, sequencing ideas logically and using appropriate facts and relevant, descriptive details to support main ideas or themes; speak clearly at an understandable pace” (CCSS.ELA-Literacy.SL.5.4). By including the presentation aspect of the project, the students will be able to access their inner creativity while additionally presenting their depth of knowledge surrounding the topic given to their peers.

Luis Moll, Cathy Amanti, Deborah Neff, and Norma Gonzalez define Funds of Knowledge as being the “historically accumulated and culturally developed bodies of knowledge and skills essential for household or individual functioning and well-being”. Through this it examines the enrichment of culture that stands within each individual and their housing. By conducting this project within the classroom, students will gain speaking, language, and social skills by connecting with their family members at home surrounding their culture. In Connecticut’s Common Core Standards, section 5.2 of the comprehension and collaboration sector of 5th grade literacy states that students should “summarize a written text, read aloud or information presented in diverse media and formats, including visually, quantitatively, and orally”. In addition, by presenting their final piece of work to their peers, teachers, and family members, students will access public speaking
skills as well as introduce the importance of teaching coming from student to student. This allows for not only the students to demonstrate their knowledge and draw upon skills learned within the classroom, but incorporate the connection that has consistently lacked within schooling between the classroom and the student’s families.

The Connecticut Common Core Standards state that students within the 5th grade should “conduct short research projects that use several resources to build knowledge through investigation of different aspects of a topic”. Through the curriculum project given to the students, students will access their own personal abilities to present and research information about their individual home lives as well as use their creative thinking skills to come up with a final poster-board piece. By incorporating the creativity aspect of being able to create their own poster-board project, the students will learn the importance and value of not only their own cultures, but as well as the cultures of their peers.

**Activities:**

We really wanted to stress that this lesson is a build up day-by-day process having the students know and realize that their effort must be their best everyday in order for the whole project to come together nicely. If they slack off for one out of the five days, it will affect their overall grade. Although we’re not grading participation, we’re holding the students accountable telling them that if they don’t participate fully throughout the week, then the final project will not have good results. We want each day’s period to go from 9 A.M. to 9:50 A.M. We feel that the
doing it first thing in the morning will work best enabling the teacher to have the students’ full attention and cooperation.

On Monday, the teacher will pass out a sheet that covers the whole week’s plan. He or she will go over it for about ten minutes and allow the students to ask any questions they may have. Then for the next half hour, the students will prepare for their mock interview that will take place later that evening at home. To prepare, the whole class will be grouped in pairs of two and conduct their own interviews. The question students will ask their partner will be “from the time you woke, what have you done today so far step by step that has gotten you to school?” To keep the theme of sequencing, which will be vital for the home mock interview, we feel this question fits perfectly enabling the students to quickly respond without thinking holding a useful conversation. Every student will have a worksheet in which they’ll record and take notes on while their partner is speaking to them. After fifteen minutes, the two partners will switch roles and repeat the same interview for the next fifteen minutes. For the remaining ten minutes of the period, the teacher will bring the whole class in for discussion and switch the focus to that night’s interview, which will include asking the family member how to make their recipe. The teacher will ask the class what strategies worked well and what worked wrong during their in-class, so that the students will be equipped and organized for the evening’s interview. For that night’s homework assignment, the students will go home with another worksheet for recording notes and conduct the real mock interview about the food. The students will be asked to pick who they’ll be interviewing a week prior to Monday, and the teacher will send out an email to all
who are picked. The email will ask the family members to have their food selected and their recipe ready in mind for the interview. Also, the email will include the worksheet that the students will be using to record and take notes on, so that the family members know what’s expected of them having it run easily and efficiently. This is why we’re calling it a mock interview.

Now onto Tuesday, which will be our writing day. Immediately at 9 A.M., the students will grab a class laptop and begin to type out their recipe. They will create a twenty to thirty sentence paragraph. Again, to harp on the theme of sequencing, it’s necessary that the students include words like first, then, next, meanwhile, later, finally etc. Their paragraphs will begin by stating what culture their food comes from and then they’ll write out the recipe’s steps on how to create the dish. At the half hour mark, the teacher will go around the room and read over the students’ paragraphs based on who’s finished first. He or she will point out any grammatical errors and ask the students to correct their mistakes. That will be all for Tuesday.

For Wednesday, the students will be cooking their food. Additionally, in the email sent home to the families, the teacher will include to keep the recipe very simple and easy to make along with the completion time to be under a half hour. The class will divide on where to cook – in the classroom, in another grade’s classroom, or in the cafeteria kitchen. The teacher is going to need all the help he or she can get, so faculty such as the gym teacher, music teacher, art teacher, the librarian, or the nurse will be asked a week in advance to join and give guidance during this time. All of the prepping will take place on students’ desks or the lunch tables, and once
ready to use heat, if necessary, the helpers will aid them to the kitchens and provide assistance. The reason why we had the students type the recipes was so they could have a copy for both the cooking process and their final poster board. The sequence words in the writing should also be great help for the students when cooking too.

On Thursday, the students will assemble their poster boards for Friday’s presentation. This will be a more relaxing today for the teacher and students because they’ll simply just attach the interview worksheet and recipe paragraph to the poster board with glue sticks and decorate. What will also be attached are pictures taken throughout the week. On Monday, each student will receive an instant print camera provided by the school, and part of the project is to take a picture of the key moments such as the mock interview, the writing of the paragraph, and the cooking. For the remainder of the class time once having their boards completed, the students will pair up with their partners from Monday’s class and practice their oral presentation to one another.

Friday is presentation day. Families, friends, and guests will be invited which will tie the relationship between the school and families closer. With their poster boards, the students will present their projects orally in a five-minute time frame. This period will run over time.

**Evaluation:**

The most important aspect of the curriculum project is the students’ ability to present the final project in a clear and cohesive way as well as the amount of depth in information within their final pieces. As a teacher, our emphasis will be placed on giving the students the proper tools to research and conduct interviews.
with their families, as well as understand what is expected of them. When introducing the project, we would like the students to understand the importance of culture within the classroom and how it relates to the world outside of the classroom. By creating an environment within the classroom where the students feel comfortable talking about their cultural backgrounds and family heritages, we feel as though this project will only increase their knowledge and ability to understand and relate to one another as peers and as citizens outside of the class.

Considering the project is primarily creativity and research based, the students’ accomplishment of the objectives will be evaluated based on their ability to fulfill self-independent work. Their final poster-board project will be judged on clarity, visual appeal, appropriate graphics, grammar, and required elements. Additionally, the oral presentation will graded on again clarity, but also speaking skills, fitting the time frame, content, attention to audience, and creativity. Both parts will be graded with rubrics so that the students can see what their strengths and weaknesses were, and then the final grade will be the average of the two grades. We decided to include the recipe paragraph in the grammar section of the project instead of having standing alone for a grade.
**Appendix:**

- Poster project rubric
- Oral presentation rubric
- Monday’s mock interview worksheet

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pictures / Graphics</th>
<th>Pictures and graphics are clear and relevant.</th>
<th>Most pictures and graphics are clear and relevant.</th>
<th>Few of the pictures and graphics are clear and relevant.</th>
<th>The student’s pictures are not clear or relevant.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Required Elements</td>
<td>All of the required elements are clearly visible, organized and well placed.</td>
<td>Most of the required elements are clearly visible, organized and well placed.</td>
<td>Few of the required elements are clearly visible, organized and well placed. May be missing elements.</td>
<td>Missing most or all of the required elements.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Visual Clarity and Appeal</td>
<td>The project has an excellent design and layout. It is neat and easy to understand the content.</td>
<td>The project has a nice design and layout. It is neat and easy to read.</td>
<td>The project needs improvement in design, layout or neatness.</td>
<td>The project needs significant improvement in design, layout and neatness.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Content Spelling Grammar Punctuation</td>
<td>The project has excellent spelling, grammar, punctuation, and original content.</td>
<td>The project has 1—2 spelling, grammar, or punctuation errors with original content.</td>
<td>The project has 3-5 spelling, grammar, or punctuation errors with original content.</td>
<td>The project has multiple spelling, grammar, or punctuation errors. Some content is copy and paste or plagiarized.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Criteria</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>----------------</td>
<td>------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attention to Audience</td>
<td>Did not attempt to engage audience</td>
<td>Little attempt to engage audience</td>
<td>Engaged audience and held their attention most of the time by remaining on topic and presenting facts with enthusiasm</td>
<td>Engaged audience and held their attention throughout, with creative articulation, enthusiasm, and clearly focused presentation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clarity</td>
<td>No apparent logical order of presentation, unclear focus</td>
<td>Content is loosely connected, transitions lack clarity</td>
<td>Sequence of information is well-organized for the most part, but more clarity with transitions is needed</td>
<td>Development of thesis is clear through use of specific and appropriate examples; transitions are clear and create a succinct and even flow</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Content</td>
<td>Thesis is unclear and information appears randomly chosen</td>
<td>Thesis is clear, but supporting information is disconnected</td>
<td>Information relates to a clear thesis; many relevant points, but they are somewhat unstructured</td>
<td>Exceptional use of material that clearly relates to a focused thesis; abundance of various supported materials</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Creativity</td>
<td>Delivery is repetitive with little or no variety in presentation techniques</td>
<td>Material presented with little interpretation or originality</td>
<td>Some apparent originality displayed through use of original interpretation of presented materials</td>
<td>Exceptional originality of presented material and interpretation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Presentation Length</td>
<td>Greatly exceeding or falling short of allotted time</td>
<td>Exceeding or falling short of allotted time</td>
<td>Remained close to the allotted time</td>
<td>Presented within the allotted time</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Speaking Skills</td>
<td>Monotone; speaker seemed uninterested in material</td>
<td>Little eye contact; fast speaking rate, little expression, mumbling</td>
<td>Clear articulation of ideas, but apparently lacks confidence with material</td>
<td>Exceptional confidence with material displayed through poise, clear articulation, eye contact, and enthusiasm</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Name:
Date:
Guest Name:

Instructions: Simply record what the guest is saying. Here are three questions you can ask the guest. Take your time on question 3, family member will slowly give his or her answers. Please be neat because you’ll need this sheet tomorrow and make sure you don’t miss a step!

1. What is your favorite food and what culture does it come from?

2. What are the ingredients that make up this food with its correct measurements?

3. Now can you walk us through the cooking process in detail step by step?