

Lesson Plans for NYC Department of Education's Hidden Voices Curriculum: MULTILINGUAL EDUCATION

Each lesson can be taught on its own or as part of the unit.

[English for Assimilation](#)

[English as Survival](#)

[English for Expansion](#)

[English as an Asset](#)

[English as a Second Language](#)

[English as Access](#)

5.5.3 - English as Access

The Asian American Education Project

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Grade Levels	7-10
Lesson Overview	At least one of every six undocumented immigrants in the United States are of Asian ancestry. Undocumented immigrants face difficulties from job opportunities to housing to education due to the criminalization of their legal status. In this two-day lesson, students will learn how anti-immigrant sentiments have affected the lives of undocumented immigrants. On Day 1, students will examine the history of undocumented immigration in the Asian American community, and make connections to educational access. On Day 2, students will evaluate the significance of APIDA contributions to bilingual and multilingual education.
Focus Question	How are attitudes about immigration connected to educational access?
Lesson Objectives	Students will write a historical paper to examine the role Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders played in the intersections between immigration and educational access.

Criminalizing Education for Marginalized Students Essay

Background:

Despite shifts in attitudes about bilingualism, anti-immigrant sentiments continue to prioritize English over other languages. Throughout U.S. history, different groups have been targeted by anti-immigrant sentiments with various laws and restrictions placed on who can enter and reside in the country legally. These anti-immigrant sentiments affect all parts of these immigrants' lives, and accordingly, attitudes about immigration are connected to issues of bilingual education and educational access.

Essay:

Language is a political issue as it can be used as a marker of identity and belonging in the United States. Accordingly, policies and attitudes related to language, such as those around teaching English in schools, are impacted by other issues related to belonging in the United States, such as immigration.

Throughout its history, the United States has used education as a tool for various purposes. In regard to immigrants, one of the main purposes of education is to teach English. The teaching of English is part of a broader goal for **assimilation** or Americanization.

Being able to speak English **proficiently** opens up access to many opportunities needed for social success and upward social mobility. However, moments of heightened **xenophobia**, most often caused by economic downturns and national crises, question who belongs in the United States and who doesn't. Unfortunately, discrimination spurred by xenophobia directly impacts immigrants and communities of color who are often positioned as foreigners or outsiders. This can lead to the needs and attainment of students, especially English Language Learners and immigrant students, to be overlooked, ignored, and/or dismissed.

One way xenophobia can affect students is in relation to **undocumented immigrants**. Undocumented immigration has existed in this country since 1875, when the United States passed the Page Act, the first federal law restricting **migration** on the basis of ethnicity or country of origin. The Page Act (1875) led to other anti-immigration laws (i.e., Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882) focused mainly on banning Chinese and Asian immigrants who were perceived to be too foreign to assimilate and considered as threats to white labor. The Page Act (1875) specifically banned the immigration of Chinese women which effectively prevented the Chinese in the United States from creating families and discouraged them from settling.

Before the Page Act (1875), immigration into the United States was open to everyone, and so “legal” or “undocumented” immigration didn't exist because people could enter the country freely.

Since the Page Act, undocumented immigrants of all backgrounds have entered the United States. One example is Jeu Gong Lum, the father of Berda and Martha Lum. Because of the Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882, Lum entered the United States through Canada. He settled in Mississippi and started a family. Later, he launched a lawsuit against school segregation on behalf of his daughters, known as **Lum v. Rice (1927)**.

Many people today may assume undocumented immigrants are of Mexican or Latinx ancestry. However, data suggests that at least one out of every six undocumented immigrants is of Asian ancestry. Asian undocumented immigrants make up over 16% of that population with most originating from India, China, the Philippines, South Korea, and Vietnam. Most live in California, New York, Texas, and New Jersey.

The first large group of undocumented immigrants were known as “paper sons and daughters.” These immigrants were Chinese workers who were denied entry due to the Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882. They bought papers that falsely identified them as being related to other Chinese people already living in the United States. They spent their lives pretending to be someone else in order to work around racist immigration policies.

The **criminalization** of migration through restrictions on who and how many people could enter the United States divides the country's population into those who supposedly belong here - because of how or when they arrived - and those who supposedly don't belong here. This attitude carries into all areas of life in the United States, from job opportunities to housing to education. By making it a crime for some people (i.e., undocumented immigrants) to exist and live in the United States, their rights and privileges can quickly come under question, like their right to an education.

For example, in 1975, Texas revised its education laws to allow the state to withhold state funds from school districts that educated undocumented children. When the Tyler School District began requiring undocumented students to pay tuition, a group of students challenged the policy through a lawsuit, *Plyler v. Doe* (1982). The Supreme Court ruled that states couldn't deny students a free public education based on their immigration status as any resources saved by denying them an education were outweighed by the harm society would face by this denial.

Plyler v. Doe (1982) secured rights for students to attend public schools regardless of their immigration status, but applies only to K-12 schooling. In 2001, then-high school senior and pianist, Tereza Lee (born 1983), confided in the artistic director of her high school that she was undocumented. Lee is a Brazilian-born South Korean who immigrated with her family at the age of two. She was a talented pianist but didn't have a social security number to list on her music college applications. Her teacher contacted U.S. Senator Dick Durbin (born 1944) for help. Senator Durbin and Senator Orrin Hatch (1934-2022) co-sponsored and introduced the **DREAM Act** to create pathways for citizenship for undocumented immigrants who entered the United States as a minor. However, the 9/11 attacks in 2001 prevented the Senate vote on the DREAM Act from taking place. Instead, the government focused on stricter immigration policies and criminalizing immigration to address concerns about national security. The DREAM Act has been re-introduced many times since then; as of 2023, it has yet to be passed.

In 2012, President Barack Obama (born 1961) signed an **executive order** for Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA). DACA is an immigration policy that provides applicants a renewable two years of deferred, or delayed, action from deportation and eligibility for a work permit. DACA gives undocumented young people in the United States some of the security that the DREAM Act had attempted to create. This new sense of security led to significant increases in high school attendance and in graduation rates among undocumented students. At the college level, DACA provided undocumented youth access to in-state tuition in many states, work permits for legal work with higher wages, added job security after graduation, and helped ease student stress.

In recent years, **caste discrimination** has been identified as another issue that impacts equal access to education. Caste is a religious social structure used to organize society in South Asia, but has been replicated in the United States and other places that South Asians have migrated to. Caste discrimination includes treating certain castes, or classes of society, as inherently inferior and undeserving of access to certain privileges such as education, political office, jobs, and more. In the United States, caste discrimination occurs in the workplace, in education, and in social settings like South Asian American cultural and religious spaces. People of oppressed caste backgrounds often hide their caste identity out of fear that they'll face discrimination. This is not just a perceived fear, but a reality for South Asian Americans. In June 2020, a lawsuit was filed against Cisco Systems, a software company, because it failed to address caste discrimination against an employee from the **Dalit** caste by two supervisors from more privileged castes. Some colleges and universities – including California State University, Colorado College, and Colby College – have already added caste to the existing set of categories that are protected against discrimination. Yet, there are hundreds of schools and colleges that have yet to add this protection for caste-oppressed South Asians. A federal recognition of caste as a protected category would bring this protection into many other sectors, including public schools.

The use of English as a common language in the United States is meant to help bring diverse groups together and ensure all people have access to various employment, educational, and social opportunities. Still, many other factors, like the criminalization of immigration and caste discrimination, hinder equal access to education and hinder the full opportunity that living in the United States and English fluency are supposed to create.

U.S. public attitudes towards immigrants have shifted over time - from exclusion to greater awareness and acceptance. Attitudes about education and English-language learning have shifted as well - from

English-only policies to bilingual or multilingual education. More specifically, attitudes toward bilingual or multilingual education have been connected to concerns about economic growth, threats to labor and profit margins, public opinions about immigration, etc. All of this impacts access to education for marginalized communities including undocumented immigrants. Attitudes about education are also tightly connected to political and societal forces, and vice versa. This is mainly because schools are seen as the main vehicles for teaching all that is necessary for being an American. In addition, schools are viewed as a privilege for Americans. It is important to consider how education is being used as a tool and whether its usage sets students up for future success or failure.

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Vocabulary:¹

- **Assimilation:** the process through which groups of differing heritages acquire the language and culture of the dominant group
- **Caste discrimination:** social structure that is based on heredity; shapes every aspect of life with upper castes having great privilege while lower castes are shunned, stigmatized, and discriminated against
- **Criminalization:** to make something illegal and allow people to be punished over that action; criminalizing things is a way to control people or discourage a specific behavior or action
- **Dalit:** the lowest class with the unique stigma of being "untouchable" and thus segregated
- **DREAM Act:** the Development, Relief, and Education for Alien Minors Act; grants temporary conditional residency to an undocumented immigrant who entered the U.S. as minors
- **Executive Order:** declaration by the U.S. president or a state governor which has the force of law
- **Lum v. Rice (1927):** court case that upheld school segregation for Chinese students
- **Migration:** movement of people from one region to another
- **Proficiently:** with skill and competence
- **Social Mobility:** a change in a person's social status

- **Undocumented Immigrants:** people who entered the U.S. without proper permission from the government or those who entered with a legal visa that is no longer valid
- **Xenophobia:** fear and hatred of foreigners or of anything that is foreign

¹ Definition adapted from Merriam-Webster

Discussion Questions:

1. **If you are teaching this lesson as part of the [Multilingual Education unit](#):** How does the text summarize previous learning? What new information is presented in this text?
2. How did the phenomenon of “undocumented” originate? In what ways is it a social construction? What is the impact of the Page Act and subsequent exclusion laws to the development of this concept of “undocumented immigration”?
3. What is the stereotype of “undocumented immigrants”? How do statistics of Asian undocumented immigrants break this stereotype?
4. What are examples of early Chinese undocumented immigrants? Why is this important to know?
5. What are the negative effects of the criminalization of migration?
6. What is *Plyler v. Doe* (1982) and its impacts?
7. What are the DREAM Act and DACA? What are their benefits and limitations?
8. How did the 9/11 attacks affect immigrants’ rights?
9. What is caste discrimination and why is it an issue in schools?
10. How are attitudes about immigration connected to educational access? Who gets to be educated and who doesn’t?
11. What role does speaking English play in who gets educated and who doesn’t?

DAY ONE

Activity 1: Defining Undocumented Immigrants

- A. Show the video entitled, “What Do Native Americans Think About ‘Illegal Immigration’?”: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bu6gbmoMQSE>
- B. Facilitate a discussion by asking the following questions:
 1. Whose perspective is presented in the video?
 2. What is the message of the video?
 3. Do you agree or disagree with the video’s message? Explain your reasoning.
- C. Ask students: Do you know what it means to be an undocumented immigrant?
- D. Share the following statement: “An undocumented immigrant refers to anyone residing in any given country without legal documentation. It includes people who entered the United States without inspection and proper permission from the government, and those who entered with a legal visa that is no longer valid.”
- E. **NOTE TO TEACHER:** There is controversy about the terms “illegal immigrant” versus “undocumented immigrant.” Politicians and media tend to use “illegal immigrant” and immigrant rights and advocacy groups prefer not to use “illegal” and tend to use “undocumented,” “unauthorized,” “non-citizens,” “without status,” or “unlawfully present.” Terms that all agree not to use are “illegals” or “illegal aliens.” Arguments for

and against these terms are based on moral and legal grounds. This lesson will use the term “undocumented immigrants.” If time permits, have students conduct further research on the arguments and as a class, come to an agreement about which terms to use.

F. Show video entitled, “Undocumented Americans” (Clip: 0:00-3:00 - Jong-Min’s Story):
<https://youtu.be/LFVoxezIxLU?feature=shared>

G. Ask students: What did you learn from Jong-Min’s story?

H. NOTE TO TEACHER: If you have time, have students watch the entire video and compare and contrast the experiences of Jong-Min, Pedro, and Silvia.

Activity 2: Criminalizing Education for Marginalized Students

A. Have students read the text entitled, “[Criminalizing Education for Marginalized Students](#).”

B. NOTE TO TEACHER: If pressed for time, have students read the text for homework the night before. If needed, read the text aloud as a group and stop often to model annotating or to clarify any confusions or misunderstandings.

C. Facilitate discussion by asking the Discussion Questions.

D. NOTE TO TEACHER: The “[Criminalizing Education for Marginalized Students](#)” text brings up several topics including the Page Act, Chinese Exclusion Act, and the 9/11 attacks. If more background information is needed, consider teaching the following lessons and resources from The Asian American Education Project:

1. “Excluded from History: The Page Act of 1875” by Virginia Loh-Hagan, Jing Kwoh, Jayson Chang, and Pat Kwoh:
<https://drive.google.com/file/d/1qDN3OyT5MB20Vx26nfYHKTAODydLEMkg/view>
2. “Chinese Exclusion Act and the Exclusion of Asians, Pacific Islanders & Chinese Women”:
<https://asianamericanedu.org/chinese-exclusion-act-exclusion-of-asians.html>
3. “Victimized Twice: 9/11/2001, South Asian Americans & Islamophobia”:
<https://asianamericanedu.org/victimized-twice-9-11-2001-south-asian-islamophobia.html>
4. “Fight for Just Immigration”:
<https://asianamericanedu.org/fight-for-just-immigration.html>

Activity 3: Tereza Lee and the DREAM Act

A. Show the video entitled, “Tereza Lee and Undocumented Asian America”:
<https://vimeo.com/690082546?share=copy>

B. NOTE TO TEACHER: Mention that this video clip is a primary source in that we are getting a firsthand account from Tereza Lee. If time is limited, or as homework, have students research more primary sources from Tereza Lee’s perspective via the internet. Have them write a paper describing the significant role she played in immigrants rights.

C. Facilitate a discussion by asking the following questions:

1. What more did you learn from this video?
2. Why was it important to hear from Tereza Lee?
3. Are you surprised that the first DREAMer is of Asian ancestry? Why or why not?

4. In what ways did the general lack of public knowledge around undocumented immigrants affect both Tereza Lee and Jong-Min? In what ways did this lack of knowledge protect them? In what ways did it make them more vulnerable?

D. NOTE TO TEACHER: If more background is needed about Tereza Lee, consider teaching The Asian American Education Project's lesson entitled, "Tereza Lee and Undocumented Asian America":

<https://asianamericanedu.org/tereza-lee-and-undocumented-asian-america.html>

Activity 4: Reflecting on What it Means to be an American

- A. Have students complete a Quickwrite given these prompts: Who is an American? What does it mean to be an American? How does one become an American?

Strategy: Quickwrite

A Quickwrite is an instructional practice that allows students an opportunity to quickly respond to a question or prompt. It is often timed for 3-10 minutes. It provides teachers an assessment of what students know or think at that moment in time. It provides students an opportunity to freely write down their first thoughts. It can be used at any time in a lesson.

For more on Quickwrites, see: <https://www.literacyworldwide.org/get-resources/literacy-glossary>

- B. Allow students an opportunity to share what they wrote in their Quickwrites.

- C. Facilitate a discussion by asking the following questions:

1. What is public education's role in helping people become American?
2. What role does speaking English play in being an American?
3. How do immigration policies and sentiments affect public schooling?
4. Does being documented or undocumented affect your definition of American?

D. NOTE TO TEACHER: The "Criminalizing Education for Marginalized Students" text also mentions caste discrimination. If time, have students watch the "Caste in America" video clips: https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PL-7a7eUvdMmiZijRVC5fr1n-Q2EW_7XMw. There are nine short videos in this series. Watch one or all of them and then facilitate a discussion by asking these questions: What is the caste system? Where did it originate? How does it impact experiences in the United States? How does it show up in the United States? What role does public education play in combating caste discrimination?

DAY TWO

Note: Day 2 is designed for classes that have implemented the entire [Multilingual Education unit](#).

Activity 1: Summarizing APIDAs Contributions Toward Multilingual Education

- A. Have students collect all their notes, worksheets, readings, etc. from the entire unit.

B. Direct students to write a list of all the acts or actions made by Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders that have contributed to the development of or added to conversations about bilingual or multilingual education in the United States. Have students include acts, action, or events that were also done to Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders and that greatly affected their role in public education.

C. NOTE TO TEACHER: Remind students that not all contributions are positive and/or productive; some may have negative effects.

D. Have students share this list out loud. Allow each student to share different things. Direct them to listen to each other so that they don't repeat things that have already been said.

E. Record student responses and display for all to see.

F. NOTE TO TEACHER: When listing the acts or actions made by Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders that have contributed to the development of or added to conversations about bilingual or multilingual education in the United States, ensure students include the following items: *Tape v. Hurley* (1885), *Lum v. Rice* (1927), *Lee v. Johnson* (1971), Native Hawaiian language revival program, *Lau v. Nichols* (1974), Lau Remedies (1975), Samuel I. Hayakawa, Asian language heritage programs, Japanese language instruction, Mandarin language instruction, paper sons and daughters, Tereza Lee, etc. In addition, students can also mention the following which influenced how Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders were treated/served in public education: Model Minority stereotype, Perpetual Foreigner stereotype, colonization of Hawai'i, colonization of the Philippines, and Southeast Asian refugees and resettlement experiences.

G. NOTE TO TEACHER: If students need more support, have them create and complete the following table either in small groups or for homework:

Act/Action/Event	How did it contribute to the development of or add to conversations about bilingual or multilingual education in the United States?

Activity 2: Economic, Social, Political, and Cultural Forces

A. NOTE TO TEACHER: If pressed for time or if not needed, skip the “ESP+C Chart” and have students select a topic to write about and move on to Activity 3.

B. Distribute the worksheet entitled, “[ESP+C Chart](#).”

C. Tell students they will be writing an essay or paragraph given the following prompt: Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders have made significant contributions to the development of bilingual or multicultural education in the United States. Which act, action, or event is the most significant? Why? How so?

- D. Direct students to select three acts, actions, or events from the list they generated in Activity 1. Tell them they will use the “[ESP+C Chart](#)” to narrow down the most significant event, which will be the theme of their written essay or paragraph.
- E. Have students add their three topics to the first row.
- F. Have students complete the chart by reviewing their notes and recording their comments in the corresponding box.
1. Explain that the “Economic” section addresses income, wealth, goods, and services. In this section, have students think about issues related to profit, globalization, jobs, etc.
 2. Explain that the “Social” section addresses human society. In this section, have students think about issues related to stereotyping, social status, social mobility, etc.
 3. Explain that the “Political” section addresses anything related to the government. In this section, have students think about issues related to laws, court cases, policies, etc.
 4. Explain that the “Cultural” section addresses the ways of life of various groups. In this section, have students think about issues related to issues such as language, race, ethnicity, customs, behaviors, etc.
- G. Walk around as students are working and be available to answer any questions or clarify misunderstandings for students.
- H. Have students refer to their notes from the “[ESP+C Chart](#).”
1. Have students select the topic that they think is the most significant contribution.
 2. Have students use their notes to provide evidence for their thinking and to explain the economic, social, political, and cultural forces at play.

Strategy: ESP+C Chart

ESP+C stands for Economic, Social, Political, and Cultural. These four broad categories can be used to organize important historical changes. Analyzing events using these four categories allows students to create a general narrative of past events. In addition, this tool helps students avoid evaluating past events by today’s values.

For more on the ESP+C Chart, see:

- <https://www.weteachnyc.org/resources/resource/grade-10-historical-thinking-tools-and-analysis-strategies/> (pp. 18-19)
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5O9U0uMSXSo>

Activity 3: Significance of APIDA Contributions to Multilingual Education

- A. Distribute the worksheet entitled, “[Structured Historical Paragraph Tool](#).”
- B. Tell students they will be writing an essay or paragraph given the following prompt: Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders have made significant contributions to the development of bilingual or multilingual education in the United States. Which act, action, or event is the most significant? Why? How so?
- C. Give students time to complete each section of the worksheet:
1. Topic Sentence: Introduce the topic/main idea that you will explain in the paragraph.
 2. Historical Context: Provide background information to help the reader better understand the

- historical forces.
3. Introduce the Evidence: Provide background about the evidence that will help your audience to better understand it.
 4. Evidence: Provide the fact(s) that support the topic sentence. Citations should be provided.
 5. Discussion: Discuss/Analyze the ideas presented in the evidence.
- D. Have students turn the notes they wrote on the worksheet entitled, “[Structured Historical Paragraph Tool](#)” into a final product.
- E. NOTE TO TEACHER: If needed, provide feedback on the worksheet before having students finalize their writing. Another option is to allow students to peer review each other’s work.**

Strategy: Structured Historical Paragraph Tool

The Structured Historical Paragraph Tool supports students as they engage in historical writing. The tool guides students in thinking about the required essential elements of a historical paragraph. It helps students organize their thoughts into a cohesive structure.

For more on the ESP+C Chart, see:

<https://www.weteachnyc.org/resources/resource/grade-10-historical-thinking-tools-and-analysis-strategies/> (pp. 4-5)

Activity 4: Concluding the Unit

- A. Allow students an opportunity to summarize what they think is the most significant contribution of Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders to the development of bilingual or multilingual education and why.
- B. Ask students: Was it challenging to pick just one event or action? Why or why not? Why would it be valuable to think about significance?
- C. Facilitate a discussion by asking the following questions:
 1. What was the most significant thing you learned over the course of the unit?
 2. What idea challenged you the most?
 3. What idea confused you the most?
 4. What would you like to learn more about?
- D. Summarize the unit by sharing this statement: “Over the course of this unit, you have learned about the important role Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders have played in the development of bilingual or multilingual education in the United States. We have discussed the impact of immigration, imperialism, assimilation, anti-Asian sentiments, and English-only policies. There are many more issues that can be learned. Hopefully, one of the main things that you have learned from this unit is that Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders are a significant part of the American narrative and their histories and narratives deserve to be told and taught.”
- E. NOTE TO TEACHER: Even though this unit focused on contributions, it’s important to ensure students understand that a person or a community’s value is not tied to their contributions. That stated, it is important to recognize and acknowledge contributions for the**

role they play in the past, present, and future.

Further Information

“Excluded from History: The Page Act of 1875” (National Council for the Social Studies, 2022):

<https://drive.google.com/file/d/1qDN3OyT5MB20Vx26nfYHKTAODydLEMkg/view>.

The Asian American Education Project lesson entitled, “Fight for Just Immigration”:

<https://asianamericanedu.org/fight-for-just-immigration.html>.

The Asian American Education Project lesson entitled, “Chinese Exclusion Act and the Exclusion of Asians, Pacific Islanders & Chinese Women”:

<https://asianamericanedu.org/chinese-exclusion-act-exclusion-of-asians.html>.

The Asian American Education Project lesson entitled, “Victimized Twice: 9/11/2001, South Asian Americans & Islamophobia” : <https://asianamericanedu.org/victimized-twice-9-11-2001-south-asian-islamophobia.html> .

The Asian American Education Project lesson entitled, “Tereza Lee and Undocumented Asian America” :

<https://asianamericanedu.org/tereza-lee-and-undocumented-asian-america.html> .

“Caste in America” (World Channel, 2020):

https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PL-7a7eUvdMmiZijRVC5fr1n-Q2EW_7XMw.