

Dear Teacher,

This lesson plan focuses on the Shelby City African American Cemetery Project in Junction City, Kentucky. The lesson's main goal is to teach students about the historical importance of the cemetery, as well as an emphasis on descent, kinship, and genealogical patterns. Kinship is hard to define because it differs cross-culturally, but it is the intertwining of self and group that not only includes biological (blood) relations through reproduction, but it also spreads into political, national, and social relationships. Familiar relations are often bound up with politics and state structures due to regulations by state laws that define a legal family structure. There are two models to consider when discussing kinship. In the first, kinship is observed to be founded solely on biological notions, placing emphasis on ideas of "blood" relatedness, transmitted through biological reproduction. The second model, "is seen as based on codes of role-based behavior, such as nurturing, sharing food, caring, socialization, and general social support" or shared life experiences (Strathern & Stewart 2011: 5). This lesson focuses on the latter of these two models, stressing the relevance of kinship studies in today's society, as well as serving as a gateway for students to begin questioning different ways kinship can be seen in history, their community, and in their own "families".

In order to effectively teach kinship in relation to genealogy, as seen in the Shelby City African American Cemetery model, it is important to understand how anthropologists view the study of kinship. As stated above, kinship is hard to define, because it differs cross-culturally. So, naturally, not all anthropologists view kinship studies in the same way. For example, David M. Schneider (2004) expressed that kinship studies should be done away with. His sentiments were that kinship was "a non-subject" that only existed "in the minds of anthropologists but not in the cultures they studied," and therefore should no longer be explored (269).

Sylvia Junko Yanagisako and Jane Fishburne Collier (2004) looked at kinship as a social whole. They argued for a unified analysis of kinship, and gender roles within kinship systems. Yanagisako and Collier (2004) pleaded that instead of other anthropologists focusing on categories of "male" and "female" they should be focusing on studying how particular societies define differences. They propose to start from the position that all social systems are systems of inequality, because all societies focus and categorize "male," "female," and give them distinct differences and functions. They also share their doubt of there ever being an equalitarian society in existence, and state that "equality is a social impossibility" (Yanagisako & Collier 2004: 284).

As previously stated, not all anthropologists view kinship studies the same, or for that matter agree with one another's theories about kinship and how it relates to the world. Harold W. Scheffler (2004) called Schneider, and Yanagisako and Collier "kinship dismantlers" (297). Scheffler stated that Schneider is focused too much on biology in kinship; and Yanagisako and Collier are focused too much on categories. He says that they should instead be looking at sexism in kinship, and the "positive rather than a negative valuation" of kin relations (Scheffler 2004: 297). Scheffler's goal is to naturalize kinship, instead of dismantling the study. Janet Carsten (2004) focused her study on relatedness and whether biology or social constructs create kinship. For Malays, relatedness is constructed through sharing subsistence—being of the

mother's blood (biological), feeding from the mother's breast (biological), and from feeding at meals in the home (social). She says that "separation of the "social" from the "biological"... [is] at the heart of the historical definition of kinship in anthropology is culturally specific" (Carsten 2004:0311). Separating social and biological relatedness is an etic (outside perspective of the observer) view point, not an emic (perspective of the subject) one.

More recent studies of kinship focus on contemporary issues such as surrogacy, in-vitro fertilization (IVF), and a fashionable study of soap operas. Helena Ragoné (2004) looks at American kinship through the lens of surrogate motherhood, and how kinship is defined or changed through surrogacy. She says that surrogacy "separates motherhood from pregnancy, creating three discernible categories of motherhood where there was previously only one": biological mother (contributes the ovum), gestational mother (gestates embryo, but shares no genetic relationship to the child), and social mother (cares for/nurtures child) (Ragoné 2004: 343). Ragoné's study, biological and gestational mothers are the most common in surrogate scenarios.

Susan Martha Kahn (2004) conducted a fascinating study of in vitro fertilization in a Jerusalem fertility clinic. She says that the main rabbinical arguments surrounding ovum donation in IVF is "who is the mother? The woman who donates the egg, or the woman who carries the pregnancy and gives birth?" (Kahn 2004: 3639). In vitro fertilization, using a microscope to fertilize an egg, is "unnatural" in the Jewish faith. In order to be a Jewish citizen, you must be born Jewish. This study is fascinating because it places kinship in regards to reproduction, religion, and nationality on level playing fields.

Through an amazing study of the American soap operas, *One Life To Live* and *All My Children*, Linda Stone (2004) builds upon the work of David Schneider and what "true" kinship is. She says that "Schneider derived three classes of relatives: (1) relatives in nature alone, (2) relatives in law alone, and (3) relatives in nature and in law" (398). Schneider says that the "true" and most valuable kin is found in a mixture of both nature and law. Stone (2004) introduces another variable, choice. As found in American soap operas, choice in kinship become relevant when kin tie are denounced and/or formed without biological relatedness.

This then brings me to Shelby City African American Cemetery, and the importance to teach students about the historical significance of the cemetery, as well as an emphasis on descent, kinship, and genealogical patterns. Robin Fox (2004) discussed the differences and similarities between primate and human kinship. He states that there are two kinship elements, descent and alliance, that present themselves in primate communities. Fox explains that descent is where kin are grouped and it decides who belongs with whom. Alliance determines reproduction and who can mate with whom. Primates only exhibit one of these elements, descent or alliance, at a time. What is unique about humans is that we are they only one who combine these elements into our kinship system. The Shelby City African American Cemetery is a wonderful place to begin studies on descent, kinship, and genealogical studies.

Included in this packet are materials in which to enlighten students on the historical importance of the Shelby City African American Cemetery, how genealogical research has led to the discovery of several individuals buried at the cemetery, and enrichment activities to accompany the lesson. One of the activities included in the lesson packet is a family genealogy chart. This chart was acquired from Teacherspayteachers.com. This is just one of many free genealogical charts on this site, along with other activities that may complement this lesson as well. I am pleased that you have chosen to present this material to your students, from which they will gain an appreciation to a history that was once lost, but through restoration is on its way to becoming an important introductory teaching tool to African American studies in the commonwealth of Kentucky, USA.

Sincerely,
Rebecca D. Spencer

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