

PCCU 2024 Cross-cultural comparison between South Korea and the U.S.: Belonging

Lesson Title: Korean Food - Gaining a Sense of Belonging Through Food

Lesson Context: High school students, 9-12 graders, studying world language and culture in an urban school, 78-minute class periods Learning

Introduction - Reflective Essay:

Participating in the Cross-Cultural Comparison Workshop focusing on South Korea and the United States has been a transformative experience that has broadened my understanding of cultural nuances and deepened my appreciation for a sense of belonging. The presentation on graphic memoirs exploring the experiences of Korean immigrants was particularly illuminating. Graphic memoirs, as a genre, offer a powerful medium for storytelling, combining visual art with narrative to convey complex emotions and experiences. The presentation highlighted how these memoirs capture the struggles and triumphs of growing up as a Korean immigrant, addressing themes of identity, assimilation, and cultural heritage. Through the vivid illustrations and personal anecdotes, I gained a deeper understanding of the immigrant experience from a Korean perspective about fostering empathy and cultural awareness.

The session on gender and sexuality, with a focus on LGBTQI youth, underscored the critical need for inclusivity in educational settings. I am resonated with the discussion on the challenges faced by LGBTQI students, including discrimination, bullying, and a lack of representation in the curriculum. This presentation was a call to action for teachers to create safe and supportive environments for all students, regardless of their gender identity or sexual orientation. It has inspired me to be more proactive in advocating for and implementing inclusive practices in my classroom.

The 'Book in an Hour' strategy, demonstrated using the novel "The Dreams of Two Yi-min," showcased an innovative approach to engaging students with literature. This strategy promotes active reading, collaboration, and critical thinking. It also allows students to experience a complete narrative in a compressed time, which can be particularly beneficial for complex or lengthy texts. The presentation highlighted how this approach can be used to explore themes of identity, dreams, and aspirations. I will implement this strategy in my classroom to enhance students' engagement with reading and their ability to analyze and discuss literature.

The presentation on social-emotional learning (SEL) in South Korean schools provided valuable insights into how SEL is integrated into the educational system. South Korea's approach to SEL focuses on fostering emotional intelligence, empathy, and interpersonal skills among students. I was particularly impressed by the emphasis on community and collective well-being in South Korean SEL programs. This contrasts with the more individualistic approach often seen in the United States. The presentation reinforced the importance of SEL in promoting a supportive and inclusive school environment. It also provided practical ideas for incorporating SEL activities into my own teaching practice, such as mindfulness exercises, collaborative projects, and open discussions about emotions and relationships.

The final presentation explored the role of Koreatown in creating a sense of belonging for Korean Americans, highlighting how Koreatown helps preserve cultural traditions and provide a space for cultural expression. Learning about the multifaceted role of Koreatown deepened my understanding of

the importance of ethnic enclaves in fostering community and identity among immigrants. The presentation emphasized the ways in which Koreatown contributes to the social and economic well-being of their residents, offering a sense of stability and belonging in a new country. This understanding has broadened my perspective on the immigrant experience and the significance of cultural communities in supporting integration and resilience.

Collectively, these presentations have enriched my knowledge of Korean culture, inclusivity in education, innovative teaching strategies, social-emotional learning, and the role of ethnic enclaves. They have provided me with practical tools and strategies to enhance my teaching practice and create a more inclusive and supportive learning environment. As a teacher of color, I am committed to fostering an inclusive classroom environment where all students feel a sense of belonging.

Teaching Opportunities:

The insights gained from the Cross-Cultural Comparison Workshop on South Korean and the United States present numerous opportunities to teach cross-cultural awareness both within my classroom and the broader community. By integrating cultural topics into my curriculum and leveraging community resources, I can foster a deeper understanding and appreciation of Korean culture among my students and beyond. For examples:

1. **Cultural Studies Unit:** I can design a unit specifically focused on Korean culture, with lessons covering various aspects such as food, traditions, language, and social norms. For instance, a lesson on Korean food culture can include hands-on activities like cooking demonstrations or food tastings, complemented by discussions on the cultural significance of communal dining and holiday meals.
2. **Project-Based Learning:** Assign students to research different elements of Korean culture and present their findings through multimedia projects, presentations, or cultural artifacts. This approach promotes active learning and encourages students to delve deeper into cross-cultural topics.
3. **Cross-Cultural Comparisons:** Incorporate cross-cultural comparisons into existing lessons. For example, when teaching about family structures or community values, include case studies that highlight differences and similarities between Korean and American cultures. This comparative approach helps students develop a global perspective.
4. **Cultural Food Days:** Organize events where students bring in and share dishes from various cultures, including Korean cuisine. Such events can be educational and fun, promoting cultural appreciation through direct experience.
5. **Cultural Awareness Days:** Advocate for and help organize school-wide cultural awareness events. These events can feature guest speakers, cultural performances, and interactive workshops on various aspects of Korean culture.
6. **Digital Platforms:** Use the school's digital platforms such as school website and social media to share information about Korean culture. Post articles, videos, and student projects that highlight what they have learned to reach a wider audience and spark interest in cross-cultural topics.

Learning Objectives:

1. Students will understand the concept of "belonging" and how it manifests through food culture in different societies.
2. Students will compare and contrast food-related practices and traditions in South Korea and the US.
3. Students will develop an appreciation for cultural diversity and the role of food in fostering a sense of belonging.

Lesson Procedures:

Day 1: Introduction to the Concept of Belonging through Food

1. Warm-Up Activity (10 minutes)

- **Think-Pair-Share:** Ask students to think about a memorable meal that made them feel a sense of belonging. Pair up to share their experiences, then discuss as a class. Record common themes on the board.

2. Introduction to Food Cultures (20 minutes)

- **Mini-Lecture:** Provide an overview of food culture in South Korea and the US. Highlight key concepts such as communal eating, traditional dishes, holiday meals, and the social significance of food.
 - **South Korea:** Focus on communal dining, importance of family meals, and popular dishes like kimchi, bibimbap, and Korean BBQ.
 - **US:** Discuss the diversity of food culture, individual vs. family meals, and popular dishes like burgers, pizza, and Thanksgiving dinner.

3. Video Analysis (20 minutes)

- **Watch Videos:** Show short clips from documentaries and YouTube channels that depict food culture in South Korea and the US.
 - **South Korea:** Clips showing communal meals, street food, and traditional cooking methods.
 - **US:** Clips showing family dinners, diverse food options, and holiday feasts.
- **Discussion:** After each clip, ask students to note down observations about how food fosters a sense of belonging. Discuss as a class.

4. Group Activity: Venn Diagram (20 minutes)

- **Group Work:** Divide students into small groups. Each group will create a Venn diagram comparing and contrasting aspects of food culture in South Korea and the US based on the videos and lecture.
- **Presentation:** Each group presents their Venn diagram to the class.

5. Exit Ticket (8 minutes)

- Reflection: Ask students to write a short paragraph on how their understanding of belonging through food has changed or been reinforced by the lesson.

Day 2: Deep Dive into Food Traditions and Personal Reflections

1. Warm-Up Discussion (8 minutes)

- Recap: Review key points from the previous class. Ask students to share one new thing they learned about food culture in South Korea or the US.

2. Case Studies (20 minutes)

- Reading Assignment: Provide students with short case studies and articles about specific food-related traditions in South Korea and the US (e.g., Chuseok celebrations, Thanksgiving dinner).
- Discussion: In pairs, students discuss the readings and how these food traditions foster a sense of belonging.

3. Cooking Demonstration and Food Tasting (40 minutes)

- Demonstration: Play cooking videos and then demonstrate in class how to prepare a simple Korean dish (kimchi pancakes) and Macaroni & Cheese.
- Food Tasting: Provide samples of Korean and American dishes for students to taste. Discuss the flavors, ingredients, and cultural significance.
- Discussion: How do these dishes make you feel? How do they contribute to a sense of belonging?

4. Reflective Writing (10 minutes)

- Journal Entry: Ask students to write a reflective journal entry on what they have learned about belonging through food culture. How can food help people connect across cultures?

Materials Needed:

- Projector and computer with internet access
- Copies of selected readings and handouts
- Chart paper and markers
- Videos and documentaries on Korean and American food culture (e.g., segments from "Korean Englishman" YouTube channel, "Street Food" series on Netflix)
- Access to online collaboration tools (e.g., Google Docs, Padlet)
- Ingredients for a simple Korean dish
- Ingredients for Macaroni & Cheese

Assessment:

- Participation in discussions and group activities
- Quality of the Venn diagram and group presentation

- Reflective journal entries
- Engagement in the cooking demonstration and food tasting

Extension Activities:

- Cultural Exchange Program: Set up a pen-pal or virtual exchange program with a school in South Korea to share recipes and food stories.
- Research Project: Students can research another cultural aspect of food (e.g., food etiquette, street food) and present how it relates to belonging.

Cross-Cultural Awareness:

Promoting cross-cultural awareness is essential in today's globalized world. By incorporating teaching about Korean culture into my classroom and sharing messages with the broader community, I can help create a more inclusive and culturally aware environment that enriches students' educational experiences, strengthens community connections, and promotes diverse cultural groups mutual understanding and respect between them. By the end of this lesson, students should have a nuanced understanding of how food culture fosters a sense of belonging in South Korea and the US, enhancing their appreciation for cultural diversity. The extension activities collectively promote a comprehensive understanding and appreciation of cross-cultural differences and similarities, particularly in the context of Korean and American food cultures, and develop students' global perspective.

References:

- 영국남자 Korean Englishman
(<https://www.youtube.com/user/koreanenglishman>)
- Street Food Series on Netflix
(<https://www.netflix.com/title/81249665>)
- The History of Korean Cuisine and What Makes Korean Food So Special
(<https://www.superprof.com/blog/south-korean-culinary-culture/>)
- North and South: A Tradition of Communal Dining
(<https://experience.nd.edu/news/the-importance-of-communal-dining/>)

Standards:

Local Standards:

1. SPPS Social Studies Standards:

- Standard 4 (Culture): Students will understand and appreciate cultural diversity and the role of culture in their lives and in the world.

2. SPPS World Languages Standards:

- Standard 5 (Connections): Connect with other disciplines and acquire information and diverse perspectives in order to use the language to function in academic and career-related situations.

State Standards:

1. Minnesota K-12 Academic Standards in Social Studies:

- Strand 4 (History): The student will understand historical events and concepts.
 - Benchmark 9.4.4.18.1: Analyze how the cultural characteristics of different regions of the world are impacted by geography, historical events, and individuals.
- Strand 5 (Geography): The student will understand the interactions between people, places, and environments.
 - Benchmark 9.3.3.5.1: Compare and contrast the experiences and perspectives of diverse cultural groups within the United States.
 - Benchmark 9.3.3.5.2: Analyze cultural diffusion and how it has shaped the cultural landscapes of various regions.

2. Minnesota K-12 Academic Standards in World Languages:

- Standard 1 (Communication): Communicate in languages other than English.
 - Benchmark 9.1.1.1: Engage in conversations, provide and obtain information, express feelings and emotions, and exchange opinions.
- Standard 2 (Cultures): Gain knowledge and understanding of other cultures.
 - Benchmark 9.2.1.1: Demonstrate an understanding of the relationship between the practices and perspectives of the culture studied.

National Standards:

1. ACTFL World-Readiness Standards for Learning Languages:

- Standard 2.1 (Relating Cultural Practices to Perspectives): Students demonstrate an understanding of the relationship between the practices and perspectives of the culture studied.
- Standard 2.2 (Relating Cultural Products to Perspectives): Students demonstrate an understanding of the relationship between the products and perspectives of the culture studied.
- Standard 4.1 (Language Comparisons): Students demonstrate understanding of the nature of language through comparisons of the language studied and their own.
- Standard 4.2 (Cultural Comparisons): Students demonstrate understanding of the concept of culture through comparisons of the cultures studied and their own.
- Standard 5.1 (Communities): Students use the language both within and beyond the school setting.

- Standard 5.2 (Lifelong Learning): Students show evidence of becoming lifelong learners by using the language for personal enjoyment and enrichment.