

Confronting the Tyranny of the Majority

A Sheltered Lesson in Civics



Pasco School District Bilingual Mini-Conference

Sal Gabaldón
Language Acquisition Specialist
Wednesday, August 22, 2012

Introduction

- The presentation will guide participants through a sample lesson that
 - Is aligned to the state standards
 - Is designed to engage ELLs & all other students
 - Includes the reading of primary sources
 - Promotes the use of technology
 - Is based on a “real world” activity
 - Models several sheltering strategies

Strategies for Sheltering Instruction

- Higher Order Thinking: **What If...Quick Write**
- Vocabulary Review: **Classifying by Connotation**
- Accessing Internet Resources: **On-line Project**
- Performance Assessment: **Differentiated Rubric**
- Reading Comprehension: **Triad Organizer**
- Academic Writing: **Scaffolding Support**

What would happen if...

- ...the United States adopted a representative democracy that avoided the use of elections completely, relying instead on a lottery system that randomly selected half of our Congress every two years from a list of all registered voters in each district? How might this affect:
 - Women?
 - Racial and ethnic minorities?
 - Campaign fund raising?
 - Public education?

DAY 1: Connotations T-Sheet

- **Remind** students that they have studied the Declaration of Independence and its abstract vocabulary of government concepts.
- **Project** the word list (pg. 5) on the board and ask students to work in pairs, using a T-sheet to categorize the words as having generally more positive or more negative connotations.
- **Use** two examples in a think aloud demonstration, pointing out ideas and images you associate with each word.

Words have emotional associations often communicated by images

POSITIVE

- Freedom (an open door)
- Justice (a balance scale)

NEGATIVE

- Tyranny (a military boot)
- Oppression (handcuffs)

Mainstream students, as well as ELLs, will often have an accurate sense of a word but not be able to articulate a specific definition. This activity allows them to see that the connotation, along with the word's context in a paragraph, supports comprehension.


DAY 2: The Poster Project

- Explain to students the five features comprising the “define a word” on-line poster project (pg. 4):
 - Locating information: image, quote, three links
 - Selecting an appropriate visual image
 - Creating an effective caption
 - Defining the selected term in one’s own words
 - Editing for correct punctuation & spelling
- Distribute the rubric, emphasizing that the assignment is an individual project.

DAY 3

- Students work on poster project
- Groups read excerpt from *On Liberty*, using Triad Summarizer strategy at each paragraph:
 - S-1 reads, S-2 interprets, S-3 completes sentence
 - S-2 reads, S-3 interprets, S-1 completes sentence
 - S-3 reads, S-1 interprets, S-2 completes sentence
- Teacher calls on groups to share responses with class and elaborate their ideas.

We the People?—Who is “We”?

- In our nation’s first presidential election (1789), less than 2% of the U.S. population voted.
- Not allowed to vote
 - Women
 - Slaves and Indians
 - Indentured servants
 - Men below age of majority (21)
 - Men (in some states) who owned no land
- In our nation’s last presidential election (2008), 42% of U.S. population voted (129/305M). 

What makes a majority tyrannical?

- In this context, “majority” and “minority” refers to **people who actually cast votes.**
- “Majority rule” is **perceived as fair** when the constituencies that make up the majority and the minority **change with sufficient frequency.**
- Otherwise, the minority will perceived majority rule as **tyranny and oppression.**
- A just democracy exercises its power with the consent of the majority—**and the minority.**

How broad is the pool of U.S. presidential election voters in 2012?

- **Direct restrictions:**
 - U.S. citizens under the age of majority (18)
 - U.S. citizens convicted of certain crimes
 - U.S. citizens judicially declared mentally or psychiatrically incompetent (varies by state)
 - U.S. citizens who officially reside in a U.S. territory
 - U.S. residents with legal status but not citizenship
 - U.S. residents who do not have legal status

Indirect Restrictions

Procedural factors with potential to encourage or discourage voter participation among certain subgroups:

- Voter registration process
- Voter ID laws
- Polling sites, dates and/or times
- Design, length and complexity of ballot items and voting procedures

Civil War & Consent of the Minority

- Majority vs. Minority in U.S. in 1860:
 - North: 22 M (including 1.5 M slaves)
 - South: 9 M (including 3.5 M slaves)
- Protections for Southern white-male minority:
 - Under the Constitution (1776)
 - Three-fifths Compromise
 - Separation of Powers (Federalism/States Rights)
 - Super Majorities
 - Under Constitutional Amendments (1791)
 - Bill of Rights

Civil Rights Movement

- Majority vs. Minority in the U.S. in 1960
 - 180 Million (85% white, 11% Black, 4% Latino)
- Available protections & political action
 - XIV (1866) & XIX (1920) Amendments, Civil Rights Act (1964), Voting Rights Act (1965), Title IX (1972), Equal Educational Opportunities Act (1974)
 - Evolving case law (Lau, Miranda, Rowe, Lawrence)

DAY 4

- Ask students to guess why someone would like to have English made official. Does it sound like a good idea?
- Distribute SB 6053 and have students read it quietly. **Pose the scaffolding questions (pg. 7).**
- Discuss the bill's implications and distribute a written copy of the assignment with its scaffolding and rubric.
- (See sample of a generic rubric on pg. 11)

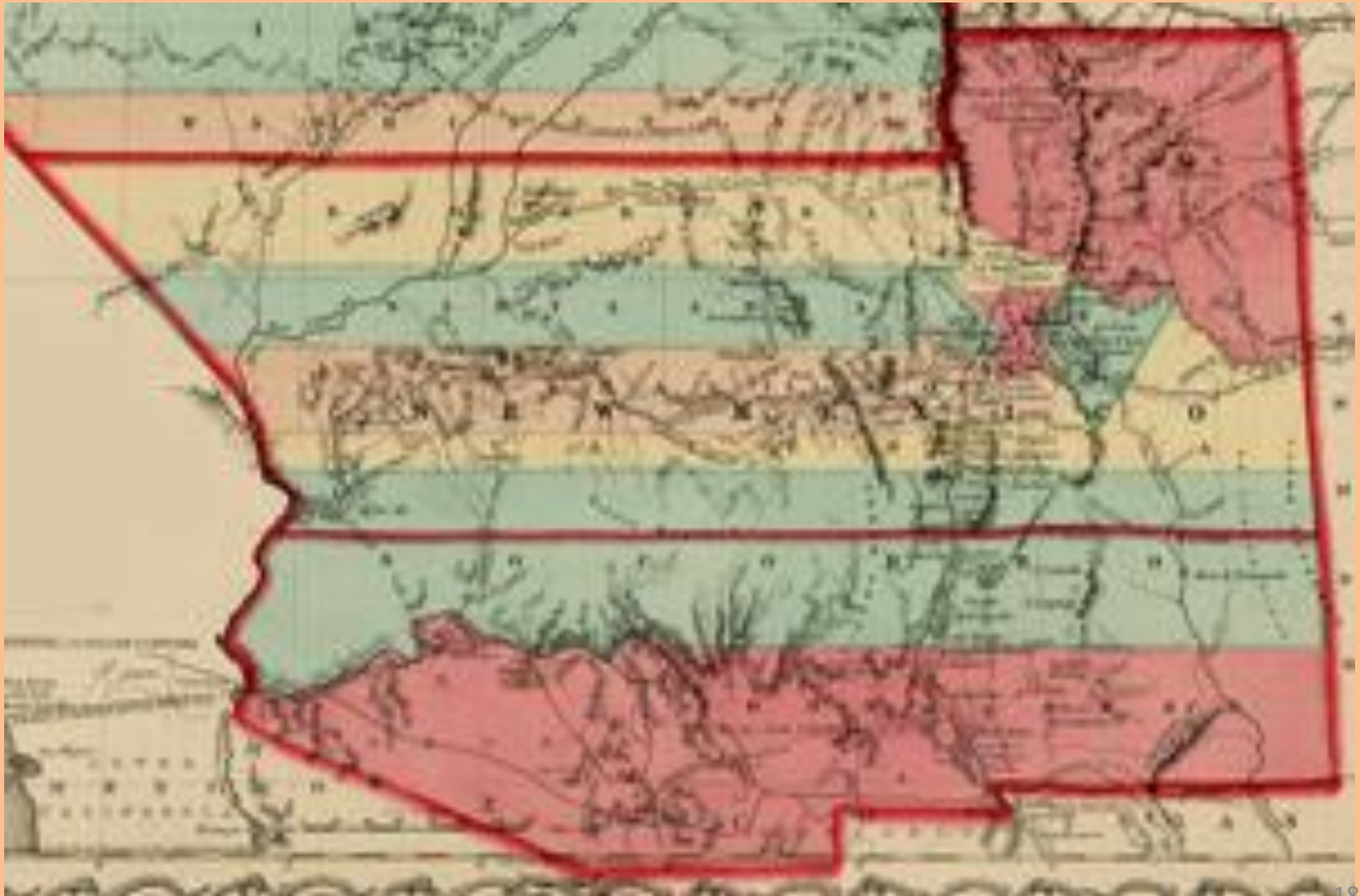
2012: The Latino Minority

- In the last decade or so, since Latino Americans became the largest ethnic minority group in the U.S., a number of state bills or laws have been proposed—many passing into law—that appear to target our nation’s Hispanic, Latino or Spanish-speaking population, especially in Arizona. What three issues do these laws appear to address—and are these issues now being raised in other states, including Washington?

Arizona initiatives have sought to:

- Ban the teaching of Mexican American hist. & lit.
- Challenge citizenship by birth on U.S. soil
- Approve anti-bilingual education measures
- Adopt “show-me-your-papers” laws
- Militarize the southern border
- Reject comprehensive immigration reform
- Denote English as the official language
- Demand proof of citizenship upon enrollment
- Segregate English language learners
- Dismiss “teachers with accents”

Arizona's Confederate Birth, 1862



Majority/Minority Languages

The top two languages for the present-day territory of the United States during the indicated years:

- 1600: Algonquin and Lakota
- 1800: English and German
- 2000: English and Spanish

From German to Spanish 1880-1940

During this period in the U.S.

- Hundreds of thousands of students throughout the Midwest attended schools taught in German
- Nearly 800 German language newspapers were being published
- WW I & II—and the fiercely anti-German propaganda accompanying them—eradicated most remnants of German culture in the U.S.

Americanization Programs

Racial segregation was common throughout the U.S., particularly in the South, and by 1919 many states required that all schools “be conducted in English,” and placed Polish, Italian, Russian and other immigrant students, as well as Native American, Mexican American, Chinese American students, in segregated “English immersion” classes. Such programs lasted well into the 60s. **AZ now segregates ELLs—again.**



Spanish Architecture: Arizona, 1902



Anglo ambivalence toward Latino culture: In the West, Mexican American children were often punished for speaking Spanish in school, yet ironically their schools' architecture commonly reflected their heritage.

Civics Lesson: Bill of Language Rights

- Washington legislators now are considering a bill that would declare English the “Official Language” of the State.
- In response, this lesson challenges students to devise, discuss and select items to include in a proposed “Bill of Language Rights” for their class, school or district, with the intent of clarifying the potential impact of “Official English” on schools.

DAY 5

- Working individually, students complete a Bill of Language Rights.
- Grouped in threes or fours, students compare their work and decide whether one of the bills in their group is best or whether a composite bill would be better.
- Each group's revised bill is presented to the class and a "best" version is selected for adoption.

Bill of Language Rights, Room 201

- BE IT ENACTED BY MR. WATANABE'S FIRST PERIOD CLASS, ROOM 201, PASCO HIGH SCHOOL, STATE OF WA:
- **SEC. 1.** We, the students identified above, find that English is the common language of the U.S., that Spanish is our nation's second-most common language, and that languages from every part of the world are spoken and welcomed in our society. Throughout history the common thread that has bound together Americans of differing backgrounds and languages has been the desire for liberty and opportunity.

SEC. 2. Although command of the English language is universally understood to be an economic and social advantage in today's world, we appreciate the liberties that our Constitution affords us, especially with regard to freedom of speech, and our right as Americans to learn and use any language we choose.

SEC 3. Furthermore, we recognize that speaking a language in addition to English provides an even greater advantage in American life and in today's global economy.

SEC. 4. Finally, we find that Native American languages have a special historic significance for our state, and that all the heritage languages brought to school by students are an important academic resource.

SEC. 5. Therefore, we declare that the English language is the common language of our class and that all students are encouraged to learn and use a second language. All business in this class shall be conducted in respectful language. All documents, rules, orders, and publications used in the class shall be in a language that students already comprehend or are learning.

SEC. 6. We further declare that parents have the right to receive communication in a language they understand, and that students should have access to appropriate library materials and Internet sites that are available in more than one language.

Dream Deferred

What happens to a dream deferred?

Does it dry up

Like a raisin in the sun?

Or fester like a sore—

And then run?

Does it stink like rotten meat?

Or crust and sugar over—

Like a syrupy sweet?

Maybe it just sags

Like a heavy load.

Or does it explode?

--Langston Hughes

Thank you!

- Q & A

