

MODULE #2: The Influence of Culture on Community

Objectives

- Participants will define and explain culture.
- Participants will determine the influence of culture and community.
- Participants will examine their own cultural background.
- Participants will dissect the cultural, racial, and national differences and the similarities in *latinidad*.

Context



Because culture informs many aspects of our daily lives, it is important to define one's immediate culture and how it affects and fits into the diverse cultural community around them.

Handouts & Resources Needed:

Handout 2.1A: Discussion Questions

Handout 2.1B: Soy Boricua IQ Quiz

Handout 2.2: Family Survey

Sheet of paper- one for each participant

Pens/pencils

Journals

Color pencils/crayons

Activity #1: Culture and Community (45 min)

Procedure:

- Icebreaker
- The purpose of this activity is to teach participants about their community. The facilitator should utilize community-based organizations and associations to assist in presenting this workshop. As part of this workshop, you should invite a community leader who has been actively involved in the struggles of building the community as well as those who directly affect or are members of the community. Refer to Handout 2.1A for discussion questions.
- Ask participants to take the Soy Boricua IQ Quiz (Handout 2.1B). Once participants are finished, the facilitator should lead a discussion of the answers.
- Tell participants to write as a homework assignment a journal reflection on "How does my background define who I am as a person?"
- Debriefing

Activity #2: Understanding Culture (30 min)

Procedure:

- Icebreaker
- Explain to participants that in order to understand culture it is important to look at the question, what is Culture? Tell them that examining their own cultural backgrounds is a key for understanding other cultures.
- Divide the students into groups of 4-5 students and ask them to work first in pairs to develop a definition of culture. Determine who the recorder of the group is going to be.
- Then have them share the definitions with the rest of the group, agree on a joint definition, and put it on paper.
- Have one of the group's members present the definitions to the class, then when every group has shared, decide on a joint definition for the whole class.
- Then ask participants to individually examine the elements of culture. Ask them to make a list of at least five elements or aspects of culture – the characteristics they believe describe people's cultural similarities or differences.
- Do a "round robin" sharing in the group: Each student in turn should state one element, which the recorder should write on paper. Then you can ask questions about the elements listed, and generate a single list on paper and put that list up on the wall with those of other groups.
- For homework, tell participants that they would need to look at their own family as a way of understanding their cultural background and the diversity that may exist within their family. Provide Handout 2.2: Family Survey
- Debriefing

Activity #3: Everyone has a culture (55 min)

Procedure:

- Icebreaker
- Remind participants about the homework assignment to look at their own family and review the questions with them (Handout 2.2: Family Survey).
- Ask two or three members to share their family backgrounds and ask the following questions as debriefing:
 - **Process** the experience – Is your family background more diverse than you had originally thought? How did it feel to compare backgrounds?
 - **Generalize** – Did you find common experiences? Did many of your ancestors come to the US for similar reasons?
 - **Apply** the information – How does understanding your own culture help you to work with other people? How can this be useful to you in your final project assignment?

Activity #4: Community---Dissecting Latinidad (55 min)

Procedure:

- Icebreaker
- Facilitator should make sure to have materials: paper, crayons, etc.
- Explain to participants that Latinos/Hispanics form the largest ethnic group in the U.S. Thus, having an understanding of Latinidad is important.
- Have the group break into different ethnic/cultural groups (Puerto Rican, Haitians, Dominicans, Mexicans, etc). In the smaller groups have them define for themselves what defines their cultural group.
- Bring the group back together and ask participants to come up to the board and write under each heading what defines Dominicans, Puerto Ricans, Haitians, Mexicans, etc.
 - Compare the smaller group's definitions with the larger groups' designations
 - Compare these ethnic categories for overlaps and differences
 - Ask participants to create a drawing, painting, collage, or other artistic medium to show your identity, Latinidad, or your family/community.
- Debriefing

Handout 2.1A

Discussion Questions:

1. Where do we (your group) come from? How did we arrive (or continue to arrive) in the US?
2. What has been the larger community's attitude toward your group? Other Latino groups? Other ethnic groups? What evidence can you give?
3. Do you know any important historical dates regarding your community?
4. Who are the leaders of your community? What has been their role and status vis-à-vis the larger society?
5. How is your group represented in the larger community in terms of political office, economic life, and judicial representation?

Closure:

The goal is to have the youth: (1) take a hard look at certain destructive acts against their community that now contribute to the community's lack of political power and economic base; (2) assess internal efforts to gain political power in terms of their goals and accomplishments.

Handout 2.1B

SOY BORICUA IQ QUIZ

Technical Note: This test was developed in the educational labs of the Institute for Puerto Rican Policy, the product of fifty years of research. It has been designed for entertainment purposes only and should not be used to screen candidates for employment or educational opportunities. Hey, it's all in fun. . . but can you pass this test, anyway?

Instructions: Each question is worth 5 points. Add up the points for each correct answer and see how you rate as a Puerto Rican or Puerto Rican-sensitive person:

90-100 Wow! You are part of the Boricua master race. You have defied "The Bell Curve" and may procreate at will.

75-85 You seem to know enough to be a Puerto Rican, but we're not totally sure! Stop watching those novelas!

60-70 You are Boricua enough to get by, but the INS might not ever let you back into Puerto Rico if you don't brush up!

25-55 You are part of the Puerto Rican mental underclass, probably doomed to a life of crime and government dependency. We suggest you enroll in a Puerto Rican studies program immediately!

10-20 You are beyond hope as a Boricua! Throw this calendar away and keep moving!

0-5 You are fully assimilated into the American Way of Life! You will be rewarded with a good job, your own home and enough credit cards to potentially bankrupt you. Congratulations, you have made it!

Handout 2.1B

THE QUESTIONS

1. In which city was the current flag of Puerto Rico designed in 1895?
 - a. Lares, Puerto Rico
 - b. New York City
 - c. Ponce, Puerto Rico
 - d. Tampa, Florida

2. The composer, Rafael Hernández, wrote "Lamento Borincano" in which city?
 - a. New York City
 - b. Ponce, Puerto Rico
 - c. San Juan, Puerto Rico
 - d. Utuado, Puerto Rico

3. Which is the birthplace of the poet, Julia de Burgos?
 - a. Bayamón, Puerto Rico
 - b. Carolina, Puerto Rico
 - c. Manhattan, New York
 - d. Vieques, Puerto Rico

4. Which is the location in Puerto Rico of el Parque Ceremonial Indígena de Caguas (the Indigenous Ceremonial Park of Caguas)?
 - a. Adjuntas
 - b. Caguas
 - c. Lares
 - d. Utuado

5. Who was the first Puerto Rican elected to public office in the United States (outside of Puerto Rico)?
 - a. Hermán Badillo
 - b. Robert "Bobby"
 - c. García Oscar
 - d. García Rivera
 - e. Tony Méndez

6. In what year were migrant laborers from Puerto Rico first brought to work in Hawaii?
 - a. 1868
 - b. 1900
 - c. 1926
 - d. 1945

7. Who was the first Puerto Rican elected to the United States Congress from Chicago?
 - a. Luis Gutiérrez
 - b. Benjamin Reyes

Handout 2.1B

- c. Hipólito Roldán
 - d. Miriam Santos
8. Who is the father of the Puerto Rican danza?
 - a. Rafael Hernández
 - b. Ramito
 - c. Daniel Santos
 - d. Manuel Tavares
9. Rita Moreno won an Oscar for her role as supporting actor in:
 - a. Evening Shade
 - b. I Like It Like That
 - c. Scarface
 - d. West Side Story
10. Who was the first Puerto Rican to be elected president of a major labor union in the United States (outside Puerto Rico)?
 - a. Enio Carrión
 - b. Santiago Iglesias
 - c. Dennis Rivera
 - d. Damaso Seda
11. Who wrote the poem, "Puerto Rican Obituary"?
 - a. Miguel Algarín
 - b. José Angel Figueroa
 - c. Felipe Luciano
 - d. Pedro Pietri
12. Before the 1860s, where was the largest concentration of Puerto Rican exiles in the United States?
 - a. Brooklyn, New York
 - b. New Orleans, Louisiana
 - c. Manhattan, New York
 - d. Tampa, Florida
13. Who wrote the novel, "Down These Mean Streets"?
 - a. Rene Marqués
 - b. Nicholasa Mohr
 - c. Piri Thomas
 - d. Edwin Torres

14. Who was the first Puerto Rican governor of Puerto Rico after the US invasion?
- a. Luis Muñoz Marín
 - b. Jesús T. Piñero
 - c. Roberto Sánchez Vilella

Handout 2.1B

- d. Pedro Juan Soto
15. In what year did the US grant Puerto Rico the right to elect its own Governor?
- a. 1898
 - b. 1917
 - c. 1948
 - d. 1968
16. Pasteles have their origins in:
- a. Africa
 - b. Cuba
 - c. Spain
 - d. Taíno culture
17. How many species of coquí are there?
- a. One
 - b. Five
 - c. Seven
 - d. Sixteen
18. What percent of all Puerto Ricans in the United States (outside Puerto Rico) lived in New York City in 1990?
- a. 33%
 - b. 50%
 - c. 65%
 - d. 82%
19. Who sewed the 1868 Lares flag of Puerto Rico?
- a. Mimi Besosa
 - b. Mariana Bracetti
 - c. Sister Isolina Ferré
 - d. Marta García
20. Which one of the following words is not derived from the Taíno language?
- a. Barbecue
 - b. Cannibal
 - c. Hurricane
 - d. Orisha

THE ANSWERS

1-b, 2-a, 3-b, 4-d, 5-c, 6-b, 7-a, 8-d, 9-d, 10-c,
11-d, 12-b, 13-c, 14-b, 15-c, 16-a, 17-d, 18-a, 19-b, 20-d

Handout 2.2

Family Survey

Think individually about your own extended family – including parents, grandparents, uncles and aunts, siblings, etc.

Write down a few sentences covering the following questions:

1. When and why did they come to the United States?
2. What are their backgrounds, in terms of race, ethnicity, nationality, and religion?
3. What obstacles did family members or ancestors face as immigrants, and how did they deal with them?
4. Make sure to identify the obstacles their family faced in becoming part of the US, and discuss what you think are the causes of any negative treatment they received.

