

Racial Issues In Brazil: Is There Truly a Racial Democracy?

Adjua Z.M. Adama

Overview

Is there racism in Brazil - the type of racism the world has become accustomed to hearing from the mouths of African descendants in the United States and in South Africa? Is there a racial democracy in Brazil – the idea that if people are not provided an equal opportunity toward social advancement, this is not due to any racial discrimination? There, apparently, seems to be two sides to this issue.

Proponents of the racial democracy theory state that there is no racial discrimination, as witnessed in the United States and South Africa, due to a number of key factors:

- Race mixing on a monumental scale has been exhibited for decades.
- There are no clear-cut racial categories defined by laws, statutes, or ordinances.
- There is no legal segregation of races/ethnic groups, as illustrated in the recent pasts of the United States and South Africa.
- Disparities among the population are due to class issues, rather than race issues. If darker-skinned people are somewhat disadvantaged, it is due to the reality of poverty and that they may be members of the working class, rather than being disadvantaged by their skin color.
- Any examples of racial discrimination are due to isolated incidents that bear no major reflection of instituted national racism, as illustrated in the aforementioned nations.

Opponents of this theory state that there is racism and discrimination in Brazil, as well as in other countries in Latin America, and that this discrimination is deep-seated. Blacks in Brazil tend to occupy the lowest income brackets, the lowest jobs, the poorest neighborhoods, and are virtually invisible to the larger image of the country. In fact, opponents to the racial democracy theory state that the lighter-skinned one is, the easier it is to maneuver through society.

This research project discusses a number of issues to be addressed as a curriculum unit for my World Cultures classes. Inherent in my focus for the class, in alignment with school district standards for the Social Studies, is an anthropological examination of the numerous areas and people we study. In addition to this, I tend to focus on pertinent issues that affect these societies and cultures, but that are universal as well. An examination of the Hindu caste system, for example, will allow for further perusal of social stratification issues inherent among Peninsulares, Creoles, Mestizos, Freed Blacks, and Slaves during Latin America's colonial period; Shoguns, Daimyos, Samurai, and peasant relationships during Japan's feudal era; and upper-class, middle-class, working-class issues exhibited within United States history. Gender inequalities endemic to Confucius' ideals may garner expeditions into similar issues found in other societies, including our own.

It is my intention that the focus of this research project – though it is pertinent to discussions concerning Latin America – should be included in the unit focusing on Africa, rather than Latin America. The unit on Africa is completed around the latter half of the first quarter, and includes discussions of African populations and the effects of slavery and racism upon them. I would like to create a unit that focuses on the nature of prejudice, discrimination, and racism as institutional phenomena in the African Diaspora, and present the information in a

case study format: United States, South Africa, and Brazil. Though the issue of racism and color consciousness is an issue in Latin America, I don't want to dwell on it as much during the Latin American unit. I believe it will gel better with student learning if placed in a context that remains consistent – though I must review many issues with them when we reach the Latin American unit.

In terms of the unit itself, as stated above, I will introduce the issue of Racial Democracy within the context of issues faced by the African Diaspora, and to draw comparisons/contrasts with the United States and South Africa. Before focusing on issues pertaining to race in Brazil – or any other civilization for that matter – I believe that it is key to define pertinent issues relevant to any discussion centered on race and prejudice. The paramount terms and concepts characterizing racial discussions need to be defined and reinforced. Inherent in many exhortations emanating from laymen "race" scholars, one usually finds that issues tend to be distorted due to an inefficient analysis of the problem overall. Indeed, many discussions centered on race tend to exhibit ignorance due to the continued premise that racism is derived solely from ignorance. While engaging in conversations pertaining to affirmative action, for example, one may argue that such programs are necessary in order to deal with, "prejudiced people in major corporations," or that affirmative action is not necessary because it penalizes many just because a few people happen to be, "prejudiced." Such comments focus on surface descriptions of problems that are endemic to life itself, and who's nature lie within explanations centering on issues much deeper than one person's feelings toward another of a different hue.

With this in mind, it is necessary that students understand key concepts and terms. They need to understand that *prejudice* is just someone's prejudgment, for whatever reason, which may not necessarily have to deal with race. *Racism*, as the suffix "-ism" suggests, is systemic racial hatred; hatred and discrimination that have become public policy and social norms. Students must also understand how people on both sides of this token economy have bought into its dictates. How have whites come to believe that they were the superior race over the years, and how have blacks come to believe it as well – which begins to foster the phenomenon of light-skinned blacks discriminating against dark-skinned blacks. This has been quite an occurrence within the U.S., but is a substantial issue in Brazil as well. Only systemic racism can breed the peculiar traditions centered around intraracial racism, which is rarely discussed among laymen race scholars.

Once the issue of race has been explored, supplemental activities and lessons will further provide substance to the unit.

The first task at hand is defining the various racial categories that are present in Brazil, and the historical relationships between them. By this time, students will be familiar with the historical realities centered on the Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade, and resulting disbursement of Africans from their homes to the Americas. From this, students need to understand the racial distinctions found in Brazil, including mulatto, moreno, and preto.

The Second task at hand is to focus on issues that appear during the 19th and 20th Centuries. Throughout most of Brazil's history, it appears that the mulatto population has allowed themselves to act as a buffer between the whites and the blacks. Though some people may state that Brazil does not perpetuate racism as in other societies, evidence in both history and contemporary studies portray Brazil to be as much an active participant of racist systems as most societies with a significant African population. Brazil exhibits aspects of a three-tiered racial structure – defined by Dr. Charshee McIntyre in her book, *Criminalizing a Race*, as a racial class system in which the whites are on top, the blacks are on the bottom, and mixed populations (mulattoes) act as a buffer zone between the two extremes. Indeed, Brazil has provided a society in which white skin becomes the equivalent to high social status and financial security. Research discusses employment and social mobility limited to those of lighter hues, and the dregs of society often being those of darker hues. History uncovers the reality that many light-skinned and biracial and/or multiracial Brazilians invited more white Europeans into the country, while denying the descendants of Africa immigration rights. The goal of many mulatto people and organizations was complete amalgamation into the white population. They believed that this was the ultimate solution for social acceptance in Brazilian – and I would venture to add international – society.

The third task for this unit is to define the various organizations that are proponents of the causes of Afro-Brazilians, and the issues they tackle. Indeed, as I scanned the many resources that came up concerning racism in Brazil, the issue addressed quite often was the use of Affirmative Action, as modeled by the United States in academic and corporate affairs. Blacks were disproportionately represented in low-income jobs, and poverty circuits. They were not well represented in areas of management, ownership, and leadership roles within corporate Brazil. Furthermore, large percentages of Brazilian blacks were under the poverty level, and did not have equal access to resources, adequate housing, and education. Other concerns centered on police brutality and alleged political assassinations.

Rationale

World Cultures, as an academic subject, has been present within established required curriculum packages for decades. However, despite the title for the subject, the focus of these classes has never been "world" cultures. The projected goals of the classes have always been an exploratory discussion of Western Civilization, how the United States has related to that subject, and a cross-cultural analysis as they pertained to Euro-American historical events (forever deliberated through the eyes of Eurocentricity). An engaging "World Cultures" student would learn about the Japanese people through the lens of an America shocked by the events of the bombing of Pearl Harbor; classes would examine Mexicans as the aggressors at the Alamo; and Africa was a nebulous continent that supplied slaves for North and South American colonies during the ancient periods, military bases and staging areas for westerners during the great wars.

This has never been my vision for a World Cultures class. I never understood why a subject would include topics to be discussed during the 11th grade U.S. History curriculum. God forbid a student take A.P. European History during their last year of public education; no wonder so many people have such a myopic view of the world they live on.

It is my intention for World Cultures to be an opportunity to explore the real world, the Earth as it is, full of numerous types of people, cultures, geographical landscapes, and traditions. The advent of numerous technologies that top themselves at exponential rates has transformed the prophesied phrase, "the world is becoming smaller" into a cliché. It is not uncommon for individuals who live in major population centers across the eastern seaboard of the U.S. to encounter hundreds of different 'world cultures.' Your food market cashier may be from Venezuela, your department store sales associate may be from Yemen, and your golf partner may be from Korea. Colleges and universities – including those that have been historically African-American – boast upwards of 20-50% "minority" populations. Increasingly, businesses and corporations have ties with foreign countries, or now manufacture their goods within distant borders. It is not uncommon for employees of major corporations to encounter individuals from foreign nations in business-related meetings and events. In reality, many Americans are being sent to other nations to operate or supervise company divisions overseas. This is not to mention the thousands of personnel sent across the oceans on military business. With the advent and expansion of the Internet and the World Wide Web, it has now become possible to find out what an Indian high school student is preparing for his final project in New Delhi.

There is a definite need for students to explore the world as it really is, and through the eyes of its entire people. We do not all agree on how one should live their lives, but we must realize that there are different ways of living, and that one is not necessarily better than another. There is, also, a need to explore common problems we all face. Issues of racism, gender inequality, poverty, problems due to economic divisions are not limited to certain populations within specific locations in the world. It is my task to focus on these issues as well.

The issue of race and racism, as a U.S. national problem, is usually glanced over and rarely investigated within this country – outside the usual Dr. King and Black History Month programs. The Pittsburgh Public Schools

are fortunate to avoid the need for African American history classes – the issue of race constituting a primary pillar of the class – for its ninth grade students. Most districts throughout this country do not contain such modules. The issue of race has deeply affected the course of events within this country, yet it is quite ignored where it truly needs to be addressed: within primary and secondary education. Students, at least in general, have no conception of the social dynamics centered on race and how it has affected this society, excluding the usual surface issues. Expand this issue to its global parent and you have completely uncharted ground with which to cover.

The purpose of this curriculum unit is to expand the issue of race from its usual subjects – North American slavery, Jim Crow segregation, and voting rights– to the reality of it being an international issue. Brazil is an ideal location to explore because it espouses the second largest black population contained within a country, worldwide. Though it has maintained its authenticity as a country with no race problems, there is quite a bit of evidence that this is not true. An exploration of Brazil may give students an understanding of how the issue of race is truly dynamic, never static, yet can contain numerous similarities despite inherent cultural differences between societies. A study was conducted among blacks who live in Rio de Janeiro, and it was determined that dark-skinned women were valued for their supposed sexual prowess, yet not worthy of long-term commitments. Such sentiments strike immediate comparisons to the reality of the Jezebel stereotype propagated toward black women in this country. The same Rio study established racism projected among black families toward themselves. Babies with straight and long hair (read white people's hair) were valued, contrasted with those who possessed more African features. These are the same issues present in Spike Lee's "Good and Bad Hair" musical number found in his 1988 production, School Daze.

In addition to this, an exploration into Brazil's racial reality will expose students to different interpretations of the same problem. Brazil does not view race as it is viewed in the United States or South Africa. There are some differences, and the issues revolve around Brazil's historical context. The pervasive intermixing of races within Brazil makes it difficult to label individuals. Furthermore, their labeling system (branco, Moreno, mulatto, preto, etc.) is quite different than those found in the United States. Here, of course, the one-drop rule applied for centuries: if you have one drop of black blood in you, you're black. History has recorded, on numerous occasions, the accounts of individuals who were fair enough to pass as white, and had to make the ultimate decision of passing in order to live a happier life, or not passing and throwing in their lot with the struggles of the masses. In Brazil, since a person could gain access to a better life by just being brown, they didn't necessarily have to pass as white, but they might never ally themselves with their darker compatriots to deal with issues affecting both of them. It is quite the reality that the majority of the efforts of black movements indigenous to Brazil center most of their efforts into conscious-raising activities among the country's morenos and mulattos.

This unit is appropriate for World Cultures students (usually infused into the tenth grade academic schedule). This unit contains a number of detailed writing assignments. For this purpose, it is necessary that the students have an understanding of basic written communication skills, as well as knowledge of how to construct a formal essay (with detailed outline, rough draft, and final copy). These skills are introduced and augmented among my classes from the beginning of the school year. An auxiliary computer project is added to this unit as an option. It requires the students to possess a basic knowledge of the Windows operating systems, and that a workable computer lab within the school premises contain the necessary software.

Finally, this curriculum unit fits neatly into the designated revised World Cultures syllabus the school district has adopted this past year, in alignment with our new textbook, World Cultures: A Global Mosaic. The new text focuses on the anthropological and geographical aspects I've always envisioned for this class. It contains pertinent information that can provide a basis for Brazil, though most of the class materials will be located outside the text.

Objectives:

This unit seeks to achieve many things, in line with my objectives for the entire scope of the class. Before expressing specific objectives for this particular unit, the objectives for my entire class shall be exposed. As I often explain to my students, my class expresses three themes that are dealt with in each class unit: anthropology, geography, and written communication.

With anthropology, it is my intention that students gain a knowledge of the people who live in particular areas from a personal standpoint, one that does not refer – necessarily – to important leaders and events, but that exposes students to the natural living environments found within core regions of the world. This is the ground that fosters understanding among different types of living patterns inherent among people adapting to various living conditions.

Geography is necessary – in a general sense - in that it allows students to visualize and foster an awareness of location. In a more analytical sense, it brings to light the catalysts for diversity of beliefs and customs. Culture is a dichotomous expression of geography and the adaptable individuality humans' possess.

The writing component is derived from the content standards provided by the Board of Public Education for the Pittsburgh Public Schools. Inherent in all classes, teachers must provide lesson plans that allow students to cultivate communications skills necessary in today's global economy. In addition to this, writing is a skill I rather enjoy, both in my personal endeavors and as a teaching tool. Give a student a multiple-choice test, and the assessment becomes a guessing game, where stories have filtered to me concerning students creating No. 2 pencil designs – of a Yule-tide fashion – on a scantron form that result in A's. Have the same students compose an essay that draws upon several aspects of class modules and you begin to separate those students who are truly formative from those who's knowledge is negligible. Case in point: My high school has a propensity to have students who cut class 80% of the year and still show up for the mid-term and final exams. They miss 40 days each nine weeks and take finals, usually because these final exams are scantron formatted. This allows one to guess and possibly do well. I always administer essay tests, even with finals. Once my reputation preceded me, even these students skipped my mid-term and final exams, while showing up to other classes. In the mean time, many of the students who consistently attend my class and do well usually score well on those exams. Though students – even though they complain that I work them to death – are the beneficiaries of skills-based instruction. They may never remember the details concerning various cultures upon advancing past my class, but their written communications skills will be superior to those they possessed in the ninth grade.

In alignment with the aforementioned themes, this unit seeks to allow students to explore the Brazilian people, on their terms, as it pertains to the issue of race and the nature of prejudice. Furthermore, this unit seeks to expose students to the value of analyzing issues from different points of view, and using various sides of an issue to understand the spirit of analytical, organized, academic debate. This, of course, will occur when students are initially exposed to the theory of "Racial Democracy." Students will be able to hone their communication skills upon completing the various writing activities and assignments involved, be it oral, written, or technology-based research and implementation. As it pertains to the social studies, students will gain opportunities to review their algebra skills – focusing particularly on analyzing and graphing function sets for data that involve research centered on the topic of race in Brazil. Students will be able to gain opportunities for further understanding of the five themes of geography when analyzing the evolving history of Brazil, from the movement of Europeans and Africans to this side of the world, to the adaptation of individuals who must now live in a world that, either, stigmatizes or reveres them based on the color of their skin.

Strategies

There are several strategies I maintain in order to allow students an opportunity to achieve the standards.

First of all, I consider myself a teacher modeled after the general who commands the war from the battlefield, rather than the castle-tower. I always produce models of significant projects students must complete, be it research projects, essay assignments, cartographic assignments, even homework tasks students might find troublesome. This demonstrates to students that, "this ... can be done." It, also, demonstrates my sincerity toward them, and that I'm not just dumping "work" upon their pitiful souls. When assigning major tasks, I've noticed that students tend to refer to my models more than the assignment criteria and the scoring rubrics. I can explain to them how this assignment should look like, give them verbal descriptions, and even draw elaborate diagrams. However, I usually get the gratifying comment, "Oh, now I get it," when I produce my own version of the project for their perusal. That provides something tangible from which they can set goals for themselves. This works especially well for complex computer projects that require students to research, but also create layout designs of a professional nature.

The use of rubrics has made my life easier. Rubrics allow students to chart exactly where their progress is headed. It allows the students to, also, understand exactly what is expected of them. This is especially true for items that require written communication. I use the same scoring rubric for writing exercises when grading homework, quizzes and tests. The facilitation of grades becomes uncomplicated as well. I remember my A.P. European History teacher making a comment that, upon grading major writing assignments, he just threw them up in the air, and whichever fell on top would be the benchmark. Even though this comment was meant to ease the tension of awaiting the exhibition of final evaluation, it basically outlined his procedure for grading: whoever produced the most superior product literally became the point-of-reference for the entire class. Rubrics alleviate this. All students need not guess what the expectations are. Of course, teachers must work harder in the planning stages to construct these rubrics, but it makes life easier in the long run. The alternative to the standard rubric (in which the teacher composes criteria that illustrates the A, the B, the C paper, etc.) is the assignment checklist. I use these more often for major projects such as computer projects. This allows me to state criteria and place the value for each on a sheet that is given to each student. While the students are completing a major task, they can situate the checklist right next to them as they work. This allows for creative expression that does not ignore the required criteria. Of course, when it is time to grade these fabulous works of art, checklists do away with most of the resentment students project toward teachers who they feel grade unfairly.

"A 'D'! Man, I can't stand this class. I do all this work and I get a 'D'!"

"Uh, uh! Look at your grade sheet before you jump in my face! You lost 50 points from the information section because you didn't include three social customs from Cuba in your narrative. You lost 70 points because you didn't format the bibliography correctly. And, you lost 105 points for not including your cover sheet, complete with the title of your report, your name, period, date, and graphics/clip-art that depicts your topic."

Rubrics and scoring sheets allow for everything to be upfront and in the open. Of course, just because students possess these items does not mean they completely understand just what they mean. I dictated rubrics for my class until I was the proverbial man who was, "blue in the face." Many of my students, mainstream and scholars alike, did not appreciate the seriousness of these nebulous rubric posters, collecting dust upon the walls, until I had them analyze sample work and grade it themselves. I picked this up during an in-service discussion with an English teacher. In order for students to appreciate a rubric, you must bring them to it. For example, before a major quiz that incorporated the same rubric used on their homework, I gave students a sample article that fictitious students had read and responded in short essay form. I generated different responses that were characteristic of each level of my six-stage rubric. Students poured over these examples and began picking them apart. The experience was invaluable because, not only did they appreciate the rubric more, they even began to use the rubric language in class.

I was even able to modify student behavior in regard to task outcomes. I had been pressing these students to not copy from the text when constructing responses for assignments. Some students continued to do this. During the rubric analysis activity, I included an answer that sounded great, but had copied from the text. I told them that someone in the bunch had received a zero. Naturally, students chose the least articulate answer for that, and were surprised the other person received the zero for copying. This spotlight on what not to do opened many an eye. Needless to say, homework and test scores improved from then on.

Classroom Activities

It should be articulated from the start that I am a teacher who believes that at least three activities should be planned within one given class day. Those activities usually center around stated objectives provided for an entire week, and usually express the desire to achieve district standards and outcomes. Smaller activities such as warm-ups, drills, and similar pedagogical practices are not always articulated within the framework of this section's lessons, but I will provide some examples of what will be done within my lessons later on.

When introducing such a complicated issue as race, it is necessary to construct a framework for these discussions. Most people will define issues pertaining to racism using these key words: *prejudice*, *stereotypes*, *racism*, *superiority*, *discrimination*, *segregation*, and *hatred*. However, they often will use these terms synonymously, juxtaposed with scenarios that may be unrelated. "Hitler stereotyped the Jews by putting them all in ovens and killing them," one person might utter. "Sometimes I might act racist towards white cops because I just don't trust them," another might say. Terms can define our entire conception of the nature of issues, and if those terms are not clearly defined, the paramount principles surrounding that issue may be lost. It is clear that the first few days of instruction must be devoted to understanding these terms and concepts. Guided discussions can achieve this, be it formal or informal.

First and foremost, students must understand that prejudice and racism are not the same. Students must understand that prejudice is simply "pre-judging" someone or something before understanding all the facts. Students must feel comfortable that everyone exhibits prejudice, and that not all prejudices are bad. Often when racial discussions come into existence, many people find themselves immediately uncomfortable because they may not want to confront their own feelings, may not want to share their views without being attacked, etc. Successful discussions on race will allow individuals to relax and express and/or contemplate their feelings without much duress. Let the students explore the word *prejudice* for a while. Are there good and bad prejudices? What does everyone do while on the street at alone at night when a person, whom they don't know, approaches from the opposite direction. How does that change when the person is wearing a ski mask? It could be your pastor taking a late night stroll, and he could be wearing a mask because it just happens to be 10° F outside. Nevertheless, most people will put their guard up, if not just outright cross the street. This is called 'street-smarts.' However, this is rooted in prejudice. People prejudge all the time. I, as a teacher, might believe that certain students are exceptional because they are in the gifted programs. They might be the biggest thugs in the school, but of course, I assumed they were good because of their academic tracking. That's not necessarily a bad thing, but it might get me into trouble during the school year.

When students can see this, then move onto racism, particularly focusing on the meaning behind the suffix "-ism." Compare its use in the words *capitalism*, *regionalism*, *communism*, *alcoholism*, or whatever other "-isms" one may fathom. Guide the students to the reality that when one attaches this suffix to a concept, it focuses on the institutionalization of that concept, or a systemic approach to that concept. Finally, apply this understanding to the concept of racial hatred.

Once students have an understanding of the difference between prejudice and racism (this will take a few days of quick review to really sink in), next move into how racial hatred can truly inherit the suffix "-ism." How can one institute racial hatred within a society? Students will generate numerous explanations, most of which will

not be far off the mark if they have any knowledge on the subject. But, the effective teacher must steer them toward concrete suggestions of social structure that constantly feeds on itself. Racism begins with individuals who feel differently about someone's appearance or culture, but if it is truly racism, it becomes public policy, it becomes laws, it becomes understood social customs and mores. Draw the students' thinking toward that by generating scenarios that are analogous to issues they can conceive immediately. I used the scenario of enslaving students from a rival school, and how one might continue to perpetuate that enslavement after resistance begins to swell. There are a number of suggestions students generate when charged with the task, most of them proverbial, such as physical chastisement if any slave does not obey directives. But the students are drawn to more systemic solutions when variables suggest that this neat little situation may not last outside the tender care of their individual conscience. In order to continue the enslavement in the absence of the teacher, laws and rules need to be there for the substitute, the school administration needs to back this in case the students complain, the school board, the local, state, and federal government must legislate for enslavement if it will truly continue to exist steadfastly.

Finally, students need to focus on why people begin to buy into the system. People don't just hate other people, or themselves for that matter, just because others believe this should be true. It's a gradual process that takes many years, and it is usually successful when it affects someone's status in life, and how they will be able to live. To pull an African from their home and tell him/her that they are inferior because they do not have white skin would usually solicit a dumbfounded expression or reply. Even beating them would not always break them in this regard. However, when you equate white skin with freedom, equality, money, power, and descent living (qualities of life every sane human being strives for), and provide a system that brings this to fruition, all you need to do is stand back and watch. Soon, those Africans who happen to be lighter than others might begin to actually feel that they can attain even just an inkling of the good life because they are that much closer to white – especially if those in charge allow this to happen. Within a hundred years or so, you begin to see phenomenon such as Madame C.J. Walker becoming the first female millionaire from inventing straightening combs designed to straighten black people's hair, and bleaching crèmes designed to lighten dark skin.

This is where the issues depicted in the song, "Straight and Nappy," from Spike Lee's School Daze comes into play. Having the students view and analyze this scene from the film will allow for further perusal of this topic. Have them analyze the lyrics and what the performers are doing as they sing. Furthermore, tie this issue into what occurs in Brazil between its mulatto, moreno, and preto populations.

Having successfully prepared students' minds for the appreciation of focusing on issues they probably believed were not as dense, one can now begin to introduce activities that augment students' understanding of district outcomes and requirements, as well as their understanding of racial issues in Brazil.

Providing the historical context for such a complex topic allows for reading activities as well as literacy activities. Having students read aloud in class provides the opportunity to have them practice authoritative articulation, in preparation for public speaking assignments. This also allows the teacher to teach key historical developments or concepts without necessarily lecturing to them. There were a lot of important journal articles I came across during the research phase for this project. Much of the language in these articles is beyond the scope of the average tenth grader, but certain articles are appropriate; in addition, others can be edited for length. A few of the 25 to 45 page articles contained valuable information, but it is quite necessary to tailor them to the size better suited for high school instruction. Stripping down these resources to about three to four pages of really important information will suffice.

Use low-level thinking activities such as crossword puzzles and discussion questions to introduce and familiarize students with complex reading assignments, as well as the topic of Brazil. Then, begin to assign short essay writings that allow students to analyze issues within the readings, while allowing for further honing of their writings skills. Finally, issues such as this provide great material for high-level thinking activities such

as editorial writing practice. Find issues that are relevant but have neither a right nor wrong answer, and have students take sides on this issue and articulate their opinions. For example, provide this prompt:

It has been proven by scientists that there is no such thing as race, at least biologically. In other words, the genes and chromosomes found in the body of a black person is similar to those found in a white person, etcetera. If this is true, why does race still exist as an issue in society? Provide three reasons why you believe in your opinion on this topic.

Depending upon their point of view, students can usually provide you with fairly well written analyses. Be careful of those who use this opportunity to express how life should really be led rather than focusing on the actual topic of why the issue still exists in society. Such statements can be included in the conclusion of the editorial, rather than dominate the articulation of the body.

Students can spend a day building on their knowledge of Brazil by perusing interactive multimedia software such as *Microsoft Encarta Africana*. Within the program package, students will find a number of articles on Brazil's racial climate, as well as biographies of important leaders such as Benedita Da Silva. They can watch video clips of capoeiras at work, and they can learn from an interactive Africa map that illustrates evolving slave trade routes over four hundred years of history, comparing who has traveled to Brazil vs. the United States, and how many.

Once classes have an understanding of particular key issues within their historical contexts, begin to focus on solutions people have provided, along with their accompanying problems. This provides for a wonderful scenario in which students enact a debate over the issue of Affirmative Action. There are those in Brazil who advocate the use of affirmative action to help remedy inequity problems within the work force. This will allow classes to delve deeper into just what affirmative action is, and what its purposes are, as well as focus on its common depictions and myths. I propose that the debate take on a talk show persona, which will allow students to have more fun with it. Provide students with particular roles they must satisfy: host, guests with their own personal stories, experts, and audience members that provide their own analyses and questions for panel members. Provide students with information that focus on their personal roles, but only enough information that realistically suits the tastes of realistic characters. For example, someone who believes they lost a job opportunity due to affirmative action may or may not fully comprehend their potential employer's affirmative action policy, but they usually would not be aware of legislative legalities such that an expert guest (corporate lawyer, civil rights attorney, or an academician) would provide. Similarly, audience members would generate questions for panel members that would run the gamut in terms of intellectual articulation vs. laymen surface issues.

In other words, provide a scaffold for students that they can use to build and embellish upon. And prevail upon the host to be an efficient delegator. They must be able to give people their just due, as well as maintain order. Of course, they can provide their own opinions during the discussion as well.

One final project students can engage in is a technology-researched based unit. I have all my students engage in technology-based projects before the end of the year, but I have my PSP (scholars) students complete one project per quarter. These have come in the form of newsletters, informational brochures, and travel logs. I would prefer that these larger technology projects be reserved for all-encompassing unit final projects, rather than secondary component units such as this one. One smaller project students can complete for this unit would require them to utilize Microsoft Publisher to create a collage that focuses on illustrating and informing the public about racial issues in Brazil. Students could choose from topics such as ***Brazil: Racial Democracy or not?; How Brazil changed from Native American to Branco, Moreno, and Preto; The Black Movement; Key Organizations dedicated to fighting against Racism in Brazil; Famous Black Brazilian Leaders;*** etc. This would require students to research online databases, software programs, and **selected** websites from the World Wide Web. This, in turn, would allow students to manipulate and practice the many layout features of

Microsoft Publisher in order to produce the collage, and it would allow them to practice various computer-editing skills, both basic and advanced.

The Brazilian race unit will conclude with an essay quiz that features questions that require students to effectively articulate many of the underlying issues of most importance to understanding racism as an institution of public policy, as well as key features of the Brazilian front.

Works Cited

□ Andrews, George Reid, "Afro-Latin America: The Late 1900's," Journal of Social History, winter '94, vol. 28, issue 2, pp. 363. *Focuses on issues along the color line within Latin America, but keying on Brazilian and Columbian issues quite often. It contains information dealing with discrimination assessments in various countries, and how samplings of people view race. Concludes with discussions of political movements and how they view the issue of race. It appears that the average working person would rather be concerned with class issues rather than race; however, lighter people and whites still control these movements at large, even though blacks are disproportionately represented among the working class and poor.*

□ Burdick, John, "Myth of Racial Democracy in Latin America and the Caribbean: An Interpretation," Microsoft Encarta Africana: Third Edition. *This is an article I would use in its entirety to introduce the issues of color consciousness and racism found within Latin America. It focuses on the debate of whether Latin America is a racial democracy or not. It provides facts demonstrating discrimination toward those who are darker, and personal testimonies from mulattoes to demonstrate prevailing viewpoints. It, also, provides a history of mulattoes in Latin America – keying on Brazil many times – in their attempt to gain as much from whites as they could, while attempting to drain the African heritage from their respective countries forever.*

□ _____, "Black Consciousness in Brazil," Microsoft Encarta Africana: Third Edition. *This piece articulates prevailing attitudes, directives, mind-sets, and agendas of the current black consciousness movements occurring in Brazil. It demonstrates that the biggest focus of this new movement is to pull all Afro-Brazilians together with the understanding that they are all "black," rather than different divisions of such. However, many working class people do not view race the same way, and many are not even aware of the issues the movement is addressing. The movement is largely light-skinned and middle class. There is an emphasis on raising consciousness through African religions as well, but this tends to alienate those who prefer Christianity.*

□ _____, "The Lost Constituency of Brazil's Black Movements," Latin American Perspectives, Jan '98, vol. 25, issue 1, pp. 136. *A treatise that focuses on the common Brazilian, this paper illustrates a study of racial identity, and seeks to explain why so many Brazilian blacks do not participate in the various movements. Those involved labeled themselves with various terms (mulatto, moreno, preto, etc.), and shared various experiences. Those who were lighter were less inclined to state that Brazil exhibits any racial discrimination, while the darker ones said that there was, and that they had to tolerate numerous accounts of discrimination. The paper concludes with an analysis of who participates in the racial movements, and why so many people appear to be marginalized. Most darker-skinned blacks did not join because they didn't know anything about them. Others stated religious differences.*

□ Callender, Neil, "Blacks Protest Brazil's 500th Anniversary," www.africana.com/index_20000428.htm. *This article focuses on the events of the Brazilian government attempting to commemorate the 500th anniversary of the Cabral expedition, and indigenous and African communities attempting to protest that commemoration to remind people of what Cabral's coming really meant to Brazil. This article illustrates*

how excessive the government responded (using rubber bullets, tanks, troops, helicopters, and two warships), and how many were arrested and injured. The article also gives a nice summary of the complexities of Brazil's racial past and present, for those who are uninformed; it illustrates how Brazil views the concept of race (by appearance and skin color, rather than ancestry), how the issue of race was dealt with over the years, and current problems Afro-Brazilians contend with – despite the rhetoric of "racial democracy" often heard and believed in.

□·Da Silva, Benedita, "Women, black, in Brazil: An Interpretation," Microsoft Encarta Africana: Third Edition. *This article reads like a state of the union address, in which Da Silva outlines the many problems that plague Afro-Brazilians, particularly black women in Brazil. Teeming with statistics that illustrate the economic, social, educational, and occupational barriers and disparities between whites and blacks, men and women, this essay invokes the intellectual spirits of African American authors and speakers such as Maria Stewart, Ida B. Wells-Barnett, Sojourner Truth, Bell Hooks, and Angela Davis. And because this piece is indigenous to Brazil, this is yet another example of how racism and white supremacy are global issues, rather than issues that African Americans and South Africans must contend with.*

□·Da Silva, Denise F., "Facts of Blackness...Brazil is not (quite) the United States...And Racial Politics in Brazil," Social Identities, Jun. '98, Vol. 4, Issue 2, pp. 201. *This is a fairly lengthy article that discusses, in detail, the complexities of race in Brazil, as compared to the United States – where the author has lived for three years and has witnessed a number of major racial events (the L.A. riots, the O.J. Simpson trial, and the Million Man March). While the author in no way denies that race is an issue in Brazil, she makes it clear that race cannot be understood in U.S. terms. Though racism is an issue faced by many throughout the world, there are differences in each circumstance due to different histories, societal issues, experiences, and people. As a result, political strategies need to take this into consideration when outlining solutions.*

□·Do Nascimento, Abdias, "Brazil, Blacks and Politics: An Interpretation," Microsoft Encarta Africana: Third Edition. *This essay focuses on the issue racial democracy, and how Brazil's history of amalgamation has produced a reality that sets it apart from the U.S.'s racial history. It also focuses on how the belief of racial democracy has been used to thwart black protest and political gain.*

□·Lovell, Peggy A., "Gender, Race, and the Struggle for Social Justice in Brazil," Latin American Perspectives, Nov. 2000, vol. 27, issue 6, pp. 85. *This is an historical piece that illustrates the modern movements that seek to address issues centered around race and gender inequalities, upon abdication of the military dictatorship in the mid-1970's. She points out that equality movements addressed class and gender issues prior to race, and that the belief in racial democracy allowed people to forget about race. She, also, points out that academic analyses of race were difficult because the empirical data did not consider certain things important to such studies. For example, census data was conducted not based on biological descriptions, but on skin color: branco, preto, pardo, etc. In essence, this paper concludes with studies that focus on issues of gender inequality and how women were treated in the new service economy emerging after the dictatorship, but also how race became an issue, and how that issue was intertwined with gender and class.*

□·McIntyre, Charshee C.L., Criminalizing A Race: Free Blacks During Slavery, Queens, NY (Kayode Publications, Ltd.). *This is a treatise that focuses on how the slavery/racial system maintained a state of servitude for descendents of the African continent here in the United States, and how it legally sought to maintain control of freed individuals using devices within the criminal justice system. It, also, focuses on the interplay of various groups, both outside and within the black community, and how intermixing caused problems for those who sought to perpetuate the racial systems of Antebellum and post-Antebellum America. In terms of this unit, the seventh chapter is relevant because it contains descriptions of the different color stratification systems found throughout the world: the two-tiered and the three-tiered systems. Within areas of the world that used a three-tiered system (whites, coloreds, and blacks) the coloreds were used as a buffer zone to foster division among African descendents at large because three-tiered*

systems were usually exhibited in areas where whites were outnumbered – the Caribbean and in South Africa. This is contrasted with the two-tiered system (white vs. black) as one will find in the U.S. Within the two-tiered system, poor whites are often used as a buffer zone between blacks and middle/upper class whites.

▣ Skidmore, Thomas E., "Race and Class in Brazil: An Interpretation," Microsoft Encarta Africana: Third Edition. *Provides an historical perspective on the racial democracy issue, focusing on the events of Portuguese slavery and colonialism. The article also explains that the strategy of how Brazil was able to maintain the myth of racial democracy was by making constant literal comparisons to the U.S. With the desegregation movements in full swing, and with African nations receiving their independence, Brazil began to lose their models for what they were better than, so to speak, and the realities of racial democracy began to deconstruct.*

▣ Winn, Peter, Americas: The Changing Face of Latin America and the Caribbean. (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1999), ch. 8, pp. 269 – 306. *Provides a good overview of race as an issue in Latin America and the Caribbean; includes pictures of important people and those that depict issues discussed in the text. Winn focuses on the issue of race in general, as it derives itself from the issues of slavery and colonialism. Then, he focuses on case studies that highlight the complexities of race in Latin America. The specifics deal with Haiti vs. Dominican Republic, then on to Brazil, and finally Trinidad. In each circumstance, the issue of race reveals itself in different terms. Haitians are quite proud of their African heritage, and there are numerous traditions there that are distinctively African. Dominicans, however, have attempted to purge all traces of Africa from its country, despite a heavy presence of African-descendant people and culture. In fact, it can be difficult for a black person to identify themselves as black if they aren't poor and illiterate. This leads to a number of issues regarding the belief that blacks are bad, whites are good, etc. The information on Brazil is good; it provides an overview of the issues focused on in the other texts. This is good reading for those who seek an introduction on the issues, as well as some good photos.*

Appendices

Appendix I. District Standards that apply to this unit

Communications Standards:

- ▣ All students use effective research and information management skills, including locating primary and secondary sources of information with traditional and emerging library technologies.
- ▣ All students read and use a variety of methods to make sense of various kinds of complex texts.
- ▣ All students respond orally and in writing to information and ideas gained by reading narrative and informational texts and use the information and ideas to make decisions and solve problems.
- ▣ All students write for a variety of purposes, including to narrate, to inform and to persuade, in all subject areas.
- ▣ All students analyze and make critical judgments about all forms of communication, separating fact from opinion, recognizing propaganda, stereotypes and statements of bias, recognizing inconsistencies and judging the validity of evidence.

- All students exchange information orally, including understanding and giving spoken instructions, asking and answering questions appropriately, and promoting effective group communications.
- All students listen to and understand complex oral messages and identify their purpose, structure and use.
- All students compose and make oral presentations for each academic area of study that is designed to persuade, inform or describe.
- All students communicate appropriately in business, work and other applied situations.

Citizenship

- All students demonstrate an understanding of major events, cultures, groups and individuals in the historical development of Pennsylvania, the United States and other nations, and describe the patterns of historical development.
- All students demonstrate understanding of themes and patterns of geography, know the location of major bodies of water, land masses and nations, and describe the relationships between geography and historical, economic and cultural development.
- All students examine and evaluate problems facing citizens in their communities, state, nation and world by incorporating concepts and methods of inquiry of the various social sciences.
- All students develop and defend a position on current issues, confronting the United States and other nations, conducting research, analyzing alternatives, organizing evidence and arguments, and making oral presentations.
- All students demonstrate their skills of communicating, negotiating and cooperating with others.
- All students demonstrate that they can work effectively with others.
- All students demonstrate an understanding of the history and nature of prejudice and relate their knowledge to current issues facing communities, the United States and other nations.