

Lesson 1.4: Intersectionality in Action

Compelling Question:

How can exploring counter-narratives from our diverse perspectives help us cultivate solidarity for a more just society?

Content Objectives

I can:

- Explore artwork that creatively expresses solidarity.
- Define intersectionality.
- Collaborate to create community agreements for the course.
- Use intersectional thinking and framing as a tool to organize the counter-narrative in a poem.

Purpose

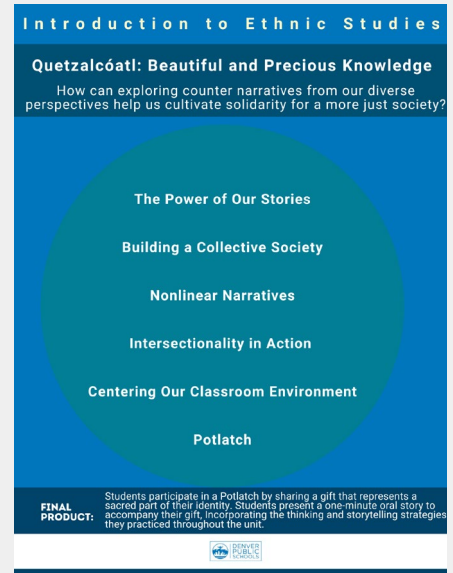
In this lesson, you will explore how art can express solidarity with a group of people. You will analyze a video on intersectionality to understand the overlapping nature of oppression and to consider how the framework of intersectionality has the power to challenge dominant narratives and encourage multiple perspectives. Next, you will work as a group and create community agreements for the course that promote a respectful and inclusive space for all. Finally, you will engage in an interactive activity by piecing together parts of Layli Long Soldier's poem to identify the counter-narrative.

Lesson Steps

1. **Explore artwork that creatively expresses solidarity:** Look at the imagery in the Kehinde [Kehinde Wiley Collection](#) and complete the [Shaping Solidarity](#) handout.
2. **Analyze the concept of Intersectionality:** Watch the video [Kimberlé Crenshaw Intersectionality](#) and complete [Why Intersectionality?](#) handout.
3. **Write up community agreements:** As a group, develop community agreements that build a sense of community and solidarity in our classroom.
4. **Piece together the counter-narrative in a poem:** Listen and read along to the final excerpt of ["38" by Layli Long Soldier](#) by Layli Long Soldier [7:15-10:15] and complete the [Poem Analysis Part 4](#) handout, reflecting on the power of language and intersectional thinking.

Explore More

- Google Docs: [Classroom Contract Example](#)



Lesson Overview

Pacing

Lesson Timing: 75 minutes

Summary

In this lesson, students explore how art can express solidarity with a group of people. Then, students analyze a video on intersectionality to understand the overlapping nature of oppression and to consider how intersectionality as a framework has the power to challenge dominant narratives and encourage multiple perspectives. Next, students work as a group and create community agreements for the course that promotes a respectful and inclusive space for all. Finally, they engage in an interactive activity by piecing together parts of Layli Long Soldier’s poem to identify the counter-narrative.

Colorado Standards: [Social Studies](#) & Interdisciplinary

SS.HS.4.2: Evaluate the purposes, roles, and limitations of the structures and functions of government

Language Objectives: [9th Grade DPS English Language Competencies](#)

Speaking and Listening

- Prepare for discussion by evaluating and collecting information on material under study.
- Engage in collaborative discussion with peers.
- Effectively present information, findings, and evidence.

Narrative Writing

- Develop real or imagined experiences or events using effective techniques, relevant descriptive details, and well-structured event sequences.
- Logically organize complex ideas, concepts, and information using formal style and precise language.

Assessment

Formative

- Complete Dominant vs. Counter Narrative table based on a poem

Lesson Resources

For Students

For Teachers

Materials

Teacher Guide

Lesson 1.4: Intersectionality in Action

Quetzalcoatl: Beautiful and Precious Knowledge



<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Kehinde Wiley Collection• Kimberlé Crenshaw Intersectionality• "38" by Layli Long Soldier• Shaping Solidarity• Why Intersectionality?• Poem Analysis Part 4	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Lesson 1.4 Slide Deck• Shaping solidarity Teacher Key• Why Intersectionality? Teacher Key• Poem Analysis Part Four Teacher Key	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Anchor chart (Poem)• Post-its• Video and audio equipment
--	---	--

Teacher Preparation

- **Step 1: Organize laptops or print-out color images.** Structure the format in which students will explore the artwork by Kehinde Wiley.
- **Step 2: Prepare video and audio equipment.** Pre-watch the video and prepare time stamps to pause and highlight important ideas or clarify questions.
- **Step 3: Prepare audio equipment.** Play audio and have students read along to the poem that is both printed on a student-facing document and on a poster to be visible in the classroom.

Lesson Steps in Detail

Step 1: Explore artwork that creatively expresses solidarity

(15 min)

Purpose: Students explore the artwork of Kehinde Wiley as an example of expressing solidarity through imagery and symbolism.

You might say: *So far in our unit we have worked to understand how exploring multiple perspectives, and multiple ways of telling stories, can help us create counter-narratives that challenge how we view the world. Today we will build on that understanding by exploring the framework of intersectionality and reflecting on how we might stand in solidarity with people whose identities and lived experiences might be different than our own. We start today by looking at the artwork of renowned artist Kehinde Wiley to explore how the artist creatively uses imagery and symbolism to empower the representation of black and brown people, express solidarity, and create a counter-narrative to the dominant narrative.*

[Slide 2-3] Kehinde Wiley

- Distribute [Shaping Solidarity](#) handout
- Present the definition of **Solidarity**: unity of feeling or agreement of action, especially among individuals with a common interest, mutual support within a group.
- Model exploring the different artwork on the website.
- invite students to complete their handout with a group or partner.

Step 2: Analyze the concept of Intersectionality

(15 min)

Purpose: Students watch a video on Kimberlé Crenshaw introducing the concept of intersectionality and telling the story behind how she came to develop the word and concept as a useful thinking and framing tool.

You might say: *We explored how the power of painting, imagery, and symbolism can be used to express solidarity, highlight untold stories, and create counter-narratives. Through Kehinde's work, we can see how an artist expresses the many different facets of identity, especially the ones that impact their lived experience. So how does identity shape the experience that people have in society? Let's look at the framework of intersectionality to answer this question.*

[Slide 4-5] Introduce Intersectionality

- Distribute [Why Intersectionality?](#) handout
- Play Video [Kimberlé Crenshaw Intersectionality](#) (5:57)
- Use the following guiding question to prompt students
 - *What is intersectionality?*
 - *Why does the judge dismiss Emma DeGraffenreid's claim of double discrimination?*
 - *How does intersectionality broaden our perspective frame to include different experiences and identities?*

[Slide 6] Facilitate Discussion

- Use the following guiding question to prompt students
 - *How can we use intersectional thinking to tell untold stories that challenge dominant narratives?*

Step 3: Community Agreements

(20 min)

Purpose: Students work together to come up with community agreements to support openness, respect, and accountability for each other and the classroom.

You might say: *As we just discussed, people's lived experiences in our society are different because people have different, often intersecting, layers to their identities that shape those experiences. How might we make sure that we are creating space to acknowledge, celebrate, and respect the many different identities in our class? We are going to co-develop community agreements so that we are all committed to creating a brave environment for us to discuss, learn, and reflect on some challenging topics. For community agreements to have power and value, all parties play a role and have a responsibility to both create and uphold the agreements.*

[Slide 7] Introduce community agreement

- Have a student read the Audre Lorde quote and lead a whole group discussion.
- Ask students if they have established classroom norms with teachers before. Pace the conversation and task based on students' previous experiences.
- You can ask students to begin with brainstorming. You could also share the 4 Agreements of Courageous Conversations, which are:
 - 1. Stay engaged**
 - Staying engaged means "remaining morally, emotionally, intellectually, and socially involved in the dialogue"
 - 2. Speak your truth.**
 - This means being open about thoughts and feelings and not just saying what you think others want to hear.
 - 3. Experience discomfort.**
 - This norm acknowledges that discomfort is inevitable, especially, in dialogue about race, and that participants make a commitment to bring issues into the open. It is not talking about these issues that create divisiveness. Divisiveness already exists in society and in

our schools. It is through dialogue, even when uncomfortable, the healing and change begin.

4. Expect and accept non-disclosure.

- This agreement asks participants to “hang out in uncertainty” and not rush to quick solutions, especially in terms of racial understanding, which requires ongoing dialogue.

[Slide 8] Create community agreements.

- *Ask:* How can our Community Agreements support our collective empowerment and the building of our untold stories?
- Get students moving. Ask small groups of students to work together to write norms or “expectations” for the classroom community, one expectation per sticky note, or use butcher paper. Then they place the sticky notes on the board or wall in groups. Once each group posts their ideas, each student uses a pencil or marker to put stars next to the other ideas that they think should be in the classroom contract.
- Ask the groups to present their expectations, and as they present, look for themes that pop up, especially with the sticky notes that have a lot of stars. Take the sticky notes that the group agrees upon and make a large contract on a poster, large sticky note, butcher paper, or print something out. All students will sign the contract and should be hung in the classroom. Note: While the process is inclusive of students’ ideas, ultimately it is the teacher’s responsibility to ensure that the ideas that make it into the final contract are those that will best nurture a safe learning environment.

Step 4: Piece together the counter-narrative in a poem

(25 min)

Purpose: Students will explore different parts of the poem and organize the dominant and counter-narratives and then reflect on how the Community Agreements were used to support the group activity and discussion.

You might say: *Intersectionality is a framework that can help us challenge dominant systems, stories, and ways of thinking. Oftentimes, when building counter-narratives, artists will look to highlight the experiences of people outside of dominant frameworks. We now look at different parts of the poem (words, phrases, and stanzas) by Layli Long Soldier to organize the dominant and counter-narratives. We are looking for how language is used to see the problem of the dominant narrative and express solidarity through broadening our perspective frame, empowering untold stories, and constructing counter-narratives.*

[Slide 8-9] Introduce poem 38 by Layli Long Soldier

- Distribute [Poem Analysis Part 4](#) handout and review the directions for part one.
- Invite students to [listen to the excerpt](#) and annotate the poem, using the guiding questions below.
 - Why is language important in reinforcing and challenging dominant narratives?
 - Why do you think the Memorial Riders chose to memorialize the Dakota 38 with an act and not inscribed words?
- Provide students time to complete the reflection questions independently.

[Slide 9] Introduce the group activity for part two.

- Distribute envelopes with the poem cut into sections.
- Invite students to work in small groups to cut out and piece together words, phrases, and stanzas of the poem that relate to the poem’s portrayal of a dominant narrative and counter-narrative.
- Facilitate a discussion based on the following questions
 - What is the counter-narrative in the poem?

Teacher Guide

Lesson 1.4: Intersectionality in Action

Quetzalcoatl: Beautiful and Precious Knowledge



- *Why is language important in reinforcing and challenging dominant narratives?*
- *How is the poem an act of solidarity?*

[Slide 10] Reflection

- Use the following questions to lead discussion
 - *How did our Community Agreements play a role in our group activity and discussion?*
 - *What more can we do to make the Community Agreements a supportive force in our activities and discussions moving forward?*