Unit 5

Title: from Barrio Boy by Ernesto Galarza

Suggested Time: 5 (45 minutes per day)

Common Core ELA Standards: RI.7.1, RI.7.3, RI.7.9; W.7.2, W.7.4, W.7.9; SL.7.1; L.7.1, L.7.2

Teacher Instructions

**Preparing for Teaching**

1. Read the Big Ideas and Key Understandings and the Synopsis. Please do **not** read this to the students. This is a description for teachers about the big ideas and key understanding that students should take away **after** completing this task.

Big Ideas and Key Understandings

Changing countries is not easy but people who respect diversity can help one acclimate more easily to new surroundings.

Synopsis

In this excerpt from Galarza’s memoir he recants his experiences in a new school in a new country, the United States. He describes learning a new language and being introduced to new cultures and people in his new country.

1. Read the entire selection, keeping in mind the Big Ideas and Key Understandings.
2. Re-read the text while noting the stopping points for the Text Dependent Questions and teaching Tier II/academic vocabulary.

**During Teaching**

1. Students read the entire selection independently.
2. Teacher reads the text aloud while students follow along or students take turns reading aloud to each other. Depending on the text length and student need, the teacher may choose to read the full text or a passage aloud. For a particularly complex text, the teacher may choose to reverse the order of steps 1 and 2.
3. Students and teacher re-read the text while stopping to respond to and discuss the questions, continually returning to the text. A variety of methods can be used to structure the reading and discussion (i.e., whole class discussion, think-pair-share, independent written response, group work, etc.)

Text Dependent Questions

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| **Text Dependent Questions** | **Answers** |
| The author tells readers in the last sentence…”*I noticed other differences, none of them very reassuring.*”How does his new school differ from his old one? How does he feel about the changes? | The author is inferring that the narrator felt unsure of himself. He was not comfortable with the myriad of differences between his new school and his old school. This is evident in his description of his new school. “It was a three-story building with two wings that gave it a shape of a double-T. It was a new building painted yellow with a shingled roof… A Mechanical contraption screwed to the top shut it behind us quietly.” Ernesto notes that this was unlike the red tile of the school in Matazlán, his old school. The author explained that the director was called the principal and that it was a lady and not a man. This was a new experience for him and by his statement …”*I noticed other differences, none of them very reassuring.*” He didn’t see anything that comforted him. |
| Why did Ernesto choose to employ the word “soared” when describing Miss Hopley? | Ernesto implies that although Miss Hopley was not a giant, her nature and stature deeply impressed him. When seated, she did not appear to be an imposing figure but when she stood up her superstructure seemed “a match for giants.” He uses the word “soared” to place emphasis on her height and stature. |
| A menace is a person whose actions, attitudes, or ideas are considered dangerous or harmful. On page 695, Ernesto has to make a decision about Miss Hopley, *“I had to decide whether she was a possible friend or menace.”* What information from the text explains what led to his final decision? | Ernesto decides that Miss Hopley is a friend. Mostly due to her “warm eyes and a (her) wholehearted smile.” In addition, “the friendliness of her voice and the sparkle in her eye…and the nature by which she addressed Ernesto and his mother” all helped to win them over. Although, Ernesto described her as “a buxom superstructure, firm shoulders, a straight sharp nose, full cheeks slightly molded by a curved line along the nostrils, thin lips that moved like steel springs..” descriptions that could imply she was a menace. However, he goes on to regard her as a possible champion - “a match for giants.” In the final sentence he concludes “I decided I liked her.” |
| What actions did Miss Hopley take to make Ernesto and his mother feel at ease? | Miss Hopley appeared to follow her usual protocols when registering new students. First, she greeted them warmly and with a smile. She then called in an interpreter and sat with them at the table. “Miss Hopley put things down in the book and ‘his’ mother signed a card,” she ensured that all of their information was accurate. Next Miss Hopley answered all of their questions and then walked his mother to the door “and without further ado took ‘Ernesto’ by the hand and strode down the hall to Miss Ryan’s first grade.” Miss Hopley treated Ernesto and his mother with respect as she registered him for school. |
| “*Miss Ryan overcame my fears of tall, energetic teachers*…” How did Miss Ryan accomplish this task? Cite from the text to show the actions that Miss Ryan took to teach the narrator English. | Miss Ryan was determined to teach Ernesto English. She used a methodical approach. *“Step by step, she loosened ‘Ernesto and his classmates’ from the safe anchorage of the desks for recitations at the blackboard and consultations at her desk.”* She constantly provided praise as her students made incremental progress from words to sentences.  *“Frequently she burst into happy announcements to the whole class… “Ito can read a sentence,” “Children…Ernesto has learned how to pronounce butterfly!”* Even recognizing the importance of a safe haven, Miss Ryan conducted private lessons in a small closet. When Ernesto encountered difficult words to pronounce, she coached him out of his phonetic ruts. She would have him to stare at her lips closely and then shut his eyes while she said the word again. She made Ernesto feel as if they…”*were both discovering together the secrets of the English language*.” She kept him focused on learning the various nuances of the English language despite his constant interruptions. She took tender care to instruct him. |
| In the statement “*Miss Hopley and her teachers never let us forget why* ***we*** *were at Lincoln; for those who were alien, to become good Americans; for those who were so born, to accept the rest of us.” Who were the “we” Ernesto referred to? Be specific. Using the text, explain what Ernesto meant by this statement.* | Ernesto Galarza shows that the staff at Lincoln was invested in the students becoming *“good Americans”*. “We” referred to all students in the class: the native-born Americans and the immigrants as well. The students were “…*a sampling of the lower part of town where many races made their home*…” The assortment of nationalities included Japanese, Italian, Portuguese, Korean, Yugoslavian, Polish, Irish and natives. Miss Hopley and the teachers all wanted the best for each student. For students who were not natives of America, the Lincoln staff wanted them to learn to become good citizens; for natives of America, the school staff desired for them to learn to accept the various people that decided to come to America. “*The school was not so much a melting pot as a griddle where Miss Hopley and her helpers warmed knowledge into ‘the students’ and roasted racial hatreds out of ‘them’.”* |

Tier II Academic Vocabulary

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|  | **These words require less time to learn**  (They are concrete or describe an object/event/  process/characteristic that is familiar to students) | **These words require more time to learn**  (They are abstract, have multiple meanings, are a part  of a word family, or are likely to appear again in future texts) |
| **Meaning can be learned from context** | shingled  mechanical  circled  swivel  maneuvered  runty  withering  obnoxious  assortment  grieving  tragedies | buxom  superstructure  persistently |
| **Meaning needs to be provided** | reassuring  roll-top  barrio  Mazatlan  contraption  flanked  mobilized  without further ado  recitations  phonetic  astounded | menace  formidable  idiocies  anchorage  sampling |

Culminating Task

* Prompt

*Use instances from Ernesto Galarza’s experiences to support the position he takes in the following statement: “At Lincoln, making us into Americans did not mean scrubbing away what made us originally foreign.”*

* Teacher Instructions

1. Students identify their writing task from the prompt provided.
2. Students complete an evidence chart as a pre-writing activity. Teachers should guide students in gathering and using any relevant notes they compiled while reading and answering the text-dependent questions earlier. Some students will need a good deal of help gathering this evidence, especially when this process is new and/or the text is challenging!

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| ***Evidence***  ***Quote or paraphrase*** | ***Elaboration / explanation of how this evidence supports ideas or argument*** |
| “…we saw in her eyes a warm welcome…” | This is the first indication we have that his experience will be a positive one. |
| “…I received private lessons from Miss Ryan in the closet…” | The school used various strategies to help students. |
| “On the playground we were sure to be marched up to the principal’s office for calling someone a wop, a chink, a dago, or a greaser.” | This proves that the students were aware of the consequences for name-calling. |
| “The school was not so much a melting pot as a griddle where Miss Hopley and her helpers warmed knowledge into us and roasted racial hatreds out of us.” | Individual identities were maintained and not stripped away. |
| “No one was ever scolded or punished for speaking in his native tongue on the playground.” | This quote supports the staff allowing students to hold on to their native tongues. |
| “The teachers called us as our parents did, or as close as they could pronounce our names in Spanish or Japanese.” | The staff made every attempt to call the students by the names that their parents called them instead of renaming them easier names to pronounce. |
| “It was easy for me to feel that becoming a proud American, as she said we should, did not mean feeling ashamed of being a Mexican.” | This cements his feeling of acceptance. |

1. Once students have completed the evidence chart, they should look back at the writing prompt in order to remind themselves what kind of response they are writing (i.e. expository, analytical, argumentative) and think about the evidence they found. (Depending on the grade level, teachers may want to review students’ evidence charts in some way to ensure accuracy.) From here, students should develop a specific thesis statement. This could be done independently, with a partner, small group, or the entire class. Consider directing students to the following sites to learn more about thesis statements: http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/545/01/ OR http://www.indiana.edu/~wts/pamphlets/ thesis\_statement.shtml.
2. Students compose a rough draft. With regard to grade level and student ability, teachers should decide how much scaffolding they will provide during this process (i.e. modeling, showing example pieces, sharing work as students go).
3. Students complete final draft.

* Sample Answer

In Galarza’s memoir of his early experience in the American school system, it is extremely clear that his experience was a positive one. He sketches his initial and warm introduction of the principal, Miss Hopley and progresses to tell of his educational adventures and interactions with the students at the Lincoln School. The school used various strategies to help their students become “good Americans”. Teachers tutored students privately to provide a comfort zone for students to learn and rules prohibited students from name-calling. “On the playground we were sure to be marched up to the principal’s office for calling someone a wop, a chink, a dago, or a greaser.” This proves that the students were aware of the consequences for name-calling. Galarza goes on to say “*The school was not so much a melting pot as a griddle where Miss Hopley and her helpers warmed knowledge into us and roasted racial hatreds out of us.*” – by this sentence, he vividly expresses that their individual identities were maintained and not stripped away. There seems to be two levels of instruction: 1) the practical educational knowledge and 2) the appreciation of cultural diversity. The quote on page 698 paragraph one states, “*No one was ever scolded or punished for speaking in his native tongue on the playground*”, further supports the staff allowing students to hold on to their native tongues. The staff made every attempt to call the students by the names that their parents called them instead of renaming them easier names to pronounce; “*The teachers called us as our parents did, or as close as they could pronounce our names in Spanish or Japanese.*” Students were even encouraged to share their unique experiences in class. In Galarza’s statement “*At Lincoln, making us into Americans did not mean scrubbing away what made us originally foreign*”, he shares that the principal and the staff respected the many diverse nationalities that were represented at Lincoln. Galarza’s concluding sentence cements this feeling of acceptance “*It was easy for me to feel that becoming a proud American, as she said we should, did not mean feeling ashamed of being a Mexican*.”

Additional Tasks

* In “Barrio Boy” the author shares how he tries to fit into the American society as an outsider from Mexico. Read the excerpt “Chinatown” from The Lost Garden by Laurence Yep. The main character also struggles to fit into the American culture as an outsider. Compare their experiences acclimating to the larger society.

In Laurence Yep’s memoir The Lost Garden he relays his experiences growing up around the Chinatown section of San Francisco in a chapter entitled “Chinatown”. Yep, who is a Chinese American, describes his feelings as an outsider in his family, the Chinese American community, and the larger African -American community where he lived. Unlike the rest of his family, he wasn’t a natural athlete, and because he didn’t speak Chinese, he missed the jokes that his peers told and didn’t understand rules of the games they played. As a youth, Yep constantly wrestled with questions about his identity. His school community did not create an environment where he felt accepted; instead of being supportive of his unique abilities the teachers forced him to conform to their preconceived ideas of who he should be. Yep felt judged that he was not like his father, who previously worked at his school. “Because the present director knew that my father had once been the director of the playground, he was always urging me on to one disaster after another.” Unlike Ernesto Galarza, Laurence did not feel welcomed nor did he feel as if he belonged to a larger group. Yep in his recant of a time his teachers assumed he spoke Chinese explains, “…that sense of being different became sharpest the time I was asked to sing. …one of the girls elbowed me in the ribs and from the side of her mouth she whispered fiercely, “Just mouth the words.”” Instead of embracing his differences and encouraging acceptance as the teachers at Galarza’s elementary school had done, Yep’s community uses his differences to make him feel like an outsider.

* Write an advertisement for Lincoln School, encouraging children of many countries to attend and learn.
* Choose a scene from this memoir and create a script for the narrator, his mother, principal and/or teacher.