Overview
This unit is designed as a resource for counselors and teachers collaborating on classroom guidance. It is structured as a series of workshops integrated into core and elective courses, and aims to improve emotional behaviors and attitudes of the students. Supporting what guidance counselors refer to as the self-actualization process, the guidances address several identity issues confronting the culturally diverse population of African American students attending University City High School.

The first identity issue is cultural misrecognition among the students. The term “African American,” used to describe ninety percent of the students in official school demographics, is misleading, for it underrepresents the cultural diversity of a student body that includes many second and third generation immigrants and refugees from African, Caribbean and Asian countries.

A second identity issue relates to the transformation of the neighborhood known among older residents as “the Bottom,” and more recently as “Black Bottom.” Over the past century, this community has been encompassed and subsumed into the expanding corporate world of the Universities of Pennsylvania and Drexel. Community members who have been displaced continue to celebrate the Bottom through an annual reunion at Fairmount Park. Community members who remain in the dwindling patches of what was the Bottom find themselves living inside of a foreign corporate entity now known as University City. In this context, the impending closing of UCHS in 2009 amplifies the sense of displacement.
These guidances will encourage students to identify the strategies of cultural improvisation they have already devised as they move daily between the Village of Cornrows and the Corporate City, and to examine these strategies in light of the improvisational style that has enabled Africans and African Americans to collectively survive through cataclysmic change. The terms “cornrow” and “corporate” are deeply and historically connected. “Cornrow” alludes to the historical and cultural connections among students whose shared African roots find expression in hairstyles that survived the middle passage. “Corporate” alludes to a modern cultural and political formation that aligns corporations with government bodies. “Corporate” also alludes to a world beyond the neighborhood where self-expression must be modified in order to express membership in the Corporation. In such settings, cornrow styles have been viewed with suspicion and even banned as “too irregular.” Where Cornrows meet Corporate, a site of struggle may open up between African ways of being and acting, and European, or dominant Western, ways of being and acting.

At the same time, this encounter can also open up cultural and economic opportunities. For example, students at University City High School are finding employment in the hair braiding salons that have sprung up all over West Philadelphia. The lucrative businesses are capitalized by outside investors, who capture the profits as well. The guidances are designed to help students explore how they can, and already do, negotiate and traverse the boundary between cornrow community life and the corporate world of University City and to recognize and come to terms with the opportunities as well as the perils.

The unit will provide an opportunity for students to explore their cultural and ethnic backgrounds in an attempt to further define themselves, as they validate who they really are, lending value to their past life experiences. The unit will further assist students in exploring and defining who they are within the “Cornrow Culture” and how they have impacted the corporate structure of the University City Community overall.

This unit will further assist students in exploring their individual and collective lifestyles from a racial, cultural, ethnic and historical perspective as a tool to encourage self-awareness, positive self-esteem and the self-confidence necessary to realize their full potential as contributors to the University City Community.

Finally, this counselor facilitated classroom guidance tool for self-actualization will facilitate a students’ acquisition of the skills necessary to center them, appreciate who they are and where they come from as they move between the “Bottom” and the corporate world known as the University City of West Philadelphia.

This unit may be taught in conjunction with the Unit from Cornrows to Corporate Part I as well as with other core (major) courses, and /or elective course offerings. It is designed to enhance the academic skills being taught in the classroom. Providing a practical life skill
approach, it encourages students to translate the information from the standardized curriculum into practical life lessons.

Rationale

The official school profile of West Philadelphia University City High School identifies 90 percent of the students as African Americans. A closer examination would reveal a more culturally diverse student body of African, Caribbean and/or Asian descent. While many of these students are second and third generation immigrants, a small percentage are first generation students who have migrated to West Philadelphia from another city after coming from some country or region of Africa.

As their baggy pants, short skirts, and Timberland boots attest, the newly arrived students have already assimilated into West Philadelphia’s African American culture. They are, in fact, Stylin’ – a mode of self-presentation that harks back to a time in African and African American history when freed men and even slaves wore clothing that symbolized their social affluence and economic status. The colors and patterns were intricately woven together to further indicate how high one had risen in the hierarchy of their culture. The book, Stylin’, (White & White, 2-9) references Ralph Ellison’s observations declaring African American youths had been able to detect that style was a nuance of expression and an attitude that revealed a culture.

Yet, it seems that among high school students, the Stylin’ impulse is over-ridden by the pressure to conform. The students of University City High School are reluctant to wear the traditional garb of their countries and countrymen. Even on the days when ethnic pride is celebrated, our students are concerned with not being accepted or validated by their peers. They prefer to compromise and/or suppress their heritage and culture rather than disclosing an identity that would indicate that they are different from the other students. Thus, these “princes” and “princesses” of University City High School are found wearing “Timbs” (Timberline boots) and Jordans (sneakers).

Why would African students not embrace the opportunity to adorn their bodies in robes of royalty or enfold their locks and braided hair in a Gele (head warp) fit for a queen? Is it because there is no validation in being a minority within the minority culture? Or is it because they’ve transferred their identity to an American youth culture with its own symbols of affluence? Perhaps it is to define their own social and economical affluence with their own garb. It therefore becomes safer to assimilate than to acculturate.

The African students try even harder to blend into the regular school culture through language. Many of these students are bilingual but attempt to mask their dialects and thick accents by flowing in conversations with slang words that include “Drawin” (attention seeking to the extreme), “Joe” (not cool at all or out of order), and “Hype” (behavior over the top). They would never consider resorting to a first language that they speak fluently as
a means of oral expression. They would not dare risk being called “Joe!” Instead, they
would resort to silence and detachment from the mainstream group with which they seek to
identify.

How do these efforts to conceal difference relate to the improvisational techniques
historically used to survive in settings threatening to core identities?

One place to establish common ground among the students, one that readily expresses
shared racial and cultural identity, is their hair. Hair is common ground in the purest sense
and will stand the strand test genetically, culturally, and racially. Whether it is “nappy”,
straight, relaxed, weaved, teased, braided, tied or dyed, it is a true indicator of the
“Cornrow” culture. An Afrocentric normality that appears to just come “with the territory”
of people of African origin who happen to live in urban neighborhoods (better known as
the “Hood”). As much as these students strive quietly to assimilate, outside of the school
they lead culturally diverse lives, expressed in the food they eat, the songs they sing and
the stories they tell. However, once they cross the threshold of the school and enter the
presence of their African American contemporaries, they resort to mimicking the latter’s
demeanor and habits. As educators, we must bring the students to a place of common
ground for acceptance and validation if they are going to successfully self-actualize in
corporate America. They must first (and deservedly so) be validated ethnically, culturally
and personally for just being who they are, where they are, and where they have come
from.

As early as the fifteenth century in many West African cultures, hair served as the
interpreter for the state of the culture for the citizens of West Africa. Whether Wolof,
Mende, Mandingo, or Yoruba, these people were able to ascertain, at a glance, the age,
marital status, religion, economic status and even the social rank of an individual within a
specific community, based on the style of the hair. The braided hair of a Wolof man
indicated he was a warrior, prepared not only for war but death. His wife, in turn, wore her
hair uncombed as a sign that she was prepared to become a widow (Byrd & Tharp, 2, 3) 2.
The hair of African people and people of African descent is a resource for self-expression,
social identity, and meaning making, to be understood and acknowledged as such.

“Cornrows are a traditional style of hair grooming of African origin where the hair is
tightly braided very close to the scalp, using an underhand, upward motion to produce a
continuous, raised row. Cornrows can be formed, as the name implies, in simple, straight
lines or in complicated geometric curvilinear designs. Often favored for their easy
maintenance, cornrows can be left in for weeks at a time simply by carefully washing the
hair using a stocking cap or hair net and then regularly oiling the scalp and hair. Cornrow
hairstyles are often adorned in the African tradition with beads or cowry shells. Depending
on the region of the world, cornrows can be worn by either men or women” (Wikipedia
Encyclopedia) 3. A point of interest is that the name cornrows does not exist, but is
defined as corn rolls in Clarence Major's “Juba to Jive”: A Dictionary of African-
American Slang. Corn rolls, or for the purpose of this unit, Cornrows, then, are not just a hairstyle but are a metaphor of great African cultures and traditions which have survived down through the ages and stages of African people, from slavery to the current migration that is now impacting this community.

It is difficult to believe that in the 21st century, cornrows have not yet been fully accepted in corporate America, though they have certainly earned the right (Harris & Johnson, 104-107). The corridors of West Philadelphia are lined with hair salons, braiding shops and commercial businesses that specialize in Black hair and Black hair products. These businesses generate and contribute easily millions of dollars in an economy that does not filter back down to the community that supports them. These proprietors and entrepreneurs have wisely elected to embrace the people who wear cornrows by using their talent as an opportunity for economic prosperity and personal success in the businesses they own.

The students of West Philadelphia University City High School not only contribute to the economy by patronizing these shops and “styling” the intricate hairstyles created and customized just for them, but many have utilized their own skills and talents by becoming braiders in these same shops. Some exceptionally gifted and economically astute students simply choose to maintain a low overhead by braiding in their own kitchens and retaining most of the profit for themselves. It is good business sense and a move that would merit the respect of seasoned entrepreneurs, CEOs and senior managers in any environment or business setting where proper planning and corporate mergers are the norm. Corporate America’s refusal to honor the marks of diversity revealed in the cornrow hairstyle has made it party to young Africans and African Americans’ denial of their heritage. Thus, it has contributed to the students’ slow advancement toward self-actualization (Dr. Abraham Maslow, 1) without which they will never reach their full potential. The ability to self actualize is directly related to knowing and being secure with your potential, your gifts and your ability to use them.

When our students acquire the knowledge and the ability to translate their gifts, skills and talents into corporate maneuvers, they will begin to realize the financial benefits associated with these and other like industries. Financial security and economic stabilization are two key ingredients in accessing a lifestyle, more conducive to living and not just surviving. Surviving on a day-to-day basis is the priority for our students; while making a profit is an opportunity that would afford them the privilege to choose a lifestyle. It is the difference between living in a village and working in corporate America. The ability to move fluidly between the life you choose to lead and the business community that supports your lifestyle is indeed a result of the acculturation process.

Our students demonstrate daily that they can be fluid from the “Black Bottom” to the top of West Philadelphia every time they arrive safely to school and return home. It is a venture and a journey through the “hood” to corporate America and back. Why then can
we not foster within them the ability to self-actualize and “style out” as they move from Cornrows to Corporate America? This is accomplished through the acculturation process necessary to successfully transcend barriers that would otherwise be a hindrance.

Let us therefore be very clear as we venture further into understanding this curriculum unit that attempts to raise the self-esteem of students of African descent. We must validate who they are in the corporate community of University City and assist them in their self-actualizing process in corporate America. Cornrows, decidedly so, are part and parcel a way of life and a vehicle to a better way of life, given the economic and financial opportunities presented by the businesses associated with the black Hair industry.

Who they are has been determined as far back as their DNA can trace their roots to Africa. Where they are was determined decades ago when, “The Plan for West Philadelphia” was first conceptualized. I am clear that the students collectively express membership in what I call the “Cornrow Culture Club of University City High School”. Of equal concern is the fact that they hail from “The Bottom” of the West Philadelphia University City area. “The Black Bottom” sits on the river’s edge, and is the heart of the educational community created by University of Pennsylvania and Drexel University. The name, which previously reflected the racial make-up and economic status of the residents, is now inappropriate. So these “children” of African decent are now challenged to navigate their way through the very corporate, no longer impoverished “Bottom”. They will need to be supported and encouraged. They are now foreign to this new neighborhood once viewed economically as “the Bottom” of West Philadelphia, now almost economically competitive with” The Top “of West Philadelphia. What better reason could exist for engaging students in a curriculum that exercises the skills needed for climbing their way to the top? They need to experience success as they “Style out Bi-Culturally” in an environment that will receive, respect and celebrate them for their contributions to its diversity. The process is called self-actualization, and the vehicle, which will mobilize them, is enhanced self-esteem.

Objectives

According to the District of Philadelphia, the Guidance Counselor is responsible for developing self-esteem among students. Through learning activities and simulated life skills experiences we seek to cultivate self-esteem in all of our children. While these activities and experiences often take place in individual and group counseling sessions, this particular unit will utilize the medium of classroom guidance.

In keeping with the Schenk High School Guidance Department model, classroom guidance is instructional based counseling taught in a regular classroom environment by the school counselor. that provides social, emotional and educational support to students in life skill areas. It is developmental and outcome based and includes sequential activities
organized and facilitated by the school counselor and may involve the classroom teacher of record.

For the children of University City High School, timing is of the essence. These children have been advised that the school may be closing its doors to them as early as fall of 2009. As a counselor, I would be failing them if I did not attempt to foster the level of enhanced self-esteem that they will need to be successful, not only in a new educational setting, but in the corporate community as well. One year allows little time to reflect with students on their own bi-cultural skills, much less to address skill areas needed for rising above and beyond the status quo in any life situation, especially when it appears that their comfort zone has been transformed and absorbed by “Corporate America.”

Strategies

School Counselors use Classroom Guidance as a major strategy to help students acquire life skills within a classroom environment, while supporting the academic, social, and developmental goals of the curriculum. As a counselor in a high school environment I have successfully utilized classroom guidance as a teaching tool for life skills.

Classroom Guidance itself relies on counseling instructional strategies, which are integrated and reflected throughout each individual guidance lesson and/or core course curriculum lesson plan. Classroom Guidance can mobilize groups of students in behavioral skill acquisition while influencing their social development as individuals.

The following counseling instructional strategies are suggested for this unit:

- The student will be involved in a group process experience during which they will be required to participate in inter group, in class dialogue and discussions following selected readings (poems, short stories, fiction and non fiction) relative to some aspect of the African and/or African American experience;
- Visualizations facilitated by the counselor will provide an opportunity for students to explore past life experiences that will impact upon their ability to connect them to future goals and aspirations;
- Written and oral assignments will be incorporated in research projects, creative writing, storytelling and impromptu journaling. The skills acquired will be reinforced and practiced in the regular core classes, while providing an opportunity for students to connect fictional characters and situations to their own life circumstances;
- Visual, oral and/or written presentations, pre-determined by the counselor to challenge the student ‘s ability to analyze, utilize, appreciate and share their natural gifts, talents abilities and acquired skills to self-mobilize or “Style Out” in a Bicultural World.
The major focus of this unit is not to teach students in the traditional sense, but to provide an opportunity for personal growth and change within the classroom environment while students acquire the life skills associated with experiencing, validating and embracing their own biculturalism, without fear of being ridiculed or labeled as different in a negative connotation. The counselor is charged with creating this environment within the school environment, utilizing the courses taught in the core curriculum as a prelude to the classroom guidance experience. These teaching strategies reflect the goals of this counselor throughout this process.

The subject areas engaged for Classroom Guidance are African American Literature and Geometry. Both subject areas enable the exploration of cultural similarities and differences along two vectors. The first is along the African African-American vector. The second is along the Cornrow-Corporate vector. Along the Cornrow-Corporate vector, both literature and geometry provide an opportunity to explore two salient aspects of an African cultural way of being. One is verbal artistry, the other is an African system of fractals, the logic of which differs from Euclidian fractal geometry.

The Cornrow concept provides a ready focus. The term “cornrows” is already verbally playful. It is a metaphor whose origins are disputed – does it represent the furrows in a field, or the textures of corduroy, which means “heart of the king.” Moreover there are terms used to describe cornrows in other African languages which offer other meanings and perspectives.

Paul Eglash, in *African Fractals*, describes an underlying logic linking African derived systems of communication in pan-African applications of “fractal geometry.” Fractal geometry is distinguished from Euclidian geometry. Fractals, he says, “are characterized by the repetition of similar patterns at ever-diminishing scales. We can argue that by the same token, these scales are ever-expanding. Traditional African settlements typically show this “self-similar” characteristic: circles of circles of circular dwellings, rectangular walls enclosing ever-smaller rectangles and streets in which broad avenues branch down to tiny footpaths with striking geometric repetition.” But while self-similarity in Euclidian-based construction methods may mean symmetry within the same scale, in African construction methods, self-similarity may unfold as replication across different scales. (Eglash 1998:31)

With this in mind, students can be encouraged to explore and reflect on how African and African-American forms of expressive culture and underlying logics consistently exhibit attention to the relationship between part and whole, between individual and community, between community and cosmos, and how this deeply humanistic project gives rise to stylized performances across a broad spectrum of expressive forms.

**Lesson Plans**
The lesson plans for this content unit require collaboration between the teacher of an academic content area {core and elective courses} and the school guidance counselor. The structure or format of the lesson plans for the subject area may vary, but should include the following:

- Course
- Title of the lesson
- Objective
- Grade level
- Materials/resources
- Procedures
- State standards (see appendices)

The plan should also include a student product and an assessment. The follow-up is actually the classroom guidance lesson, which is the primary focus of this unit. While the guidance plan does not rely on the students’ acquisition of academic skills, the skills acquired in the academic lesson will be reinforced and practiced throughout the guidance lesson. The academic lesson will be referenced in the beginning of each guidance lesson, and a complete academic lesson plan(s) concludes this section.

I have designed the following classroom Guidance Lesson Plans to integrate the academic curriculum with the students’ social, emotional and developmental needs. Facilitated as Life Skills Workshops, these lessons may utilize counseling techniques and strategies in lieu of traditional teaching methods.

**Classroom Guidance Activities Plan I: An African American Literature Classroom**

**Title: Self Images, “A Real Good Look At You”**

**Objective**

To facilitate the student understanding of the connection between the poem “No Images”, by Waring Cuney with the student’s own perspective regarding self-image and to explore the notion of how their own self-image relates to their feelings about their own environment(s), past, present, and future. This is the first classroom guidance lesson, which follows the African American Literature Lesson entitled “Self Actualization; In the Search
for Identity”. The self-actualization process will be reinforced in the guidance lesson using the imagery in the poem “No Images”.

**Materials**

Students will need paper, pencils/pens and guidance counseling journal. They will be given a copy of the poem, “No Images”.

**Strategy**

The counselor will initiate dialogue in a large group forum, preferably a circle, for initial discussion, reviewing prior lessons and outcomes in preparation to break down into smaller cooperative learning groups to read, discuss and analyze “No Images”.

Students will be partnered for pair/share exchange of how they see themselves, before returning to larger group setting for visualization” experience facilitated by the counselor and followed by students making a “Feeling Based” journal entry.

**Procedures**

The counselor reviews with the class the self actualization theme and process, reminding students of the need for everyone to be able to realize who they really are as they aspire to be the best that they can be in any situation by understanding how this process happens.

The counselor will review the lesson presented in African American Literature integrating into the discussion the analysis, comparison and contrast between the two poems. The following questions will be presented and explored for discussion, reflection and response as a review.

- Describe what it means to “Self Actualize”. Counselor will guide the responses to the realization of self and potential.
- How did the characters in Countee Cullen’s poems Self Actualize?
- How do you think they felt about themselves?

The counselor will validate student’s response and allow open and honest dialogue before moving the discussion to a smaller group forum, then introducing the poem, “No Images” for silent reading and again out loud for emphasis, diction and feeling. At this time the counselor will introduce the concept of Self Image by having students use their analytical skills to talk about the poem and the imagery in the poem.

Key questions to address include:
• Why do you think the poem is called “No Images”?
• Where could this woman have come from and where is she now that she is looking into “dishwater”?
• How has her life or her lifestyle changed?

Select someone in the group to share your responses with and explain how you would feel without an image. Prepare to make a journal entry about your own self-image.

Answering these questions:

• What do you see, and where do you see yourself? In your past, present, and future?
• How did you look physically and how are you dressed?
• What style of clothing reflects your past image, present and your future?
• Describe and explain why your clothing and hairstyle has changed? (The counselor may share enlarged photographs of Michael Jackson’s past and present for stimulus for thought and discussion) The stimulus photos could be anyone famous the students will recognize.

Counselor will instruct students to pair up with one other person with whom they feel comfortable to talk about their responses. Counselor will then convene and close out with final “visualization” exercise. Students will be asked to close their eyes and see themselves in a corporate work environment. Counselor will describe in detail a variety of professional settings and request that students see themselves, including what they are doing and how they are dressed. Instruct them to remember all the details as you end the visualization experience.

Student Product Assessment/Assignment

The student product is the journal entry and students will be asked to review it for homework and plan to share some part of it at the next session. Explain to them that they will need to elaborate on the type of work they were doing and how they were dressed in the visualization. The counselor may request that students prepare a paper on dress norms of corporate America.

Follow-Up

Next session Topic: Cornrows: Are They a Culture, Hairstyle, Geometry or a Corporate Opportunity. Instruct students to think about this question to prepare for the next lesson.

Classroom Guidance Activities Plan II/III: A Geometry Classroom
Title: Cornrows: Are they a Culture, Hairstyle, Geometry or a Corporate Opportunity?

This guidance lesson will follow the Geometry Lesson on Fractal Patterns, (which draws an analogy between geometric fractal patterns to the intricate patterns braided in the various cornrow hairstyles and the mathematical concepts and skills involved in both processes).

Objective-

To enhance students self esteem and validate the student’s culture and cultural experience by engaging students in examining and expanding the diverse concepts of cornrows from a cultural hairstyle that they wear, to the skills that they have acquired that are marketable and transferable. Students will be able to define what “Cornrows” mean to them and how a change in perception could mean a change in lifestyle and the foundation of a lucrative business opportunity in Corporate America.

Strategies -

Review previous lessons on self image, validate and encourage student sharing) as an introduction to Style and the diversity associated with Cultural Styling. Reflect on the Geometry Lesson involving Fractal patterns as a premise for cornrow hairstyles involving mathematical concepts and skills. Students should be grouped in cooperative learning clusters for the purpose of developing a group position on the thematic question and providing a rationale for the decision. Visit all groups and initiate conversations and dialogue in each group. Advise students to select a recorder, a timekeeper and a reporter. Identify and encourage students to use all resources (inclusive of Braider and Counselor as consultants). Designate a time frame for working. This particular lesson requires at least ninety (90) minutes for the entire lesson. Being responsive to the cooperative groups’ tasks, could easily run over into two lessons depending upon student’s research findings, enthusiasm and input. Allow as much time as possible for all students to contribute to the project and report out.

Material/Resources

Enlarge picture of Cornrow hairstyle, preferably demonstrating fractural patterns. Student that has braiding skills, students volunteer to have hair partially braided. Short story on Madame C. J. Walker, books for students to browse through should include Black hair magazines. Tender-headed A Comb-Bending Collection of Hair Stories, Hair Story Untangling the Roots of Black Hair in America. Students should have pens, pencils and paper as well as a journal. Newsprint paper, markers, and masking tape will be provided.
Procedures

The counselor will review the occurrences and ideas presented in the previous guidance lesson, receiving student input on their own “self image”. Counselor will guide students to elaborate on the physical image they imagined, clothing, shoes and hairstyles. These are some questions you might ask when a counselor is alluding to braids in the exercise.

- Did anyone have them? Why or why not? (Questions should be probing, yet reflective enough to seize the opportunity to introduce the lesson title).
- Ask what they learned in Geometry that applies to cornrows as a hairstyle using mathematics.
- Who wears braids?
- What are terms are used in African languages to describe cornrows and braids? What do those terms mean? Do they help us to see in a new way what we have taken-for-granted?
- Is it just a Black thing?

Bring up the skills in the designer styles and inquire concerning the cost. Introduce the theme again as a rhetorical question after several students respond. Note the responses in setting up the cooperative groups on that basis.

Strategy

Students will be instructed to use the newsprint as they choose to chronicle their group discussions, and research findings. They may also draw pictures and/or diagram fractal patterns. Tell them it is their project and they are free to respond in their own way, and encourage them to rely on the skills and talent in the group or the expertise of the braider. The counselor will circulate among the groups encouraging the process and trouble shooting when help is necessary or requested. Instruct them to be creative and think outside the box.

Finally the group will be reconvened as a larger group (with smaller cooperative groups seated together within the larger body) for the purpose of presenting their responses. Counselor will allow for questions and comments on the presentations maintaining a positive tone and guiding comments towards constructive feedback only. Always validate the thoughts, statements and skills that students contribute to this exercise. Have them post their responses around the room, acknowledging and validating their work. Provide constructive feedback and positive reinforcement. Thank everyone for participating and prepare the students to close out with a Free Feeling Journal entry about their own style!
Student Product Assessment/Assignment

The newsprint posters will be the cooperative group product and the journal entry will be the individual student product. Perhaps someone would also have a design or braided a hairstyle, or sketched out a fractural pattern that could be used as a design for braiding. All if these are acceptable. Advise students to come prepared for the next session, which will be facilitated by a guest presenter that is a Human Resource specialist. They should come “Dressed to impress” or “Dressed to express,” who they are! Let them know you are available if they have questions or concerns. Give some thought to the follow-up questions “

- What and where is Corporate America”?
- Do I want to fit in?

Follow-Up

Write the definition of Corporate and Corporation on the chalkboard or newsprint before class ends and leave it up for the students to review. Encourage students to research and understand what “Corporate America” means. Encourage them to know as much as possible by the next guidance lesson.

Classroom Guidance Activities Plan IV
Title: 10 Blocks from Cornrows to Corporate America

Objective

Students will understand the concept of Corporate America and what the essential requirements are for getting there, the relationship between the environment of the neighborhood-community in which they go to school (the physical location of University City), and the corporate world that surrounds it.

Students will explore and experience from a corporate Mentors’ perspective the 10 basic steps necessary to transition from the Cornrow Culture to the corporate culture of downtown Philadelphia, which is less than ten city blocks away. Students will learn what it means to Style out to impress your peers versus styling out to be acceptable in corporate America. Students will demonstrate the ability to choose when and how personal style should be a reflection of who you are in a corporate setting versus to when you are hanging out with your peers.

Materials
Paper, pencils, markers, newsprint, counseling guidance journals, and a trunk filled with urban gear and corporate attire. Copy of the poem “Body Language,” by Dunett Rio Ebo and a copy of “Ten Blocks, a Guide to Corporate America”.

**Strategy**

Use the large group forum (circular) as you engage students in the group process to converse, question and respond to various concepts and definitions of corporate America. Essential questions include: what is considered corporate America? Where is it physically located? How do you get in? Why would you want to get in? Introduce Guest Facilitator, with similar background as students who is representing corporate America, the guest will be dressed more like the students as a point of interest to be revealed later. The guest will mentor, model and instruct student in the transitioning processes.

**Procedure**

Facilitator will be introduced only after students are situated in a circular mode and quiet. Counselor will review corporate definition previously put on newsprint and ask for thoughts. Typically students input should be affirmed and validated. Explain that the reasons for having the guest are to share their knowledge about Corporate America. Provide an oral resume (position, place of employment, skills, gifts, and educational credentials). Facilitator should explain her personal background and how she entered the corporate world. While discussing and presenting the “Ten Blocks, Guide to Corporate America “, the guest will subtly transform from the student dress motif to the more accepted corporate attire. Most of the changing only involves revealing her more appropriate clothing and pinning up her braided hair into a more moderate hairstyle.

She will continue talking and answering questions the entire time she transforms, explaining the difference between transformation and conformation. Following her presentation she will open the trunk and help students determine what attire is appropriate to wear to express who they are and what attire is appropriate to impress in a corporate setting and how to manipulate the exchange.

**Student Product Assessment/Assignment**

Students will be asked to articulate their philosophy or feelings about entering into corporate America as an employee or entrepreneur. They will also make a journal entry and share it if they like. Finally those students who volunteer may use the items in the trunk to model different attire related to the lesson.

Students will be assigned to write about your own background and what you did before you arrived to University City High School. Include how you see yourself moving towards corporate America. What would you like to do and how would you like to dress once you
are in that corporate world. Use your new Mentor as a resource. The assignment should be at least 1 page. Review the 10 Blocks, Guide to Corporate America and the poem

Lesson Plan I – Self-Actualization, In Search of Identity
Course: African American Literature

Grade Level

11th or 12th

Unit Goal:

To introduce students to various literary works from the Harlem Renaissance period that will facilitate an understanding of the nominal theme of Self Actualization for African Americans during that time period, and their search for personal identity.

While this entire Renaissance unit in African American Literature will include many different works of the Harlem Renaissance, this lesson plan (s) will include the counselor as a co-facilitator to assist in drawing the connection between two poems by Countee Cullen and the student’s real life experiences in search of their own identity in America today.

It is the intent of the counselor and the instructor to utilize this lesson (s) in conjunction with the classroom guidance lesson I to initiate a process for students to become involved in a search for their own personal identity as they acquire the skills necessary to self actualize in America.

Procedure

Students will read Countee Cullen’s “Tableau” and apply the definition of self actualization to the experiences of the writer, engaging in a discussion of symbolism and imagery, comparing and contrasting the experiences of the fictional characters to their own life situations.

Students will identify, describe, evaluate and synthesize themes in America “Social Ill’s” that are dominant in the literature of the Harlem Renaissance, relating them to the author’s depicted experiences and America today.

Students will analyze and evaluate diction in order to relate to the points that the writer intended to make regarding black/white relationship and friendships and their impact upon the self actualization of the characters in the poem and what it means to the students in their search for identity and the need to self-actualize in America.
Method

Introduce the lessons as a “joint” venture between the teacher and counselor to help students in their own search for identity. Have the counselor express why it is important to self actualize and how this lesson in “poetry” can help them to identify with the fictional character’s process and help them experience more control over their own process.

The teacher will remind the students of skills they have used when reading and talking about poems in the class and encourage them to use the skills discussing these poems. The teacher will then briefly review the Harlem Renaissance time period and introduce the works of Countee Cullen The teacher may speak briefly about the author, but should draw students into the poems immediately after they have been read.

Read the poems out loud with expression and diction. Encourage immediate response, but guide the discussion with probing questions. Encourage reflective listening and continue to revisit the works to raise and prove points of view from the students. Instigate when appropriate. Remind students to use vocabulary with which they are familiar.

Assignment:

Students may choose another work to orally discuss or write about as it relates to “seeking identity”. They may choose to write their own poem. All are acceptable. Students should also make a journal entry about their own search for identity.

Follow-up

The counselor will facilitate guidance lesson using the poem “No Images by Waring Cuney. Students are encouraged to prepare to “Look at yourself”.

Lesson Plan II – Geometry

Title: Understanding Fractal Patterns

Objectives

To generate a fractal; to recognize and articulate the nature of fractal patterns; to draw connections between fractal geometry, designs used in cornrow hairstyles, and the physical layouts of villages, neighborhoods, and the corporate city.

Grade Level

11th or 12th
Materials

Rulers, pencils, tracing paper, equilateral triangles drawn on opaque paper

Methods:

Teacher will begin the class by introducing students to famous fractal patterns: Koch’s Snowflake, the Mandelbrot, etc, proceeding with activities that support the students understanding of the concept of fractal patterns as well as how to create them.

Procedures

Teacher will lead a discussion of iterations and the nature of fractal patterns.

Essential questions are:

- What is a fractal Pattern?
- How is it infinite?
- Where can we observe these patterns in designs, or in nature’s design?

Teacher will instruct the students to create a Sierpinski triangle by shading in all but ¼ triangles remaining from parts of interlocking triangles in several iterations. A sheet of paper can be used to create each new iteration. For example, the first iteration excludes the small triangle inscribed in the larger triangle that is ¼ part of the larger triangle. The second iteration excludes the 3 smaller triangles inscribed in the 3 triangles remaining from the first iteration, and so. Diagrams are provided to get the students started in the process, but the next iterations can be easily extrapolated from the first two.

Student Product Assessment/Assignment

Students will be asked to articulate several ideas about the triangle. What is a fractal pattern? Remind the students that the answer was given earlier. What fraction of the triangle is shaded in each iteration? Is there a rule for how to find the fraction each time?

Follow-up

Students will be given some corn row hair designs and asked if they can find similarities in the designs. (Some may or may not be similar and some may have more than others). What are they looking for when they draw the comparison? What makes a particular design a facsimile of a fractal pattern?
Students will be given free time to draw any comparisons they see between the hair designs and the fractal pattern. Any thoughtful responses will be considered correct. It is however desired that someone will identify patterns as being self-similar when a basic shape has branches that repeat the main shape on a smaller scale.

**Suggested Reading and Listening for Teachers and Students**

*Clarence Major's Juba to Jive: A Dictionary of African-American Slang written in 1994*

Poem “No Images” by Waring Cuney in 1926


DC Public Library, *Black Renaissance* web site:

http://www.delibrary.org/blkren/bios/cuneyww.html

Black Bottom (Philadelphia) Wikipedia the Free Encyclopedia

India Arie Song lyrics “I Am Not My Hair”


Body Language – by Runett Nia Ebo


Appendices – Standards

The guidances accommodate the state standards addressed in the course content areas. The standards specifically addressed in this unit are Pennsylvania Literacy and Math Standards, which are included in the appendices and embedded in the academic lesson plans and guidance activities.

Standards

While the classroom Guidance lesson Plans are not standard driven, the guidance lessons provide the opportunity for students to practice the skills they have acquired in the academic Lessons taught by the teacher for this core and elective curriculum. With this, in mind the following standards reflect the lesson plans for this unit that are reinforced in the Guidance Lesson Plan.

Pennsylvania Literacy Standards Met By This Unit Are:

1.1 Learning to Read Independently – D: Identity, describe, evaluate and synthesize the essential ideas in text. Assess these reading strategies that were most effective in learning from a variety of tests.

1.1 Learning to Read Independently – G: Demonstrate, after reading, an understanding and interpretation of both fiction and nonfiction text, including public documents.

1.1 Learning to Read – H: Demonstrate fluency and comprehensive reading

1.3 Reading, Analyzing, and Interpreting Literature – A: Read and understand works of literature.

1.3 Reading, Analyzing, and Interpreting Literature – B: Analyze the relationships, uses and effectiveness of literary elements used by one or more authors in similar genres, including characterizations, settings, plot, theme, point of view, tone and style.

1.3 Reading, Analyzing, and Interpreting Literature – C: Analyze the effectiveness in terms of literacy quality of the author’s use of literary devices.

1.3 Reading, Analyzing, and Interpreting Literature – D: Analyze and evaluate in poetry, the appropriateness of diction and figurative language (e.g., irony, understatement, overstatement, paradox).

1.4 Types of Writing – B: Write complex informational pieces (e.g., research papers, analyses, evaluate, essays).
1.6 Speak and Listen – A: Listen to others.

1.6 Speaking and Listening – D: Contribute to discussions.

1.6 Speaking and Listening – E: Participation in small and large group discussions and presentations.

The Academic Standards For Mathematics For This Unit Are:

2.9.11 Grade 11

2.9.11A Construct geometric figures using dynamic geometry tools (e.g., Geometer’s Sketchpads, Cabri Geometry)

2.9.11G Solve problems using analytic geometry.

Annotated Bibliography


Cullen, Countee, 1927. ed. Caroling Dusk: An Anthology of Verse by Poets of the Twenties. New York: Harper. Caroling Dusk presents the poetry of the Harlem Renaissance from the perspective of the authors themselves. Each author has written a biography that precedes each poet. The authors included are worthy of being there by having contributed to the voices of that time period.
Nikki Giovanni celebrates some of the most renown Black writers of the past covering before and during the Harlem Renaissance. The literature depicts the theme of image with special attention given to validity of the philosophical views of the writers during the Harlem renaissance.


This book supports the theory of ethno mathematics as a source for creative inspiration for black graphic designers who realize the potential for design utilizing fractal patterns and geometric techniques in their designs.


This article is one of the last interviews of Abraham Maslow in which he attempts to support his theory on hierarchy of needs. It discloses an extremely humanistic perspective, especially regarding the need for the self-actualization process of humans.


An essential reference guide for understanding African American language and the slang that emerges from the Black community from an historical perspective.


Toni Morrison eloquently recalls the time of the first school integration mandated by the United States Supreme Court. It is a unique introduction for children to read as they journey through the history of a tumultuous time of racial unrest in our country.


This text addresses the fundamental social and cultural foundations upon which counselors and other helpers develop the knowledge and skills to be effectively when working with diverse populations.


**Endnotes**

1 Ayana Byrd and Lorie Tharp, “Hair Story: Untangling the Roots of Black Hair in America” St.
Martins

3 Wikipedia, the Free Encyclopedia, Wikipedia.org

