

VI. Shared Experiences

Subject(s):

Time Needed: 50 minute class session

Objectives:

- ✓ share experiences as classmates
- ✓ discuss the state of Waterbury today
- ✓ develop an understanding of the positions of others
- ✓ use and strengthen problem solving skills

Areas/Disciplines Covered:

English (composition, grammar)
Journalism (interviews)

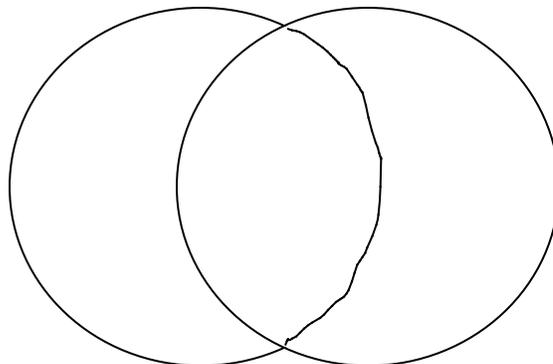
Materials:

- chalk and chalkboard or markers and chart paper
- list of questions for each student
- internet to access “Brass City Life” website
- Venn diagram printout for each pair
- homework assignment

Procedure:

1. Start class out by discussing what Waterbury neighborhood you’re from. Address why you live there, what you like about it, what you don’t like, who else lives there. Then ask, by a show of hands, how many students live in each neighborhood that the school represents. Ask one student, “What makes your neighborhood different from X?” Draw a Venn diagram on the board and record her/his answer in the diagram on one side. Then ask another student from a different neighborhood what makes their neighborhood different from the last one. Record her/his answer on the other side of the diagram. Then ask both of the students what makes them the same. Place that answer in the center of the diagram. [Take only 10 minutes for this portion.]

2. Explain to the students that this is what they are going to do. In pairs of two, they are going to discuss the things that make their neighborhoods and their experiences similar and different. All of the things that are different go in the outside circles, all of the things that are the same go in the inside circle. This is a Venn diagram. It will show you how you are different and how you are the same.



3. Divide the class into pairs. If possible, try to place students together who are not very well acquainted and from different areas. Hand out the list of questions (or if you'd rather, write the questions on the board). Allow the students to develop other questions as well as those you've offered (if they would like to). Also hand out a drawn copy of a Venn diagram. The internet access will allow each pair to engage with the website in order to jog their memories on the neighborhoods they've studied and use that to build their understanding of their neighborhoods. Some of the ideas discussed on the website and in class are: food, race, ethnicity, jobs, leisure, gender, and tradition. All of these can be used to address their similarities and differences with questions such as:

- What is the major ethnic group in your neighborhood?
- What is the major cuisine of your neighborhood?
- What do most youth in your neighborhood do in their spare time?
- Where do they go?

They will have 20 minutes to interview each other and finish their diagram.

4. After the 20 minutes are up, bring the class back together. Ask a few groups to present on what they've found. How are they different? How are they alike? What do the similarities and differences tell us about the neighborhoods in Waterbury? About the city of Waterbury?

5. At the end of class, assign HOMEWORK. Ask them to write a paragraph answering the following questions:

- What did you expect to be different between you and your partner?
- Were they different?
- What was the same?
- Were you surprised to have similarities?
- What were they?
- Does this exercise make you think any differently about your classmate or yourself?

Related Resources:

Vocabulary List

tradition: an event or practice which, through repetition, becomes a part of a group's culture.

Venn Diagram: a graph that shows, with closed circles, the similarities and differences between two data sets.