Week 1: Cultures, Clans, and Ethnography

Activity: Creating a Clan

Discussion:

1. Introduction
   * Introduce ourselves and why we are here.
   * Go around the room and have each of the kids introduce themselves
2. What is Anthropology?
   * The study of the physical and cultural development of human societies past and present
   * Sub-Fields:
     1. Physical Anthropology – study of people from a biological perspective, usually aspects that are genetically inheritable
     2. Cultural Anthropology – study of human thought, behavior, and lifeways that are learned, rather than inherited, by groups of people.
     3. Archaeology – study of past cultures, based largely on their remains
     4. Applied Anthropology – using anthropological knowledge to solve human problems
     5. Linguistics – study of language and its relation to culture
3. Culture
   * What is culture?
     1. Learned behaviors by which humans adapt to their environment in such a manner that allows them to live in groups. (Ways of life characteristic of a particular human society)
   * Symbols: Something that stands for something else.
   * Norms: Shared ideas about the way things ought to be done.
     1. Shaking hands when being introduced to someone new instead rather than bowing
     2. Hugging as a hello or goodbye rather than kissing cheeks
   * Values: Shared ideas about what is true or right
     1. The idea that breakfast is the most important meal of the day
     2. The idea that you should tread people how you would want to be treated
4. Ethnography
   * What is Ethnography?
     1. The systematic study of peoples and cultures, it is a means to represent graphically and in writing the culture of a group.
   * Anthropological Perspective: Cultural Relativism – cultures should be viewed and analyzed through the lens of their own histories and values, rather than the values of another culture
5. Clans
   * What is a clan?
     1. A group of people brought together and united by an actual or perceived kinship and descent
     2. Usually a smaller part of a larger society

Independent Practice:

Students will be split into groups and form a clan. This activity is intended to demonstrate to the students how culture develops, evolves, and creates diversity among people. Students will be separated into groups of 5\* and then be tasked with formalizing their clan. The students will need to come up with a clan name, a clan handshake or dance, and design/pick a clan symbol. After some time, the students will be asked to come to the front of the class and introduce their clan. They will tell us their name, what their symbol is, and demonstrate their handshake to the rest of the class.   
  
\*[Specific number subject to change from class discussion]

(If we have a proctor or other teacher who is familiar with the students it may be beneficial to consult with them before splitting into groups to avoid any specific problem pairings, otherwise letting the students choose their own groups, or random selection will suffice)

Activity Supplies:

* Drawing tools: crayons, markers, pencils, colored pencils, erasers
* Poster-board
* Scratch paper

Review:

What is anthropology?

What is culture?

Why is it important to consider cultures from their own perspective?

**PowerPoint Script**

**Anthropology Is Elemental**

Hi, how is everyone doing today?

(Click)  
I am Colin (Gestures to self), this is Nick, (gestures to Nick), and we are anthropology students from the University of Alabama. We are excited to be here today, and excited that you all took an interest in anthropology and signed up to take this class. As you probably know already we are going to be teaching you a lot about anthropology over the course of this semester. Can I get a show of hands, how many of you have an idea of what Anthropology is? Good good, well hopefully by the end of today and certainly by the end of the semester you will all be budding anthropologists.

(Click)

**What is anthropology?**

Today we are going to be spending out time talking about Clans, and Culture, and after the powerpoint you are going to get to work in groups to form your own clans, but before we get into that we need to answer the big question of the day “What is anthropology?”

(click)

I asked you all earlier if anyone had an idea about what anthropology was so do one of you want to take a guess at what anthropologists’ study?

1. Guess correct: That’s right. Anthropology is the study of people. Anthropologists want to study everyone, in all places, and in all times.
2. That was a good guess. Ad Lib answer to bring it around to “Anthropology is the study of people, Anthropologists want to study everyone, in all places, and in all times.

So instead of the monkey maybe this would have been a better picture?

(click)

(click)

**CLAP**

Now you know what anthropology is, but I’m sure you are all wondering what exactly it is that anthropologists study about us right?

There are four big fields of anthropology, and thankfully they are super easy to remember, if you can CLAP.

(click)

So if you can CLAP you can remember the 4 fields of anthropology.

(click)

CLAP stands for Cultural, Linguistic, Archaeology, and Physical Anthropology

(click)  
Cultural anthropologists study culture. Which is what we are going to be talking about in just a minute when we talk about clans.

Anyone want to take a guess at what linguistic anthropologists look at?  
 - Language

Archaeologists study past societies and people.

And finally Physical Anthropologists, study our bodies, our health, and how we change and adapt over time.

So just remember C.L.A.P. : Cultural, Linguistic, Archaeology, Physical!!

(click)

**Cultural Anthropology**

Like I said just a minute ago, cultural anthropologists study culture.   
  
But what is culture?

* A culture is a shared set of beliefs, behaviors, values, manners, ways of thinking, eating, dressing and acting that are common within a group of people.

Who has culture?

* Everyone is a part of culture. In fact, most everyone is involved with many cultures, American culture, southern culture, school culture. There are an extremely large number of unique cultures out there.

**How do we Study Culture?**

So now that we have an idea of what culture is, and that everyone has it. How do anthropologists study it?  
  
The way they usually do it is to go to where the culture is. If they wanted to learn about the culture of the people of Madagascar they would go to Madagascar and integrate themselves in the society. They would live in it and observe and absorb all they could about the people. They would talk to people, conduct interviews, learn how and why they do things the way they do. Then once they are done doing all of this research and collecting their information they write about it. This whole process of observing and documenting a culture is called ethnography.   
  
One of the most important things to remember when doing ethnography or anthropology in general, is that you have to leave your own beliefs about the culture and its history behind. So you can learn and view the culture through its own history and values instead of yours.   
  
Other cultures are not better or worse than your own they are just different!!  
  
Let me give you an example. I don’t know if you know this but, football is big in Tuscaloosa. When I first came to the university I was not a football fan at all. In fact I thought it was a silly game, and I much preferred watching soccer, and baseball. However, since football at the University of Alabama, is such a big thing I decided that I should give it a chance and see what all the fuss was about. It was hard at first because I knew almost nothing about it was completely new, and I preferred other sports, but I did my best to set aside those thoughts and ideas and embraced football. So I went to games, I learned about the different positions, the history of the game, and I talked with my friends and roommates and learned why they like it and what the sport means to them. And now at the end of it I understand the football culture here, that it has a deep history and is something that students and people from this area are very proud of. While football still is not my favorite sport, I would call myself a football fan, simply because I took the time to think like an anthropologist, set aside my culture and say its not better or worse its just different.