

The Charter in the Classroom: Students, Teachers and Rights

Topic: *The Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms, Section 1: Limits; and Section 2(b): freedom of thought, belief, opinion, and expression, including freedom of the press and other media communication.*

Case: *Chamberlain v. Surrey District School Board No. 36*, [2002] 4 S.C.R. 710, 2002 SCC 86

Instructional Expectations and Opportunities have been selected by provinces and territories for secondary schools and may be found in **Resources** under **Curriculum Expectations**.

Learning Environment

- Community Circle set up for introductory games and post-game discussion
- Computer Lab access or classroom computers/laptops (Internet access)
- Space for brainstorming and rehearsal or presentation
- Audience / Stage set up for presentations
- Back to community circle for wrap up discussion

Required Resources

- Cultural Differences game Instructions (Appendix 1)
- List of Forms of Expression (Appendix 2)
- List of scenarios (Appendix 3)
- CC: STAR website: <http://www.thecharterrules.ca> Concept 5
- One of three books: *Asha's Two Mums* by Rosamund Elwin and Michele Paulse, *One Dad, Two Dads, Brown Dad, Blue Dads* by Johnny Valentine, *Belinda's Bouquet* by Lesléa Newman;
- Art supplies
- Computers with Internet access

Content and Teaching Strategies of Lesson

Overview/Agenda/Review (two day or three day plan):

1. Cultural Differences Game
2. Post-game discussion – discuss communication
3. Group work: selecting a form of expression and the message to express
4. Presentations
5. Community discussion: “2 cards” discussion
6. Website Exploration
7. Discussion of the limitations of the Freedom of Expression.
8. Group Work – Groups will select a scenario, develop a short skit and rehearse it
9. Discussion (after each skit)

Introduction:

Cultural Differences Game (See Appendix 1 for attached instructions and masters)

- Print out the culture characteristic sheets and distribute them equally to the class.
- Mark each sheet with the corresponding culture colour on the back.

The activities could be spread over three days rather than the suggested two. See below for suggested adaptations.

Day One:

1. To introduce students to the idea of diversity and expression play the **Cultural Differences Game** (Instructions and Discussion Guide attached)
2. **Debrief** after the game. Here students will discuss their personal feelings about their discoveries during the game. It is important that students walk away from this game with an understanding of cultural sensitivity and the variety of ways in which a person can express him or herself.
3. Having explored different forms of cultural expression, the students will break into groups for the main project. Each group will select or draw a **message** to communicate. The class as a whole can brainstorm these messages, or teachers can use the provided messages. Then, student will select a **form of expression** (a list is provided in Appendix 2). The students will express their message using the selected form.
 - Ex: If the group selects “Stay in School” as its message, and “Poetry / Song” as its form of communication, the students must write and perform a poem to the class about the importance of staying in school.
4. **Presentations:** All groups present their work to the rest of the class.
5. **Community Discussion** (Two Cards Chat): The class sits in a circle and each student is given two cards. The teacher facilitates the conversation by posing a question such as: “what did you like about the presentations?” If a student wants to say something he or she puts a card down in the middle of the circle to add a comment or a question. When all the cards are down the discussion is over. This discussion can be done held with two or three smaller groups.

Day Two:

1. **Website Exploration:** Here the students have an opportunity to explore Concept 5 of the CC:STAR website. The main goal of this exploration is to understand the Chamberlain case in terms of Section 2 (b) of the Charter of Rights. In the end they should be able to answer the question: How is section 2 (b) relevant to this case?
2. **Discussion – Children’s Book Analysis:** Briefly, as a class, take a look at 3 pages from one of the three children’s books that were banned by the Surrey School Board. Have a discussion about the reasons Surrey may have decided to ban the books. Whose rights were violated if any? Discuss the book as an example of Freedom of expression.
3. After discussing the book as a form of freedom of expression, it is now the students’ turn to act out different kinds of expression. In small groups have the student select/draw a provided scenario (Appendix 3). They will act out a **skit** based on the scenario they have select – allow for rehearsal time.
4. After each skit, have the audience make a judgement. Was the form of expression depicted in the skit appropriate? Why? Why not?

*This activity can work as either a follow up to learning about section 1 of the Charter, or as an introduction into learning about section 1.

Day 3 Option:

1. The review and discussion of the books could be moved to Day 3 along students working with the Explore activity. This will allow for more time on exploring the banned books from the Chamberlain case.
2. Students could research a book of their choice (either from the Chamberlain case or the books listed in the Explore activity) to determine why it was banned.

Optional Research Question:

Research and define “cognitive dissonance.” What does Chief Justice McLachlin mean? Do you agree with her? Is some level of cognitive dissonance necessary and/or beneficial in the classroom setting?

Appendix 1

Introduction to EXPLORING CULTURAL DIFFERENCES

Through this activity, participants explore their reactions when faced with behaviours and characteristics different from their own. This activity can serve as an icebreaker also.

Activity Overview:

1. Two minutes to review the cultural instructions.

DO NOT TELL others about your specific cultural characteristics.

2. Once everyone is ready, ask all participants to walk around the room and communicate with the members of the other cultures according to the instructions they have been given.

Topic for discussion is your weekend.

Debrief and Wrap-up:

Initiate a discussion with the whole group using lead-in questions:

1. *What did you think about the game?*
2. *How did you feel towards the members of the other cultures?*
3. *Were you frustrated at any time? Why?*
4. *Was there one culture in particular which was easy to communicate with? Was there one that was difficult to communicate with?*
5. *What methods could you have used to allow you to better understand the members of the other cultures?*

To wrap it up, students could consider the following:

- When faced with something we don't know, we often tend to feel **afraid or frustrated** because we feel **misunderstood** within that specific situation.
- Today we were easily frustrated by the behaviour of others.
- We may experience similar situations at school or in our surroundings when we interact with people of different backgrounds than ours.
- How do we challenge ourselves to find ways of communicating with each other that do not include negative reactions, stereotypes and divisions, while recognizing or own needs?

Adapted from:

The Kit - A Manual by Youth to Combat Racism Through Education by The United Nations Association in Canada, can be accessed via <http://www.unac.org/yfar/splash.htm>.

Cultural Instructions

You are a member of the **BLUE** culture.

This paper tells you which culture you belong to. During the game, you must act according to your culture.

Taboo: Never use your left arm or left hand

Salutation: Cross the arms

Attitude towards the Yellow culture: You feel sorry for them and try to defend them.

Make sure you let the other cultures know how you feel!

Cultural Instructions

You are a member of the **BLUE** culture.

This paper tells you which culture you belong to. During the game, you must act according to your culture.

Taboo: Never use your left arm or left hand

Salutation: Cross the arms

Attitude towards the Yellow culture: You feel sorry for them and try to defend them.

Make sure you let the other cultures know how you feel!

Cultural Instructions

You are a member of the **YELLOW** culture.

This paper tells you which culture you belong to. During the game, you must act according to your culture.

Taboo: Never communicate without touching.

Salutation: Gently touch noses

Attitude towards the Green culture: You feel inferior to the Greens

Make sure you let the other cultures know how you feel!

Cultural Instructions

You are a member of the **YELLOW** culture.

This paper tells you which culture you belong to. During the game, you must act according to your culture.

Taboo: Never communicate without touching.

Salutation: Gently touch noses

Attitude towards the Green culture: You feel inferior to the Greens

Make sure you let the other cultures know how you feel!

Cultural Instructions

You are a member of the **GREEN** culture.

This card tells you which culture you belong to. During the game, you must act according to your culture.

Taboo: Never use your left hand or arm

Salutation: Gently touch the other person on the shoulder

Attitude towards the Pink culture: You feel superior to them

Cultural Instructions

You are a member of the **GREEN** culture.

This card tells you which culture you belong to. During the game, you must act according to your culture.

Taboo: Never use your left hand or arm

Salutation: Gently touch the other person on the shoulder

Attitude towards the Pink culture: You feel superior to them

Cultural Instructions

You are a member of the **PINK CULTURE**.

This card tells you which culture you belong to. During the game, you must act according to your culture.

Taboo: Never touch others

Salutation: Double wink

Attitude towards the Orange culture: You think they are funny and strange

Cultural Instructions

You are a member of the **PINK CULTURE**.

This card tells you which culture you belong to. During the game, you must act according to your culture.

Taboo: Never touch others

Salutation: Double wink

Attitude towards the Orange culture: You think they are funny and strange

Cultural Instructions

You are a member of the **ORANGE CULTURE**.

This card tells you which culture you belong to. During the game, you must act according to your culture.

Taboo: You can't look someone in the eyes

Salutation: Shake hands with the right hand only

Attitude towards the Purple culture: You think they are interesting and idolize them

Cultural Instructions

You are a member of the **ORANGE CULTURE**.

This card tells you which culture you belong to. During the game, you must act according to your culture.

Taboo: You can't look someone in the eyes

Salutation: Shake hands with the right hand only

Attitude towards the Purple culture: You think they are interesting and idolize them

Cultural Instructions

You are a member of the **PURPLE CULTURE**.

This card tells you which culture you belong to. During the game, you must act according to your culture.

Taboo: No negativity! You are very appreciative and everything is beautiful to you!

Salutation: Shake hands with the left hand only

Attitude towards the Blue culture: You subtly try to avoid them

Cultural Instructions

You are a member of the **PURPLE CULTURE**.

This card tells you which culture you belong to. During the game, you must act according to your culture.

Taboo: No negativity! You are very appreciative and everything is beautiful to you!

Salutation: Shake hands with the left hand only

Attitude towards the Blue culture: You subtly try to avoid them

Appendix 2

Each group will draw / choose one form of communication and one message to communicate using that selected form.

(Teachers can brainstorm a list with the students; some suggestions are below)

Different Forms of Communication:

- Poetry: Song, Written
- Visual Art: Painting, Sculpture, sketching
- Propaganda: Pamphlets, Posters
- Media: TV, Radio, Newspaper
- Dramatic Arts: Skit / play, dance

Messages to Communicate:

- Stay in school
- Say no to drugs
- Don't try this at home
- Stop, drop and roll
- Don't judge a book by its cover

Appendix 3

Scenarios for Section 2(b) Skits:

1. Someone shouts "Fire!" in a movie theatre, when there is no fire.
2. Swearing in a classroom presentation.
3. A TV show with nudity and scenes of violence.
4. Writing, publishing and distributing racist newsletters.
5. A school board deciding to ban a controversial book.
6. Creating an artistic painting depicting a nude child.
7. A student wears a top that reveals a lot of skin in class.
8. A teacher teaching his student's that the Holocaust did not happen.
9. Several students walk out of class in protest of the teacher's "No Hats" policy.
10. A student discusses sex explicitly as part of a sexual education class.
11. A student writes an article in the school newspaper describing an event that could lead to the suspension, or even the arrest, of another student.
12. A student wears a shirt with a sexist saying on it.
13. Choosing a song with coarse language and violent images for a poem study.
14. A group of students present a video that depicts them smoking marijuana.
15. A student creates a Facebook group to damage the reputation of another student.