



EXPLORING 20TH CENTURY EDUCATION IN NYC
ASIAN AMERICANS' ACADEMIC EXPERIENCES

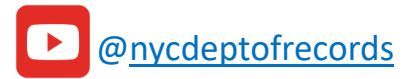
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ABOUT US

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Contributor: Jia Gui

OVERVIEW

This curriculum aid is designed to engage students in the complex interplay of historical, social, and cultural factors that have influenced the educational experiences of Asian American communities in the United States, specifically in New York City, during the 20th century.

Our exploration begins in the 1930s, a time marked by significant social and immigration policy developments. Through the examination of nationality cards used to document the ethnic composition of school populations, students will gain insights into the demographics and representation of Asian American students in NYC schools during this era. Moving forward, we will consider how historical events, immigration patterns, and societal attitudes have contributed to the educational experiences of Asian American students. From the perception of Asians as "successful businessmen" and "outstanding students" to the stereotypes and challenges that such labels entail, students will critically analyze the complexities of identity, assimilation, and cultural adaptation.

Through guided questions and activities, this curriculum aid aims to foster a deeper understanding of the diverse and evolving nature of Asian-American educational experiences. By engaging with primary sources, personal narratives, and critical discussions, students will connect past experiences with present realities, exploring the ongoing journey of Asian-American communities in the U.S. education system.

Working with Primary Sources

Primary sources are first-hand accounts of a topic, from people who had a direct connection to it. Primary sources are key to understanding history. They provide the context, look, feel, and language that transports the researcher to the moment being studied. Primary sources also enable the researcher to witness the opinions, biases, and viewpoints of people directly involved in an event or moment in history.

Nonprint (Photo/Illustration/Film/Video) Primary Sources

While many primary sources are written materials, increasingly, primary sources include photography, illustration, film, or video clips of events or actions that bring to life moments or periods in history.

There are many ways to engage with primary sources, as individuals and small groups. It can be helpful to compare different primary sources. For example, students might think about the commonalities and differences of a print primary source and a nonprint primary source. They can consider how the different mediums enable the author/creator to get their point of view across and what limitations there may be as well. As with any part of study, it is important to understand students' prior knowledge and experiences related to any particular time period or primary source to make sure the material is accessible to all learners.

Teachers are encouraged to select questions from the provided list in each task that are most relevant to their student's grade level and the specific focus of the class content without the obligation to use every question.

STANDARDS

This curriculum aid is designed for 9-12 history and social studies classes supporting the [Hidden Voices: Asian American-Pacific Islander Curriculum](#).

KEY WORDS AND PHRASES

Assimilation

Demographics

Immigration

Integration

Memorandum

Proficiency

Socialization

PRIMARY SOURCES

1. Source 1A and 1B: Nationality Cards/Collection Guides, Board of Education, 1933 Manhattan and 1933 Brooklyn;
2. Source 2: Memorandum, Chancellor's Statement and Charge to the Task Force on Asian-American Concerns, April 27, 1989;
3. Source 3A and 3B: REC0037, Chinese, Career Education 1991-1992, File Box 1343 20 folders 428 1343, 330 1343; and
4. Source 4: New York Hotline: Episode #131: Immigrants, Tape 2, REC0047_2_150_2028.mp4.

PRIMARY SOURCE 1A

<u>NORTHEASTERN EUROPE</u>	
Esthonia, Latvia, Lithuania	17
Finland	1
Poland	52
Russia	59
<u>SOUTHWESTERN EUROPE</u>	
Italy	1218
Portugal	5
Other Countries	Arabia 1
Armenia	3
Australia	2
Syria	44
China	1
Turkey	1
Jugoslavia	1
Philippine Isl.	6
Denmark	4
Greece	21
Palastine	3
Roumania	1
Percentage of Negroes in your school	9%

1933 Manhattan Nationality Card

PRIMARY SOURCE 1B

<u>NORTHEASTERN EUROPE</u>	
Esthonia, Latvia, Lithuania	0
Finland	0
Poland	18
Russia	26
<u>SOUTHWESTERN EUROPE</u>	
Italy	351
Portugal	1
Other Countries	Armenia 124
Australia	501
China	5
Greece	65
India	1
Japan	1
Mexico	2
Turkey	82
Percentage of Negroes in your school	One negro child
	13 Porto Rican children

1933 Brooklyn Nationality Card

PRIMARY SOURCE 1 QUESTIONS

1. What do these nationality cards tell us about the population of Asian American students in New York City schools in 1933?
2. Considering the numbers presented, what can we infer about the representation of Asian American students in the education system at that time?
3. What historical events might have influenced the number of Asian American students in New York City schools during the 1930s?
4. How did the experiences of Asian American students in the 1930s differ from the experiences of students from other racial or ethnic backgrounds?

BOARD OF EDUCATION OF THE CITY OF NEW YORK
110 LIVINGSTON STREET, BROOKLYN, NEW YORK 11201
OFFICE OF THE CHANCELLOR

Make more personal
Reads like a position paper
Audience = Task Force members
1st person

MEMORANDUM

April 27, 1989

TO: Richard R. Green
FROM: William Ling
SUBJECT: Chancellor's Statement and Charge to the Task Force on Asian-American Concerns

I have taken the initiative to prepare a statement on your behalf, to the Asian-American Task Force, outlining your charge to the group and your expectations. Please review and make any changes you see fit.

According to the recent report "The Growing Asian Presence in the Tri-State Region", New York City is the home to 306,000 Asian-Americans, making it the largest Asian community in the tri-state area. The public at large is very much aware of the dynamic growth and overall success of the Asian-American community. Asians are perceived as not only successful businessmen but also outstanding students in our public schools. On the surface, the Asian community appears to be extraordinarily successful and devoid of any problems that afflict other communities.

start

Since becoming Chancellor I have become aware that this may not be the entire picture. With increasing frequency we are seeing Asian-American youth confronting the same type of problems faced by other immigrant groups. The problem of language, adjusting to a new culture, lack of parental supervision, poor social and medical care, poor housing, racism, delinquency and frustration in school. The 13% drop out rate among Asian students is a shock and must raise considerable consternation in Asian-American communities. Asian-Americans come from disparate backgrounds, from highly educated professionals to unschooled laborers and tradesmen, they come as immigrants or as refugees. Many have also come as illegal aliens. All these factors have an impact on education.

visited many schools in our school system and have noticed that a significant population of Asian students many of whom are students in need. Many who need services, etc.

Page 1 of memorandum from William Ling to Chancellor Green regarding the Task Force on Asian-American Concerns.

Richard R. Green
Page 2
April 27, 1989

For these reasons I have established the Task Force on Asian-American Concerns to help me and all who are responsible for the education of our children, to better understand the issues that affect our Asian students.

The Charge to the Task Force is threefold:

To identify the major concerns in the Asian-American communities with regard to the educational programs we provide.

To offer a new insight on the ~~social and academic problems~~ ^{issues} faced by Asian-American youngsters.

To make recommendations on how to correct these ~~problems~~ ^{issues} and suggest avenues for continued progress.

Ms. Shirley Wang has been retained to serve as the ~~task force~~ ^{complete (full) facilitator} coordinator and staff writer for this project. Please be assured that you have the support of my office and all the resources available at the Board of Education to help you complete your task successfully.

It is my hope that the Task Force will complete its deliberations in June so that we may present the recommendations to the Board of Education before the end of the current school year. Thank you for your commitment and involvement in this ~~important~~ ^{critical} project.

WL:snj
cc: Carol S. Gibson

To facilitate the work of the T.F. I have referred

In addition to Ms. Wang closely working with you on the day to day operations of the T.F.;

I have assigned Row of BL as 94-officio members to serve as a standing resource to the T.F. Finally

Page 2 of memorandum from William Ling to Chancellor Green regarding the Task Force on Asian-American Concerns

PRIMARY SOURCES 2A & 2B QUESTIONS

1. What historical events or social conditions in the late 20th century might have contributed to the challenges faced by Asian-American students in New York City?
2. The memorandum mentions that Asians are perceived as "successful businessmen" and "outstanding students." How might such stereotypes, even if seemingly positive, contribute to pressures or challenges for Asian-American students?
3. The text mentions Asian-Americans coming from "disparate backgrounds." How might the experiences of Asian-American students vary depending on their family's country of origin, socio-economic status, or immigration status?
4. What specific challenges are mentioned in the memorandum that Asian-American students face in the public school system?
5. Based on the memorandum, what types of programs or initiatives could be proposed to support Asian-American students in overcoming these challenges?
6. What current issues or challenges do you think Asian-American students might still face in the educational system today?
7. How can learning about the experiences of Asian-American students in the past help inform more inclusive and supportive educational practices today?

Office of Research, Evaluation, and Assessment
New York City Public Schools

E.S.E.A. Title VII Evaluation Profile
**Chinese, Career Education, and Computer Education
(Project Three Cs)**

Community School District 2, Manhattan
Grant Number: G008710390
1991-92

EXTRACT

PROJECT DIRECTORS: Ms. Eugenia Chang and Mr. Phillip Ficke

FUNDING CYCLE: Year 5 of 5

SITE

<u>School</u>	<u>Grade Levels</u>	<u>Enrollment*</u>
I.S. 131	7-9	285

*The project enrolled 285 students (39 more than in the previous year). Male students numbered 150, female 133. (Gender for two students was not stated.)

STUDENT BACKGROUND

<u>Native Language</u>	<u>Number of Students</u>	<u>Countries of Origin</u>	<u>Number of Students</u>
Chinese	279	China, People's Republic	242
Cantonese	124	Hong Kong	27
Mandarin	36	Malaya	5
Other	119	Taiwan	3
Spanish	5	United States	2
Unreported	1	Other	5
		Unreported	1

Median Years of Education in Native Country: 5.0; in the United States: 2.0

Percentage of Students Eligible for Free Lunch Program: 99.3

ADMISSION CRITERIA

Project Three Cs admitted students who had scored at or below the 40th percentile on the Language Assessment Battery (LAB) and were thus classified as of limited English proficiency (LEP).

"Career Education and Computer Education Project" report (page 1), which reveals insightful details about the initiatives taken to support Chinese immigrant students who were Limited English Proficient (LEP).

PROGRAMMING

Design Features

Project Three Cs was designed to meet the needs of recent Chinese immigrants who were LEP. The program was designed to provide computer-assisted instruction (C.A.I.) to students in seventh through ninth grade in English as a Second Language (E.S.L.), content areas, and career development classes. The project trained staff in computer techniques to use in the classroom and provided individualized instruction to students and staff, if requested. Parents visited the computer laboratory throughout the year to observe their child's progress as well as to use the computers themselves.

Capacity building. This was Project Three Cs last year of Title VII funding. Pupils with Compensatory Educational Needs (P.C.E.N.) will fund resource teachers in the future.

Strengths and Limitations

Project Three Cs carried out those activities it had proposed in its design. The computer mastery center was fully operative. C.A.I. was incorporated into all subject areas. Valuable job skills were also incorporated into the curriculum. The project directors reported that the staff development component of the project was exceptional and that as a result of the training offered by the project, staff became computer-literate.

One limitation noted by the project directors was that the project could not serve all of the students who wanted to participate.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The project met all of its objectives--E.S.L., content areas, career education, student management system, self-concept, attitudes toward education, and parental involvement.

The conclusions, based on the findings of this evaluation, lead to the following recommendation:

- Disseminate information outlining the successful practices undertaken in this project to interested schools and districts.

"Career Education and Computer Education Project" report (page 2), which reveals insightful details about the initiatives taken to support Chinese immigrant students who were Limited English Proficient (LEP).

PRIMARY SOURCE 3A & 3B QUESTIONS

1. Why was there a need for a specialized program like Project Three Cs for Asian-American students, specifically recent Chinese immigrants?
2. How does the report define "Limited English Proficient (LEP)" and why is this designation significant for understanding the students' educational needs?
3. How might computer-assisted instruction (CAI) have been particularly beneficial for LEP students in the 1990s?
4. In what ways did Project Three Cs attempt to involve the community and families in the students' education?
5. What potential effects could this program have had on the self-perception, educational attitudes, and level of parental engagement among Asian American students?
6. Reflect on the admission criteria for Project Three Cs. How do you think scoring at or below the 40th percentile on the Language Assessment Battery might have influenced a student's academic journey?
7. What strengths and limitations of Project Three Cs can you identify, and how might these have affected the outcomes for the students?

PRIMARY SOURCE 4

This activity will take you on a journey to understand the complexities of the Asian-American educational experience during the late 20th century. We'll be focusing on a personal narrative that sheds light on the challenges and opportunities faced by Asian American students, particularly those who, like many of their peers, came to the United States with their families in search of better educational opportunities.

You will watch an interview with Melanie, a high school student from South Korea who moved to New York City with her family in 1990. In this interview, Melanie shares her experiences adjusting to a new education system, culture, and language, as well as the impact of these changes on her and her family.

As you watch the interview, pay close attention to Melanie's reflections on her educational journey, her social experiences, and the cultural differences she navigates between her life in Korea and her new life in the U.S.

After watching the interview, you will engage in a critical discussion using a set of guided questions. These questions are designed to help you delve deeper into Melanie's story and connect it to broader themes of immigration, cultural adaptation, and the Asian American experience in U.S. schools.

Watch from 13:08-18:15 of [this video](#).

PRIMARY SOURCE 4 QUESTIONS

1. How does Melanie's explanation of her family's reason for moving to the United States reflect broader trends in immigration and education during the late 20th century?
2. Discuss the emotional challenges Melanie and her family faced upon moving to the U.S. How might these challenges be reflective of the broader Asian-American experience during this period?
3. Melanie mentions the difficulty of making friends and integrating into a new culture. How does this reflect the challenges of assimilation for immigrant students?
4. Analyze the differences in social activities and parental expectations between Melanie's experiences in Korea and the U.S. What do these differences reveal about cultural attitudes towards education and socialization?
5. Melanie notes differences in gender roles and expectations between Korea and the U.S. How do these observations help us understand the challenges of cultural adaptation for immigrant families?

CONCLUSION

In this curriculum aid, you have seen a sample of the Asian-American student experience from 1930 to 1990. Over the decades, departmental policy has evolved from simply noting student demographics to developing programs to assist Asian-American students with adjusting to American culture, including language lessons and the New York City education system. You have also heard from Melanie, a Korean immigrant, who shared her experience adapting to student life in New York City. With this history in mind, consider how the Asian-American student experience has changed (or has not) in the 21st century.

CULMINATING ACTIVITIES

Group Presentation: The Evolution of Asian-American Educational Experiences

Divide the class into small groups, assigning each a specific time period or theme from the curriculum aid (e.g., 1930s demographics, 1980s challenges, Project Three Cs, and Melanie's narrative). Each group will research further, using both the provided sources and additional research, to create a presentation on how their assigned aspect contributes to the overall narrative of Asian American educational experiences in New York City. Presentations could include visual aids, key facts, and critical analyses. This activity allows students to delve deeper into a specific aspect while contributing to the class's collective understanding.