

First Person Plural

by Deann Borshay Liem

National PBS Broadcast on P.O.V. on Monday, Dec. 18, 2000 at 10pm ET

Companion Lesson Plan: From One Family to Another

Background

Frequently, students have difficulty relating military and political facts and figures with real people and real events in history. Examining the life of one Korean American woman through a documentary lens will assist students in relating Cold War events and economic conditions with the lives and families of everyday Koreans and Americans. Students will discuss how larger world issues affect the personal lives of individual people.

Lesson Objectives

1. Students will be able to explain the concept of “adoptive family” and give examples of other different kinds of families in the world today.
2. Students will be able to identify political, social, and economic factors that affect international adoption.
3. Students will assess the effects of these factors on Deann Borshay Liem’s personal and family life as a young child in post- Korean War Korea.

Related Standards List

Language Arts Standards

Writing #1 Demonstrates competence in the general skills and strategies of the writing process

World History

#43 (Level 2-2 and 4) Understands how post-World War II reconstruction occurred, new international power relations took shape, and colonial empires broke up.

Geography

#13 Understands the forces of cooperation and conflict that shape the divisions of Earth's surface

Human Systems

#9 Understands the nature, distribution and migration of human populations on Earth’s surface (Level 4: knows how international migrations are shaped by push and pull factors (e.g., political conditions, economic incentives, religious values, family ties).

Time

2 50 min class periods or 1 block class



Students

Grades 10-12

Materials

Class set or 1 for each group of the *Overview of International Adoption* (<http://www.pbs.org/pov/firstpersonplural/historical/intadoptions.html>) and *Adoptions from South Korea* (<http://www.pbs.org/pov/firstpersonplural/historical/skadoptions.html>) from the website link

Class set of worksheet, **Factors Affecting International Adoption**

Scraps of paper to jot thoughts on

Procedure

1. Ask students to think about the meaning of the word “family”. Elicit responses from students about what they think the word “family” means. If appropriate, ask one student to find a dictionary definition and share it with the class.
2. Explain that there are many different types of families and they are made in different ways. Elicit examples and publish: (Vocabulary: nuclear family, single-parent family [male or female headed], blended family [two parents with children from former relationships], step-families, extended families, biracial families, and, of course, *adoptive families*).
3. Ask the whole group of students to think about the word “adoption” for about 20 seconds. Ask them what thoughts came to mind. Record simultaneously on the board or overhead.
4. Explain that there are many ways that families are created and that **adoption** is one of these ways. They are going to be learning about international adoptions –which happen when a person from one country adopts a child from another. Also, introduce the word “transracial” here if appropriate.
5. Pass out the worksheet, **Factors Affecting International Adoption**. Ask students to read out loud one by one, or silently. Make sure they understand that the left side is for the **Adoptive Family** (*family or person who is doing the adopting*), and that the right side is for the **Birth Family** (*person/family whose child is being adopted*.)
6. Group students (4-6 per group), and have them read the overview of the History of International Adoptions, and fill out their charts. Teachers may want to assign a certain part of the chart to a specific group. For example, one group may read the History for political factors, and the next group for economic factors, etc.
7. Have students share responses or write in columns on blackboard or overhead.
8. Explain to students that the documentary, **FIRST PERSON PLURAL** shows us how these political, economic, and social forces in the country of Korea affected the life of Deann Borshay Liem.
9. With a classroom map or individually with maps in their textbooks, ask students to find Asia, North and South Korea, neighboring countries, and the DMZ. Ask if any student has been to Korea, lived in Korea, or has any friends or relatives from Korea. Invite sharing.
10. View film segment.
11. Pair students. Ask students to explain to each other what was going on in Korea immediately before Deann was adopted. Then share with whole class.
12. Assign short essay for this prompt: **“What political, economic, and social factors affected Deann Borshay Liem’s life, and how did they affect her and her family?”**

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(What led her Korean family to relinquish her for adoption, and what factors led the Borshay's to adopt her)? Teacher may decide to let students use their worksheets, depending on their abilities.

Video Segments

Teachers will find the second half of the film useful for this lesson (25-30 min.)

Assessments

1. Students hand in their essays for a grade based on a predetermined rubric.
2. Students choose one of the following and present it to the class:
 - a. Write a short speech pretending they are a member of Borshay family and **explain to Deann's Korean family why you adopted Deann.**
 - b. Write a short speech pretending they are a member of Deann's Korean family and **explain to the Borshay family why you relinquished Deann for adoption.**

Extension

1. Ask students to choose a country that has experienced large scale adoption (China, Guatemala, Romania) of its children as discussed in the *History of International Adoptions* or *History of Adoptions from South Korea* and be able to tell the class about the political, economic, and social factors currently affecting the situation in that country now or in the past. Students could also do graphic illustrations of the situation in the country.
2. There are several sociological ideas which apply to Deann's story. Are they unique to her experience alone? Ask students to prepare a demonstration, a poem, a speech, a skit, a story, a rap or song, a photograph, a music video, a newspaper article, or a poster than illustrates how they have experienced one of the following concepts in their own life:

- **Adaptation:** "To fit different conditions, or to conform."
- **Assimilation:** "To absorb into a cultural tradition."
- **Acculturation:** "Cultural modification by borrowing and adapting traits from another culture."
- **Cultural diffusion:** "To spread a culture widely," or "to move from a region of high cultural concentration to a region of low cultural concentration."
- **Dissonance:** "A lack of agreement, or a lack of harmony."

Resources

Cummings, Bruce. Korea's Place in the Sun. W.W. Norton & Co: 1998.

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Factors Affecting International Adoption

Reasons why a person/family would want to adopt....
Reasons why there would be a greater demand for babies.....

Political

Social

Economic

Reasons why a person/family might put their child up for adoption...
Reasons why more and more people/families would do this in greater numbers...

Political

Social

Economic