

2026



LATINIDAD

in Schools

CURRICULUM RESOURCE GUIDES

CENTERING
AFRO-LATINIDAD
IN NEW YORK CITY



Edmund W. Gordon Institute
for Advanced Study
Teachers College, Columbia University

THE LATINIDAD CURRICULUM INITIATIVE, EDMUND W. GORDON INSTITUTE FOR ADVANCED STUDY



The Latinidad Curriculum Initiative (LCI) for New York City Public Schools is based at the Edmund W. Gordon Institute for Advanced Study at Teachers College, Columbia University and has been made possible by a generous grant from the New York City Council and in partnership with the United Way of New York City and the Hispanic Federation. Together, our overarching goal is to provide the opportunity for teachers, students, and communities served by New York City Public Schools to explore, celebrate, and expand their study of Latinidad across academic content areas and throughout grades K–12.

Team

Dr. Limarys Caraballo

Associate Professor
Teachers College, Columbia University

Dr. Regina Cortina

Professor
Teachers College, Columbia University

Dr. Ezekiel Dixon-Román

Professor and Director
Edmund W. Gordon Institute for Advanced Study
Teachers College, Columbia University

Dr. Amanda Earl

Visiting Assistant Professor of Teaching
Teachers College, Columbia University

Paola Heincke

Head of Operations and Strategic Initiatives
Edmund W. Gordon Institute for Advanced Study
Teachers College, Columbia University

Stephanie Latchman

Project Coordinator
Teachers College, Columbia University

Dr. Alicia Chatterjee

Postdoctoral Research Fellow
Teachers College, Columbia University

Dr. Nicole Sansone Ruiz

Senior Research Associate
Teachers College, Columbia University

Dr. Rachel Talbert

Assistant Research Professor
Teachers College, Columbia University

Jonathan Beltrán Alvarado**Katie Caster****Carolina Gomez****Sara Pan Algarra****Fabiola Quiñones****Sophia Vazquez****Shari Wejsa-Stewart**

Doctoral Research Assistants
Teachers College, Columbia University

Kendal Peterman

Graduate Research Assistant
Teachers College, Columbia University

TO LEARN MORE ABOUT THE LATINIDAD CURRICULUM INITIATIVE AND ITS RELEVANCE,
TAKE A LOOK AT OUR STRATEGIC REPORT “THE NEED TO ADVANCE THE STUDY OF
LATINIDAD IN NEW YORK CITY PUBLIC SCHOOLS” AND OUR CURRICULAR BLUEPRINT ON
OUR WEBSITE: <https://www.tc.columbia.edu/latinidadnycschools/>

ABOUT THE LCI CURRICULUM RESOURCE GUIDES



The Latinidad Curriculum Initiative (LCI) for New York City Public Schools aims to enhance the quality of education by providing a dynamic, interdisciplinary curricular framework and lesson plans that celebrate Latinidad and its connection to the histories, accomplishments, and cultures of our City and nation. The resources provided through this initiative seek to help teachers recognize who their students are and to enable the study, active reflection upon, and celebration of the histories, cultures, and intellectual contributions of Latinas and Latinos, thus providing a more comprehensive understanding of the dynamics of the city we live in and the places we call home. A curriculum that enables the study of Latinidades and their multiple and ever-evolving forms is meant to enhance school experiences by providing children and youth of all backgrounds opportunities to celebrate where we come from, what we have achieved, and what we desire for our families, communities, city, country, and world in the future.

As part of our curriculum development, in the second year of our initiative we hosted a series of Knowledge Building and Curriculum Writing Workshops during the 2025–2026 school year. The knowledge building workshops invited scholars and topical experts to engage with New York City Public Schools educators and administrators around the concept of Latinidad. We held four of these workshops at Teachers College, Columbia University:

- **Centering Afro-Latinidad in New York City**, on October 9, 2025
- **Narratives of Latinidad in New York City**, on November 4, 2025
- **Sounds of Latinidad: Integrating Music and Arts Education into the K–12 Curriculum**, on January 13, 2026
- **Lessons for the Study and Celebration of Latinidad**, on March 12, 2026

During knowledge building sessions, educators discussed the dynamic and multidimensional aspects of Latinidad; reflected personally and professionally on their connection(s) to this concept; and brainstormed in conversation with workshop facilitators and each other around how to incorporate lessons and resources about Latinidad into their teaching practice. As an outcome of these workshops, the LCI has created an ongoing series of **Curriculum Resource Guides**, published on our website (tc.columbia.edu/latinidadnycschools/) and designed for New York City educators, that is meant to complement the lesson plans we are developing for New York City Public Schools. The first five guides, described below, highlight content from our knowledge building workshops. These Curriculum Resource Guides thus represent a collaborative effort and body of knowledge and, while not exhaustive, include valuable and reliable resources—including scholarly and fictional texts; primary source documents; music, film, and audiovisual content; and historical and conceptual contexts—that teachers aiming to address the overlooked histories, knowledges, and contributions of the various communities that make up Latinidad in K–12 classrooms will benefit from using. They address just a few of the many important topics, regions, and heritage and national identities of Latinidad in New York City; our aim is to publish more as our curriculum develops. Our first five guides cover the following topics:

- **Centering Afro-Latinidad in New York City:** This guide, authored by Yosef Medina and utilizing work done by the [afrolatin@](#) forum, offers a brief historical and conceptual background for understanding the importance of New York City as a main locus of Afro-Latinidad—including for intellectual, political, and artistic life and culture—in North America since colonial times. It also provides summaries of the interdisciplinary lesson plans within our larger curriculum prepared by Medina and his colleagues at the [afrolatin@](#) forum that specifically address Afro-Latinidad, or the experience of descendancy from both the African as well as Latin American and Caribbean diasporas.



- **Teaching Dominican Histories:** Authored by Alexa Rodríguez, this guide provides lists of materials organized by school level—children’s books, novels, scholarly books, academic articles, city excursions, music, videos, documentaries, and websites—that could be used in the classroom or at home to teach about the history and ongoing contributions of Dominicans in New York City.
- **Latinidad in Sounds:** Integrating Music and Arts Education into the K–12 Curriculum, Priscila Santana wrote this resource for those interested in using a music-centered lens and applying sound as a medium for mapping histories, forging connections, and (re)collecting memories to enrich students’ engagement with the diverse cultural ecosystems of New York City. It includes specific recommendations of genres, songs, and artists to explore.
- **Narratives of Latinidad in New York City:** Eddie Rivero, a scholar of bilingual education, curated this guide which consists of a reading list, organized by grade level, of texts that can inform culturally responsive-sustaining teaching across K–12 settings.
- **Superheroes of Latinidad:** This guide, inspired by ideas generated during the knowledge building workshops and members of the Latinidad Curriculum Initiative team, offers a set of matching flashcards to introduce students to key Latina/o figures that have made important social, political, and educational contributions in NYC. It can be used as an icebreaker or small group activity in classrooms.

We would like to thank the experts who facilitated these workshops and authored the Curriculum Resource Guides, the educators who participated in these workshops and made suggestions for resources, and the New York City Council for providing funding to make these possible.

— **LATINIDAD CURRICULUM INITIATIVE AT TEACHERS COLLEGE, COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY**



Five Boro Story Project. (2021). Micailhuitl: Día de Muertos on 34th Ave.

CENTERING AFRO-LATINIDAD IN NEW YORK CITY



About the Authors and Contributors

Within the Latinidad Curriculum Initiative lesson plans, a subset of lessons were designed to specifically address Afro-Latinidad. This portion of the curriculum was developed by the [afrolatin@](#) forum under the direction of Guesnerth Josué Perea and Yosef Miguel Medina.

Guesnerth Josué Perea serves as the Executive Director of the [afrolatin@](#) forum, Director of Black Lives and Contemplation for the Center for Spiritual Imagination, Associate Pastor at Metro Hope Church, Co-Curator of the AfroLatine Theology Project, and as Executive Producer of the documentary *Faith in Blackness*. In 2025 he was selected as an Atlantic Fellow for Racial Equity where his project looks at movement organizing and coalition building. His perspectives on Afro-Latinidad & Spirituality have been part of various publications including *The New York Times*, *The New Yorker*, and *Sojourners*. His writings are a part of *Let Spirit Speak! Cultural Journeys through the African Diaspora*, the *Revista de Estudios Colombianos*, *The Los Angeles Review of Books*, and *Engaging Religion*, among others.

Yosef Miguel Medina serves as the Director of Strategic Initiatives at the Virginia Foundation for the Humanities and Public Policy at the University of Virginia. In his role, he leads the development and implementation of statewide programs that broaden access to the humanities and strengthen partnerships across the Commonwealth. He directs the HBCU Scholars Fellowship, the Cultural Resources Task Force, and facilitates engagement with the Regional Humanities Centers, advancing initiatives that support academic and community engaged scholarship and preserve cultural heritage. Yosef has also worked with youth and families in the K–12 public school and juvenile justice systems as an education and re-entry program specialist in Harlem, NY. He served as the Chair of the Education and Career Training Committee for the Governor’s Latino Advisory Board in Virginia from 2021–2024, and has been an active member of the [afrolatin@](#) forum since 2011.

Founded in 2007 by Miriam Jiménez Román and Juan Flores, the [afrolatin@](#) forum is a Brooklyn-based nonprofit that centers Blackness within Latinidad. As a research and resource center, the forum focuses on Latin@s of African descent in the United States to provide a bridge that expands our understanding of the African Diaspora. The forum supports the struggle for racial and social justice through dialogue and action by engaging communities, forging coalitions, creating accessible educational materials, and organizing public events.

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THE IMPORTANCE OF AFRO-LATINIDAD IN NEW YORK CITY

Afro-Latinidad refers to the histories, cultures, and lived experiences of people of Latin American and Caribbean descent who also have African ancestry. In New York City, this identity is not peripheral—it is part of the fabric of the City and its schools. Many students in New York City Public Schools (NYCPS) navigate identities that reflect both African diasporic and Latin American heritages, yet these experiences have often been underrepresented within or separated from traditional curricula. As a result, students are frequently asked to understand themselves through categories that do not fully reflect their lived realities. This resource guide and its accompanying lessons respond to that gap by offering educators a framework and content to more accurately and meaningfully represent the diversity of their classrooms. After an explanation of the need to teach Afro-Latinidad in NYCPS classrooms and an introduction of key terms, this guide describes lessons that explore this topic within the Latinidad Curriculum Initiative for PK–12 classrooms, highlighting useful background for teachers planning to implement them with their students.

TEACHING ON AFRO-LATINIDAD IN NYCPS

The marginalization of Afro-Latin histories is rooted in longstanding limitations in how race and ethnicity have been taught and understood in the United States. Afro-descendant communities from Latin America and the Caribbean have often been excluded from both Latin American studies, due in part to anti-Blackness, and from Black Studies, which has historically focused more narrowly on Anglophone contexts (Rivera-Rideau et al., 2016). This has contributed to a persistent absence of Afro-Latine perspectives in PK–12 education, even in cities like New York where these communities are highly visible and deeply influential. At the same time, Afro-Latine histories have always been present—sustained through intellectual traditions, community knowledge, cultural production, and grassroots education efforts that extend beyond formal schooling (Jiménez Román & Flores, 2010).

In New York City, the importance of addressing this gap is particularly clear. Latine students make up over 40 percent of the public school population, with Black/African American students comprising the second largest population at 20 percent. Many of these young people identify across these categories, yet curricula have often reinforced a divide between them. These lessons instead position Afro-Latinidad as a space of connection, helping students understand the shared histories and overlapping experiences that link Black and Latine communities. This approach aligns with the broader goals of culturally responsive-sustaining education in New York State, which calls for instructional practices that affirm students’ identities while expanding their critical understanding of society (New York State Education Department, n.d.).

Building on the foundational work of the *afrolatin@* forum and the scholarship of Miriam Jiménez Román and Juan Flores, the lessons described below within the Latinidad Curriculum Initiative for NYCPS bring the insights of their seminal work, *The Afro-Latin@ Reader: History and Culture in the United States* (Duke University Press, 2010), into PK–12 classrooms. Their work challenges dominant narratives that render Afro-Latines invisible and emphasizes the importance of recognizing the complexity of identities that exist across racial, cultural, and national lines. These lessons make these histories accessible to younger learners, ensuring that students encounter Afro-Latinidad not as an abstract concept, but as a lived and ongoing presence in their communities.



Importantly, this work is also connected to and informed by the pioneering efforts of the New York City Department of Education's *Hidden Voices* curricular resources (available on the *WeTeachNYC* website), which seek to surface narratives, individuals, and movements that have been historically excluded from mainstream accounts of the City's past. Through this effort, educators and scholars have collaborated to expand the scope of what is taught in classrooms, demonstrating that inclusive histories can be meaningfully integrated into existing standards and curricula. Scholars such as Michael A. Gomez and Vanessa K. Valdés, among others, have contributed significantly to this broader intellectual and curricular movement, which foregrounds Afro-diasporic histories and identities within New York City. Regarding PK–12 curriculum development, Michael A. Gomez, director of the Center for the Study of Africa and the African Diaspora (CSAAD) at New York University, was the lead scholar of the groundbreaking *Hidden Voices: Stories of the Global African Diaspora*. Vanessa K. Valdés has written a set of historical essays as part of a curriculum guide on the life of Afro-Puerto Rican scholar Arturo A. Schomburg. The guide is designed to help students in middle and high school learn how to use primary sources to gain a deeper understanding of Black history, experience, and culture, and is available on the *WeTeachNYC* website. Their scholarship and public-facing work have helped establish both the academic foundation and the pedagogical urgency for centering Afro-Latinidad in PK–12 education.



Hispanic Federation. (2026).



KEY TERMS FOR TEACHING ON AFRO-LATINIDAD

The following definitions were compiled by the afrolatin@ forum in a document entitled *Understanding AfroLatinidad: Identity, Visibility and Action*. They can serve as an entry point for educators and students who will explore Afro-Latinidad throughout this curriculum. For in-depth background, explanations, and related resources, please visit the forum's website and their "Pensamientos Blog."

- **Latina/o/x/e/@:** A person who is from or whose cultural origins are in countries associated with Spanish and Portuguese colonialism. "Latino/a/e/x/@" tends to connote Spanish-language speakers but can also include Portuguese- (Brazilian) and Kreyòl- (Haitian) speakers, as well as English speakers.
- **Person of African Descent:** People of African Descent may be defined as descendants of the African victims of the Trans-Atlantic and Mediterranean Sea slave trade. The group includes those of the sub-Sahara slave trade. Descendants of the victims of the Trans-Atlantic trade live primarily in the Diaspora of North, Central, and South America and the Caribbean. However, for the definition to be complete, it must also include Africans and their descendants who, after their countries' independence, emigrated to or went to work in Europe, Canada, and the Middle East where they also experienced racial discrimination suffered by those who live in Western European countries (Kasanda, 2003).
- **Afro-Latino/a/e/x/@:** People of African descent in Mexico, Central, and South America, and the Spanish-speaking Caribbean, and by extension those of African descent in the United States whose origins are in Latin America and the Caribbean.

Why use the term Afro-Latino/a/e/x/@?

In the United States the term "Afro-Latin@" has surfaced as a way to signal racial, cultural, and socioeconomic contradictions within the overly vague idea of "Latin@." In addition to reinforcing ever-active transnational ties between people of African descent and Latin@s, the Afro-Latin@ concept calls attention to the anti-Black racism within the Latin@ communities themselves (Jiménez Román & Flores, 2010).

Triple-Consciousness

Afro-Latin@ is at the personal level a unique and distinctive experience and identity, ranging as it does among and between Latin@, Black, and US American dimensions of lived social reality. In their quest for a full and appropriate sense of social identity, Afro-Latin@s are thus typically pulled in three directions at once, and share a complex, multi-dimensional optic on contemporary society. This three-pronged web of affiliations, taking a cue from W.E.B. Dubois, has been termed "triple-consciousness" (Flores & Jiménez Román, 2009).



LESSONS RELATED TO AFRO-LATINIDAD WITHIN THE LATINIDAD CURRICULUM INITIATIVE

The lessons discussed here are organized to help students trace Afro-Latin histories in New York City across time, highlighting key moments, figures, and movements that have shaped the City. Beginning with the story of Juan Rodríguez—a free Black man of Dominican descent who arrived in the area in 1613 and is widely recognized as the first non-Indigenous settler of what would become New York City—students are introduced to a narrative that challenges conventional understandings of the City’s origins. From there, the curriculum explores the development of Afro-Latin communities through the migration of Afro-Cuban and Puerto Rican cigar factory workers in the nineteenth century, whose intellectual and political engagement helped establish early community networks and cultural institutions.

As the lessons progress, teachers can choose from lessons that help students examine the role of Afro-Latine individuals and communities in shaping major cultural and political movements. This includes their contributions to the Harlem Renaissance, their presence in the Negro Leagues, and their involvement in labor organizing and Caribbean independence efforts. These lessons also enable students to engage with the work of activists and organizations such as the Young Lords, whose efforts in New York City demonstrated the power of solidarity between Black and Puerto Rican communities in advancing social justice. By situating these histories within broader narratives of US and global history, these lessons, informed by the broader LCI framework, will help students see Afro-Latinidad as integral to understanding the historical development of the City and the nation.

The following lessons also emphasize the continued relevance of Afro-Latinidad in contemporary New York City. Through discussions of migration, identity, representation, and neighborhood change, students are encouraged to connect historical themes to present-day issues. This approach allows them to better understand the social and cultural dynamics of the city they live in, while also developing the critical thinking skills necessary to engage with complex questions about race, identity, and belonging. The section below provides a preview of each lesson, including the relevant content areas and a brief description of the lesson topics and learning objectives. The lessons are designed to be integrated into units of study modularly, although they could also be taught in progression as a unit if classroom time and space allow. They are suggested for upper middle school or early high school years, though they could be adapted for other grade levels.



1. Juan ‘Jan’ Rodriguez: New York’s First Immigrant

Content Areas: Social Studies, ELA

In 2012, Mayor Michael Bloomberg signed legislation to add a co-name to three miles of Broadway from 159th Street in Washington Heights to 218th Street in Inwood: Juan Rodriguez Way. It was a small step to honor the life and legacy of Juan Rodriguez and memorialize his place in the history of what is now New York City. In the Spring of 1613, Juan Rodriguez, a free, Black man from La Española (the island in the Caribbean colonized by the Spanish), arrived in the Hudson Harbor on a Dutch merchant ship. When the captain of the ship prepared to return to the Netherlands, Rodriguez decided to stay behind, becoming the first non-Indigenous person to settle in New York. This two-part lesson tells this little-known history, helping students to build on and challenge their prior knowledge of the history of immigration to the US. Students will seek to answer questions about the origins of Black history in New York and consider whether the first immigrant to arrive in New York was someone of African descent.

On Day 1, students will read about Juan Rodriguez and participate in a Conver-Stations activity to answer questions about his first encounter with Manhattan. On Day 2, students will read a newspaper article about his life and legacy and write their own newspaper article, presenting the history of Juan Rodriguez in a creative way. By investigating and demonstrating their knowledge in writing, students will answer the essential question of this lesson: *Who was Juan Rodriguez, and what is his contribution to the history of immigration to New York City?*

2. Lesson Series: Cigar Factory Floor to Freedom: Afro-Caribbean Workers and Political Activism in New York City

Content Areas: Social Studies, ELA

This lesson series focuses on the development of the first Afro-Latin@ communities in late nineteenth-century New York City. Shortly after the abolition of slavery in their respective countries, many Afro-Cubans and Afro-Puerto Ricans migrated to New York to fill the labor demands of the booming cigar industry. Due to the *lectura* tradition—the tradition of reading texts aloud in the factory as workers labored—in Hispanic-owned cigar factories, these places of work quickly became key sites of consciousness-raising and revolutionary thought that led to community organizing and participation in radical politics that supported Cuban and Puerto Rican independence from Spain. In this three part modular series, students will examine the interconnections of the African diaspora between the United States and the Spanish-speaking Caribbean and learn how New York City became the central locus of Afro-Latinidad community-building in the US. Teachers may choose to teach all three lessons in the series or choose one or two lessons depending on the essential learning goals and lesson objectives.

In part one, students will learn about the history of the term Afro-Latinidad and its connection to transnational and diasporic identities. They will consider this essential question: *What is Afro-Latinidad, and how do African diasporic histories shape identities across Latin America, the Caribbean, and the United States?*

In part two, students will do a deep dive into the life and legacy of activist Arturo Schomburg, working together to answer the question: *How did the work of Arturo Schomburg contribute to the preservation and celebration of Afro-Latinidad in the US?*



Building on the knowledge and insights students gain from parts one and two of this lesson series, in part three, students will tackle this essential question: *How did Afro-Cuban and Afro-Puerto Rican cigar workers transform labor spaces into centers of political activism and contribute to Afro-Latinidad in NYC?* Students will analyze and compare photographs, primary, and secondary sources and conclude the lesson series by writing their own “Contemporary Lectura” to highlight an issue affecting Afro-Latin@ communities today.

3. New York Cubans and the Negro Leagues in NYC

Content Areas: Social Studies, ELA, Spanish

Building on students’ background knowledge and personal experiences with the sport, this lesson will help students discover the important contributions of Afro-Latine and Black athletes to “America’s favorite pastime”: baseball. While many people recognize baseball as central to the cultural identity and history of the US, the influence of the Negro Leagues on modern baseball in the US and the Caribbean is often overlooked. The Cuban Giants team was formed in 1885 and is known as the first professional African American baseball team. By 1908, integrated Cuban baseball teams were competing against Major League Baseball teams in the US. Talented Black and Afro-Latine baseball players made up the eight original teams of the National Negro League, formed in 1920. Through this lesson, students will engage with photographs, videos, and articles to discover and explore the important contributions of Black and Afro-Latino baseball players and their influence on the sport itself.

Students will further explore this history by selecting and researching a famous Black or Afro-Latino baseball player like Martín Dihigo, Cristóbal Torriente, José Méndez, Luis Tiant Sr., Minnie Miñoso, Silvio García, or Dave Barnhill. In this lesson, students will seek to answer: *How does the history of the Negro Leagues and teams like the New York Cubans add to or challenge the more visible history of race and baseball in the US?*

4. The Young Lords and Latine Activism

Content Areas: Social Studies, ELA

This lesson examines the emergence and impact of the Young Lords Party as a central force in Latine activism during the Civil Rights era, particularly in New York City. Originating in the late 1960s amid widespread urban inequality, the Young Lords organized Puerto Rican and other marginalized communities to confront systemic issues such as inadequate healthcare, housing, and sanitation, drawing inspiration from groups like the Black Panther Party. Through their community-based campaigns and direct actions—including church and hospital occupations—they advanced a vision of self-determination, racial justice, and cross-racial solidarity. Across multiple sources, students will analyze the political strategies, ideological foundations, and social impact of the Young Lords while reflecting on the role of youth activism and the enduring relevance of coalition-building among Black and Brown communities. Throughout this lesson, students will consider: *Does the legacy of The Young Lords inspire us to continue their dedication to community?*



5. Miriam Jiménez Román: An Afro-Latina Leader

Content Areas: Social Studies, ELA, Spanish

This lesson explores the life and enduring impact of Miriam Jiménez Román, a pivotal scholar and organizer who championed the visibility of Afro-Latinidad in the United States. Focusing on her transition from a working-class Puerto Rican migrant in New York City to a leading public intellectual, this lesson highlights how she leveraged her personal history to critique racial discrimination, sexism, and classism. Students will examine her foundational work with the *afrolatin@* forum and her co-editorship of *The Afro-Latin@ Reader* (2010), learning how she bridged the gap between research and activism to challenge standard racial paradigms. By analyzing diverse primary and secondary sources, ranging from archival interviews to contemporary music, students will discover how Jiménez Román's leadership helped redefine the African diasporic experience and ensured that Afro-Latine identity remains a central component of conversations regarding Blackness and Latinidad today. Students will assess and consider: *Why is it important to recognize Afro-Latine identities when studying history and culture?*

6. Developing a Transnational NYC: Dominican/Afro-Latin Connections

Content Areas: Social Studies, ELA, Spanish

This lesson explores the development of New York City as a transnational hub for Afro-Latine communities, using the Dominican diaspora as a central case study. Beginning with late twentieth-century migration from the Dominican Republic driven by political instability and economic opportunity, Dominicans established vibrant enclaves—particularly in Washington Heights—that fostered cultural continuity, economic activity, and community formation. At the same time, migrants maintained strong social, economic, and cultural ties to the Dominican Republic through travel, remittances, and evolving technologies, illustrating the fluid nature of diasporic identity. Through literary excerpts, visual media, and historical analysis, students will examine how transnationalism shapes belonging, identity, and community, and assess the enduring legacy of Afro-Latinidad in New York City as a dynamic, interconnected space. Throughout this lesson, students will analyze the question: *What is the enduring legacy of Afro-Latinidad in NYC as it remains a hub for Afro-Latines in the 21st century, and beyond?*

7. Afro-Latinidad in Hip-Hop

Content Areas: Social Studies, ELA, Music

This lesson explores the early development of Hip-Hop in 1970s New York City, emphasizing the often-overlooked contributions of Puerto Ricans and other Latines, in shaping the culture. Emerging from the social and cultural conditions of the Bronx, Hip-Hop developed as a collaborative expression rooted in longstanding interactions between African American and Latine communities. Through music, dance, and visual culture, Latin youth played a central role in the formation of key elements of Hip-Hop. Using multimedia sources and historical texts, students will examine the cultural intersections that gave rise to Hip-Hop and analyze how race, ethnicity, and identity influenced its development and legacy. Throughout this lesson, students will consider questions like: *What were some of the foundational roles Latines played in Hip-Hop?*



IMPLEMENTING LESSONS ON AFRO-LATINIDAD

Objectives

For students, the impacts of this curriculum are likely to be both academic and personal. Research has shown that when students encounter culturally relevant material that reflects their identities and experiences, they are more engaged in the learning process and demonstrate stronger academic outcomes (New York City Coalition for Educational Justice, 2019). In classrooms where Afro-Latinidad is centered, students who identify as Black, Latine, or both are given the opportunity to see themselves represented in meaningful ways. At the same time, all students benefit from a more accurate and comprehensive understanding of history, one that reflects the diversity and interconnectedness of the communities that shape New York City.

For educators and school leaders, this resource guide is intended to support the integration of Afro-Latinidad into existing curricula in ways that are both practical and aligned with required learning standards. The lessons emphasize interactive learning, including discussion, group work, and the use of visual and multimedia resources, allowing students to engage actively with the material rather than passively receiving information. This structure reflects best practices in culturally responsive-sustaining teaching and supports a range of learning styles.

Ultimately, centering Afro-Latinidad in New York City Public Schools is about ensuring that the stories told in classrooms reflect the realities of the students who sit in them. Afro-Latine histories are not separate from the history of New York City; they are foundational to it. By incorporating these lessons, educators can help students build a deeper understanding of their communities, recognize the contributions of those who came before them, and see themselves as part of an ongoing history. In doing so, this initiative supports not only academic learning, but also a stronger sense of identity, connection, and belonging for all students.

Challenging Misconceptions and Tips for Teachers

- ▶ Many students in NYCPS come from diverse backgrounds, with a majority being of Latin American and African American descent. The intersections between these lessons and the family histories and lived experiences of many of these students are clear. For those that do not come from Latin or Afro-diasporic backgrounds, they live in communities and attend school or other forums with people from those backgrounds, and it is beneficial for them to understand the history of those communities and how that history potentially relates to others.
- ▶ The term Black and Latino are often used as if they are mutually exclusive in the US. There is a need to deconstruct that limitation with the students, showing them the frequent interconnections and overlap between these categories. For example, a portion of Black soldiers that served in all Black regiments like the Harlem Hellfighters were of Puerto Rican descent. Likewise, Afro-Latine baseball players were equally Black to other players. It is important to understand that Afro-Latines are not a “mixed,” “diluted,” or “less-Black” version of Black people.
- ▶ Black history in the US extends beyond the British empire; the longstanding effects of multiple colonial powers beyond the British should be recognized. Regions like Florida, Texas, and Louisiana, among others, have histories that predate the 1607 founding of the English settlement at Jamestown, Virginia. Educators should have a basic familiarity with Spanish, French, and Dutch empires and their connection with colonization and Native and African history in the Americas.



- It is important to note that the origin story of Afro-Latinidad in New York City and the US began prior to the Spanish-American War (1898) and the Roosevelt Corollary to the Monroe Doctrine (1904). Beginning with Juan Rodriguez in the seventeenth century, and expanding with the enclaves of Cuban and Puerto Rican political exiles and factory workers who began settling in the US in the mid-nineteenth century, Afro-Latinidad has been present and influential in the US for centuries.
- To clarify the intersections between Afro-Latin and African American life in the postbellum era it is important to highlight the following:
 - Slavery in Cuba and Puerto Rico was abolished in 1886 and 1873, respectively. Afro-Cubans and Afro-Puerto Ricans moved to Florida and New York City through labor programs that allowed them to work in cigar factories throughout the late nineteenth century.
 - During the late nineteenth century, as more African Americans began migrating to northern cities, Afro-Cubans and Afro-Puerto Ricans also migrated north due to the expansion of cigar factories and other labor opportunities.
 - Afro-Cubans and Afro-Puerto Ricans also built their own communities and organizations and participated in their form of radical politics, principally the Cuban and Puerto Rican independence from Spain.
- Dominicans, many of whom identify as Afro-Latinx, form the largest immigrant group in New York City, comprising about 7% of the city's population.
 - **Historical Roots:** The 1960s saw a significant, large-scale influx of Dominicans to New York, driven by factors like political instability, the end of the Trujillo regime in the Dominican Republic, and economic hardships.
 - **Concentration in New York City:** Dominicans have historically been concentrated in New York City, with the Bronx and Washington Heights being major areas of settlement.
 - **Impact on the City:** The Dominican population has significantly shaped New York City's culture, economy, and political landscape.
 - **Community Formation:** Dominicans have established vibrant communities in New York City, with strong cultural and social networks.
 - **Continued Growth:** While the growth rate may have slowed in recent years, Dominicans remain a significant and influential part of the New York City population.



ADDITIONAL RESOURCES FOR EDUCATORS

Educators who would like to engage more with the themes and topics covered in these lessons can consult the resources below. The following **books**, **articles**, **videos**, **websites**, and **community resources** will equip educators with additional background knowledge and information needed to understand the important history and context of these intersecting and significant topics.

Books

- Andrews, George Reid. (2004). *Afro-Latin America, 1800-2000*. Oxford University Press.
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- National Museum of African American History and Culture
- Negro Leagues Baseball Museum
- PBS: Stealing Home: The Case of Contemporary Cuban Baseball
- The Center for Puerto Rican Studies at Hunter College (CENTRO)
- Center for Puerto Rican Studies Archives of the Puerto Rican Diaspora (Digital/Online and In-Person options available to the public)
- The New York Public Library's Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture (Digital/Online and In-Person options available to the public)



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