

## Finding an Identity in Two Worlds

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### INTRODUCTION

#### The School Experience as a Focus

Often when I walk into my school's cafeteria, I usually see the same thing: poorly discarded chip bags from previous lunches, forgotten and strewn around the sticky floor, with the unmistakable scent of mop water. I see waves upon waves of students. I also see something else that I really never paid attention to before but is as unmistakable as that mop water: the students, and whom they sit with during the lunch break. While a few sit with a variety of people, I see the majority sitting with their own race. I think about this all through lunch, and as I walk through the sea of students, like a snorkeler examining the bottom of the sea, I notice that these students are in groups, more commonly called cliques. Many of these cliques are primarily of people with the same background or race. I am aware that people often feel more comfortable with people that share their same interests or are the same race, or have some of the same past experiences, but what if some people did not have any of these qualities; had no shared interest, no one that looked like them, no one that shared their same experiences? What if such people did not have any traits that someone could relate to? What if they had traits that they themselves could not relate to or understand? What if they had no clue about where they came from? These people might find themselves in the middle of an identity crisis.

#### WHY STUDY THE IMPORTANCE OF CULTURAL IDENTITY?

It is important to learn cultural identity because it dictates the thoughts, beliefs and behavior of humans in society. One must also keep in mind that American culture is currently being shaped by the presence of large numbers of immigrants in our school system and society.

**Culture** means “the totality of socially transmitted behavior patterns, arts, beliefs, institutions and all other product of human work and thought typical of a population or community at a given time” (*Webster's Dictionary*). My students have very little exposure to other cultures; therefore, they have a difficult time relating to people coming from different ethnic backgrounds. Usually they feel that people who migrate to the United States have the motive of becoming materialistically rich. They cannot understand that intellectual growth and freedom are major aspects that attract people of different cultures to come to the United States. Many foreign students have to work extra hard to attain what they want to accomplish in life. Oftentimes they have very little

money and little family support yet they strive to fit into their new surroundings and culture.

**Identity crisis** means “a psychological state of disorientation and role confusion, occurring specially in adolescents because of conflicting pressure and expectations” (*Webster’s Dictionary*). Most of my students are young adolescents whose behavior reflects their state of mind. Some students taunt children who come from other cultures because those students sound different, eat different foods, wear different clothes, and have dissimilar values. A few of my students feel that people coming from different cultures are encroaching on their space. I have had students tell me about events where they have swindled or made fools of shopkeepers from cultures other than their own. They laugh and mock in their insensitivity and ignorance. This unit will address these students who lack the knowledge of cultural identity to help them to come to an understanding of other cultures and ethnic backgrounds.

Some of my students lack emotional maturity and tend to have behavior problems. These students are not sensitive to their surroundings. They often copy the behavior of others or act like someone else because they do not have any idea of their own personality or culture. These students get confused and end up having an identity crisis, thus creating an unhappy situation for others as well as for themselves in a school or a social setting in the society.

On the other hand, some of my students are also immigrants. There is a constant struggle with newcomers to a country to hold onto the heritage and history of their culture while accepting and living their American dream and ideology. It is a literal tug of war in an individual’s belief system. On one side is the American lifestyle that students feel that they should follow to truly be an American, but on the other branch they don’t want to forget where they come from. A person must keep his or her heritage, while fitting into a new land.

Students coming from different cultures face conflicting pressures in identifying themselves to new values. These students do not have any other alternative but to adjust to the new culture. They make great efforts to learn new languages, values, norms and customs. This adjustment leads to confusion in all areas of life. At times they feel ashamed of their family because they are different from mainstream society. Whereas before, they might have been proud of their hairstyle or clothes, they now feel ashamed and choose more American fashion trends to be more accepted.

**Heritage** is “something passed down from preceding generations, the status gained by a person through birth” (*Webster’s Dictionary*). Many of my students live alone or in a group home, and are not in touch with their family or ancestors. Therefore, they have little information about their heritage. They fail to realize what they are missing out in their lives. I will help them to realize the importance of heritage by asking them to trace

their family history. Cultural heritage encourages good relationships. It builds discipline and creates a concrete foundation for bonding the old and the new blood in a peaceful and harmonious way. This unit will provoke the students to search for their cultural identity.

In the book *The Color of Water* the issue of cultural identity is at center stage. It deals with a Polish woman named Ruchel Dwajra Zylska, who is a Jewish woman who comes to America and changes her name to Rachel Shilsky. She does this to adapt to her new country. This is not the only thing she changes about her identity in order to survive in America. She made many choices about her life that she felt would help her assimilate into American culture. Many new residents of America often make choices to start anew, in order to embrace the American culture. American culture is a culture with no real background but a mixture of hundreds of cultures mixed into it. America is often called the “melting pot.” However, many foreigners that become American citizens feel the need to forget their old culture and totally accept and pass on their new culture. This creates an almost sieve-like effect that slowly starts to phase out their original culture.

### **WHERE DO I COME FROM?**

Many young Americans have very little knowledge of their original culture. Most of my students do not know their origins. Often grandparents or other ancestral relatives are not known. They have no cultural identity.

A few of the students in my class are children of interracial couples and often are brought up in two ways. One way is to learn about both cultures of the parents and strike a balance between the two backgrounds. Another, and quite a bit disturbing one, is only learning one parent’s culture, and never learning about the other parent’s culture. A feeling of not belonging can be embedded in the individual due to this rejection of both backgrounds. This creates a barrier for students to fully understand their heritage. These young adults are desperately trying to search for their cultural identity, trying to grasp for individual truths about their family history, searching for answers for which history books have little room.

A great example of not knowing one’s roots takes place in *The Color of Water*, a book written by James McBride. As a boy in Brooklyn’s projects, James McBride knew his mother was different. At times, James felt that his mother “...looked nothing like the other kids’ mothers. In fact, she looked more like my kindergarten teacher, Mrs. Alexander, who was white...” (12). James repeatedly questions “...why don’t you look like Rodney’s mother or Pete’s mother? How come you don’t look like me?” (12). His mother replies, “I do look like you. I’m your mother. You ask too many questions. Educate your mind. School is important...” (13). The young McBride is trying to grasp racial and cultural differences while trying to tie them to his own identity. His mother

and her family were Polish Jewish immigrants who moved to the South. His mother married a black man and raised twelve children.

Sometimes my students find themselves in a similar situation of cultural identity. They ask their parents about their heritage and differences in appearance. Often the parents of my students have no time to waste on such questions. They feel the students will discover it by him or her self and pay no heed to explain the students about their cultural heritage. They are too busy working and making both ends meet in their everyday lives. The students are not exposed to any form of cultural interaction. McBride goes on a journey to discover his cultural identity. Likewise, I will encourage my students to explore their own cultural identity and never give up hope.

*The Color of Water* also reflects the cultural sacrifice that James McBride's mother, Rachel Shilsky, had to adopt to make life in America easier. Rachel shared her past and culture with her children. When James finally finds out he is half Polish, he wants to know and be a part of his lost Polish culture and sets forth to unravel it.

There are many examples of cultural ignorance and sacrifice in *The Color of Water*. James says,

I felt like an odd ball standing in front of the quite empty building; and looked up and down the street every couple of minutes lest cops come by and wonder why a black man was loitering in front of a white man's building in the middle of the day in Suffolk, Virginia. Black males are closely associated with crime in America not with white Jewish mothers, and I could not imagine a police officer buying my story as I stood in front of the Jewish temple saying, "Uh, yeah, my grandfather was the rabbi here, you know" (219).

This is one example of the fear that many people who have lost touch with their culture feel like. They fear they will not be accepted or be understood, by the culture and the community surrounding it. Another conflict when dealing with two different cultures is explaining it to loved ones, like this passage from *The Color of Water*,

I wanted to see the inside of the synagogue. I wanted to see it, then later tell my black wife and my two children about it because some of my blood runs through there because my family has a history there, because there is a part of me in there whether I, or those that run the synagogue, like it or not (221).

These are just some of the powerful quotes in *The Color of Water* that my students will encounter and identify. The purpose of this activity is not only for them to identify with the situation but try to mirror it in their own lives and experiences. Once this is done they can go on and produce a paper, which compares and contrasts the characters' cultural identity with their own. The students will then be able to create a drama using certain plot

and situations from the novel *The Color of Water*. Thus the students will not only learn to read but understand it visually by acting it out.

### **Lack of Self Esteem and Family Pride**

In the play *Tokyo Bound* Amy Hill tries to accept who she is and to identify herself as a child coming from two different cultures. Her mother was a Japanese woman and her father was from Finland. She grew up in the American northwest and had the opportunity to study abroad in Finland or in Japan. She accepts to visit Japan and comes face to face with the underlying questions of her identity. She feels like she has been transplanted into Japan and attempts to retrace her Japanese heritage. In doing so she learns activities that characterize the Japanese woman. "Soft, gracious, feminine mannerisms unlike the outgoing, outspoken tough and rough American girl" (53).

Often children from two different cultures can sense at a very early age that their family is unique, as is their background. Amy Hill writes, "my mother was a Japanese who helped my father financially by cooking in a Japanese restaurant called *Nikko*, and then as a full time cook in the Group Health hospital kitchen. Growing up, I sensed that our family situation was unique though not necessarily to be envied, so I made it my job to reinvent who I was"(47). When a person is not sure about their culture they may feel displaced.

The novel and the play can be used to heighten the awareness of the conflict of not knowing one's culture. These are just a few excerpts that present people who have to struggle to understand their identity while not fully comprehending their culture. My students will read and analyze the issues of cultural displacement and isolation depicted in the play. They will realize their unique situation and make the best of it by understanding that everyone has his or her unique situation and that they will have to fight it in their own extraordinary way. The actions in the play will motivate the students to share their feelings in a way of class discussions, talking about the characters and their trials in the play and consequently talking about their own agony of not understanding some aspects of their own cultural identity.

Some of my students get disenchanted with their life situation and cultural identity and fall victim to anyone or anything that they can identify themselves with. Many turn to gangs, violence, drugs, and anti-social attitudes, isolation or, in extreme cases, adopt an existence of social outcasts leaning towards self-destruction and human disaster. Sometimes these youngsters lack self-esteem and become poor achievers or drop out of school. To discover one's cultural identity will enable the students to analyze their values in life with a new perspective and become productive members of society.

### **THE GOALS OF THE UNIT**

The goals of the unit will be that the students will apply critical thinking skills to make links between wide selections of reading to their personal lives. This will establish a new enthusiasm in the spirit of the students to search for their cultural identity through reading. Next, the students will respond to literary pieces from different times and places, and observe major cultural influences. The student will examine and read about various cultures. Students will interpret short stories, fiction, poems, and drama, reading plot, setting, and character based on multicultural themes. The goal of the unit will help students identify conflict and resolution in the story and play.

For my students to understand the conflict that is felt by someone who is trying to find their cultural identity they will need a proper guide to truly feel the pain and displacement felt by someone who has no clue where they fit into. To accomplish this goal I will have my students read a novel by James McBride called *The Color of Water*. This will give the student needed insight into why first generation Americans often drop their original culture in favor of a more Americanized one. I will have my students read this book over a six-week period.

Likewise in the Broadway play *Tokyo Bound*, written by Amy Hill the author expresses many conflicts and feelings that describe assimilation into the United States. Here for example is an excerpt from the play, where Amy describes her mother, “She was a freak to me. My father told me once on this long ride back from Washington that even my own relatives didn’t talk to her for six months after she arrived in Deadwood. We got hate letters and rocks in our mailbox in Seattle. We, her own children, would make fun of her accent” (68). As a child Amy asked her mother, “Mom, say ‘Phyllis Diller.’ Come on!” Her mother answered, “Firis Diris” (68). She tells the audience that because her mother spoke English so poorly, “We questioned her intelligence. I thought it was her fault that I didn’t fit in” (68). And Amy taunted, “What are you? Indian?” (68). In order to dispel this embarrassment of culture I will make my students step into the roles of the characters in the stories to understand the emotional, psychological and physical aspects of drama.

While reading *Tokyo Bound* I will have them be aware of certain elements such as, who is the main character(s)? Is the main character(s) involved in a conflict internally or externally? If so, define what the conflict is. Do the characters have any conflicts concerning their culture? Explain. Does the conflict ever change? I will have the student make notes of any situations that fit into any of these points as they go along in the book. The students will analyze and discuss the internal and external conflicts faced by the character(s) in the play *Tokyo Bound*.

Lastly, the unit will include several themes that relate to multicultural American drama, including the search for self, alienation, love, conflict, separation, loss, and the individual's relationship to the community.

## Connect to Literature

To understand the challenges felt by the characters in the novel and play, students must feel a personal bond with these characters. Good writing can make a reader empathize with characters. “If you don’t understand where something or someone comes from and what they have gone through you can not feel for it,” Peter Singer notes in *Writings on an Ethical Life* (Singer 22). Using this same logic I want my students to feel a personal connection with these characters and their situations.

Themes of multiculturalism are very delicate matters, especially when being dealt with in the classroom. It is of zenith proportions that I will take the proper measures to make sure, that while dealing with a subject like multicultural conflict in society that it stays emotionally and verbally appropriate. Some of the issues that are confronted in *The Color of Water* and *Tokyo Bound* are of a nature that if construed in one way or another could be taken as taunting or belittling of certain cultures. The text does this at times deliberately to convey a sense of not belonging or misunderstanding about the culture felt by the characters. This subject must be handled in a way that is sensitive to all students; the students must be aware of this climate and should be aware that it in no way is a threat or insult to any of their own personal beliefs. I will also make clear to my students while there are some racial references in the book and play, which are condescending and insensitive in nature. I will make sure the student will not practice such behavior in their personal life, and will make sure they understand in which setting this type of behavior was used in, to improve the understanding of personality traits.

Keeping in frame with my goal of uniting the reading and the student, I have chosen as pre-reading material *Arranged Marriage* by Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni, *The Joy Luck Club* written by Amy Tan, the novel *The Color of Water*, and the play *Tokyo Bound*. I chose these because of the instant connection it makes with my students. As I stated before my students come from various backgrounds, from all parts of the city, and have very different lifestyles, so I chose materials that makes a strong bond of the one thing that they all have in common, their age. Each one of the reading selections was chosen because of the age appropriate characters in relation to my students. It is difficult to make students feel for a literary character but if you were to make them step into the character's shoes and feel everything that the character felt it then it becomes easy. But for them to step into the shoes of someone they must have some like traits, therefore, for the student to relate to be at one with the character, making the characters age correspondent with the students was a natural progression.

Overall, I want to bring two elements together, personal linkage between literature and reader, and the study of multicultural themes in relativity to the students in my classroom. At the same time, paying close attention and considering the many social

issues, and the unique lifestyles led by my students. It is an important part of achieving success with this unit. I am emphasizing the relationship between the book and play to the students' lives because multiculturalism is such a prevalent issue in our society, and many of the students I teach come in contact with multicultural conflicts everyday. So while teaching this unit in my classroom, I must make sure to take advantage of and use this real life experiences and funnel it into the classroom, so there will always be a personal bond between the work and the student.

Most of my students have failed in previous schools, and this is their last chance. Some of my students also have had problems with the law. Most of my students grow up in the inner city, sometimes never meeting their mother or father, or either in some cases. So my students often feel rejected, or lost. But to really bring literature alive for my students I must make them feel as if they are a part of it. It is my duty as a teacher to make them feel as if what they are reading is not just random words grouped together and bound together simply to put them to sleep. I want to show them this is real, living and breathing. These are true issues that people went through, and are still going through. I want them to feel for the characters, not look at them as if they were benign, lifeless, fictional people. I want them to feel the same pain that the characters' feel when rejected by a culture that the characters hardly know, but are trying ever so hard to understand. The key to making Houston high school students in the inner city feel for a privileged Japanese American girl trying to find her culture is to make the high students take the journey with her, finding her culture and on the way finding and embracing their own culture.

Often times I am asked by my students "why do we have to learn about *Hamlet*; we do not need to know about *Hamlet* in real life." However, *Hamlet* is very relevant to everyday life. Many universal human conflicts that are found in great literature are observed in today's society. As a good teacher, I am committed to encourage students in my class to understand the value of education.

In order to achieve the desired goals the students will know how to discover and improve upon their intellectual abilities and cognitive skills. This will give tremendous strength and insight and in-depth knowledge about how to apply what they learned in the classroom to their real life situations. Thus the young students will be able to learn how to cope with the obstacles in life. For example in the play *Tokyo Bound* Amy Hill travels to her mother's land, Japan, and tries to fit into the traditional Japanese culture. While this was difficult for Amy Hill she persevered and was able to overcome obstacles. Students will use critical thinking skills to make good judgments and thus excel in society. They will emerge with a new and outstanding identity of themselves. This will teach them how to become confident and strong. In so doing they will reach constructive and positive results.

## Teaching Strategies, Pre-Teaching and Pre-Reading Activities

The students will read excerpts from *Arranged Marriage* by Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni. Divakaruni's novel is a collection of short stories. The short stories include: "The Bats," "Clothes," "Silver Pavements, Golden Roofs," "The Word of Love," "The Perfect Life," "The Maid Servant's Story," "The Disappearance," "Doors," "The Ultrasound," "Affair," and "Meeting Minal." Divakaruni's novels reveal conflicts and resolutions found in human drama. Stories show immigrant and the first generation dealing with issues of adjustment and assimilation while differing in individual situation. Divakaruni presents themes of interracial relationships, isolation, the search for self, facing conflicts, frustration and despair to survive in a new community. The stories primarily concern young Indian brides. The characters often overcome their conflicts by changing their attitude, values, discovering their own self worth. Sometimes the immigrants fail to adjust to their new environment; most of the characters meet their challenges and strike a balance between their new social surrounding and personal lives thus finding a cultural identity in the heart of their new world.

The students will also read the novel *The Joy Luck Club* written by Amy Tan. The book is divided into four parts. Part one is named "Feathers from a Thousand Li Away." Part Two is called "The Twenty Six Malignant Gates," part three is the "American Translation," and the last part is "The Queen Mother of the Western Skies." The story revolves around four Chinese women who get together weekly to play ma jong. Stories about the immigrant mothers and their first generation children are presented. The characters all possess different circumstances and have different levels of conflict and anxiety. The novel also gives a very vivid picture of the mother daughter relationship. For the immigrant mothers, their relationship with their mothers in China is presented in their stories. In their daughters' stories, their unique relationships are presented. A sense of self-growth and acceptance in the face of tradition and expectation in the new world are revealed through the stories. *The Joy Luck Club* traces the lives and issues faced in the old world as well as the identity and assimilation issues one faces when entering American society.

These stories will act as preparatory exercises for the students, to learn and appreciate other customs and traditions. I will encourage my students to read materials dealing with experiences with important themes of culture in the world today. This will give a chance to my students to discover and learn different styles of reading and writing by writers from various cultures. The students will acquire a deep sense of cultural identity, which will create a new bond to their future. They will learn to strengthen and admire the diversity of all cultures in the United States. This trend will help America grow to become a more productive and prosperous country with peace loving citizens contributing a wealth of culture to the society. At the same time paving a road to harmony for their children who will know and have admiration for all cultures.

## **Review of Literary Skills**

This is a review of the basic literary skill required for the student to comprehend the wide selections of readings. Literary comprehension is key to understanding the language of English literature. The students must learn and identify literary elements while reading the play and novel. As a good teacher I will make sure that every student understands what he or she is reading and learning. This exercise will also work as a re-teaching and relearning method to clear the doubts and difficulties of the students. This gives an opportunity to reinforce the teaching and learning objectives of the unit. This procedure works as an incentive for the students to make good grades on the standardized tests and also on the end of the course final test, which they take on the computer. The students get sufficient practice to improve their comprehension and writing skills. Therefore, it is essential for the students to understand the following key terms, action, antagonist, protagonist, character, characterization, conflict, dialogue, foil, mood, moral, narrator, plot, and plot line.

Action is everything that happens in a story. An antagonist is the person that works against the hero of the story or play. The characters are one or more of the people in the play, the people who the plot focuses on. Characterization is the way a writer portrays a character, making him or her seem believable. The author generally uses these methods: sharing the characters thoughts, action, and dialogue; describing his or her appearance; revealing what others in the story think of this character. Conflict is a problem or struggle between two opposing forces in a story. There are the five basic conflicts: person against person, a problem between characters; person against self is a conflict within one person's own mind; person against society, a problem between a character and society, school, the law, or some tradition; person against nature, which is a person or many characters against elements of nature; person against fate, a type of problem that is far out of the main character's control. Dialogue is the conversations that characters in the novel and play have with each other. Foil is a type of character whose main purpose is to serve as a challenge to the main character. Mood is the feeling a piece of literature creates in a reader. Moral is the lesson you take away from the story or play. Narrator is the man or woman who speaks over a play or piece of cinema who tells the story or lays groundwork for the story. Plot is the action that a story, novel or play follows. Plot line is the planned action or series of events in a story. The five types of plot lines are exposition, rising action, climax, falling action, and resolution. Exposition is the part of the story usually near the beginning in which the characters are introduced; the background is explained, and the setting is described. Rising action is the central part of the story during which various problems arise. Climax is the high point of action of a story. Falling action is the action and dialogue following the climax that leads the reader into the story's end. Resolution is the part of a story where it comes to an end and solution. These terms will be used in a warm-up exercise on the chalkboard. There will be a weekly quiz administered on these terms at the end of every week.

## LESSON PLANS

The activities I have planned for my class involve applying the lives of the students to the works. If they make a connection from the printed words to the lives they lead everyday it will bring a personal sense to the story.

These activities will include a collage, comparative writing, and a play acted out by the students. The first activity that I want to touch on is by far the one that I believe the students will enjoy the most: the collage.

### **Lesson One: Collage**

The collage is keystone to making the bridge from the novel and the play to their everyday life. The collage will require them to refer back to the list that they created before to find the key elements of the story, the plot, characters, and conflict. This will not only display a blue print for what they should include in the collage but it will also remind them of what they have read and to help them analyze the conflict.

**Objectives:** The student will learn to use various reference materials and display in a visual manner; comparative analyses of the cultures discussed in the book and play compared to their own culture.

**Materials Needed:** *National Geographic*, *World of History Magazine*, *The Smithsonian*, and other reference web sites will be needed. I will make sure to provide ample information dealing with Japanese, Polish, African, Indian, Chinese, and American cultures. *Tokyo Bound* and *The Color of Water* deal extensively with these cultures in particular. A Xerox machine, poster board, markers, scissors, rulers, glue, and a computer will also be needed.

**Lesson:** The student will go through these resources and find articles and pictures involving the characters' culture. Once these are located I will have the students cut these pictures out, or have them make a digital copy. This will give the student an interactive feeling, learning about the culture of the characters in the book at the same time relating it to their personal lives.

To help the students gain more exposure to their culture and relate to others, I will have my students go through their homes and look for pictures, history and background belonging to their own culture. They will be able to use secondary sources but I will also encourage them to use first-hand information, what they already know about their culture. I will have them compile all of the information they have collected on their respective cultures and then have them Xerox any pictures they have brought from their own home, or cut out pictures if they have located them in a magazine. If there are any

essays or written stories they would like to include into the collage I will have them tell the story through art.

Once pictures of the characters' cultures and the students are compiled they will be pasted to poster board. The board will be divided into two parts, one section will be devoted to the characters in the novel and play; the other will be dedicated to the student's culture.

### **Lesson Two: Personal Narrative Essay**

This lesson will help the students compare and find similarities between their culture and the cultures discussed in *Tokyo Bound*.

**Objectives:** The student will learn to pick out particular sections of dialogue from *Tokyo Bound* and quote it, to prove their points in their essay. The student will also learn to use the dictionary to improve their perspicacity, vocabulary and become more descriptive writers.

**Materials Needed:** Pencil, paper, the play *Tokyo Bound*, and a dictionary. Also availability of the use of the Internet for more information on the various cultures will be needed.

**Lesson:** I will have the students write a paper explaining two major differences and similarities they found while researching the culture of the character in the play and their own culture. The student will write a composition of five paragraphs stating two or more similarities when compared to their own culture and the characters. The students will use the formal essay format using, introduction, body, and conclusion. The students will be encouraged to use the dictionary and use descriptive words. The students will also have to use ten vocabulary words, which are found in the play.

### **Lesson Three: Journal Writing**

The method of journal writing will foster a comfort level with writing. The journal also helps the student into the classroom and settles them down quickly, instead of telling their friends about their weekend dates, problems, happiness, and sorrow.

**Objectives:** The students will be able to communicate freely their thoughts in writing without the fear of making errors in the grammar or the mechanics of English language. The students tend to enjoy journal writing.

**Materials needed:** Pen, pencil, and notebook paper tablet.

**Lesson:** I will give some journal topics to my students that revolve around the novel and play by using such open ended questions like, “Who does Amy Hill’s mother remind you most of?” or “At times I feel like James McBride because...” and “The story in *Arranged Marriage* make me feel...” These journal writings will be entered into a journal-writing notebook, which I will evaluate for the students growth in writing and comprehension at the end of the semester. The students must write a minimum of twenty-five journals. I too as the teacher, will keep a journal and evaluate my own growth at the end of the semester.

#### **Lesson four: Writing and Enacting a Play**

The purpose of writing and enacting a play is to further the bond between the student and the play *Tokyo Bound* by Amy Hill, by putting the student in the exact position as the characters in the stories, thus making the student interested and exhilarated in reading and acting.

**Objectives:** The student will write and enact a play based upon the writings of Amy Hill. The students will learn to write dialogue in a play form by choosing their own topic for their play. The student will learn to become sensitive to drama with multicultural themes. This will also open up new writing styles to the student.

**Materials Needed:** Paper, pen, pencil and script of *Tokyo Bound*.

**Lesson:** I will divide my classroom students into five groups consisting of four students in each group; I will do this to create a mini ensemble cast to act out a play involving handpicked situations from the play *Tokyo Bound*. These situations will vary from group to group. Each group will have respective roles, consisting of a recorder, a speaker, an editor and a director. The students will construct a small play each group getting an individual setting, which will revolve around situations found in *Tokyo Bound*. One group will get a situation from *Tokyo Bound* where one character must decide which part of the world and what culture he or she want to go to school. The students will be able to create characters and time settings but must keep the situation and cultural tone intact in their play. The play must have a role for all four members of the group, must have a title, include three of the literary elements listed above, and must not contain profanity, or inappropriate behavior. Lastly, it must be written in Standard English language, but may contain brief dialogue in another language pertaining to the culture being enacted.

#### **Grading System and Time Period**

Each activity mentioned above will take place during the reading of, and shortly after the completion of *The Color of Water* and *Tokyo Bound*. The collage will be done at the completion of *The Color of Water* and *Tokyo Bound*. The collage will be done in a time period of two weeks.

The novel *The Color of Water* must be completely read by the student in a time period of six weeks total.

In the “personal narrative paper” students will describe what they like about their culture and what they would change about it will be done over a span of one and a half weeks; this includes time to do research and write a paper.

The plays that the students will be conducting in class will start on a Monday and end on a Friday, giving the students four days to complete their plays. These plays will be done towards the end of *Tokyo Bound*. *Tokyo Bound* will be read in a span of 2 weeks.

To grade all of this work I will be using Holistic Grading. Holistic Grading involves focusing on the piece of writing as a whole and on those features most important to the success of the piece. It helps the teacher to evaluate more quickly, more consistently, and more pointedly.

Keep in mind the student must make a grade of 70 to master the course. Students making anything lower than a grade of 70 will fail, but will be given a chance to revise work and retake tests to make a satisfactory grade.

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A critical survey of the writings of American authors whose work pertains to adolescence. It is a very handy reference tool and it contains nice snippets of traditional criticism as well.