

Let's Read Fall 2020
***Identity Matters* Model Lesson**
Created by: Lejla Begovic

- ◆ **Participant Context:** 15-19 students, university students
 - ◆ **Key Learning Objectives:** Exploring the issue of identity at micro and macro level
 - ◆ **Key Themes/Chapter focus:** Whole book/chapters by choice
 - ◆ **Materials:** Large pieces of paper, Markers, Posters, Small pieces of sticky paper, Large writing surface
 - ◆ **Time:** 80 Minutes
 - ◆ **Strategies used:** Group Mural/Iceberg of Identity/Story of My Identity
 - ◆ **Essential Question:** Who am I?
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◆ **Hook/Engage: Group Mural (20 Mins)**

Today we will compare issue of identity in terms of both national and personal identity, and constant strive for being someone else, living somewhere else, which is a true form of search for identity. You will gather around a large piece of paper and drawing symbols you will show what types of identity do you know.

For example, Students will draw religious symbols or flags or some other marks of national or religious identity using colors, shapes and lines.

Everyone gathers in a circle, in case of larger group or a class, Students can gather in several groups and create several murals. Explain that the students will respond to the idea of identity and what it represents in relation to our life or the world around us and in creating a mural, they will show how the idea of identity can be expressed visually. Invite the group to sit or stand around one very large piece of blank paper on a table, floor, or taped to a wall surface and provide a large set of marker or crayons for writing. Or, divide the large group into smaller groups, each with their own piece of large, blank paper and set of markers/crayons. Ask students to work silently to use words and images to respond to the prompt. Play music while students work. After 10-15 minutes, gather around the Identity Mural. Or invite the students to place a word or image as a respectful response to something made by another student in a final, silent round or to add further color or detail to an image/word already on the paper.

Reflection:

- What images/colors stand out to you the most?
- Are there specific symbols/colors/flags that appear on multiple pages? What connections can we make across the pages?
- Why did this group/groups offer these responses?

Defining concept of personal identity and search for identity (10 Mins)

Thank you for sharing your views on concept of identity. Before we explore key concepts of our personal search for identity in comparison to the search of Esperanza, I want you to think about some features that mark you as an individual. Where do you belong? How can you define yourself as a person? Why do you think going somewhere else would make your life better and in what terms? Why is your country, your identity, place you were born in, is not enough or satisfying for you future development? Who are you?

Now let's think about the identity of our main character Esperanza. Where does she belong? Why does she think that Mango Street is not a place for her? Why is her family/community not enough? What does she think she should achieve to make her fulfilled? What is she searching for in her life? Who is Esperanza?

◆ Explore: Iceberg of Identity (30 mins)

Now we are going to define identity markers which influence and shape our perspective of others and ourselves. Using this strategy, we will try to reflect on ourselves and Esperanza and show that the search for identity in adolescence is a natural flow of growing up.

Invite participants to brainstorm a broad range of identity communities based on a range of markers (e.g., religious communities, race/ethnicity groups, socioeconomic status, familial relationships, and/or hobby/vocation).

Now we share participants in two groups to create two icebergs – one for students and the other for Esperanza. In the first group, based on these identity communities, ask each participant to compile an individual, written list of “identity markers,” which society may use to describe them (e.g., *female, black, liberal, daughter, girlfriend, young adult*). Each participant chooses five markers from their list – that they feel comfortable sharing – and writes one marker each, on 5 different post-its or individual pieces of paper with tape. Participants of the other group do the same for Esperanza.

Draw two pictures of two large icebergs outline in the water on a chalk/white board. It's important the drawing includes parts of the iceberg formation above and below the water level. Invite participants to place each of their 5 individual “markers” onto the iceberg image based on whether the identity marker is seen (placed above the water) or can be hidden (placed below water level) from others. Students of the first group decide for themselves and students of the second group decide on which markers are hidden for Esperanza and which are to be seen.

Afterwards, ask participants to switch groups and observe where identity markers are placed. Engage in dialogue about what markers are placed where and why. To close the strategy, invite participants to reflect on the ways individual and group identities are seen and not seen in this learning community and why this might be. All of the participants observe similarities of the two icebergs of two teenagers and open discussion.

Reflection:

- *How did it feel to write down markers of your identity? How did it feel to write down markers of someone else's identity? What categories of identity markers did we choose to include/exclude?*
 - *What identity markers are similarly/differently placed? Why do you think that happened?*
 - *How might identity inform our work together in this learning community?*
 - *What are the most prominent identity markers important for this age which are mutual across communities?*
 - *Which identity markers, i.e. our personal features, can we hide and which ones we cannot hide. Why?*
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◆ **Story of my identity (20 mins)** [*variation of Story of My Name*]

Students will sit in pairs and share conclusions about their identity and compare it to Esperanza and her struggle for identity.

As our final activity, you will share a brief story of your identity to your partner and possible conclusions to our initial questions about belonging, search and oneness.

Explain that each student shall share several points that define their identity and make a short story of it. The students shall receive a prepared sheet with three or more key questions based on the previous activity (e.g. *What community do I belong to? Which identity markers are visible on me physically? Which identity markers would I like to hide? Do I belong here where I was born? If I could, I would live in...? Who am I?* and similar intriguing questions) and a place to write a short story about their identity. Students can write a story on the basis of their answers to the previous questions in the form of blog or vignette or even a song.

Model the process by sharing the story of your name as an example.

Each pair decides to choose one person to shares their story first to the other student in a pair. All students share their stories at the same time. After two minutes ask the pairs to switch and the second person shares their story. After each person in the pair has shared, the full group comes back together to reflect on the activity. Students can share the story of their partners or report on similarities between partners.

In reflecting the activity, the group as a whole sit in a circle, one of the students receives a blank handout intended for story about Esperanza and has a task to write down answers the group provides. The activity is also relied on the iceberg and the prompts already written on the board. After agreeing on the answers about Esperanza, students write a story of Esperanza. Depending on the number of participants, students can write one or more story or stories. We can even make a competition on writing a blog, vignette or a song about Esperanza.

After creating all the stories or songs, students compare their stories to the story or stories of Esperanza's identity.

Reflection:

- *What did you notice about yourself as you participated in this activity?*
- *Did you connect to someone in terms of same challenges of identity?*
- *What similarities did you notice about all teenagers including Esperanza?*
- *Why does identity define us? Where do we belong? Why are we in constant search?*

The aim of the activity is to point to the similarities of teenage identity across different national identities and to show that the age of adolescence is somewhat a change in itself and with the issue of identity can be a real burden for such a young age.