

1 Introducing Research, Inquiry, and Connected Learning



*Research is formalized curiosity. It is
poking and prying with a purpose.*

—Zora Neale Hurston



No matter who we ask to think about the concept of culture, no matter what point they are at in their lives, it is a big issue to grapple with, to puzzle through. Asking ninth graders to think about it, especially at 7:45 in the morning, initially results in general bewilderment. This chapter shows how we effectively introduced students to the research, inquiry, and technology tools we used in the unit “Reading Our World and Exploring Perspectives: Identity and Culture.”

As we considered how best to frame this broad idea and help students break the work into manageable chunks, we identified a number of overlapping goals:

- Integrate technology in a robust and appropriate manner
- Invite students to begin their own inquiry process
- Teach students how to participate in a variety of digital spaces as productive digital citizens

We aimed to develop a shared sense of *artifacts of culture*, which we referred to as representations of a cultural characteristic (art, music, fashion, food, traditions, language, etc.), and *characteristics of culture*, which we referred to as abstract and metaphorical or “thinking about culture” (e.g., the trait of being individualistic).

In terms of technology, we introduced or reminded students of the following technologies:

- Wikispaces, our class site for this work, including daily agendas with links and handouts
- The Youth Voices social network, where students would post their blogs and respond to the posts of others
- Google Apps for Education, including Drive, Docs, and Slides, for collaborative work to share ideas, comment on one another’s work, and compose together

We also explored digital citizenship, asking students to think about how they represented themselves in existing online spaces, such as social networks outside of school, and how they could create academically appropriate—yet still personal—digital identities related to topics inspired through work in school. As we consider the ways in which this approach rewires the research and writing process, we encourage you to pay particular attention to the ways that students develop their own interest-driven questions, how they join a personal learning network of other engaged students, and how they use technology to explore and annotate texts.

For their inquiry, we asked students to think about big questions focused on identity and culture, knowing that some would “wobble” with the ideas being presented. As Fecho (2013) notes,

as teachers and students venture into dialogically primed spaces, they often do so with questions and doubt. It is in such spaces where . . . wobble (Fecho, 2011) happens, an indication that change is occurring and attention should be paid. (p. 117)

These moments where students—and teachers—“wobble” are important for learning, as we grapple with big questions and consider, explicitly, what we are learning and why we are learning it.

Charles Fort in *Wild Talents* (1998) wrote, “One can’t learn much and also be comfortable.” Challenges that initially feel uncomfortable can be a key part of learning. This is the “wobble,” or the moment when students are grappling with a big idea and not always getting it. Serious writers and professionals in other contexts often wrestle with such moments of uncertainty. It reflects critical thinking and real-life learning. But to establish a classroom for teachable moments that are uncomfortable, we need to be ready for mess and ready for challenges.

This chapter spans the first section of the unit, from the Preview Lesson through Lesson 5. We want to remind our readers that, in addition to the lesson outlines, links to all handouts and resources referenced in this book are available on the companion website, <http://resources.corwin.com/writingrewired>.

Beginning in this chapter and continuing through Chapter 5, we will share each lesson, including its purpose, its context within the inquiry unit, a handout for the lesson, and extensions and adaptations for consideration.

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PREVIEW LESSON: THINKING THROUGH A CULTURAL LENS

The purpose of this lesson is to help students

- Define and begin to establish a shared thinking space
- Explore artifacts that represent a culture and offer a tangible connection to the culture’s characteristics
- Determine characteristics of culture and analyze abstract and metaphorical characteristics of a culture

- Engage in initial brainstorming of cultural images based on student perception
- Preread key ideas for the unit of study

Reading and Responding to a Common Text

To introduce the inquiry unit, we asked students to read the transcript while viewing Sheikha Al Mayassa's (2010) TED Talk *Globalizing the Local, Localizing the Global*. (The transcript for many TED Talks can be accessed by clicking on a visible link on each video page: "View interactive transcript.") In this TED Talk, Al Mayassa explores the cultural identity of Qatar through examples of fashion, food, and technology. In this conversation, she additionally breaks down the importance of gender roles in understanding and disseminating cultural identity. When we selected this video, we recognized that Al Mayassa's talk is quite hefty in terms of both the type and number of ideas, especially for ninth graders, but we wanted to present students with a text that addressed our cultural focus, as well as challenged them so that they knew we would be working at a high level of sophistication in our conversation.

As we introduced this TED Talk, we invited the students to read and listen for the general messages and concepts presented about culture, not to understand every detail of Al Mayassa's presentation. After they viewed the video, we asked them to write and reflect on the speech and then discuss it. Through class discussion, we captured ideas from Al Mayassa's transcript and posted them in the discussion tab of our unit culture study wiki, as this website served as a class hub across all the sections of Dawn's courses; when students posted on this site, students in all class sections could observe ideas expressed by students from Dawn's other classes who were also studying this talk. For instance, some students identified cultural artifacts in Al Mayassa's speech—fashion, religion, tradition, food, mobile phones, and social media—and others found smart ideas as points to share, such as how sometimes cultures are misunderstood. In some cases, students latched on to key phrases, and in other instances, they were able to identify characteristics and artifacts of culture such as Al Mayassa's *abaya* (traditional dress), the role of women in a traditionally patriarchal culture, and new representations and interpretations of art. Al Mayassa also poses important questions that the students pointed out, including "What should culture in the 21st century look like?"

Reflective Writing and Thinking: Generating Initial Ideas

After exploring this initial text for our cultural study, we prompted students to engage in a quick activity of collecting images for their own TED Talk.

By asking students to identify five images that represent a culture, we intentionally created a task that was both quick and thought-provoking. We also set up the exercise to provoke cognitive dissonance as students “wobbled” with questions related to culture, such as “*What is culture?*” and “*How do we participate in it?*” We explained that their goal for the assignment was to capture quick first impressions of a culture so they could, by the end of the inquiry unit, have an artifact to return to as a reminder of their initial thinking related to culture.

During this activity, a student turned to Dawn and asked, “What are we doing? What will we do with this work?” He understood that this first assignment involved selecting images and participating in a conversation related to culture, but he wanted Dawn to identify the final destination. What would the end product be? Dawn replied, “We’re going to be exploring culture and our questions related to culture. We’ll be on a journey of inquiry together.” To succeed as researchers, students must learn to be comfortable embarking on journeys for the purpose of exploration without a prescribed final destination as the main goal. Of course, we had the end goal in mind, but we also intentionally were building in flexibility and intentional time to question and explore without a scripted response or format. After all, research should impact our thinking, and a predetermined idea is not being informed by research, just proven.

Still others didn’t jump ahead to try to determine the major end product but rather grappled with what culture to represent and whether or not to include an image related to a culture that they belonged to but did not participate in. For instance, one student recognized that while fast food plays an important role in American culture, she did not eat it. In that sense, the conversation among students was even better than we had expected. Students started asking questions: “Should I just represent American culture?” “Should it be my ethnic culture?” “Can it just be teenage culture?”

Initially, the students wanted us to answer these questions for them. Instead, we explained that they had to develop answers to these questions in the inquiry process and learn to be comfortable with the wobble and the challenge of exploring ideas through reading, writing, and researching as a means to refine their thinking and make purposeful decisions for a composition.

Collaborative Writing and Thinking: Sharing Initial Ideas

Students began the quick collection of cultural images on Friday, developed them over the weekend, and shared them on Monday. During that class period, students observed that they found pictures to be powerful messages of culture, citing the cliché that “a picture is worth a thousand words.”

We then asked students to share their TED Talk images and writing in a Google folder. Using the commenting and highlighting tools in Google Drive, students could respond to one another through a digital adaptation of “ink shedding.” In this peer response practice, students share original writing with one another and, as they read, “shed ink” on (or, more literally, underline) spots that they find interesting, that they appreciate, or that otherwise resonate for them in each other’s work (Ashbaugh, 2007). Students may also praise a text or pose thoughtful questions by inserting margin comments.

One student, Allison,¹ shared her work with the class. She had highlighted the social media aspects of culture. With an image of the Facebook logo, Allison wrote,

Facebook represents our culture because it allows us to express ourselves and tell others our thoughts. It is a huge social media outlet, which can affect how people react to different events and how they react to each other. It is positive because it allows people to share their thoughts and feelings, but is negative because it can also open people up to ridicule.

This note received a few comments, including one from Beverly, who said,

I hugely agree with this. I also think that although the Internet can connect people who are far away, it has taken control over people’s lives. People can spend hours on end just staring at a lit-up screen.

Thaarini followed Beverly’s comment:

I agree with both of you guys. People can express themselves on social media, but it also takes up their lives because they can get absorbed into it.

Through this discussion with comments in a Google presentation, students were starting the inquiry process as they engaged in conversation surrounding

1. With their parents’ permission, we identify all students by their real first names. We thank them for allowing us to bring their voices to this book.

HAND
OUT**Preview Lesson. Thinking Through a Cultural Lens**

We see artifacts of culture all around us—clothes, buildings, signs, and more. Yet, we don't often slow down to understand what these artifacts say about our culture, or our identities as individuals. Today, we are going to view a TED Talk from Sheikha Al Mayassa from Qatar, who invites us to think about her culture and how it is changing in the 21st century.

Activity 1: Viewing a TED Talk

This presenter shares her thoughts about how the country of Qatar is changing in the modern era. As you watch, we encourage you to think about some of the artifacts that she presents as well as what those artifacts demonstrate about the characteristics of her culture.

Cultural Artifact	What does this demonstrate about Qatar?

Activity 2: Creating Your Own TED Talk

Now it's your turn. Imagine that you must deliver a TED Talk tomorrow, in which you describe your own culture like Al Mayassa did in her talk. Please do the following:

- Find at least five images that represent characteristics and/or artifacts of your culture. Import those images into separate slides in a Google presentation.
- Next to the image, explain how your image represents culture. Consider why you selected this image. Also, consider various perspectives. Think about it: Is this a positive or negative representation? Why or why not? What does it suggest about culture, cultural values, and cultural identity?



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images. Inquiry was naturally developing and being co-created through collaborations with peers.

Interestingly, Allison made the move to feature cultural groups. She examined not only American society at large with social media but also her school culture with a focus on academics and grades, as well as her own ethnic culture. In this way, she started brainstorming about various cultures and their influence on our lives. Another student, Amjid, shared his work with the class. It was clear he appreciated and respected his religious culture, as he joyfully shared images that reflected his Islamic culture, such as making a pilgrimage to Mecca.

Inquiry was naturally developing and being co-created through collaborations with peers.

Across the classroom, diverse backgrounds and experiences were highlighted as students appreciated hearing one another's stories. Through our shared Google folder, students visited one another's work, viewing images and representations of culture and commenting on the choices other students made for this same task. Students began to recognize that the work was both personal (i.e., each student could relate to it personally as culture is important to self, family, and community) and public (because the content that was represented often informs many of the things that happen in our society, communities, and cultures).

Extensions and Adaptations for the Preview Lesson

To introduce various thematic units, teachers can use different modes and media for engaging texts. When choosing a mentor text, it's important to think about whether or not students will find it accessible, as well as applicable and relevant. To adapt this lesson, consider using different introductory material or a different TED Talk or film. The text of focus could also be a song or image related to the topic. Several websites, including Edudemic, feature TED Talks for Classrooms.

LESSON 1. EXPLORING DIGITAL IDENTITIES

The purpose of this lesson is to help students

- Activate prior knowledge about digital citizenship
- Discuss factors impacting choices to post writing online
- Revisit and refine ideas about digital citizenship and responsibilities related to posting work online
- Introduce ideas related to questioning
- Explore the writing of a digital profile

Composing for Online Spaces

In Lesson 1, Dawn made a number of teaching moves related to prompting student reflection about publishing online and digital identity. To see the lesson, watch Video 1.1. Students in Dawn’s class had already explored the concept of digital citizenship throughout the school year, and it was also clear that they had learned about Internet safety in middle school. Earlier in the year, students had talked about the scary (though sometimes overblown) news reports of Internet predators and the importance of digital safety. They had also shared stories of ways in which people make inappropriate moves in digital spaces—moves that can have real implications for school and job opportunities. Consequently, this portion of our initial teaching happened relatively quickly, but other teachers may need to spend more time on this broad subject with their own students.

Some Considerations for Posting Work Online

When we teach from a rhetorical perspective, we focus on encouraging students to carefully consider their audience. This also means that students need to recognize that what they put online stays online and could follow them as writers, as content can stay associated with their name. This reality is an exciting one, but it also comes with certain responsibilities.

As teachers, we need to consider that if students post content online that contains errors or immature viewpoints, it could possibly jeopardize some aspects of their future college and career goals. There are times when people evaluate others without knowing the context, especially in a digital space.

To honor our students, we need to think about giving them choices—not just because the publishing medium is digital, but also to help them own their work. Specifically, we need to address the role of digital safety head on and allow students and their parents/guardians to make choices about when and what to post.

We contend that, at least in our digital class space, thoughtful learning around the role of digital citizenship can happen even if a student makes a mistake. Supporting students in these situations, as well as setting them up for success with their digital identity, is important. We also acknowledge that if we are teaching digital literacy skills, we need to do so in digital spaces and invite students to participate in real digital conversations.

In Lesson 1, we asked students to write about how they make choices in what they post online and their understanding of a digital identity. Students quickly came up with answers and jotted them on our wiki discussion forum. General responses noted the importance of keeping audience in mind and the need to think twice before posting. For instance,

watch it here



Video 1.1

<http://resources.corwin.com/writingrewired>

To read a QR code, you must have a smartphone or tablet with a camera. We recommend that you download a QR code reader app that is made specifically for your phone or tablet brand.

one student said, “Before you post—think about how you sound or how much information you post. Even if it is not a finished piece, you still need to think before posting.” Students described digital identity, noting, “Who you are—everything you post online—helps show who you are. How you portray yourself across the Internet (what you post, pictures, what you say)—this characterizes you for those who don’t know you.” Students further mentioned that digital identity is important for college and jobs and can be very positive.

Additionally, students mentioned that they saw publishing work online as a valuable way to get feedback on their writing, but that this opportunity required them to be open to criticism too. In this way, students embraced writing online for the purpose of sharing process work and also final published work. They understood that they had to be careful in their thinking because an audience would be present in the digital space and that, when they post online, they are leaving behind their digital footprint.

Creating an Online Profile

This lesson intentionally placed the development of a profile with the conversation about digital citizenship, digital identity, and digital footprints. In some educational settings, students are positioned to avoid social networks for their own safety. However, we contend that they will need to operate within these spaces for their education and careers. Networking for many jobs includes using social media resources for the purpose of gaining a job (e.g., through LinkedIn), demonstrating credibility of skills, and sharing resources and learning collaboratively. When a student told Dawn that she does not like computers, Dawn replied, “If you want to operate in this world, whether or not you *like* computers is less important than *how and when you use them.*”

The Internet is full of people trying on different personas and identities in various spaces, and students need to recognize different purposes for online spaces. As such, the development of their academic profile is an important one. To create an effective profile, students must learn how to identify their audience and consider how they might be perceived in a digital space. For this lesson, students wrote about themselves for an academic audience, and to support their work with inquiry, part of this lesson was to develop five “self” and “world” questions; selected questions developed by various students are shown in Table 1.1.

Of course, looking at these initial questions, any middle or high school teacher (or parent of a teen) can understand why students are asking these types of questions. Taken out of context, they could seem trite, or cliché.

Table 1.1 Student “Self” and “World” Questions

Examples of “Self” Questions for Student Profiles	Examples of “World” Questions for Student Profiles
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What job am I going to get? • Are there some aspects of my culture that I don’t know about? • Will I ever get married/have kids? • What would be a great new hobby for me? • How do others perceive me? • Where are my strengths? • Is my life already planned out for me? • Am I “normal”? • Am I capable of making a significant mark on the world? • What most surprises others about me? • What one sentence best describes me? • What will I do when I grow up? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How was the universe created? • Will there ever be a way to get rid of pollution? • When will our world end? • Are humans inherently flawed? • How do I know “reality” isn’t just some elaborate dream? • What happens when we die? • How large is the universe? Is there intelligent life out there? • How much about the universe do we really know? • Will all the nations on Earth ever get along? • What does the future hold? • Will humans ever leave Earth?

As we designed an inquiry-based unit, we wanted to honor and understand these pressing questions in our students’ lives while, eventually, pushing them to ask more critical, specific questions about their own identity and the broader influences of culture.

Extensions and Adaptations for Lesson 1

There are a variety of existing curricular materials available to help teachers develop conversations about digital citizenship. Resources that we trust are from Common Sense Media (www.common Sense Media.org), the Digital ID project (<http://digital-id.wikispaces.com>), and Digital Citizenship (www.digitalcitizenship.net). Each site offers activities that can be taught in one class period or as an entire unit. We encourage you to visit these sites and adapt the lessons as needed for your own students.

HAND OUT

Lesson 1. Exploring Digital Identities

Digital identities include how we present ourselves and interact in digital spaces. Our digital footprints also speak to this identity as we leave tracks that give information about ourselves in online spaces. How will you craft your digital identity? How does what we leave behind in our footprints have implications for our futures? How will you make purposeful decisions as you craft your digital identity?

Activity 1: Writing, Reflecting, and Discussion

Writing time:

- As a critical thinker and writer, what do you need to consider when writing in an online space?
- What value is there in sharing ideas that are not “final draft” quality in an online space?
- What do you need to consider when posting ideas that are final polished pieces of writing?
- What does it mean to have a digital identity?
- What is your identity in a public online space? How will you participate in online academic communities?

Share responses: Pair share, class share

Class discussion: What do we believe about digital citizenship and safe digital identities?

Activity 2: Brainstorming Ideas for Your Profile

We will be joining a social network of students whose academic experience includes engaging in online discussion with students across the nation. Part of joining this community includes the opportunity to develop your own profile.

You may make an avatar for your profile picture. You can also add to your profile to share information about yourself. Your first task is to compose your profile information.

For your profile, you can be as simple as stating your grade in school, an interest or two, or recent books you have read. You can also develop this further if you like.

You do need to write five “self” and five “world” questions to think about inquiry questions, and you may also use them in your profile. See <http://youthvoices.net/questions> for a guide to writing your questions.

In our next lesson, we will review examples and work on revision.



Available for download at <http://resources.corwin.com/writingrewired>

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Password Management

Managing digital spaces can be a challenging task for adults, let alone for students. While students need to make their own choices with parent/guardian input on how to manage these spaces, we do offer a few tips for students to manage passwords.

We have heard the idea that “the best password is the one that you can’t remember,” which sounds, of course, paradoxical. Really, it makes a good deal of sense in that we should remember a single master password, one of significant complexity that we can then use to access our other passwords. Online services like LastPass (<https://lastpass.com>) and downloadable programs like KeePass (<http://keepass.info>) allow users to generate secure passwords for websites, store those passwords, and access their entire collection with a single master password.

These password management tools are an essential component of how we teach our students to become smart digital readers and writers.

**TECH
TIP**

LESSON 2. CULTURAL CONVERSATIONS ONLINE: JOINING YOUTH VOICES AND READING COLLABORATIVELY

The purpose of this lesson is to help students

- Review and revise profile work through careful practices of providing feedback to others
- Develop profiles on the Youth Voices network to join an academic community conversation
- Explore voice and tone for writing in online spaces
- Refine “self” and “world” questions as a step toward developing clear inquiry questions

Identity and Tone for Online Spaces

Throughout the school year, Dawn’s class discussed the importance of entering conversations in online spaces. She explained that just as they would choose an appropriate tone for talking to their friends, parents, or teachers in various settings, students needed to select the proper language and tone for Youth Voices, a space for academic discourse. She introduced students to Youth Voices as a space for serious, yet still personal, writing and thinking,

and noted that given this digital setting, she expected them to refrain from using only “digitalk,” or language acceptable for online communications outside of academic settings that may include abbreviations, emoticons, and other shortened textual forms (Turner, 2012, 2014), as well as from engaging in the types of social banter that are acceptable in other online spaces.

Thus, we asked students to generate a draft of their profile in Google Docs, including and building on their five “self” and five “world” questions. As they reviewed one another’s work, we asked them to consider response questions:

- *What do you appreciate about this author’s profile? How does he or she use his or her voice to accentuate positive aspects of his or her personality and interests?*
- *What might you suggest that he or she add or revise? What do you want to know more about?*
- *How might he or she incorporate his or her “self” and “world” questions into the profile? They don’t need to be a list of the questions necessarily, but how could those ideas be sprinkled throughout the author’s description of himself or herself?*

As students read one another’s profiles, they answered these questions and, in turn, generated more ideas for their own writing. Building in purposeful peer response provided time for students to work on their writing and engage in revision. Additionally, emphasis on peer response for student profiles was an intentional decision. We wanted students to think about what they were writing and how to address the audience and purpose of Youth Voices. While students could quickly compose a profile and post it, spending more time on revision for this first publication on the website set the tone for careful thinking, writing, and revising of work students would post on Youth Voices. Through this work, students also reflected on the conversations about digital literacy and what they post online by the simple step of taking more time to review their work instead of the popular approach of write and post—without much reflection or revision—that students often experience on social media sites. In Video 1.2, Dawn helps students think about developing inquiry questions through their profile work, while keeping purpose and audience in mind.

watch it here



Video 1.2

<http://resources.corwin.com/writingrewired>

Joining Youth Voices

To conclude the first part of this lesson, we asked students to join Youth Voices, an online academic community (<http://youthvoices.net>). We suggest that you set up your account and school page on the Youth Voices site before asking students to create profiles, as this step will allow you to make students members and link to individual student pages from a Youth Voices page specifically for your school and your students.

Lesson 2. Cultural Conversations Online: Joining Youth Voices and Reading Collaboratively

Collaboration is important to our shared thinking. By brainstorming ideas with one another, we can generate more possibilities for writing. Also, we can make our own work better by offering feedback to one another.

Today's work focuses on reviewing our profiles to get another perspective and share ideas with collaborative reading.

Activity 1: Reading a Mentor Text

Read the example profile below. Highlight, underline, or put a star next to elements of the profile that stand out to you as important to know or that demonstrate voice as a writer.

- What do you appreciate about this profile?
- What might you suggest that the author add or revise?
- How might the author further incorporate "self" and "world" questions into his profile?



Youth Voices Logo

Source: Youth Voices Logo, <http://youthvoices.net/> Used with permission.

My name is Bob. I attend Okemos High School, and I am a freshman. I enjoy reading science fiction books, and I enjoy playing soccer. Other interests of mine include hanging out with friends, listening to music, and learning how to play the guitar. I enjoy socializing with friends at sporting events and on social media. I have a cat and dog, and two sisters. I enjoy sharing ideas with others. I am interested in the universe, and I wonder if alien life-forms exist. Does the government cover up alien interactions? What would I find if I visited another planet? Are any aliens like those we watch on Star Wars? I am also interested in paleontology. My favorite dinosaurs are the Triceratops and Tyrannosaurus rex. I would love to go on a dinosaur dig. I wonder, How many fossils are yet to be found? How did the dinosaurs go extinct? In what ways can our society work to prevent such destruction from happening again? Are any alien life-forms similar to dinosaurs?

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Activity 2: Review Profiles

In small groups, review your profile drafts. In Google Drive, share your profile draft with your writing group. Respond to one another using the following questions:

- What does each profile suggest about the author?
- In what ways is this profile appropriate for an academic social network?
- Review the writer's "self" and "world" questions. Do the questions make sense to other readers? If not, why not?
- What might be revised so that others understand the writer's questions?
- In what ways might the questions spark further research or discussion with others on Youth Voices?
- Offer any other constructive comments or questions for the writer.

Activity 3: Join Youth Voices (or Your Class's Online Community)

- Create an account at <http://youthvoices.net/user/register>.
- Copy and paste your revised profile from Google Drive into your bio on Youth Voices.
- Create your profile!



Available for download at <http://resources.corwin.com/writingrewired>

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Extensions and Adaptations for Lesson 2

Extensions of the profile work are also important to consider. How students introduce themselves in online spaces can relate to personal narrative writing. Students might share a top-ten list about themselves, inquiry questions, or even a personal narrative, poem, or digital story to introduce themselves into the community.

Additionally, the technology that students use to create their social network could be Edmodo, Schoology, Nicenet, Chalkup, Google Classroom, or any number of other appropriate tools. Other social network options include Wiggio, Spruz, GroupSpaces, and Ning. While these services are generally “free,” be mindful that some of them (Spruz and Ning) may have fees if you go over a certain amount of users on the site.

We recommend Youth Voices because it is maintained by teachers connected with the National Writing Project and because we know that students are encouraged (and taught how) to participate in ongoing conversations across classrooms and communities. Perhaps you want to start with something smaller or more self-contained with one of these other tools, yet know that you—and your students—would be welcomed in the Youth Voices community.

LESSON 3. BEGINNING THE CULTURAL CONVERSATION

The purpose of this lesson is to help students

- Review and use reading strategies for a careful close reading of a common text
- Collaborate and share thinking related to culture and identity
- Build ideas and thinking related to culture and identity
- Establish clear classroom community guidelines for discussing issues related to culture

Digital Reflections on Collaborative Reading

In this lesson, students engaged in a close reading of a common text. To continue the culture conversation, we used Katie Soe’s “The Great Cultural Divide: Multiethnic Teens Struggle With Self-Identity, Others’ Perceptions” (2006). This text was interesting to students because it is written by a teen and includes experiences that some students understood firsthand. So, what happened when we had students respond to the article digitally? Many

students used the comment and highlighting feature in Google Docs not only to comment on the article but also to reply to one another's comments. In our diverse setting, some students discovered that they could relate to the article about being from a multiethnic background. Others recognized that they could not relate directly but that the points in the piece were very important and insightful. Students were also able to identify characteristics and artifacts in the article that reflect culture.

Some learners related very personally to the article, noting how they identify themselves on forms that require them to select an ethnicity. One student wrote,

I can totally relate to this. I hate having to mark "other." It feels like I'm different from everyone, like an alien.

Later in the unit, another student replied to this student's post, noting,

If you're an alien, you're a cool alien :)

And the first student replied at the beginning of her spring break:

aw thanks :3

In this way, students continued to interact with texts even after we'd studied them in class. They also engaged in conversations with their reading in interesting ways as commenting on the text and even interactive commenting with peers, and moved the learning from reading to writing.

We had originally selected Soe's article in part because it would raise the concept that there are various differences in our classroom related to culture. As such, it was a good setup for a review of the need to respect and appreciate our differences and different opinions. We established a few ground rules for discussion, such as "Comments should allow an opportunity for everyone to be heard" and "We learn a lot when we disagree; accept different opinions and be open to learning from others," and we offered students the opportunity to add to the discussion expectations. This conversation about the text and our discussion expectations allowed students to build on their thinking related to culture in a very manageable way. Additionally, they continued to practice their careful critical reading skills and marking of a text.

Using Google Drive and Google Docs as a Tool for Annotation

TECH TIP

Google Drive—a cloud-based suite of software including a word processor, spreadsheet, and slide-style presentation tool—is available for free for anyone who creates a Google account. Dawn’s school district already subscribed to Google Apps for Education, thus providing her students access to these tools when they logged in with their school network ID.

Often cited for its collaborative, real-time writing and editing capabilities, Google Docs can also be creatively repurposed for a variety of tasks. In this case, Dawn chose to use Google Docs as a space for the students to respond to writing. To do this, she

1. Navigated her web browser to a site with the article “The Great Cultural Divide” by Katie Soe
2. Copied the entire article and pasted it into a new Google Doc
3. Created a shared folder in Google Drive named “First Hour” for the class, and invited students to this folder, using their Gmail addresses
4. Shared the Google Doc with her entire class by placing it in the shared “First Hour” folder
5. Instructed students either to use the “make a copy” function to create their own version, or to place comments in the shared Google Doc

Of course, the copy-and-paste move here offered Dawn a good opportunity to talk about plagiarism as well as copyright and fair use. In this case, Dawn was asking students to use copyrighted material for an educational purpose, commenting upon it, and identifying elements of culture. During this lesson, Dawn modeled her thinking about this concept by taking on the role of a student and pondering aloud as a student might. Specifically, Dawn noted that she was not attempting to use any part of Soe’s article for quoting in her own writing, nor would she ever try to pass Soe’s writing off as her own, a clear act of plagiarism. Instead, in this case, she was repurposing the original work for an educational purpose, an allowable fair use of the copyrighted material.

Extensions and Adaptations for Lesson 3

There are a variety of ways to work with students and text annotation, such as arranging students in different groups based on lesson objectives or using different tools for annotation. From e-books to social bookmarking notes, technology opportunities abound.

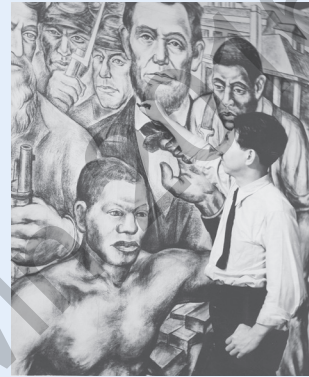
HAND OUT

Lesson 3. Beginning the Cultural Conversation

At this point, we return to our first set of essential questions: What is culture? How do various individuals, communities, and groups describe the characteristics of “culture”? Also, consider two related subquestions:

- What are characteristics of culture? How do these characteristics influence and contribute to culture?
- When are cultural characteristics considered positive, and when are they considered negative?

You are going to use your abilities as a critical reader to explore an article by Katie Soe, “The Great Cultural Divide: Multiethnic Teens Struggle With Self-Identity, Perceptions.” As you read, we want you to consider Soe’s perspective, and to make connections to your own cultural experience.



Archives of American Art,
Eitaro Ishigaki

Source: Wikimedia Commons.

Activity 1: Reading Strategy Review

Discussion Review: What reading strategies do we already know and use? In teams, write a list of at least six strategies you can use when wrestling with a challenging text.

Activity 2: Close Reading of “The Great Cultural Divide”

Group leader: Copy and paste the text from “The Great Cultural Divide” into a new Google Doc and share with your group.

Group reader: Read the article aloud as everyone else will use the commenting and highlighting tools to take notes on the reading. Every group member should highlight at least three important points from the article and include at least one comment.

Summarize: After your group discusses the article, capture notes and write a four- to five-sentence summary of what your team identifies as the key ideas of this article. Also, include at least one question that still remains for your group. Post the summary to our online class space for Lesson 3.

Activity 3: Reflection

Individually, please write a brief reflection on Soe’s article. How do you relate to her argument that “because people have different ideas about how ethnicity should be expressed, this can be a source of frustration and disappointment”? Do you agree or disagree? Why?



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Classroom Management in Virtual Spaces

It is inevitable that students will make mistakes. After all, isn't making mistakes part of learning? Still, when students take missteps online, the consequences may be permanent, so it's essential to discuss digital citizenship. Share examples with students too; stories from the news about people who have used digital spaces inappropriately can be discussed for the purpose of learning and making smart decisions in online spaces.

Particular issues to discuss and watch out for include using racist, sexist, classist, or other stereotypes or posting inappropriate or suggestive words.

During our inquiry unit on "The Great Cultural Divide," a student silently waved Dawn over to her screen to show her that another student (they couldn't tell who) had inserted a swear word in the title.

Dawn chose to tackle this behavior head on. She stopped the class and immediately had students write answers in response to the following questions:

- *What responsibility do I have to my class, my classmates, and my learning?*
- *How do I want to be treated? What do I need from others to be treated as a mature learner?*

All the students brought up the idea of "respect" in their writing while referring to their classmates and/or teacher, noting that this respect needed to extend to their digital conversations. It was clear that they valued and respected their learning community.

No one confessed to adding the swear word, but several students apologized on behalf of the group. Dawn realized it was less important to identify and discipline the writer than to have the entire class see the impact such behavior could have on their learning, reminding them of the responsibility they had for their classroom learning community.

Here are a few tips for classroom management in virtual spaces:

- Review student expectations for behavior in digital spaces just like you would in your physical classroom.
- Help students understand publishing decisions and variance between spaces.
- Discuss academic personas versus personal personas.
- Review implications for inappropriate posting both in and out of class.
- Manage your moves as a teacher. If you are worried about students writing in online spaces, start with a tool that offers monitoring.
- Extend your proximity to include not only moving near students, but also looking at their screens. This does not have to be onerous, but students need to see the teacher monitor and to have consequences if they get off task.
- Establish a classroom community and know your students on both your physical and digital classroom spaces. Students might behave differently in each space.

TEACHING**TIP**

A few ways to work on annotating with students could include the following:

- Diigo (free, with premium services; web-based)
- Evernote (free, with premium services; web-based)
- Genius or Lit Genius (free, web-based tool for annotating)
- Hypothes.is (free, web-based service for annotating, collaborating, and organizing work)
- NowComment (free, web-based tool for collaborative commenting)
- OneNote (a component of Microsoft Office)

LESSON 4. EXPLORING VISUAL CULTURE THROUGH FOOD WRAPPERS AND ANALYZING VISUAL CULTURE

The purpose of this lesson is to help students

- Explore arguments about culture
- Review the role of visual texts in our construction of cultural ideas
- Question various texts in our everyday world, such as the food wrapper
- Analyze the rhetorical moves of a food wrapper
- Develop and build upon our definitions and understandings about culture
- Analyze various aspects of a culture as based on a food wrapper
- Explore the role of business, technology, legalities, and safety, presumptions all present in the text of a food wrapper
- Continue to support learning communities through the common practices of reading, discussing, and writing

Reading a Food Wrapper: Questioning Cultural Artifacts

At this point, students had viewed a TED Talk, explored images related to culture, and engaged in a shared reading of a brief nonfiction text. To further their thinking about culture and texts, we asked students to bring a food wrapper to class (a move we learned from Dànielle DeVoss). Even though this is a simple task, some students were surprised by the nature of

this request. A food wrapper? We also gave students the challenge of being creative in their food wrapper selections so that we might have the chance to share a broad range of material. Some embraced this challenge, looking for a unique type of food, while others simply grabbed the nearest candy bar wrapper for the assignment.

When students prepared to analyze their food wrappers as text that offers messages that teachers often don't consider, we asked big questions to prompt students to consider the cultural artifacts involved:

- What does it mean that a lot of wrappers are shiny or the inside of a wrapper is made with silver paper? What marketing considerations might be part of packaging?
- Why is it that natural colors—such as green and blue—or pictures of nature are found on packages that promote sugary foods?
- What does color psychology have to do with understanding our food wrappers?

This food wrapper exercise helped students examine perspectives and carefully read the world around them. By answering questions, students were also prompted to form more questions.

For instance, one student brought in an energy bar with a banner proclaiming “High in Protein!” This raised a series of questions about our cultural assumptions related to the typical American diet, as well as dieting as a way to lose weight, which led to further questions about our perceptions on healthy weight levels and body image. These views were held in contrast to reading this wrapper as a product to help a culture that might not have access to meat for protein requirements in a diet.

Thus, a relatively simple claim on just one wrapper created its own inquiry process through a brief class discussion. As students worked in small groups, each person asked similar questions about everything from candy to ramen noodles, from potato chips to bottled water. During class, in the discussion tab of the wiki, students wrote about their ideas related to questioning the food wrapper.

Analyzing Visual Culture

In addition to prompting students to explore the questions about food wrappers, we asked them to view a slide show titled “Analyzing Visual Culture,” which originated from one of our mentors, Professor Dànielle DeVoss at Michigan State University. Available on the companion website at <http://resources.corwin.com/writingrewired>, this slide show offers various definitions of culture, thus echoing the work that students engaged in

before their analysis of food wrappers. It also establishes the argument that culture revolves around digital technologies, cultural ideas and artifacts are remixed and repurposed, meaning is created across various modalities, and meaning can be contested.

Through the arguments made in the slide show, we explored the impact of technology on culture and the role we play in society as not only consumers of texts but also producers of texts. DeVoss uses the term *prosumers*, originally coined by Alvin Toffler in his book *The Third Wave* (1980). Moreover, we explored the role of remixing to create new messages, a concept important to composing texts with digital media. Popular references in society constantly deal with textuality, and we examined the role of remixed material across modes and media as oral, visual, and textual elements are combined. As part of this activity, we wanted students to begin to recognize meaning that is made based on modality. This understanding is important for students as they engage with a variety of texts, and we continued to define texts as not only the printed word but also visual compositions and speeches, and even food wrappers.

Furthermore, we explored the role of parody in our society. For instance, there is a genre of video trailers that have become even more popular with the emergence of YouTube: parody horror trailers. Users will take existing footage and—under the provisions of fair use in the Copyright Act of 1976—create parody horror trailers. Many exist on YouTube, some of amateur quality and others that are quite exemplary ranging from *Willy Wonka* to *Frozen* to *Mrs. Doubtfire*. We examined the *Scary “Mary Poppins”* video as one way to remix texts and understand how it can change meaning (Rule, 2006).

At the same time, we also explored the changing nature of texts with the role of technology by viewing cultural anthropologist Michael Wesch’s brief film *Web 2.0: The Machine Is Us/ing Us* (2007), which explores the malleable nature of digital texts. In this film, Wesch blends a variety of screen captures and screencasting of activity on his computer to argue that digital text is different from print text. Along the same lines, we considered the manner in which text, communication, and education are changing by viewing the *Did You Know? Shift Happens* video, which demonstrates the changing nature of our society in the 21st century, especially as it is influenced by technology. This informational film, originally created by educators Karl Fisch and Scott McLeod in 2007, outlines dozens of facts about the changing nature of our digital world (and has, itself, been remixed numerous times). Just as we had students explore concepts about culture by examining the food wrappers, we used these films to help them consider the idea that meaning can be created by composing with various media and remixing content.

We explored the impact of technology on the role we play in society—not only as consumers of texts but as producers of them.

Lesson 4 (Part 1). Exploring Visual Culture Through Food Wrappers

HAND OUT

As we look at the world around us, exploration of cultural artifacts and visual culture can help us read and understand our world. Consider the essential questions:

- How do artifacts and characteristics of culture influence your life?
 - What are artifacts of your culture, such as images, music, food, clothing, ceremonies, or pop culture icons?
 - What do artifacts of culture suggest about cultural characteristics? (For instance, if an artifact is a protein bar, what does this demonstrate about culture? Does it suggest that our culture needs protein or is obsessed with body image?)
 - How do you imagine these artifacts and characteristics of culture will continue to influence your life in the future?

Activity 1: Defining Culture

As a team, develop a response to the following questions and post it in our online class space:

- What is culture? What is American culture?
- What characteristics are important to culture?
- How might these questions be important to our reading of literature and our world?

Activity 2: Food Wrapper Analysis

Look at the wrapper and identify what it tells us about the culture the wrapper is from. In a group document, write down everything you might assume about this culture by looking at these wrappers.

- What kind of assumptions does this document make of its audience?
- What are you expected to know when you look at this?
- What sort of legal, safety, or other presumptions does this make?
- What does it tell us about business in that culture? Systems of measurement in that culture? Technology in that culture?

Activity 3: Arguments About Visual Culture

Based on our work with exploring ideas related to culture, we can make some general arguments about visual culture. We will look at a slide presentation, adapted from

(Continued)

(Continued)

Danielle DeVoss at Michigan State University, as a way to think about how images and culture connect. Consider these questions as you view the slides:

- How do you define culture? Why do you define culture in this way? What value is there in defining culture?
- What are some of the factors that influence culture? Why are these significant?
- How does the changing nature of texts impact culture? How do digital spaces impact culture? What impact does that have on your understanding about culture?
- What texts do you consume? What texts do you produce? How would you define a “prosumer” culture? How are you a part of that culture?
- How is meaning made in a culture? How are visuals a part of culture?
- What role do remixing, remaking, and rehashing have in how we define culture?



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Lesson 4 (Part 2). Analyzing Visual Culture

HAND OUT

Based on our work with exploring ideas related to culture, we can make some general arguments about culture.

Think about your ideas inspired by the “Analyzing Visual Culture” presentation as you consider the following video arguments and their implications.

	<i>Did You Know?</i>	<i>Scary "Mary Poppins"</i>	<i>Web 2.0: The Machine Is Us/ing Us</i>
What do you notice about the design of the video? What do you notice about the color scheme? Camera angles? Text and captions?			
What does each video suggest about our culture? What message do you take away from the video? What role do remixing, remaking, and rehashing have in this video?			

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watch it here



Video 1.3

<http://resources.corwin.com/writingrewired>

After viewing their food wrappers from this new perspective, students expressed that they both enjoyed the process and learned how to analyze one form of text in a deep manner. This activity was a scaffold for deeper analysis that would come later in the inquiry process, helping them to question various assumptions about texts, as well as to recognize many types of texts that could be important in their study of culture and identity. As this lesson ended, students were primed to begin our exploration of the definition of ethnography the next day. Conversations from this lesson about visual literacy and arguments about culture are shared in Video 1.3.

Extensions and Adaptations for Lesson 4

Teachers might structure this lesson in different ways by varying the guided notes page or asking different questions of texts. Additionally, students could explore various texts for analysis. A few texts for consideration could be

- Advertisements
- Art
- Magazines
- Songs

While not all ads on this site are school appropriate, carefully selected images from Adbusters can be used effectively to demonstrate the power and pervasiveness of advertising (see www.adbusters.org). Additionally, Renee Hobbs and her colleagues at the Media Education Lab (see <http://mediaedlab.com>) have created a variety of interactive and useful lessons, including a set of resources including Powerful Voices for Kids (<http://powerfulvoicesforkids.com>) and My Pop Studio (www.mypopstudio.com).

LESSON 5. INTRODUCING ETHNOGRAPHY AND THE CULTURE COLLAGE ASSIGNMENT

The purpose of this lesson is to help students

- Consider various perspectives as a way to see the world from a different view and support the role of questioning
- Explore the concept of ethnography and apply it to understanding the need to read carefully and closely
- Review the need to be ethnographers to collect and create a culture collage
- Practice being both producers and consumers of texts

Becoming Digital Ethnographers: Embracing Culture Through Perspective

By the end of this first week, we wanted students to begin seeing themselves as both consumers and producers of culture, with the ability to understand and interpret various forms of text in their world. Greene (1981) explores the importance of “perceiving and noticing” as a part of aesthetic education, which we contend is an important part of the research process. She further notes that students

ought to have opportunities, in every classroom, to pay heed to color and glimmer and sound, to attend to the appearances of things from an aesthetic point of view. If not, they are unlikely to be in a position to be challenged by what they see or hear; and one of the great powers associated with the arts is the power to challenge expectations, to break stereotypes, to change the ways in which persons apprehend the world. (Greene, 1981, pp. 136–137)

In this spirit, we invited students to be ethnographers in our classroom community. We asked them to think about the definition of ethnographers as people who study culture through careful consideration of perspectives from observation, interviews, and analysis of artifacts.

To begin the lesson, we asked students to team up and take pictures with one another of interesting angles and perspectives in our classroom. Within a matter of seconds, students were standing on tables and lying on the floor to get interesting pictures that we would not always see in a classroom. In Video 1.4, you can see Dawn explain the instructions to capture pictures with a different perspective.

Looking at the classroom through a new lens also led students to the conversation about being ethnographers within their own culture to explore its rich perspectives and artifacts. While this exercise was engaging for students because it was fun, it was also purposeful because few of them had thought about photography in this manner before. Most were accustomed to taking snapshots or, as was popular at the time, “selfies.” However, most had not thought about composing an image by choosing a different perspective, framing the shot, or thinking purposefully about the message that they intended for the image to convey. The process of “re-seeing” the classroom, a space where students can often zero in on their own personal space and small group, reminded all of us that taking time to rethink our perspective is useful. And it’s not lost on us that this teaching move would honor Mr. Keating from *Dead Poets Society* (Weir & Schulman, 1989), the teacher who invited his students to stand on a desk and look around the room to see from a different perspective. Students were also beginning a research process by experiencing the work of ethnography.

watch it here



Video 1.4

<http://resources.corwin.com/writingrewired>

Extensions and Adaptations for Lesson 5

There are various ways for students to be ethnographers. Whether they take on the role of ethnographers in the classroom or around the school, the experience of “looking” is an important one. In addition to taking photos of the classroom, students could engage in a mini-lesson to analyze photographs related to perspective. Teachers might also prepare a more focused lesson on being an ethnographer in students’ homes and neighborhoods. Finally, students could also explore existing photo sets on Flickr, Picasa, or other photo-sharing services.

The Culture Collage Assignment

The final piece of this week included an introduction to the Culture Collage Assignment, which asked students to consider perspectives and collect images of their culture (see the handout on page 55). The timing of this assignment, on the day before spring break, was intentional; rather than starting a novel for the literature circles (as we describe in Chapter 2), we agreed that a flexible creative assignment would work well to keep students engaged in questions of culture during the break. Obviously, this assignment could also fit during a week or over a weekend too. One of the goals for this assignment was to have students synthesize the ideas that they had been exploring through the first week’s lessons. The assignment was designed to be interesting for teens, as well as to offer students an opportunity to explore various media and modalities. Additionally, the writing that students would eventually do related to their collage and would demonstrate the need for purposeful moves crafted in various compositions. We knew this skill was



Zoya, with Anna, capturing a panoramic image.

Lesson 5. Introducing Ethnography

HAND OUT

As an ethnographer, you are, of course, interested not only in the facts but also in what those facts mean and how they might help you to explain the culture you are studying. Therefore, you will need to create the kinds of research questions which would answer not only what is happening in front of your eyes but also why it is happening and what its significance is for the culture you are investigating. You also need to ask the kinds of questions that would help you discern patterns in the events or behaviors you observe, you make connections between people, incidents, and events.

—Pavel Zemliansky

How do people study culture? Ethnographers engage in research by conducting

- Primary research, which includes observing, interviewing, surveying, photographing, videotaping, and collecting cultural artifacts. Researchers then analyze these resources through a critical interpretive lens to make meaning from what they have seen, heard, and experienced.
- Secondary research, which includes searching for existing articles, books, websites, photos, videos, and other materials related to the researcher's topic, created by others.

Activity 1: Being Ethnographers

Ethnographers consider things from various perspectives, much like we might see in different photos. In teams, take pictures in our classroom that offer a perspective that you might not always see. For instance, you might lie under a table or stand on a desk. You can't stay in your seat for this . . . or can you? For example, here is a panoramic image from Zoya:



Zoya's Panoramic Photograph of Our Classroom

Activity 2: Sharing Your Findings

Post your images in our online class space. Compose a brief response about perspectives in our shared classroom space. See if you can be the most creative here!



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essential for their learning, and it would also be important for the decisions they would make in their media project later on. In this way, we continued to scaffold student experiences to prepare them for later work.

While students were not too excited about the prospect of having real “homework” over the break, they were interested in gathering photos and images related to their culture. This project also prompted conversation about what was going on in their world. Students who were traveling to different places for their break were expected to think about how the places and spaces they visited impacted their culture. Students who were staying home were asked to think about the role of their culture in their everyday places.

REFLECTIONS ON EMBRACING INQUIRY IN THE CONNECTED CLASSROOM

At the end of the first week of instruction, we could tell that the students were overwhelmed yet enjoying the variety of lessons and ideas that had been presented to them. Given that this first week of lessons was intended to help spark their thinking and spur their inquiry process, we felt as though we had accomplished that goal. They had created their initial TED Talk quick draft presentation, which was, as we noted, meant to encourage the wobble as students were thinking carefully about their own culture and what they valued. A few other specific reflections related to our overall teaching and learning goals follow.

As we consider the five *Ts*—teens, timing, topics, texts, and technology—we feel that a number of strategic moves helped create the groundwork to consider cultural influences and elements related to culture. Our conversations in the classroom and work in digital spaces were intentionally focused on fostering questioning and inquiry. As mentioned, we had students develop “self” and “world” questions while considering the cultural focus. We also had students get set up with various digital spaces.

Teaching in an inquiry-based, student-centered context creates an interesting paradox both for us as teachers and for students. On one hand, we recognize schools and classrooms as spaces that require a certain degree of order and coherence (e.g., daily and weekly routines, marking periods and semesters, lesson objectives and unit goals). Still, as teachers, we should all have a vision of where we want to go with our curriculum.

However, as we have noted several times, an inquiry-based approach is messy because it leaves space for students to explore their questions and real thinking does not have one clear end. Throughout these first lessons, we encouraged students to search for answers to their own questions, but we also supplied some guidance in the form of specific questions they

HAND
OUT

Culture Collage Assignment

Create a collage to represent your culture. As you design your collage, be sure to think about how you define your own cultural background for yourself. While composing this piece, take notes for yourself about your thinking related to your culture.

For your collage, you can use a variety of images, such as clippings from magazines, newspapers, or an Internet search. You can also create your own sketches or use your own photos.

Your collage can be a print or digital text. Some tools to consider for creating a digital text include

- Capzles
- Mural.ly
- Padlet
- Smore
- ThingLink
- VoiceThread

In a paragraph or two, write an explanation about your collage to explain how it represents your cultural identity.

Assessment Criteria

Your collage should identify characteristics of your cultural identity. These characteristics of culture are more abstract and metaphorical; consider them as “thinking about culture.” For instance, the United States is often characterized as “individualistic.” One way to represent that would be to include a picture of a person wearing a personalized shirt.

When others view this collage, it should be clear that you have identified a culture to which you belong. It should include

- Your identity related to the self and family culture, and/or
- Your identity related to the local community culture, and/or
- Your identity related to the broader American culture
- Specific artifacts of a culture (art, music, fashion, food, traditions, language, etc.)

Your collage will also be evaluated on the following criteria for attractiveness/appeal:

- Excellent use of visual design (which may include font, color, graphics, etc.) to enhance the work
- Thoughtful consideration of the rhetorical situation (mode and media, audience, purpose, situation)



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might consider as they worked through the various activities. Specifically, we wanted students to begin to learn how to extend their initial thoughts to form an exploration of larger ideas. As Randy Bomer (2011) describes it, we wanted students to begin “writing toward what is significant” (p. 192). Bomer further argues that “[o]ften a writer starts writing about something that is not, in and of itself, particularly a big deal,” suggesting that as they write about a topic, students need to ask themselves, “*What’s important about this? How is this significant?*” (2011, p. 192). With this in mind, we planned our activities to guide students toward deeper writing and questioning and, in turn, toward a deeper sense of thinking and discovery.

As we had anticipated, at times Dawn’s students, in their efforts to play the game of school, wanted to know if they were doing things right and accomplishing the goals that we set out for them. As this chapter has shown, students shared images and thinking in a Google shared folder, and they commented on one another’s ideas. They started collaborating on the wiki with contribution to discussion tabs. They began to post pictures through the class perspectives ethnography invitation. And they collaborated in their reading as they took notes on an article and responded to one another too. All this feedback and conversation served not only to extend their learning but also to make them more comfortable with the messiness involved in genuine research and inquiry.

As we wrapped up this first week of instruction, it was clear that students were starting to think in rich and purposeful ways about culture. Students were considering perspectives and being ethnographers. Students were thinking critically about a variety of texts. And it was natural and purposeful. Even though the type of thinking that we were asking them to do was difficult—both because we began each morning with big questions and because these questions were different from what is often asked in schools—Dawn’s students began the process with eagerness.