

Plan on a Page

Lesson 8: Belonging on Your Own Terms

Guiding Questions:

- How do you navigate the tension between your desire to fit in and your need to express your own individual identity?
 - What steps can we take to create a more inclusive and accepting class and school community?
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Activities (Day 1)

Activity 1: Reflect on Windows, Mirrors, and Sliding Glass Doors Experiences

- Distribute the **Windows, Mirrors, and Sliding Glass Doors** handout and read the quotation together. Then have students reflect on texts that have provided windows, mirrors, and sliding-glass-door experiences for them.
- Debrief the activity in pairs and see if any volunteers would like to share with the class. It can be community building when you share your own responses to this prompt alongside students.

Activity 2: Read and Discuss Personal Narrative Essays

- Let students know that they will be reading and discussing four personal narrative essays using the **jigsaw** strategy. While each student will only read one of the four, there will be opportunities to learn about and discuss all four together.
- Explain the **jigsaw** strategy and move students into their “expert” groups of four. Distribute **the readings** so each student has one and **Belonging on Your Own Terms Connection Questions** handout for this activity.
- Let students know that in this class period, they will read and discuss their stories with their “expert” groups. Encourage students to support their ideas with evidence from the personal narratives, text set readings, journals, handouts, and their own experiences. In the next lesson, they will share what they learned from their story and learn about the other stories in new “teaching” groups.

Activity 3: Reflect with a 3-2-1 Response

- With students still in “expert” groups, use the **3-2-1** strategy to help them synthesize ideas from their reading. They can record their ideas in their **journals** or on an **exit ticket** if you would like to collect them to check for understanding.
 - What are **three** things that you learned from your group’s text or discussion?
 - What are **two** ways that you contributed to your group’s reading of the text and discussion?
 - What is **one** question that you have about your text or something that came up in your discussion?
 - If you have time, you can ask for volunteers to share ideas from their responses. Let students know that they will have a chance to learn about all of the stories in the next lesson.
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Activities (Day 2)

Activity 1: Identify Valuable Ideas in the Personal Narratives

- Have students sit with their “expert” groups from the previous lesson. Let them know that they will have a few minutes to review their stories and **Belonging on Your Own Terms Connection Questions** handout before they move into “teaching” groups to share what they have learned.
- Project the following question on the board and have students do a quick response in their journals: *In your opinion, what is the most valuable idea about fitting in or belonging in your story?*
- Then invite students to share their ideas with others in their group so they all feel confident in what they will share with their “expert” groups.

Activity 2: Discuss Personal Narratives in Expert Groups

- Move students into “expert” groups and direct their attention to Part 2 of the **Belonging on Your Own Terms Connection Questions** handout. After reading the instructions, circulate while students address the questions with their peers.

Activity 3: Facilitate a Closing Discussion

- Facilitate a class discussion to help students synthesize key ideas from the text set. Start with the first essential question, recording students' ideas on the board:
What factors influence whether or not someone feels like they belong in a group or a place?
- Have students work in pairs to rank the factors from most influential to least influential. You might want to focus on the top five if they generated a large list. Invite students to share their ideas. Record the first list on the board and see if there are any challengers whose lists differ. They should support their challenge with evidence from the text set and their own experience.
- Next, ask students to discuss the following question:
 - *What steps can we take to reduce the barriers to belonging for members of our classroom community?*
 - *How can we create a more inclusive and accepting space where everyone feels a strong sense of belonging?*

Activity 4: Reflect on a Personal Action to Cultivate Belonging

- To capture students' thinking at the end of the text set, have them complete the final exit card. On an **exit ticket** that you create, have students respond to the following questions:
 - What is one concrete step you can take in the upcoming weeks to help reduce the barriers to belonging and create a more inclusive and accepting space in this classroom?
 - How would having this kind of classroom environment impact your learning?
 - How might it impact other members of your class community?