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Hope Village Human Rights Curriculum: Identity Module

Kelsey Annu-Essuman
Yale College, New Haven Connecticut

Abstract:

This capstone consists of a series of identity modules for students at the Hope Village. An abundance of material on building self-esteem in teens exists in the sphere of curriculum design, but many of these materials and handouts were simply infeasible to obtain in the setting in which this curriculum would be taught. As the lessons took shape, the development also focused on reviewing activities in order to ensure that they were sensitive to the needs of students who had experienced trauma.


This capstone is a work of Yale student research. The arguments and research in the project are those of the individual student. They are not endorsed by Yale, nor are they official university positions or statements.
Kelsey Annu-Essuman
Hope Village Human Rights Curriculum: Identity Module
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Lesson 1: Understanding Myself

TOPICS: Identity; Self-Expression; Self-Esteem

TIME: 2 Hours

OBJECTIVE(S):

This lesson focuses on self-discovery. Students will explore different aspects of their identities and learn the importance of developing a healthy view of oneself.

LEARNING GOALS:

- For students to name and describe personal characteristics that are important to who they are
- For students to define (loosely) identity and recognize its multifaceted nature (i.e. influences from family history, experiences, personality, and interests)

TAKE-AWAY SKILLS:

- Students will be able to produce artwork representing students’ view of themselves
- Students will receive practical suggestions on how to build and practice a healthy self-esteem (written in journal)
- Students will begin keeping a notebook in order to record their thoughts and activities and to see how they develop throughout the modules. This will involve two journals (one to be locked in classroom, another to be taken home).

KEY QUESTIONS & CONCEPTS:

- Who am I? How do I define my personality, interests, and ambitions? What represents me? Why is it important for me to express who I am? How can I confidently express who I am?
- Identity: the characteristics and qualities of a person, considered collectively and regarded as essential to how that person views themselves
- Trait: a distinguishing feature describing a person
- Individuality: the traits that make a person unique

MATERIALS:

- 10 Strips of Paper for Each Student (students can make this using construction paper)
- Scissors (optional)
- Construction paper
- Markers/pens
- Paper bag with students’ names (can be saved for later use)
- Journals
- Day in the Life of Me Chart (Email Attachment; To be redrawn by students)

**LESSON PLAN & ACTIVITIES:**

✓ **Warm up Activity:** Begin by asking students to think of a person they know. *What words would you use to describe the person? How does the person look? What is their personality? What do they like to do?* Ask for a few students to volunteer their responses. If there are no responses, use yourself as an example. Now, that the students have a few descriptive words in mind, ask the students to think about how they would describe themselves to a person who does not know them. *What would you tell that person about yourself?* Give students a few seconds to think about this quietly, to themselves.

**Lesson Script and Brief Introductory Activity (20 minutes):**

This lesson will focus on the basics of identity. A person’s identity, or who they are, can be divided into three main groups: physical identity, family identity, and social identity. Oftentimes, we tend to think of identity only in the physical sense. Physical markers of identity can be characteristics like age, eye color, skin color, or hair color. Family identity can be where you were born, the number of siblings you have, and your family traditions. Lastly, social identity are things like your community, your friends, and the things you are interested in.

✓ **Ask** students if they can name other characteristics that fall under Physical, Family, or Social identities. If students are having trouble responding, here are a few additional suggestions:
  ○ Physical: height, hair style, style of dress, skills, and biological gender (man, woman)
  ○ Family: your order of birth, who your parents are, your family history
  ○ Social: your religion, the neighborhood and community you live in, your likes and dislikes, the languages you speak, what you do
  ○ Additionally, feel free to ask students to break away from these categories and name other ways of describing themselves.

**Traits are distinguishing features that describe who you are.** Some traits are genetic, which means they are inherited from your family (like your eye or hair color or some aspects of personality). Other traits can be called character-traits, which describe our thoughts, emotions, and ways of acting. Regardless of what name we give these descriptions, every person has a different assortment of traits. This means that every person has traits that make them unique,
thereby giving them individuality. Because of the uniqueness of our traits and the individuality of each person, we each have an identity.

**Important:** Since there are so many traits that influence or identity, we can sometimes focus on one particular trait and use that trait to define the entirety of who we are as a person. For example, because I teach, I can call myself a teacher. But I am not only a teacher, I like “...” I can “...” and I know “...”. **I am more than one trait or part of my identity. You are not only a student, but a friend, a sister, a brother, etc.** (For example: But I am not only a teacher I like to sing, I am a mother, I am part of the governing body of the community.)

✓ **Brief Introduction to Activity 1:**
- Give students 10 strips of paper (or ask students to fold and cut a piece of paper into ten strips)
- Ask students to again think about how they would describe themselves to someone else. On each strip of paper, have students write one of their own traits on each strip of paper, for a total of 10 descriptions (traits).
  - **Teacher Note:** If students cannot think of other traits besides clan, ask students to consider describing physical traits and their personality traits. Are they tall? Are they kind to others?
  - **Teacher Note:** If students are having trouble understanding new ideas, it may be helpful to pause and allow students to define the key concepts in their own words.
- Then ask students to imagine if they could only choose one trait to define themselves. For each trait they choose not to define themselves with, tell them to crumple that strip and place it in their paper bag (alternatively, students can simply set the crumpled sheets of paper aside)
- After all students have selected the one trait they would like to define themselves as, have a few (or all) students share which trait they selected and why they chose that trait. Why was that trait most important to them? What would they lose if they couldn’t have those other traits? How would their identity be different? After the discussion, allow students to crumple the strips of paper. Remind students that they are more than one aspect of their identity, and that it will be important for them to explore all of their traits. Remind students of the other types of social identity traits.

After students have discussed their traits, remind students that it is important to consider all aspects of their identity.
Important: Many parts of our identity can be influenced by what people tell us about ourselves. For example, a teacher can tell a student that they are hardworking and smart, and, in turn, the student can view that as part of their identity. However, not all influences on our identity are positive. People can tell us negative traits that may influence how we perceive our identity. For example, traits like what clan we belong to can be used to separate us from others and to make us feel like our identity is less than or superior to another person’s identity. That is why it is important to think about and explore our sense of ourselves and who we are and hope to be, and to remember that everyone is defined by more than one trait. This next activity will give you the space to explore your identity, as you define it, and share who you are with the class.

Teacher Note: You may have noticed that this lesson did not begin with having students introduce themselves to the class. This was intentional. Students will introduce themselves after the Identity Portrait Activity, once they have had the chance to really think about how they want to represent themselves.

Explain to students that the next activity will allow them the space to think about their identity and represent who they are through art. Explain that they will use their artwork to introduce themselves to their classmates.

Activity 1: Identity Portrait (individual/ 40-45 minutes w/ discussion)

Prior to activity, distribute construction paper, markers, and other materials to students.

✓ Step 1: Ask students to consider the traits discussed in the lesson. Do they have a favorite song? Food? Something they like to do? What is important to them? Who and what do they care about? What are their dreams? Favorite color? Explain that the following art activity will be a tool for them to express who they are.

   Teacher Note: Encourage students to think only about how they perceive themselves, not about comments on their identity that they’ve heard from others (i.e. “you’re smart” or “you’re lazy”).

✓ Step 2: Individually students will draw pictures, create a piece of artwork, or write (poetry, short paragraph, etc) about what represents their personal interests and abilities.

✓ Step 3: After students have completed their artwork have each student introduce themselves to the class and present what they have created. Have students explain why they included each image, phrase, or art piece relating it back to experiences, personal characteristics, or thoughts. Have students compare/contrast the collages of the presenter.
Teacher Note: In addition to the daily debrief at the end of class, students may enjoy hanging their artwork throughout the classroom.

Discussion Questions: Why is it important to explore who we are? How does understanding our identity help us grow as individuals? Relate to others? Were our descriptions influenced by things others have said to us or told us about ourselves?

Introduction to Activity 2: The last activity taught us about what shaped our identity. This activity will give you a glimpse into how our identities are shaped. A large part of our identity can be shaped by habits. Everyday, we are either reinforcing existing parts of our identity or creating new ones. Because we have individuality, we have the ability to choose aspects of our identity. For example, I chose to be a teacher. Another example, you can choose to be nice someone you meet.

✓ Ask students to name some choices they made before coming to school today. This activity will allow you to both get to know one of your classmates better, and to understand the routines and choices that reinforce your identity traits.

Activity 2: Day in the Life of Me (pairs/using journals/30 minutes w/ discussion)
Distribute notebooks to students. Explain that the notebook will be a space for them to record thoughts, ideas, notes, and activities throughout the course. Explain that their notebook is private, unless the lesson involves an activity where everyone will be sharing from their notebook, but that even in those cases, no student will be required to let another student actually read what they have written, but instead will have the opportunity to share their reflections in their own words.

- Step 1: In a page of their journal, ask students to create a Day in the Life of Me Chart like this one: http://iusd.org/homeschool/documents/5thGradeASFStudentPages.pdf. (See Attachment) Give students 5-10 minutes to think about what they do on a typical day.

- Step 2: Ask students to recreate the Day in the Life of Me Chart. Have students fill in the chart being as honest as possible.

- Step 3: Assign students to pairs with a partner. Have students reintroduce themselves to their partner.

- Step 4: Ask students to share their typically day with their partner. Then, ask each pair to consider the following questions:
  - Which activity do you spend the least amount of time on? For how long?
  - Which activity do you spend the greatest amount of time on? For how long?
  - Which activity is most enjoyable for you?
  - Least enjoyable?
  - Do you and your partner share similar typical activities?
Important: Finally, ask each student to consider the traits they described in their Identity Portrait. Ask students to consider which aspects of their day involves this trait (for example, if one of their traits is that they are helpful or they like cooking, then perhaps part of their day involved helping a parent make a meal). Explain to students that their identity is constantly being shaped, and that every action influences the person that they are. Explain that they have the power to change some aspects of their identity if they want to. For example, if they do not consider “helpful” as part of their identity right now, they can choose to be more helpful each day. Soon, it will not be only a habit, but also a part of their identity. Every action counts.

Closing Activity/Debrief (as a class/15 minutes):
At the end of each class, students will have the opportunity to reflect on what they’ve learned that day. This reflection can happen in different ways: students can discuss a particular experience or person, a particular concept, or a new idea they will take with them. The teacher can start by modeling.

✓ Step 1: Gather students in a circle. Start by saying “one thing I will leave behind is...””. Have each student complete the sentence with a belief, attitude, or action they will not take with them at the end of class. As they say the sentence, have students pretend to grab something from within themselves and throw it outside of the circle.

✓ Step 2: After each student has stated what they will leave behind, have students complete the sentence “One thing I will take with me is...””, doing the same hand motion.

Alternative Debrief:
Students can answer the reflection questions by free-writing in their journals; alternatively, students can gather in pairs or small groups, if they are more comfortable sharing in a smaller setting.
Lesson 2: Understanding Self-Respect

TOPICS: Self Expression; Self-Esteem

TIME: 2 hours

OBJECTIVE(S): This lesson builds on the introductory lesson on individuality by focusing on a key tool for developing a healthy view of ourselves: self-esteem. Students will learn how to maintain a healthy view of ourselves that embraces their strengths and weaknesses, in addition to learning how their feelings towards themselves influences their actions towards others.

LEARNING GOALS

- For students to identify and explore methods for building a healthy view of ourselves
- For students to define self-esteem and understand its influence on action
- For students to understand some positive and negative influences on self-esteem

TAKE-AWAY SKILLS

- For students to write a journal entry about their personal strengths and weaknesses (independent of how others view them); the lists can be edited throughout their journey in the course
- For students to be equipped with practical ways to build a healthy self-esteem

KEY QUESTIONS & CONCEPTS

- How do I feel about who I am? What are ways that I express who I am to others?
- **Self-Expression:** the ways in which a person expresses their feelings and ideas
- **Self Esteem:** the feelings a person has about him or herself; the general attitude a person has towards themselves; self-esteem is fluid and can change depending on the situation; self-esteem can also be influenced by the feedback a person receives from other people

MATERIALS

- Large sheets of paper for groups discussion and markers to write with
- Permanent Markers
- Journals
LESSON PLAN & ACTIVITIES:

✓ **Warm up Activity:** Hand out student journals or a sheet of paper. Ask students to write their names across the top of a page in their journal. Give students 10 minutes to write every positive attribute they can think about themselves, such as their positive character traits, talents, or achievements. Tell students that they can write the same words or attributes multiple times if they want to emphasize that aspect of themselves. After the 10 minutes, ask students to stand at one time, and have them read aloud what they wrote, all at the same time.

**Lesson Script and Brief Introductory Activity (20 minutes):**

This lesson will focus on how we develop our **self-esteem**, or the way we feel about ourselves. Last class, we focused on exploring our individuality and learning about our identity. We learned that every person has a variety of traits, which are **distinguishing features that describe who they are**. We learned that some traits are genetic, which means they are inherited from our families.

✓ **Ask** students if they can name some genetic traits

We also learned about other traits, like character traits, which described our thoughts, emotions, and ways of acting. Since every person has a different assortment of traits, everyone has a uniqueness that grants them individuality. Our identity is a product of this individuality.

✓ **Ask** each student to share something they learned about one classmate during last class.

**Traits** are **distinguishing features that describing who you are**. Some traits are genetic, which means they are inherited from your family (like your eye or hair color or some aspects of personality). Other traits can be called character-traits, which described our thoughts, emotions, and ways of acting. Regardless of what name we give these descriptions, every person has a different assortment of traits. This means that every person has traits that make them unique, thereby giving them individuality. Because of the uniqueness of our traits and the individuality of each person, we each have an identity.

**Important:** Last class, we also created Identity Portraits to portray ourselves in the way we see ourselves. We learned that sometimes, we can focus on one particular trait and use that trait to define the entirety of who we are as a person. However, we also learned that it’s important to embrace all aspects of ourselves. For example, I may be a sister, but I am also a teacher, and like to “...”.

We also learned about how we shape our identity. By mapping out our typical day, we talked about how our daily habits can reinforce or create new aspects of our identity. Just like our actions can shape our identity, so can our thoughts and emotions. Who we are is influenced not
only by other individuals, or by what we choose to draw about ourselves. Our identity is shaped by how we feel about ourselves, which is called our **self-esteem**. How we view ourselves is like a collection of different facts we know about ourselves, such as what we enjoy doing, our typical mood, or what we believe in. The traits we discussed last week all contribute to how we view ourselves. Our self-esteem depends on whether we feel positively or negatively towards these facts about ourselves.

✓ **Introductory Activity (small groups/as a class, 30 minutes w/ discussion):**

  o Step 1: Divide students into small groups. Have each groups come up with their definition of self-esteem. Have each group share with the class their definition. Have the class come up with one definition for each vocabulary word using pieces of their own group’s definition.

    ▪ **Important:** Even though our self-esteem comes from within us, we can have different levels of self-esteem, depending on the situation we are in or depending on the feedback we get from others. For example, I may be more confident performing one task than I am while doing another task. Or, I may have less confidence doing something, but I may increase my confidence after getting encouragement from someone else. Many things can influence your self-esteem: teachers, friends, other people around you, yourself.

✓ Step 2: After students have defined self-esteem, ask each small group to think about and create a list of the individuals who have contributed to their self-esteem. Invite each group to write on the board (or large sheet of paper) which individuals have contributed to their self-esteem.

**Discussion:** As a class, discuss why students thought of these individuals. As a class, discuss the list of individuals. What did the person do to influence their self-esteem? How did they feel about this person – did they feel encouraged? Motivated?

**Introduction to Activity 1: (20 minutes w/ discussion):** Having a healthy self-esteem means that we value ourselves. We can improve our self-esteem by taking actions and thinking thoughts that bring us closer to the kind of individual we want to be. This includes all of the dreams of who we would like to be, whether that means being more helpful, being better at a sport, or being a kinder friend. Last class, when we talked about our typical day, I mentioned that it was possible to improve in areas of ourselves that we would like to be better at. Our self-ideal helps remind us of what those areas of improvement are.
Ask students to close their eyes and think about three things they dream about achieving or being. Do the positive attributes they wrote about in the beginning of class fit with the dreams they thought about? How about they individuals who have contributed to their self-esteem? How have these people influenced what their dreams are? Give students a few minutes to think about these questions.

Teacher Note: If students are having difficulty thinking of their dreams or responses to the questions, have them consider what they currently like /enjoy doing and how that can be used in the future. Also, use yourself as an example!

Important: Remind students of the different levels of identity that were discussed in the first lesson (i.e. physical, family, and social). Remind students that there are aspects of ourselves that we can and cannot change.

It is important to think about who we aspire to be because that allows us to improve ourselves and create more positive facts about ourselves that add to a healthy self-esteem. Remember, how we view ourselves is built and kept by positive thinking, developing our abilities, recognizing our talents, and creating and achieving goals.

Activity 1: Respecting Myself (45-50 minutes w/ discussion, in pairs/as a class)

Step 1: Divide students into pairs (preferably with someone they are not familiar with). Repeat the following statement to the students: Self-esteem is like a balloon. It is large and inflated when we are born, but as we grow up, we gain negative beliefs and views about ourselves that poke small holes in the balloon and that start to deflate our self-esteem.

Step 2: Give each pair 10 minutes to create a list of negative thoughts that may poke holes in someone’s self-esteem balloon.

Step 3: After each pair has their list, ask the pairs to share each negative thought with the class. For each thought, as the class to think of an alternative (positive) thought that would seal the holes in the balloon. Invite students to write the positive thought on the chalkboard.

Discussion Questions: Which comments gave you the strongest feelings and why? Did you have stronger feelings when hearing positive comments or negative ones? How did the comments conflict or align with how you viewed yourself?

When we have a healthy or high self-esteem, we are comfortable with who we are as an individual. A healthy self-esteem allows us to have the confidence to make decisions, express
ourselves, and pursue our goals. Low or unhealthy self-esteem means that we do not value our individuality and cannot obtain the goals we set for ourselves.

**Introduction to Activity 2/Alternative Activity 1:** The last activity helped us examine how different influences can affect our self-esteem. In this activity, we will learn what a healthy self-esteem looks like and the kinds of things we can do to create it. We are going to look at different ways that we can measure the “health” of our self-esteem. The next activity will allow students to identify indicators of high/low self-esteem.

**Teacher Note:** Prior to activity 2, prepare the following materials:

- Tape
- A drawing of a large arrow pointing upward and downward (to be posted somewhere in the classroom)
- Several large strips of paper, each labeled with an item from the following list:
  - I am confident that I can complete my work.
  - I worry about what my friends think of me.
  - When I try something new and don’t do well at the first try, I try again.
  - I am optimistic about my future.
  - I am pessimistic about my future.
  - I wish I looked like someone else.
  - I don’t think I have any talents.
  - I like the way I look.
  - I am proud of how I treat other people.
  - When someone criticizes me, I lose confidence in my abilities.
  - I am proud of who I am (need to find source??)

**Activity 2/Alternative Activity 1: Self-Esteem Scale (30 minutes w/discussion, as a class):**

- Step 1: Turn the strips of paper upside down. Ask for a student to volunteer to select a piece of paper at random. Ask the student to read aloud what the paper says. Then, ask the student to tape the strip alongside the upward facing part of the arrow or alongside the downward facing part of the arrow.

- Step 2: After the student has decided where to place the paper, ask for a volunteer to explain why the statement was a healthy or unhealthy indicator of self-esteem. Assist in explanations as needed. Repeat steps 1 & 2 for each strip of paper.

**Discussion:** Explain to students that self-esteem is built and destroyed by the thoughts we have about ourselves and the way we interpret the comments from outside influences. While nobody is perfect, we should always learn to appreciate our characteristics and strive to improve on what we want to change. If we do want to change an aspect of ourselves, it is important to make sure that we are doing so for good reasons. For example, if we believe that
we want to look like someone else, we are not appreciating our individuality, so changing ourselves would lower our self-esteem. Remember, everyone is different in different ways, and it’s important to not be too critical of ourselves in order to feel good about ourselves and have a healthy self-esteem.

**Closing Activity/Debrief (as a class/15 minutes):**
At the end of each class, students will have the opportunity to reflect on what they’ve learned that day. This reflection can happen in different ways: students can discuss a particular experience or person, a particular concept, or a new idea they will take with them. The teacher can start by modeling.

✓ Step 1: Gather students in a circle. Start the debrief by saying “one thing I will leave behind is...””. Have each student complete the sentence with a belief, attitude, or action they will not take with them at the end of class. As they say the sentence, have students pretend to grab something from within themselves and throw it outside of the circle.

✓ Step 2: After each student has stated what they will leave behind, have students complete the sentence “One thing I will take with me is...””, doing the same hand motion.

**Alternative Debrief or Homework -- Writing Assignment:**
Have students write a paragraph explaining what the following statement means to them: “You can’t love others until you love yourself.”
Lesson 3: Understanding Others

TOPICS: Identity; Preferences (Likes/Dislikes); Respect; Iceberg Model of Identity

TIME: 2 hours

OBJECTIVE(S)

This lesson focuses on cultivating a willingness for students to learn more about others. Students are encouraged to seek a deeper understanding of other’s perspectives and to become more aware of the preconceived notions they may have or be influenced by.

LEARNING GOALS

- For students to understand how identity goes beyond visible characteristics
- For students to begin actively thinking about similarities/differences and what it means to be respectful towards others

TAKE-AWAY SKILLS

- Students will leave with a consciousness of the biases/stereotypes individuals (include themselves) may have
- Students will identify their personal preferences and what it means to be respectful towards others
- Students will learn more about their classmates

KEY QUESTIONS & CONCEPTS

How does my identity differ from others’? How can I appreciate the similarities I share with others and be respectful of differences?

- **Identity:** the characteristics and qualities of a person, considered collectively and regarded as essential to how that person views themselves
- **Respect:** includes both how you feel about yourself or someone else and how you treat yourself/someone else. To respect oneself means to think and act in a positive way. To respect others means to acknowledge their individuality and care about their feelings/well-being
- **Preference:** to like or dislike something over another
- **Assumption:** long-learnt, automatic response and established opinion. We are, ourselves, almost always unaware of the nature of our own basic assumptions, but they shape our behavior - what we say, do, and how we view others. Basic
assumptions are usually rooted in our childhood, early family life and social context. Our assumptions can be hurtful to others if we use them to create an overly simple opinion of someone's identity. When we judge others' identities based on our assumptions, we create a **stereotype**.

- **Stereotype**: an oversimplified image or idea of a particular type of person or thing

**MATERIALS**
- Interview Game Questionnaire
- Large fill-in-the-blank laminated version of Iceberg Model of Identity (and possibly individual handouts)
- Paper bags
- Large poster/chart paper
- Pencils and markers

**LESSON PLAN & ACTIVITIES:**

✓ **Warm up Activity**: Begin by asking students to imagine the following scenario: another teacher walked into the room, said “hi”, and immediately walked out. If another student came in and asked “what’s the teacher like”, what would you say? Ask students to think about how they would describe the unknown teacher? Is it difficult to describe a person that you haven’t spoken to? Would your descriptions be based on specific kinds of traits (ie. physical), as opposed to others (ie. social)? Ask students to share why it’s difficult to describe someone that we have not had substantial interactions with and have not taken the time to talk to.

**Lesson Script and Brief Introductory Activity (10 minutes):**

This lesson will focus on learning to understand the differences between ourselves and others, and learning to respect others’ identities without making assumptions about who they are. When we judge a person without getting to know them, we base their **identity**, or who they are, on our **assumptions**, or what we think they are and believe to be true. Even though our assumptions about others are simply opinions, they have a major impact on our behavior towards people. The things we say, do, and how we view others are impacted by what we assume about them. Assumptions can be based on our past experiences, how we were raised, who we spend time with, or how we feel.
However, it is important to not allow our assumptions create an overly simplistic view of someone’s identity. We have to learn to respect others, meaning we have to acknowledge their individuality.

Ask students if they can think of a time that they thought something about someone and they later discovered that their assumption was incorrect.

Now ask students if they can think of a time that someone misjudged them.

Explain to students that the next activity to going to help us understand the complexity of others’ identities.

Introduction to Activity 1: Iceberg Model (as a class, 20 minutes w/ discussion)

Introduce students to the Iceberg Model of Identity (see Attachment). As we discussed in previous lessons, there are several levels to individuals’ identities. It is important that we try to listen and engage with others, instead of making assumptions about their character traits or what they like or dislike (their preferences).

Teacher Note: Prior to the following activity, give students a copy of the iceberg model handout.

✓ Step 1: Draw large triangle on a sheet of chart paper. Add curved lines to the triangle to represent the “water line.” Describe the following analogy: an iceberg has only 1/8 of its actual mass that is visible and above water. Explain that people have only a limited understanding of another person’s identity when they stop at the “surface,” or those characteristics that are readily observable.

✓ Step 2: Ask students to identity some visible descriptors “above the water line.” List these characteristics around the upper peak of the iceberg. Explain that some characteristics are assumed based on observation (i.e. a person wearing a particular outfit, a person’s height) Ask students to suggest other characteristics in this category, and invite them to write them on the iceberg’s “water line.”

✓ Step 3: Explain that many descriptors are not easily observable but are important aspects of identity that people use to describe themselves to others. Ask students to give examples from participants, writing them on the portion of the iceberg “below the water line.” - Explain to students that some descriptors may, for some people, fall in different areas of the iceberg. Where would we put religion? Ethnicity?
Activity 1: Interview & Commercial Game (in pairs, using journals, 40-45 minutes)

✓ Step 1: Arrange students into pairs, preferably with another student that they are not familiar with. Write the following questions on the chalkboard:

1. How did you learn __________?
2. Who else in your family likes to ____________?
3. How long have you been practicing ____________?
4. Why do you like _____________?

✓ Step 2: Ask each pair to select one “below the line” characteristic (such as a special skill, talent, or preference). Using the questions on the board (and other questions that they think of), ask students to “interview” their partner on whichever characteristic they chose.

✓ Step 3: After students have finished interviewing one another, give students 10 minutes to look over their partner’s responses. Now it’s time for students to briefly share what they learned about their partner during the interview game. Ask students to think of a way to present what they learned about their partner as though they were giving a radio commercial or advertisement about them. Emphasize to students that it is important for them to:

➢ Highlight the positive characteristics and capabilities of their partner (i.e. being a positive influence on their partner’s self-esteem)
➢ Have enthusiasm about sharing something unique about their partner’s individuality (i.e. showing respect towards their partner)
➢ Describe why they would not know this about their partner just by looking/observing them (i.e. not making assumptions about their partner)

Teacher Note: Prior to each presentation, make sure students share their partner’s name! After each person presents, encourage students to clap for the presentations.

Discussion Questions: What did students like about each other’s presentations? What is something new they learned about their classmate(s)?

Introduction to Activity 2: Busting Stereotypes (as a class, 10-15 minutes w/discussion) The last activity helped us understand the Iceberg Model of Identity. We cannot understand another person’s identity solely based on what can visibly observe. Many times, we judge others based on our assumptions about their character and personality, but it is important to allow others to express their themselves, so that we may get to know them better. Even if we learn that their
talents, preferences, or characteristics are different than our own, we must respect them for who they are, for their individuality. Another reason why it’s important to not make assumptions about individuals is that sometimes, our assumptions can span to entire groups of individuals.

✓ Step 1: Write the word stereotype on the board (or a large sheet of paper). Ask students if they know what it means, and to think of words that they associate with it.

✓ Step 2: Write down the dictionary definition of the word (“an oversimplified image or idea of a particular type of person or thing ”) Explain that when we don’t learn to respect individuality, we can categorize people based on how we perceive them. When we use categories to describe a person’s appearance, personality, actions, or lifestyle, we are stereotyping them. Even though many people may believe in them, stereotypes give an oversimplified view of a person’s identity, and they are often reinforced by our assumptions.

Activity 2 -- Busting Stereotypes (as a class, 40-45 minutes w/discussion):

In this activity, students will discuss and learn about different stereotypes have or may come across. Students will be challenged to think of the reasons why stereotypes are not true indicators of a person’s identity and learn ways to be respectful of others.

Teacher Note: Students will need note cards and their journals for this activity.

✓ Step 1: Give each student a note card or piece of paper. Ask students to write down a stereotype (make sure it’s legible!) that they have heard or that they may believe in themselves. Students should not write their names on the notecard.

Teacher Note: If students are having trouble thinking of a stereotype, some examples are included below:

- Men are stronger than women.
- Women are better cooks than men.
- Only women can be teachers.
- Poor people are lazy.
- Only men can be scientists.
- Boys are smarter than girls
✓ Step 2: Gather note cards or pieces of paper. Allow the class to sit in a circle. Place note cards face down in the circle. Allow each student to take a notecard, making sure not to pick another if they accidentally pick their own.

✓ Step 3: Ask each student to read to the class the card that they were given. Tell students that the writer of the card will remain anonymous. Give students a few seconds to think about what was written. How did it make them feel? Were they sad, frustrated, or angered by the stereotype? Or was it something that they believed was true? Tell students that they do not have to share their feelings aloud. Instead, allow them a few moments to write down how they felt. Repeat the exercise, having each student read aloud their note card, giving a few moments for pause, reflection, and writing, then asking students why and how the stereotype is an incorrect judge of someone’s identity.

**Discussion Questions:** After students have written a few thoughts, ask students if they would like to share their thoughts. If not, ask students if they can think of why someone would believe this stereotype. Is it something that their friends or family believes? Something that they heard or see on tv, advertisements, the radio? Who decides whether a stereotype is true? Can they think of ways in which this stereotype can be disproven?

**Closing Activity/Debrief (as a class/15 minutes):**

✓ Step 1: Start the debrief by saying “one thing I will leave behind is...””. Have each student complete the sentence with a belief, attitude, or action they will not take with them at the end of class. As they say the sentence, have students pretend to grab something from within themselves and throw it outside of the circle.

✓ Step 2: After each student has stated what they will leave behind, have students complete the sentence “One thing I will take with me is...””, doing the same hand motion.

Remind students that they can learn to respect other’s individuality and not make assumptions or stereotype people.
Lesson 4: Understanding Community

TOPICS: Community; Responsibility

TIME: 2 Hours

OBJECTIVE(S):
➢ This lesson introduces students to the idea of being community oriented. Students will explore different types of communities, roles of different community members, and their own roles in their communities.

LEARNING GOALS

- For students to identify which communities they belong to (i.e. family, neighborhood, religious, school)
- For students to identify ways in which they and others engage with their community
- For students to begin viewing their classroom as a form of community

TAKE-AWAY SKILLS

- Students will be able to describe different types of communities
- Students will be able to identify their specific roles in their communities
- Students will be able to explain how the classroom is form of community

KEY QUESTIONS & CONCEPTS

- What is a community?
- What are some of the different roles of individuals in various communities?
- What communities do I belong to? What defines these communities?
- What does it take to sustain a community?
- **Community**: a group of people with shared interests, goals, or relationships; a place where people with shared interests come together
- **Responsibility**: duty or obligation to perform or complete a task (assigned by someone, or created by one’s own promise or circumstances) that one must fulfill

MATERIALS:

- Iceberg Model of Identity
- Large poster/chart paper
- Construction paper
- Markers/pencils
LESSON PLAN & ACTIVITIES:

Teacher Note: Today’s lesson focuses on community. Prior to beginning the activity, use tape to create a line dividing the floor of the classroom into two halves. Tape a sheet of paper on one side labeled “Agree” and tape a sheet of paper on the other side labeled “Disagree”.

Warm up Activity (individual/as a class, 25-30 minutes)

✓ Step 1: Hand out student journals and writing utensils. Explain to students that you will be reading a long definition of community, and that they should write down anything they think is important about the definition in the journal. Explain that you will be briefly pausing throughout the read, in order to allow them time to jot down any words, phrases, or reactions they have. Now begin by slowly reading aloud the following definition of community to class, pausing at each point noted in an asterisk (*):

“Communities are not built of friends * or of groups with similar styles and tastes * or even of people who like and understand each other. * They are built of people who feel they are part of something that is bigger than themselves *: a shared goal or enterprise, like righting a wrong, * or building a road, * or raising children, * or living honorably, * or worshipping a god. * To build community requires only the ability to see value in others, * to look at them * and see a potential partner in one’s enterprise.” * (Goldsmith’s definition from Facing History and Ourselves)

✓ Step 2: Reread the definition another time, and give students a few minutes to finish jotting down a few thoughts.

✓ Step 3: After students have written a few thoughts, ask them to stand. Then, explain that you will read a few statements (see list below) and you will give them a few moments to decide if they agree or disagree with the statement. Ask students to stand on either side of the room marked with “Agree” or “Disagree” based on the statement that is read. Give students a specific statement to which they respond by standing in the corner that best represents their opinions.

1. Communities should only consist of people who like one another.
2. Communities do not always share a similar goal or goals.

3. Not everyone can be a member of every community; for a community to exist, some people must be excluded.

4. It is possible for a person to be a part of a community even if they do not value other members of their community.

5. A person can only truly belong to one community at a time.

6. Community members have a responsibility to each other.

**Teacher Note:** Encourage the students to follow their own opinions (not the definition you read, nor their classmate’s opinion), and explain that no matter what their opinions are, they will not be judged based on which side they choose. Explain that the purpose of the activity is for students to understand different interpretations of the meaning of “community”, and that there is no perfect answer for each question.

**Important:** Make sure to give students the time to think about their opinions on each statement, so as to avoid students following another classmate to a particular side.

✓ Step 4: For each statement, give students on either side of the room one minute to discuss, as a group, why they chose that side. Then, ask someone form each side of the room to report to the class some of the reasons why their group members chose that side.

**Discussion Questions/Journal Prompt (individual/10 minutes):** After students have heard each side of each question, reread the original definition of community. In their journals, ask students to write their own definition of what a community means to them. Ask students to consider the following: what do community members have in common? What are their responsibilities? What determines who is and is not a part of a community?

**Introduction to Activity 1: 3 Types of Communities (as a class/ 20 min w/ discussion):**
We began this lesson by trying to create a definition of community that captures the essence of who is in a community and what a community does. As we discovered, there are many ways to define community, and it can be difficult to describe perfect boundaries between types of communities. However, generally speaking, when we talk about communities, there are three overarching categories: Geographic, Identity, and Interest (or “Solidarity”). Geographic communities are defined by physical space and boundaries, like a neighborhood. Even though the people within that space may be diverse, they share a common identity by virtue of being in the same community.
Ask students to close their eyes and think of where they live. As you pose the following questions, pause and allow students the space to visualize the particulars of their neighborhoods.

How do the surroundings look like? Are there trees, bodies of water, plants? Are there any specific places in their neighborhood (like a center, an old building, or a shop many people frequent)? Are there a lot of people walking on the streets? How do the people look like? Are they of similar age, religion, or other characteristics? Do children play in specific places? How do the homes look like? Are they close to one another or far apart? Do people walk from place to place or drive?

The second type of community is an Identity Community, where members have a similar culture such as a similar religion, language, politics, or work field. Physical markers do not bind these communities. For example, the individuals in this classroom all share the identity of being a student studying the same course material, thereby making the classroom a type of community. Lastly, the final general category is an Interest Community, where people who have similar goals are connected to advance that goal. For example, if all the teachers of Hope Village got together to create a new program of their students, they would be forming an Interest Community.

Ask students if they can name examples of communities that fall under any of the three categories. Ask two students to record the examples on the board (or large construction paper in the front of the classroom).

No matter which category a community falls under, all communities do share some similarities. For example, every community has groups of individuals that have relationships to one another (i.e. neighbor, friend, teacher, etc). And, all communities can (and do) change throughout time. This change can because of things that happen within the community or things that happen outside of the community.

Ask students if they can name examples of internal and external causes of changes in communities. If students are having difficulty, use the following examples, and ask students if they can identify if they are internal or external causes of change and what changes each factor may cause: hurricane, new school Regulations, a neighbor moves, conflict arises between two people

Important: This lesson could involve discussion of war as a cause of change in a community. If students mention this, give students a few minutes to consider how they would categorize war and why. Allow students to discuss the changes war can cause, but refrain from steering the conversation in an opinionated direction. Instead, explain
that war is a type of conflict, and that the class will discuss war and conflict on a deeper level in future modules. Additionally, invite students to talk with you one on one if they have anything further to say that was not discussed in the activity.

In the following activity, we will discuss the different members of some communities we listed on the board.

Activity 1: Community Members (as a class / 30 min w/ discussion):

✓ Step 1: Begin by explaining the concept of community (as provided in lesson), noting the various types of communities individuals can belong to, including a classroom community; Then, as a class, create a list of individuals within these communities (example: a category for "only child", "daughter", "teacher", or "imam")

✓ Step 2: Gather students in a circle; Read aloud each category, and have students who identify with that category move to the center of the circle; Ask the students in the center to think of one responsibility or role they have as that member of the community. Ask students to share with the class.

   Teacher Note: If students are uncomfortable sharing, ask anyone (including those not at the center of the circle, to share what roles they think someone would have as that person in the community.

✓ Step 3: Repeat activity with each category in the list, recording student responses on the board; Explain to students the concept of a community member, a person with roles and responsibilities within a community. Community members both understand themselves (their identity) and their environment (their community).

Discussion Questions: What keeps a community going? Why is it important that each member of a community fulfills their role?

Introduction to Activity 2 (as a class, 5 minutes):

As members of different communities, we constantly interact with different people who have various personalities, interests, backgrounds, traits, and individuality. Being a part of a community requires us to respect the individuality of others, and cooperate during certain times. This activity will allow us to explore what it means to cooperate with others that we may not know very well but who are nonetheless still part of our classroom community.
Activity 2: (pairs/using journals, 30 minutes w/ discussion):

✓ Step 1: Divide the class into groups of 3-5 students, giving each person three note cards (or have students fold and tear a piece of paper into three pieces). Leave extra paper as students come up with more ideas.

✓ Step 2: Explain that this activity involves brainstorming ideas to solve problems in a scenario. There are no right or wrong answers, but everyone in the group must agree with the solution.

✓ Step 3: Present the class with each of the following situations (one at a time), giving each group 5-10 minutes to discuss a solution to the problem in the scenario.

✓ Step 4: As a class, discuss each scenario and the suggested solutions of each group.

- Situation 1: Another student in class is always aggressive and mean to you. He bumps into you when he walks by and calls you names when you’re walking home from class. You have never spoken with him, and you do not know why he aggressive towards you. What options do you have to solve this problem?
- Situation 2: You work in a bakery. A customer calls fifteen minutes before she is coming in to pick up the bread she ordered that morning. The bread is for a large meal she will be having with family members tonight. You find that the bread has not be made. What options do you and other workers at the bakery have to solve this problem?
- Situation 3: You are with friends at the market when you wander off to find milk. Meanwhile, your friend sees your favorite candies and decides to snag a few and put them in their bag. After paying for the milk and leaving the market, your friend shows you the candies that they snagged. You consider going back to the market, but do not want your friend to get in trouble with the owner, who also lives next door to your friend. What options do you have?

Discussion Questions: How did your group decide on a solution? What made it difficult to create a solution that everyone agreed with? Remind students that they can learn to respect other’s individuality and not make assumptions or stereotype people.

Closing Activity/Debrief (as a class/15 minutes):
✓ Step 1: Start the debrief by saying “one thing I will leave behind is...”’. Have each student complete the sentence with a belief, attitude, or action they will not take with them at the end of class. As they say the sentence, have students pretend to grab something from within themselves and throw it outside of the circle.

✓ Step 2: After each student has stated what they will leave behind, have students complete the sentence “One thing I will take with me is...”, doing the same hand motion.
Lesson 5: Understanding Leadership

TOPICS: Community; Responsibility; Influence; Leadership

TIME: 2 Hours

OBJECTIVES:

- This lesson is a continuation of the previous lesson on community. Using the different types of communities explored in Lesson 4, students will learn about community leadership in order to identify the characteristics of good versus poor leadership.

LEARNING GOALS:
- For students to learn historic and modern-day examples of positive and negative leadership
- For students to identify examples of leaders within different types of communities (including their own)
- For students to relate their own roles in their community to the roles of a leader

TAKE-AWAY SKILLS:
- Students will be able to describe examples of historic and modern-day leaders
- Students will be able to identify examples of leadership within their own communities
- Students will be able to identify both positive and negative leadership behavior

KEY QUESTIONS & CONCEPTS:
- What is community leadership? (Who is a community leader?)
- What are some examples of leaders in different communities?
- What are the qualities of good versus poor leaders?
- What is the difference between good/effective leadership (poor/ineffective leadership)?
- **Community**: a group of people with shared interests, goals, or relationships; a place where people with shared interests come together
- **Responsibility**: duty or obligation to perform or complete a task (assigned by someone, or created by one’s own promise or circumstances) that one must fulfill
- **Leader**: a person with the ability to do something that affects their community
MATERIALS:
- Paper/pencils
- Large poster paper
- Historic Leaders Photo List

LESSON PLAN & ACTIVITIES:

✓ **Warm up Activity:** Begin by asking students to think of a time when they acted as a good leader. Was it during a class activity where they were able to guide their classmates to finishing a task? Was it at home while they were helping family members? Give students a few moments to think of an example when they exhibited leadership. Now, give students five minutes to quickly jot down a few words that describe how/why they exhibited leadership in that scenario. Was it because people listened to them? Was it because they got the task done? What made them a good leader in that situation? After students have written their responses, ask students to find someone sitting next to them and share their leadership situation and the reasons why they were a good leader during that time. As students are sharing, write the word “LEADER” on the chalkboard and on a large piece of paper in the front of the classroom preparation for the next activity.

**Lesson Script and Introductory Activity (40 minutes):**

In this lesson, we will learn about what it means to be a leader and the differences between positive leadership and negative leadership. In the last lesson, we discussed the meaning of community and the different roles we have in our respective communities. As we learned, communities are created when different types of people come together and fulfill different roles in relation to one another. For example, we can think of our neighborhood(s) as a type of community, where elders, children, families, neighbors, the shopkeeper down the road, and everyone in between have responsibilities to one another. Communities can be defined geographically (like where we live, our neighborhood(s)), by some part of our identity (like our religious community) or based on a shared interest (like us, learning about human rights as a classroom community). Because communities are based in something we share in common with others, we can belong to multiple communities. As community members, we have different roles that give us responsibilities to one another. However we decide to act in our roles influences the health of our communities.

✓ **Brief Introductory Activity (group & as a class/30 minutes w/ discussion):**
✓ Step 1: Divide students into small groups. Ask each group to choose one student to record notes for the group and another student who will present what the group discusses to the class at the end of the activity.

✓ Step 2: Ask the groups to think of people in leadership roles within their communities – it could be someone in their religious community, at home, or in another part of the world. These leaders can be from past or present. Ask the groups to create a list of 20 traits/qualities they think are important for leadership. Students should feel free to incorporate what they wrote in the warm-up activity.

✓ Step 3: After groups have created a list, now challenge the students to rank the 20 leadership traits in order of importance. Give student 5 minutes to create their new list.

✓ Step 4: Gather the groups as a class, and ask the presenter for each group to present the top 10 leadership qualities. Invite the presenter of each group to write these qualities on the chalkboard, underneath the word “LEADER”.

Teacher Note: If students give reasons such as “I like X leader because they have a lot of control over people”, explain to students why this quality does not necessarily make for a good leader. Provide counterexamples to how something like “having control over a lot of people” can, in fact, result in poor leadership.

Discussion Questions: Once all groups have presented, ask students to consider the traits written on the board. Have students compare and contrast the different traits. Do all leaders have these traits? Are these traits essential for a leader? Now, ask groups to share how they decided on which group members would be the presenter and which members would be the recorder. Why did they choose those particular classmates? How did those classmates selected as recorder and presenter exhibit some of the leadership traits listed on the board? How did other group members exhibit leadership qualities?

Introduction to Activity 1: 3 Exploring Leaders (as a class/ 20 min):
In the previous activity, we described the qualities of different individuals that we consider leaders within our communities. Even though we were able to select traits of leaders, defining leadership is a difficult task, simply because there are a multitude of situations in which people
– and ourselves -- act as leaders, even though we may not think of ourselves as leaders. Regardless of how we formally define a good “LEADER”, all individuals who we consider leaders share certain ways of relating to others in their communities. These behaviors can be categorized in the following five ways: **firstly, positive leadership typically involves being a positive example to those around you.** To be a positive example, a person must model the behaviors that they want others to emulate.

Ask students to recall the time they thought of themselves as a good leader. In what way were they modeling the behavior that they wanted others to follow?

**Teacher Note:** As you introduce each leadership behavior, write each of the following on the large sheet of paper labeled “LEADER”, write each of the following prior to Activity 1: 1) Model the Way 2) Inspire a Shared Vision 3) Challenge the Status Quo 4) Enable Others to Act 5) Encourage

**Secondly, positive leadership is not self-centered.** Instead, positive leadership means recognizing that your actions affect the community around you and that you have a responsibility to others. Hence, instead of only choosing to only work towards tasks that benefit themselves, a positive leader acts on a shared vision for the future. By considering others’ needs and the needs of the community as a whole, a positive leader creates future goals that seek to sustain the health of the entire community.

Ask students to recall the communities they described during the last class period. What are some goals that are shared amongst all members of that community? (If students are having difficulty, use the classroom as an example. For instance, in a classroom community, both students and teachers share a goal of learning.)

**Third, leaders work to challenge the current** situation surrounding them and their community. Part of being a leader involves **taking action** to make the shared vision a reality. For example, if we as a classroom community want to learn about human rights, I, as a teacher and a leader, must plan and teach lessons that improve our understanding of rights and that can help change our behavior to better exercise and respect rights.

**Fourth, positive leadership means recognizing that no one person can act alone.** This involves cooperation. Just like you cooperated to create a list of leadership traits and qualities, positive leaders enable others around them to act. They respect the individuality of others and recognize the contributions that others can and do make. Lastly, along with cooperating with others, **leaders share the benefits of their hard work, in order to encourage others to continue building a healthier community.**
**Activity 1: Exploring Leaders (group & individual/40-45 minutes w/ discussion)** *(This is the only activity requiring print outs that I kept from the original outline, since I know Deqo liked the idea of having students talk about leadership examples. Feel free to separate students into five groups so that each group will have a separate handout, so that you only have to print one copy per each leadership example.)*

In this activity, students will learn about examples of leadership within the human rights community.

- **Step 1**: Divide students into small groups. Ask students to designate a new person as a recorder and a presenter.

- **Step 2**: Present the class with a photo of an individual (see “Historic Leader Handout”). After showing each photo, give the groups five minutes to jot down notes on who they image this person to be. Groups should answer the following questions:
  - What is this person’s nationality?
  - What are they like? What is their personality/behavior?
  - What does this person do?
  - Where do they live? What is their community like?
  - What is their family like?
  - What do you think makes them a leader?

- **Step 2**: After repeating this exercise with all photos (approx. 5), gather as a class and go through each photo, having the designated present of each group report to the class on what characteristics their group ascribed to each student. As the presenter is reporting, write a few descriptions on the chalkboard for the entire class to see.

**Discussion Questions:** As a class, discuss some of the similarities/differences of the groups’ descriptions. How can our perception of a person be inconsistent with who they actually are? If we cannot judge a person based on how they look, what other ways can be identify a person? Now, read the actual descriptions of each person (also located on the “Historic Leader Handout”). After reading the proper descriptions, ask students how their descriptions differed from whom the person actually is. Explain that we admire these leaders not only because they are able to fulfill their roles in their community or because they can accomplish a task, but also
because of the qualities they embody in their leadership. How does this person embody the five behaviors of positive leadership?

**Teacher Note:** Students may also be interested in the different professions of each leader. If so, descriptions of each profession are listed on the handout.

**Teacher Note:** Students should remain in their small groups for Activity 2.

**Introduction to Activity 2: Good Leadership Role Play**

In the last activity, we learned about examples of leaders within different communities and of different professions. All of the examples showed us ways that different individuals have been or are being positive influences in the communities. However, not all leadership is good leadership. Like we discussed before, one thing that defines a leader is that they are able to take action to accomplish a goal or complete a task for their community. However, just like how not all actions are good actions, not all leaders that are effective at accomplishing their goals are good leaders. In this activity, we will continue to explore the meaning of “good leadership” through a role-play of different common situations where we may be inclined to act as leaders.

**Activity 2: Good Leadership Role Play (groups/ 30 minutes w/ discussion)**

- **Step 1:** Explain to students that you will be presenting them with a list of scenarios. As a group, their task is to choose a scenario and act out two brief skits. Each skit should be three minutes or less. One skit should demonstrate the behaviors of positive leadership, and the other should imagine what negative leadership looks like.
  
  **Important:** Prior to allowing groups to start the skit planning, remind students of the five behaviors of positive leadership: (1) Model the Way 2) Inspire a Shared Vision 3) Challenge the Status Quo 4) Enable Others to Act 5) Encourage.

- **Step 2:** In their small groups, ask students to choose from one of the following scenarios (below). Give student 15 minutes to create a short scene to act out. Everyone must be involved, even if they are playing the role of a narrator.
  
  - A conflict between friends resolved
  - Getting lost on the way to the market
  - A classmate having difficulty with schoolwork
  - Taking care of siblings at home
  - Working on a group project

- **Step 3:** After groups have decided on their scenarios and created a skit, invite each group to present their skit to the class.

**Discussion Questions:** After each group presents, discuss how their skit exemplified the leadership behaviors discussed earlier in the class. What was the “shared vision” of each scenario? How did the actions of the students “challenge the status quo”? In what ways could
they have acted differently (both positively and negatively? What are some ways of describing negative leadership?

**Closing Activity/Debrief (as a class/15 minutes):**
At the end of each class, students will have the opportunity to reflect on what they’ve learned that day. This reflection can happen in different ways: students can discuss a particular experience or person, a particular concept, or a new idea they will take with them. The teacher can start by modeling.

☑ **Step 1:** Gather students in a circle. Start by saying “one thing I will leave behind is...”. Have each student complete the sentence with a belief, attitude, or action they will not take with them at the end of class. As they say the sentence, have students pretend to grab something from within themselves and throw it outside of the circle.

☑ **Step 2:** After each student has stated what they will leave behind, have students complete the sentence “One thing I will take with me is...”, doing the same hand motion.

**Alternative Debrief:**
Students can answer the reflection questions by free writing in their journals; or students can gather in pairs or small groups, if they are more comfortable sharing in a smaller setting.
Lesson 6: Understanding My Values

TOPICS: Values; Tolerance

TIME: 2 hours

OBJECTIVE(S):

This lesson seeks to teach students about personal values and how values influence our actions and goals. This lesson seeks to empower students to understand how they can actively shape their environment and communities by acting on their values.

LEARNING GOALS:

- For students to learn about their own personal values and the values of others
- For students to explore and articulate personal goals/aspirations
- For students to understand the role of values in shaping our actions and interaction with others
- For students to identify ways of showing tolerance and respect for others’ values

TAKE-AWAY SKILLS:

- Students will create a personal mission statement, for future reference throughout the duration of the curriculum and beyond
- Students will establish a class mission statement and classroom ground rules chart that explains the values of their classroom community
- Students will be able to articulate some personal values and compare/contrast those values to those of their classmates
- Students will identify specific actions that enable them to embrace their personal values and be tolerant of differences with others

KEY QUESTIONS & CONCEPTS:

- What do I most care about and why are these values important to me?
- How do my values make me similar to or different from others?
- How can I be respectful and tolerant of differences?
- What are some shared values within our classroom community? What are some ways that we can act on these values? What are some rules that can help guide our classroom conversations moving forward?

- **Values:** inner standards from which you receive the motivation to act as you do and by which you judge behavior (both yours and others)
- **Tolerance:** respect, acceptance and appreciation of the rich diversity of our world's cultures, our forms of expression and ways of being human; values are fostered by knowledge, openness, communication and freedom of thought, conscience and belief

**MATERIALS:**
- Paper
- Notecards
- Pens/pencils
- Large Paper (Labeled "Ground Rules Chart")

**LESSON PLAN & ACTIVITIES:**

Teacher Note: This lesson includes a lengthier warm-up activity, intended to allow students to shape the discussion; Rather than being presented with a list of values, students begin by answering a question that elicits a value.

✓ **Warm up Activity (20-30 minutes):** Begin by giving each student a sheet of paper and ask students to form a circle. Remind students of the discussion on preferences in the previous lesson: who and what influences our preferences? What are some examples of preferences? Then, present students with two beginning phrases: “I like to be....” and “I dislike it when....”.

For each phrase, have students go around the circle, each restating the phrase and filling in the blank. (For example, may begin demonstrating by stating “I like to be...honest” or “I dislike it when...I can’t go to school”). After each go round (for each of the two phrases), present students with a value (see list below) that corresponds with some of the statements or ask students to think of one word that summarizes their statement. Write a few of the values/suggestions on the chalkboard.

**Sample List:**
- Peace – Family – Friendship – Respect – Honesty – Humility
- Responsibility – Loyalty – Knowledge – Happiness - Health
- Education – Creativity – Freedom – Unity – Intelligence – Popularity
Teacher Note: Encourage students to record the "values" that resonate with them on their sheet of paper. Also, if the class size is large, students may complete this warm-up activity in smaller groups.

Lesson Script and Brief Introductory Activity (As a class, 20 minutes):

This lesson focuses on understanding our individual values. Similar to our preferences, our values are influenced by our experiences and our interactions with other people. While we may sometimes share the same values with others, oftentimes, what we value can differ based on our individuality. Even though values are like preferences, there are a few important differences. The first key difference between what we prefer and what we value is how we act. Even if we have a preference for something, we do not always act on that preference – we choose when it’s appropriate to act on that preference. However, a value is something that we always act on. We choose to value something because we strongly believe in it. Values help us make decisions whenever there are many choices of how to act, some positive choices or some negative. For example, I may prefer spending time with my friends, but because I value education, I will always come to class to teach and learn with you all, even when I could be spending time with my friends instead.

Ask students to think of a time when they decided to do something that they knew was good for them, even though they would have preferred to spend their time doing something else instead. Explain that the idea of “knowing something is good for them” is a value judgment.

How do we know what we value? Sometimes, our likes and dislikes can help us determine what we value. (For example, in the activity we just did, I said, “I like to be...honest”. This is an example of something I value: Honesty.) Yet, it is not always the case that our preferences translate into a value. We know that we value something when we choose to act on it on a daily basis and when it shows up in every aspect of our lives – from our words to our actions. When we value something, we care about it deeply and we are willing to stand by it publicly. The second key difference between a preference and a value is that a value should always have a positive and healthy influence over our lives and choices. For example, I may have a strong preference for eating candy instead of healthy foods, but I choose to eat fruits and vegetables because I value having a healthy body, and I know that having a healthy body will allow me to be energized throughout the day. It may not always be easy to act on our values (sometimes, eating a lot of candy is tempting!), but when we do act on our values, we foster a healthier self-esteem because we taking an active role in shaping our lives for the better.
Our values determine the actions we take and the goals we set for ourselves. Values can vary from person to person, community to community, and, more broadly, country to country. We can value character traits (like honesty and the other traits we discussed in the first activity), actual things (like the Qur’an), and other people (like a sibling or a parent). The next activity will help us identify some aspects of our own personal value system.

✓ **Brief Introduction to Activity 1:**

- Give students a sheet of paper. Ask students to imagine that they had to leave Hope Village in the next hour. Then, give students 2 minutes to jot down as many valuable items they would want to take with them before they left.
  
  **Important:** This scenario, though intended to be “imagined”, could strike a chord with some of the students who may have previously experienced a similar situation. In this case, monitoring students’ reactions to the assignment is very important. Additionally, it may help to mention at the beginning of the assignment that the purpose of the activity is to give students the space and time to reflect on difficult situations. As such, it may also help to allot more time for students to think about the scenario. Lastly, although it is important to not shy away from discussing such experiences, if you (the teacher) feel this will be too difficult or traumatizing for the students, feel free to start the activity with the next step (second bullet instruction). The activity is just as useful without this first step.

- Now ask students to think of their neighborhood. Give students 1 minute to jot down as many values that they believe to be typical of the people in their neighborhood.
- Now ask students to think of another place (country or region). Give students 1 minute to jot down as many values as they can think of that would be important to a person from that place or country.
- Now ask students to think of their family. Give students 1 minute to jot down as many values that they believe are important to their family members.
- Lastly, ask students to think of their friends. Give students 1 minute to jot down as many values that they think might be important to their friends.

**Discussion Questions:** After students have had the opportunity to write their responses, ask for volunteers to share what they wrote for each question. Which questions were difficult to think of answers to? Do they share the same values as what their family finds important? How about what their friends care for?
**Introduction to Activity 1: Personal Mission Statement (as a class, 10 minutes)**

A mission statement is similar to a value in that it reminds us of what is most important to us in and outside of the classroom. You can create a general personal mission statement, or a mission statement for a particular purpose. The next activity will help us develop a mission statement for a particular purpose: our time in this human rights course. The purpose of the statement is to help us focus during class, guide our daily decisions, and encourage us when challenges arise.

**Teacher Note:** This activity begins by allowing students to identify their goals/mission as a collective, in order to help them view their purpose in the class as being intertwined with the purpose of their fellow students. This is also intended to help students during Activity 2, when they must create classroom rules that consider and apply to both themselves and others.

**Teacher Note:** Prior to class, write the following guiding questions for Activity 1 on the chalkboard.

**Guiding Questions:**

1. **WHO:** Who are we as a group? What is our classroom like? What are we learning about? What are you eager to learn about?

2. **WHAT:** What do we want to accomplish? What are our reasons for coming to class?

3. **WHY:** Why do we want to accomplish this goal? For what reason?

4. **HOW:** How are we going to accomplish this goal?

**Activity 1: Personal Mission Statement (30-40 minutes).**

✓ Step 1: Divide students into small groups (5-10 students, depending on class size) and give each student a piece of paper. Ask students to sit in a circle with members of their group. Explain that each student will be responsible for creating a mission statement for themselves, but prior to creating an individual statement, students will be working in small groups to answer a few guiding questions (listed above).

✓ Step 2: Present the guiding questions (listed above), to the students. Give the groups 20 minutes to discuss their responses to the questions. In every group, students should go through each question and allow each group member a moment to respond briefly. Allow students to write notes on responses and ideas that resonated with them. There are no
perfect answers – the purpose is for students to generate ideas in preparation for writing their personal mission statement.

✓ Step 3: After students have discussed the questions as a group, ask each student to return to their table. Give students ten minutes to use the ideas they heard/discussed in order to write a brief statement (3-4 sentences), answering the guiding questions for themselves. Students should feel free to incorporate ideas from their classmates. Emphasize that the personal mission statement must be something that the student believes in and is willing to abide by, even when tasks become difficult or challenges arise in and outside the classroom. Allow students to create the mission statement either specifically for the classroom, or more generally for when they are both in and outside of class.

**Introduction to Activity 2: Ground Rules Chart (10 min)**

A classroom is a form of community, because we share some common purpose for being here (that is, for education and learning) and our interactions and responsibilities within this community are shaped by that purpose (that is, we do things that allow ourselves to learn and obtain an education). Just like in the other communities we discussed, there are roles, responsibilities, and values in our classroom. For example, I, your teacher, have the responsibility of teaching you, my students, and ensuring that you get learn; whereas, you, the students, have the responsibilities of participating and learning about the topics that we discuss. Additionally, students have the responsibility of being respectful towards their classmates. Because we each have roles in our classroom community, it is important that we cooperate by creating shared values and ways of one another and ourselves achieve those values.

Determining our shared values can sometimes be simple, but oftentimes, it is difficult. When we feel very deeply about our values, it is difficult to respect those who see things differently. We believe that we are right, which means we see those who disagree with us as being wrong. In such cases we may even come to regard such people as our enemies, not because they have done anything to us personally but just because their beliefs are not the same as ours. **Tolerance** allows us to respect others, even when we feel very deeply about our values. Tolerance is finding harmony despite difference.

In this activity, we will get to play an active role in designing our classroom community. Together, we will create Class Ground Rules Chart that describes our shared values in this Human Rights Class and lists important rules for us to follow throughout the course. Just like our values, the class mission statement and ground rules chart will allow us to make the most of our time together and achieve our learning goals, by helping us respect one another during activities and discussions. Because everyone will give their input to the mission
statement and rules chart, everyone will be responsible for respecting the rules and acting in ways that further our community’s mission.

**Activity 2: Ground Rules Chart (as a class/60 min):**

✓ Step 1: Give each student a notecard/piece of paper. Explain how certain values, like respect and tolerance, are important for a healthy classroom community to function. Give students a few moments to think of one or two values that they believe are important for a classroom community. Encourage creativity – the values do not have to correspond to the ones discussed in the previous activity! These values could either be important for the teacher-student relationship or for the student-student relationship. After students have had a few moments to think of their value, ask students to write down the value on the notecard, turning the card face down on their desk and not sharing with other students.

✓ Step 2: Collect all of the notecards. Then, randomly redistribute the cards to students, so that each student has a notecard other than their own.

✓ Step 3: Ask students to read over the value written on the notecard they received. Then, given students five minutes to create a rule or guiding principle, for themselves and their classmates, that would enable the classroom community to embrace that value. (For example: if the notecard states "respect" as the value, then an example of a corresponding rule could be "Do not interrupt others when they are speaking").

**Teacher Note:** It may be a bit tricky for students to create a rule corresponding to a value on their own. If necessary, invite students to work in pairs to create their rules. Ask students to think about/imagine what a good learning environment looks like. Are students all talking at once, is everyone quiet all the time, or something in between? Are tables messy or organized? What makes you enthusiastic to come to school? Unenthusiastic? How do you like your classmates to treat you? How do you treat your classmates? Your teachers?

**Teacher Note:** Explain that the rules the class creates should be taken seriously, especially since these rules will be applied to discussions and activities henceforth. Students should be reminded and encouraged to play an active role in their classroom community. If conversation is scant, remind students of the class mission statement and ask them to think of behaviors/actions that can help that mission statement.

✓ Step 4: Once all students have created a rule based on their given value, recollect the notecards from each student. Read aloud each rule, one by one to the entire class, and ask
students to guess the corresponding value. (The student who wrote the rule should not respond!) Once the class has identified the value being described, allow students to vote on whether they want or do not want the rule to be included on the Classroom Ground Rules Chart. If there are volunteers, allow students to explain why/why not that rule should be included. Allow students to discuss how each rule will contribute to the classroom community. When students have agreed on a rule, record it on the large sheet of paper labeled "Ground Rules Chart".

✓ Step 5: Have all students and teachers sign the bottom of the Ground Rules Chart, as confirmation that they have contributed and agree to its terms. Display the Ground Rules Chart in a space where it is visible to all students, perhaps on the classroom door or near the chalkboard.

Closing Activity/Debrief (as a class/15 minutes):

At the end of class, students should have the opportunity to reflect on what they’ve learned that day. This reflection can happen in different ways: students can discuss a particular experience or person, a particular concept, or a new idea they will take with them. The teacher can start by modeling.

✓ Step 1: Gather students in a circle. Start the debrief by saying “one thing I will leave behind is...””. Have each student complete the sentence with a belief, attitude, or action they will not take with them at the end of class. As they say the sentence, have students pretend to grab something from within themselves and throw it outside of the circle.

✓ Step 2: After each student has stated what they will leave behind, have students complete the sentence “One thing I will take with me is...””, doing the same hand motion.
Lesson 7: Understanding My Story

TOPICS: Self Expression; Self-Esteem; Compassion/Empathy; Active Listening

TIME: 2 hours

OBJECTIVE(S)

- For students to continue understanding the "Iceberg Model", namely the idea that everyone has a story that is not visible on the surface level
- For students to share a story about themselves to each other
- For students to learn to be engaged listeners when others are sharing their stories

LEARNING GOALS

- Learn that empathy is a fundamental component of compassionate behavior.
- Understand that compassion is being able to recognize when someone is suffering, and to respond to the suffering in sensitive ways that recognize the needs and feelings of the person suffering.
- Learn that compassion is demonstrating caring, comforting and supporting.

TAKE-AWAY SKILLS:

- Students will learn the five steps for expressing empathy and compassion when interacting with others
- Students will be able to identify their communication style and learn how to respond to alternative styles of communication
- Students will gain practical experience in total self-expression by verbalizing an “origin story” about themselves to others
- Students will begin learning to be comfortable with public speaking

KEY QUESTIONS & CONCEPTS

- How do I effectively communicate how I feel to others?
- How do I validate my emotions and decide how to act accordingly?
- What are some ways of actively listening to others and expressing empathy by “putting myself in their shoes”?
- What are the experiences and who are the individuals that have influenced me? How would I describe? How would I tell my “origin story”?
- What are the similarities/differences between my story and that of others? How can I respect others' stories?
- **Empathy:** Ability to identify with other people’s situations and feelings; one of the ways we can develop and deepen our respect and tolerance for other people is through empathy, to understand the way he or she feels and thinks. We may not necessarily agree, but we can at least practice tolerance by trying to understand and see the world through his or her eyes.

**MATERIALS**

Large, classroom-sized version of Iceberg Model  
Notecards/Paper  
Pens/pencils

**LESSON PLAN & ACTIVITIES:**

- **Warm up Activity (small groups, 20 minutes):** Begin by asking students to get into small groups. Give each group a sheet of paper. Give the groups ten minutes to discuss the following questions: What makes a good listener? How do I know when someone is listening to me? What are some verbal cues? What are some non-verbal cues? What makes a good conversation with someone I know? What makes a good conversation with a stranger? After groups have discussed their responses to these questions, gather as a class and create a list of examples of good and bad non-verbal/verbal communication cues. Write this list on the chalkboard.

**Lesson Script and Brief Introductory Activity (as a class, 20 minutes):** This lesson focuses on developing our listening skills, in addition to developing our ability to communicate with others. From here on out, we will be discussing important issues surrounding human rights with our fellow classmates. In a previous class, we made a ground rules chart in order to prepare our classroom for the discussions we would have in the future. Some of these discussions may be about difficult issues that we may not always agree on or that we may not immediately feel comfortable talking about. So, just like it was important to create some rules to help us manage our classroom, this less is important because it will help us develop key skills in listening to others and expressing our own opinions and emotions. Communication is a two-way street: to be understood, we must understand. When someone is trying to communicate a significant experience to us, an important aspect of understanding that experience is being able to empathize with how they currently feel or how they felt at a particular point in time (if the story is about something in the past). Just like we would want to be reassured that someone was listening to us, we must also be able to assure others that we are actively listening and understanding them. Essentially, we need to express empathy. Expressing empathy can be
broken down into five essential steps: The first step to expressing empathy is to **watch and listen**. Ask yourself, “what is the other person saying and what is their body language”? The next step of empathy is to simply **remember a time when you felt the same way** as the person you are communicating with. The third step to expressing empathy is to **imagine how you might feel in that same situation**. What would be your own emotions in this particular situation? No matter what range of emotions you feel, all emotions are valid. However, it is important to distinguish between acknowledging an emotion and acting on an emotion. Not all emotions need to be acted upon.

**Ask** students to think of a time they felt a strong emotion but decided not to act on that emotion. Why did they choose to do so? What do they think would have happened if they decided to act on that emotion instead?

We want to “put ourselves in someone else’s shoes” in order to really see a situation from their perspective. This isn’t easy because this requires us to leave behind our own judgments, biases, preferences, and sometimes values, in lieu of imaging the other person’s judgments, preferences, etc. It means respecting how someone else can view an experience differently than how we would. And, most significantly, it involves **asking the person how they actually feel and accepting their response**, as opposed to projecting our own perceptions of how they should feel about the situation. Remember, regardless of how they feel, an emotion is separate from a response. Lastly, it is important to **show the person that you care**, through both your words and actions.

✓ **Brief Introduction to Activity 1:**

- Group students into pairs. Ask students to think of a time when they needed someone to listen to them or a time when they shared something important with another person (such as an important story or expressed a deeply felt emotion). Who did they seek to listen to them? Why did they choose this person instead of someone else? How did that person respond?
- Now ask students to think of what qualities made this person a good listener? How did that person show them that they cared or that they did not care? Give students ten minutes to work as a pair and create a list of “Good Listener Qualities”.
- After students have created their lists, gather as a class to discuss some of the qualities. Write the qualities on the board. Examples include:
  - The listener did not interrupt.
  - The listener did not rush the conversation
  - The listener was trustworthy.
The listener understood the speaker’s feelings.

**Introduction to Activity 1: My Narrative & Active Listening**

In this activity, you will be challenged to think of a significant experience and the details surrounding that experience. You will be asked to play the role of both the storyteller (the person talking about that experience) and the active listener (the person empathizing with that experience). The purpose of this activity is for you to practice, in a safe environment, conveying a story and the emotions surrounding that story and for you to practice good listening skills with a classmate. We want to practice being intentional in our communication because the more we practice, the easier it becomes to do and the more natural good communication skills become for us. Like in other activities, there are no “wrong” or “bad” stories to tell. However, there is a difference between good and poor ways of communicating. Some examples of poor communication (whether you are the listener or the storyteller) are:

- Interrupting or interposing questions while your partner is explaining something
- Expressing judgment on the “rightness” or “wrongness” of a particular situation, either by directly saying it or through non-verbal communication
- Being distracted; Not giving full attention to the person speaking
- Using aggressive, demeaning, or condescending tone of voice
- Ask students if they can think of other examples of poor ways of communicating with others. Some other examples may be:
  - Laughing when someone is speaking on a serious subject
  - Using unengaged body language

**Activity 1: My Narrative (individually, in pairs, then as a class, 60 minutes w/ discussion):**

✓ Step 1: Given students a sheet of paper and arrange students into pairs. Explain to students that they will have **fifteen minutes** to think about and outline a story they would like to share with their partner. The story should take around five minutes (more is allowable) to explain and can be about any experience they’ve had in the past or that is currently on their mind. For example, the story can also be about some significant aspect of who they are (i.e. how they got their name or their relationship to their siblings) or can be about an influential event (i.e. a time they accomplished something
they thought they could not do or a time they lost something or someone important to them).

**Important – Alternative Activity:** If many students are uncomfortable expressing a story in the first-person narrative, *it may help to do this activity twice: once when the student tells a story from the perspective of another person, and a second time when the student tells a story from their own perspective.* In this case, a few prompts for the first story-telling activity could be:

- Write a story from the perspective of someone who is forbidden to go to a specific place. Where are they forbidden and why? How do they feel about being forbidden? What do they do about being forbidden?
- Write a story from the perspective of an animal that roams your neighborhood. How do they see your neighborhood? What are they interested in? How do people treat that animal? What is this animal thinking about?
- Write a story from the perspective of a person who is in an unfamiliar place. Where are they and how did they get there? Who else is there? What do they see, do, hear, smell, and notice?

When outlining their story (either from the first person perspective or using one of the prompts), students should be sure to answer the following key questions:

- How did / do you feel at the time of this event or experience? Or, what sorts of emotions does this story bring?
- Think about the other individuals involved in this story. What are some sentiments they might have felt / be feeling? How are they similar or different to your own?
- Was there any dialogue or conversation during this experience? What was said? By whom? What was the result of this dialogue?
- Think of how you want to express this story to your partner. What is the mood? What will be your tone of voice? What are the important, most significant parts of this story and how will you convey them to your partner?

✓ Step 2: After students have written an outline of their story and thought about / answered the key questions, explain to students that in each pair, there will be a
“Storyteller” and an “Active-Listener”. Each student will have the opportunity to play either role throughout the duration of the activity. For this first round, ask students to divide themselves into either role. The Storyteller will have five to ten minutes to explain their story to their Active Listener partner. The challenge of the storyteller is to weave their answers to the key questions into their story. Meanwhile, the challenge of the active listener is to practice conveying their empathy in a way that their partner can recognize.

✓ Step 3: After each partner has told their story and listened to a story, partners should discuss and create a list of ways that they knew their partner was actively listening? How could they sense (or not sense) their partner’s empathy? Is it possible to sense empathy in everyday communication? Why or why not?

✓ Step 4: Now is the challenge: In pairs, students should take turns retelling their partner’s story. Students should think of their partners’ tone of voice during different parts of the story, gestures, or facial expressions? Were they able to recall the significant portions and details of the story?

Discussion Questions (as a class): Was it difficult to think of a story to tell? Why or why not and how so? How and why was it difficult to retell your partners’ story? Were you able to convey similar emotion and expressions as your partner id in their original telling of the story? Why or why not? In what ways did you know that your partner was actively listening? Based on stories, can students think of anything to add to the Classroom Iceberg Model drawing?

Closing Activity/Debrief (as a class/15 minutes):

✓ Step 1: Gather students in a circle. Start the debrief by saying “one thing I will leave behind is...”. Have each student complete the sentence with a belief, attitude, or action they will not take with them at the end of class. As they say the sentence, have students pretend to grab something from within themselves and throw it outside of the circle.

✓ Step 2: After each student has stated what they will leave behind, have students complete the sentence “One thing I will take with me is...”, doing the same hand motion.

Lesson 8: Module Recap

Topics: Undecided; Format will depend on Lesson 7 reviews.
A Note to Future Team Members

An abundance of material on building self-esteem in teens exists in the sphere of curriculum design. However, writing this module was still a challenge, not because there was a dearth of subject material, but because synthesizing that information and adapting it to be accessible a wide age range required a process of constant revision. With that said, this note should serve as a brief guide on how to approach revisions to this module, as well as how to approach writing future lessons (either for this module or other modules as the curriculum develops). The note contains the following: my personal reflections on the writing process, suggestions for potential revisions or ways to scale up the lessons, and general considerations for the curriculum as the team moves forward.

When I began research on the subject of developing individuality and identity in teens, I came across a variety of activities geared toward schools settings that had access to typical classroom resources (from art materials to texts). However, many of these materials and handouts were simply infeasible to obtain in the setting in which this curriculum would be taught. Hence, rather than relying on the ability for students to answer questions on a handout, all activities (aside from activity 1 in lesson 5) were designed to either involve basic materials (pen and paper) or role-playing / group discussion activities. While this is sustained throughout the module, an important consideration for future lessons will be creating activities that can incorporate more movement or other creative ways of conveying the topics while still using as minimal materials as possible. The current head teacher (Ayan) is overburdened with a myriad of tasks: hiring teachers, enrolling and placing students in appropriate class levels, managing
classrooms, training teachers for special curriculums (like this one), and establishing a school office with student records, among her other day-to-day responsibilities of running a secondary school. As such, the fewer materials and the clearer the lesson instructions are, the better.

As the lessons took shape, it became important to review activities (even prior to having them reviewed by members of the Schell Center) in order to ensure that they were sensitive to the needs of students who had experienced trauma. As I reviewed my lessons, I made note of activities that could evoke traumatic experiences or that could be particularly challenging to a child who had experienced trauma. Hence, under some instructions, there is a marking of “important” or a “teacher note” that either explains the purpose of an activity, offers an alternative method to approaching the activity, or simply forewarns the teacher of potential issues that could arise between students (for example, the issue of clan affiliation was initially a concern noted in the first lesson).

Aside from noting potential causes for concern as they arose throughout the lesson, another recurring issue throughout the writing process was the gender dynamic within the classroom. Typically, the students were taught in classes that were separated by gender: boys sat on one side and girls sat on the other. However, Dr. Mohamed explicitly intended for the students to intermix in the classes where this curriculum would be taught. This request presented its own difficulties, especially since when writing, I could not predict how students would react to particular discussions and activities (such as the activity on gender stereotypes in lesson 3). Oddly enough, it was that difficulty which enabled me to recognize an important aspect of my approach to writing: namely, that I would need to become comfortable with the uncertainties inherent in designing a curriculum from a place far removed from the teachers
and students in the classroom. Most significantly, I would need to constantly remain aware of areas of the curriculum that would need to be left to the teachers’ discretions. These two realizations were, at first, limiting. For example, while writing lesson 6, it was difficult for me to think of ways to describe the concept of values without invoking language that would imply or ascribe positive or negative qualities to particular values. (Many questions went through my mind while writing this particular lesson: what if a student said they valued something like “power” because they could influence people or have control over people? How would I explain power in both its positive and negative qualities without confusing the conceptual definition of a “value”, which is supposed to be something that always has a healthy influence over one’s life?) Questions like these helped me realize that I could not completely screen for what would be happening in the classroom; that I would need to rely on the feedback of Ayan during our weekly Skype calls and be comfortable producing lessons that may or may not need to be overhauled or tweaked after they were taught.

Lastly, there was the ethical question of whether our team, being so far removed from the Somali students, could reasonably be expected to produce a curriculum that both engaged the students and respected their experiences. Our team this year had many discussions on this question and were oftentimes conflicted on our answers as a group and as individuals. On one hand, we recognized that we had the time and academic resources to compile, review, and create the materials that Dr. Mohamed requested when she commissioned the Schell Center for this project. On the other hand, we recognized that our very position which made us useful in one respect, rendered us useless in another: that is, we could never fully grasp what it would mean to teach at the Hope Village secondary school. Foreigners, particularly U.S. citizens, are
restricted in their ability to travel to Somalia, given the exorbitant costs of security.

Furthermore, the security in Lower Shebelle (the location of the school) is precarious and, in one instance, disrupted the class schedule after an explosion occurred near the school. Hence, even if our will to teach the curriculum was present, the reality was that we could not. Yet, this reality did not reconcile the innermost conflict of whether we could ethically believe that we were in the proper position to write this curriculum. And, our ultimate conclusion was that we were not. Preferably, this curriculum would be written by individuals with more expertise than ourselves and with more culturally relevant knowledge than what we could acquire through our readings, our weekly talks with Ayan, and Dr. Mohamed’s visit to Yale. However, like Nicola said in our final capstone presentation “this is not an ideal way to create a curriculum, but Hope Village is also not an ideal situation”. Essentially, we were students who had the time and access to resources (from research materials to individuals with particular expertise) in order to assemble a project that is only at its starting stages.

These lessons are the groundwork that should be expanded upon and better tailored to the needs of the students who will engage with the lessons. While the material in this module is suitable for students entering the first year of the curriculum, it can still be expanded upon. Lessons on individuality and others can begin to include more diverse subject matter such as explicit discussions on gender norms and the intersection of faith and women’s rights. Additionally, lessons on self-esteem and leadership can include material on leadership styles and incorporate greater emphasis on leadership within the community. (This may also relate to the final module on “Becoming a Change-maker”). For later years, lessons on values and community can also explore the values of different faiths and religions, and the values of
different types of governments and community structures. Lastly, the entire module can be reshaped (for later levels) to incorporate more text and literature from Somali, African, and non-African thinkers, philosophers, statespersons, and writers.

Kelsey Annu-Essuman
References


In consultation with:

Ayan Abukar, Head Teacher at Hope Village Primary and Secondary School

Dr. Deqo Mohamed, Hawa Abdi Foundation

Omer Bajwa, Coordinator of Muslim Life in the Chaplain’s Office at Yale

Professor Hope Metcalf, Yale Law School Orville Schell Center for International Human Rights

Sophia Berhie, MA student at Jackson Institute for Global Affairs