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English 112B

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The Struggles of First Born/First Generation Immigrant Daughters

1. **Rationale**
	1. I chose this topic because I have firsthand experience of what it is like to be a first generation immigrant daughter. I was like a second mother to my siblings, I changed diapers and prepared bottles at the age of ten. I cooked for them and helped them with their homework, barely having any time to focus on my own work. I did this because my parents were working hard to put food on the table, but it should not have been my responsibility. In high school, I wanted to join a sport or a club but my parents told me it was a waste of time. They did not understand that having good grades was not enough to be admitted to a good college. My parents did not go to college, so when I was applying to college, I did not have anyone to turn to. One day, I gained the courage to tell my English teacher I was undocumented and did not know if I could fill out a FAFSA form, my English teacher was clueless. She sent me to the counseling center and my counselor was just as confused! It was not until I took a Spanish class and read *Like Water for Chocolate,* that I felt *seen*. The protagonist, Tita, does not want to follow the family traditions that her mother is forcing on her. This is something I always struggled with, so I was able to recognize myself in Tita. When the family traditions are followed in the novel, it does more harm than good. This is one of many books that first generation daughters need. Oftentimes, they are expected to uphold family traditions and obligations, even if it means repeating cycles of generational trauma. They are expected to put everyone’s wishes before theirs, often picking majors their *parents* want. They are forced to depend on themselves, making it hard for them to ask for help when they need it the most. I want students to see that *it is* possible to break those toxic cycles. I want my students to know that my classroom is a safe space for them to open up about the struggles that come with being a first generation immigrant. This is important because San Jose is home to many immigrant families. Thus, topics such as being first generation and the immigrant experience, need to be taught and addressed.
	2. The social media app TikTok has many topics ranging from makeup tutorials to social justice issues. One of the things I stumbled upon was #firstgencollege student, #firstgenlatina, and #firstgendaughter. I noticed that most of the women in these TikToks shared similar struggles. For example, user **moth120320** talked about how they “will forever be jealous of people who are privileged enough to go to college simply for the experience of being in one instead of going to college in order to have at least some form of education in order to increase the possibility of living comfortably in the future.” This is something that I used to relate to. I saw college students skipping classes because they did not have to worry about keeping up their G.P.A in order to receive financial aid. I was also jealous of my friend when she nonchalantly told me she failed a few classes. I did not allow myself to fail any classes, because I knew my financial aid would only cover four years. Even with all these TikToks circulating around, this issue is not discussed enough. Many women do not feel comfortable voicing their opinions to their parents. Some have tried to have a discussion with their parents, but they are often dismissed. Thus, it is important to give students (especially women) a space to express these issues.
	3. I had Professor Warner's help, she pointed out that *The Joy Luck Club* shares the same themes as my companion texts. I decided that when I start teaching, I could use *The Joy Luck Club* as the centerpiece for one semester and then switch to *Like Water For Chocolate*, as the centerpiece the following semester. Although I did not read the book, The Joy Luck club shares the same issues that are found in *Adolescents in Search for Meaning: Tapping Powerful Resource of Story*. These include making life choices, facing violence and abuse, living through family and relationship issues, and dealing with identity and discrimination. For example, *The Joy Luck Club* looks at the mother-daughter relationships, which are affected by a generational gap. In *Like Water For Chocolate*, Tita and her mother struggle to understand one another because of family traditions. Both of these issues are also found in my companion texts, making these novels perfect centerpieces.
2. **Activities**
	1. **Week 1 -** introduction
		1. Introduce *The Joy Luck Clu*b to students using youtube video.
			1. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sIj3d9G8Sx0>
		2. Break up class into four groups. Each group will have to define one of the terminologies, these include “first generation”, “second generation”, “generational gap” and “generational trauma”. Each group will be asked to make a poster that will be put up in the classroom for the whole unit. As we read, they will add examples to their posters.
		3. Show students TikToks that discuss struggles of first generation daughters and first generation college students. Ask students to write down anything they relate to or to write down common struggles. Afterwards, students will have the option to share what they wrote. If students do not start a discussion, I will start the conversation by pointing out something that I related to.
			1. TikToks:
				1. [https://www.tiktok.com/@moth120320/video/7111511854886702382?\_r=1&\_t=8Xr2mW1dPC6&is\_from\_webapp=v1&item\_id=711151185488670238](https://www.tiktok.com/%40moth120320/video/7111511854886702382?_r=1&_t=8Xr2mW1dPC6&is_from_webapp=v1&item_id=7111511854886702382)2
				2. [https://www.tiktok.com/@jenniferchunchi/video/7141531194780339502?\_r=1&\_t=8XsdkXvwlic&is\_from\_webapp=v1&item\_id=7141531194780339502](https://www.tiktok.com/%40jenniferchunchi/video/7141531194780339502?_r=1&_t=8XsdkXvwlic&is_from_webapp=v1&item_id=7141531194780339502)
				3. [https://www.tiktok.com/@rhea.shetty/video/7038826711827401990?\_r=1&\_t=8Xsdvcb1eY7&is\_from\_webapp=v1&item\_id=7038826711827401990](https://www.tiktok.com/%40rhea.shetty/video/7038826711827401990?_r=1&_t=8Xsdvcb1eY7&is_from_webapp=v1&item_id=7038826711827401990)
		4. The *same* four groups will follow one of the four mothers and their daughters in the novel.
			* 1. Group 1 will focus on Suyuan Woo and her daughter Jing-mei (June)
				2. Group 2 will focus on An-mei and her daughter Rose `
				3. Group 3 will focus on Lindo and her daughter Waverly
				4. Group 4 will focus on Ying-ying and her daughter Lena
		5. Read four chapters of *The Joy Luck Club* to students. Ask students to read for participation points.
			1. After reading I will ask students to write down any differences or similarities between the TikToks and novel. Then we will discuss as a class. I will ask students who did not read to share their answers first.
	2. **Week 2** - Family tree
		1. Introduce students to what a family tree is by showing them my own family tree. Then I will give them a handout with questions that will help them make their own family tree.
			1. *Possible questions:*
				1. How far back can you trace your ancestors?
				2. What countries did your family come from?
				3. Are you first generation, second generation, third generation?
		2. Students will fill out this form to get ready to make their family tree
			1. [https://processing.nli.org.il/sites/ManofEng/PriteyHinuch/ManofDocuments/מערךשיעור\_Family\_Tree\_Preparation\_–\_Secondary\_School.pdf](https://processing.nli.org.il/sites/ManofEng/PriteyHinuch/ManofDocuments/%D7%9E%D7%A2%D7%A8%D7%9A%D7%A9%D7%99%D7%A2%D7%95%D7%A8_Family_Tree_Preparation_%E2%80%93_Secondary_School.pdf)
		3. Students will be encouraged to make their family tree creative. They can make a family tree of their own family **or** make a family tree of a mother-daughter pair from the novel. I will provide creative examples:
			1. 
			2. 
		4. Read four more chapter of *The Joy Luck Club*
			1. After reading, students will be asked to answer some discussion questions:
				1. Which generation of women do you like the most?
				2. What do you think of the parenting in this novel?
				3. Who is the most likable mother and why?
				4. Who is the most likable daughter and why?
	3. **Week 3** - finishing novel
		1. Read the rest of the novel as a class. Take a break after four chapters, to make sure students are not lost. After we finish reading the book, students will be given a quiz to assess their knowledge of the text.
		2. Students will have **two options** for the final project:
			1. They can make a TikTok where they address the struggles of one the mother/daughter relationship. They will be asked to write a paragraph explaining why they chose that mother/daughter relationship.

*Or*

* + - 1. They can watch the film *The Joy Luck Club* and write an essay comparing the film and book ***or*** write a personal essay that talks about a character (daughter or mother) they relate to. For students that want to write a book to film, they can use this chart to help them develop their ideas:

| Scene:  |  |
| --- | --- |
| How do you expect it to be filmed?  | How was it filmed? Any changes? |
|  |  |

| Scene: |  |
| --- | --- |
| How do you expect it to be filmed? | How was it filmed? Any changes? |
|  |  |

* 1. **Week 4 -** reading groups/companion texts
		1. I will show students several YA novels, these include:
			1. *I Am Not Your Perfect Mexican Daughter* by Erika Sanchez
			2. *I Am Malala: The Girl Who Stood Up for Education and Was Shot by the Taliban* by Malala Yousafzai, co-written with Christina Lamb
			3. *The Distance Between Us* by Reyna Grande
			4. *How Dare The Sun Rise: Memoirs of a War Child* by [Sandra Uwiringiyimana](https://www.google.com/search?client=safari&rls=en&q=Sandra+Uwiringiyimana&stick=H4sIAAAAAAAAAOPgE-LVT9c3NEw2TSoyTyowUoJw0yoqytLSLE21ZLKTrfST8vOz9cuLMktKUvPiy_OLsq0SS0sy8osWsYoGJ-alFCUqhJZnFmXmpWdWZuYm5iXuYGXcxc7EwQgAHM5lUV4AAAA&sa=X&ved=2ahUKEwiD0cm10977AhVtlGoFHVydBHkQmxMoAHoECEEQAg) and Abigail Pesta
			5. *The House on Mango Street* by Sandra Cisneros
		2. Students will be asked to write down which 3 books they’re most interested in, this will help me make groups. Four groups will be made.
			1. Students will get in their groups and do some research. They have to find out if the book is a memoir, autobiographical or nonfiction.
			2. Students will read one chapter as a group and read however much they agree upon, at home.
			3. We will come back as a class and share what their book is about (setting, characters, what the problem is, if there is any so far). As a class we’ll make a poster that highlights the similarities and differences of the books.
			4. Groups will continue to meet to read and discuss. I will hop from group to group to read or discuss with students.
		3. **Activities - companion texts**
			1. Each book has different activities, students will be asked to present their work to the class (art, poem, video, or speech). Students who chose to write essays will share their work with a student who also wrote an essay, peer review it and give them a grade (this will not be their actual grade). Students who do not want to share their poems, have the option to peer review and grade another student’s poem as well.
				1. *I Am Not Your Perfect Mexican Daughter:* Julia likes art and poetry, so students will be asked to make a poem with the prompt “I am Not your Perfect \_\_\_” *or* “I am not \_\_\_” If students prefer to do something more creative, they can make a drawing *or* painting of a theme (immigrant cultural identity, secrets and lies, or poverty and entrapment) that best represents the novel.
				2. *I Am Malala: The Girl Who Stood Up for Education and Was Shot by the Taliban*: Students will draw a before and after picture of Malala. One drawing of Malala before the Taliban comes to her community and another drawing of Malala after she is shot. Students who prefer a writing assignment will be asked to pick three quotes from Malala’s life before the Taliban and three quotes from Malala, after she is shot. They will have to explain why they chose those quotes.
			2. *The Distance Between Us:* Students have the option to interview a family member that immigrated to the U.S. *or* write a personal essay about the impact of the American Dream on the individual and/or the family.
				1. *Questions for the interview*:

What was your life like before you came to the U.S.?

How many years did you live in your native country? What did you do for a living?

How did you prepare to come here (emotionally, physically, and financially?)

How difficult was your journey?

How did your life change when you arrived?

Are you happy here? Why or why not?

What was your biggest challenge about being “new” in the U.S. ?

After they answer these questions, students will be asked to make a map that maps the journey of the person they interviewed.

* + - 1. *How Dare The Sun Rise: Memoirs of a War Child:* students have the option to write an essay that looks at the differences/similarities of Sandra’s childhood in the Congo and her life in Rochester *or* prepare a speech in which they are an immigration attorney arguing that Sandra should gain admittance to the United States as a refugee.
			2. *The House on Mango Street:* students have the option to write a “My name” poem where they talk about what their name means, *or* they can listen to Eminem’s “My name is” and make their own short version of the song. They can use apps like TikTok to enhance their voices. *Another option* that students have is to write four vignettes that talk about their home, family, or friends.
1. **Closing out the unit**
	1. To close out the unit, I will ask students to write a short reflection. I will ask them some questions that will help them reflect. Students *do not* have to answer all questions, they are just meant to guide students.
		1. *Questions*:
			1. Which companion novel did you read? What did you like about it? What did you dislike about it? Was there anything that you read that made you feel uncomfortable? Anything you related to?
			2. Which companion novel that you did **not** read, would you like to read next?
			3. Going back to *The Joy Luck Club*, was there anything similar that you also found in the companion novel you read?
			4. Now that you have been introduced to the concepts of first generation immigrants, generational gaps, and generational trauma, are any of these related to your life? If you do not relate to any of these, did your view on these issues change?
	2. As a class we will watch the film *The Joy Luck Club.* This will mark the end of the unit. The reflection should help me access what worked and what did not work. Their reflections will help me improve the unit for a different class. It will also help me decide if I will keep using the same novels or if I should look for different ones. The biggest takeaway is for my students to feel safe in my classroom, especially undocumented students who might be seeing themselves in literature for the first time.

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