

Part II: *Our Stories*

In this two-part lesson students will read the life stories of others and practice their own storytelling as a means of communicating cultural identity. They will also learn to collect primary source data through interviews. (Recommended chapters: 5, 6, 7, 9)

Activity 1: *Telling our stories*

1. After students have read selected chapters from the text discuss the following questions with them:

- What kinds of lessons do the stories offer?
- How would you describe their emotional tone? Happy? Proud? Nostalgic?
- How would you describe the narrative style of the storyteller?
- How do community members assert their cultural identity in their stories?
- How does reading or hearing a personal story enhance your learning about an object? A culture?

2. Write the following concepts on the board and discuss them in relation to their readings:

cultural survival

cultural renewal

cultural adaptation

3. Have each student write a story or personal narrative of their own that connects the object chosen in Part I to their sense of community or cultural identity.

4. Provide time for students to share their stories with the class.

Activity 2: *Recording and reporting*

1. After students have read selected chapters from the text consider the following with them:

These chapters are mostly the spoken, first-person testimonies of community members. Imagine the community member to be not only speaking in the presence of an interviewer, but also responding to the interviewer's questions.

In addition to the personal stories, these chapters give detailed descriptions of the objects and how they are used. What specific questions do you think the interviewer was asking? What general or open-ended questions do you think the interviewer was asking? Allow the students to re-read or refer back to the text if helpful.

2. Working in pairs, have students concentrate on a particular text passage, or set of passages, from a single chapter. Together, have them generate a list of questions that address the important or notable information in the passage.

3. Next, have one student take the role of the interviewer, and the other student the role of the community member. Have them re-enact the imagined interview as one student asks questions and the other recounts the original responses given in the text.

4. Then, have the students generate a new list of questions directed toward each other based on their written responses in the previous activity (Activity 1, 3), and let them take turns interviewing each other. Be sure that they document their exchanges in written or other recorded form.

5. Allow time for sharing or reciting before the class.

6. *Extension*– Have students prepare a list of questions and interview someone outside of the class (another student, a friend, a parent or other relative, etc.) regarding their cultural or community identity, their objects, and their stories. Have them write a report to be presented to the class.