Ana’s Shadow Discussion Guide

A Resource for High School Teachers

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Purpose of the Guide

*Ana’s Shadow* is an ethnographic play in which a mother and her three daughters negotiate the challenges and politics of transnational/transracial adoption in a same-sex family. The script is based on stories, ideas and opinions gathered from written personal narratives by members of adoptive families and from interviews with them. Scholarly and personal narrative accounts of transnational/transracial adoption suggest it is a complex, political and contested practice that raises many questions and issues for adoptive parents and their children.

*Ana’s Shadow* is an example of the tremendous capacity that stories hold to reflect reality while stimulating critical discussions about how power operates within society. The authors of this guide have aimed to provide you, the teacher, with various avenues into some of the themes present in *Ana’s Shadow.* The purpose of the guide is to assist teachers and their students to explore: differences between charity and social justice; complex questions of community and belonging in a transnational family; and how issues of caregiving in illness and death are taken up in a queer family. The stories contained within *Ana’s Shadow* pose a multitude of questions to readers and bring to light a variety of issues that contribute to the foundation of an anti-oppression pedagogy in the classroom.

We hope that this guide will serve as a springboard for discussions that explore how issues of race, class, ethnicity, gender, sexuality, ability, and colonization intersect in the lives of real people.

Our Approach

The *Ana’s Shadow* discussion guide is organized by theme. After thoughtful consideration, the authors of the guide settled on a thematic structure concluding that this setup would help facilitate classroom use. We believe there is power in explicitly naming the important issues that are present in the play. However, we recognize that a thematic approach poses challenges to capturing and exploring complex moments that involve more than one theme. We do not wish to give the impression that issues
addressed in one theme ever operate one-dimensionally. With this in mind, we hope this guide will support teachers in identifying connections between the play, their own curriculum and the lives of their students.

**Audience**

This guide was designed for use by secondary teachers of a multiplicity of disciplines. The authors of this guide have geared its themes, questions and activities primarily to students in Grades 9-12 English, Drama, Family Studies and Social Sciences courses, but we believe that this guide can be easily adapted for intermediate grades and for courses outside of these disciplines. In order to identify the kinds of courses that could engage with the issues and themes present in Ana’s Shadow, we have provided learning goals for each theme that specifically speak to learning we hope students might gain from each activity. We hope that in doing this, we open this guide up for use by teachers across Canada and internationally.

Finally, we recognize that each classroom contains a unique microcosm of diverse experiences. While we attempted to write to as broad of a student population as possible (including adding Differentiated Instruction for each theme), we recognise that we cannot speak to every student in every classroom. We hope that you, the teacher, will find this text to be a useful guide in your classroom instruction!
SCENE SYNOPSES

Below are synopses for each scene in Ana’s Shadow. Within each scene, most of the play's major themes identified in this discussion guide are carefully engaged. As you read through the play, consider how subjects such as "Charity and Social Justice", "Community and Belonging", "Caregiving", "Illness, Loss, and Death", "Silence and Voice", and "The Politics of Transnational Adoption" might be explored from scene to scene. This Ana’s Shadow Discussion Guide aims to offer educators with a range of frameworks through which they might wish to engage students in critical explorations and discussions of these subjects.

Scene One:
Harriet, Marty, Luisa, Ana, and Clara celebrate Passover as a family with a seder. As Harriet is ill with cancer, Ana feels that she must stay at home and help take care of Harriet while she undergoes chemotherapy for a second time. However, Ana reluctantly promises Harriet that she will return to university in the fall.

Scene Two:
Harriet and Clare are cleaning up after the Passover seder. Harriet tells Clare that although Luisa and Ana learned many things from Harriet, there may be things that Luisa and Ana inherited from her biological parents that Luisa feels are important to discover. Clare is relieved when Harriet says that she is okay with her leaving for the summer to go help build a medical clinic in Colombia.

Scene Three:
There is tension between Marty and Harriet. Harriet is very tired; Marty repeatedly tries to connect intimately with her but fails. However by the end of the scene, they have reconciled.

Scene Four:
Marty questions Ana about her decision to drop out of university to take care of Harriet. Ana explains that she could not focus in class and
wanted to be home to take care of Harriet while she was sick. Ana notes that singing has been one way for her to escape the shadow of Harriet’s illness.

Scene Five:
The whole family is helping Ana pick out outfits for her Canadian Idol audition. Ana notes that she is reluctant to leave for the competition because she does not want to leave Harriet’s side for such an extended period of time. Harriet reassures Ana, insisting that Ana at least try out this new experience.

Scene Six:
Anita, Luisa, and Harriet are discussing the ethics of transnational adoption. Later, Harriet and Anita discuss the routine surrounding taking Harriet to her chemotherapy. Anita maintains that she wants to be in the hospital for Harriet during the process, but Harriet insists that she would prefer to be alone for the first few days.

Scene Seven:
Ana and Clare discuss Ana’s achievement in having made the top 40 in Canadian Idol. Clare praises Ana for her self-written song “Absent Impact.” After having heard the song, Luisa realizes that the song is about both her own and Ana’s experiences growing up. Luisa and Ana have an argument. Clare is upset by their argument and resentfully agrees to stay behind in Toronto and help take care of Harriet this summer. Marty counsels Clare.

Scene Eight:
Harriet surprises Marty with a date night and tickets for a trip to New York for the summer. Marty suggests that the trip may be too extravagant for them; Harriet suggests that they may not have the opportunity to enjoy such a trip again.

Scene Nine:
Harriet is helping Luisa pack as she prepares to leave for Colombia for the summer. Harriet notes that sometimes she doubts whether she has been a good mother. Luisa reassures Harriet, noting that she has been a
great mother and that she cannot imagine her life without her. Harriet says that she is proud of the strong woman that Luisa has become, and praises her for going to build a clinic in Bogotá.

**Scene Ten:**
Ana explains why she has no interest in returning to Colombia and learning about her biological family. Marty encourages Ana to sing at a café with her friend Helen. Ana discloses that she anxious about this idea, as it would mean spending less time with Harriet.

**Scene Eleven:**
Harriet informs Anita that her oncologist would like to change her chemotherapy regime because the current one appears not to be effective anymore. Harriet tells Anita that she wonders if her cancer is a form of punishment for something she has done wrong in her life.

**Scene Twelve:**
Ana becomes very frustrated because she feels as though all the caregiving she has done for Harriet has been useless as Harriet’s tumours continue to grow.

**Scene Thirteen:**
Harriet oversleeps and misses a Skype conversation that Clare has with Luisa, who is in Colombia. Harriet wants to find a way to get Ana and Luisa to speak to one another again.

**Scene Fourteen:**
Ana performs her song “Chanting” for Clare. Clare reveals that Luisa has found her and Ana’s aunt in Colombia. Ana retorts that this discovery does not mean anything to her.

**Scene Fifteen:**
Anita tells Marty that she is planning to ship the children’s books in Harriet’s kitchen off to Bogotá. Marty is agitated by this proposal and asserts that she and Harriet will bring the books to Colombia together in person.
Scene Sixteen:
Luisa returns from Colombia and embraces Ana. Harriet, however, remains absent. Whether Harriet is alive and resting, or has passed away remains ambiguous.
READERS’ NOTES

Each theme is arranged into the following sections:

**Introduction**: Provides a definition or description for the theme.

**Learning Goals**: Outlines several cross-curricular learning goals for students.

**Preparing to Read**: Offers a series of questions and activities that may help learners become familiar with the theme. These questions and activities should be facilitated prior to reading the play so that learners are better able to engage with the issues presented in the play.

**Engaging the Text**: Includes questions and activities that identify and respond to particular passages or moments in the play that deal specifically with the theme being discussed.

**Consolidating Ideas**: Intended to be completed after a full reading of the play to allow students to expand and further examine ideas related to the theme.

**Additional Resources**: A list of additional resources for teachers and/or students to further explore subjects introduced in the play.
CAREGIVING

Introduction

In this theme, students will explore the shifting dynamic between being cared-for and being the caregiver, and vice-versa. In addition to exploring the subject of caring for others, this section of the guide also examines the topic of self-care.

Learning Goals

• To explore the question of who traditionally takes on the role of a caregiver.
• To recognize what caregiving looks like in a variety of contexts.
• To understand the role and importance of caregivers in a range of communities.
• To think about the concept of self-care, and to discern why it is important.

Preparing to Read

Questions to Consider

• What is caregiving?
• Who provides care in your home? Who receives care?
• How is caregiving compensated/rewarded in our communities?
• Why do we need caregivers? How do we need caregivers?

“What is a Caregiver?” Activity

Ask students to think of a time when they acted as a caregiver for someone in their lives. Remind them that caregiving takes many forms. For example, taking a younger sibling to school; translating documents for parents or grandparents; cooking for the family.

After reflecting, engage the class in a discussion around (1) the
characteristics that they believe that caregivers possess (based on the words they used to describe themselves in the role of caregiver) and (2) the tasks that caregivers perform.

_Caregivers Around the World Activity_

Using this resource: [http://www.familiesoftheworld.com/teachers.html](http://www.familiesoftheworld.com/teachers.html), ask students to read over one or more of the various case studies provided on different types of families around the world.

Next, ask students to write a reflection based on one of the descriptions of caregivers included in the resource above. Have students identify why they believe that the person in their case study is a caregiver, and to outline what characteristics that they believe are required in order to be a good caregiver.

Once students have completed their reflections, ask them to share their perceptions on caregivers with the rest of the class. Ensure that students have used different case studies in order to provide a diverse representation of what caregiving means in a range of sociocultural contexts.

To help facilitate discussion, you may find the following questions useful:

1. How does the caregiving role of the individual in your case study compare to your own experience?
2. Do you believe that someone who provides financial support is considered a caregiver?
3. Did gender and gender norms impact how you identified the caregiver in your case study? Why or why not?

_Engaging the Text_

_I Love You Forever Text–t-Text Activity_

Draw students’ attention to various relationships in the play, specifically Ana’s relationships with both Harriet and Luisa.

Have the students identify the caregivers in each story and consider the challenges that each of them face. Ask students to reflect on/discuss the following questions:

1. What is the significance of the mother and son singing the song "I'll love you forever"?
2. How does Ana use songs to describe her relationships in *Ana’s Shadow*? What impact does the transition from “cared for” to caregiver have on each individual in the stories?
3. Have you experienced any similar caregiving shifts in any of your relationships? Do you think this pattern of caregiving often exists for families?

Ask students to create a children’s book reflecting the texture of Ana’s relationship with Harriet or Luisa, or reflecting the texture of an important caregiving relationship in their own lives.

**Internal & External Character Activity**

Create a ‘Role on the Wall,’ an outline figure of Ana and Marty. Have students form two groups and list the character’s internal feelings inside the figure. Then, describe what their external roles as Harriet’s caregivers might look like, outside the figure.

Explore each character’s individual loyalties, attitudes and expectations. What are they driven by, what are they fearful of? Remaining in groups, Group A focuses on the thoughts and motivations of Ana and Group B focuses on Marty.

Ask the two groups to find their own spaces and form a circle facing outwardly, forming a collective character. A student from Group A is chosen to play the role of Ana and, similarly a student from Group B will play Marty. The students representing ‘Marty’ and ‘Ana’ stand inside
their circle, absorbing the experience and tapping participants randomly in the circle, to voice a thought/ feeling, sound and/or action relating to the character of Marty or Ana, based on their explorations of ‘caregiving’.

To conclude the activity, all participants share their reflections of the experience.

Consolidating Ideas

*Caregiving, Gender and Sexuality Activity*

All the characters that we encounter in this play are women, and, consequently, all the caregiving work is done by women. Reflect on this and consider the following questions:

- How is this reflective of societal norms that regulate who can (or should) provide care to those in need?
- Why is caregiving still considered “women’s labour”?
- Think about how caregiving work is present in your life. Who cleans, prepares meal, does laundry? Is this labour shared?
- What about the emotional caregiving? Is this labour? Why or Why not?
- Who do you look to for emotional caregiving in your life? Why? Is it because they possess certain qualities? If so, what are those qualities?
- As a same-sex, unmarried couple, how significant is it that Harriet and Marty are caregivers for the three girls (two of whom are adopted)? Do you see this form of caregiving (in same-sex couples) as resistance to traditional norms around caregiving in families or a confirmation of traditional norms of caregiving in families? Why?

*Self-Care Activity*

Self-care is something that each of us can and should undertake in order to ensure that our own emotional and physical needs are met.
In the play, there are several instances where characters engage in self-care. Ana engages in emotional self-care, for example, through her songwriting; it helps her cope with the conflicted relationship that she has with her sister, as well as her complex identity as a child adopted from Colombia. Self-care can take many different forms, and looks different for every individual, since there are as many different needs as there are people.

As a class, discuss what self-care is and why it is important to individual well-being, especially in high-stress situations. Provide some examples of self-care, such as "spending a night in because you're feeling tired, even though your friends want you to go out with them" or "taking time to create some art or music when you feel stressed out about school or work".

Students can then work in pairs to come up with (1) a way in which they engage in self-care, and (2) a way in which they can help others to engage in self-care. These ideas can be written on pieces of colourful paper (one sheet for each idea), and mounted on the wall so that students can be reminded of these ideas throughout the unit or through the entire school year in order to help them remember to engage in self-care on a regular basis.

**Differentiated Instruction**

*How this activity differentiates:*

These activities are set in small groups to ensure that each student has an opportunity to share and to be involved in the process of understanding caregiving.
Peer-to-peer sharing will also allow for English Language Learners to hear perspectives in the common language used amongst those in their age group. This may allow for solidification of what was taught in class. Students will be reading a children's book and comparing it to relationships and concepts in the play. For students who have challenges with processing, using a less challenging text at first (*I'll Love You Forever*), and then connecting it with a more challenging piece (*Ana’s Shadow*) will scaffold this activity.

*Accommodations that could be made:*

For English Language Learners and individuals who need accommodations due to a learning difficulty or an intellectual disability, it might be valuable to have students create and share their own comic strips and or books. This might help some students who did not fully comprehend the play to understand it in a different way. It might be also important to pair students up so that they can develop their stories together.

It may also be effective for the instructor to provide a definition bank on the board when using new words that have not yet been introduced in the classroom. For example defining what a caregiver is will be useful for an ELL accommodation.
Charity and Social Justice

Introduction

Charity and social justice are two concepts explored in Ana’s Shadow from a variety of (often conflicting) perspectives. This conceptual framework allows teachers an opportunity to facilitate critical conversations about the possibilities and limitations of different forms of social activism.

Learning Goals

- To develop an understanding of the ways in which charity and social justice are similar, and of how they differ from one another.
- To understand how power and privilege function through acts of charity and social justice.
- To help students to think about their own relationships to the concepts of charity and social justice, and to help them reflect on what each of these things might look like in their own communities and in their everyday lives.

Preparing to Read

Questions to Consider

- What is charity? What purpose(s) does it serve?
- Who provides charity? Who receives it?
- What is social justice? What purpose(s) does it serve?
- In what ways are charity and social justice similar in their ideals?
- In what ways are charity and social justice different?
- Does social justice have defined providers and recipients, as is the case with charity?
- To what extent can charity resolve issues of social injustice, such as poverty or health epidemics? Are there limits to the kinds of social change charity can promote?
• How would you locate ‘charity’ within your own culture or communities? How is it viewed and enacted? Do you believe there is often stigma toward those who receive charity? Why might this be?
• What does the term “status quo” mean? Does charity disrupt or maintain this? How so? Give examples.

**On Both Sides Activity**

(Think/Pair/Share): Assemble students into groups of three to five. Hand out one of two worksheets to each table. One worksheet will read: "Charity is social justice because..." across the top; the other will read: "Charity is not social justice because..."

If possible, the students should not know that other tables may have a different sheet than they do.

As a team, each table will brainstorm as many thoughtful ways to finish their sentence as they can.

After several minutes, ask students to put down their pens and listen as responses are shared.

When finished, students will post their brainstorms on a space on the wall.

**Research and Present Activity**

In pairs, have students come up with a social justice issue or cause that they feel strongly about. Have one student research a charitable organization that addresses this issue, while the other researches a grassroots initiative that addresses the same/similar issue(s). Have students compare their findings on each initiative with one another and present their work to the class in a form that they choose (chart, diagram, video, blog etc).
Ask students to identify 1) What are the similarities and/or differences between the two approaches? 2) Is one approach more sustainable and/or beneficial than the other? If yes, how so?

**Engaging the Text**

*Concept Mapping to Concept Attainment Activity*

In Scene 6, Luisa engages Anita in a heated discussion around the politics of transnational adoption. Both women come from very different perspectives, and they are unable to appreciate one another’s opinions. Re-read this scene as a class.

Have students pair with a neighbour to discuss and closely examine the different arguments that each character is defending. What aspects of charity and social justice do they see in each woman’s argument?

Provide each student with a placemat that has a Venn Diagram on each side, and space at the bottom to record notes. Ask the students to take two minutes to think individually about definitions for the terms “charity” and "social justice.” Invite students to pair up with a partner to share their definitions.

After a few minutes, reunite the class and invite a conversation to co-construct definitions for each term. Labelling one circle "Charity" and the other "Social Justice," note the differences and the similarities and record these appropriately on the Venn Diagram. You may wish to have a few blank lines at the bottom of the diagram where students can record a sentence or two defining each term.

Reunite the class for a larger discussion to expand their perspectives. Generate a conversation in the class that shows students the complexity of relations between and among countries within the global system we live in.
During this conversation, you may wish to ask the how the issue of transnational adoption depicted in Ana’s Shadow may be creating or inhibiting social justice.

To conclude the activity, have students take 10-15 minutes to individually write a journal entry, a poem, or a song, or have them create a concept map that expresses their own perspective on this complicated matter.

Consolidating Ideas

Questions to Consider

As a class, consider the following:

- Consider a variety of charitable initiatives within your school and community. Discuss some of the positive and negative consequences of these.
- How might you change or alter these approaches to address some of the systemic or structural problems that contributed to these issues in the first place?

Differentiated Instruction

How these activities differentiate

These activities differentiate because they use worksheets and graphic organizers to break down complex information and make it easier to understand for students who need information to be grouped together visually. Students are paired together in the research activity, therefore individuals who prefer to be peer-guided, or who benefit from hearing peer-to-peer language, will succeed in this activity.
Accommodations that could be made

For English Language Learners and Individuals who need accommodations due to a learning difficulty or an intellectual disability, it might be helpful to first provide a definition and an example of charity and social justice. It may be useful to have students agree on a specific example of a charity, and then discuss whether or not the charity is able to advance social justice. This might allow for the students to relate better to the material being examined.
Silence & Voice

Introduction

This theme asks students and teachers to think about the power of their own voices, examine whose voices are heard/silenced in the play and who is represented/misrepresented/not represented in the play. The concepts of “absence of voice” and “a silent presence” will be used as catalysts for discussion of this theme.

Learning Goals

• To understand the multiple meanings of "voice."
• To help students to reflect upon how they use their own voices in various contexts, and to reflect on how this usage may be mediated by outside factors.
• To consider the multiple meanings of "silence."
• To engage in critical thinking around the concepts of "voice" and "silence," and the roles that both can play in communication.
• To begin to think about how various kinds of power and privilege can have an impact on who/what is silenced and who/what is heard.

Preparing to Read

Questions to Consider

• In what ways do we voice our thoughts, opinions and emotions in our school or at home?
• What can influence the times we choose to speak and the times that we remain silent?
• Is silence always negative?
• Thinking about school, work, media, and home, whose voices are heard? Whose are absent?
• What factors might render someone silent? How do these factors reflect broader social structures such as those related to gender, race, class, and age?

Body Language Warm-up Activity

Discuss ways in which silence communicates. In other words, do people need to speak to "say" something? What are examples of silent communication? (e.g. body language, pauses, expressions, gestures, choosing not to speak, silent protest, sign language).

Invite students to move freely in the space of the classroom, mingling and walking to fill the room. Provide specific prompts on how to use body language.

Examples of prompts:

You are walking to school, and you pass a stranger. How do you react? You meet your friend. How do you react?

You arrive home, late for curfew, and your parent greets you. How do you react?

You have just had an argument with your sister, and she passes you in the hallway. How do you react?

Provide only body language and gestures, no speaking.

Engaging the Text

Talk About Artifacts Activity

There are several references throughout Ana’s Shadow to collecting and packing children’s books.
• What do these books symbolize? How does their appearance change as the play develops?
• What ‘silent’ messages do you think the playwright is communicating to the audience through the silent appearance of the books?

Split into groups, each to focus on different characters from the text.

Brainstorm the meanings behind the ‘silent’ representation of the children’s books. Consider the physical presence of the books, the collecting and the packing, in connection to your group’s assigned character.

Develop this activity further by swapping characters with another group.

Voice Through Movement Activity
Inspired by the work developed by Rudolph Laban.

Read Marty’s monologue: (Scene 4, page 14)

“When I’m beside the shadow, I can still see it. I know it’s there. I can keep my eye on it, but it doesn’t always stay the same size. Sometimes it’s taller, sometimes it’s shorter. And when it’s smaller, I can be a little less anxious, a little less scared about what’s going to happen. When I live beside the cancer, I don’t carry it on my shoulders. Or around my neck. It’s still there, beside me. But it’s not strangling me.”

Have students draw on Marty’s monologue to make an interpretation of her assertion in this passage through movement.

Students should work in pairs, facing each other. One partner in the pair will lead the physical action/movement in slow motion, the other partner will 'mirror' them.
Continue to build upon this movement, using your peripheral vision, by shifting position to stand side-by-side, and/or one behind the other. Build the motion to a point where the movement is ‘mirrored’ so precisely that there is no obvious leader of the partners. Experiment with the differences between mirroring and shadowing movement, alternating leadership with your partner. Discuss with your partner the emotive and abstract meanings of ‘the shadow’ from the text.

As a whole class, discuss these movement interpretations. The discussion could address the following questions:

1. How did the groups vary with their approach and expression through movement using space, time, weight and flow?
2. In what ways did they symbolize ‘the shadow’?
3. Draw on your own experience of this process. Did creating physical movement broaden your understanding of the text? How so? Does movement ‘speak’ to you differently than words?

Revelations Activity

Adapted from "The two revelations of Saint Teresa" in Acting Games for Actors and Non-Actors by Augusto Boal (2002).

This is an improvisation in which two characters meet and reveal something to each other. Consider choosing a moment in the play - like Harriet and Marty when Marty offers candles and a bath and Harriet is feeling too sick, or Harriet saying good-bye to Luisa, or Luisa saying good-bye to Ana.
The activity begins when the characters meet and say the things they would typically say to each other.

After a minute, the teacher says: "one of you must make your first revelation." The character then reveals an inner thought or feeling that has the potential to give an emotional charge to their meeting, and the other one must react accordingly.

After this plays out, the teacher tells the second one to make an important revelation as well. And then the first player must react.

Ask students: What do you discover about the relationships, the characters? What did the characters give voice to?

Extension: In Scene 10, Ana reveals her nightmare to Anita. Read the monologue together and discuss Ana’s inner fears and memories. How would the scene change if Luisa had heard her sister give voice to these memories and fears, instead of Anita. Add Luisa in as a listener, and then invite her to react to her sister’s revelation and voice.

Consolidating Ideas

Questions to Consider

1. Whose voices are not heard in the play? Are their characters in the play who do not have the opportunity to speak? What are the consequences of their silence?
2. How is silence used in relationships and/or in conflicts in the play?
3. How does the medium of music give Ana a voice? Why can she express things through song that she is unable to express in conversation with her family?
Teachers could also lead the class in a discussion focused on the character of Luisa, who, throughout the play, is determined to use her voice to right the wrongs of the situation in Columbia, her birth country. She also voices her opinions to Ana about Ana's heritage and her allegiances to Columbia.

Have the class discuss the ways in which Luisa's voice is used in the play as an activator for change and as an activator for resistance.

“Chanting” - Luisa Song Activity

Ana chooses to write a song about her memories in Bogotá for Luisa in Scene 14. She shares it with Clare who encourages her to share it. Clare then opens up with important information for Ana.

Listen to the song as a class and review the lyrics. Raise some questions with the class:

1. How does Ana's songwriting allow her to express her voice?
2. How does she give voice to the silence in their conflict?
3. How do silence and voice play out in the sisters' relationships with each other? What are the points of silence? What are the points of voice or revelation?

Clare’s Voice Activity

Clare’s voice is one that we don't hear as often in Ana's Shadow. Consider the following questions:

1. How might Clare be feeling as her family evolves through Luisa's leaving to Colombia?
2. What might Clare be feeling about Harriet's illness?
3. What might Clare’s thoughts be on Ana’s and Marty’s caregiving?

If Clare wrote about her experiences, what might that sound like? Invite students to write from Clare's perspective at the end of the play.

They can choose a genre - song, poetry, prose.

*Power of Representation Activity*

Playwrights and authors are in a position of representing the views, opinions of the characters in the play.

Have students discuss in small groups what they feel the responsibilities of authors and playwrights are when they develop a play or book.

*Differentiated Instruction*

For a Visual Arts component, offer various materials for students to work with (e.g. clay, paints, pastels). Ask students to choose a character from the play and to give him or her a voice through this medium. Ask them to describe why they chose the material(s), colour(s), and technique(s) that they used to depict the character's "voice." As an extension, ask students to create a character’s voice in an artistic medium of their choosing. *Note* this can be extended to Music, Drama, Dance.

*Additional Resources*

[http://code.on.ca/resource/acting-course-profile#section-3](http://code.on.ca/resource/acting-course-profile#section-3)

CODE is the Council of Ontario Drama and Dance Educator's website. The “Voice Through Movement Activity” described above has been inspired by Rudolph Laban. For more descriptions and activities based on his work, refer to ‘Walking the Efforts’ for Laban’s Movement Efforts
on the website.


ArtsAlive.ca is the National Arts Centre’s performing arts educational website. Go to this link for details on making dance: elements of composition.


In this book, Cheung proposes that there are different types of silence, and that each type has different implications for the individual.

The two forms of silence that are of most relevance to *Harriet’s House* and *Ana’s Shadow* are protective and inhibitive silence. According to Cheung, *protective silence* manifests as a result of an intention to shield an individual from a harsh or upsetting reality. Inversely, *inhibitive silence* is presented by Cheung as silence that has a debilitating effect on an individual. As a possible activity, ask students to consider the ways in which these different forms of silence are present in *Harriet’s House* and *Ana’s Shadow*. 
Politics of Transnational Adoption

Introduction

Ana’s Shadow takes up the complex politics and ethics of transnational adoption, as well as queer adoption, as seen through the lens of the unique experiences of the members of Harriet’s family. By exploring the intra- and inter-personal conflicts amongst characters, especially those between Luisa and Ana, students can gain a critical understanding of the emotional, social, economic and political factors that affect transnational and same-sex adoption.

Learning Goals

• To be able to identify the similarities and differences between adoption within a nation and transnational adoption.
• To be able to think critically about the roles that socio-economic power and socio-political privilege play in the practice of transnational adoption.
• To begin engaging in critical thinking around key ethical issues raised in the play related to the politics of transnational adoption.
• To develop a sense of some of the challenges faced by same-sex couples who choose to adopt children.

Preparing to Read

Questions to Consider

• What do you know about adoption? In Canada? In other countries?
• Who gets to adopt in Canada? Under what circumstances?
• Why is transnational adoption overwhelmingly unidirectional? (Do people in developing countries adopt children from North America and Europe? Why or why not?)
• What, if anything, does this suggest about the politics of transnational adoption? Who benefit and in what ways?

“Grounding Learning in Student Realities: Celebrity Humanitarianism?” Activity

Probe student pop culture knowledge: what celebrities have adopted children of different from other countries?

Consider celebrities such: Meg Ryan, Madonna, Brad Pitt and Angelina Jolie, Ewan McGregor, Michelle Pfieffer, Rosie O’Donnell, Charlize Theron, Katherine Heigl, Tom Cruise and Nicole Kidman

Ask students:

What do you think makes transnational adoption a popular practice?

How do images like those of Angelina Jolie and Brad Pitt’s family, impact peoples’ thinking about transnational adoption?

Engaging the Text

The Ethics of Transnational Adoption: Text-to-World Activity

Throughout Harriet’s House and Ana’s Shadow, Luisa struggles with not knowing whether or not her birth mother is alive, and this leaves her feeling conflicted about her own adoption experience.

To explore the larger social phenomenon in which Luisa’s struggle is rooted, have students read an article that takes up some of the complex issues surrounding transnational adoption. This activity may help students to reflect critically on the difficult ethical questions surrounding transnational adoption.
Give each student a copy of The Economist's article "Saviours or Kidnappers?"(http://www.economist.com/node/15469423)

Ask students to read the article individually and to record three reactions they had to the text (it can be a word, a phrase, or a series of short phrases)

Next, have students team up with an elbow partner to share their reactions. Were their reactions similar, or were there divergences?

Come back together and lead a class discussion that takes up students' reactions to the text. Have students connect their responses to this article with their thinking about the play. Did this article change or affect their thinking/understanding of Luisa's conflict with transnational adoption? If so, how? If not, why not?

_Debate on Transnational Adoption Activity_

Note: This activity should be presented after students have been exposed to different perspectives on transnational adoption

Step 1: Tell students that they are going to have a classroom debate. Ask students to get into groups of between five and seven (group sizes can be determined according to the size of your class).

Step 2: Ask students to identify which role they would like to take on in their group out of the following roles: debaters (you will need four; two if you have fewer students), writers (each group will need two), and peacemakers (each group will need one).

a) Debaters: Individuals who will take material learned in class and debate the assigned side.
b) Writers: Those who write down arguments supporting their group’s assigned position so that the debaters can present these points to the class.
c) Reader: This person will read the case study to the group as well as present the case study to the class during the debate.
d) Peacemaker: This person will time the debates, making sure that each side talks within two-minute intervals, and that everyone gets a turn to speak. The peacemaker also ensures that the students are all being respectful and that they are staying on task.

Step 3: Give out case studies. Students will be given Scene 6, page 23 of the play, and will be assigned to debate either Luisa's side or Anita's side.

Students should consider these perspectives raised by Luisa and Anita respectively in the scene. For example:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>How would Anita answer these questions in this debate?</th>
<th>How might Luisa answer these questions?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• What effect does transnational adoption have on the children being adopted?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• What can these adoptive parents offer these children?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• What impact does transnational adoption have on families of origin?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Why might someone challenge the practice of transnational adoption?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• What effect does transnational adoption have on the communities these children are being adopted from?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• What effect does transnational adoption have on the children being adopted?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Step 4: Give each side five minutes to write down some of the points they would like to make to support their assigned position on the subject.

Step 5: Monitor debates to assess the level of understanding of the topic. You can gauge how well the students understand the material by how thorough their debates are.

Step 6: Once they have thoroughly debated each side, have students choose two points they found were most compelling in their debate, and have them share these points with the class.

Step 7: Write all groups’ most compelling points on the board and have a discussion based on what the class has come up with.

**Consolidating Ideas**

*Reflecting on my Position Activity*

Present students with an opportunity to reflect on their thoughts either on the subject of transnational adoptions or on the subject of same-sex adoptions. Ask them to address whether or not the reading of the play had an impact on their thinking.

Invite the students to present their reflections through a journal entry, a poem, or through concept maps.

**Differentiated Instruction**

*How these activities differentiate*

In the debate activity, students have the option of taking on one of many different roles to participate. For English Language Learners, this activity can be helpful because it allows them to choose the nature of their participation, rather than forcing them to take on a linguistically
high-demand role such as the debater. This will also allow ELL students to improve their understanding of the topic in English by hearing it being discussed in plain language by their peers.

*Accommodations that could be made:*

In many of these activities, students are asked to write down their thoughts about adoption in its many forms. For some individuals, this may be difficult. For these students, you may want to group related concepts so that they are easier to understand. Or you may want to develop questions that will help to guide student thinking more specifically and concretely.
Illness, Loss and Death

Introduction

This theme highlights the socio-economic and political factors affecting health outcomes and mortality rates in Colombia and in Canada respectively, and explores the meanings of loss and death for individuals and families. Using this theme, students will consider the various ways in which illness, loss and death are conceptualized and experienced by characters in Ana’s Shadow, as well as in their own lives.

Learning Goals

• To consider the various ways in which illness, loss and death are conceptualized and experienced by individuals, families and communities around the world.
• To consider how feelings and emotions are shaped by the ways in which individuals, families and communities think about illness, loss and death.
• To develop and explore one’s own personal ideas and feelings about illness, loss and death.

Preparing to Read

Questions to Consider

• How are illness, death and dying understood in your community(ies)?
• How do various faiths and/or belief systems view illness, death and dying?
• How might individuals cope with the illness and/or loss of a family member or loved one?
• Where in your local community might people go to find support when dealing with illness, loss and/or death?

Engaging the Text

Teacher in Role Activity

Invite students to consider what Luisa's memories might be of her birth mother.

What might she be thinking, feeling and remembering about her birth mother when she thinks of her?

Invite students to take some time to think of a question they might have for Luisa about her feelings about the loss of her birth mother. What words of comfort they might offer, or what memory might they ask about?

Consider recording student ideas on cue cards or chart paper.

Invite students to talk to Luisa.

The teacher, in role as Luisa, models some possible answers to those questions.

Then, divide students into pairs and ask one person to ask Luisa questions and another, in role as Luisa, to reflect in role and answer them.

Monologue Activity

After the role-play above, ask students to consider writing a monologue titled "Mama, I have trouble remembering you..."
Additionally, ask students to write a monologue from Mama's point of view while she was still alive in Bogotá. The letter could start "Letter to my daughters, Luisa and Ana..."
Consolidating Ideas

*The Wave Activity*

Invite students to consider carefully the journey of each character in this play: for example, Marty as Harriet's partner, Ana as daughter, sister, caregiver, Harriet as mother, and cancer patient and being cared for, Luisa as daughter, sister and adult seeking her own way, Clare as daughter and sister.

Consider the last moment in the play and read the stage directions of Scene 16. Ask each student to choose a character in the play, and to get into role as that character. In role, arrange students in a line, walking shoulder–to-shoulder.

If available, play one of the songs from the play in the background.

Following a leader, or sequentially, ask students to drop out of the line as the line moves forward to create a pose or image that fits their character's actions/feelings/emotions at the end of the play.

The last person to create their shape stays in stillness for a few beats, then modifies their shape in some way, rises and walks back to pick up other characters who then sequentially modify their shape, rise and return to walking shoulder–to-shoulder. Conclude back in the line and then in unison, make a group sculpture of all the shapes. You may or may not wish to include Harriet as a character in this drama structure.

*Song-to-Song Activity*
Get students to think of other music and songs that deal with illness, loss or death.

Ask them: Why do you think artists use these topics in their art forms? Referring to the song they have chosen, ask them to describe some of the emotions that they feel are conveyed?

Now refer to Ana's song "Absent Impact"? What are some of the emotions that she is conveying? How are these songs similar/different?

**Differentiated Instruction**

*How these activities differentiate:*

In the Wave Activity, where students will physically act out each character’s journey, students who have difficulty processing will benefit from being able to look at the play multiple times and then solidify their knowledge by acting it out physically.

In the Song-to-Song activity, it may be helpful for some students to use music in order to think about the play. This could be particularly helpful for students who relate to the lyrics or find comfort in learning through song.

**Additional Resources**


This is a collection of essays written by teenagers on various “tough” issues, such as death, suicide, eating disorders, and alcohol abuse.
Community and Belonging

Introduction

The characters in Ana’s Shadow are affiliated with many different communities structured around characteristics such as ethnicity, class, language, national identity and sexuality. Through the conceptual framework of Community and Belonging, students will explore the complexities, benefits and limitations of belonging to a specific community. As many of the characters struggle with belonging, whether to a community, a group, an identity, or to another person, this theme also explores how belonging (whether created by choice or circumstance) affects who we are and the decisions we make.

Learning Goals

• To think about what it means “to belong.”
• To understand what "community" means – both its pressures on and its benefits for individuals who belong to one.
• To recognize the importance of feeling a sense of belonging and community.
• To consider how social forces, such as racism, colonialism, homophobia, and ableism, may impact peoples’ experiences of community and belonging.

Preparing to Read

Questions to Consider

What is “belonging”?
Is it important to belong somewhere, to something, to someone? Why or why not?
What is a community? What elements make up a community? What kinds of communities appear in the play? What are the ways in which we benefit from being a part of a group, place, and nationality? What makes it challenging to be affiliated with a particular group, place, or nationality? What specific challenges might exist for immigrants, particularly those who have come to Canada as a result of adoption?

*Defining Community Activity*

Have students think/pair/share what community means to them. As a class have students compare and contrast their definitions. Are there commonalities? Surprises? Disagreements?

*Engaging the Text*

*Questions to Consider*

In what ways does each of the three sisters (Ana, Luisa and Clare) in the play feel a sense of community? In what ways do they feel displaced by their communities? Where do they feel they belong, and why?

How does Marty and Harriet's relationship evolve in the face of Harriet's illness?

In Scene 10, Ana discusses how she does not feel as though she belongs to Colombian culture or society. She is terrified of the thought of not having been adopted by Harriet and Jonathan, and the idea of not being Canadian. How do you account for Ana’s feelings on this subject? Do you think it is possible for Ana to feel as though she belongs to more than one place, group, nationality? Why or why not?
Writing In Role Activity

Ana and Luisa both have a strong sense of belonging to different groups and communities. For this activity, have students choose the character (either Ana or Luisa) to whom they feel they best relate.

Writing in role, have students draw up a list of connections to the various political, religious, social and/or geographic locations that their character feels a sense of belonging to, and why they (as either Ana or Luisa) feel that sense of belonging.

After they have completed writing their own reflections, have students partner up with another person in class who selected the other character.

Have students read over one another’s lists, to one another or to themselves. Have them discuss and clarify any points of confusion or disagreement with one another.

Follow up: Have a class discussion on this activity. How did it feel to write in character? Was this challenging? How? What did you discover about your character’s perspective? Did writing from the character’s perspective change your perspective at all?

Mapping Communities of Belonging Activity

Excerpt from Scene One:

**LUISA:** Don’t you want a chance to find out more about your heritage?
**ANA:** Who do you think planned this whole seder?
**LUISA:** Not this heritage. Your Colombian heritage. Your genetic heritage. You need to go back to where you came from to really know
who you are. Who you want to be...

Read Scene One and discuss the different community that Luisa and Ana feel they belong to.

How are their communities connected? Disconnected?

Where does each character fit in these different communities at the beginning of Ana’s Shadow?

What communities might Clare feel she belongs to?

**Consolidating Ideas**

**Corridor of Voices Activity**

Invite students to think about Ana’s dilemma as she is compelled to care for Harriet, is driven to explore her music and is not feeling connected to her Colombian identity.

Have them reflect on what words of advice they would give Ana for her future at the end of the play. Arrange students in two lines with their advice prepared. Invite a student to play Ana, and have him or her slowly travel down the corridor to hear the advice from the students. As "Ana" passes, students whisper or speak out their advice and freeze in a still image/shape/gesture that lends meaning to their words. At the end of the row, “Ana” shares a response, if she feels one present.

Repeat for other students to experience being Ana.

Possible extension: This activity could be repeated for Harriet as well at the end of the play.

*Discussion and Culminating Reflection Activity*
After having read the play, have students discuss the different forms of community that are found or implied in *Ana’s Shadow* (e.g. Global Family, Harriet's family, the orphanage in Bogotá, Jewish community, Colombian community, the "privileged middle class" community, heterosexual community, LGBTQ community).

Discuss the politics of belonging to these different communities. Consider the following questions:

- What are the rules of membership within these communities?
- What are the challenges faced as individuals negotiate multiple communities?
- In the play, Clare “border crosses” several communities within her family. Discuss examples of how she does this.

Ask students to write a reflection on the various communities that they belong to and the ways they negotiate or “border cross” between these communities.

**Differentiated Instruction**

*Writing in Role* Activity - To prepare some learners, start with a whole class Role on the Wall activity on chart paper that shows the inner and outer feelings of Luisa and Ana before asking students to work individually on their role-play.

In the *Corridor of Voices* Activity, have students prepare and practice their advice by writing it on cue cards. For ELL learners, invite only a single word or single shape for the students. Invite pairs to travel down the corridor or model travelling down the corridor first, as Ana.

Using magazines or other sources for images, have students create a collage to represent how they think a character in the play feels about
where they belong, or where they fit in. Each student can choose one of the main characters and then present to rest of group.

In the *Discussion and Culminating Reflection Activity*, allow students to use multi-literacies to express their ideas - writing is not mandatory. By using podcasts, video, songs, poetry or visual arts, students can express themselves using multiple intelligences. Invite students to work in pairs.
Further Conversations

"When I look at things up close, right in front of me, I have my own personal joy of living with Luisa and Ana. But when I move back, I can see injustice of parents having to give up their children to keep them alive and healthy. The joy and the injustice live side-by-side." - Harriet (Ana’s Shadow, pp. 23-24).

By working with Ana’s Shadow, teachers and students have had an opportunity to examine and explore the complexities of living in adoptive same-sex family. It is our hope that you will continue to think about the negotiations, the challenges, the joys and the injustices that Harriet and her family face.

To give students a chance to reflect on the complex issues that emerge from sustained engagement with the play, teachers may want to consider facilitating either a closing circle or a journal reflection.

To facilitate a closing circle, arrange students in a circle and ask each student to share one of their responses to the play. You may want to use the prompts below. These prompts can also be used in journal reflections:

- Identify a moment from the play that resonated with you...
- Articulate something from or about the play you are still struggling with/confused about/uncomfortable with...
- Share with the group something you've learned from working with the play
- Identify the character(s) in the play with whom you were most strongly (or least strongly) able to identify, and share with the group why you felt close to or distant from the subjectivity of that character.
Glossary

A
Advil – A popular drug for treating headaches and inflammation.

Antibiotics – Drugs prescribed by a doctor to treat bacterial infections.

B

C
Canadian Idol – A popular televised talent show that judges contestants on their ability to sing.

Caregiving - Taking care of someone else's physical, emotional, or mental needs. This can take on a variety of forms, depending on the needs of the person being cared for, and the role, abilities, and skills of the caregiver.

Charity - Money given or activities performed with the intention of helping another person or group of people considered to be in some way disadvantaged.

Chemo/Chemotherapy - [kee-moh-ther-uh-pee] The treatment of disease by means of chemicals with the goal of destroying cancerous tissue.

Colonialism - The formal and informal methods (behaviours, ideologies, institutions, policies, and economic systems) that maintain the subjugation or exploitation of indigenous peoples, lands, and resources.

G
Gitana – [hi-ta-nah] The Spanish word for a “gypsy”.
Gravol – A popular North American drug for treating an uneasy stomach.

H
Haggadot – [hag-ga-dot] Jewish texts distributed and read from at the Passover seder that set forth the order of the seder.

I
Imodium – A popular North American drug used for staving off diarrhea.

Immigrant - A person who comes to live permanently in a country other than the one in which they were born/ previously lived.

J
Jerusalem – One of the oldest cities in the world and a city that has been long at the centre of territorial disputes between Israel and Palestine. To some, it is the capital of Israel, though not universally recognized as such.

K
Kensington Market – A distinctly multicultural neighbourhood in the centre of Toronto. The market is widely known for its variety of vintage clothing stores, fresh produce and cheeses, and international food supplies.

L
Loblaws – A North American grocery chain.

Lord’s Prayer - A central prayer in Christianity.

M
Matzah- A brittle, flat piece of unleavened bread, eaten by Jews especially during Passover in commemoration of the Jewish exodus
from slavery in Egypt.

Multiculturalism - The idea that several different cultures (rather than one national or dominant culture) can coexist peacefully and equitably in a single country.

O
Oncologist – A physician who specializes in the study and treatment of cancer.

the "other" - A term used to refer to individuals or groups that are outside of the dominant group within a society or culture. Those in dominant groups are considered "normal" and held up as the standard against which all "others" are compared as different or inferior.

P
Passover - A Jewish festival that commemorates the exodus of the Jews from slavery in Egypt, and is marked mainly by the seder ritual, and the eating of matzoth.

S
Seder - [say-der] A ceremonial dinner that commemorates the Jewish Exodus from enslavement in Egypt. It includes the reading of holy texts and the eating of symbolic foods.

Self-care - Activities that individuals, families, and communities engage in on their own behalf in order to enhance their physical, mental, or emotional health and well-being.

Skype – A free service that allows users with access to a computer and internet services to communicate with peers by voice, video, and instant messaging over the Internet.
Social Justice - The concept that all people should have equal access to basic human rights, power and autonomy over their own lives, and the resources required to comfortably sustain life regardless of gender identity and presentation, religious belief, sexual orientation, class status, racial, religious, or ethnic identity, or citizenship status.

V
Vegan – A person who excludes all animal products from their diet, usually for political, humane, or dietary reasons.
Discussion Guide Writers’ Biographies

Sarah Bardwell is a recent graduate of the Intermediate/Senior panel of the Bachelor of Education program at OISE/UT. Her previous academic life was spent studying Cultural Studies and Critical Theory, Studio Art, and English at McMaster University. After her time at McMaster, Sarah spent time coordinating the Hamilton Youth Arts Network (a youth engagement program in Hamilton, ON centered on the arts), and spent 15 months teaching ESL in South Korea. Through these experiences, Sarah has become interested in exploring how the arts can be used as a tool through which students can engage in courageous conversations around a variety of challenging topics.

Jessica Cleeve is a recent graduate of the Bachelor of Education program at the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education (OISE/UT). Jessica has a specific interest in Queer Theory and its place in education. Jessica was first introduced to Harriet’s House and Ana’s Shadow in Dr. Goldstein’s “Sexualities and Schooling” class. Jessica will be studying her Masters in Social Work at Wifred Laurier University this year, with a focus on individuals and families.

Georgia Cowling has worked as a collaborative artist and project worker in elementary, secondary, arts and community-based settings. She holds a Bachelor of Arts in Drama and Media Arts and a Master of Education in Arts Administration. Georgia has designed, implemented and facilitated a youth arts-focused network and numerous arts-based projects and programs within local communities of the eastern regions of Melbourne, Australia. During her stay in Canada, she is completing graduate teaching studies (Monash University), focusing her research on the pedagogical innovations of multimodal collaborations amongst artists, teachers and students and the role they play in education.

Carly Glanzberg recently completed her Bachelor of Education at the University of Toronto (OISE/UT). She participated in Dr. Goldstein’s “Sexualities and Schooling” course, which further informed her anti-oppression education framework. Carly is currently completing an internship at The Triangle Program, where she has had the opportunity to work with LGBTQ students in an alternative school setting. In the future, Carly hopes to continue working with youth, specifically in areas of sexuality and gender education.

Amy Gullage is a PhD Candidate in the Department of Curriculum, Teaching and Learning and the Graduate Collaborative Program in Women and Gender Studies at Ontario Institute for Studies in Education at the University of Toronto (OISE/UT). She has worked as Dr. Goldstein’s Graduate Assistant on many innovative projects. Most recently she has worked as a researcher for the performed ethnographies Harriet’s
House and Ana’s Shadow. Amy’s own research examines how teachers understand discourses of the body, and the impact these discourses have on their professional and personal lives.

Natalie Kauffman is an artist and art educator. She has taught Visual Art, Photography, Media Arts, and Drama to a wide range of students, from pre-school through university. She ran a photography business for 15 years, exhibiting in galleries and art fairs across North America. She earned her BFA from Concordia University in Montreal, in 1994, and is currently completing her MA in education at the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education, specializing in Arts Education.

Sarah Papoff is an elementary Teacher at TDSB Crescent Town Public School, currently on leave. She is working towards an M.A at OISE in the Department of Curriculum, Teaching and Learning. She has delivered many workshops for schools, Family of Schools, ETT, CODE, as well as for Pre-Service teachers at York University. She has taught grades 3 to 8, and worked as a generalist teacher and Drama/Dance specialist. She volunteers with CODE (Council of Ontario Dance and Drama Educators). She enjoyed being part of the Ministry writing projects with CODE to create new, innovative curriculum. She is passionate about embedding the arts and social justice into teaching. Sarah was delighted to be part of the discussion guide writing project for Ana’s Shadow and Harriet’s House.

Sarah Peek is a recent graduate of the Bachelor of Education program at the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education of the University of Toronto (OISE/UT). In her B.Ed. program, she focused her studies on teaching for equity in urban schools. Sarah holds a Master’s degree in International Affairs and has worked on numerous academic research projects both in Canada and internationally. She is currently working with Professor Goldstein on “10 Years of Inqueeries,” a project that explores the experiences of anti-homophobia educators and the impact of this work on themselves and their students.

Adam Saifer is an M.A. student in the Department of Curriculum, Teaching, and Learning at the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education (OISE/UT). He works on the Urban Arts High Schools project, where his main focus is the role of socioeconomic status as an exclusionary mechanism. Adam’s own research examines how the imagined role of the arts in schools changes within different class contexts. He’s also interested in looking at the ways in which themes of social justice and resistance are addressed in creative writing spaces.
Laura Sparling is a graduate of the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education (OISE) at the University of Toronto. Her Bachelor of Education degree focused on learning in an urban context, and has certified her to teach Canadian and World Studies at the Intermediate/Senior level. Prior to attending OISE, Laura completed a Master’s degree in International Affairs, and dedicated a year to collaborating with women’s rights groups in Chiapas, Mexico. As an advocate for arts-based learning, Laura was enthusiastic to join this project, especially after studying under Professor Goldstein in her B.Ed.

Spiros Vavougios is currently an undergraduate student from the University of Toronto, where he studies Political Science and Equity Studies. Spiros’ interest in education was sparked while taking a course with Dr. Goldstein that approached issues surrounding education and schooling from a critical, anti-oppressive and social justice perspective. Spiros hopes to be able to apply his background in equity to either a legal or medical—or, perhaps both—field of work in the future.