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April 14, 2016

## Moving Towards Independent Work

### ***Welcome to Room 4!***

Recently, my students and I have started reading Sherman Alexie's *Absolutely True Diary of a Part Time Indian*. This wonderfully funny young adult novel is a semi-autobiographical tale of 14-year-old Junior, who decides to leave his high school on the Spokane Indian Reservation and attend a predominantly white high school nearby in order to obtain a better education. I have centered this text in a unit about identity, asking students to consider their own identities and complete short, autobiographical writing assignments about their own experiences as they read more about Junior's life. For this unit, I have also created Book Clubs made up of 4-5 people. Within these Book Clubs, each student plays a particular role in facilitating activities/discussion, recording any notes, and keeping the group on task. Though I ultimately chose the groups, students chose their own roles, and agreed upon rules and guidelines to follow as a group, which they outlined in Book Club Contracts.

Before today's lesson, the students were given time to read silently in class, and were asked to choose 3-4 quotes from the reading that best explain who Junior is and what his life is like. Since we have just started the book, we have read through the first few chapters together, where Junior describes his life on the Spokane Indian Reservation. Before we get to the part where Junior actually makes the decision to leave, I want us to spend some time considering what may have influenced this decision. By looking closely at Junior's life on the Reservation, I want students to begin to uncover why Junior would want to leave, and what would make this decision to leave so difficult.

### ***Today's Lesson***

For today's lesson, I am trying to change my role in the equation. I have been setting up the students to work more independently, rely less on me in the front of the room giving them their instructions, and rely more on each other to come up with ways to answer questions and solve problems. They will be completing a "Save the Last Word" activity looking at the quotes that they found in their reading, and discussing amongst their Book Clubs what Junior's life is like. After this activity (which will likely take up most of the class for most groups), they will be given a bonus challenge to come up with some discussion questions about what we have read. Ideally, we will use some of these questions for a Socratic Seminar on Friday. However, instead of coming in to the class today and listening to me tell them what to do before getting started, I will have all instructions and materials in an envelope on their desks. They will be instructed to sit with their groups, and then open the envelopes and begin their work. Rather than telling them what to do, I plan on moving from group to group, helping them deepen their thinking and offering assistance as needed. Please feel free to pick a group to focus on during the round today!

### ***Rounds Inquiry***

1. Do you notice evidence of students using the quotes that they found to discuss what Junior's life is like? Is there any evidence that they are beginning to uncover why Junior would want to leave the reservation?

