**Real Immigrant Children Monologues**

***Helping to Develop Cultural Competency***

Compiled from 2013-2016

Written by Jennifer J. Davis

***Background and Justification for Monologues:***

*“Good teachers not only learn from, but learn about their students. Learning about the cultures and languages of individual students provides a foundation for implementing effective accommodations that facilitate learning.”*

*-Cheryl Irish and Monica Scrubb*

*The NEA’s (National Education Association), website states, “Cultural competence is a key factor in enabling educators to be effective with students from cultures other than their own. It can help close the achievement gap for students.”*

*“Educators with the skills, knowledge, and attitudes to value the diversity among students will contribute to an educational system designed to serve all students well.”  -Dennis Van Roekel, president of the NEA*

As an ESL Teacher, I realize how important these statements are and that is why I wanted to create something that could potentially broaden people’s perspectives and increase empathy. I wrote these monologues based on the true stories of some of the English Language Learner students I previously worked with. They are intentionally written with poor syntax and grammar to reflect common mistakes made by students learning English. I did not interview my students and then transcribe what they said, rather these facts and stories were gathered over many months or years of working with them and their families. My original intention of writing these monologues was to bring more awareness to those who worked directly with these children so they could better understand their students and what may be influencing their behavior and/or performance in school. I am convinced that stories are the most effective way to change people’s hearts and minds. We can endlessly debate about issues of cultural proficiency but it’s hard to argue with someone’s real life experience. Cultural competency workshops can be beneficial for any organization but if the discussions only remain in the abstract on an intellectual level, they may not have a lasting impact. Stories, especially true ones, bring these themes down to earth and have the potential to create real change. Half of the money raised by these monologues will go to the *Immigrant Defense Project*.

***Production Notes:***

There are 4 monologues in total and they could be performed by students in middle school, high school or by adults or they could be read during a cultural competency training. There are 4 male roles and 1 female role however creative gender casting is always encouraged. One of the male roles is speaking Spanish since they are translating one of the monologues. If the monologues are read back to back, the duration is approximately 20 minutes. If you are wanting to lengthen the performance, there could be traditional dances or songs between each monologue based on the culture of the previous monologue performed. Another option is students, actors, or trainees could write their own monologues in addition to these based on their own pasts or on the experiences of people they know. If these monologues are done in a performance or training workshop format, the questions found at the end of all the monologues can help generate discussion.

**Real Immigrant Children Monologues**

***These monologues are true stories of some of the students I worked with in the past. The only thing that has been changed is their names.***

*-Jen Davis*

**Nicolas**

(*There could be traditional Guatemalan music playing softly in the background*.)

Hi my name is Nicolas and I’m in first grade and I’m from Guatemala. I came to the USA with my mom who was pregnant back then and my dad. We taked alotta buses to get all the way from Guatemala to Machuset (*Massachusetts*). It feels like it was a long time ago. We left cause there was too much crime in our village. These bad men came to our house a few times and pushed my mom down on the ground. She give the money to him. I ask my mom all the time why they did that. I don’t understand why they did that. So we left the village. We left my bigger sister who’s 11 now and my little sister who’s 4 now in Guatemala with my abuela. My mom talks to them on a phone a lot and she cries. I wish they can come here but my mom says it’s too many money. When I first got here the people put me in kindergarten. It was in the middle of the school year. I couldn’t understand anything anyone was saying because my family speaks Spanish. I screamed and yelled and cried a lot that year. I hit the kids in my class a lot too cause I thought they was being mean to me. My mom and me, we went to the place you get free food every week until my dad started to make money. When I started first grade I begged to go back to kindergarten so the leader of the school and the teachers let me go back. Now I’m the oldest kid in my first grade class and so many kids are smarter than me. But I have a bunch of friends and we laugh a lot. We went to the snow and we builded a snowmen. But sometimes my friends say mean things that try to scare me and the counselor lady makes us talk. A few months ago my older sister in Guatemala saw Señor Gomez get shot and killed…right in front of her! He was an old man from our village and he didn’t want to pay those bad men money no more. My little sister there in the village, she has an infección in her eye. The pictures make it look like bloody. They live far from the city and it’s a lot of money to take the bus to see the doctor. My grandma took her anyway and the medicine costs her $100. My mom isn’t happy about this and I cry when I see photos of my little sister with her eye looking like that. The medicine didn’t make it go away. (*pause*) Sometimes I miss Guatemala. Last year my mom came to my school on a special day and she sang the special Guatemala song and I was crying. I have the best mom in the world. She reads to me in Spanish all of time and makes me do all my work. Then I can play the video games. I have a hard time paying attention in school because it is boring sometimes…and hard. But the counselor lady, she tells me it’s good to make the mistakes and whenever I do I should tell myself, “I’m okay”. Lately some grown-ups I don’t know at school keep taking me out of class to ask me questions and I have to write things down too for them. They’re like tests. But I do kinda like the attention and I get to leave class and not do my work.

**Khaled**

(*There could be traditional Egyption music playing softly in the background*.)

مرحبا اسمي خالد وأنا في الصف الثالث و جئت من مصر

Translation: Hi my name is Khaled and I am in third grade and I come from Egypt. (*If possible say the previous line in both Arabic and English*). I came to U.S. at the start of second grade with my parents and my smaller brother; he is in first grade. I was a little worried about what it would be like here but I like school most of the time except the teachers make me write neat and that’s annoying. When I first come, the teachers got mad at me because I spoke when I wanted to many times. If