Running Head: THE HUMAN CUBE

The Human Cube

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Student Profile

Ann is a grade ten student. She has been attending her high school for the past two years, but struggles to motivate herself to go. School has become intimidating ever since leaving her small elementary school to attend the large high school where she does not know her new peers well and they do not understand her learning difficulties. Ann struggles with the effects of foetal alcohol syndrome, or more specifically, alcohol related neurodevelopmental disorder. This year she did not start classes until the first week of October. She was too afraid to start school again after the summer. Ann's grandparents, and guardians, do not tend to keep in contact with the school about her attendance or performance.

Ann lives with her grandparents on a reserve north of the school, just out of town. It is unclear where her parents are or if she ever sees them. Her grandparents gained custody of Ann at a young age. It is likely that Ann and her family have suffered intergenerational trauma. Ann's grandfather attended residential school. Ann's grandmother did not attend school. Neither has come to the high school since Ann started attending two years ago.

Ann has an IEP that recognizes her disorder. She does what she can in her academic classes with the aid of an EA, but Ann prefers her elective classes that she can attend alone. Her classmates in her entrepreneurship class are in grades 10, 11 and 12. The teacher has explained Ann's need for patient mentoring to a few of Ann's older classmates. In this very fast-paced class where students are each in charge of different aspects of the school store, Ann sometimes works one-on-one with her peers to learn and re-learn different operations in the store. Ann has a difficult time remembering, so she spends a lot of time relearning things.

Ann often has a difficult time staying engaged in the core subject areas. She likes her English class most of the time, but she cannot read the level of texts that her peers are often assigned so she usually attends class for a short time then works with her EA on the assignments in the Aboriginal Education room. Ann has had mixed experiences in high school being accepted in class by her peers. This year her English teacher frequently changes the seating plan so everyone is always sitting

beside different people in different desk formations. Ann prefers this to being placed in one spot all semester.

Despite her struggles in English class, especially with spelling, Ann loves writing stories. She gets very excited when she talks about her writing. She likes to write drama/suspense stories, and she has recently started experimenting with science fiction. She wants to try writing romantic stories someday, but she giggles when she talks about this and says she is not sure when she will start her first one. For now, she would like to get better at writing science fiction. Ann talks about the writing she does at home a lot, but is hesitant to write much in class. Her EA usually writes her class notes and helps her with spelling when Ann writes independently for Quick Writes and other activities.

Ann wants to enjoy English again like she did in elementary school, but she does not have the same connection with her teachers and classmates in this new school. Classes have become more serious and less social in high school. Ann is losing interest in attending school, but continues to come for her elective classes and because she enjoys the routine. She also likes seeing her friends at recess when she can find them. Ann is a very friendly girl and was well-liked in her elementary school, but as her peers are maturing and finding new friend groups, Ann spends more time in the Aboriginal Education room with one of the EA's where they often do crafts, work on homework or just chat while they eat lunch.

Ann's IEP states that she only needs to attend her academic classes for 15 minutes then she can choose whether to work in class or go work in the Ab Ed. room once her teacher has given her the work for the day. One of Ann's EA's believes that Ann is not being pushed hard enough in class and feels that if she were encouraged to stay for the entire class she would benefit more from being amongst her peers than working one-one-one in the Ab. Ed. room. The teacher and the EA have agreed to work together to try and encourage Ann to stay in the class for a little longer each day by engaging her right away in activities that may help her connect better with her peers and the content. The following activities will address the concepts of identity and belonging in the context of a unit on short stories.

BC Curriculum Connections (ELA 10 – Literary Studies)

Big Idea: The exploration of text and story deepens our understanding of diverse, complex ideas about identity, others, and the world.

Curricular Competencies:

Comprehend and connect (reading, writing, viewing)

- Read for enjoyment and to achieve personal goals
- Recognize and appreciate the influence of land/place in First Peoples' and other Canadian texts
- Recognize personal, social, and cultural contexts, as well as values and perspectives in texts
- Construct meaningful personal connections between self, text, and world
- Identify bias, contradictions and distortions

Create and communicate (writing, speaking, representing)

- Respectfully exchange ideas and viewpoints from diverse perspectives to build shared understandings and extending thinking
- Respond to text in personal, creative and critical ways
- Demonstrate speaking and listening skills in a variety of formal and informal contexts for a range of purposes

Content:

- A variety of text forms and genres
- Reading strategies
- Oral language strategies
- Metacognitive strategies
- Writing processes
- Language features
- Elements of style
- Literary elements and devices
- Literal meaning and inferential meaning

Rationale: This unit's focus on identity and belonging in the context of a study of short stories is meant to deepen students' engagement with the curriculum by giving them tools to recognize and connect their own backgrounds with the content. It has been long understood that a strong sense of connectedness to teachers and peers greatly motivates students' engagement in school. However, understanding of one's own identity and seeing it reflected in the curriculum, may have an even greater influence on a student's engagement with the content and sense of belonging at school (Faircloth, 2009).

Transitioning from puberty to young adulthood, adolescents pass though a toddler-like stage of adulthood, where they suddenly become aware of their knowledge, opportunities, and independence. However, they also become aware of their new and future responsibilities, creating what Erik Erickson termed, an *identity crisis* (Crain, 2000). During this this stage, "one's earlier identity seems inadequate for all the choices and decisions one must make" (Crain, 2000, p. 282). Adolescents are confused by new social conflicts and demands and become concerned with one's place in the social order (2000). Faircloth (2009) found that "allowing students to engage in learning in ways that are attentive to students' developing sense of their own identity may offer a powerful avenue to establish motivating connections to school" (p. 343). This time of intense identity development, Faircloth argues, is an ideal time to help students make deep connections between learning and identity thus encouraging them to become "active agents in self-regulating their future learning objectives" (p. 343).

Feeling a sense of belonging within the social, structural and curricular contexts of school is essential to optimal learning. It is often much easier to find a sense of belonging, however, when one first knows oneself. When we think about how students fit in or connect to and within the school, often too much emphasis is placed on the interpersonal. Attention also (if not first) needs to be paid to the intrapersonal. Historically, the school context has only been reflective of the dominant culture, and still today the system is permeated with norms and attitudes that do not support minority or low-income students with the representation they need. The goal of this unit is to allow students to understand that they each have

different identities in and outside of school based on their innate personalities and the influences and culture surrounding them. The goal is also to ensure that the identities students assume at home and the ones they bring to school are valued, respected and represented in the curriculum.

Activities

1. The Masks We Wear

Time: 15-25 minutes

Materials: Worksheet with three mask outlines (Appendix A)

Objective: To have students think about the various identities they assume in different contexts. The aim is to guide students towards the realization that we all have different influences that help form our multiple identities and those identities can change from place to place and over time.

Assumptions: Students have recently been introduced to the idea if identity and identity formation.

Activity: Watch the video, *Personal Identity* (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JepjY84sE). Have a short discussion on the questions posed in the video: "Are you the same person your entire life? Is identity just an allusion? What makes you you?" Have students pair and share, then discuss as a class.

Ask students to think about three places where they spend a significant amount of time (school, home, work, summer camp, church, sports teams, etc.). Hand out 'The Masks We Wear' worksheet. Students will write the places at the top of each mask, then some words or short phrases inside the masks that describe who they are in each of these places. If students are unsure what to write, guide them with the following questions:

- How do you feel in this place?
- Do you interact differently with the people in this place than in other places?
 If so, how?
- What special skills or activities do you do in this place?

- How do you dress/look in this place?
- How much independence do you have in this place?
- Etc.

When students are finished, ask them to notice if there are any words/phrases that are repeated across all three masks. Which words/phrases do they like best? Have students discuss their masks in pairs or small groups. Students do not have to share what they wrote on their masks with others, but rather discuss the activity. If needed, provide some guiding questions:

- Did you realize anything about yourself in this activity?
- Did anything surprise you?
- Why do you think you wear (or do not wear) different masks in different places?
- Do you think your school mask is different now than it was in elementary school? If so, why do you think it changed?
- Do you think your masks will be different when you are in grade 12? After you graduate?
- Etc.

Rationale & Assessment: This video and activity are meant to get students thinking about how everyone has multiple identities and that identities are often influenced by one's surroundings. Not all students will write extensively on each mask. Some may need time just to absorb the idea, and may get only as far as naming the places at the top of each mask. Others may fill their masks completely. The idea is to get all students to engage in the conversation that follows. The teacher will assess, through observation, how students do at filling out their masks, but more importantly, how they engage in discussing the ideas presented in the video and their thoughts on the activity. The teacher will walk around and ask open-ended questions to groups as necessary, and try to gain an understanding of how well students are grasping the idea of multiple identities and influences on identity. Assigning a Quick Write reflection (see activity 6) on this activity may help teachers assess individual

understanding of metacognitive thinking if s/he cannot observe the discussions in each group.

2. Short Stories Study

Time: Various stories of various lengths.

Materials: Variety of short stories in various formats

Objective: To experience different forms and genres of short stories, containing various perspectives, and to make personal connections within texts. Students will also learn how the elements of narrative can be used to make connections between and beyond texts.

Assumptions: Through mini lessons the teacher will review the different literary elements (plot, theme, point of view, character formation, conflict, etc.) as the class progresses through the unit. Care however, must be taken when consuming Aboriginal texts and literature, not to perpetuate epistemological colonization (Hansen, 2008). Not all Indigenous texts will conform to Eurocentric literary norms. Activity: Students will consume a variety of short stories throughout this unit. Some stories will be read independently, while others will be read by student volunteers, the teacher, or pre-recorded oral story tellers.

One example of a short story that will be covered in this unit is *Borders*, written by Thomas King. This story will introduce students to the idea of identity within narrative. In this story, the main character's mother refuses to identify with either the Canadian or American nationality, choosing instead only to acknowledge her Blackfoot identity. This creates problems for her and her son when they try to cross the border from Canada into the U.S. Many of the stories discussed in class will have an Indigenous connection. Stories representing other minority perspectives (both visible and not) will also be included, as well as some well-known classics.

Students will participate in pre-reading activities to give them some context prior to consuming each story as a means of peaking their curiosity and engagement. The delivery of each story will change depending on how well students read independently or if the story requires oral telling. Small reading groups may be

formed for students who struggle to read alone. Literature circles will be utilized for some of the stories. The roles in the literature circles (discussion leader, diction detective, bridge builder, reporter and artist/representer) offer opportunities for differentiation. The role of discussion leader, for example, is one that requires an ability to read deeply and think critically. This role may be rotated among group members, or assigned repeatedly to stronger students.

Rationale & Assessment: Reading and listening to short stories is a convenient way to try new authors and genres. It is also exposes students to many different topics and perspectives. As classrooms are steadily diversifying, "culturally diverse literatures have the potential to appeal to culturally diverse students [and] teach students to understand and value difference (Hanson, 2008, p. 7). At the same time, they can open discussion towards "challeng[ing] the normalization of white or European culture, and in many other ways broaden[ing] the horizon of literature studies" (p.7).

Exploring a unit of short stories offers students many opportunities to internalize and apply the knowledge they gain about reading and interpreting literature to the next story they read. By learning the literary elements of short stories, students can begin to make connections across different topics and perspectives. Stories create the opportunity to further discuss serious themes and events that can serve as the topic of discussion in Socratic Seminars (activity 5).

3. Alter Egos

Time: 20-40min

Materials: Card stock and pens

Objective: To have students understand how we tend to label each other and ourselves. We often judge each other by these labels, or try to act a certain way to maintain a label. One commonality we all share is that we all have identities outside of school that deserve to be shared and celebrated.

Assumptions: Most students know each other somewhat or fairly well.

Activity: Divide class into two groups. Once students are seated, give them each a card. They need to keep their cards covered so no one can see. On the first side they will write their alter ego, the person they think others see when others look at them. Give some examples such as an athlete, a musician, a gamer, a techie, a good listener, an organized person, etc. On the other side of the card students will write something that represents who they really are, but which may not be recognized by people at school, such as chef, creative writer, dog whisperer, procrastinator, etc. The teacher will collect the cards from both groups. One person from group A will come to the front and choose a card from group B's basket. Group A will talk together and guess who that card belongs to. If they guess correctly, then that person will join group A. At the end of the activity (or at the end of class) ask students to reflect (together as a group, in pairs, or alone in writing) if they learned anything about each other that surprised them today and how they felt about sharing a part of their private identity.

Rationale & Assessment: In 'The Masks We Wear' activity students consider their multiple identities. Students may learn and even share something about themselves that is not recognized at school. There is often a gap between students' school and personal identities. Lack of representation and connection to the institution can create a larger disengagement from school, than lack of traditional scholastic abilities. The Alter-Ego activity is intended to begin bridging the gap, not between students interests or identities outside of school, but in recognizing that all students have identities and interests that may not align with who they are in-side the school. Often students do not see their true identities legitimized by the institutional definitions and recognitions of intelligence, status, learning and success (Faircloth, 2009) and may feel alone in their feelings of exclusion. This activity is meant to help students realize that we all have skills, interests and identities outside what is traditionally acknowledged or recognized in school, and that all identities matter.

4. Socratic Dialogue Practice

Time: 10-20 minutes

Materials: Socratic Seminar Sentence Starters (Appendix B)

Objective: To give students the academic language to build and share their personal understandings and connections to literary ideas and themes.

Assumptions: Students have previously discussed and practiced writing openended directed questions that aim to link the texts (video, images & written text) to other sources, stories or their personal lives.

Activity: Prior to participating in a Socratic Seminar, the students will practice using Socratic language. Once or twice a week, students will view a short video on the topic of identity and bias. Each video is about two to five minutes long. The students will watch the video once, then as they are watching it a second time, they will write a conversation-starting question. After the second viewing, students will discuss the content in small groups, with each member using their conversation starter, either to get the conversation going, or to address a lull in the conversation. Students will have copies of Socratic seminar sentence starters to use as the conversation progresses.

Rationale & Assessment: The goal of this activity is to create a safe space for discussing serious themes, ideas and topics. Showing students how to use Socratic language, gives them not only the rules for how to interact in formal discussion, but also a framework within which to work. As Hanson (2008) states, "[I]t is important to set out clear expectations as to how students should interact in the classroom: for instance, respecting each other's ideas and learning process, avoiding derogatory language, and engaging positively in a diverse academic climate" (p. 12). It is equally important then, to give them the tools to do so.

Most students will likely feel uncomfortable at first in using the Socratic language, which is why they will practice in small groups. The aim is for Socratic language to become so natural that it eventually makes its way into informal class discussions as well. Using Socratic language provides a means for students to show respect for others' opinions and perspectives while also challenging established ideas, norms and assumptions. The goal is to encourage each other to think more deeply and critically.

Assessment at this stage is very informal. Students will engage in peer formative assessment aiming to improve, not judge one another through discussion. The teacher will observe each group's use of Socratic language and their depth of discussion. If needed, the teacher can sit with individual groups to advise them on how to ask open-ended yet directed critical questions and how to respond using Socratic language.

5. Socratic Seminars

Time: 20-60min

Materials: Students' notes, texts and conversation starters. Socratic Seminar Role worksheets (Appendix C).

Assumptions: Students have participated in a Socratic Seminar in the past and are familiar with the process. They have also practiced using Socratic language in small discussion groups.

Objective: To have students work together to build meaning from texts and other sources through critical questioning and discussion.

Activity: Through out the unit on short stories students have made various connections to the stories, to each other and to their own identities. At the end of each class, the students wrote one conversation starter in their notebooks. This could have been a question for clarification, a hypothetical question, an opinion, a personal connection or realization, etc. to the content or activities in class that day.

Students will be assigned to either the inside or outside circle. Those on the inside circle will bring their conversation starters and any notes or story annotations with them. They can use these during the discussion if there is a lull in conversation. Otherwise, the inside circle is left to their own ideas, thoughts and initiative as they reflect together on the content and activities covered throughout the unit on short stories and identity. The teacher will do her/his best to simply listen and offer open-ended prompts only if absolutely necessary.

Students in the outer circle will be assigned one of four roles: Shadower,
Reporter, Comment Counter or Silent Contributor. Roles can be assigned to reflect

the needs, abilities and interests of each student. Students who have expressed great aversion to being in the inside circle but have also displayed a deeper understanding or reflection on the material, for example, may wish to take the role of Silent Contributor. Students who struggle to concentrate on writing may feel more comfortable as a discussion participant in the inside circle, or a comment counter on the outside circle. As they become more comfortable with each other and with the Socratic Seminar process, students will switch roles and may try roles that they had previously shied away from.

Rationale & Assessment: We all know more than we know, but we need to learn to collaborate through dialogue to reveal the knowledge in side of us. This was why Socrates believed so strongly in discussion rather than lecture. Students need the opportunity to practice dialoguing in a safe environment, where they have been given tools to respectfully share, build on each other's ideas, and even disagree, question and challenge each other. Practicing the skills of dialogue and self-reflection in the context of the classroom will help prepare students to receive challenges to their ideas and beliefs as opportunities to peel away biases, misunderstandings or prejudices, rather than receiving future challenges simply as threats (Tedx Talks, 2016).

One of the most difficult things for the teacher in this activity is to be comfortable with silence. It can take students time to get warmed up, but dialogue can only emerge from silence. One of the benefits of having students create their own questions and conversations starters, is that the discussion topics are automatically scaffolded to their level. It is a good idea to have some additional questions prepared, however, in case students need guidance delving into higher level critical thinking.

Assessment will take place on several levels. Students will engage in peer formative assessment aiming to improve, not judge one another through discussion. Students will also engage in self-assessment by setting goals for their participation in the Socratic discussions and assessing themselves accordingly. Many students are afraid to speak and need time to build the confidence and comfort needed to be able to fully participate. ESL students may also shy away from the center discussion

circle if they are not confident with their English. In these cases, students may begin by preparing conversation starters so that they can practice entering the conversation with prepared materials.

Teachers may also observe conversation simply to inform future instruction. If all students appear confused about a particular issue, this can be addressed in a future lesson. In addition, if students show particular interest in a topic, the teacher may use this to guide future text selection.

Teachers may also assess participation, but should not do so until students have had a chance to participate several times and are comfortable with the procedures and roles. Evaluation criteria for discussion participants must be very clear prior to the first graded seminar. The following is a list of codes with which the instructor may assess participation:

() = comment

(+) = especially insightful or analytical comment

(-) = distracting or inappropriate comment

(?c) = student asks a "clarifying" question

(?p) = student asks a probing question intended to take the conversation further

(F) = student facilitates the conversation by redirecting it, encouraging others to speak or taking the conversation in a new direction

(T) = student auotes the text directly

(OT) = student engages in off-task behavior such as side conversations, staring blankly into the distance, antagonizing others, etc.

(D) = student dominates the conversation and makes it difficult for others to participate

6. Quick Writes

Time: 3-10 minutes

Materials: Pens & paper. A critical question or writing prompt.

Assumptions: Students know the rules: they can talk for a minute or two before they start, then they should write quietly; they should try to write for the entire time

even if they just write "I can't think of what to write right now..."; spelling and grammar do not matter.

Activity: Give students regular opportunities to write creatively and purposefully. Give students critical questions that have them reflect personally on the content. Questions such as, "What would you have done differently if you were in the main character's position?" or "Describe a time when, like the main character, you have had to make a choice between two difficult options."

Rationale & Assessment: In order to create fluency and comfort in writing, students should write frequently about various topics and in various formats. Betty Flowers (1981) describes how our identities in the writing process should progress from "madman" to "architect" to "carpenter," then to "judge." Often, when we sit down to write, our madman is too quickly obstructed by the judge. He sits over the creative madman commenting on spelling, punctuation and our ridiculous ideas. As a result, "the madman loses all his crazy confidence and shrivels up," (1981, p. 834) stifling creativity. The frequent and short writing in quick writes and reflections is meant to give students practice at removing their filters and writing for the sake of writing.

In designing Quick Write questions, it is important to place an emphasis on making connections between content and student's lives outside of school.

Quick writes may be used as different types of formative assessment, from showing individual students' progress over time to informing instruction for a whole class. More importantly however, quick writes allow students the opportunity to explore their identities through written language. A teacher's acknowledgement of students' thoughts and opinions can be an affirming process for developing identities. As Faircloth writes, "the teacher's role as audience for the students' sharing of their self and their ideas is one dimension of her support for their belonging" (2009, 341). A teacher's response, legitimizing the views, opinions and personal connections students make with the content will help students craft their own

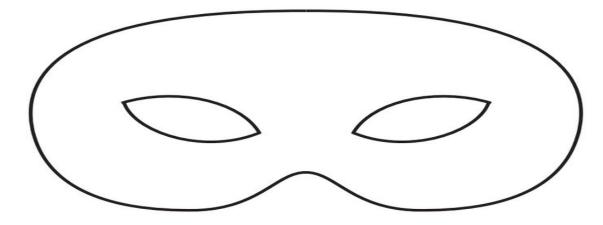
By creating opportunities for students to connect personally to "a student's ability to craft a sense of belonging may be inextricably linked to whether the student

experiences a sense of congruence between their own sense of self and the self-definitions accorded support within their context" (p. 327).

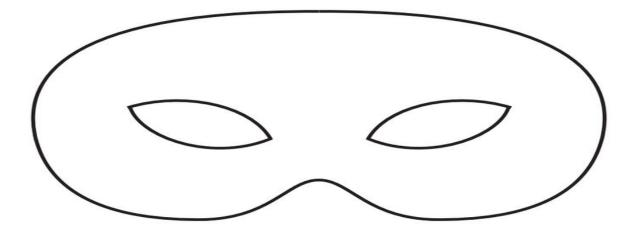
Appendix A

The Masks We Wear

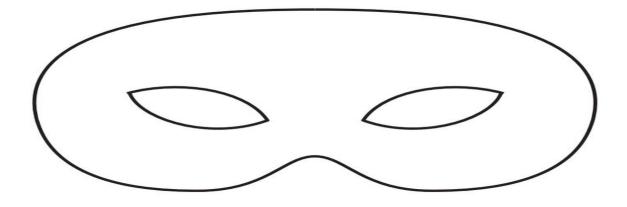
Place 1: _____



Place 2: _____



Place 3: _____



Appendix B

Sentence Frames for Clarification:

Socratic Seminar Sentence Starters

Directions: During Socratic seminars, you are expected to use academic language when you speak. In turn, you also expected to apply good listening skills during the activity. Please utilize the following sentence frames while you speak in order to incorporate strong academic language structures into your natural vocabulary and deepen the level of intellectual discussion in an academic setting.

·, could you please rephrase that?
·_I did not understand, could you repeat that, please?
·_I did not understand, do you mean? (here you rephrase what you thin
the group member said and wait for clarification)
·_It's not quite clear. Can you explain what you said about?
· _Can you say more about that?
·_In other words, are you saying?
· _I have a question about State your question.
Sentence Frame for changing the subject:
· _I think we've exhausted the topic of, can we move on to?
· _Moving on to
\cdot _Does anyone have any final comments to add about or shall we move on to a new subject?
Sentence Frames for affirming an idea and adding to it:
· _My idea is related to 's idea
· _I really liked's idea about
· _I agree with Also,
· _My idea build's on's idea. I
Presenting a different angle on a subject:
· _While I can see why you believe this, I see this differently. In my opinion
\cdot _I understand where you are coming from, but I see it a bit differently. From my perspective,
·_That's a valid point, but I feel
\cdot _On the other hand,
· _I do agree with the part about but
Expressing your opinion:
· _I believe that
· _In my opinion
· _I feel that
· _I think that because
· _To me, it seems obvious that

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Socratic Seminar Role

<u>Shadower</u>: Track the contributions of one person in the discussion group.

- Did your assigned discussion participant....
 - Speak loudly and clearly?
 - Cite reasons and evidence for their statements?
 - Listen to others respectfully?
 - Stay on topic?
 - Talk to the whole group (no side conversations)?
 - Avoid inappropriate language?
 - Ask for help to clarify confusion or start new conversations?
 - Seem prepared? (Why? Why not?)
 - Act as a positive role model?

Name of discussion participant:	

		Name:
Socratic :	Sem	inar Role
Reporter:	- - -	What were the main points made during the conversation? Were there any disagreements? Were they respectful? How? Were there any interesting opinions expressed? What were the strengths of the conversation? Weaknesses? How could this discussion have gone better?

	Name:
Socratic Seminar Role	
	1.0
<u>Silent Contributor:</u> What would you say if you were in the circ	cle?
- Write down a few points about the discussion that we	re important to you
- Write down a few points about the discussion that wer	e important to you.
Did you agree or disagree with the discussion participation	ants? Write down how
you would have responded if you had been in the discu	ussion.

Socratic Seminar Role

Comment Counter: Listen carefully tot eh conversation

- Write down the names of each of the discussion participants
- Each time a participant speaks, record a point beside his/her name

Names of Discussion Participants	Mark a point each time they contribute

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