**Reflection 1: Unmasking Halloween**

In this Case Study several reasons are presented for why we should not celebrate and acknowledge Halloween in our schools. Additionally, a concerned parent, Kim Petrowski, presents her own arguments why Halloween shouldn't be "cancelled".

First I'll list the reasons given for both sides, then explore some other reasons that may be "hidden" behind their stated reasons. Finally, I'll give my own humble opinion on whether or not Halloween celebrations should be in schools.

So, firstly, we are told that Middleboro is moving forward with field trips in order to reduce the "distraction" of "garish" Halloween, partly in an effort to make "school celebrations more inclusive". In particular there was a suggested conflict with a Philippine celebration the next day. Furthermore Halloween "privileged and perpetuated... a North American perspective". Further, Halloween "creates stress" for young students, while cancelling it is in line with "multiculturalism". Lastly "time is better spent on more relevant and inclusive activities"

Kim Petrowski, on the other hand believes that this action is "depriving her child of Halloween", but behind that is a kind of cultural movement that is attempting to protect "traditional" white, north American culture. Trumpism and "saving Christmas from being cancelled" are part of a retrograde movement that seeks to protect what some people feel is an assault on their culture. At it's heart, these people hope that their children will be raised similar to the way that they were raised.

On the other side we have the teachers who have redesigned the school year to minimize Halloween- with a backing of well thought out and researched academic trends towards decolonization and multiculturalism.

In my opinion it would be better to include Halloween for the simple reason that kids love it. Halloween fits nicely into the idea of a fun and gamified classroom, and I think there are lots of ways it can be used that are not "garish", "distracting", or stressful. There are also a lot of ways it can be linked to indigenous heritage and other world cultures. Halloween is one of the only times kids get to play with "scary" stuff in a place that is still safe for them. Therefore, I hope that it can be used, with a little bit of creative tweaking, to let kids learn about how to deal with fears and have a great time.

**Reflection 2: Alone in a Crowd**

This reflection will have 2 parts: 1- addressing signs that Darlene has been marginalized, and suggesting ways that she could be better integrated into the classroom.

From the very beginning of the text we have some pretty clear signs that Darlene isn't feeling happy and welcome in the group. By 8:30 am she is already "looking stressed" and has her ears covered as she inches along the wall "with her back to the lockers to avoid touching any of the other students". This is the very picture of a girl whose back is literally against a wall. She then waits for the area to clear before trying to get her stuff out- hardly normal behavior. Getting shouted at by Gavin first thing in the morning certainly doesn't set out a good precedent for the day, especially for a person so sensitive to sound. To make matters worse, after lunch time many other students begin ignoring Darlene, "not smiling", and refusing to talk to her culminating in one student telling her to "leave and never come back". Finally, it could be argued that Jim's words at the meeting post-incident further marginalized Darlene even though she wasn't there to witness it.

I think there are a number of places where things could have been done differently. Firstly, it seems that talking to some of the students about the challenges Darlene faces (particularly to Gavin since he is next to her locker space) could help them better understand her and restrain their worst reactions. Secondly, we notice that Darlene "sneaks past" Paula- suggesting she is somewhat resistant towards the special considerations and restrictions placed on her. This brings up the debate about whether or not labelling students is always best for them. Clearly, the challenges faced by Darlene are not something to be ignored completely but the fact that she is resisting her supports shows there is some kind of mismatch in the approach being taken. The fact that Darlene had taken interest in the art project and made compromises shows that she is willing to be a part of the learning community. I'm not saying it was the wrong choice but giving a speech about the mornings events may have made things worse. Lastly, Jim's suggestion that Darlene be placed in a different "space" goes against a lot of very good research on inclusion. (Elena Marin, 2014)