

Performance: Teachers repeat this action time and time again. Meet a new teacher. Try to find a point of connection. Give some insight into the new situation and deliver some information about procedures or students in order to give the new hire a heads up in the classroom. What we communicate in this performance may shape and color the actions that follow. In my work with students, particularly in the international student setting, this teacher to teacher performance sadly relegates students to cultural groups, which then proceeds to define those students. The performance communicates the values of essentializing, categorizing and stereotyping. These stereotypes taint the classroom environment and affect teacher views of students. Sara Ahmed, in “Melancholic Migrants,” describes the British (extrapolated to Western) migrant experience, one laden with expectations of happiness. These places of “freedom” are also where those same migrants will be denied true access to that “freedom”. These stereotypes, reinforced by teacher performances, begin to deny a migrant or international student access, starting non-native born students on the path toward “alienation from the abstract potentiality of the individual, premised on the belief that you can do or be whatever you want to do or be” (Ahmed 2310).