

## Process Documentation

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This activity was inspired by the story written by [Donna Yoo, who wrote about her experience of navigating her Korean American identity in two different countries](#)—Korea and the U.S. Yoo specifically mentioned how Koreans and Americans would differently react to her name, Donna (단아, 娥). While this name, meaning “a beautiful girl born in the morning”, is considered to be an elegant name in Korea, her American friends would wonder how she was given a “random name from the 60s” and would also ask what her ‘real’ name is. As Donna pointed out, it is not unusual for Asian Americans to anglicize their names “for the convenience and comfort of others” to avoid having to teach people all the time how to pronounce their names and still having them consistently mispronounced.

Names are a fundamental part of one’s identity. Many Asian Americans have a shared experience of having hard times establishing this basic part of their identity—people would question their names, their identity, and eventually where they belong. However, while having to navigate the duality of identity as “Asian” and “American” is indeed a challenge, it also opens up an expansive possibility of exploring and embracing a multiplicity of one’s identity.

Yoo’s story reminded me of Korean folklore painting Munjado, a form of letter painting where the calligraphed letters are drawn with the symbolic graphics representing the meaning of the letter. The way I learned about Munjado is through my mom’s paintings. She would explain me what the letters mean, and what it means to draw those letters with symbols. I’ve always been fascinated by how visuals of the paintings meet the meaning of the letters and become a synthetic art that expresses multiple layers of what a word means.

In this way, I came up with the activity combining the artistic form of Munjado and the exploration of the multiplicity of identity. Through this activity, I hope that my students can reflect on how multifaceted human beings they are, as well as better learn their friends. I also hope they will feel proud of who they are as they are—which will be represented by their version of Munjado, decorated with their own creativity and artistry.