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DRAG, GENDER, AND IDENTITY: EXPLORING PERSONAL NARRATIVES ON STAGE



*Middle and High
School grades*

Athanasius "Tanas" Sylliboy, warmly self-proclaimed as "Your favorite auntie's favorite auntie," Anita LandBack, originates from the Eskasoni First Nation in Mi'kma'ki. As a devoted Two Spirit Lnu (Mi'kmaw) Nurse Practitioner and talented Drag Artist, Tanas/Anita is driven by a passion for fostering acceptance, visibility, and representation for marginalized communities. They masterfully balance their careers in nursing and drag to break down barriers and amplify the voices of Indigenous, Black, Asian, 2SLGBTQ+, and other underrepresented groups. Their inspiring presence infuses a gentle touch of fun and warmth into every space they inhabit. Join us as we listen to Tanas tell their story of identity, discovery, and belonging. In this interview we hear what two-spirit mean so Tanas and how they were able to connect with the culture, the history, and the stories of two-spirit people. This is a great resource for people who want to learn more about what two-spirit means and the importance of including genders from other cultures or pre-colonial genders in your 2SLGBTQ+ conversations. This resource can help others as they learn about identity and explore their own identity; as well as better understand drag as a form of storytelling and expression.

Workshop activities

Individual activity

Anita Landback speaks about drag as a way to tell stories. They talk about how their name, their beaded earrings, their song list, and even their makeup choices - all of these things are little details that help them to convey their story. Think about yourself and your story. What are the things you are passionate about or the parts of your identity that you want others to know? How does your outward appearance help to tell that story?

In the space below draw yourself with some outward signs of who you are. Think about your culture, your hobbies, and the causes you are most passionate about and create an image of yourself that tells your story.



Workshop activities

Discussion questions and journal prompts

Here are a list of discussion questions to have within your class.

- What did you think about the video?
- What message did you take away from it?
- What are some ways you can make your community or classroom more inclusive of 2SLGBTQ+ folks?
- Anita Landback speaks to gender, specifically they speak to the two-spirit gender. Two-spirit is a gender that encompasses both masculine and feminine qualities; what do you think some of those qualities could be?

Journal prompts:

- A third gender has been common throughout history in many different cultures, for example, to Indigenous people on Turtle Island there is a third gender called two-spirit, in Hawaii there is a gender called Māhū (meaning in the middle), and in India there is a gender called hijra, which has existed in Hindu religious texts for over 4000 years. Why do you think these other genders were silenced during colonization around the globe?
- Anita Landback speaks to language and how the language we use holds significance. They speak to the language around "coming out" as well as how their traditional language uses a gender neutral pronoun for all. Our words can be one of the most powerful things we have; what are some ways the language we use can be inclusive and welcoming and what are some ways it might exclude or harm others?
- What are some ways we can work together to make sure everyone feels seen in our schools, communities, and our country?



Click or scan

Anita Landback chose their drag name very carefully. We encourage you to do some research on the Land Back movement to better understand one of the stories they are trying to tell.

