**Launching Self-Discovery and Building Trust**

**Cultural Chemistry**

**Teacher Overview**

This is a very nice way to kick off a developmental emphasis in your course--with visual self-discovery. Students can refer to any kind of culture they’re part of, from ethic to virtual. The realization that this assignment actually launches the course emphasis on self-discovery came to me from numbers of student course evaluations. Before I realized this benefit of the assignment, I assigned it because students enjoyed it and because it’s a great get-acquainted activity.

To introduce the activity, you may wish to replace my personal sample with your own. (It won’t be challenging to get more creative visually than I did.) Four student samples follow the student instructions.

On the due date, usually the first day of the second week of school, I’ll have students share their visuals in teams of three or four, using the activity for students to begin to get to know each other in a comfortable, creative way. They even do some analytical thinking as part of the written portion of the assignment. See Step 3 on the student instructions on the reverse and in the other document.

I have them share in teams, and then have each team nominate one student to share with the class. In the classroom, we’ll use the document camera to project nominated visuals on the screen. On Zoom, the sharing can be done in breakout rooms, where students can screen-share their visuals and answer the three questions. Several students can then screen-share with the whole class.

Along with the self-discovery the activity involves, it also begins to build trust as student learn a little about one another’s cultures and their views on them. I have my TAs select 2-3 favorites from each class and post them on our class bulletin board, which now serves as a visual reminder of students’ cultures, an important aspect of their identities.

Enjoy!