

**Lesson Plan: Stepping Stone Ideas, Possible Open Questions and Feelings**

**Idea #1 Environment limits Brandon's choices.**

1. What do we know about Brandon's neighborhood?
2. What do we know about Brandon?
3. Why did kids "learn to act tough" in this environment?
4. How do you think his mom felt?

**Feelings** distressed, abandoned, hopeless, aggressive, angry, oppositional, pressured

**Stop/Talk** End of first paragraph, "He earned bad grades and was always fighting."

**Idea #2 Brandon gets an opportunity to make new choices.**

1. Why was Brandon's opportunity so "amazing."
2. Why did Embry set up a new school in Kenya?
3. How do you think Brandon reacted when he learned he was going to a school in Africa?
4. Why might he have gotten off to a bad start?

**Feelings** empathetic, determined, compassionate, suspicious, scared, distrustful, obstinate

**Stop/Talk** Middle of fourth paragraph, "This word means "blessing" in Swahili...."

**Idea #3 Boys with promise get the opportunity.**

1. Why do you think half the teachers are American and half are Kenyan?
2. What does it mean to "show promise?"
3. What are some ways that Brandon might have shown promise?
4. How do we know the academic standards are high and that Brandon might have some trouble?
5. What do you think the teachers expected when Brandon arrived?

**Feelings** determined, clever, challenged, embarrassed, knowing, understanding

**Stop/Talk** End of fourth paragraph, "At Baraka, he had to take hard classes to catch up."

**Idea #4 Brandon changed his life.**

1. What convinced Brandon to start cooperating and learning?
2. Why wasn't Brandon returned to his old school in Baltimore?

3. What might have happened had he returned to his old school?
4. How did Brandon's thinking about himself and his goals change?
5. Why does Brandon's new attitude toward learning seem permanent?
6. What responsibility does Brandon have now to the society that invested in him?

**Feelings** successful, trusting, optimistic, secure, assertive, thoughtful, committed

**Stop/Talk** End of sixth paragraph, "He got an A+ on his first Latin test!"

### **Big Ideas**

1. The quality of the environment affects how we think and behave.
2. Everyone has choices, regardless of the environment.
3. Caring adults can have a powerful impact on student achievement.
4. It is important to be your own person.
5. Beliefs and behaviors can be passed down from generation to generation..