USING DIVERSE LITERATURE ALONG WITH CRITICAL LITERACY
STRATEGIES TO SUPPORT DIVERSITY AND EQUITY IN SPANISH IMMERSION
CLASSROOM

by
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Project Summary

Introduction

Working at a Spanish Immersion school, it has made me realize the importance of creating an environment where students’ cultural backgrounds and identities are represented in the classrooms and the school community. The research question that I wanted to examine was: *How can diverse literature be used along with critical literacy strategies to support diversity and equity in Spanish immersion classrooms?* To respond to this question, I settled on creating a blog that allows teachers and students to use critical literacy strategies with diverse literature that will reflect students’ culture. Students need to be motivated in their learning because they can see themselves represented in the resources they are having access to it and analyzing as well. Teachers need to highlight in the teaching practices the importance of honoring, respecting and valuing different perspectives and traditions each one has in their daily life.

Twenty-first century learners are exposed to broad opportunities to create, collaborate, communicate and through these interactions with other peers think more critically about situations that involves having a different lens when analyzing texts or media. By using these resources and teaching students critical literacy strategies, they can reflect on what they are learning in situations in which it shows a context that students can feel represented. It provides an opportunity for others to learn something new from the world as active members of the community. Additionally, it is a way for students to
be engaged with the lessons and leading not just their learning but discussions they can have with others and feel their thoughts are respected and listened.

**Rationale**

The idea of having this blog is that teachers are aware of the diversity that it is represented in the students not only around our school but also district-wide. As we are teaching a second language, teachers need to include activities which students get to talk about other cultures and value differences. Having a strong cultural background is essential for our students because they come from all over or sometimes they were born here in the U.S but their relatives are from somewhere else and that is when they are being part of the construction of their cultural identity.

Besides, in the classroom they need to find connections that reflect traditions, language, clothing, food when reading books that they feel represented and it is a great opportunity for other students to get to know others and honor who they are and bringing to them a new vision of the world and its problematics as well. A blog will help teachers to have the resources they need to keep reinforcing cultural background and experiences students bring to the classroom every day. Teachers can choose the critical literacy strategies they are going to implement in the classroom and choose the diverse literature books that are going to be listed in the blog but it is optional for them to use them as they preferred and most important what works for their group of students. Teachers will be also learning how to have a different lens and listening to different perspectives but the main goal is to teach students to be more critical when analyzing problematics that are happening in the society and how to use problem-solving to find a way to make a
difference in the society as citizens. Any other resources can be added if needed to support the critical literacy teaching in the classroom.

Audience

School-wide teachers were participants as they are going to have access to the blog and they can implement it according to unit lessons. Based on the diverse literature books that were listed in the blog, teachers will decide the ones they are going to use according to their class population and also the critical strategies they are going to teach students along these books. Students in our school will be active participants when they are analyzing the topics of the books and the critical literacy strategies students are going to be familiar with and learn how to use them but also teachers can decide on the ones they will find in the blog or the ones that the teacher decides to use according to the class context that can be used in groups or individually.

Project Description

According to Hong (2008) “blogs engage people in knowledge sharing and reflection, and they often attract a large readership. Instead of providing static information, blogs allow users and readers to respond, to create, and to connect” (p. 34). As the information is always evolving in the way we preserve it, it is important that educators see blogs as a way to interact with other colleagues by sharing strategies, tools and other resources. Leigh (2018) found that “when used inside a blogging platform, reflections become public, either by allowing full public access to them or by sharing within a community specific to the participating educators” (p.27). By doing that, it will enrich the teaching instruction and it can be seen as a collaborative tool that allows to
gather resources and essential information that will benefit both students and teachers. Besides, we are creating a connection with the information so our students can take ownership of it and as teachers as a way to connect with other teachers and create new ways to keep resources alive and available when need it.

The blog provides information about the definition of critical literacy, multiple perspectives, inquiry and its important in education, and a detailed description of critical literacy strategies that teachers can use with the diverse literature book list that teachers will have access through the blog and it can be used to support their unit lessons. The book list has the title of the book, a description of the books, topics mentioned in the book that can be used for class discussions. In order for teachers to know more about the book, I included a book trailer or an interview with the author providing highlights from the story.

**The Project**

https://diverseliteratureehsi.blogspot.com/p/bienvenidoswelcome.html

This project includes a list of diverse literature books that not only reflects characters from other stories but also adversities in their lives due to their family challenge conditions. I found the idea of a blog more engaging for teachers who are going to have access to the resources in it. I was more familiar with the framework of a blog that I decided to create all the resources in an accessible way and also easier to navigate. In this part of the blog, it shows five categories users will find in there and some literature review regarding the main focus of my capstone: the use of diverse literature books that can be used with critical literacy strategies.
Something About Me

In this category of the blog, I wanted the user to know some background about myself and as well as the purpose I had when creating this blog so that teachers know the goal of it and make them reflect about how the school community is going to benefit from this.
Diverse Literature Books

In the list of books I wanted to include in this blog, there is a variety of stories represented in each book. Some books will talk about celebrations around the world in countries such as China, India, the Middle East especially during Christmas time. I wanted to have books who reflect how other cultures celebrate these holidays, what they do and talk about what it is similar to our cultures and what it is different but also letting our students know that it is important to respect and listen to what it is important to them to keep all of these traditions alive. This year, I have kids whose families grew up in India and we have been talking a lot about their celebrations and what they know or have heard about India and it is important to teach other students who are not exposed to this information to learn from their peers. This experience of listening to people from other cultures really expands their knowledge and the vision of the world.

There are other list of books that tell stories of families migrating here, and how all the members of the family support each other when there are difficult times they experience at work, at school, in their neighborhoods. At the same time, it reflects how they still want to preserve their cultural traditions and keeping them through the different generations in their families.
Another important component in this book list is to show how other children live around the world and what challenges they need to face in order to support each other and help their communities. There are wonderful stories based on real life experiences of people in South America, Asia and Africa that will make students reflect the way they live in with their families, or the school they attend, access to facilities.

On the other hand, I wanted to have books that talk about how families face challenges such as health, economic issues, having an only child so students can also understand what families have to experience and what to do when there are challenges that are hard to control but how these families cope with adversities on a daily basis.

The way I organized the information in each book was to have the title in both English and Spanish so that teachers can find the books easier since translations of the titles can vary in both languages. Some of these books are only in a Spanish version but I think it is important to have books that knowing there are not available in one language they can still serve as a reference point to start critical discussions in the classroom.
In addition, it offers information about the writer and illustrator of the book. It also has a picture how the cover looks like, a summary of the story and in some of them, I tried to include tips when using them for a lesson but my future plan is to have a tip for all of them or that teachers can add their own tips on how to use them so that we can have suggestions about how to use them in our lessons. The last part I wanted to include was a book trailer of the book or an interview with the author that will give a more detailed description of topics that are going to be referred in the book and how the author can give his/her purpose when writing a specific story.
Critical literacy strategies

In a Google Docs, I decided to include some critical literacy strategies teachers can use along the diverse literature books that are listed in the blog. Each strategy comes with a description of what the purpose is and then how we can use it with the students. It is important that teachers use modeling when working with these strategies as it will serve as a reference for independent reading work for students. Doug Fisher and Nancy Frey (2007) stated that teachers can model *I do, you do, we do it* in order to release their responsibility so that they can use these strategies during their own reading time or even at home. This model allows to be more student-centered instead of teacher-centered.

I listed 14 strategies for teachers to use in any lesson or with any book they are planning on. As a future plan, I want teachers to add more strategies that they think it should be in this document and they have been effective in their classrooms. With the Google Docs, I want to expand the variety of strategies so there are different choices to choose from.
Survey

In this category, users can reflect on what the notice about the website and ways to improve it. I consider it is good to include users’ voices feedback as a way to keep this tool improving. What I created was based on what I observed and what I want teachers and students support in. In the same way, I want teachers and staff member to contribute to this tool that will benefit the school community. There are 4 questions users can find in a Google Form. The first one asks users about what they think it needs to be modified or changed in the blog. The second one opens up to what other resources users would like to find in the blog. The third question makes users reflect on their teaching practice and how this blog is effective for their teaching. The last part is simply to gather comments, suggestions, questions or concerns they have when visiting the blog (maybe one video is not working, they want to participate with including resources of their own or recommend articles that supports the research, etc).
BOOK LIST REFERENCE


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