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Cultural Representation in the Classroom

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Abstract

The purpose of this paper is to establish the importance of cultural-representation in schools where the majority of the students identify as Latino. The participants for the Capstone Project included a classroom of third-grade students in a public elementary school located on California’s Central Coast. The supporting literature provides additional information on why incorporating culturally-relevant literature is needed. The issue is what books are available to the students that talk about their culture. By providing culturally-relevant books to students in the classroom in hopes to promote a more positive relationship with reading and a personal relationship with attending school. For the project portion of this paper a lesson plan was made with one book that explained family values and traditions. As a future teacher this work contributes to my career by reassuring what an important impact culturally-relevant literature can do to help improve a classroom experience.

Keywords: cultural-representation, school, literature
Literature Review

An important note to take into consideration when examining the sources found for this topic could be labeled as outdated. A majority of the sources used are close if not written 10 or more years ago. The outcome of this paper has the potential to show limitations on what can be further analyzed as a modern problem when addressing the era some sources were written. The topic of this paper is to discuss how and why it is important to use culturally-relevant literature in the classroom. Culturally-responsive or culturally-relevant teaching is defined by Gloria Ladson-Billings, stating that it is specifically committed to collective empowerment (2007). A common theme among the sources is the labeling of both Hispanics, Chicanos and Latinos and the importance of understanding their origins. For this paper, both Latino and Hispanic will be used interchangeably in a pan-ethnic fashion.

There is a problem in local schools in a coastal area surrounding the use of literature that is being read to Hispanic/Latino students. Defining who is Hispanic and Latino is also a large part of finding a solution to this problem. In chapter two of Ada’s book entitled: *Latino Literature for Children and Adolescents* Ada discusses the history with which labels come about. While expanding on this idea, Ada explains that the genetic makeup and intermarriage of Spanish people with Native Americans and Africans created a mix that is known as mestizo (2003). Over the years, the demographic of this area has shown that Hispanics have become the majority of the population. This is also the case for schools. The site where this project is based, the student body is 96% Hispanic or Latino. The growing number of Latino students require a great deal of consideration when examining what is incorporated as part of the curriculum. Common themes seen in the articles are how powerful children’s literature is, the growing need for Hispanic representation through literature and how implementing culturally-relevant
practices in the classroom and how this can be done through the use of books provided to them and read to the students. With that being said, in what ways could incorporating literary representation for Latino students create a meaningful relationship with education? This literature review will cover the benefits that come along with reading and having culturally-relevant literature accessible to all students.

There is a wide array of Hispanic literature available for children to learn about their culture and why it should be valued. Having a culturally-responsive pedagogy could help Latino students feel that they are being represented and can succeed in their educational journey. Under the evacuation of options section, there is an option on a practice that can be used by those who seek implementing a culturally-relevant pedagogy. Evelyn Young, wrote about her research in culturally-relevant pedagogy and how valuable it is in the classroom. Young explains the how crucial it is for teachers to positively incorporate their students cultures in to the classroom. She makes it a point to say that that is not easy and how many teachers have difficulty with it, but how it can be done with dedication (2010). That dedication can be seen through the use of quality Latino themed children's books that represent student’s culture. Similar to this topic on culturally-relevant pedagogy, Ladson Billings’ (2007) brings out in her article, “culturally relevant teaching requires that teachers attend to students’ academic needs, not merely to make them “feel good” (p. 160).

As children’s books help children to read and to understand words, how much more so do they teach children the values, lessons, creativity that are a part of their daily lives. These books are an important piece of how children feel about themselves as well as who they would like to imitate. An article talks more about this and how picture books are used to enable young learners to discuss their backgrounds in a classroom setting. Luisa Abellán-Pahnani and Thomas Hérbert
(2013) provide an example through a teacher’s struggles to relate to her growing number of Hispanic students coming into her classrooms. The issue arises in the classroom in how Latino learners are being supported in thinking about their growing number. The authors of this article say that making sure Hispanic student’s educational journey is focused on their social and emotional well-being (2013). Arlene L. Barry (1998) touches on the rapid Hispanic population increase as well. This increase is a supply and demand issue for Hispanic literature for children and young learners is in need. While going through the references one may notice that about 7 of the articles in this literature review are over 10 years old and a question that may be asked is, if these references are out of date would these issues still be relevant to modern times in the classroom. This issue is still relevant and authors such as Nina Nilsson, who speak about the Hispanic portrayal in literature and how it is measuring up over 40 years. Nilsson (2005) does a study that shows how books representing Latinos have changed for the better from 1966 to 2003. In her study she finds that being critical of how books are presenting different ethnicities matters how people feel today. This overlaps with the project conductor’s thoughts on keeping books that represent the demographic in the classroom so important to open a safe discussion and how to refrain from judgement of other cultures and have students become more understanding through the aid of literature.

During an experience where the project conductor noticed that at this school site books were read in which all the protagonists were Caucasian or the majority of the characters were Americans. It is important to question what message is being sent to this large percentage of Latino students if or when they do not see themselves reflected in the literature that is available to them as often as the majority culture.
According to this statement made by authors Clark, Flores, Smith and González (2016): In the United States, as the multiple groups that compose our society have struggled to achieve equal rights and recognition, the case has been made that all children deserve access to books that mirror their experiences and reflect their own realities, the realities of their parents, families, and communities. (p.10)

With that being said students may see themselves as “less than worthy” because the stories all involve characters with whom they can relate. Students have a right for their identity to be validated. That presents the message that these books are better, the characters in this book are nicer, more approachable. It is a form of colonization (Villenas, 1996). Sofia Villenas, a Chicana ethnographer expresses her concerns by using “we” in work, involving all those who impact the youth, which are essentially all adults. A point Villenas makes regarding that topic is how even ethnographers fail to question their own identities and privileged positions and in what ways it perpetuates “othering.” The footnote on that page defines “othering” as: objectifying people who are different than the Western White self in a manner that renders them inferior (1996). A common goal among teachers is to get to know the backgrounds of their students in order to teach effectively, similar to an ethnographer. Directing attention to the idea of self-reflection to educators would allow them to ponder over if they are colonizing their students by not incorporating their own cultures into the classroom. Teachers, parents, librarians, all whom are educators could help their Hispanic students by incorporating books that they can resonate with and can really connect with to promote a high level of self-esteem.

Latino representation in literature is out there, however the accessibility students have to this particular literature may not be as prevalent in school libraries. Culturally relevant
representation can be used as a means to get to know students and even encourage more parent involvement. Literature can be used in and outside of the classroom to bridge a gap that schools and parents have with each other. Academic improvement is always sought after in schools. Boosting scores could improve in majority Hispanic schools it would be helpful to view suggestions from a study conducted by a group of researches that look at the growth of young Latino students in reading and literacy. One of the suggestions that follows this is to have more intense English-reading for English-Language learners. (Fitzgerald, Amendum, & Guthrie, 2008) This reading can be accomplished and students could get even more out of that reading by having the culturally relevant Hispanic literature be a supportive way to carry out this intense reading and still get more out of it other than just reading for practice.

**Evaluation of Options**

These options are used to help incorporate more culturally relevant reading in schools for Latino students. This capstone project will choose one of the three options as a means to better understand and research if the option was used in a classroom setting. Taking a look at the three options that can be implemented in a school to encourage the use of literature in order to find solutions. Option 1 is to read books to the students that reflect the demographic of the classroom. This option will help to start conversations about what is important to the students and validating that culture is beneficial to their overall learning. Kurkjian and Livingston (2007) provide a list of children's books and their culturally exposing contents. Contents of these books can contain themes on social issues, diversity and history. Based on its criteria, it has a zero for cost, because it takes no money to read the books to children. A three for time allotted in that it might be a chapter book that will be read overtime, or the teacher may want to read a book and attach a lesson plan around the subject of the book, making it last a long time. Option 2 is used for
educators to make lists of quality books to have in a classroom or accessible to students at the library. Based on its criteria, this option is has a zero score for cost because it does not take any money to find a list of books and a 2 for time allotted since lists of books relating to multicultural themes can be find online with ease. Option 3 is used to encourage the use of the culturally relevant books available to the students by giving them a writing prompt to interact with. This option has a three for time allotted because it may take some time for a teacher to come up with a writing prompt that will go along and it will also take time for the students to write up their responses. The cost for this is also zero because there is no cost for a teacher to write up an engaging prompt for their students. All these options got a score of 3 for reach in that, they all reach all the stakeholders at hand and are interactive with the students education progression.

Option 1. Reading books to them

This option requires those who read to students have books that represent the students, this means the books have accurately represent the students. Chambers (1996) expresses the importance of making quality books accessible for young readers. With this option, books that are accessible to them in their own classroom will be used to further expand on the subject of culture and its importance. Chambers also refers to the ideal of having multiple copies of a book read to students in a classroom as an added plus.

Option 2. List of books to have in the classroom

Provide students with books to choose from in either the class library that have characters who are Latino and or Hispanic. By providing more multicultural literature for students to choose from this presents the message that the school shows more of a willingness to inclusive to all cultures, values and ideas. By looking into what resources are available to educators for their
certain demographic, as for the demographic of Latino students referring to Clark, Flores, Smith, and Gonzalez (2016) is where a list can be referenced (p.301-322).

**Option 3. Writing Prompts**

Writing prompts are a great way students can be encouraged to read the books and connect with the books and home life. By assessing students on their readings of culturally-relevant books with multicultural characters it helps make culture apart of the curriculum. Students can identify with the characters or story of a book and therefore have to self-reflect on how they feel about their own culture (Clark, Flores, and Smith & Gonzalez).

**Table 1. Options and Criteria:** This table represents the options and criteria scored on a scale of 0-3. Zero being not much or very little, and three being a lot. These scores are to score what the project conductor theorizes will weight out to be the best option.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Options ↓</th>
<th>Criteria</th>
<th>Reach</th>
<th>Time Allotted for implementing</th>
<th>Cost</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Reading books</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>List of quality multicultural books to have accessible</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Writing Prompts in relation to the books read</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note: Options weighted on the impact each will have based on the criteria stated.*

By weighing the success of this project through the lens of reach, time, cost and time will help to rank what option would be the best to use in classrooms.

**Conclusion**

The overall concept of this paper is to address an issue that has to do with the ways in which Latino students are being supported through their education. One way to examine how
these young learners are being supported is to place an important role in the literature they have access to in schools. To integrate on a much bigger scale the books that are being used in majority Hispanic schools in order for students to see their identities being represented and validated in books. The benefits to having students see themselves in literature that reflects them uses books as an aide to support growth in academics and psychological development (Clark, Flores, Smith, & Gonzalez, 2016). Limitations for this paper involve the sources and when they were written. Most sources are over ten years old and that could impact how relevant these issues are in modern classrooms today. Catherine Kurkjian and Nancy Livingston speak about this importance as well in their article entitled; “Children's Books: The Importance of Children's Literature in a Global Society”. In their article they discuss how incorporating books with “heavy” topics helps all better understand other cultures apart from their own. (Kurkjian, Livingston, 2007). The fact of the matter is that as the Hispanic population is growing the classrooms will be filled with Hispanic students and to help teachers better prepare themselves for their students and create an accepting space we need culturally relevant literature in available to the students.

Project

Overall, the material brought out from the literature review provided information on how to utilize the books available to students and teachers. Students are always being encouraged to read and educators continue to read to students through their time in elementary school. Paying close attention to the books and its contents will encourage more reading. Reading is a great outlet to improve student’s ways of learning about new things that otherwise would be difficult to understand. Points brought out in the literature review include, the books that are available to students, the content of the literature that is important, and why involving culture into the reading
is beneficial. In the literature review, it was also expressed that for Latino students supporting through their education it is important to emphasize on their social and emotional wellbeing. By incorporating a personal experience the project conductor had at one school, where the demographic is 98% Latino in regards to what books were being read to them. After this experience the project conductor realized that the books that were read to these young learners continuously did not represent the student’s culture and they were always representing Anglo-American culture. Seeing that the literature was something that can be improved on the project conductor decided return to the same school and implement a lesson surrounded by a book that express Latino students and their culture.

The contents of this project includes information about the school where the project was conducted. To be discussed step by step is the implementation of what steps were used in following the lesson plan as well as additional information that the project conductor did to instruct students on what they needed to do. An evaluation about the results of this project are provided in this paper. The evaluation is used to see if the lesson plan was a success or not so much. At the end of the evaluation is a heading titled appendix which contains files of some of the students completed work. The work that is shown in the appendix was chosen by random to provide a variety from what the students produced. Also attached in the appendix is the lesson plans used and designed by the project conductor, pictures taken at the site of parts of the lesson conducted and student’s sentence webs and their typed out stories.

**Design**

The mission statement for this elementary school is: “As a team, we will strive to uphold high academic expectations and achievement by focusing on standards-based curriculum, 21st-century skills, safe learning environment, and college and career readiness. With parents support
and involvement, our students will be able to reach their full potential.” Along with that is the vision statement for this public school which states, “We believe that all students can learn and succeed in their educational goals.” This site is located in an urban area, in the west of California near the Pacific Ocean. Closely surrounding the school is a neighborhood filled with low-middle class residents. The populations served are almost exclusively Hispanic or Latino and are considered socioeconomically disadvantaged. According to the school’s most recently published SARC (School Accountability Report Card) that was made available during the 2018-2019 school year, out of the total 659 students enrolled, 95.6 percent are Hispanic or Latino. Being that this is a heavily Latino based area, those factors are considered for this capstone project.

This site was chosen for this capstone project because of the project conductor’s familiarity with this school. The project conductor finished their primary education there and it is in close proximity. There have been two service learning assignments completed with this site as well. This capstone topic is about the promotion of cultural representation in books read to students which also encompasses the promotion of achievement with culturally responsive schooling.

This project was thought up after an experience at the site where the researcher (project conductor) observed the literature being read to the students. This observation brought to the project conductors attention that students may not be getting enough cultural representation through the books that are provided to them. This prompted the researcher to further examine the effects of reading culturally attentive literature. Attentive meaning, attending to the demographic of the school.

The students at the site are majority Hispanic. Noting this, the researcher brainstormed ideas on how culture can be more a part of the curriculum. Focusing more on getting more books
involving Hispanic protagonists to be read to the students. There is a great need for Hispanic representation for the students at this school to create a sense of belonging in their community and strive to be like influential characters in said books. This discovery has moved me to encourage more reading from the students and to the students, books that contain cultural representation, and for this school, it is Hispanic and or Latinos. This capstone project will help promote the purchase of more Latino based books available to the students and encourage students to read more books where they feel they can identify with the characters.

This project has the potential to get students more accepting to read more and improve reading test scores and the student’s self-esteem and self-worth. Being that a lot of the influence in this community comes from Mexican culture and in Mexico views about bettering oneself come from a collectivistic society mindset. Creating a positive and culturally respectful learning environment by incorporating more Latino based literature at least for this school, will help the community create better relationships at home and in schools and that will positively reflect in their grades and test scores. Students who feel proud of their successes and abilities, and who have enhanced images of themselves, family, and their culture, are better learners. Creating a positive and culturally respectful learning environment by incorporating more Latino based literature at least for this school, will help the community create better relationships at home and in schools and that will positively reflect in their grades and test scores.

**Implementation**

The researcher attended the classroom where the project was conducted every Friday for three weeks to be a familiar face before the lesson plan was taught to them. The researcher worked with the teacher to create the lesson plan that would work well with the students and how the teacher manages the class. This lesson was completed over three days during from 9:10 A.M. -11:45 A.M., included in the time was a 20-minute recess break, the students had which was
from 9:50 A.M to 10:10 A.M. For the first day the teacher was to call the students to the floor to sit, where she has full attention and introduce the book. For this project, the book used was: *Family Pictures* by Carmen Garza. After the title of the book is introduced the conductor asks if the students can raise their hands and define what ‘culture’ is and what the general topic of what they think or know it means. As students start to raise their hands the conductor asks them to share their definitions with the person sitting next to them. After about 30-45 seconds, students are asked to raise their hands and share their definitions. The definitions that the students shared showed that they understood a majority of what culture meant but it showed they had a misconception between the differences between ethnicity and culture. Once these definitions are shared the teacher adds more to the definition of what culture is and cleared up the misconception. The book was then read to the students and after they were asked to go to their desks, and get ready for their recess break. To finish up this lesson, some vocabulary words were chosen and defined by having the words already written down on the board (shown in *Figure 1.*) while students are asked to raise their hands to define them. Once the students come back from their recess break they will be given time to go back to their desks and talk to each other for 2 minutes to settle into getting ready to write on large papers to brainstorm the stories they will write. Students will also be giving their writing expectations orally and that this is supposed to be a fun assignment for them so they were advised to write about something that they enjoy about their culture. Their story was instructed to be a personal story that happened to them, referencing the book and how there is a picture along with a story. After students work on their sentence webs they will then be asked to wrap up their work and continue to think about their story and to even go home and keep thinking about what they could add. Encourage them to ask their parents about their culture if they would like.
For day two, students will be asked to bring out their large papers or sentence webs and place them on their desks. As students are sitting in their desks teacher will engage with students by asking them to raise their hands if they added any more sentence to their stories or if they asked their parents about their culture. The teacher of this project will show the students her brainstorm paper (refer to Figure 2.) which is used as an example as to what sentences can be added to their story that also talk about culture. After this students will get out their Chromebook and open up google classroom where a file made by teacher will be shared with them so that they can start added their sentences from their sentence web (refer to Figure 3). As writing is starting to be taped student will be reminded about the structure of their work and how they could add any of the vocabulary words from the book and to capitalize proper nouns. Teacher will walk around and help students to edit their stories as they finish up writing. If there are any students who finished they will be able to draw a picture or add photos from the internet that follow along with their story similar to the way the book has a picture and a description.

The last day of this project, day three students will be asked to get out their Chromebook and continued to write up their stories and finish them up. Students will also be reminded about adding a concluding sentence and checking for proper capitalization of words. Students who are finished will be directed to inform me or the teacher to proofread their stories with them in case there are any mistakes in spelling and or mistranslation. Students who get their papers edited with the teacher and once everything is revised for corrections then they are ready to print. The editing process is very interactive and a personal teacher to student exchange. During this time the project conductor points out any things the student may be interested in fixing while also commenting on their work and the contents of their story. This including reminding them about the story requirement; that their story needs to have a concluding sentence. If a student has
completed the all other steps and they are ready to print they will inform the teacher of this and she will print them and the papers will be collected by the conductor (for typed papers refer to Figure 4).

**Evaluation**

Overall this project did go as planned. The results of this project from the students were great and they had a lot of written material that was complete. As far as the contents of their material in terms of how it related to culture and its similarities to the book that did not go so well. This outcome could have been because of the shortness of time students had to brainstorm with their sentence webs and the lack of examples given to them. Students were instructed to write about their own story and involving their culture in it, and the results show just that. The learning objective was to involve their culture yet a majority of students efforts went to writing their story. Along with that the student’s stories were very well written and also showed a beginning, middle and end. One of the standards for this project was for them to provide a concluding sentence and they did complete that standard. Students were given an example and were told to make their concluding sentence and in their own worlds. Students did achieve that California standard. The students did type up their story and complete the requirements asked of them, which was a huge success for this project. Following the lesson plan and the objective, the students did compete this and some students wrote more than the required amount of sentences.

**Reflection**

This part of the Capstone Paper where the project conductor reflects on the successes or downfalls that happened with this overall project. The discussion portion of this paper will talk about some of the challenges conducting this project. The details about this project and how well or not so well it turned out is in this portion of the paper. Next is the recommendation section which goes over how and why this lesson plan was taught in this way. This part also contains
what steps could have been done differently with the project or that proved to add to challenges or that went very well. This project was created by the researcher to find better ways to become an educator or that benefits education. This part of the reflection discusses how implementing this project will or will not be an asset inside the classroom. Finally, the project conductor will give a brief overview of the project and their experience.

Discussion

Implementing this project went very well. The work that the students completed came out extremely well. As far as the written work, it showed that the students really grasped the idea of what culture is and how daily activities are all apart of culture. One thing that really helped was going to the site at least three weeks in advance. The project conductor noticed this was helpful because the students were more responsive and willing to work with someone who they were familiar with. This was also possible with the help of the teacher and her added input on the best way her students would respond to the lesson. Some of the challenges that arose was how the conductor instructed the students on what to do and connecting it to the format of the book read to the students. The conductor took in account that the students would have a sentence web to help them write their stories however, it would have worked out better if the project conductor provided more instruction on how their stories were to reflect their own culture and why they like that. A part of the research done was to count the books that were readily available to the students in the classroom. This was done by going to the in-class library and counting the books that were in open containers (refer to Table 2 in Appendix) for this particular classroom. While counting these books the researcher counted how many containers there were and then proceeded to count the contents of what kind of literature was in them. It should be noted that the books were categorized according to the researchers own judgment and otherwise could be overruled in
what books qualify as multicultural, bilingual or culturally-representative books for Hispanic young readers.

As stated in the project section of this paper, this project was done over the course of three consecutive days. If there was more time to conduct this project, the project conductor could have had the students take more time to make the outline for their stories with their sentence webs which could have resulted in more meaningful stories about them and their cultures. Their stories were meaningful to them, and that cannot be denied however, it must be noted that with more time, a more in depth view of what culture means to them and also maintaining a sense of cultural pride in themselves and their school-work could be achieved. Trying to achieve that in three days was only touching the surface to what culture means. Hypothesizing on how many days this could take to become even more meaningful could mean this project could last up to a month.

Something that the project conductor observed as a challenge was managing the classroom at times. Managing what students that had already completed their work, which ones were ready to edit and who was still working on it. While this part was anticipated that it would take the longest, it was just enough time to gather all the students finished work on the third day.

The choice for going over the vocabulary words seemed to not matter as much, as it would have been if it was a requirement for the students to apply the words to their story. This part could have been left out however, students did enjoy engaging with the translation of words they knew that were in Spanish.

**Recommendation**

The lesson plan made up for this project was inspired from the literature review. Main points brought out in the literature review showed how books are a great ways to involve culture.
To use that in the lesson plans, the researcher formed the lesson plans surrounding the use of a culturally expressive book that reflected the majority demographic of the class, which was Latino. The book that was chosen for this project was intentionally picked out of the class collection provided to the students. This was used also to point out that the selection for Hispanic representation literature was limited. However, the book chosen was still really great in that it contained cultural Latino representation which was the goal for the book choice.

To help with managing the class while they were typing, it would have been helpful to have a list of the student’s names and check off or highlight students who have finished. This would help keep track of the students who may need reminders to stay on task. A recommendation for going over the vocabulary would be to only use the words that involved a celebration or words that would need to be translated to English. Other than those recommendations for the challenges that went along with this project, it was surely a success in that there were not many challenges.

**Future Plans to Build on the Capstone**

This project will help the researcher with further prospects when involving the importance to adding culturally-representative literature into the classroom. Two ways that this could be used in the researcher’s career as a future teacher would be to invest in books in which incorporate culture as a means to connect with books. Involving one's own colleges to also be involved in fundraising or encouraging parents to donate for books if the school does not have a book fund. A second way would be to make a point to the read books by making culture apart of the curriculum and not just having them in the classroom is a vital part of making sure culture is being incorporated. Applying the research from the literature review and even using them to use books on a multicultural level and observing other demographics of cultures could also be really
helpful in making a lesson culturally-representative lesson plan. For many public schools the choice for culturally relevant-literature is limited however, investing and fundraising for books as a way to get them into schools is what would be required. In order to establish that culture is an important aspect to educating and learning educators need to be aware that there is not being enough done to inspire minorities to be accepting of their own cultural identities.

**Conclusion**

Overall, this project had a successful outcome and the learning objective was achieved. The project conductor had bigger hopes in what this lesson could do. The bigger picture of this lesson was to expand on a larger class discussion on the cultural pride that reflects on how they see their own success in their personal relationship with learning in school. With that being said, the students stories are what shape that they were able to understand what culture is and how it is all around us and how differences are to be celebrated. There are many ways culture can be incorporated into the classroom so just limiting an educator to books as means to talk about culture is not the main focus here. Branching out of what culture means to the educator and the young learners besides the superficial traditions and the language is a great way to make schooling a more personal experience.

The whole Capstone experience was definitely a learning experience for the project conductor. The research in the literature review was evidence to introduce the issue that is present in schools where the majority of students are Hispanic. The issue had to do with an unrepresentative of Latino students. Since this concept of this issue was first a critical observation at the site, it was very impacting to see how an observation can be formulated into becoming a work in progress in hopes it no longer being an issue. The researcher got a taste as to what teaching is really like and creating lesson plans that are compelling to the students learning.
Understanding the process in what goes into having an idea and then producing a product that has the potential to shape how young minds think about themselves and their education is a very rewarding experience, and that is what this Capstone helped me reaffirm was true.
References


Appendix

Lesson Plan

**Lesson Overview:** Students will write a story about 10 sentences in length incorporating their own everyday cultural practices.

**Materials and Resources:**
- Family Pictures by: Carmen Lomas Garza
- Large Poster Paper
- Markers
- Chromebooks (class set)
- Google docs
- Blank paper
- Long paper for brainstorming
- Pencils/ color pencils

**Implementation**

Learning Context: This lesson is meant to open up the conversations in a classroom about cultural differences and the validating that the cultural backgrounds students come from are important to their learning. Lessons associated with this that can come before are defining what culture is and what it means. Lessons to follow would be exploring the cultural differences in the classroom among the students and around the world.

Teaching Strategy: Think - Pair - Share - Guided reading

Time Allotted: 1 hour lessons broken up over 3 days. About 3-4 hours total to complete whole lesson. **From 9:10am - 11:40 ** Recess time included in << Procedure

**Anticipatory set**

Students will be introduced to the topic of culture and what it means. They will ask among each other (given 1 minute to talk to their neighbor/group) and raise their hands if they would like to give answers to their own/groups definitions. The book will be introduced and an introduction on the project will give to them. This will be done enthusiastically. Students will be told that they are doing a creative writing assignment all about them and they get to choose what they would like to write about, in line with the subject and book. Book will be read to them this day.

**Second day:** Allow students to have time to talk to their neighbors. 2 minutes. Get out large brainstorm papers and continue to develop their personal and creative stories that reflect a part of their culture. Students who are ready to start to type up their stories will do so.

**Third day:** Continue to type up and finish their stories and pictures. Print.

Modeling: Teacher will be working alongside the students making up her own story as well. Teacher will give students a list of vocabulary words and their definitions. These vocabulary words will be written down on large poster paper and teacher will be defining them as to what they mean, but not writing the definitions alongside.
Vocabulary Words: Culture, artisans, entertainer/s/ing, inspired, encouraged, involved, surprised, scene, handkerchief, scribbling, slicing, parboil, caught, hammerhead shark, swallow, prepared, playing jacks, seeking, shelter, led, refuses, travelers, overalls, soak, spreading, evening, afternoon, porch, supper, beyond, praying, church, healer, curandera, copal incense, respected, constellations

Guided practice
Teacher will write out words in the book that may be hard to spell or that need to be defined if students do not know what they mean. Students will get a large piece of paper to brainstorm what story they will write about themselves or something that is a part of their culture. Teacher will work alongside them to give examples of the sentence starters and concluding sentences that they could use throughout their stories.

Independent work: Students will have to brainstorm on a large piece of paper about their story and what they would like to add to it. This will help them to develop their sentences for their story. Later they will type up their sentences in to a google doc on their Chromebook.

Closure
Students will work on this story for the next two days and will print out their competed paper and story, some students will also have pictures attached if they finished early. They will print out their papers and then the conductor of the lesson will collect them alongside their brainstorm process papers.
Follow up: After all papers are collected students will be gathered back to express their likes and dislikes of this project verbally. If not enough time on this day, then lesson conductor will come back to topic on another day for a short 2-5 minute discussion.

Assessment: Students will be assessed on the performance of their writing. If student covers most to all the standards looked for above then the student accomplished the standard goal for this lesson.

Standard:
CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.3.2.D: Provide a concluding statement or section
Table 2. Inventory of classroom books on shelf. This table represents the books counted for by the project conductor. The books that were counted were in open containers shown in Figure 6.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Total of open containers on shelf</th>
<th>Total of open containers with books accounted for</th>
<th>Spanish Bilingual/Hispanic representation displayed on cover</th>
<th>Total of books counted in 9 open containers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>29</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>237</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: The open containers had a mix of different picture books and some chapter books in which students were allowed to read.
Figure 1. These photos were taken in the classroom the first day of the lesson where the conductor used the whiteboard to give students a layout on how to make their own sentence web.

Figure 2. This is a photo of the project conductor’s own sentence web shared with the students.
In the summer I went to the beach because it was fun.

The sea was fun and you could see the beach in the distance.

You have to bring your own beach towel if you want to get wet.

I love the beach and it's so fun and I can jump into the water.

I love my culture because it is fun.

I love to wear beads and clothes.

I'm speak in Spanish and English.

In my story I went to the beach and ate a big black and white fish. My dad and I went to walk and talk. Then we went...
This is a story about my culture.

In my culture, I eat pizza.
I eat a lot of pizza.

In my culture, I wear shoes.
I wear a lot of shoes.

Also, in my culture, I speak Spanish.
I speak a lot of Spanish.

Another fact in my culture is that I can make tacos.
I can make a lot of tacos.

With my culture, I can also make tortillas.
I can make a lot of tortillas.

Third, I like to wear skirts.
I wear skirts a lot.

In my culture, I can speak a lot of Spanish.
CULTURAL REPRESENTATION

My Culture

My family and I like to go to the store and go to the park. We also go to the beach. We like to play games together.

My family and I also go to Mexico.
My Culture

My story!

After my cousin came to play in the park.

To begin, Me and my family in the grass we play.

We had a picnic on the grass.

We also went to the monkey bars.

My family and I go to the park.

Second, we play at the park.

Next, we eat corn, pizza and pop.

Finally, we play in the monkey bars.
In my culture I go to school. I go to the pulga to buy some clothes.

In my culture me and my family we go to the movies and go to see funny movies.
My culture

Hear me a chank food

E' hear music from the gitari

Eat pizza or pepperoni
Figure 3. These are photos of some of the sentence webs.
My Family's Culture

In my culture I can eat a lot of pizza. First, in my culture I can speak a lot of Spanish. In my culture I wear shoes called Jordans. Next, I can eat a lot of food called roast beef. Third, I like to wear a lot of things like t-shirts with a picture of a soccer ball on it. Then, I can speak a lot of Spanish with my brother and also speak English. One thing we do in my culture I can do a lot of things like play soccer outside. I like this about my culture because I can play. Second, in my culture I can go to a lot of places. The places I go is like the fair, with my mom and dad. After, in my culture I can play a lot of things. Another part of my culture is I can eat a lot of good food. I can do a lot of things with my brother like play tag. In my culture I can eat a lot of tacos. Last, my culture was to fun because I play soccer. This is a story about my culture.
My Culture
I love my culture because it is fun. I love to wear boots and clothes. I speak in Spanish and English. In my story I went to the beach and a saw a black and white fish. My dad and I went to walk and talk. And my dad buy us some ice cream because it was hot. Then we went back to my home sweet home. In the house I drew a picture of a animal it was a cute little puppy. Later we ate popcorn and saw a scary movie called Truth or Dare it was very scary. In the morning in my culture we set on the couch my mom made us some delicious pancakes. We ate them I said, “yummm it is so delicious”. I went outside the air was so cool down. It the best air I asked my brother if we are gonna go get some ice cream. I said okay then we got some ice cream we went back to my house. We live in a beautiful place for guest for 2 week and it was fun in that place. This is a story about my culture were I went with my family to a beautiful place.
My Culture

What I know of my culture is that we pick apples and lemons. Second, we cook chicken and we eat it. Then, me and my family celebrate holidays but not in October. Fourth, we do a lot of work in Mexico and shop. What I know of cooking is that we eat quesadillas. A quesadilla is a tortilla with cheese inside and you cook it and also can put meat in it. What we wear in Mexico is different clothes than in the USA. In my culture we celebrate The Day of the Dead, dia del los muertos. In my culture we do art and sleep. In my culture my family work hard to build houses.

MY STORY

One time I was in my house in Mexico, me and my sister we were doing funny things in the couch and I fell down.
My culture

First, in my culture in the summer my brother and I go with our babysitter to her house. On Sunday we do not go with are babysitter we are with are family. Next, family and I go to the movie in Maya and we watch a movie called Wonder. Also, its my birthday in the summer. In my culture in summer vacation we go on trips like Oregon and Disneyland.

After, my mom says it is time for summer school. I don’t like summer school. I sleep a lot in the summer. In summer we go to the sea to have fun. Also, we go to the park. And we go to God’s house. In my culture we eat food called, carne asada, in English it is called grilled meat.

Last we look up at the stars shining. I like this about my culture, because I love being with my family all the times. This is a story about my culture that is my summer with my family.
My Family Culture

In my culture we like to go fishing with all my family. First, we go to the drive in a car all the way to a place called San Luis. Next, I catch 5 fishes. Also, I eat corn for dinner. The corn I eat has cream and cheese on it. The fish we catch my dad cooks it so we can eat. In my culture, we eat pizza with my family. Also, we eat meat with chiles and queso and beans. Queso is food, or in English is called cheese. Next, we go camping and we hear the wolves at night. Also, we swim with my family in the water. And we saw bunnies and some rabbits. Next, we climbed the mountains. And my mom said let’s make a game. Also we collect some blue and pink rocks. This is a story about my culture and me fishing with my family.
My Culture, My Story, What My Culture Does

In my culture we dress up in different clothes like classic clothes. Like t-shirts and pants. Some things my culture likes is Mexican music with Mexican instruments. And I like rock music, that is also apart of my culture. Those are my two cultures, Mexican and American. Those cultures have food some of the same type of things and me and my family like both. Our culture is known for liking instruments such as a trumpet and the drum set and other ones and the trombone. Also my culture is really good at making food and cooking. In my culture we also likes to eat these foods enchiladas, tortillas de queso, tacos. And are culture likes to play instruments such as the bangos. Also my culture likes to visit the emperor building. My culture also like to dance to the hookie pookie also the cha cha cha dance.

My Story

So my story starts in a kitchen cooking chicken. And the table had peper, salt to go with the chicken and the chicken wings and the pozoles. And after we finished are pozoles eat it we get too eat desert which is potato. So we got to sleep but before that mom came to tell me that was in charge of picking up the watermelons. So after that while I was asleep my sister was eating my coffee that I ALWAYS DRINK! So when I woke up I went to get the watermelons so I put my
watermelon hat. What the watermelon hat does it protects you from falling watermelon that may hit you. So when I got all the watermelons I went to eat and that's my story.

What My Culture Does

My culture does play a lot of different types of musics we go to a music festival every December 23. We also like to eat a lot a potatoes with different toppings on it. I personally like the shredded bacon and some butter. And my culture has annual BBQ were we can eat potato and burgers. In my culture even if we are not in China we still have a animal celebration. The animal we celebrate is a dog but to be more pacific it's a chihuahua. The reason is because my first pet was a chihuahua that's the reason why. In my culture I eat different things depending on the weather if it's winter I eat pozole because it's hot and good. I like my culture because It's good because I eat the different food so I don't eat the same things as every day. That is the story of my culture.
My Culture

Every year my family goes to the pizza factory. In my culture we eat fruit and pizza also healthy things. Every day I brush my teeth after I wake up in the morning. Also my culture is that I eat chicken alfredo because, it is good to eat. Other things that do is we go to the park. When we have money we buy tamales and so fruit. Also sometime we eat meat after that we eat healthy stuff. The healthy food we eat is food like, beans, carrots, strawberries and bananas. We also go to the beach and have some fun at the beach in Hawaii. Next, we also go to the pool party and have lots of fun with Luis, Matthew and I. Some other time we also eat good or we would eat beans. I like this about my culture because we have a lot of fun wherever we are. Other thing is that we watch the movie spiderman with popcorn.

Date: 3-19-19
My Cultural and My Story

In the summer I went to the beach because it was hot. The beach was fun and you get wet and the beach is a fun place. And you have to bring extra clothes like pants because if you get wet. I love the beach it is so fun and I can jump in the water. In my culture I love the beach it is awesome because you can see fishes and sea plants. One day I went to the beach and I found seashells and I made a sand castle. My dad buys us some pizza to eat it was delicious. My cousins were here and we were eating more pizza. I splash my cousins’ hair with water he splashes me back it was fun. Then there was a fair close nose to the beach we went to the fair we play games and we ride roller coasters. My dad buy us some ice cream because it was hot. The beach was a place beautiful because we can do sand castle. Then we go to My house to sleep on the bed. This is a story about my culture.
My Culture and My Story

In my culture I eat a lot of different things. One thing I like to eat is called quesadillas. Quesadillas are made out of tortillas and cheese. In my culture I can be wearing different things. For example I wear my apple watch and my hat. My apple watch is what I wear it on to call and play games. One thing I like to do is to ask my big brother let me use his toy. One day, I went to my tia’s house and she made me a quesadilla with cheese. A tia is my aunt. In my story about culture is what family wear and what they eat and also what they like. Also a culture is what we like to play, my family we like to play soccer and we like to play tag. Tag is a game that you run and catch people. This is a story about my culture. In my culture I do different things like we can play different things. My story is when I went to play with my family. In my culture I don't always look like other people. This is my story about my culture. All in all, in my culture I do a lot of different things.

March 20, 2019
My culture

In my culture in the summer I went to the park with my family. On Sunday’s I go to the pulga to get money and work. The pulga is a little store that you can buy things. In the summer sometimes my dad goes to get pizza and buys pizza for my family. On Saturday’s I babysit my little brother. Then I need to babysit my little cousin in my house too. My mom said that “in our culture we speak in Spanish” I said you are right. My dad said it is things you do with your family and my dad is right. My brother said that culture is the clothes you have to wear. I said culture is clothing and what you use what you and what you do in your family. I said culture means is what you celebrate in your family what you do in your family. On the holidays my family we celebrate like Christmas and we ate tacos and the enchiladas and other holiday. My family they are from Mexico. In my family we go outside to see the Earth and walk and see outside. One day we go to the movie Thriller and watch a movie and eat popcorn when we led the movie Thriller I said.” It was so much fun. One day we go to the beach we had so much fun. This is a story of my culture and I like my culture because, we eat tamales and tamales it is good. Sometimes we go to get some ice cream and it is delicious.
My family culture

In my family and in my culture we and my family culture we go to the movies to watch funny movies and was fun. Next in my culture I hit a piñata with the bat to hit hard and hit the piñata to spill the candy to get the candy to eat the candies. den we make tamales for dinner and watermelon in summer of hot day at night time to eat of watermelon in night and we eat corn at day time and of hot chocolate to keep warm in winter when it is cold. We go to the park to play games and exercise to keep healthy of are body to play I the park for kids to play activities in the sand. At the new park we go to exercise in the new park to run in the grass, and play soccer in for exercise to work to be a soccer player in the soccer team and my cousin came to my house to play soccer and final this is a story about my culture of my story The end.
My Family’s Culture

In my culture we wear regular clothes. Also we eat Mexican food like sopes, tamales, enchiladas, beans, chilaquiles, stuffed baked potatoes, tacos, chiken, corn in the cob, roasted beef and posole. However, my favorite dish is sopes and enchiladas. The sopes are little round made of corn dough (masa) with beans, cheese, and onions. And the enchiladas are tortillas dipped in chile and then they put cheese inside. We also celebrate Day of the Dead, Mexico’s Independence Day, Christmas and Holly Kings Day as well as other festivities.
My Culture: My story

What is my culture? My culture is what we do. My culture is what you eat or wear. Culture is like what you do if you go somewhere. You have a culture too all around you. Culture is how you talk.

My story

This is a story about my culture. We went to a party and we ate tamales and chicken and elotes and cake. Elotes are corn. We went to my big brother’s house and we ate tamales and posole and chicken. Posole is soup with meat too. Next, I went to play games and play cars. My big brother let me use his car. In my culture we eat different things too not just cake and elotes. In my culture we also watch movies and play with my computer and tablet. Sometimes I go exercise with my family and then we go to sleep. In the morning we ate breakfast then we go to play outside.
My Family's Culture

This is a story about me and my culture. First me and my family we go to the park. Next, we eat pizza and popcorn. Second, we play at the park. After my cousins come to play in the park to because they want to come too. To begin me and my family play in the grass. We play tag. Tag is when you have to catch the person and they run away. Then, at the park was fun. Third, my family and me talk in Spanish and English as our language. Later, my uncle play in the monkey bars like me. Also we go to watch a move and we eat popcorn. In my culture we also go to the beach. We go to Walmart and the mall. We also go to the chuck e cheese sometimes and we have so much fun and my family likes to go to the chuck e cheese. This is my story about my culture.
My Culture

My family and I go to Mexico every year. My family and I go to eat. Me and my family go to the park. Me and my dad drive to the store. My family like to do lot of things together. Next, my dad says let go to the store. Me and my family go to get food for dinner at the store. In my culture we plays some fun games. In my culture we play some board games called candy land. I play with my dad, my mom and my brother. Sometimes we went to the park and play on the slides. Me and my family play more games at the park. We want to get some ice cream. At the end of the day we we go to my house and sleep on the bed. This is a story about my culture, I had a fun day.
My Family Culture

First, in my culture we eat pepperoni pizza, tacos, tamales and roast beef. Second, I hear music from the guitar, phone, and computer. I speak two languages called Spanish and English in my house and in school, playground, and classroom. Another thing, I like to do is I go to the park and I eat a happy meal from Mcdonalds. After, I can wear different clothes like my skinny jean and my jordan shirt. Later, I can have different types of haircut like right now I have a mohawk. Then, I can go to different places like the Monterey Beach. Another thing, I can do different things like play with my friends Luis, Hector and Marco. This is a story about my culture.

Date 3/19/19
My story about Chuck E. Cheese

This is a story about my culture. First, me and my family went to the movies and we eat popcorn it was fun because the movie was funny. Next, we went to go eat. We eat food and we eat chicken and it was so good because my mom made it. Then, we went to the park we play with my family and my cousin come to play with me and we play tag. Next we went to Chuck E Cheese and we play games with my family and I was fun. Chuck E Cheese is a place where people come to play games and you get tickets and prizes. Also went to walk with my family and the dog and we got ice cream because I was hot. In my culture me and my mom went to my cousin house I play with my cousin and an we eat pie because we were hungry. In my culture we went to my cousin birthday and I was so fun because they have food and they have ice cream and they have a jumping house. Last we go home to sleep because I was night. This is a story about my culture and what I do on a day.
My Family Culture

In my culture in the summer I went to San francisco to have fun. First my family was changing then we pack to stay there. Then we went to get some breakfast at mcdonalds. We order some tree boxes of tree pancats for each of os. Second we past through the golden gate and saw the ocean. Third, my dad drives us through a long bridge that had this beautiful lights that were colored yellow. After we went through the bridge I bought this dress that had mini mouse. After I finished changing I went to eat spaghetti with a lemon drink because it was so hot outside. Fourth my family and me went to a store called target to buy some chetos my favorite chetos are the jalapeño. In san francisco we speak spanish and english. Also we went too have fun at the park. My mom and my dad, sister got ice cream and we would playing at the park. First we slide down through a long slide. Second we were playing tag Last we were tired and got some ice cream. In conclusion i love going to san francisco and telling my culture.
My Culture

In my culture I go to the pulga with my family to buy something. In my culture I go to the mall to buy shoes for me. Me and my family go to eat in a restaurant. On Saturday I need to be the babysitter to my baby cousin. My dad says my culture is mexican. My brother says with celebrate the Day of the Children. In my culture we speak spanish. In my culture I like to be with my family. In my culture we go eat as a family. In the summer I go to buy pizza to eat. On Sunday I go to Toro Park to the mountains. In my culture I like to be with my aunt and my little cousin. I like this about my culture because me and my family go to the rodeo to see the fireworks. In my culture me and my brother like to decorate the Christmas tree. In my culture I like to play with my little cousin in my aunt at my house.
My Family's Culture

In my culture we do things in the summer. In the summer I go to my cousin's house. In my cousin house I play with my cousin in her house. Also my cousin has 10 years old and she is 10 and I am 9 years, she is older than me by one year. Also her name is Esmeralda but we call her Esme. In my culture we gave her a nickname because, it is we just like to call her that. Last my cousin and I think it will be fun to have a sleepover in my room. A sleep over is when go to sleep in someone’s house that is not your house, it is my house, but not my cousins. Next, we get up in the morning and we eat pancakes with a strawberry and banana milkshake. Also on the weekends we go to Modesto because she lives there. Third, the weather is very hot and we go to the river in Modesto. Then I drive home with my family. All in all, I love my family culture and what I do.

3-20-19

Figure 4. These are photos of some of the students finished work, typed out and printed.
My Family Culture

In my culture we have fun in the summer. First, my family went to San Francisco to have fun. Then we went to get some food at a restaurant. We order some two bowls of ramen noodles for each of us. Second, we went to see the Golden Gate and saw the ocean. Third, my dad drove us through a long bridge that had beautiful lights that were colored yellow. After we went through the bridge, we bought this dress that had red flowers. After finishing shopping, we went to eat spaghetti with a lemon juice because it was so hot outside. Fourth, my family and me went to a place called Target to buy some clothes. My favorite clothes are the pajamas. In San Francisco we speak Spanish and English. Also, we went to have fun at the park. My mom and my dad usually get ice cream and we would playing at the park. First, we slide down a long slide. Second, we were playing a ball. Last we were tired and got some ice cream. In conclusion, I love going to San Francisco and telling my culture.

My Culture

First, in my culture in the summer, my brother and I go with our grandmother to her house. On Friday, we drive go with our ingredients to her house. Next, I go to the movie in May, and we watch a movie called Wonder. Also, in my birthday in the summer, I go with my parents to lots of places like Oregon and Disneyworld.

Last, we look up at the stars. I like this about my culture because I love living with my family in the summer. This is more about my culture that is my summer with my family.

My Family’s Culture

In my culture I live a lot of places. First, in my culture I can speak a lot of Spanish. In my culture I wear shoes called Zapatillas. Next, I eat a lot of food called rice and beans. Third, I use to wear a lot of things that I wear with a picture of Jesus like on it. Then, I own a lot of Spanish with my brother and also speak English. One thing we do in my culture I wear a lot of things like play soccer outside. I like this about my culture because I can play. Second, in my culture I can go to a lot of places. This week I go to a lot of places, like the beach with my mom and dad. After in my culture I can play a lot of things. Another part of my culture is I can eat a lot of good food. I can eat a lot of things with my brother like play tag. In my culture I can eat a lot of food. In my culture, my culture was so fun because I play soccer. This is a story about my culture.
Figure 5. These are photos of 3 students work side by side.

Figure 6. These are photos taken at the classroom site of the open containers filled with books.