

Expeditionary Learning- An Effective Approach for Heritage Language Education

Expeditionary Learning is one way I can draw on my students' lived experiences, academic knowledge, and home literacies via learning expeditions. Learning Expeditions give students an opportunity to engage deeply in an inquiry about a single theme or topic at the core of the curriculum.

Duggan Academy staff work under the premise that students do not come as empty vessels and more importantly that they have had valuable life experiences, whether it is literacy skills, concepts, or funds of knowledge about the topic or theme. As a result, Learning Expeditions invite educators to become colleagues as students integrate skills and instruction across the content areas but in ways that allow students to demonstrate their knowledge in the best ways they know. For example, expeditions afford students opportunities to use their research, reading, writing, and public speaking skills, as well as their funds of knowledge in accomplishing their final product. In this manner, the expeditions become a highly focused, real-world application that engages learners to go beyond the curriculum and not just across the curriculum. I am finding that Learning Expeditions are a great way for heritage learners to share the richness that exists within each other, their families, and their communities, because it is centered from and about multiple perspectives, authenticity, and real-world application.

My objective for developing a two-week Learning Expedition on *El Movimiento Muralista Mexicano* with my heritage language tenth grade learners was to not only beautify the school with students' artistic talent but also for the school community to learn what students have to say via the images. The goals for these two weeks are to:

- learn about students' and their families' talents and history to affirm them in our curricula
- explore students' cultural and linguistic identity as they converse with their families to learn about their stories
- engage the school community in multiple conversations of how critical literacy can support the school curricula to empower students and their families
- define what a community of learners means and identify communities of learners
- have students visualize their future selves

I used The Integrated Performance Assessment (IPA): Connecting Assessment to Instruction and Learning model, the AP Spanish and Culture Model from the Spanish AP Curriculum Frameworks (Lesson 1: El arte como ventana y espejo), and the Expeditionary Learning Model.

The description of El Movimiento Muralista Mexicano Learning Expedition I developed is included here.

El Movimiento Muralista Mexicano

Theme: Personal and Public Identities / Las identidades personales y públicas

Time frame: Two weeks / Dos semanas

Recommended Contexts:

- Constructing and narrating a new cultural identity through the arts (murals) / Construyendo y narrando una nueva identidad cultural a través del arte muralista

Overarching Essential Questions:

- How are aspects of identity expressed through the arts? / ¿Cómo se expresan los distintos aspectos de la identidad a través del arte?
- What symbols are important to represent the customs, traditions, and perspectives of a community? / ¿Qué símbolos son importantes para representar las tradiciones, costumbres, y perspectivas culturales de una comunidad?
- How do experiences shape a person's identity? / ¿Cómo definen las experiencias de una persona su identidad?
- What stories [of those experiences] are essential to know, and how will knowing those stories empower a community? / ¿Qué historias son imprescindibles de conocer, and cómo el conocer esas historias le da voz y fortalece a su comunidad?
- How do the arts both challenge and reflect cultural perspectives and what is of value in a community? / ¿Cómo las artes desafían y reflejan las perspectivas culturales y lo que se valora en una comunidad?

Lesson Summary

The purpose of the lesson is to introduce art as a means to understand cultural identity and educate the public about the community's funds of knowledge and struggles. Another goal is to give voice to that which may not be known in mainstream education and to understand the perspective of various members in a community. Lastly, the goal of the lesson is to empower a community to communicate their message in creative and unconventional ways.

In the lesson students will:

- Recognize the ways that relationships among cultural products, cultural practices, and cultural identity symbolize powerful examples of a community.
- Analyze how murals are unconventional ways to communicate a group's struggles.
- Analyze how murals represent a cultural identity while depicting cultural products and practices in their art.
- Make inferences about cultural perspectives by analyzing the products and practices depicted in art.

- Identify the stories that will represent their funds of knowledge, struggles, traditions, and customs of their own community and compare them with those represented by the artists of the Mexican Muralist Movement.
- Compare the role of their community's culture, as depicted in their art, with other members of the community a way to engage the larger community in conversations about and reflections on cultural identity and perspectives.
- Observe the process of the transmission of culture through products, practices, and symbols and how those can be interpreted, thus giving way to a multiplicity of perspectives.

Finally, I used the ten design principles that Thornton Creek, a Seattle Public School, follows for their expeditions, which I will post in the classroom as students begin El Movimiento Muralista Mexicano. Please view the school's ten design principles at <http://thorntoncreek.org/expeditions>

References

<http://elschools.org/>

<http://thorntoncreek.org/expeditions>

<http://www.apsva.us/Page/16415>

Integrated Performance Assessment (IPA): Connecting Assessment to Instruction and Learning model. *Foreign Language Annals*, 39(3), 359-382

AP Spanish and Culture Model from the Spanish AP Curriculum Frameworks. Lesson 1: El arte como ventana y espejo (http://vistahigherlearning.com/media/pdf/temas_authorized_syllabus.pdf)