

# ABSTRACT

This poster presents a successful partnership between a CSN eLearning Librarian and CSN Education faculty member teaching a fully online diversity class (EDU 280: Valuing Cultural Diversity). Students in EDU 280, sections 1003 and 1004 were required, as part of their Diversity Lesson Plan assignment, to create a lesson plan based around a book that highlights a multicultural theme or other aspect of diversity. Students needed to select a book that was appropriate for the subject and grade level they planned to teach, and also select a book that focused around a particular aspect of culture. The final assignment involved writing a lesson plan with grade level appropriate questions about the book and grade level activities. As past students in this class struggled to find a book that would work for this assignment, Education Professor Theri Wyckoff invited eLearning Librarian Stephanie Espinoza Villamor to become embedded in the online course so she could work directly with the students to find books of appropriate grade level that fit the assignment requirements. Over the course of an 8-week semester (August 27, 2018 to October 21, 2018), the librarian worked with a total of 43 students in EDU 280, assisting students with their information needs.

# BACKGROUND

## Embedded Online Librarians

The CSN Libraries department has an existing service called the "Embedded Online Librarian Program" where faculty can embed a librarian into an online course to assist students directly at the point of need. Librarians in this program are added as a "Teacher" into the course shell, can respond directly to student inquires through the learning management system (Canvas), and can create customized content for the course based on the faculty member's needs (such as guides, tutorials, videos, discussions, etc). Best practices include having at least one research-based assignment the would require librarian interaction, announcing the librarian's presence in the course (or allowing the librarian to send announcements to share their purpose in the course and contact information), and offering credit for working with a librarian (required or extra credit) to encourage participation. Librarians also typically send a brief survey to students at the end of the course to rate their experience interacting with a librarian online.

[libguides.csn.edu/elibrarian](http://libguides.csn.edu/elibrarian)

## Diversity Lesson Plan Assignment

### Student Learning Outcomes:

- Practice strategies for integrating multicultural content across the curriculum.
- Analyze instructional practices, teacher/student interactions, and educational materials for elements of racism, sexism, stereotyping and historical inaccuracies.
- Develop alternative approaches and strategies for working with diverse student populations, their parents, and the school community.
- Identify and begin to practice using Clark County School District's key objectives for teaching with a multicultural emphasis.

### Choosing the Book:

Students must explore the multicultural resources in Canvas and then contact the eLearning Librarian, letting her know:

- The subject and grade level the student is planning to teach this lesson plan for, such as Reading, Social Studies, Science, etc. for 3<sup>rd</sup> grade, 8<sup>th</sup> grade, 11<sup>th</sup> grade, etc.
- The culture chosen to focus on. Example: Mexican, Japanese, Irish.
- The topic, such as "Holidays" and which holiday the lesson plan will focus on. Example: The Day of the Dead.

Working with the librarian is required, but students can earn five extra credit points for submitting their proof of working with the librarian via a screenshot of their communications with the librarian.

### Writing the Lesson Plan (Requirements):

- Book title, Author, Publication date, grade level(s)
- Multicultural theme(s) of the book
- Materials needed
- Standard
- Objective(s)
- Procedure
- Introduce book title, author, theme
- Read the book
- Discuss: five grade-level appropriate questions
- Activities: two grade level appropriate activities
- Evaluation

# Search and Recovery!

## A Librarian's Quest to Find Diverse Books that Rescue Lost Students

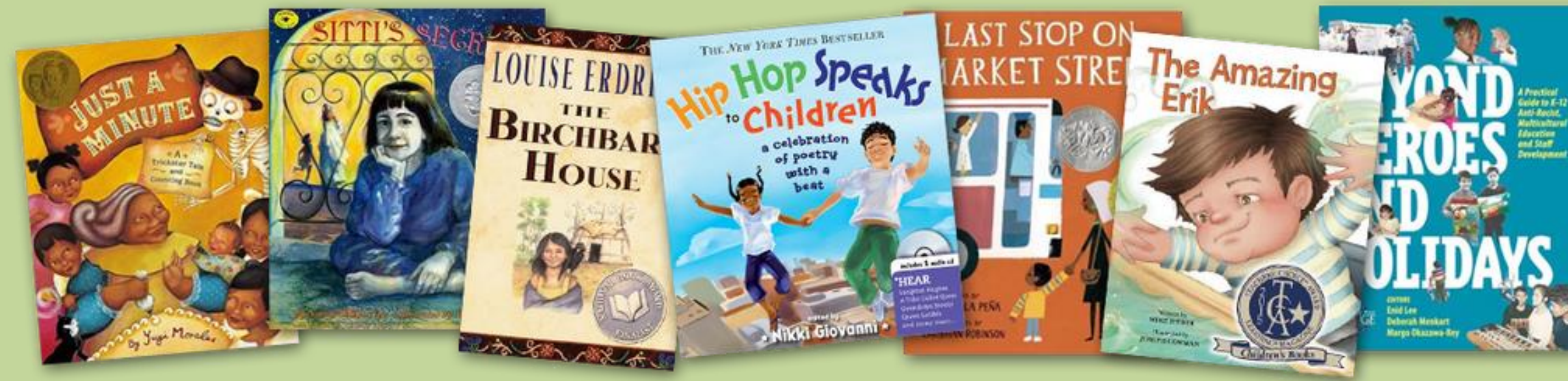


Image Credit: socialjusticebooks.org

# METHODS

The collaboration began with the Education faculty member reaching out to the eLearning librarian to discuss possible ways to assist EDU 280 students. The librarian suggested assistance with lesson plan children's book selection given her experience in finding information and background in Youth Services. After the initial agreement was made, the librarian contacted the Office of eLearning to be added into the appropriate course and sections as a "Teacher" in the learning management system (Canvas) to have full access and to have the librarian's name also show up on the course evaluation. The Education professor made working with a librarian required for a grade in class, and then the next step was waiting for students to contact the librarian after the Diversity Lesson Plan was assigned.

Examples of student questions:

*"For my diversity lesson plan, I want to use a book called Freedom's School by Lesa Cline-Ransome. I want to teach an elementary history lesson on the civil rights and how children struggled for equality even after slavery was abolished. Would this work?"*

*"I'm trying to get my lesson plan artifact started, and would like your help choosing a book to work with. I'm planning on doing a lesson plan for elementary school age children, and teaching about disabilities."*

*"I would love to hear your recommendations for my Diversity Lesson Plan. I have chosen to teach this lesson plan with 5th graders and it will be oriented around Social Studies. The culture I have chosen to focus on is Mexican and my topic will be Holidays. The Mexican holiday I'm interested in is Day of the Dead."*

The librarian worked with students by writing back and forth directly within the learning management system to conduct a "reference interview" that would determine what type of book was needed and where the student had already searched. She then utilized resources based on knowledge of CSN Libraries, the professor's listed resources (ex: [socialjusticebooks.org/booklists/](http://socialjusticebooks.org/booklists/)), and outside research to find titles to suggest. The librarian worked with each student who contacted her until an appropriate title was chosen. After the assignment deadline, the Education professor offered 5 points of extra credit for students to also complete a survey about their experience working with the librarian.

## The Importance of Diverse Lesson Plans



- We give students (CSN students and the K-12 students they are teaching) a more equal chance for success when we take into account their diverse backgrounds and recognize their distinct experiences and individuality.
- We create an inclusive environment and teach appreciation and acceptance of other cultures, backgrounds, differences, etc. when using diverse lesson plans and books.
- A majority of children's books are written from a white, middle-class male (or female) author/character viewpoint. Introducing future teachers and their students to stories with their own cultures not only builds representation, but can begin to change how society often presents material from just one perspective (which can exclude minority voices).
- Being exposed to a variety of viewpoints means more opportunities to learn from others with experiences and knowledge different from our own.



# FINDINGS

- Of the 49 students in two classes, 43 students contacted the librarian at least once and 14 students contacted the librarian more than once (beyond the requirement). A total of 59 questions were asked over the course of the semester.
- This Fall 2018 experience had 48 out of 49 students submitting their final lesson plan, a total of 98%! When compared with Fall 2017 when there was no embedded librarian in class, only 37 out of 45 students submitted their final lesson plan, a total of 82%. While we can't assume the librarian presence is the only cause of the 16% increase, we suspect a correlation due to survey comments that reported how librarian assistance made the assignment easier and less stressful.
- This Fall 2018 experience had students using *more cultures*: 12 cultures were chosen for 48 lesson plans, compared to Fall 2017 when only 7 cultures were chosen for the 37 lesson plans. In the Fall 2018 classes with a librarian, there were also *more books on specific cultures* (a requirement for the assignment) instead of general books on diversity chosen (10% of the books chosen in 2018 were too general compared to 41% of books chosen in 2017).
- This Fall 2018 experience had 89% of students who filled out a course evaluation choosing the Diversity Lesson Plan as the assignment *that most contributed to their learning*, compared to 31% in Fall 2017.
- Of the 48 students who completed a lesson plan in Fall 2018, 33 also completed the extra credit survey to provide feedback on their experiences with a librarian. From these surveys we found that 82% felt more confident after working with a librarian, 82% felt the librarian's suggestions fit their assignment, and 100% ranked the librarian experience as either a 5 ("Great") or a 4 ("Good") on a scale from 1-5 (with three students who did not answer the question).

**"She knew exactly what I was looking for and suggested the right books."**

Overall feelings on the librarian-faculty partnership were extremely positive. Both the librarian and the professor felt the relationship was beneficial and the experiment manageable. The only changes recommended for next time include being more detailed in the directions to require a book from a specific culture and to specify how student-librarian interactions should take place. The librarian noted that interactions with students improved once the faculty member explained to all students the reason for her presence, what she could and could not do for students, and what information to provide at first contact in order to best utilize the librarian as a resource.

# TAKEAWAYS for FACULTY

- Faculty can request an embedded librarian to assist students with research and customize the partnership based on the individual assignment.
- Faculty can not only utilize librarian research skills but also knowledge of library collections, reading material, and recommendations.
- Incorporating diversity into the curriculum builds a foundation for understanding those with cultures, backgrounds, experiences, and individual differences outside that of the student's own.
- Incorporating academic support via a personal (human) element is not only beneficial to students, but easy to accomplish.

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