Identity Affirmation Through Literature, Language, & Storytelling

• ILC - 2022 Immigrant Student Success

Emily Francis
Engage!

@emilyfranESL

Mrs.FrancisESL

Mrs. Francis’ ESL Class
My Journey
- My Greatest Gift
Guardian of 4 siblings at the age of 13
My Immigrant Journey

hope
Newcomer Journey
Key to Success

Passion

Persistence

Motivation

Boosting Achievement book
Wrong Story Being Told

“I have a student who knows NO English. She will just be sitting in class (4th block Civics) all year and not be able to do any assignments or work whatsoever. An idea for you to consider would be putting her in Ms. _____’s class with Emily Francis in there full time working completely with ELL students. This is the only way she has a chance of learning anything in Civics this year. It is a freshman class but I can’t see that being a problem considering the situation. Obviously she will fail if she has to be left in my class. It would be like me sitting in a class where only Spanish was spoke (I know no Spanish) and I would fail miserably too.”

ty
Mr. XXXXX
So close!
“We, the teachers have the power in our hands to make or break our classrooms in how we want our students to feel, how we want our students to run, & what kind of students we want to produce.”

–Dr. Stephen Knight
Affirming Identity and Unpacking My Potential

RCCC - Associate's Degree 2007

UNCC - Bachelor's in Spanish 2010

UNCC - TESOL Certificate 2012

UNCC - Masters in TESOL 2013
Effects of identity affirmation
To Affirm Identity - Do This NOT That

**Do This**
- Ask/Learn their story/journey
- Validate and affirm cultural background & experiences
- Understand SLA process & allow home language use to access content
- Keep the bar/expectation high but provide scaffolding.

**Do NOT do THIS**
- Do not assume you know their story (dangers of a single story)
- Don’t ignore and devalue students’ backgrounds & experiences
- Don’t be a language oppressor.
- Don’t let them “sink or swim” on their own
Lessons That Affirm Identity

K12 Lessons
Our Own Identity

- Experiences
- Thoughts
- Feelings
- Attitudes
- Beliefs
- Family
- Foods
- Dance
- Culture/Heritage
Our Name

- Who selected your name?
- How do you feel about your name?
- Would you change your name? Why? Why not?

https://www.mynamemyidentity.org/
Our Stories

Go beyond a name...

- Celebrate Uniqueness
- Transact with the text
- Take Action

https://literacyworldwide.org/blog/literacy-daily/2019/01/31/affirming-individuality-and-identity-through-picture-books-and-storytelling?fbclid=IwAR1aQNGKBnM162VuSqJ5L-VCn25w7Nce-wzmHpNg6qB1yG4vy70PFaiKQo
A New Narrative

Karen's Story Arc

**Challenge**
- I'm going to break this cycle
- Sexism machismo
- I had to advocate for myself, I'm a first-generation college student
- I immigrated to the U.S. when I was 3 years old

**Choice**
- Paying for college is a struggle.
- I will define my future
- I want to prove my identity won't deter me from getting an education
- I found motivation in knowing my success could help others

**Change**
- Don't give up!
- It has been proven that our resilience and advocacy can make a difference
- Be unapologetic!
- Love yourself and your community
- Education as a pathway to liberation

Our Learning Arc

Understanding Migration
Life before migration
The Journey
Adjustment

Moving Stories
What actions can we take to build more inclusive and sustainable societies?

Re-Imagining Migration

**Storystellers for Change**

Rising Arc of Revealing Questions -- you will find a link to a guide to systematize and each of these guiding questions.
¡Gracias!

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