2017 Jaffarian Award application – Pilot Mountain Elementary School

NARRATIVE

1. ***Describe the program or program series, and how the school library and librarian were involved. If the program is ongoing, use the information on programming and activities from the previous school year (2016-2017) only.***
   - ***Include the title of the program or program series.***
   - ***Explain the humanities theme or topic emphasized in the program.***
   - ***Explain why you chose this program.***
   - ***Describe in detail the program or program series.***
   - ***Describe the planning process and collaborative relationships involved.***

My year long program for third grade is titled "Everybody Has a Story." The humanities theme is cultural and historical preservation. This ties in with their social studies goal of how communities change. I chose this theme because we are a community school and I wanted to explore how our local community has changed over time. I also wanted students to understand cultural traditions in our own area and around the world. By broadening their perspectives about traditions in other cultures, students learn the importance of cultural and historical preservation locally and globally. We begin by focusing on language, arts, dance, music, food traditions and practical skills. The first lesson consists of two episodes of Steve Hartman's series "Everybody Has a Story." One takes place in South Carolina and the other in Oman. Students are given a Venn diagram in which the center is larger than the sides. They soon realize that I want them to find more similarities between the two people in the videos than differences. The next lesson is called "Marie's Dictionary." Marie is the last known speaker of the Wukchumni language. Students use the UNESCO atlas of endangered languages to understand how many languages are threatened with extinction and how important Marie's work is to her culture. We use videos from TheWays.org to look at how people in the Great Lakes are keeping their languages alive. Because the Hula is a great transition of language and dance, students learn about the history of the hula and how it was vital in keeping the Hawaiian language alive. We even learn a few steps of Irish folk dancing, while comparing it with local clogging. Our music lesson looks at Mickey Hart's collection of recordings through the Smithsonian and he describes his goal of recording endangered music. Videos of local artists show them that people in our area are keeping our musical traditions alive. Students' eyes light up when I bring out real spoons for them to try to play. When introducing cultural traditions of arts and crafts we examined the Gullah tradition of basket weaving and the Gullah culture. We also learned how to fingerknit. When studying the food traditions, the book What the World Eats examines the differences in our food traditions and those of other countries. We then turned our focus to their local community. A video of our town from 1939 was preserved by our local civic club. We look at how our town has changed over time. Local historian, Carolyn Boyles spoke to the students about our local history. She has been instrumental in this program, offering primary source photos that she has collected, hand drawn maps of the town in the late 1800s, and her extensive knowledge and stories. I then took the students on a tour of our town, pointing out historical landmarks, and telling interesting stories about how our town has survived numerous fires, boomed in the railroad years, and persevered during the Depression. We used clues gathered along the way to complete a Breakout activity at the public library, who are great collaborators. Students take what they learn and create their own versions of historical Pilot Mountain using Minecraft. Our Director of Digital Learning helped me think through the process of creating buildings in Minecraft and setting up this part of the program. My hope is that students will look at people for their story and not their stereotype, think about their community in new ways, be good stewards of their culture and their history, and learn more about their town as well as the world.

2. *Describe the involvement of others in the program. Letters of support (to be uploaded below) should emphasize the humanities program and the impact the program had on students and the school community, not the library program or the librarian.*
   - *Identify the number of student participants.*
   - *Describe how the program features higher-order thinking skills through student involvement.*
   - *Describe the benefits that ensued, including how you measured success.*
   - *Describe the involvement and awareness of parents, administrators and community leaders.*
   - *Explain why you feel the program is exemplary or goes beyond normal school library media programming activities.*

Seventy-three third grade students participated in the program. Students were asked to participate in discussions about a variety of cultures, how aspects of culture are endangered and the importance of cultural and historical preservation. Students used videos, books, websites and primary sources to explore global and local culture. They then focused on cultural and historical preservation in their own town. Using Minecraft which is a computer software game in which they can build things, students recreated historical buildings. They had to reference primary source photos in order to accomplish this. Students were led on a walking tour of the town learning more about the history of the buildings and the people. This also helped them think about the buildings they were constructing in the game. It also allowed us to talk about how our community has changed over time. I measured success by how engaged students were in the lessons. Whether we were watching a video or learning to fingerknit as part of our exploration of culture, I wanted them engaged. I also measured success by the accuracy of the buildings they created, and how they used the primary sources. Parents were kept aware of the program through Twitter and Facebook posts, and field trip permission slips that went home. Administrators participated, such as our Director of Digital Learning who helped set up the Minecraft program and came by to watch it in action and offer support. The Principal and Assistant Principal at our school observed how excited the students were by the use of Minecraft in the classroom. Community leaders including our town historian, public librarian, visitor's center and local business operators were glad to see our students visiting the town and learning more about the history of the community. Some of them stepped out of their businesses to give details about the buildings, or offered support through the use of their facilities. The public library has been a huge supporter over the years. This year we completed a Breakout Puzzle activity at the library at the end of our tour. This program goes beyond normal school library media programming because it interweaves each lesson into a story of how communities change over time. Each lesson reveals another aspect of the importance of cultural and historical preservation. It is cross-curricular, and promotes global awareness as well as local community connections.

3. *Provide evidence of a curriculum component.*
   - *Describe the relationship of the program or program series to the school's curricular goals and to the state's learning standards.*
   - *State how the American Association of School Librarians Standards for the 21st Century Learner were incorporated into the program.*
   - *Provide evidence of a curriculum component for classroom treatment of the humanities theme or topic emphasized in the program.*
   - *Explain how the program goes beyond the school's standard curriculum requirements and programs.*

This program began when I started thinking about the NC third grade Social Studies Goal 3.H.2.1 Explain change over time through historical narratives. Town historian Carolyn Boyles had recently published her book Early Days of Pilot Mountain, North Carolina and I asked her to share that information with our third graders on a tour of the town. I had also attended a Library of Congress workshop on using primary sources in the media center and wanted to infuse these lessons with pictures and video from the time period to show students the history of the town. As a district we received a grant through Ancestry.com to use their sources including Newspapers.com which is invaluable in telling the stories of our town. As I began to think more of how communities change over time, I wanted to broaden the scope of the humanities program to global changes and how they affect individuals. Using AASL standards 2.3.1 Connect understanding to the real world and 2.3.2 Consider diverse and global perspectives in drawing conclusions, I added the cultural preservation aspect to the historical preservation piece of the program. Standard 3.1.4 Use technology and other information tools to organize and display knowledge and understanding in ways that others can view, use, and assess was the goal in producing a product that allows them to use the primary sources and modern technology together. Our Director of Digital Learning had the solution in Minecraft. I am able to have students explore their community, primary sources, technology and show what they learned about how their community has changed. Our standard curriculum requirements and programs include multiple choice assessments of fiction and nonfiction reading passages, math problems, and science questions. To prepare students for end of the year assessments frequent multiple choice assignments are given. This humanities program takes the social studies topics and presents them in a way that students can engage with the information that a printed page or online standardized assessment cannot do. These students are invested in the stories that they hear. I have had students continue learning about these topics at home and come and tell me more about what they have found. Parents are telling me how excited their children are to come to the library because they love what they are doing. Engagement is key and standard requirements do not address student interest.

4. ***Describe how this program might be replicated.***
   - ***Provide examples of how this program or program series might serve as a model or springboard for humanities programming in other schools.***
   - ***Identify key components of the program that were essential to the program's success.***
   - ***Identify any key components that might need to be modified for use in other settings.***

High interest hooks such as the videos from The Global Oneness Project and Minecraft introduces topics on cultural and historical preservation in a fun and creative way. These tools would be appropriate from third grade through twelfth grade. This program has many talking points that would fit a variety of curriculum goals. Some schools may wish to explore parts of the program such as the arts and crafts component. You could have guests come in to demonstrate a variety of local arts and crafts for students to try. Older students could use this program to discuss how geography influences culture. Many of the videos in The Global Oneness Project and The Ways clearly show geographically specific cultural traditions. They could also use many parts of this program to discuss how technological advances and exploration and settlement have affected culture. One of the key components of the program that was essential to its success was high quality video and access to primary sources. The Library of Congress and Ancestry.com's newspapers site would be a great place to start compiling local primary sources. The videos used would be applicable to any social studies class studying cultural preservation. The primary sources would need to be regional so anyone wishing to replicate this program would need to seek out the local historical society or public library that may have access to this source material. Each town will have its own story and ways that it has changed over time due to differences in geography and economics.

5. ***Describe the expectations and outcomes of this program***
   - ***What would you change about the program?***
   - ***What were some unexpected benefits or reactions to the program?***
   - ***How did this program take the library to the next level in terms of school and community collaboration, programming and student impact?***

I wish I had more resources to help students compare other cultures to their own. I would love to have more guest speakers come in to demonstrate local arts and crafts, discuss Appalachian language differences, Appalachian music and other aspects of culture. The use of videos is great, but real people would add so much to the program. One of the unexpected benefits was social media connection. When I tweeted about this program, an ethnobotanist retweeted it. I asked him about resources to teach my students about ethnobotany, and he shared his book with me which was a Reading Rainbow selection. After watching the video and exploring the topic, one of my students said she wanted to be an ethnobotanist. We were not only connecting to our local community but the social media world as well. Another unexpected reaction was when one of my Hispanic students told me that her dad was trying to get her to learn Spanish. She was never interested before our lessons on endangered languages. She is planning on speaking more Spanish with her dad. Our community is very supportive of our program. I have always had strong community support whenever I needed a guest speaker. To take the classroom to the community added that extra dimension. Using community resources like the public library and the visitor's center, allows the students to bring the classroom into the real world. They can touch the buildings and see the historical artifacts in the visitor's center. This impacts students by making learning real for them. It takes it out of the abstract and puts it into their hands. They can then synthesize this information and create a product that is meaningful.