Celebrating Language in the Classroom

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Purpose: to apply what I was learning in Education courses to an actual classroom

Intention: to observe and learn ways to celebrate students' full linguistic repertoires

“FACTS is designed to provide expertise and knowledge regarding the needs of Asian-American and immigrant students; to bridge the gulf of isolation, unfamiliarity with institutions, and language barriers...”

Field Site

I worked at the Folk Arts-Cultural Treasures Charter School in Chinatown, Philadelphia

My role was to help support 14 students in an English Language Development classroom through small groups and one 1-1 session

Growth

- Communicating with my host teacher for help
- Using non-verbal communication more frequently
- Improving conflict resolution skills

Challenges

- Differentiation in lesson planning
- Working beyond my English and Spanish knowledge
- Understanding classroom dynamics

Forming Connections

One of my takeaways has been expanding my library of pedagogical resources that connect to and extend beyond my specific field of interest. Although my faculty advisor focuses on higher education and my work is in a K-12 setting, we discuss themes across the board that are relevant to creating liberating classrooms but also self-developing as an educator. Among my favorites are bell hooks, Mays Imad, and Ofelia García.

Teaching a Whole-Group Lesson

By developing a relationship built on trust with my host teacher and students, I gained enough confidence and a deep understanding of our classroom room dynamics to lead a lesson. Although I did not envision myself teaching U.S. history, it was rewarding to approach the subject from a decolonizing standpoint and teach students the importance of critical thinking while unlearning things myself.

01. Teaching a Social Studies lesson on the making of the U.S. Constitution while centering the role of Native Americans in its creation.

Next Steps

This year, I've especially come to learn and experience the need for bilingual educators. As I delve further into the world of education, I hope to continue developing a culturally responsive teaching practice and educating myself on methods to celebrate students' diverse experiences.