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Mar 28th, 6:40 PM - 7:30 PM

Challenging what we know: Making space for multiple voices using Critical Literacies

Barbara Steckel

Lesley University, bstecke2@lesley.edu

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Steckel, Barbara, "Challenging what we know: Making space for multiple voices using Critical Literacies" (2018). *Lesley University Community of Scholars Day*. 10.

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Barbara Steckel
Associate Professor
Language and Literacy

Proposal for Community of Scholars 2018
Format: Individual session

Title: Challenging what we know: Making space for multiple voices using Critical Literacies

Session Overview:

In this session participants will enjoy technology-integrated close reading, close viewing, and related vocabulary activities. Participants will also engage in rich conversation about changes to their pre-existing conceptions of history and social justice, prompted by the words and visual images in an engaging and well researched selection of children's literature.

Abstract:

According to Sue (2013), there is a dominant narrative that perpetuates the ongoing myth masking the discrimination and oppression experienced by many people in our country. This myth tells a story of equal access and social justice that has not been the experience of many people of color nor those from some religious, cultural, or societal groups. Therefore, there is a critical need for today's teachers to prepare students to understand, respect, and connect with the perspectives of all people. Students of the majority group must recognize their own privilege and consider how race, gender, sexual orientation, and disability impact the ways people must navigate the world. Students from underrepresented groups must feel empowered to share their voices in inclusive classroom settings. It is the responsibility of the teacher to create spaces for all voices to be heard. This is not always easy; often teachers are left to determine how to do this on their own. Critical conversations about the impacts of race, gender, sexual-orientation, and ability are often silenced in the standards-based classroom; yet, these conversations are beneficial to students and teacher alike (Sue, 2013). In order for teachers to become empowered to facilitate these conversations among students, they must engage in critical conversations within one another. This session provides a context for critical conversation prompted by the literary depiction of the first encounter of the indigenous people in the Americas and the European explorers. The historical events are told from the perspective of a child.

Additional Description:

In this one-hour workshop attendees will grapple with the challenges associated with creating spaces where all voices are heard. Attendees will learn and practice strategies for reading and thinking aloud using questioning techniques and reader response frames to support deep thinking about various perspectives, those explicitly represented and those that are absent. In addition, teachers will critically analyze texts, visual images and embedded messages to hear and understand the

voices of the underrepresented. This session is designed to support rich discourse among participants. The session also provides an appropriate model for teaching critical comprehension and facilitating critical discourse for young adolescent and upper elementary level students.