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Statement of Purpose

Curriculum Design Project

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The sixth grade language arts common core standards contain a quote that states texts can provide insight into dilemmas and social realities of the world while also representing the thoughts and actions of human beings. Life therefore shapes literature and literature shapes life. (Ohio Department of Education, 2011) Reading skills are essential for all aspects of life. The concepts learned in language arts class are carried with a child and used throughout their life. A study done by the National Center for Education Statistics showed that 32 million adults in the USA, about one in seven, have such low literacy skills that it would be a challenge for them to read anything harder than a children’s picture book. With shifts in today’s employment market away from labor and manufacturing jobs toward service and information jobs, the current importance assigned to increasing children’s literacy skills in the nation is amplified. Legislators, parents and educators all agree that a child who does not learn to read and use printed information has little or no chance to reach his or her potential as an individual or to become economically mobile as a citizen in the future society and market place. (Reutzel & Cooter, 2003) Language arts must be taught in a way that students learn literacy skills that they can relate to and can apply to the world around them.

The problem encountered by many educators today is the number of demands placed on our time in the classroom. High stakes testing as well as financial problems in schools have caused many districts to gravitate to a curriculum that is geared toward doing well on a test but not always geared at doing well in life. My district, as well as others, has changed from education being an art to education as a science. We have implemented several district wide plans all with the goal of higher scores on the state achievement tests. Next year we will be transitioning to the Common Core Standards while still implementing the Ohio Academic Content Standards until 2014 when testing will be done on the Common Core. This unit is consistent with both sets of standards.

My goal is to design a contextualized curriculum that will meet the demands of my district as well as be real in the lives of my students and prepare them for adulthood. Literacy learning does not occur in stages, but is a continually evolving process which takes years to develop. (Fountas & Pinnell, 2011 ) The unit I am designing follows the development of cognitive processes orientation because it emphasizes content but is also designed to help the students acquire information and thinking skills and use them to become a lifelong learner. My unit will look at building upon the reading concepts taught in earlier grades while helping students use higher level thinking, connect the skills they have been taught and become lifelong readers.

References

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