

LGBTQ2+ and Literacy Programming Part Two – Final Report 2019

1. Project description

This project is a continuation of the 2017-2018 LGBTQ2 & LITERACY PROGRAMMING PDIG. While it focused on Media and Novels related to the LGBTQ2 community, this project focused on looking at LGBTQ2 Short Stories and Poetry. The purpose was to make more short literature accessible to teachers. We created a chart showing the appropriate grade level of poetry and short stories that teachers could use in the classroom.

2. Goals

Our focus was to provide teachers with more materials that they could use in the classroom, either as a teaching resource or as part of an in-class library.

We decided how to go about finding the information needed. The search for poetry, and short stories involved google searches, meeting with members of the LGBTQ2 community (we visited Kind Space and Venus Envy, two LGBTQ2 community resources), seeking out material from local and national bookstores as well as using our local library to its full potential. We determined a course of action, and divided the reading tasks.

As there is a shortage of LGBTQ2 material within the Language Arts curriculum, we have addressed this issue in the previous PDIG with novels, movies, and film shorts. However, within this context we realized there still is missing a written text that is an easily whole class teachable resource, such as material that teachers can pair with the novels they are teaching or use for an in class response/article. For example, at the grade 9 level with the Outlier LES, a teacher might include a regular novel, such as *Ready Player One*, but start the unit with a pertinent LGBTQ2 poem about isolation. We used the opportunity to search for, organize and bring more LGBTQ2 written short texts to the forefront. It is our contention that teachers don't really know what is available in this subject matter, as it is a relatively new genre. By assembling a chart with poems and short stories that are sorted by grade level and theme, we are able to save teachers an incalculable amount of time in searching for classroom options. We are happy to report we have found suitable classroom stories and poetry that are grade level appropriate.

3. Outcomes

- We integrated literature found during our research into our mid-term pre exam preparatory session with positive results: many grade 9 students enthusiastically debated and discussed the ideas and perspectives they encountered.
- We created a guide for teacher-use that anthologizes short stories, poetry, and a few multimedia pieces for use in ELA classrooms from SEC 1-5.
- We expanded on our previously-created guide for long-form texts (novels) in the theme of LGBTQ2+ voices.

4. Reinvestment

We ran an ELA-themed LGBTQ2+ and identity punctuation contest throughout our school that featured pride-themed prizes awarded to creative-language submissions.

We proposed and started to prepare a workshop to share findings and the chart guides with teachers outside our school and board. We hope to be accepted to present the workshop in Montreal at the teacher's convention in early November. We have stories of our experiences sharing the LGBTQ2 material with students, and the reactions of other teachers. We are fortunate in that we have a supportive principal who allowed us to try new literature in our classroom. We went as far as using an important LGBTQ2 text for pre exam review of response writing.

Many of our experiences in integrating these marginalized voices into our literature programming have also proven useful during recent gender and sexuality curriculum development planning. We started to look at the new Quebec Sexuality curriculum and components of the pieces of literature we were studying to see if there were some crossover.

5. Final report

We have had a successful and rewarding experience. Some of my students have developed a stronger voice and found the readings much more relatable. We have met our projected goals and planned outcomes. The PDIG helped us realize how much more diverse the voices are now in the classroom and how important it is to have multiple perspectives on life. The charts have been met with success in that our literacy consultant has shared it with others teachers in the board. We also hope to share it at the Provincial teacher's conference.