

Taia Schmidt's Literacy and Language Manifesto

welcome!

Ways in Welcoming Newcomers

The way we welcome newcomers into our classrooms is extremely important for the growth of the child's development. For a successful multilingual student, we must incorporate the child's native language while also helping them succeed with English speaking. Pairing students with other students who speak the same native language make the student feel a sense of familiarity and they can also gain a better understanding of what is being taught with help from the other student. Teachers are also crucial in the process of acclimating a new student, thus it is important for us to be aware of the student's backgrounds in order to successfully improve their education and ease the transition. Assessments with the newcomer students on the first day are a great way in understanding what level the students are at.

Embrace
Equity

Equity > Equality

"To achieve equity in culturally and linguistically diverse schools, we need not just new strategies but new roles—for both teachers and students. We need to recognize what meaningful engagement with rigorous content learning actually involves and understand that effective language interactions are at the heart of that engagement" (Nordmeyer, 2021). Personally, I believe all students achieve and learn at a different level. With newcomer students, this is extremely important since many of them are starting fresh in an unknown place. Nordmeyer includes an excellent example in his article. This example includes a father who wants the best education for his daughter but the principal encourages the father that English speaking will be a top priority. Yes, English is an important subject but just as important as the rest in which all the English-speaking students are learning. This proves the importance of equity rather than equality. All students should be provided with the same education regardless of the language barriers. There should be multiple opportunities for all children.

I will address diversity in my classroom

Diversity has become more and more of an important topic as society is constantly changing and evolving. By addressing diversity in the classroom it does not only allow students to feel safe in the environment but also helps students learn to respect and teaches them how to properly address diversity issues. Many informative children's books are made to start the conversation on diversity and in a way younger students will understand. Intercultural posters are extremely effective to create a welcoming environment while teaching new cultures. An example of posters to include would be a word in multiple languages. Children will find it interesting to try and pronounce and understand these words while also incorporating multilingual students' needs for a comfortable environment. Another way of diversifying the classroom is changing lesson plans and curricula. Changing lesson plans to incorporate important topics while insuring the material is comprehensible for all students.





How I will support my Indigenous students

We learn a lot about indigenous culture through social studies. Through these learnings, we are taught about the hardships they were faced with and the history of the culture but the language is never talked about in depth. I will be taking a Cree course in the fall to help me better understand the language and how I can comprehend my indigenous-speaking students.

This will be a huge step in my journey as a teacher to learn new literacy methods. The article *Fostering Literacy Success for First Nations, Inuit and Metis Students* states that learners from First Nations, Métis and Inuit communities should be exposed to various communicative contexts and experiences that enable them to master code-switching. This will provide them with tools for learning how to communicate and interact in a multitude of situations.⁵ Long-term, this ability and proficiency in more than one language will allow these students to live seamlessly in a bilingual/bicultural or multilingual/multicultural state. A classroom that honours FNMI learners will necessarily adopt a bilingual (or multilingual) approach to teaching standard English and/or French.⁶ (Toulouse, 2013). Understanding the concept not only will help the success of our indigenous-speaking students but will also give lots of promise to our English speaking students as well.



Works Cited

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