

CULTURE OF STEM

Assignment 2: Cultural Analysis Plan

(Scheduled for Week 6: 9/30-10/6 - Completed 10/31/20)

“How can I better understand my students’ cultures?”

1. I believe that it is important to open up to my students and share some aspects of my life outside of school. They should know that I am not only their teacher, but also a mom, an animal-lover, a corny-joke-teller, and someone who loves to cook and travel and explore. When I do this, I often find that students are eager to respond and share something about themselves. For example, I might show pictures of my 4 cats, and the students vie to tell me all about their pets. I recently shared a picture of my whole family carving jack o'lanterns, which led to a discussion of Halloween and Day of the Dead traditions in their families.
2. Friday fun-facts are a tradition in my middle school Science/STEM classes. It is so easy to find facts from around the world, allowing students to connect to their own culture or to someone else's. As I keep saying to my students, there is genius everywhere in the world -- and fascinating stuff to learn about too!
3. My SEL classes sometimes involve a music-share or art-share. I started by sharing some music and art that I enjoy, which is sometimes surprising to my students. A few have offered to present an artist that they enjoy, and we even shared K-Pop one day when a very shy student asked me (after class) if we could do that. I asked her for the songs, and we went from there.
4. Our STEM projects involve students needing to become “country experts.” When given the chance to choose the country of their heritage, many of them do. It makes a very personal connection when a Dominican student can brainstorm ways to reduce poverty in the country where a lot of his family still lives. As they delve deeper into the country and the issues it is dealing with, we all share in this knowledge. It's great for everyone's sense of who they are, but also for helping to developing their world view.
5. Although I am not a sports fan, many of my students are. Some families are very heavily into basketball or girls' volleyball, and their passion for the sport influences their culture at home. This is an area that I need to respect more and learn more about.