

Read Around the World Afterschool Program: Building Reading & Writing Comprehension

Overview: This afterschool book club creates a space where reading becomes a shared experience, helping children discover the joy of books while gaining essential literacy skills.

Program Components:

1. Peer-Based Reading Environment:
 - Unlike a traditional classroom atmosphere, the program creates a relaxed, interactive setting where children read alongside their peers. This group-based approach encourages kids to feel more comfortable exploring new texts and asking questions as they read together.
 - Small, age-appropriate groups ensure that each child feels supported and can engage at their own level. For example, younger children (ages 5-8) might read picture books, while older participants (ages 9-16) dive into chapter books and more complex literature.
2. Book Selection:
 - Natasha Acosta and Deja Ogeah thoughtfully curate books that are both age-appropriate and engaging, ensuring the children are reading material that challenges their abilities while sparking their imaginations.
 - Selections may range from beginner-level picture books to early-reader chapter books and young adult novels. Themes often include relatable topics such as friendship, adventure, and problem-solving.
 - Books are selected with a focus on diversity and inclusion, reflecting a wide variety of backgrounds, cultures, and experiences to resonate with the children in the program.
3. Guided Reading and Zoom Conversations:
 - Twice weekly, Natasha Acosta and Deja Ogeah lead guided reading sessions via Zoom. They encourage kids to read aloud with their peers and facilitate open-ended discussions to ensure full comprehension of the material.
 - These guided reading sessions provide an opportunity for the children to ask questions, predict what might happen next in the story, and share their thoughts about characters and themes.
 - Conversations focus on deepening understanding of the text, encouraging critical thinking, and fostering a love of reading. Natasha and Deja help students connect what they are reading to their own lives and experiences.
4. Writing Comprehension Activities:

- After finishing each book, students participate in reflective writing exercises designed to boost their writing comprehension. They might:
 - Write short summaries of the book's chapters.
 - Create alternate endings or discuss what they would have done differently as the main character.
 - Write personal letters to characters or authors, expressing their thoughts and opinions about the story.
 - Weekly creative writing prompts are introduced to develop skills such as writing dialogue, describing scenes, or crafting their own short stories.
5. Parent and Mentor Engagement:
- At the end of each month, Natasha and Deja host a virtual "Book Celebration" where parents and mentors are invited to listen as students read aloud from their favorite passages or present their writing projects. These sessions build confidence in the children while encouraging parental involvement in literacy.
6. Program Schedule:
- Monday (Zoom Session):
 - 3:30 – 4:00: Check-in and Reading Time (guided by Natasha Acosta)
 - 4:00 – 5:00: Group Discussion and Q&A about the book
 - 5:00 – 5:30: Creative Writing Prompt: "If I were a character in the story..."
 - Wednesday (Zoom Session):
 - 3:30 – 4:00: Reading Time (led by Deja Ogeah)
 - 4:00 – 5:00: Peer Group Discussions and Story Summaries
 - 5:00 – 5:30: Writing Exercises: Summarizing, writing character descriptions, or composing alternate endings.
7. Program Impact Goals:
- The Reading Together program aims to:
 - Improve reading comprehension by fostering a supportive and engaging reading environment.
 - Encourage peer collaboration and build confidence in discussing literature.
 - Strengthen writing skills through reflective and creative writing exercises.
 - Cultivate a love for reading by introducing students to diverse and relatable stories.