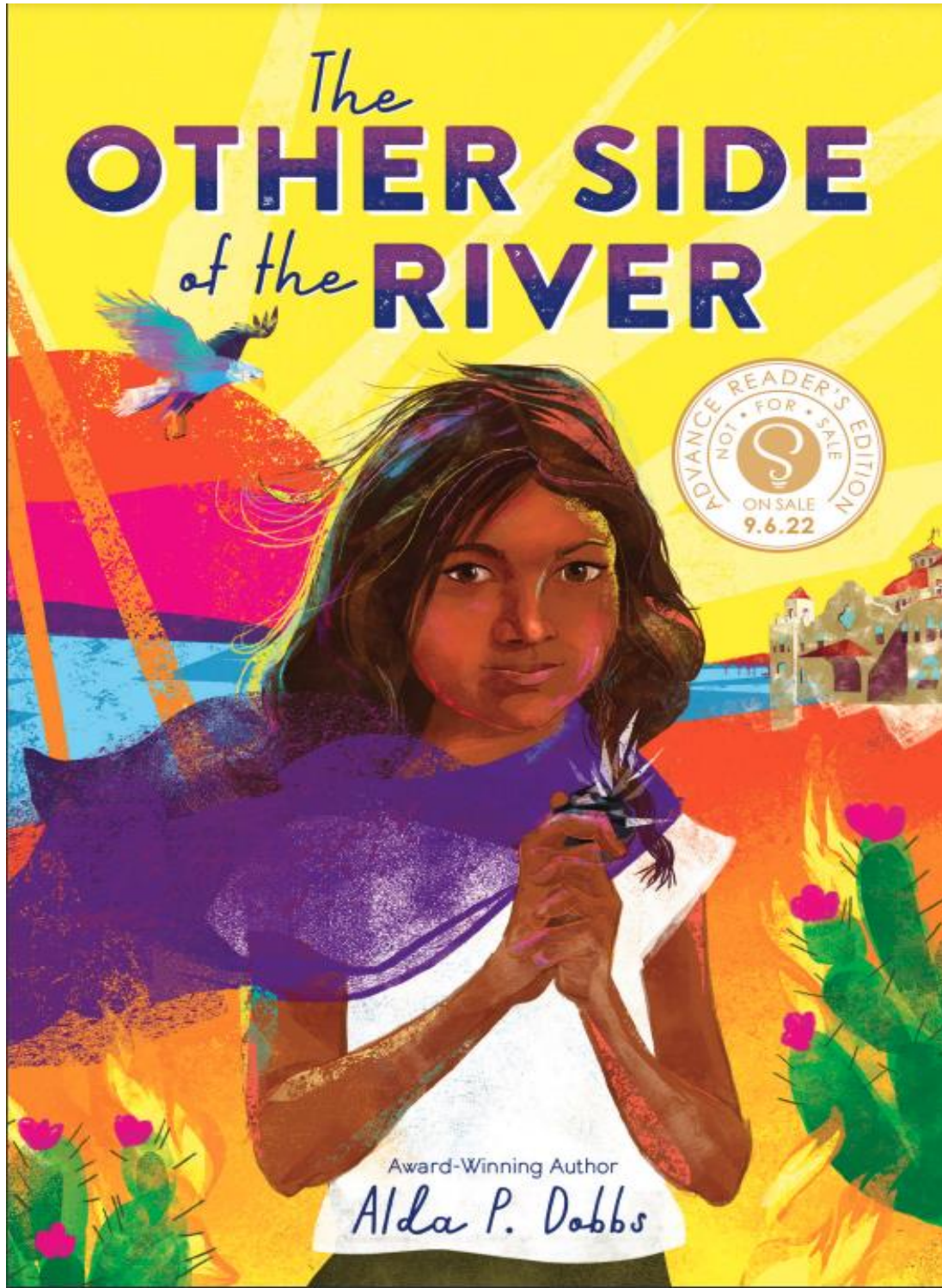


The Other Side of The River by Alda P. Dobbs



Classroom Lesson Project: Why Do People Move?

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Project Summary

This project will be an opportunity for fifth grade students (age 10-11) to familiarize themselves with the concept of immigration (and related concepts) and to identify the hardships associated with it. The lesson sequence will ideally take place over the course of two days (excluding the final project that will be turned in one week after the initial lesson). The focus and literacy goals of the lesson sequence/project will be to build and strengthen students' comprehension and background knowledge. Day one will be focused on close reading to facilitate comprehension—students will engage in text-based discussions and using their personal experiences (background knowledge). Day two will be collaboration-focused where students will engage in peer discussion to summarize the learnings of day one and explore the use of figurative language (metaphor) in the text. As their final project for this two-day lesson plan, students will interview a family member/friend (using interview prompts supplied with this document) and document the interview in any creative format of students' choice (written, audio, visual, audio-visual). The final project aims at strengthening students' understanding of refugee/[im]migration genre literature by contextualizing their learning in real world experiences.

Audience

5th graders for the project, family members and/or friends for the completed project.

Lesson Goal(s) and Objective(s)

- Students will share examples and experiences of migration.
- Students will identify and analyze the figurative language of metaphors.
- Students will be able to summarize the text.
- Students will engage in peer discussion.
- Students will be able to identify and talk about the challenges faced by the main character.
- Students will create a way to document real life [im]migration narratives.

Curriculum Standards

CCSS: RL.5 (a): Use pre-reading strategies, such as identifying a purpose for reading, generating questions to answers while reading, previewing sections of texts, and activating prior knowledge.

CCSS: RL.5.1 Quote accurately from a text when explaining what the text says explicitly and when drawing inferences from the text.

CCSS: RL.5.2 Determine a theme of a story, drama, or poem from details in the text, including how characters in a story or drama respond to challenges or how the speaker in a poem reflects upon a topic; summarize the text.

CCSS: RL.5.4 Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, including figurative language such as metaphors and similes.

CCSS: RL.5(d) Use knowledge of literary devices (such as imagery, rhythm, foreshadowing, and simple metaphors) to understand and respond to text.

Materials Needed

The Other Side of The River/ Chapter 1, “The Eagle’s Pass”

White board or cards with bilingual vocabulary words

Technology (composition apps, slide deck programs etc.)

Pencils, craft (construction paper, markers, crayons, scissors, etc.)

Students’ reading/writing journal

Description of the Teaching and Learning Process

Session Length: This project may require up to two in class sessions. The final project will be due one week after the initial lesson.

Day 1: Read Aloud and Comprehension Focused (35-40 minutes)

Teacher Process:

1. Teacher will preview the vocabulary words: migrate, emigrant and immigrant with the students (definitions enclosed in the facilitator reference guide).
2. Teacher will introduce the text *The Other Side of The River*, and will engage students in discussion regarding what the text might be about by asking the whole class “How many of you have ever lived somewhere else?” (Background knowledge). The students will be told that they will be doing a Think-Pair-Share: “With the person sitting next to you, think of a time that you or someone you know moved to a new home. Describe how you or that person felt *before*, *during*, and *after* the move to the new home.”
3. After the initial discussion, the teacher will read the prologue & first chapter “An Eagle’s Pass”, stopping on certain pages to ask specific questions to engage students in a comprehension-based discussion of this chapter.

(Note: I have highlighted several quotes/passages from the text that might be useful in understanding and answering the comprehension-based questions for those sections of the text.)

Pg. 1-3: “...and despite the sun glistening over the smooth river below us, everyone, including me, believed it was the end of our lives.”

- “Terrifying screams ripped through the crowd...”
- “A strange thing happens when a country fights itself...there are no winners or losers...it’s like two parts of a single body fighting each other”.
- “My country had been fighting itself for three years, and there seemed to be no end in sight”.

Through the quotes specified above, teachers will reflect on—who is the speaker, where are they located at the beginning of the story and how is that place described in the text?

At the end of the prologue, the teacher will ask— How is the narrator of this story feeling before crossing over to the other side of Río Grande and why does she feel so?

Pg. 7- 8:

- “it’s okay, *m’ija*,” ... we are in a safe place”.
- “my stomach soon awoke... swallow hard”.
- “we’re in America, and we can’t let tomorrow go to waste”.

How is she feeling after moving to America?

Pg. 9-12:

- “when life’s problems squeeze you hard... you grow up to shine like a diamond.” “I don’t know what’s going to kill us first... hunger or smallpox”.
- “voices heavy with concern broke the morning silence, just as they had the past two mornings”
- “*Cuarentena* (...) In the camp, that word brought fear of sickness, of being sent back to Mexico, back to the revolution, and of death.”
- “I heard last night that a group of people here at the camp want to go back into Mexico and retake Piedras Negras. I think everyone here is too hungry and scared of smallpox.”

Since the metaphor is discussed on day 2, the teacher will discuss these pages with questions like-

“What do we learn about how the other refugees (including the grandmother) are feeling about moving to America?”

Pg. 14-15:

- “I stared at the words on it, and my heart leaped...”
- “I heard the wind again... telling me of future encounters or friendships to come?”

How does the speaker feel at the end of this chapter? Why do you think she feels this way?

At the end of this chapter, having explored the protagonist’s feelings about leaving her home and immigrating to a new place, the teacher can now circle back to reference the hook: “Why has the protagonist moved to America?”

(Note: Teachers may utilize the bilingual vocabulary word-guide during their reading to support comprehension for non-Spanish speakers. This could also be a good way of leveraging participation from ELL students.)

Student Process

1. Students will actively listen and pose any questions about the vocabulary words being previewed.
2. Students will have the opportunity to engage with their reading partner in deep reflections of the opening question.
3. Students will answer comprehension-focused & inference-based questions posed by the teacher.

Day 2: Discussion Focus (35-40 minutes)

Teacher Process

1. The teacher will create small discussion groups and ask each group to discuss their learnings from day one. This will be followed by asking a group representative from each group for brief summaries of the first chapter and revisiting the answer to “*Why has the protagonist moved to America?*” (4-5 minutes)
2. The teacher will follow up by asking the students to talk to their groups thinking back to the time that you or someone you know moved to a new home and think of the *challenges* that you or they faced. The teacher will invite a few students to share. (4-5 minutes)
3. The teacher will then ask the students to consider the following passage from pg. 9 of chapter one— “when life’s problems squeeze you hard... you grow up to shine like a diamond.” The teacher will revisit the term “metaphor” and ask a couple of students to explain what the passage means. The teacher will then ask students to work with their group to list the pressures/challenges that the main character is facing. (15 minutes)
4. The teacher will utilize the last 10 minutes of this class session to explain the final project assignment to the students. As their final project for this two-day lesson plan, students will be asked to conduct an interview with a family member/friend (using interview prompts attached below) and document the interview in any creative format of the students’ choice (written, audio, visual, audio-visual). This activity will encourage students to apply their textual learning to real world experiences and become aware of the

different reasons that motivate people to move.

Student Process

1. The students will engage in peer discussion with their assigned group to summarize their understanding of chapter one by revisiting the question prompt from day one. Each group representative will have the opportunity to share their brief summaries with the class.
2. Students will have the opportunity to share their personal experiences (i.e., the challenges they might have faced in the process of moving) with their discussion groups and the larger class audience.
3. The students will share their definitions of the term metaphor and apply this understanding to the passage in consideration. They will work with their respective discussion groups to draft a list of pressures/challenges faced by the main character of the text. (They will use their writing journals to accomplish this task).
4. Students will turn in their final project work (i.e., documented interview) a week after the initial lesson.

Additional Information

[Vocabulary Guide](#)

[Interview Question Prompts](#)

Artifacts

Student creations that display various reasons for why people move and the challenges they face in doing so. Sample artifact attached here [Written Interview Transcript](#)

(Note: The sample artifact attached above is in a written format; however, this is not the only format students are expected to follow for documenting their interviews. Teachers must encourage students to explore any other written, visual, audio, and/or audio-visual format of their choice to accomplish this task.)

About Me - Ishmeet Kohli

I am from New Delhi, India, where I was a middle school English language & literature teacher for over four years before moving to Colorado in 2018. I am currently pursuing my MA in English Literature at CU Boulder and grateful for the opportunity to learn about literacy education in the United States through my elective course with the School of Education.