



Featured Teacher: Michael Sanchez

"Students were highly motivated to write their stories because they knew their stories were going to be published into an actual book."

Cast of Characters:

"Our 5th grade classes completed a classbook in November. The subject that we focused on was social studies, more specifically, 'Explorers Going to the New World.'"

Background and Setting

"When I did the project with Studenttreasures, I was teaching all subjects in 5th grade."

Learning Through Storytelling

Similar to many teachers who use a Studenttreasures book publishing project in the classroom, Sanchez tied the project to an existing lesson and required assessment.



"This definitely helped my students see that their writing matters!"

"During October, we finished learning about Native Americans and started learning about explorers. In the first quarter, we also had to assess students through narrative writing. I used Studenttreasures Publishing after teaching about the Native Americans and during the Explorers Unit.

I had students create a narrative story about any explorer finding new land. Students chose fictional characters, themselves, their friends, or even teachers as part of their stories to illustrate their understanding of explorers traveling to the New World. They had to use what they learned about the Native Americans and how explorers found land and interacted with Native Americans."

To complete the writing project, Sanchez provided steps the students' stories needed to follow and used the writer's workshop model for developing a narrative story, including mentor texts, a first draft, editing, critiquing, rewriting, a final draft and high-quality illustrations. This method helped build writing

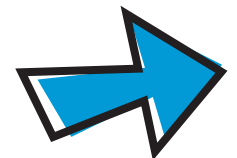
skills, confidence and story development. More specifics about this method and his Studenttreasures project can be found in Sanchez's blog: [**"Students Become Published Authors!"**](#)

Motivated by Authorship

Seeing actual examples of how the final book would look built excitement for the project and motivated the students to complete the work on time.

Character Development and Pride

During and after the book publishing project, Sanchez witnessed his students' confidence, as well as creative writing, spelling and ELA skills, grow immensely.



“By creating a real-world type final product instead of a book report puts into practice what my school's philosophy is all about: Expeditionary Learning puts the learning in the hands of the students, literally! Most students took this project in stride and created amazing stories that helped support/improve their writing skills.

“When students were in their process of critiquing each other's writing, a student asked, ‘Is this what a writer does in the real world? Do they have people check their work before it becomes a book?’ Another example was when a student's parents bought four books to give as gifts for Christmas and the student was ecstatic to show them! They wanted to show off their writing! That confidence is very important for our students.

“I had a student who was a struggling writer, but this real-world type opportunity showed her that she was a capable writer. By seeing the results of her work come to fruition, she started to write more and started taking more chances in her writing. In the end, she grew leaps and bounds in her writing – all sprung by this project.

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Tips for Success

Even Sanchez learned a few things along the way. His advice for completing a Studenttreasures' book publishing project: “Do it!” Also, he suggests planning backwards after you set your publishing date.

As a first-time publisher, Sanchez learned a lot. “Now I know I would plan it out with weekly goals for the students to stay on track.”

A Suspenseful, Loud and Joy-Filled Ending!

Like a great mystery writer, Sanchez added suspense to the project on the day the published books arrived.

“When I received the boxes, I did not tell anyone what they were. At the end of the day, when we had time to spare before dismissal, I placed the boxes in front of them. I started laying clues as to what it was, but nothing was registering,” he said. “Once I opened the box and took out the first book, all the students screamed in excitement! My next-door teacher actually texted me if everything was OK because it was so loud!”

In the end, the students were happy to see their hard work being recognized in something they did not think was possible – a published book.

