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Borders in Play

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Scout Crowell Reflection 1

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Scout Crowell

Professor Román-Odio

Cultural Productions of the Borderlands

12 October 2017

Reflection #1: Meet Team Horizon

For the past three weeks, two class mates and I, Sabrina Serrano and Kat Ridley, have ventured to Columbia Elementary School to teach a group of six fifth graders. Columbia Elementary is located in Mount Vernon, Ohio, right outside of Kenyon college's campus. Despite their proximate locations, Kenyon and Mount Vernon host contrasting socioeconomic populations: Mount Vernon is a rural town with little socioeconomic advantages, while Kenyon hosts predominantly upper class and upper middle class millennials. At Columbia Elementary, the racial demographic, based solely on my own observation, is largely white, which our group was representative of.

During our second week of teaching, our students decided to name our group "Team Horizon," a very fitting name as they continue to demonstrate their phenomenal intellect, creativity, and warm hearts each and every week we spend with them. Team Horizon is made up of six students, Karson, Isaac, Sarah, James, Tim, and Kassandra. During our first meeting, they shocked me with their intellect, even though many of them do not yet seem to know the extent of their academic abilities. Tim was one of the most outspoken members of Team Horizon since day one alongside Sarah, unafraid to share his ideas and experiences with the group. However, everyone chimed in, expressing opinions, observations, ideas, and a few giggles along the way. With the passing of each week, every student began to speak more and more and new stars began to shine within the group. During week three, Kassandra shared her own Mexican-American

culture with the group. From an observational standpoint, she seemed to enjoy having a platform through which she could teach her class mates about her culture, one which is most likely drowned out by the predominantly White culture at Columbia Elementary. It has also been phenomenal to see Karson step out of his box and really express his ideas without fear and to see Isaac and James start to do so as well.

In the development of our lessons, each member of the group chipped in to create a cohesive lesson that would not only teach the kids about story structure, but also the borders that actively work in society and the themes that communicate those borders, even on the most basic level. Throughout the process, Sabrina played a key role in the development of bigger themes that would encompass both works that each lesson dealt with, all the while offering constructive criticism where it was needed, polishing our lessons to best benefit the kids. Kat was a great with developing questions and using the materials provided to us as inspiration and an outline. As for myself, I acted as an active organizer as well as a creative mind in the development of our goals for each lesson. I utilized my experience as a preschool teacher and childcare provider to formulate questions that not only invoked thought in the kids but were constructed at a level that they could comprehend. As a whole, our group worked phenomenally to communicate ideas and facilitate learning, all the while being adaptive and flexible during the teaching process to ensure maximum learning for Team Horizon.

Members of Team Horizon have made tremendous progress in the past three weeks, coming out of their shells, sharing their own experiences and borders, fearlessly contributing ideas, and engaging in creative thought to understand story structures.