



Cuentos Infantiles

Johanna Jorfald, Spanish, High Tech High Media Arts

Students produced Spanish children's books and gave them to Spanish-speaking children. In pairs, students in my Spanish I class were assigned a basic Spanish vocabulary unit such as clothing, colors or animals. Each pair created a list of the most common words and verbs in that unit and gave a mini-lesson to the class, providing them with handouts and activities. The student-led lessons generated a strong understanding of important vocabulary, and each pair used this knowledge to write and illustrate a story for a simple, colorful, and creative children's book. When the books were completed, the students practiced reading them to each other before we took them to an orphanage in Tijuana, where they read the books to the children. After a full day of reading, laughing, bonding, and playing in Spanish, we donated the books to the orphanage so they could build their first library.

Teacher Reflection

This was one of the longer and more memorable projects I have done. My students placed great importance on being accurate in their spelling and conjugations, and on creating stories that would impress and engage Spanish-speaking children. They worked hard to make the books unique and professional. It was exciting to see them bring their stories to life. They spoke beautifully in Spanish, trying hard to make no mistakes as they read to their audience. The project ended with tears of happiness and sadness as we said goodbye to our new friends. My students not only learned important content, but they also made a difference in other people's lives.

—Johanna Jorfald

Student Reflection

When I was told we were making a Spanish children's book, I didn't really understand what an eye-opening and true learning experience this was going to be for me. The actual experience of going to Tijuana and reading the books we made to the orphans was life-changing. Even though Tijuana, Mexico is only a 20 minute drive, the atmosphere is drastically different. This project taught me a new language, a new culture, and most importantly, how to make a change in someone else's life.

—Katie Smith, 12th grade

To learn more about this project and others visit the HTH Digital Commons and Johanna Jorfald's digital portfolio at <http://www.hightechhigh.org/> and <http://staff.hthma.hightechhigh.org/~jjorfald/>