

January Themes

Bluebonnet Voting

Creativity

Bluebonnet Voting

January brings the highly anticipated event of Bluebonnet voting. Throughout the year, students have been tracking their Bluebonnet reading on their logs, and hopefully many students will have made a Bluebonnet project to share on Family Literacy Night. But hurrah, the voting opens!

Students will turn their logs into the librarian and vote for their favorite book. I want them to do some form of simple response for the book they vote for using technology technology. Some ideas are creating a short video to post to our Seesaw library blog or upload a video or work cloud to a Padlet with columns created for each nominated book.

Creativity and the Maker Mindset

Since the weather is cold and in Texas, it rarely snows (so being outside in the cold just isn't as fun without snow), I think this is a great opportunity to focus students' attention on creating when they are trapped indoors. Plus, we have such a popular MakerSpace program, and last year we also added a lot of materials to support a maker mindset. I hope that by displaying these books I can draw attention to the really excellent selection available.

Each week, I want to create couple of stations with materials and one of these titles that focus on a different type of craft. Many of the activities students use during MakerSpace involve screen time. Now I am completely supportive of students using technology for learning and fun, but I also believe in balance. I'm considering, just for the month of January, removing access to the Chromebooks and iPads during MakerSpace to encourage more hands-on exploration.

There are some really interesting titles included in this bibliography and we have scores more that I did not include. Origami is hugely popular at Anderson and we have many origami books. The one I included on this list is also an ebook, which can be opened online when students log in with their Destiny logins. Others include projects using recycled materials such as milk cartons and old clothes. There is a book of winter crafts. There is also a book that profiles people whose careers involve STEAM.

I love books that motivate kids to do and make. One benefit of these sorts of books is that they often encourage parent involvement in an engaging manner. When a child takes one of these books home to make one of the projects, it's likely the parents will join in the activity. Additionally, by highlighting these how-to books, students are being exposed to procedural reading and writing. When students read and do at the same time they have to reread to ensure they follow steps correctly. And when parents get involved with kids' and their reading, we all win.

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