



Teaching With Love and Respect for Every Child's Humanity

by NAWAL QAROONI CASIANO

Empowering students to compose stories and supporting a deep love of expression opens doors for border crossers—ensuring children move between spaces with honesty, authenticity and understanding. Through appreciation of all cultures and walks of life, against an expansive backdrop of multimodal texts, we cultivate communities of learners who lead with love and respond first with humanity.



LITERACY CHAMPION: NAWAL QAROONI CASIANO

Nawal is a Chicago-based educator, literacy consultant, and writer. Forever passionate about growing readers, writers and thinkers, Nawal worked as a classroom teacher, literacy coach and curriculum developer in Brooklyn and Chicago before launching [NQC Literacy](#) in 2014. She and her team support schools and districts by facilitating professional development and coaching around a holistic, balanced approach to literacy instruction: always looking through lenses of cultural-sustainability, inclusion and equity.

Nawal earned a Bachelor of English from the University of Michigan, a Master of Teaching from Brooklyn College, and a Master of Journalism from Syracuse University's Newhouse School. She won a New Jersey Press Association Award for her international reporting and transitioned into education as a New York City Teaching Fellow. She is the proud daughter of immigrants and her role as a mother to four multiethnic, multilingual kids shapes her approach as an educator. You can find Nawal in Chicago's Logan Square neighborhood or on Twitter at [@NQCLiteracy](#).

One to Know: The Loving, Culturally-Sustaining Pedagogy That Empowers All Learners: Choice, Access, and Multiculturalism

Nawal and her team at NQC Literacy believe deeply in the power of storytelling and expression in many modes, and in broadening understanding of what it means to read and write. We empower students to become confident readers and writers in multiple contexts, using a loving approach to literacy that includes the inclusion of diverse voices and purposeful inclusion of students and their rich histories at the core of curriculum.

NQC Literacy supports leaders and teachers in schools, districts and education spaces through tailored professional development, individualized teacher coaching and long-term planning. They design powerful learning experiences in literacy instruction that include teacher involvement every step of the way, as our learning journeys are intricately intertwined with the learning of our students. That means making public our own reading and writing lives; that means bringing personal passions to the classroom.

Strong literacy practices are strong practices in all areas of curriculum. Together with teachers, NQC Literacy coaches strategically plan for reading, writing, speaking and listening to merge beautifully and stack across grade levels for a cohesive experience. They consider socio-emotional learning, culturally-sustaining pedagogies, centering students, honoring translanguaging and students' varied, brilliant literacies when they collaborate. They ask the question: how can we build on the cultural capital each child brings?



What to Do

- Seek #ownvoices texts and diverse narratives to ensure students are seeing themselves in stories but also learning about others ([Dr. Rudine Sims Bishop's](#) windows, mirrors and sliding glass doors).
- Encourage choice across all aspects of classroom design—in how students share learning, in book choice, in assessment.
- Exalt process by allowing students to name their learning and goals along the way. Prompt reflection by studying deeply and listening to one another, as we learn by doing and not best by being told.

- Layer texts into sets that allow for multiple access points, from alphabetic to art to video, for more equitable learning and greater context overall.
- Share personal passions and your unique background by bringing personal stories and anecdotes into the classroom. It is the shared vulnerability that brings together a community of learners.
- Think individually of each of the specific and powerful abilities each student brings. Lead first and consistently with compliments that inflate the learner and amount to excitement for the next learning opportunity.

Contact Information

You can learn more about Nawal, the NQC Literacy team and their work at NQCLiteracy.com or email nawal.qcasiano@nqcliteracy.com directly for coaching speaking engagements, workshops and collaborations.

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