Professional Development Reflection

*How did the project empower you as a leader?*

I think all aspects of this project made me a better leader and more comfortable taking an active, non-cπonformist role in the education of my students. Incorporating design thinking as using the Makerspace was a great push to literally and figuratively take my students out of their comfort zone and into a space in which they were creating, playing, and designing. It was both concerning and confidence-boosting to heat other teachers talk about what we were doing and treat it as something that either they haven't done or wouldn't think about doing. In that sense I was made to feel a bit like a pioneer, which on one hand feels encouraging because taking risky steps towards student-centered learning is progress, but it is uneasy grappling with the knowledge that perhaps these teachers should have been doing lessons like these all along. I suppose this makes sense for leaders, or people placed in leadership positions: we must plant the flag in some new area and the reflect and say “how am I one of the first one's?”

*How did the project contribute to your growth as an educator?*

Creating this lesson and enacting this presentations made me think hard about the design of the lesson and of the needs of my students, particularly as they relate to learning and foreign language. Taking the initiative on a project that lasted more than a single class period and took longer than the average time it took me to prepare lessons made me feel like I was going far out of my way to create something that the students would genuinely enjoy and benefit from. Developing this project also gave me a sense of place within the education community. For example, for the empathy part, my original idea was just to write the situation on a piece of paper explaining that the Theatre class needed help. But then it occurred to me that I’m sure the teacher and those students would be more than willing to actually create something that would even further validate this hypothetical situation. It was gratifying to show the students those videos and for them to connect so well with the extra effort that I put in. All of these things combined leave me with this very explicit feeling of growth and personal development.