

# Social Justice and El Biblioburro in the Spanish Language Classroom

Dr. Lori Langer de Ramirez | [lr Ramirez@dalton.org](mailto:lr Ramirez@dalton.org)  
Director, World and Classical Language Department, The Dalton School

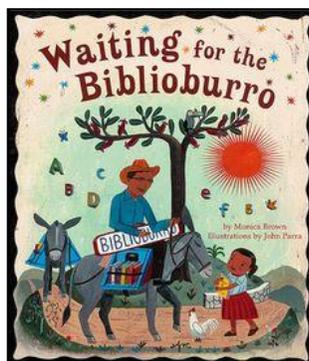
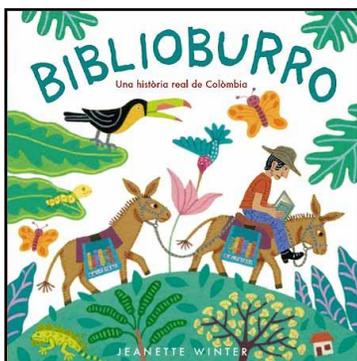
Online resources can be accessed at: <http://miscositas.com/biblioburro.html>



Language study can open a student's eyes to social issues around the world. In rural Colombia, teacher Luis Soriano brings books to students who have little access to them. Traveling to schools throughout La Magdalena with his donkey library, or *El Biblioburro*, Soriano exposes young students to literacy and a love of reading. Learning about this grassroots project, students of Spanish can explore geography, socioeconomic issues, and history while participating in class projects to improve the lives of others.

## Resources for teaching about *El Biblioburro*:

- Download a 15-page **thematic unit** for students: "El Biblioburro y Colombia": <http://miscositas.com/Thematic%20Unit-El%20Biblioburro.pdf>
- Visit my **Pinterest board** with resources and images about the Biblioburro: <https://www.pinterest.com/miscositaspix/biblioburro/>
- Share **videos** in English & in Spanish about the Biblioburro from this YouTube playlist: [https://youtu.be/Cq1kvDAfRWA?list=PLOZekfnFU0DbxZi0NiPr9IiUWA8Q9Y9\\_V](https://youtu.be/Cq1kvDAfRWA?list=PLOZekfnFU0DbxZi0NiPr9IiUWA8Q9Y9_V)
- Two **picturebooks** in English and in Spanish can be shared with students:
  - *Biblioburro - Una historia real de Colombia*, by Jeanette Winter
  - *Waiting for the Biblioburro/Esperando al Biblioburro* by Monica Brown & John Parra



- **The Biblioburro Blog** - This is the official blogsite of the *Fundación Biblioburro*. There are beautiful photos (like the three photos above), posts about the different projects, and other information on this site: <http://biblioburrosinfronteras.blogspot.com.co/>
- **Fun for Spanish Teachers** celebrates the 20th anniversary of the Biblioburro with an excellent TPRS-ready story complete with illustrations along with worksheets: <http://funforspanishteachers.blogspot.com/2017/03/lets-celebrate-biblioburros-20th.html>
- **Veinte Mundos** - The amazing digital magazine produced an article entitled "*Biblioburro: La Increíble Labor de un Profesor Colombiano*." Included is a 9 minute audio report about the Biblioburro with full transcript and highlighted vocabulary. There is a "*lenguaje*" tab with comprehension questions; a multimedia tab with videos and links, and a "*viaja*" tab with background information about Colombia. This site is an entire thematic unit unto itself! <http://www.veintemundos.com/magazines/107-en/>
- **POV | Biblioburro: The Donkey Library** - This site from PBS and the series POV (Point of View) has a wealth of incredible resources for learning and teaching about the Biblioburro. <http://www.pbs.org/pov/biblioburro/>; Some of the highlights include:
  - **Lesson plan** - Volunteer to address local literacy needs; full lesson including objectives, activity, extensions, resources, and standards.
  - **Take action!** - Learn how to donate books to the *Fundación Biblioburro*.
  - **Photo gallery** - Many photographs taken during the filming of the documentary.
- **Colors Magazine** - A fantastic graphic novel about Luis Soriano and the Biblioburro, part of a series about "Superheroes." It is in English, but it might make an interesting project for students to create their own dialogue in Spanish by whitening out the English text: <http://www.colors magazine.com/stories/magazine/80/story/biblioburro>
- **Everyday hero** - blog entry from Spanish teacher Shannon O'Shea about Luis Soriano. Shannon drew a beautiful image of the Biblioburro that would make a great handout for students! [http://shannonoshea.blogspot.com/2011\\_07\\_01\\_archive.html](http://shannonoshea.blogspot.com/2011_07_01_archive.html)
- **Spanish Cuentos** - Profe Klein from SpanishCuentos.com has some excellent printables, maps, posters, and readers that center around Colombia themes: <http://spanishcuentos.com>; Among the resources are:
  - *Peter va a Colombia* - a simple reader for beginning students that tells the story of a young boy who takes a trip to Colombia and meets the Biblioburro along the way!
  - Biblioburro printable - a fun activity for kids to print, cut out, and assemble so they can have their own Luis and burro!
  - Biblioburro coloring page - created for our elementary Spanish students with an adorable illustration from *Peter va a Colombia* (with permission from Profe Klein): <http://miscositas.com/Biblioburro%20coloring%20page.docx>
- **Librería Barco de Papel**: <http://libreriabarcodetapelny.com/>

