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Integrating a Variety of Cultures and Diversity into the Upper Elementary Curriculum

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**Integrating a Variety of Cultures and Diversity
into the Upper Elementary Curriculum**

by

Tammy Joy Hamlin

December, 2009

**Master's Project
Submitted to the
Graduate Faculty of the College of Education
At Grand Valley State University
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Degree of Master of Education**

Grand Valley State University

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Tammy Joy Hamlin

Abstract

Research has overwhelmingly shown that something needs to be done to combat the increasing problem of high minority drop-out rates. Many people still do not acknowledge that schools need to do anything differently. Instead the problem is blamed on the home life and economics. Some teachers feel that low-income inner city, minority students, simply are not capable of being successful academically. Society often does not realize how poor the minority drop out rates are in their school districts. Some administrations have chosen to hide the statistics. For instance one New York school district in this research promoted that almost all their graduates were going to college. That fact may have been true, but they failed to mention that only 20 percent of the students that started in ninth grade had actually graduated from that graduating class. Research has found that many minority students have stated that they felt they were being pushed out of school for poor academic performance, and that they didn't feel like they fit in socially. One area of research that points to added success academically and socially for minority students was to amend the literature curriculum. The studies showed that by embedding culture and diversity into the literature curriculum, minority students became much more engaged in the lessons. With higher engagement levels the students felt like they fit in more socially, and could relate personally to the stories. If students can relate personally to the literature then they are more engaged, and thus more successful academically as well.

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CHAPTER ONE: PROJECT PROPOSAL

Problem Statement

High school dropout rates are alarming and minority graduation rates are even more alarming. National reports indicate that minority graduation rates are much worse than rates for Caucasian students (Bureau of the Census, 2001). According to one report 75 percent of white students nationwide graduated from high school in 2001, but only about 50 percent of minority students received their diplomas (Civil Rights Project, 2004). During the past decade much focus has been given to intervention. Leonard and Guha (2002) report that, the National Council for Teachers is pushing to make connections to real world experiences in their lesson plans. They contend that in order to relate to real world experiences, culture and ethnicity must be taken into account (Leonard & Guha, 2002).

Importance and Rationale of the Project

In many areas of the United States, Caucasians are no longer the majority race (Bureau of the Census, 2001). According to the U.S Census Bureau only 69 percent of the American population was “white, non-Hispanic” in 2000, and this “white non-Hispanic” category is expected to decrease to 53 percent by the year 2050. If this proves to be the case and if the minority students continue to drop out of school in increasing percentages, then more and more Americans will be poorly educated.

It is in the best interest of society to try to keep students in school, since graduates tend to be better citizens (Civil Rights Project, 2004). According to a

report published by the Civil Rights Project, students that do not graduate are much more likely to be unemployed, end up in prison, and in poverty.

Background of the Study

According to author Michelle Fine (1991) dropout rates for the inner-city students were hidden from the public, in the New York school district where she was conducting her studies. Fine stated that the principal announced, at the first Parents' Association meeting, that almost all their graduates were going to college. She contended that this was the claim that most of the urban school administrators were making. Although the claim was true, it was misleading because in fact only 20 percent of the incoming ninth graders had graduated. "In other words, 16 percent of the 1, 430 ninth graders of 1978-1979 were headed for college by 1985" (Fine, 1991, p 35). The administration chose to promote the statistics that made them appear to be successful. If the public does not know a problem of retention exists, they cannot look for solutions.

Fine reported that "The New York Board of Education had until recently refused to monitor retention, promotion, and educational achievement statistics by race and ethnicity for fear of 'appearing racist'" (p. 35). The school system would discharge large numbers of students, which meant they no longer attended a particular school. According to Fine, this would include any students that left of their own choice, those that were made to leave due to behavior problems, those who transferred to another school, including night school, alternative school, business school, the military, prison, or for physical or mental health reasons. Another finding

that was reported in the Civil Rights Project (2004) stated that many minority students commented how they felt they are being pushed out of schools and districts. This was being done so that the school's high-stakes test scores would not suffer from those students' poor academic performance. Fine (1991) claimed that New York State's new requirement, that public high schools must reduce dropout rates by a certain percentage, made matters even worse for poor and minority students. She stated that a GED (Graduate Equivalency Diploma) program director explained how the

new mandate works for everybody. In calculating dropout statistics, a student who no longer attends public high school but goes to a Board-of-Education-approved GED program is no longer considered a dropout. He is still considered retained. So they (the public high schools) are sending their kids to us, if they have any indication of being a truant, in academic trouble or just a pain in the rear. Then they don't have to list him as a dropout, because he's in a program. They get to keep higher-level kids and can report lower dropout rates. We (in the alternative programs) also get higher-level kids. So our figures for academic achievement and attendance, even retention, are way up. But the kids we're supposed to be helping, they aren't getting any more help. Maybe even more neglect. (p. 200)

Fine (1991) states that from inside the school, the discharges seem to most as "inevitable, necessary, and non-disruptive" (p. 63). But Fine points out that if 66

percent of the white middle-class students were discharged from ninth-grade, it is unlikely that acceptance of this would persist.

Statement of Purpose

Can more minority students be motivated to stay in school? If so, then the dropout rate would decrease for minority students. A study conducted by Detris Honora (2002), examined the connection between students' future outlook and school achievement. She found that African American students are more likely to be involved in remedial instruction, school suspension, failure of classes, and school dropout. She concluded that a students' positive or negative attitudes about their future influenced their current behavior and thus helped determine whether or not that student would be motivated to achieve academically. According to Honora's (2002) study "societal problems among these groups, such as high unemployment, racism, and current and past experiences with oppression, often restrict their future outlook" (p. 303). She provides numerous studies to support her claim that disadvantaged cultural groups tend to avoid future planning and prefer focusing on the present. Honora attributes this to the fact that the poor, migrant, and transient rarely possess the required characteristics of future-oriented thinking. She says that in order to develop these mind sets, people must be able to trust others, have a sense of predictability and some self-empowerment they can use to influence people and situations.

Teachers play an important role in getting students motivated to learn; however there seems to be a challenge to educate teachers about the needs of minority

students. According to one study, only 13 percent of about 3000 student teachers were willing to teach in urban schools (Proctor, Rentz, & Jackson, 2001). Most of these future teachers, in the teacher education programs surveyed, had little or no experience in schools with non-white populations. According to the survey, about 80 percent of these future teachers also believed that urban children had lower learning ability than other children. However, Proctor, Rentz, and Jackson (2001) report that there is a disparity between the ethnic make-up of potential teachers and the background of the future students. They state that “prospective teachers will continue to be predominantly white, middle-class females under 25 years of age, while the percentage of students who are minorities and second language learners will continue to increase” (p. 220). The researchers found that middle-class white teachers had predominantly negative ideas about minority students and urban schools in general. These researchers state that if this trend continues, minority students will increasingly feel alienated from the learning process and will continue to reject the educational systems. Stage and Manning (1992) report that if

Educators fail to consider multicultural students as people with unique perspectives based on cultural knowledge ... a significant cultural dimension of their personas is ignored or denied ... (and) students reject educational systems that do not respond to their cultural backgrounds. (p. 19)

The expectation of a teacher greatly affects the motivation level of the student. Moss and Fuller (2000) found in their research that a teacher’s perception, as to whether a student had the potential to learn, greatly influenced student’s academic

success. Tournaki (2003) stated that all children are affected by how they think others feel about them. She examined how teachers predict the social and academic future success of their students. One of the factors the teachers relied on was whether the student was engaged in the lessons and learning activity. For the less engaged students, the teacher predicted lower academic and social future success which, according to Tournaki (2003), will ultimately affect the student's self perception.

One study noted that as the nation's schools become more culturally diverse, it is essential to develop a knowledge base to encourage academic achievement and equity for all students (Lee, 2003). Stewart, Evans, and Kaczynski (1997) found that one of the most important things that affect a students' success is if the teacher has high expectations, and believe that all students can learn. They cite Walker and Shea (1995) as claiming that all teachers must have high but realistic expectations for students, must adapt instruction to learning styles, and accommodate for diversity.

Objectives of the Project

One of the objectives of this project is to be a resource for teachers and administrators in regards to the importance of including diversity in the lesson plans. Many school districts, especially those that may not have many minority students, may question whether their school would benefit from adding more culture and diversity. This project presents the extensive research that supports such practices, as well as research that claims all students benefit, not just the minority students.

The primary goal of this project is to provide some lesson plans that include culture and diversity. Literature is an especially good source to embed culture and diversity.

Definition of Terms

The following terms and their definitions will provide uniformity of understanding for their use in this project.

Benchmark: as defined by The New Oxford American Dictionary (McKean, 2005)

a standard or point of reference against which things may be compared or assessed (p.152)

Caucasian: as defined by The New Oxford American Dictionary (McKean, 2005)

in the racial classification as developed by anthropologists in the 19th century, Caucasian included peoples whose skin color ranged from light (in northern Europe) to dark (in parts of North Africa and India). Although the classification is outdated and the categories are now not generally accepted as scientific, the term has acquired a more restricted meaning. It is now used, esp. in the U.S., as a synonym for ‘white or of European origin,’ as in the following citation: the police are looking for a Caucasian male in his forties. (p. 271).

Curriculum: as defined by The New Oxford American Dictionary (McKean, 2005)

The subjects comprising a course of study in a school or college (p. 415)

Disengaged: as defined by The New Oxford American Dictionary (McKean, 2005)

emotionally detached: the students were oddly disengaged, as if they didn't believe they could control their lives (p. 484)

Diverse: as defined by The New Oxford American Dictionary (McKean, 2005)

showing a great deal of variety: a culturally diverse population. (of two or more things) markedly different from one another (p. 493)

Embed: as defined by The New Oxford American Dictionary (McKean, 2005)

(often be embedded) fix (an object) firmly and deeply in a surrounding mass: figurative implant (an idea or feeling) within something else so it becomes an ingrained or essential characteristic of it: the Victorian values embedded in Tennyson's poetry (p. 551)

GED: (graduate equivalency diploma) a certificate of graduation for adults who do not complete a regular high school. It was developed during World War II for veterans who had quit school to fight for their country. The written test includes writing, social studies, science, reading, and math.

Individuals with Disabilities Act (IDEA): as defined by the Praeger Handbook of Special Education (Bursztyn, 2007)

Law that has become the touchstone for analyzing the rights of all publicly funded, special education students in the United States. It defines a student as being within its protected class if she or he needs special education or related services such as speech or occupational therapy because of mental retardation, hearing impairments (including deafness), speech or language impairments, visual impairments

(including blindness), serious emotional disturbance, orthopedic impairments, autism, traumatic brain injury, other health impairments, or specific learning disabilities. (p. 38)

Integrate: as defined by The New Oxford American Dictionary (McKean, 2005)

Combine (one thing) with another so that they become a whole: bring into equal participation in or membership of society or an institution or body: integrating children with special needs into ordinary schools (p. 876)

Majority: defined by The New Oxford American Dictionary (McKean, 2005)

the greater number; to be in the majority: belong to or constitute the larger group or number: publishing houses where women are in the majority (p. 1022)

Minority: defined by The New Oxford American Dictionary (McKean, 2005)

the smaller number or part; a relatively small group of people, esp. one commonly discriminated against in a community, society, or nation, differing from others in race, religion, language, or political persuasion: representatives of ethnic minorities (p. 1080)

No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB): as defined by the Praeger Handbook of Special Education (Bursztyn, 2007)

this act contains the most recent amendments to the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) of 1965. NCLB was enacted in 2002 and became the signature education statute of the George W.

Bush presidency. In addition, it redefined the federal role in K-12 education. Its main objective is to ensure that all public school students in the United States – including traditionally underserved groups such as low-income students, black and Latino students, and students receiving special education – meet high academic standards by 2014. Annual tests in reading, math, and science for all students, with data separated out by grade and the specialized populations described above, is used to track progress toward this goal in meeting state standards. Districts and schools receiving federal Title I funding that fail to make “adequate yearly progress” are required to provide parent-initiated school choice, supplementary educational services such as tutoring, and curricula validated by scientifically based research, as approved by the federal Department of Education. (p. 43)

Privilege: as defined by The New Oxford American Dictionary (McKean, 2005)
A special right, advantage, or immunity granted or available only to a particular person or group of people: *education is a right, not a privilege* (p. 1349)

Standard: defined by The New Oxford American Dictionary (McKean, 2005)
A level of quality or attainment; *the governor’s ambition to raise standards in schools*; an idea or thing used as a measure, norm, or model in comparative evaluations: (p. 1651)

Limitations of the Project

The goal of this project is to integrate a variety of cultures and diversity into the middle school classroom; although adaptations could be made for elementary or high school classrooms. Several lesson plans that promote diversity and culture will be included, but almost any lesson plan can be amended to include this goal. This researcher hopes that by embedding diversity, minority students will feel more accepted, better relate to the lessons, and feel more successful academically as well as socially. Since the teachers' observations of students will be the main feedback as to the success of the newly embedded curriculum, there are many variables that are affected. The ultimate hope would be to decrease minority dropout rates, but since dropout doesn't usually occur until high school it would require a long term study to see those effects.

All students will benefit by embedding diversity into the current curriculum by including books, materials, and writing assignments that include representation of diverse minority groups. Since most teachers or schools may not have many materials that fit these criteria, it will require the teacher to gradually add such items to the classroom. As other teachers, administration, and the school library take on these cultural goals, the task of locating items and books to use will be much easier.

CHAPTER TWO: LITEATURE REVIEW

Introduction

Schools today are supposed to be preparing students to be able to enter the workforce successfully. That outcome looks bleak for a large number of minority students who are not doing well even in the school setting. According to Childress (2006) many middle school students, including minorities and girls, that were failing their general classes, would "come alive in technology class" (p. 6). He states that he is confused that, with the great opportunity for these students, why there are so few minorities and females in the technology field. Childress (2006) says that

the lack of diversity in the workforce nationwide is taking an economic toll ... Failure to fill jobs with women and minorities is estimated to cost science, technology, engineering, and mathematics - related businesses and industries \$4 billion annually. (p.6)

Something needs to be done to keep these minority students in school and motivated to want to succeed in the many varieties of the work force. This researcher has looked at many related research documents and books, in an attempt to better understand this on-going problem. First, attitudes of minority students will be addressed. The next section will focus on teachers not being culturally aware. Then how classroom materials may affect diversity issues. After that, what researchers have learned about culture and diversity. Lastly, this author will give some final conclusions.

Attitudes of Minority Students

The expectation of a teacher greatly affects the motivation level of the student. Moss and Fuller (2000) found in their research that a teacher's perception, as to whether a student had the potential to learn, greatly influenced student's academic success. Tournaki (2003) stated that all children are affected by how they think others feel about them. She examined how teachers predict the social and academic future success of their students. One of the factors the teachers relied on was whether the student was engaged in the lessons and learning activity. For the less engaged students, the teacher predicted lower academic and social future success which, according to Tournaki (2003), will ultimately affect the student's self perception.

It is important for students to feel like they belong. Lavoie (1994) maintains that during adolescence it is very important to be accepted by classmates. He states that students are at risk for emotional problems if they suffer rejection. The teacher can provide the student with a classroom setting in which he feels comfortable, accepted, and welcomed. Coming to school every day can become a hopeless task for some children unless they succeed and feel like they belong. Smith and Croom (2000) contend that children construct their complex perceptions of themselves through the experiences they encounter. Since a child spends so much time in school, it is expected that their experiences at school will greatly influence their self perceptions. Their research also noted that in classrooms where the child's creative

thinking and divergent thinking were praised or accepted, both immediate and long-term positive effects on achievement appeared to take place.

According to Goldstein (1999) humans will naturally be engaged, responsive to, and comforted by contact with others. In a research study of urban minority schools, Waxman and Huang (1997) found that the teachers in the effective schools interacted with the students nearly twice as often as the teachers for the ineffective schools. The African American students in these same effective schools were "more motivated, had higher aspirations, and perceived more Task Orientation and Rule Clarity than students from the ineffective schools" (p. 36).

Teachers - Not Being Culturally Aware

Minority students make up 40 percent of the pupil population in the United States, but minority teachers make up only nine percent of the three million public school teachers that currently exist (Irvine, 2003). According to Irvine (2003), forty-four percent of the nation's schools have no minority teachers and since 81 percent of the teacher education students are white females, that bleak statistic is not likely to change any time soon. (p. 52). Stewart, England, and Meier (1989) supported the need for more minority teachers. They stated that

given historical inequities in educational opportunities afforded black students, representativeness of school faculties is crucial. Black teachers improve the quality of education provided to black students. (p. 301)

Stewart, England, Meier (1989) also found in their research that minority teachers provide role models for the students and help to discredit myths of racial inferiority, which helps promote feelings of integrity and importance for minority groups.

Proctor, Rentz, and Jackson (2001) concluded from their research that many teachers and teacher education students have negative attitudes toward urban schools and culturally diverse learners. One recent study found that only 13 percent of 3000 teachers said they were willing to teach in urban schools. (p. 220)

The studies of Schultz, Neyhart, and Reck (1996) seem to support this attitude, since they found that 80 percent of the future teachers in their survey believed that "urban children were lower in learning ability than other children" (p. 2).

According to Davis and Dupper (2004) "teachers underestimate the powerful impact of their attitudes and beliefs on student success" (p. 184). One study conducted by Rosenthal and Rubin (1978) also supports this belief. In their study the teachers were given names of students whom would excel, but there really was no basis for that information. Davis and Dupper (2004) summarize Rosenthal and Dupper's (1978) study as follows

students who were chosen to excel actually did perform better than their peers at the end of the school year. These students gained an average of 15 points on their IQ scores while their classmates' IQ scores remained unchanged. The

authors concluded that these differences could only be attributed to teachers' expectations, attitudes, and behaviors. Particularly interesting was the fact that the Mexican-American children who were chosen made the most significant gains. Although teachers are reluctant to declare that they cannot help students because of their race, social class, or family circumstances, these studies provide evidence that teachers' attitudes, expectations, and behaviors have a powerful influence on student achievement regardless of individual characteristics or family background. (p.184)

Classroom Materials

Sleeter (2005) states in her research that

for at least three decades, advocates have argued that textbooks should be representative and accurate, not only for the sake of being truthful but because the quality of school experiences for students from historically oppressed communities is severely compromised when textbooks either omit their communities entirely or portray them in distorted and derogatory ways. (p. 13).

Sleeter (2005) contends that since textbooks have the power to define what gets taught, there has been much criticism regarding their content. Due to negative publicity, book publishers, in the 1970's and early 1980's, began addressing certain omissions and stereotypes (Sleeter, 2005). She continues with results of her study, stating that although most textbooks now include people of different ethnic

backgrounds and both sexes, that teachers should "not assume that publishers have taken care of the forms of bias". (p.85) Sleeter (2005) concluded in a study in which she had teachers evaluate textbooks and found that

all but two teachers reported that 80-100 percent of people in their texts to be middle class, and the other two found the upper class to outnumber everyone else. Lower-class people were either absent or underrepresented, and appeared mainly as people of color (e.g., slaves). ... Further, texts often link poverty with people of color, particularly in illustrations. (p.87)

Okhee (2003) agrees with these textbook findings. He states that traditional textbooks or regular curriculum do not tend to use examples from diverse backgrounds. He states that "although establishing instructional congruence is a challenge to most teachers, it promotes students' understanding" (p. 467).

Okhee (2003) found that one teacher was able to use students' home language and culture in science to help them understand.

Cooking is important in feeding a family, and they relate to that well. Hispanics do a lot of cooking in their homes. All the foods they cook at home require a lot of boiling, and they see the evaporation. So when they have lessons that involve boiling and evaporating, they have something to build on to learn science. When they do the activity on boiling, we talk about boiling frijoles (beans) and arroz (rice), things they can relate to. (p. 76)

Teachers complain that they have difficulty finding good cultural books. Kitano and Pedersen (2002) found in their research that "nearly two-thirds of responding elementary teachers cited lack of materials as a problem when implementing multicultural goals" (p.270). Harris (1992) places part of that blame onto uninformed publishers who don't realize the increased market demand for these books. She supports this by the fact that

over 5000 children's books were published in 1990; only 51 of these were written and/or illustrated by African Americans. ... Only one book written by an African American for children was a best-seller in 1990. That book was *Roll of Thunder, Hear My Cry*. ... Excuses such as perceptions among some that the books are only for African-American children, or the belief that customers do not want to purchase the books makes the problem seem insurmountable. (p.68)

Harris (1992) claims that clearly there is a need for children's culturally rich books. She gives several examples to support this and continues to come across similar stories. First at a speaking engagement in New Jersey she was approached by an attendant that had recently been involved in a book fair that featured African-American children's literature. "The book fair posted sales in excess of 25 hundred dollars" (p.69). A second example was a couple that became frustrated with trying to "locate children's books that provided positive portrayals of African American children" (p.69). So they opened their own bookstore, called Just Us Books, in which

they only sold children's books that fulfilled that need. "In just three years, their company has sold over 350,000 copies of seven titles including *Bright Eyes, Brown Skin*" (p. 69).

What Researchers Have Learned

Teachers need to provide lessons that minority students can relate to. The National Council for Teachers is pushing for teachers to make connections to real World experiences (Leonard, & Guha, 2002). In order to relate to real world experiences, culture and ethnicity must be taken into account. Pope and Reynolds (1997) support diversity training for educational leaders. They claim that

The growing and complex multi-cultural dynamics of many institutions necessitate that student affairs professionals not only be prepared to address multi-cultural issues, but also acquire the skills necessary to work effectively with culturally diverse populations. (p. 266)

Teachers also need to be trained in diversity issues in order to provide the best possible education to the children of society. Okhee Lee (2003) states that "for students from diverse backgrounds, learning is enhanced- indeed, made possible- when it occurs in contexts that are linguistically and culturally meaningful and relevant to them" (p. 2).

Teachers more than ever before must take into consideration the background or culture that each child brings to the classroom. McLean (2002) states that

understanding the importance of the knowledge, skills, and values that the children have acquired from home, gives teachers the opportunity to make connections to their cultures. When the student can see how the lesson or concept relates to his own life, then he can understand the significance of education. McLean further contends that teachers should develop ways to extend textbook examples to include students' daily experiences. One example she provided was that of an eight-year-old Alaskan girl who was stumped by a mathematical story problem that involved simple addition. After a long silence, the girl looked at the teacher and asked, "But what are tennis rackets?" (2002) The girl's culture did not have tennis rackets, so she was stuck and unable to do the math. Teachers need to teach concepts in ways that all the students can succeed. The girl could certainly do the math, but if she had not asked about the tennis rackets, the teacher would've assumed she could not do the addition.

Teachers are now challenged with how to incorporate more diversity into their classrooms. One report (Jairels, Brazil, & Patton, 1999) states that

several challenges have emerged as educators attempt to meet the demands of teaching in an ever changing multicultural society. One of these challenges is that many teachers have limited knowledge of different cultures and groups of people. Such a lack of a knowledge base could affect teachers' abilities to teach from a multicultural perspective. Educators cannot teach what they do not know. Moreover, some teachers may believe that they lack adequate

methods, materials, and strategies pertinent to multicultural education.

(p. 303)

So where do teachers begin? One way is to begin integrating diversity and cultural literature into the curriculum. Jarrrels, Brazil, and Patton suggest using magazines that are written for culturally diverse groups. The magazine can serve as a resource for lesson planning. It also can provide successful role models for students that have similar backgrounds to the people featured in the magazine. Books classified as being “high interest, easy readers” are an excellent choice according to researchers, M.F. Graves and R.A. Phillipot (2002). It is important for teachers to become familiar with the good books that are available. One suggestion was to utilize books that have won Caldecott and Newberry awards. D.T. Ouzts, and M.K. Taylor (2003) conducted some surveys that showed not many elementary teachers were very familiar with these award winning books. They suggested that professional development training be incorporated to better educate the teachers on the resources out there. Getting kids motivated to read will help them be a better reader, and thus will help them feel more successful. A student that feels successful in the school setting is less likely to drop out.

There are a lot of children’s literature that can be integrated into almost any curriculum planning. Chappell and Thompson (2000) claim that integrating cultural content will increase learning opportunities for all students. Based on their research they developed a list of children’s literature, movies, games, posters, and other

resources that have a cultural perspective. They state that any teacher can easily integrate culture and diversity, simply by choosing appropriate literature, or other objects to include in their daily lessons.

Social Studies units are especially easy to integrate culture and diversity, since its focus is on people any ways. Scott Waters (1999) states that in “the hands of a resourceful teacher, children’s literature serves as a marvelous teaching and learning tool” (p. 80). He also states that good literature can allow students to live in another part of the world or to experience the feelings of another culture through the eyes of the character in the book. Numerous research supports using literature to help students get a deeper understanding of the historical events or experiences.

Harris (1992) claims that literacy achievement in African-American children would make gains if they could see themselves and their culture in the books they read. She states that,

I want children to discover African-American literature and the literature of other people of color in a more systematic fashion. I want it to become an integral component of schooling. I am hopeful that children will encounter books such as *Me and Neesie*, *Abuela*, *Tucking Mommy In*, and *Hawk, I'm Your Brother* with as much ease as *The Tale of Peter Rabbit*. (p.xvi)

Chavkin (2005) has found that it takes more than just the teachers in the community to combat this lack of culture and diversity in the schools. She states

It is unlikely that teachers on their own will become knowledgeable about working with diverse families, and certainly it is unfair to place the responsibility for family involvement on teachers without giving them some assistance. It is understandable that many teachers are feeling short-of-time and overburdened with responsibilities. There are no easy answers. The complexity of the issue demands use of multiple approaches at more than one level to prepare both pre-service and in-service educators to work with diverse families. (p.16)

One of the best predictors of diverse students' success is whether they feel like they belong. Qiuyun (2001) finds in her studies that

a caring-centered multicultural teacher conveys a sense of urgency in raising students' levels of achievement and self-efficacy. Through a caring and culturally relevant education process, children will develop and become successful in schools so that they can contribute to the creation of a more just society. (p.107)

Qiuyun (2001) supports this idea with an example of a school system in Calexico, California, that based their teaching on "caring-centered multi-cultural education" (p.107). This school is made up of 98 percent minority, has a high rate of unemployment, and the average family income is less than 12,000 dollars a year.

by focusing on caring-centered multicultural education, the school district has "beaten the odds" against it. Calexico's dropout rate is only 14 percent

annually, while the Latino drop-out rate statewide is almost twice as large. Furthermore, 20 percent of Calexico High School graduates go on to Four-year universities, while another 58 percent continue their education at community colleges. Calexico, the poorest school district in California with the most population of farm workers and most Latinos, is graduating kids at a higher rate than Beverly Hills! (p.107)

Qiuyun attributes the success in the classroom where "teachers build strong, trusting relationships with parents and students and emphasize the importance of academic achievement for every child" (p. 107).

Irvine (2003) concludes that the need to increase teachers of color onto the staff should be a priority in school districts. School districts with high numbers of African American teachers had fewer African-American students "placed in special education, fewer suspended or expelled, more were placed in gifted and talented programs and more graduated from high school" (p. 54). She claimed that teachers of color share common experiences with their diverse students, such as "hopes, dreams, and expectations of their families." (p. 54) One of her research subjects stated that "When I see the faces of these children, I can't help but see myself" (p. 54).

Another successful approach for minority students to be engaged in is afterschool development or enrichment programs. Roffman, Pagano, and Hirsch (2001) in their studies cite many researchers that agree with them that minority youth

development programs, that focus on growth and has opportunity to form relationships with caring, stable adults has been very successful. They stated that

children's perception of the atmosphere at the Boys and Girls Clubs was linked to well-being. Enjoyment of the club related to better psychosocial functioning for girls and fewer behavior problems for older children. Not feeling badly treated at the club related to better psychosocial functioning for children overall, particularly for black boys. (p. 97)

Conclusion

The research presented in this paper clearly shows that diversity and culture needs to be integrated into the school curriculum. Teachers need to be more educated on the issues of culture and diversity, and how to help students of color to see themselves in the lessons. Too many minority students are leaving the educational system due to a feeling of failure both academically and socially. Much research has supported the fact that teacher expectations and beliefs, greatly affect students' self perception of themselves and their motivation to learn. It will take more than just the teachers to improve the diversity and cultural well-being of the minority students; the administration and the community need to be involved and educated on the issues. The lack of minority teachers in a school district is alarming and efforts should be made to increase minority representation. Numerous researchers have concluded that the use of literature in the curriculum is one effective way to integrate culture and diversity in a positive manner. Teachers must make an effort to locate materials and

books that will help to improve diversity and culture for all students, not just the minority students.

CHAPTER THREE: PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Introduction

Growing up, I had neighbors that were African-American, but there were very few non-white students in the school I attended. When I was about 10 years old I watched a television series, called *Roots*, that showed the realistic life of a young slave, named Kunta Cante. Prior to watching the show I had no idea that blacks had been treated so badly. It made such an impact that I still remember the show today. I recall thinking, "I'm glad things aren't like that anymore!" Now as an adult, I realize that prejudice still exists. There might not be public hangings, etc., but minority groups have negative stereotypes that flourish. I think a lot of the stereotypes are accepted simply because people are not familiar with a certain race, so lack of education contributes to the problem. Haberman (1991) in his 33 years of experience in working with teacher preparation institutions, has found "that education faculty members do not agree on the values that future teachers need because they do not agree that future teachers need to become more culturally aware" (p.27).

As teachers we need to provide students with a good variety of books that will embed them with culture and diversity. According to Reif (2000) when you read books aloud to kids that they really enjoy, then they look for books by the same author or books with similar topics. They then also trust you to make good recommendations. She further states

I am suggesting we read at least four or five novels or plays a year as a whole class so we can engage all of our kids in the process of real reading / thinking

about the meaning of those words on the page, even as we are teaching them to pronounce the words. (p. 52)

Johnson and Smith also agree with her. They state in their findings that

Dealing with diversity through multicultural fiction is an effort to come to terms with the complexities involved in such profound social change. Here the reader will encounter a learning community of teachers and students who are trying to understand themselves and others through reading, reflection, discussion, and an exploration of values and attitudes. These attitudes are defined in relation to personal and group identity, as well as to awareness of cultural, ethnic, physical, and other differences. Real-life issues of stereotyping and prejudice are confronted through encounters with fictional characters. (p.45)

Children's Book Project

For my project I will providing two lesson plan projects in which my research supports the fact that these lessons will help to embed culture and diversity into the classroom. The first part will be having the students create a 32-page authentic children's book, in which they will be completing the text, illustrations, and all other components of a published book. (Lessons presented in Appendix A). This project begins with immersing the students with many children's picture books that will include many featuring diversity and culture. Waters (1999) states that good picture books should not be limited to just the younger children because "many books in

picture book format such as Polacco's *Pink and Say* (1994), contain important messages appropriate for older readers" (p.81). Gilbert (2000), a fifth grade teacher also claims that picture books have been one of her greatest tools in making literature successful. She explains that it involves

brainstorming about what the author was thinking when writing, when choosing the words; where the idea for the plot came from; how the pictures support the text; and connections from the book to other books, other authors' styles, and to our personal experiences. (p. 9)

One way to find good books for students is by including Caldecott and Newberry Medal books. Many of those books have cultural and diverse topics. Ouzts, Taylor, and Taylor (2003) also are advocates of teachers using the Caldecott and Newberry medal books, since these books have been judged to be some of the best children's literature. During their research they unfortunately found that many teachers were not very familiar with those books. They stated that "fewer than half of the sample population recognized the Caldecott Award Books, while less than one-third of the sample population recognized the Newberry Award Books" (p. 84). Teachers will need to become more aware of the children's literature that is available.

Slave Dancer Project

The second part of my project will be using a Newberry Medal chapter book called, *The Slave Dancer*, by Paula Fox. This book looks at slavery on a slave ship, but from the eyes of a young boy that was kid-napped and forced to play his fife as

part of the exercise rituals for the newly captured slaves. These lesson plans are provided in Appendix B. As part of the *Slave Dancer* lesson plan I've also included a lesson plan in which the students will be doing a live debate against each other. They will have to research real characters in history that were for slavery and others that were against. The debate will have them role playing as those characters in history and they will work as teams, much like the North debated against the South.

Children, and adults for that matter, need to see themselves in the literature they are reading in order to really be engaged in it. They want to feel like they are like everyone else and that they belong. I worked as a foster parent for 10 years and I will never forget the excitement of a three-year-old African American foster boy that I had in my care. He came running upstairs screaming, "Look, this ones like me - this ones like me!" He had found a Fisher Price "little people" that was black. (If you are not familiar with these toys they are kind of like miniature Barbie dolls.) He had only been living with us for a few days and had, until this point, been fairly shy and quiet. He was even more excited when I told him that I would help him look in the toy box for some more like that. He had found the father figure and I knew that we had a mom, a baby, and a little boy that was also black. The sad part is that the only reason I had purchased those was because the store had been completely out of all the white dolls. He carried those "little people" around with him and even slept with them for several days. After this incident I made a point of adding more cultural and diverse toys to my household. I never had really thought about it before. I now have minority

baby dolls, and minority Barbie dolls, along with a lot more assortment of books and kids' videos that feature minority people in them as well. My foster son's little brothers (twins that were two years old) didn't seem to have a preference for the African American looking dolls over the Caucasian dolls. But their older brother at just three and a half years old had a major connection.

Delpit and White-Bradley (2003) also have found in their studies that their minority students were much more engaged in the lesson when they could see themselves in the lessons. The researchers especially noted this when studying Ancient Egyptian and specifically the Kemetic people that lived there. The Middle School they were teaching was 99% African American children. Their research concluded that

as they studied this classical civilization, the students, all of African descent, became increasingly fascinated by the intricacies of the society. They were even more intrigued by the images of the Kemetic people -- actual photographs of statues, paintings, and relics collected primarily by friends of the authors who had visited Egypt, rather than from textbooks. "That man looks like my cousin, " remarked one dark-skinned student. "How come they're so black? They don't look like the people who acted in *The Mummy*," (movie) commented another. Once the students realized that Kemetic people of the earliest and the most significant of the dynasties were in fact Africans

phenotypically similar to themselves, the study of the civilization took on new meaning. (p.84)

Project Conclusions

I believe those toys gave my foster son (mentioned above) comfort and made him feel safe, like he belonged at our home. He opened up after that and seemed relaxed and like a happy little boy instead of being scared. This life experience made it clear to me that such a simple gesture as having toys or books that children can relate to themselves, can really make a difference for all children, but immensely so for minority children. The tragic truth that the research has pointed out throughout this paper is that the school system is failing too many of our minority students. Much research shows that by embedding culture and diversity into the curriculum that the minority students are more engaged, have better grades, and most of all have better outlooks on school and themselves. It's a shame that even with the beneficial research results that many teachers and schools have done very little to implement culture and diversity into their lesson plans. With the use of my projects and others that utilize children's literature to provide culture and diversity, more students are bound to feel more like they belong and hopefully more motivated to stay in school.

Project Dissemination

I will continue to create new lesson plans that embed culture and diversity. I also will take opportunities to educate fellow teachers and administrators about the importance of embedding culture and diversity. I also will continue to add toys,

books, posters, props, and other materials that promote culture and diversity. I will look for opportunities to incorporate diversity both at school and at my home teaching my own children, nieces and nephews, and anyone else I may have the opportunity to influence in a good cultural way.

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Appendix A

Writing a Book for Children

Lesson Plans by Tammy Hamlin

Thousands of children's books are written and published in the United States every year. There continues to be a demand for new creative books for children. In the age of electronics and video games, the need to expand student's creative minds is crucial. This project can be adapted to almost any age. This particular project is appropriate for grades fourth to eighth. Depending on the age of the students, you probably will get an attitude that they are too old for kids books. A simple reminder of famous books, such as *Harry Potter* and *Star Wars* should get rid of most of those attitudes. (There are many picture books available, not just the chapter books.) As you get into the project the students hopefully will get excited about their book and be proud of their finished project.

The use of the book, *From Pictures to Words, a Book About Making a Book*, by author Janet Stevens, is an awesome book to use with this project. This book set up this project and the use of the story boards is especially useful in helping and forcing students to think out all aspects of their story. A title, characters, a problem, a plot, and a setting should all be included in every story, no matter how young the student author is. This project is an authentic writing experience and assessment. Since real authors generally are expected to write a 32-page children's book, our students also should be held to those standards. It is effective to relate to the students that they are authors and the teacher is like an editor in real life. An editor does make suggestions, does have requirements, and does reject some work. It should be mentioned that during the production process some pages will most likely get ruined and the student (author) may have to redo the artwork. For instance, if the laminating machine eats a page, then that may have to be redone. In real life, artwork sent through the mail could be damaged in the process and the real authors / illustrator may have to recreate

the pages. It is best to mention this to the students at the forefront to prepare them.

Hopefully not many will have to be redone, but for instance, if a grammar error is caught after the illustration is complete, it should be redone. The published book should be, if at all possible, error free. That definitely is the goal.

There will be a great opportunity for peer proofing and brain storming to help their fellow students. It also is a good opportunity to practice the skill of appropriate suggestions. No put downs will be tolerated when sharing each other's book ideas, etc. Practicing some peer reviews together is useful. Also, to emphasize that some comments are not useful to the author. For instance, simply saying "I don't understand this page" probably won't be as useful as comments such as "I'm trying to figure out who is talking on this page."

I've found that there will always be procrastinators, so requiring about six squares on the story board to be completed in intervals of deadlines helps force the students to move on with their ideas. Books such as *Star Wars*, took years to write, and even though this is not a chapter book, revisions and expanded ideas could continue for years. So just as in real life when many writers have deadlines to meet, so do the students in this project. George Lucas, the author of *Star Wars*, has commented that he still sometimes thinks of things he would've done differently, but he finally had to draw the line and finish the story. A writer can always improve on their writing, even famous authors.

This project is especially exciting in regards to being able to expose the kids to lots and lots of books. So please take this opportunity to include many cultural and diverse children's books for the students to be reading and analyzing to get ideas for their books. Since they are children's picture books with not as much reading as chapter books, the students will be reading lots of books. So this is a great opportunity to have them experience lots of culture and diversity. They will be reading the books and analyzing things to help them get ideas for their own book.

The book publisher, Scholastic, has published quite a few books that were written by various school age students. It is helpful if you can get your hands on one or more of those books. The actual published book, with the student's photo in the back is really motivating for the students.

The students will need a very large, blank piece of paper to make their story board squares. I've found that the large flip board paper works well. They will need to have the 32 squares drawn, leaving space under each one to write the text that will go with the illustration. I have used the drawing of the squares as part of the math curriculum measuring and producing the 32 squares in neat rows and columns - all of the same size, etc. The illustrations will be rough drafted in each of the squares. The first page will be the cover, then the next page is blank as it will be the backside of the cover. (Some use that as the "dedicated to page") So the third square on the story board is the title page. Then you can decide if you want to use one square for an author profile or to save the author profile for the back cover of the book, there also needs to be an abstract, to entice readers to read the book.

Once the squares are all drawn, then you can set deadlines for a certain number of squares to be done. Some may know how they want the story to end, so those students can complete squares at the end of the book. The title page might be one they find easy. Some kids may find it hard to get started but it seems to help when they know that they don't have to start with the beginning. Maybe they want to do a scene from the middle of the story. Just set deadlines for either 4 or 6 squares to be complete at different dates. Plus in real life authors definitely don't always start with the beginning when they have an idea.

One of the things that I love about this project is that you can tie in certain mini-lessons each day as the students continue to work on their books. I've included a few of my mini-lessons, but pretty much any writing curriculum lessons that you are wanting to cover will help them with their books.

Depending on the grade, you may want to have a computer template produced (or one may already exist) that has the large square and the place for them to type their text under it. I've found that has worked best, since then the books all look similar in style. Most schools have technology standards to be taught so this could possibly be tied in with that curriculum? They would need to know how to place the page numbers, etc.

Student's Name: _____ Date: _____

Story Book Writing Project

Assignment: To produce a children's book with 32 pages. You will be required to make a story board of the book prior to beginning the final pages. Group editing and critiquing will be expected. All writers, even famous authors, can develop and improve their writing skills. You will be graded on creativity, attention to detail, how well the story flows, and finally how well you present your finished piece.

A Few Guidelines of the Book Project:

- ~ 32 pages
- ~ 3 or 4 characters only
- ~ all aspects of the book must be of appropriate material (no blood and guts, etc.)
- ~ approval of rough draft and story board must be received before beginning the final draft
- ~ it must have a happy ending (remember this is a children's book)
- ~ it must have a title, setting, plot, characters, and a problem of some sort that is resolved by the end of the story
- ~ text and illustrations are required for each page (unless prior approval is given)

Note: If using crayons / or colored pencils, it is suggested to color lightly, so that the wax is not thick on the paper. The reason is that when the project is laminated, it is hot and the wax can melt slightly. Also it is recommended that you use only "Crayola" brand crayons, since they do not melt or smear near as much as "Roseart" or "Prang." Remember the characters and illustrations should remain fairly consistent throughout the story, so the reader is clear on which character is who.

- ~ each page must be numbered
- ~ the text portion of the book will be edited and typed
- ~ illustrations and text must complement each other (in other words, the writing portion must make sense with the pictures)
- ~ must have cover page, title page, dedicated to page, and author profile
- ~ an abstract is also encouraged, which is a lead into the story to entice people to want to read the entire book to find out what happens

Student's Name: _____

Children's Book Project

The following sheets of information must be submitted with your finished book.

1. Book Title: _____

Definition: What the story is called

2. Setting:

Definition: Where the story takes place

3. Problem:

Definition: The situation in the story that needs solving

4. Plot:

Definition: Brief description of what happens in the story

5. Character(s):

Definition: Person(s), critters, or things that are in your story

Please describe each of your main characters below.

Character # 1:

Character # 2:

Character # 3:

Character # 4:

Lesson plan -- Book covers and beginnings – what works, what does not?

Created by Tammy Hamlin

Language Arts Lesson that involves making predictions about books from the title and/or cover. Then to compare the beginning of several stories and decide which beginning is the best and which one is the worst. The students will need to think about why they like or dislike the various beginnings. (This is a lesson to assist them in their thinking of how to begin a story. The students will be writing a children's book as a project. They have begun to think about a story idea and many have started making sketches of possible characters in their story.)

Anticipatory Set: Have LOTS of children's books laid out on the floor so that most of the covers and titles are showing. Yeah, opportunity to embed lots of cultural and diverse books into your project. (Most public libraries allow teachers to check out quite a few books at a time. Spring Lake, for instance, allows one to check out 150 books.) Each of the students will be instructed to quickly pick out 3 (or 4) books by simply looking at the cover. Instruct them that they only have two minutes to make their selections. Then the students will discuss with their team (of 3 or 4 kids) why they picked each of the books. What was it about the cover that made you want to read it. Then the team will read the first page or so of the stories and decide which one has the best beginning. Also to decide which has the worst beginning. They will need to give reasons for their choices. –Brainstorming!

Note: Teachers should observe how many cultural and diverse students may pick books that have cultural or diverse covers, etc. It is interesting to see the reasons various students pick which books, simply by looking at the covers. Since upper elementary and middle school teachers usually are using chapter books, etc, it makes it difficult to expose the students to a

wide range of cultural books. With this project they are reading the picture books so each student can read a lot in a week. That's a lot of cultural and diverse exposures that becomes possible. Choosing Caldecott and Newberry books are especially recommended since many of those already have diverse topics in them. Most importantly, make the project fun and by incorporating culture and diversity into this writing book project that is an extra bonus.

Objective: To demonstrate preferences in reading, viewing, and representing, based on aesthetic qualities, and to explain their choices. [MI Curriculum Framework, Benchmark 3] The students will evaluate the covers, titles, and then the beginning of several stories. (Once again lots of cultural and diverse books should be included.)

Purpose: To give the students an opportunity to choose books that appeal to them personally, and to encourage inquisitive thinking. The students will have to give reasons for their choices. They then will work with their team to evaluate the beginning of each of the stories by reading the first and/or second pages of each book. They will need to choose the best beginning and the worst beginning. They will need to provide reasons for both of the choices.

Input: As the teacher, comment on how there are many different kinds of books. Also that everyone has their own opinions and tastes of books, etc. Stress that there are no right or wrong choices. Instruct the class that they will be evaluating some children's books. Inform them that they will not get the opportunity during this lesson to read the entire book(s) that they will be picking out. Assure them that the books will be available for several weeks so they will get to do that later. Tell them that they first will be picking out three books simply by looking at the covers and titles. They will return to their seats and NOT open the books.

Then discuss in class some of the reasons they picked the various books. As a team, the students will be looking at the beginning of each of the books in their team. Have them read the first page only (in most cases, unless very little or no text is on the first page). They will evaluate the books and decide which one has the best beginning and which one has the worst. They will need to give reasons why they evaluated them in that manner.

Model: Physically walk over to the area where the books are displayed and quickly pick out about three books. Then return with them to your seat. Sit down at a desk and do NOT open the book yet! It will be hard for them not to sneak a peek, but assure them that the rest of the class will be done shortly.

Check for Understanding: As the teacher, ask questions to assure that the students understand what they are going to be doing, once their team is dismissed to pick out their books.

Guided Practice: As the teacher, circulate around the room as the students are gathering their books. Assist where needed and prod those who cannot make up their minds. Also observe for those trying to sneak peeks.

Closure: First the students will share with their team why they chose each book. Then as a whole group list the various reasons on the board. The teams of three or four students will read the first page and begin evaluating the books within their teams. After they have made their decisions, we will share as a whole group the reasons for choosing the best beginning and the worst beginnings. When done, emphasize for the students to remember these things as they begin writing their stories. Point out that different authors will have different opinions, as seen by all the published books that were just looked at. Emphasize that the

important thing to know, as an author, is what your personal feelings are. That way you will be proud of your finished product.

Independent Practice: Instruct the kids to do more evaluating of books to get more ideas. There are a lot more books available. Many may have many children's books at home that they may have never read or have not read in a long time. Encourage them to check out their books at home, perhaps even younger sibling's books. Finally, the local libraries have a ton of books, they could spend some time at the local library, and of course the school library.

Lesson Plan "Setting – is a part of the character ..."

Created by Tammy Hamlin

The following activity is one that helps students realize how important the setting in a story is, and also helps to improve their details in developing characters.

Bring in two boxes of very different sizes. (One quite large and one fairly small.) Keep the large one out of sight so the students are only focused on the one box. Tell them that they are to pretend there is a certain character in the box and have them write a description of the character that they picture being in there. They will share their work with the class. Also have them include a quote of something their character might say. Give them ample time to stretch their imagination a bit. Then share aloud in class. Three to five sentences is good. There hopefully will be some students that will give very good descriptions, that puts an image of their character in your mind. Others will benefit from listening to the more advanced writers. After sharing aloud, then bring out the second box. These boxes can both be empty or you could put some interesting prop in the box. In one of my lessons, I had a life-size Yoda from *Star Wars* in it that I took out after the students brainstormed on a character for the bigger box. I've found that the students were much more detailed in their character description for the second box, as compared to the first box. Bringing something out of the second box after doing the share really helped promote the excitement of writing a book. This activity for most will be fun and not difficult, since there are no wrong descriptions.

Point out, or better yet, probe them to come up with why they had quite different characters, when thinking about them being in the different size boxes. Emphasize that the box represents the setting of each of their characters. The setting of the big box helped to create details of the character, as did the setting of the little box.

If using a prop in the second box, it is helpful to use some character in a well known book to emphasize how real life this assignment is. Someone had to think up each character in each book. Harry Potter has a lot of characters, yet each is distinct from each other.

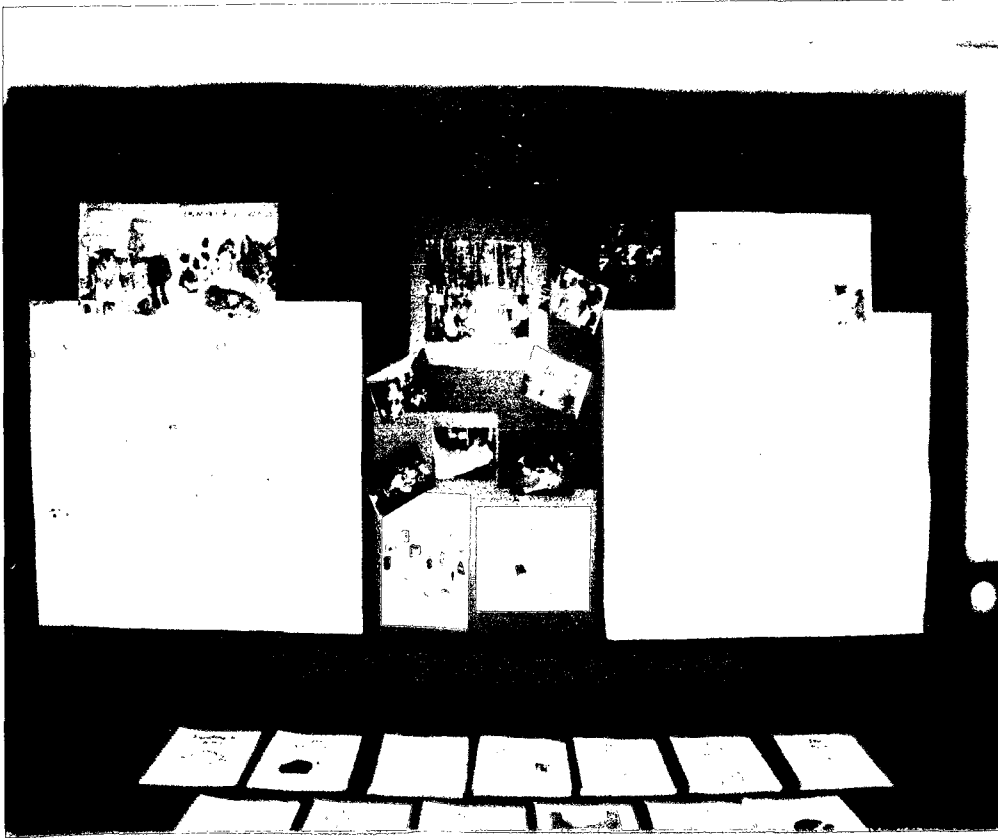
Whatever setting they have in their story will affect how their character is perceived. For instance, a mean looking monster that lives in a beautiful flower is perceived differently than a mean looking monster that lives in a dark, dreary swamp.

Children's Book Writing Rubric - Page One

<i>Objectives</i>	<i>Low Performance</i>	<i>At or Below Average</i>	<i>At or Above Average</i>	<i>Exemplary Performance</i>	<i>Earned Points</i>
Plot: Problem Climax / Resolution	1 Point Neither plot parts are fully developed	2 Points Both plot parts are addressed but not fully developed	3 Points One of the plot parts is fully developed and the less developed part is at least addressed	4 Points Both plot parts are fully developed	
Setting: When and Where	1 Point Neither setting parts are developed	2 Points Both setting parts of the story are addressed but not fully developed	3 Points One of the setting parts is fully developed and the less developed part is at least addressed	4 Points Both setting parts are fully developed	
Characters:	1 Point None of the characters are developed or named	2 Points The main characters are identified or named	3 Points The main characters are developed with some descriptive detail. The reader has a vague idea of the characters.	4 Points The main characters are fully developed with much descriptive detail. The reader has a vivid image of the characters.	
Grammar: Capitalization, Punctuation, and Spelling	1 Point Many errors interfere with meaning	2 Points Careless or distracting errors	3 Points Errors are present but do not interfere with meaning	4 Points Essentially error free	

Children's Book Writing Rubric - Page Two

<i>Objectives</i>	<i>Low Performance</i>	<i>At or Below Average</i>	<i>At or Above Average</i>	<i>Exemplary Performance</i>	<i>Earned Points</i>
Story Board / Outline	1 Point Missing story board and / or outline handout	2 Points Vague or disorganized story board and / or outline handout	3 Points Distinct story board. Shows some evidence of thought and planning	4 Points Complete, clearly organized story board. Shows much evidence of thought and planning.	
Illustrations / Creativity	1 Point Illustrations are not connected to the story or no attempt was made. Very little or no creative ideas or illustrations.	2 Points Illustrations are somewhat correlated to the story. Art shows an attempt to illustrate the story, but the drawings lack detail and /or appropriate color. some creative ideas and/or illustrations were attempted.	3 Points Illustrations, for the most part, correlated to the story. Art is in color and shows some detail. Parts of the book show creative ideas and/or illustrations.	4 Points Illustrations are consistently correlated to the story. The art is colorful and detailed. Creative thoughts and illustrations are included throughout the book.	
Book Construction: Cover Page, Title, Dedicated to, Author Profile, Illustrations on each page, No more than four characters, appropriate material for children, plot, problem, setting, problem resolution, story board, handout, etc. (required elements of book)	1 Point Book is missing too many of the requirements.	2 Points Book is missing three or more of the requirements.	3 Points Book is missing one or two of the requirements	4 Points All necessary requirements are present.	
				Score:	



Bulletin Board of Children's Book Writing Project - Example



**Photo of myself performing the Box Lesson Plan for
"Setting is a part of the Character"**

Appendix B

Slave Dancer Lesson Plans – Standards and Benchmarks Touched Upon

1. SOCIAL STUDIES

Historical:

SS.I.2.LE.3

SS.I.2.LE.4

Geographic:

SS.II.3.LE.1

SS.II.3.LE.2

Civic:

SS.III.5.LE.2

Public Discourse:

SS.VI.1.LE.2

SS.VI.2.LE.1

Citizen Involvement:

SS.VII.1.LE.1

SS.VII.1.LE.2

ENGLISH / LANGUAGE ARTS

ELA.I.1.LE.3

ELA.I.3.LE.3

ELA.III.5.LE.3

ELA.III.5.LE.5

The Slave Dancer Lesson Plans

I. Standards / Benchmarks:

SS.I.2.LE.3	ELA.I.1.LE.3
SS.I.2.LE.4	ELA.I.3.LE.3
SS.II.3.LE.1	ELA.III.5.LE.3
SS.II.3.LE.2	ELA.III.5.LE.5
SS.III.5.LE.2	
SS.VI.1.LE.2	
SS.VI.2.LE.1	
SS.VII.1.LE.1	
SS.VII.1.LE.2	

II. Objectives:

To integrate a historical fiction novel to promote interest and better understanding of the many issues surrounding the slave trade. The book, *The Slave Dancer*, by Paula Fox, is a Newberry Medal book that provides characters with varying views of the slave trade. Students will be engaged in speaking, listening, reading and writing. Critical thinking activities are included throughout the reading of the book. (Copies of the activities are provided following this lesson plan.) The reading of this book and the completion of the activities will take about two weeks to complete. The main goal of these lessons is to get the children to look at slavery from the different views of people involved in it. Also to encourage them to look for experiences in their own lives that remind them of experiences of the characters. Learning to survive and how to adjust to new situations is a theme throughout this novel. All of these activities will help them prepare for the

culminating activity of debating from the perspective of a specific character in history.

By the end of the lessons the students will be able to compare the viewpoints of various characters and be able to “step into that character’s shoes” so to speak. It is important for the students to understand that by knowing how and why events occurred in history, they can perhaps avoid similar problems in the future.

As the teacher, I will continually observe the individuals, groups, and the class to check for understanding. There is a presentation piece in which the students will interview a family member as to how their family came to America, and if there were any hardships that incurred. We will continually discuss in groups and class issues as we read the novel. There are a fair amount of vocabulary words specific to the “slaver’s boat, etc.” so vocabulary definitions will be provided on a regular basis. Most of the words can be figured out from the context clues, so that strategy will be encouraged.

Four of the worksheets the students will be completing were taken, with permission, from *The Slave Dancer*, LIFT Teacher Resource Book. (See copyright permission letter at the back of my Master's Project, located in Appendix D.)

III. Anticipatory Set:

As a pre-read activity leading into the start of the novel and as a start into this unit, I will be using the activity labeled “Imagine.” This activity will generate interest, force the students to access prior knowledge, and encourage them to look deeper into a subject they have already studied, slavery. For instance, the students probably knew the slaves were crammed together. But did they think about food, water, space to lie down, need for sun and air, waste elimination, and so on? After discussing in groups and in class we will begin reading the novel. It is important for the students to know that historical fiction is not real, but that it could be real, based on the facts of other characters.

IV. Input: Materials and methods needed to present lesson

A. Task Analysis: The learner needs to know some prior knowledge regarding the slave trade and some knowledge of American history. They also need to know that the book we will be reading is historical fiction, which means it is based on things that could’ve happened. Finally they need to know that they will be encouraged to work with their groups and the class to look at different views of a situation. Most probably consider slavery to be awful and don’t really understand how so many people had gone along with it. Most of the characters in this book provide view points from the other angle, in which they are involved directly with the slave trade.

The step-by-step procedures for these lessons include reading of the novel and stopping often for discussion. It also involves worksheets that promote critical thinking skills. (See the worksheets for more details of instruction.)

B. Thinking Levels: Bloom's Taxonomy: The reading of the novel will require some previous knowledge they already know. The stopping to discuss and check understanding involves the comprehension aspect.

Below is the breakdown of which thinking levels each of the handouts encourage.

Handout Activity

- **Imagine:** Knowledge, Application since they need to use that knowledge to relate to oneself. Evaluation, since their answers will give me a basis for their thinking strategies and viewpoints.
- **Finding Out:** Knowledge and understanding since they need to connect the relationship to the event described and how that changed the person or person's perception
- **Cooperation:** Knowledge and making connections about what is happening in the story, but that isn't specifically told. Students need to infer as to why certain characters may have done what they did.
- **What Do They Really Mean:** Knowledge and making inferences since there are statements that people say that wouldn't make sense

except that you know they really mean something else. (kind of like when someone says something sarcastic.)

C. Learning Styles and / or Accommodations

- For these activities it is important to provide movement for those that suffer with Attention Deficit Disorder. Allow those with this to draw while you do the read-a-loud. This allows them to concentrate on the story instead of focusing on how to sit still. Also bring in props dealing with the story such as maps, a fife, a whip, perhaps a compass, etc. Any various objects that would relate to the story that would provide opportunity for students to touch and satisfy that need for movement of their bodies. Set the rules of expectations. I suggest to allow all the students to draw if they wish. At first most of the students will want to use the props and draw. But as your class year goes on, you will find that only the students that need that extra movement will continue to utilize the privilege.

D. Method and Materials

- As part of this unit plan we will read aloud in class the Newberry Medal book, *The Slave Dancer*, by Paula Fox. (If possible, it would be great to have a classroom set. That way the students could read a chapter and then the teacher read aloud, checking for understanding.) Other materials needed are copies of the handout activities, photos related to the book to be available

to the students. For instance, photos showing the slaves crammed in the boat together.

V. Modeling

- A. Show as well as tell
- B. How to do as well as what to do
- C. Visual input accompanied by verbal input
- D. Student involvement using several learner modalities

VI. Checking for Understanding

- A. Ask Questions - written answers given to check for understanding
- B. Teach Some – STOP & CHECK – Resume Teaching – etc
 - depending on the outcomes of written work and by observing the groups, the teacher may need to give further explanations where knowledge seems to be lacking
- C. Provide ways for children to respond
 - students throughout *The Slave Dancer* novel will be interacting with peers and the teacher

VII. Guided Practice

- A. Repeated practice of new learning as stated in the objective / benchmark
- B. Modeled first

(B. Thinking Levels: Bloom's Taxonomy: -- Continued of Slave Dancer Lessons)

- **Imagine:** Knowledge (need prior knowledge), Comprehension to make sense of the questions, Synthesis, since they are asked to put themselves as a worker on a slave ship.
- **Finding Out:** Knowledge, Comprehension, Analysis, since they need to relate an occurrence to a change in the character, Synthesis since the students will need to propose what change they think occurs, and finally Evaluation, because they have to consider events before and after an act or occurrence happened in order to notice a change in the character.
- **Cooperation:** Knowledge, Comprehension, Analysis since the student will need to contrast between what really happened in the story and if Jessie had not found the life. Finally, this also promotes the synthesis thinking level since once again the student must imagine.
- **What Do They Really Mean:** Knowledge, Comprehension, Application, since they are interpreting what the character really meant. Evaluation since it asks the student to give their opinion of why Jessie feels lost.

Evaluation is involved in all of the journaling questions, because all of those are asking the students to reflect.

Excerpted text from *The Slave Dancer* by Paula Fox from LIFT
(Literature Is For Thinking) series reprinted with permission from
Sundance/Newbridge Educational Publishers, L.L.C.

Name: _____

1

ACTIVITY

Imagine

Slavery was introduced to America in 1619 when a Dutch ship brought twenty black slaves from Africa to the colony of Jamestown, Virginia. The slave trade was carried on chiefly by New England merchants and shippers. Their trading ships left southern ports for the coast of Africa with cargoes of rum to trade for African citizens, sold by the kings of warring tribes as slaves. The slave ships sailed to Cuba and the United States, where the slaves were exchanged for money, sugar cane, and molasses. These trading ships were wooden vessels ninety feet long. Forty to eighty slaves were placed in poorly ventilated holds, which measured approximately thirty feet by thirty feet, and were chained at the ankles by iron shackles. Answer the following questions, using your imagination and the information in this paragraph.

1. Given the number of slaves in a small hold, what do you think would be their physical and mental needs? What problems could arise if those needs were not met?

2. What sorts of people would be willing to work on a slave ship? How might they be affected by what they see and do?

3. What do you suppose would be the attitude of crew members toward the kind of work they are doing? to the conditions of the blacks?

4. If you were forced to work on a slave ship against your will, what would concern you the most?



In Your Journal . . . How do you feel about slavery? Do you believe slavery goes on today?



LIFT *The Slave Dancer*
Prereading

Critical-Creative Thinking/Reading Comprehension
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4

ACTIVITY

Name: _____

Finding Out

Most characters in a story learn something new or change in some way. For example, Jessie learns about the treatment of slaves and discovers that he has strong emotions about that. He learns about the power that some crew members have over others and that they use that power in unfair and frightening ways.

1. Below is a list of other things Jessie learns or discovers. For each item, write a sentence that describes a change in his behavior or in what he realizes.

Learns/Discovers	Change
a. He is punished if he cries out at the plight of the slaves.	
b. He is the same age as a boy slave.	
c. He finds out "how to be in another place."	
d. He is whipped if he refuses to dance the slaves.	

2. Which one of the things that Jessie learns affects him the most? State two reasons for choosing that answer.

3. Which discovery do you think will have the most lasting effect on Jessie after the journey is over? Why?



In Your Journal . . . So far, what have you learned about slavery that you did not know before?



LIT *The Slave Dancer*
During "Nicholas Spark Walks on Water"

Literary Analysis/Reading Comprehension
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Name: _____

7 ACTIVITY

Cooperation

When Jessie has to go down into the hold to look for his fife, the blacks, especially the young boy Ras, help him. Since this story is written from Jessie's point of view, we do not learn why the captives are willing to help Jessie.

1. Recall what the fife makes the slaves do. Think about how they might feel about dancing to the fife. Then answer these questions. Write each answer in complete sentences.

a. Why do you think the blacks help Jessie?

b. What would have happened to Jessie if he had not brought the fife out of the hold?

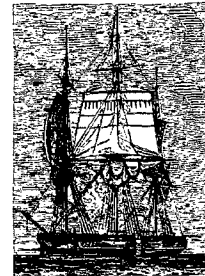
c. What would have happened to the slaves if Jessie had not found the fife?

2. Write a dialogue between Jessie and Ras in which Jessie questions Ras about what happened when the blacks discovered the fife, what they talked about, and what they thought when they saw Jessie lowered into the hold. Write the dialogue to read like a play. Use another sheet of paper if you need more space.



In Your Journal . . . Think of a difficult situation you have been in recently. Who helped you? Why did they help out?

LIFT *The Slave Dancer*
During "The Spaniard"



Writing/Critical-Creative Thinking
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12

ACTIVITY

What Do They Really Mean?

Sometimes a character makes a statement that cannot be taken as it stands but needs to be interpreted. Below are statements that characters make. These are not just simple descriptions or statements; they have additional meaning. Read these quotations. Write your answer to each question.

1. *I wish Stout was dead!* I cried.
But he is dead, said Purvis. *He's been dead for years. And there's one of him on every ship that sails!*
 - a. What does Purvis mean by the first sentence?

 - b. What does he mean in the third sentence?

2. At the time of the following quotation, *The Moonlight* is not literally lost. It is on course, but something else causes Jessie to make this statement: *I thought that now I understood the phrase, 'lost at sea.'*
 - a. What does Jessie mean by his statement?

 - b. What one thing, in your opinion, makes him feel the most lost?

3. As Jessie prepares to leave for home, Daniel says to him, *I hope you have a safe journey.* Jessie continues: *I stepped out of the but. Daniel had saved my life. I couldn't expect more than that.*
 - a. Jessie really does have another expectation. What is it?

 - b. Why is it an impossible expectation?

4. At the beginning of the voyage, Purvis tells Jessie: *You'll see some bad things, but if you didn't see them, they'd still be happening, so you might as well.*
 - a. What does Purvis mean?

 - b. What does that tell you about Purvis's reasons for being on a slave ship?



In Your Journal . . . Do you always say what you really mean? Explain.

LIFT *The Slave Dancer*
After "The Old Man"

Critical-Creative Thinking/Reading Comprehension
Copyright © Sundance

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Lesson Plan -- Pre-Civil War Time in America

Culminating Activity: A Student Debate

Benchmarks / Standards

SS.I.2.LE.3

SS.IV.2.LE.3

ELA.I.3.LE.3

This lesson plan works best if the students have had experience using the Venn Diagram where they must find beneficial points for both sides. For instance I once used a newspaper article in which they were proposing to allow "illegal immigrants" to get their driver's license in a certain state. The article gave many opinions from various people arguing for and against the problem. Depending on the age group you may want to do a Venn Diagram comparing the North's and the South's view on slavery prior to this activity.

In this two to three day activity, the class will become teams of people assigned to either the North or the South. (Note: There should be more assigned to the North side since there were more Northern sympathizers in history than there were Southern sympathizers. This will become clearer later in the lesson plan as to why this should occur.) They will be separated to different sides of the room to encourage discussion and ideas. The students should then work as a team to find real

people in history that favored their view and study up on that person. Everyone in the group needs to contribute. It's ok if some of the students research the same person. The idea is for them to use those people as the spokes people during the debate. So if they can find quotes or articles that talks about their views, that would be helpful. Probably they will be people in the political parties, etc. If possible you could time the activity to coincide with computer and / or library days for them to work on their research. The debate will be as if it is happening during the pre-civil war era. The question debated will be: *Should slavery be abolished?*

This question in itself is culminating. After years of disagreements, complaints, compromises, and differences, Americans from the north and south had to decide for themselves whether the slavery issue would ever be resolved. Some southerners were against slavery and some northerners were for slavery. During the debate the teacher will act as a referee by allowing the various team members to argue their point. Students will need to state who they are, or rather what character in history they are representing. Then he / she will argue from that character's point of view. Other team members can be looking over the research notes and share ideas with their spokesperson when debating. Each team can have several predominate people (or characters of history) that they have researched. (It should include people involved in the underground railroad, etc. The teacher may need to give some assistance where needed.) Each one of the people should be represented by a different person on the debate team. All members should be participating in some way.

At the end of the second or third day, each side will elect one individual to make a final appeal to the assembly in favor of their viewpoint. This closing argument may contain multiple viewpoints and may be read from a written speech, to insure that all their major points are not missed. (Authentic activity just like in closing arguments for lawyers arguing a case in court.) The assembly will consider the arguments made by both sides and then cast their votes on the future of slavery in the United States. The votes of all members will be tallied and the results announced to the group. (The decision to include more northern sympathizers on the team was deliberate as mentioned earlier.) The outcome of many votes in Washington were determined by the larger populations (therefore increased representation in Congress). The outcome likely will be for the Northern side? If so then the students representing the southern view will likely feel cheated - a reaction that would have been shared by representatives of the southern states during the pre-civil war times.

The debate session will close with a discussion that reflects on the experiences of students as they tried to argue for their side. This discussion will also bring the unit to a close by looking forward to the only option many southerners felt they had available - succession

The debate will be assessed with the attached rubric.

Also: Extra credit can be given to those who go above and beyond getting into character and the times. (Such as wearing clothes, hats, beards, etc. during that time period, making or bringing props that tie in. Also by using a character's dialect or accent.)

Note: If debate is done after the Slave Dancer lesson plan project. Then hopefully the students will already have gained insights into the various view on slavery and how people felt about it. Also how some weren't for it but they needed a job to feed their family, etc., so they worked in the slave industry anyways.

Historical Debate Assessment Rubric

<u>Work</u>	<u>Outstanding</u>	<u>Good</u>	<u>Needs</u>
Presentation Style	Student shows expected volume, eye contact, organization, and knowledge of material.	Student meets expectations (volume, eye contact, etc.) in all but one area.	Student meets expectations (volume, eye contact, etc.) in two or fewer areas.
Level of Involvement	Student shows a strong desire to be actively involved and contributes without prompting.	Student becomes involved after minor prompting from teacher or classmates.	Student shows little desire to take part in the activity. Participates only when pushed.
Historical Accuracy	Student's arguments consistently show evidence of careful and thorough research.	Student's arguments reveal careful research with only minor factual mistakes or misconceptions.	Student's arguments lack detail and contain significant factual errors.
Variety of Sources	Student used a wide variety of sources in conducting research (print, photographs, technology, etc.)	Student showed some variety in choosing resources (used at least two different types)	Student used only one type of source for research (only reference material or internet).
Higher Order Thinking	Student's contributions show active in-depth thinking about the topic being discussed	Student exhibits higher order thinking only when prompted with leading questions.	Student's contributions show little evidence of higher order thinking .

Appendix C

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Appendix D

Date: January 31, 2008

Copyright Permission Request

Sundance Publishing

P.O. Box 740

Northborough, MA 01532

Dear Sundance Publishing:

I am currently enrolled in the Grand Valley State University (GVSU), Advanced Studies in Education Program, and I am writing a Master's Project for the completion of my Master's Degree in Education. My *project* is entitled "INTEGRATING A VARIETY OF CULTURES AND DIVERSITY INTO THE UPPER ELEMENTARY CURRICULUM." May I receive permission to include in the appendixes of my Master's Project, copies of the following items?

LIFT (Literature Is For Thinking) Teacher Resource Book

"The Slave Dancer" by Paula Fox

Activity # 1 (Imagine), Activity # 4 (Finding Out), Activity # 7 (Cooperation), and Activity # 12 (What Do They Really Mean). Copies of these pages are enclosed. I would like to include all four of these worksheets in my appendix, but could get by with less if you don't feel comfortable granting permission for all four?

Your signature at the bottom portion of this letter confirms your ownership of the above item. The inclusion of your copyrighted material will not restrict your re-publication of the material in any other form. Please advise if you wish a specific copyright notice to be included on each page. My *project* may be cataloged in the GVSU library and will be available to other students and colleges for circulation.

Sincerely,

Tammy Hamlin

7114 Warner Street, Allendale, MI 49401

Phone Numbers: (616) 402-0396, cell as main Alt: (616) 895-6786

E-mail: tammyhamlin@yahoo.com



PERMISSION IS GRANTED to you (Tammy Hamlin) to include the requested materials in her GVSU Master's of Education *Project*.

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A Hights Cross Communications Company

March 11, 2008

Tammy Hamlin
7114 Warner Street
Allendale, MI 49401


Dear Tammy,

This is in response to your letter dated January 31, 2008, requesting permission to use the activities from *The Slave Dancer*, LIFT Teacher Resource Book. Permission can be granted for use of the following Activities: #1 Imagine, #4 Finding Out, #7 Cooperation and #12 What Do They Really Mean. They may be included in your Master's Project for Grand Valley State University as you describe. Our understanding is that you will be creating one copy as it will be cataloged in the GVSU library and that the copy will not be sold or reproduced.

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Should you have any questions, please feel free to contact me at (508) 571-6779. Thanks and good luck with your Master's Project.

Sincerely,


Laura Sanderson
Vice President of Publishing Operations
Sundance and Newbridge Publishing

LS/kk
THamlin_LIFT_personal

GRAND VALLEY STATE UNIVERSITY

ED 693 Data Form

NAME: Tammy Joy Hamlin

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TITLE: Integrating a Variety of Cultures and Diversity into the Upper Elementary Curriculum

PAPER TYPE: (Choose only 1)

SEM/YR COMPLETED: Fall, 2009

Project

Thesis

SUPERVISOR'S SIGNATURE OF APPROVAL _____

Using key words or phrases, choose several ERIC descriptors (5 - 7 minimum) to describe the contents of your project. ERIC descriptors can be found online at <http://www.eric.ed.gov/ERICWebPortal/Home.portal?nfpb=true&pageLabel=Thesaurus&nfls=false>

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