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# Unlocking the Power of Multidimensional Literacy in a Language Arts Classroom: A Middle School Language Arts Curriculum

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Unlocking the Power of Multidimensional Literacy in a Language Arts Classroom:  
A Middle School Language Arts Curriculum

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A Project

Presented to

The Graduate Faculty

Central Washington University

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In Partial Fulfillment

Of the Requirements for the Degree

Master of Education

Master Teacher

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By

Andrew Raymond Kostelnik

July 2008

## ABSTRACT

Unlocking the Power of Multidimensional Literacy in a Language Arts Classroom:  
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A curriculum project that incorporates a multidimensional and multicultural point of view is created for a middle school language arts classroom in a rural community. Multiculturalism theories and underpinnings are examined and critically analyzed. Materials are identified and examined to determine the appropriateness in relation to the demographics and nature of the Kayman School District. Multiple sources and materials were established as a permanent curricular component to ensure an education that incorporates multiple perspectives and viewpoints.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to thank all the people that listened to me whine and cry while I wrote this damn thing.

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## TABLE OF CONTENTS

Chapter	Page
I INTRODUCTION.....	1
Statement of the Problem.....	2
Purpose of the Project.....	3
Significance of the Project.....	4
Limitations of the Project.....	4
Overview of the Project.....	5
Definitions of Terms.....	6
II REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE.....	9
III BACKGROUND OF THE PROJECT.....	36
Project Procedure.....	37
Project Development.....	38
Project Implementation.....	38
IV CURRICULUM PROJECT.....	40
Unit Introduction.....	40
Unit Plan.....	42
V CONCLUSION.....	77
BIBLIOGRAPHY.....	79

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure	Page
Figure 2.1 Concepts for Multicultural Education.....	13

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# CHAPTER I

## INTRODUCTION

### Background of the Project

"We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable rights" (Declaration of Independence).

Language arts, the art of working with language through reading, writing, and speaking can arguably be considered the most important academic area all across the country. Knowing how to read, write, and communicate is essential in order to learn in other content areas, and provides a solid foundation for a successful educational career (International Reading Association & National Association for the Education of Young Children, 1998). Throw in the culturally diverse backgrounds of students from coast to coast, and a dilemma of immense proportions emerges. These backgrounds that students bring to the classroom can create an atmosphere that is quite daunting to the pre-service and in-service teachers of this nation (Gay, 2003). Not only is the percentage of diversity of these students in the United States at an all-time high, but this level of diversity will continue to rise and demand the incorporation of multicultural curriculum in the local classrooms (Banks, 1997).

This project was designed to investigate the specific needs of the students in Kayman Middle School and create a curriculum piece that would not only follow state guidelines and standards, but one that would also meet the needs of each individual student, incorporating the perspectives and viewpoints of a



variety of cultures from around the world and within the United States in order to create a positive and truly democratic environment.

Racial and cultural diversity has been prevalent in the United States since the "white man" set foot on these American shores (Takaki, 1993). This diversity has caused racial tensions in many areas of life, but none as confused and widespread as those felt within the educational community. Students across the nation are being pushed through the educational system with little or no knowledge about cultures different from their own. Evidence of this can be seen in the overwhelmingly negative response towards Arab Americans following the tragic events of September 11, 2001. Hostility toward people of Middle-Eastern descent was common across the country, revealing a profound lack of knowledge toward the Islamic religion and cultural point of view. Violent attacks toward Mosques and other Islamic buildings at the time revealed an ignorance that could have been prevented had the people of this great nation been educated enough to understand the divisiveness within the Islamic culture and how it affects those living here in the United States (Banks, 2006).

It is the goal of this project to introduce students to those varying worldviews and create in them a mind for justice and democracy in order to create a more culturally inclusive atmosphere in the classroom and in the communities in which they live. Through education, perhaps injustice and inequality in all its various forms can be eliminated from public schools, and possibly from the nation as a whole.

### Statement of the Problem

The lack of a culturally inclusive curriculum had created an inequitable educational experience for the students within the Kayman District. The district had just adopted a new building wide curriculum with the Holt Elements of Literature program, and while the text did offer some perspectives from a multicultural point of view, such selections were few and far between. The largest portion of material still came from writers of a male-dominated and European background, presenting few diversifying opinions and worldviews. The curriculum was also extremely test based and ventured very little into aspects of diversity, citizenship, and democracy. Students were marched through curriculum materials without pausing to reflect on the background from which the materials came from. Students were expected to merely believe that what the texts said was true, regardless of the possible bias that may be influencing who wrote it. Materials that could explore other viewpoints and cultural perspectives needed to be interwoven throughout the curriculum, giving the students a rich learning experience that would prepare them to be active citizens, aware of the multicultural world in which they live. This curriculum would also be designed to help students establish their own cultural identity in their minds and give them the knowledge and ability to critically examine the injustices that permeate the world.

### Purpose of the Project

The overall goal of the project was to improve and expand on the current curriculum by providing multidimensional perspectives in order to further engage students and create a more inclusive environment that would give students a

sense of citizenship and democracy. This project set out to create not only a greater connection between the students and their class work, but also a working knowledge of the culture from which the majority of the students were coming from and going to. This knowledge would make learning more meaningful to the current students and provide greater feedback regarding future students that would enter the classroom. They would also develop a better understanding of the world in which they live, and the multitude of viewpoints ever present in today's society, making them better prepared citizens.

#### Significance of the Project

The project has the potential for increasing student knowledge and awareness of multidimensional perspectives, giving them the power to be active and engaged citizens in a culturally diverse society. This power will enable the students to experience success, not only in the classroom, but in their lives as citizens of the United States. They will be better prepared to live and work in a world that is full of ever changing beliefs, customs, and attitudes, as well as give them experiences that will validate their own beliefs, customs, and attitudes. Without such experiences, true democratic ideals will fade and true freedom oppressed (Dahl, 1998).

The project can also be a catalyst for change in the pedagogy, epistemology, and theory of the teachers that seek to employ the ideals of multicultural education in their own classrooms and curriculum, and it is with this hope that the project was developed.

### Limitations of the Project

While the project may be generalized to other schools of similar demographics, several other factors may influence the feasibility of use of this project within other districts or other states. The curriculum was designed for the students of Kayman Middle School in the Kayman School District, whose demographics are sure to be an issue. With 76% Hispanic, 23% White, and 1% Asian-Pacific Islander, the student population is diverse, but not in the typical fashion. In Kayman, the "minority" is the majority.

The project also included reviewing and using available technology and resources within the district and utilizing these resources to the fullest extent. Projectors, document cameras, internet resources, computer access, DVD players, audio equipment, and laptops were used throughout the project, and while many schools have access to these materials, there are still many schools that do not. Resources available might be a hindrance, as much of the materials may need to be acquired through a personal or specialized budget. In some situations team collaboration was utilized with the teachers of other content areas to create integrated lessons that ask the students to use their knowledge from the multiple disciplines and perspectives in order to complete the assignments. In Kayman, this was an easy task to accomplish, but other districts may find this kind of collaboration difficult or even impossible.

Because all students are different, as are all teachers, no one curriculum will ever meet the needs of every student. This project is only intended to be a guide to aid teachers in their journey to becoming multicultural educators. It is

not conclusive and represents the tip of the iceberg in regards to the research and materials available for use and study.

### Overview of the Project

Chapter one of this document introduces the reader to the need for a multicultural curriculum in the Kayman school district, and in districts across the nation. Chapter two dives into the related literature and provides a solid case for the development of a multicultural curriculum and classroom not only in the Kayman school district, but also in schools nation-wide. Justification for the need of a multicultural environment is presented as well as brief glimpses into the history of this growing movement. Theoretical implications as well for the need of changing epistemologies and pedagogies are examined and detailed. In chapter three the methods, procedures, and implementation of the project are described. Chapter four includes a written description of the project including sample items to be used throughout the unit and a description of how the classroom was changed to reflect a culturally inclusive environment. Lesson plans with objectives and connections to state standards are included, along with ideas for lesson extension to enhance student learning beyond the classroom. Chapter five concludes the project and provides information and recommendations for further use and study in the classrooms of teachers across the nation.

### Definition of Terms

Multicultural Education: According to James Banks in the Handbook of Research on Multicultural Education, "Multicultural education is a field of study and an emerging discipline whose major aim is to create equal educational opportunities

for students from diverse racial, ethnic, social-class, and cultural groups” (Banks, 1995a, p. xi).

Perspective: The way a person views the world. Different perspectives are based on different cultural backgrounds. A person that has lived through a war will have a much different perspective than a person that merely read about it from a continent away (“Perspective [cognitive]” Wikipedia, n.d.).

Epistemology: This is the study of “how” students know things. Constructivist teachers believe students learn more through experience and social interaction than through direct instruction and lecture. Multicultural education puts a heavy reliance on constructivist philosophies, but adds that ways of knowing are directly linked to student’s background and personal culture (“Epistemology” Wikipedia, n.d.).

Pedagogy: Quite simply, the art and science of teaching. This includes the methods, activities, content, and ways of learning prescribed by the teacher to the students. Knowing when to slow down and reflect or speed up and skim, understanding the needs of individual students, and recognizing when learning is or isn’t taking place is all a part of a teacher’s pedagogy (“Pedagogy” Wikipedia, n.d.).

EALR’s: Essential Academic Learning Requirements – These are the state standards for Washington State that provide the framework for academic instruction (Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction, n.d.).

Assimilation: A term used to describe the process by which members of a minority culture proceed to adapt aspects of the dominant culture in order to become a part of it ("Cultural Assimilation" Wikipedia, n.d.).

Marginalization: This concept refers to the idea that certain cultures or groups of people are actively left out of participation within the dominant culture of the society in which they live ("Marginalization" Wikipedia, n.d.).

Ethnocentrism: The belief that one's culture is better or more important than another. This belief also tends to hold a monopoly on truth and the state of being right ("Ethnocentrism" Wikipedia, n.d.).

## CHAPTER II

### REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

The world's greatest problems do not result from people being unable to read and write. They result from people in the world – from different cultures, races, religions, and nations – being unable to get along and work together to solve the world's intractable problems (Banks, 2004).

#### Historical Focus

Multicultural education is an idea that has been around for decades (Hanley, 1999), yet teachers, districts, and administrators all across the country still have few ideas when it comes to teaching a multicultural curriculum. The level of diversity will only keep rising in this country (Banks, 1997) and it is up to educators everywhere to incorporate multicultural perspectives in their classrooms and curriculums to promote unity in the nation. Even Gandhi realized the importance of multiculturalism saying, "The ability to reach unity in diversity will be the beauty and the test of our civilization" (Center for Multicultural Education, 2005). In fact, some believe that the key to the survival of a democratic society depends on the ability for a diverse people to think and believe in the ideals the country is founded upon. "Democratic societies are fragile and are works-in-progress. Their existence depends upon a thoughtful citizenry that believes in democratic ideals and is willing and able to participate in the civic life of the nation-state" (Dahl, 1998, p. 124).

Joel Spring even acknowledges that in the early days of the country, the government spent more time trying to deculturalize students of different cultures



rather than give them the equal education they deserved. "Issues of racial segregation, language policies, and attempts to destroy cultures clouded efforts to provide equality of educational opportunity for all children" (Spring, 2005, p. 168).

Multicultural education began as a small movement to equalize the education of Irish-American, Italian-American, and Jewish-American students that resulted from the great wave of immigration at the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. This small movement, known as the intergroup education movement, slowly reformed over the years to become the very foundation of the multicultural education movement seen today (McGee-Banks, 2005).

Historically, groups of different cultures have been marginalized and left on the outer edges of society, some trying to assimilate into the dominant culture of the country, and others trying to maintain a grip on their own piece of culture (Takaki, 2002). Multicultural education strives to ensure that marginalization does not occur. Sonia Nieto states that, "Culturally responsive education, an approach based on using students' cultures as an important source of their education, can go a long way in improving the education of students whose cultures and backgrounds have been maligned or omitted in schools" (Nieto, 1999, p. 68). By giving students the educational experience they deserve, all groups will find equity, and thus marginalization will be eliminated.

#### Multicultural Education in Washington State

In Washington State, the population of diverse students has risen more than 375% since 1971 (Jackson, 2002), yet often only one course in the area of

dealing with diverse students and multiculturalism is required for pre-service teachers, and this is not nearly enough to equip them with the skills necessary to change their views of other races and cultures (Gay, 2003). The people of the Multi-Ethnic Think Tank urged Washington State Superintendent Terry Bergeson to make changes to the state standards, and increase training and knowledge among school staff including teachers, educators, and para-professionals, but to no avail (Jackson, 2002). While the state acknowledges the need for multicultural ideals, they were simply unwilling to add them specifically to the goals and objectives of education in Washington State, resulting in students and citizens that are still relatively unaware of the cultural divisiveness still prevalent in society. This divisiveness can even be seen in the diverse city of Seattle, where subtle acts of racism and prejudice are still encountered, and educators still believe that racism is very much alive in the hearts and minds of young people (Edwards, 2008).

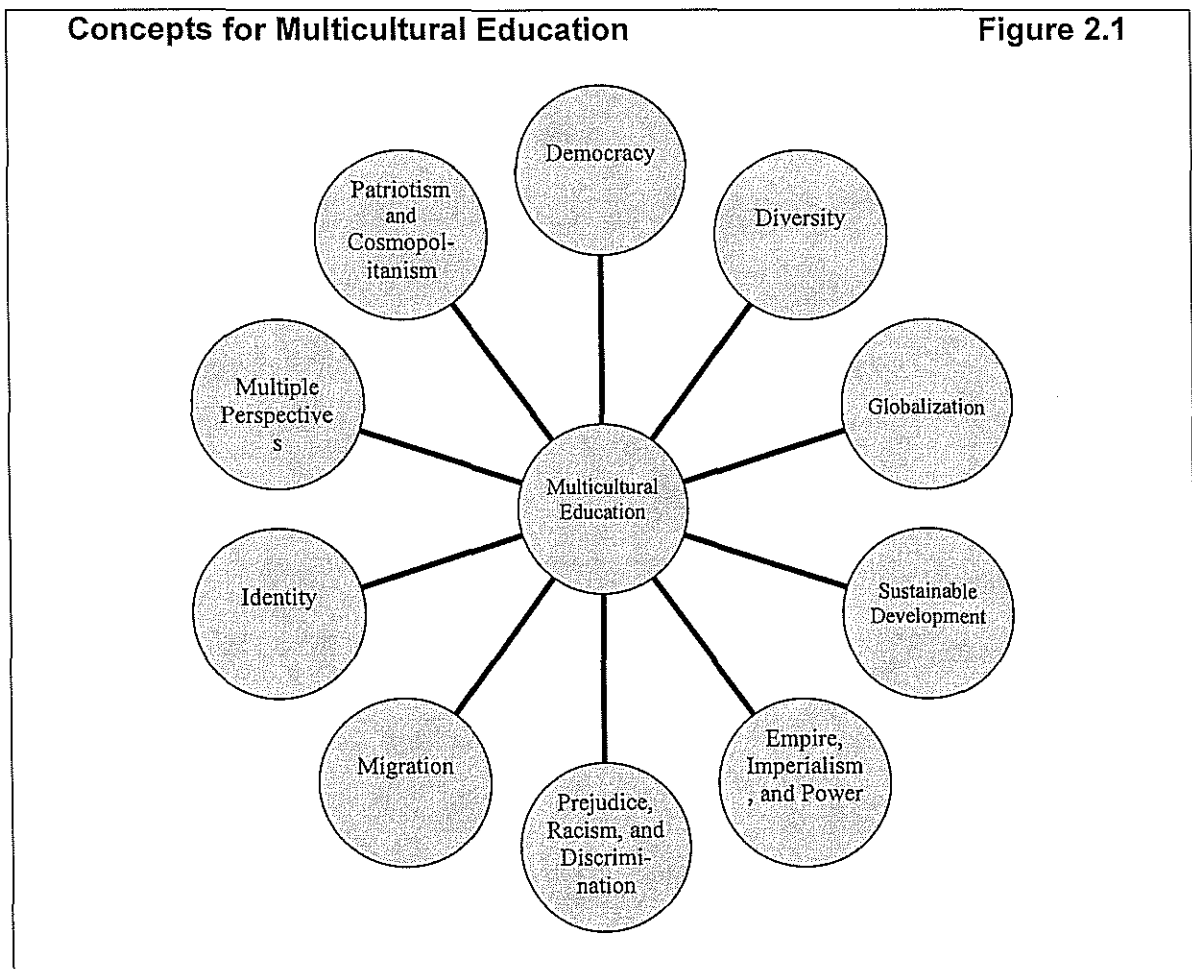
#### Core Principles and Beliefs

A multicultural curriculum contains material that helps address and discuss some key concepts and principles identified by the Center for Multicultural Education in the documents Democracy and Diversity and Diversity within Unity. The authors of these documents believe that educational institutions around the country should follow twelve key principles that enable greater learning to occur while promoting a democratic and just society. Principle 1 addresses the need for professional development for teachers that would encompass a wide range of theory and practical ideas for teaching diverse

students. Principle 2 strives for equity for all students that walk through the school doors. Principle 3 stresses the need for diversified learning and advocates for a constructivist approach to the acquisition of knowledge. Principle 4 states that all students should have equal access to extra-curricular activities. Principle 5 encourages schools to create groups that all members of the school can become members of to foster unity and intercultural experiences. Principle 6 asks schools to ensure that students are being taught about stereotypes and biases, and how they relate to modern society. Principle 7 pushes for a curriculum that encompasses learning about the values and beliefs of other cultural groups, validating them, and allowing students to see the values that connect cultures together. Principle 8 presents arguments for aiding students in developing their social skills in order to effectively communicate and work together with other cultural groups. Principle 9 puts students of different cultures together in situations and circumstances that will allow for positive communication to eliminate prejudice and discrimination. Principle 10 demands that decision making within the school is spread across all members of the school, not just those from the dominant culture of the area. Principle 11 ascribes that government and school leadership should actively strive to provide equal funding to all schools across the nation, regardless of where they are located and regardless of the demographics of its population. Principle 12 details how assessment should be constructed to allow for cultural sensitivity considering the differing cultural backgrounds students come from (Center for Multicultural Education, 2001).

The Center for Multicultural Education also developed a document that specified ten concepts that students should develop and understanding and awareness of. These concepts are shown in figure 2.1 below.

Examination of these concepts within the classroom can lead to a more diversified and culturally inclusive curriculum and environment within the schools. Awareness and understanding of these concepts leads to better unity within the community and progresses more toward a more democratic and just society (Center for Multicultural Education, 2005).



Even though multicultural education has these many faces, one of the primary keys is for multicultural perspectives to become key components of the educational system and curriculum. Examining differing perspectives gives students an additional lens with which they can view the world, and this invites them to instigate their own learning. Gay also states that by using multicultural perspectives, the students learning is increased along with their on-task time (Gay, 1994).

Another key aspect to being a culturally responsive teacher in a culturally inclusive classroom is to examine the issues of diversity plaguing the country. Since diversity comes in many forms, it is necessary to understand how diversity plays a role in the lives of people around the world. These different forms of diversity include but are not limited to class, gender, ethnicity/race, exceptionality, religion, language, age, and sexual orientation (Campbell, 1996). By examining these forms of diversity and their relationships to prejudice, racism, and discrimination, students will become more aware and able to assist in the establishment and maintenance of democratic and just ideals, creating equity for all.

Sonia Nieto also proposes three issues that need to be discussed and analyzed for consideration in multicultural education. The first is that students association with their own culture and language can be a huge motivating tool to enhance their educational experience, so it must be utilized. The second is that the teacher, as a facilitator to the culture of power, is a key aspect to the students' education. Teachers need to find ways to create a bridge from the

students' cultures in order to show them how to be academically successful. The third and final aspect is that teachers should implement multicultural teachings in the overall context of the curriculum and classroom structure, not just in random and secluded activities and lessons (Nieto, 1999). This reinforces Banks pleading for multicultural education not being used as the "tour and detour" approach (Banks, 2007).

From a distant perspective, the educational curriculum in the schools today appear to be moving toward being more culturally responsive and ethnically diverse, but a closer examination reveals seeds of discrimination, prejudice, and racism (Gay, 1994). When curriculum does not reflect people of color, it is racist. When teachers neglect the accomplishments and contributions of people of color, it is racist. When students of color are directly or indirectly told that the culture in which they live is inferior to the mainstream culture of the United States, it is racist (Tatum, 1999). And while these forms of racism may not be the active, Klu Klux Klan style of racism, these passive forms of racism are just as hurtful and dangerous to students across the nation (Marx, 2006). Teachers need to be aware of the myriad of cultures that live within the borders of the nation, and should strive to understand them in order to more effectively teach them. Some opponents to multicultural education may argue that this means treating students of color differently than white students, which is inequitable towards whites, but as a famous quote often attributed to Thomas Jefferson states, "There is nothing more unequal than the equal treatment of unequal people" (Martin, 2002).

## Approaches to Multicultural Education

A continuum of sorts has been developed by some of the leaders in the field of multicultural education. The four stages of the continuum give teachers a way to examine their own classroom and curriculum to determine how well they have integrated their curriculum with multicultural ideas and practices. The first stage of the continuum is called "The Contributions Approach" (Banks, 2007, p. 251). This approach seems to permeate the educational system on a national level. With this approach, focus is given to minority groups and marginalized cultures only when it fits a major holiday or examines a societal hero such as Martin Luther King Jr. or Cesar Chavez. This is what is also known as the "tour and detour" approach in which the multicultural curriculum is hit here and there, but never fully realized in the mind of the teacher or the students.

The second stage of the continuum is called "The Additive Approach" (Banks, 2007, p. 253). In this stage, teachers add splashes of multicultural color throughout the curriculum, but fail to change the management and general structure of the classroom. The room is still a dictatorship with the teacher driving everything that comes into the room and everything that goes out. At this point, the purpose is to enable the teacher to claim that he or she is multicultural because they have added all this "stuff."

The third approach is called "The Transformation Approach." In this approach, "The fundamental goals, structure, and perspectives of the curriculum are changed" (Banks, 2007, p. 255). Teachers understand different points of

view, and they teach their students to do the same. The transformative approach looks at underlying problems and examines the root causes of conflict and how those conflicts can be avoided or remedied. Diversity is examined and celebrated for the wonderful aspect of humanity it is. Discussions that include racism, prejudice, and discrimination are paramount to an effective curriculum in which students learn how to transform their society into the democratic and just society it should be.

The fourth and final approach is called "The Social Action Approach" (Banks, 2007, p. 258). This approach takes everything gained from the transformative approach and takes it one step farther. Rather than just discussing the issues that plague society, plans of action are devised and implemented to overcome barriers that impede positive social change. In this approach, students become caretakers of society and invest themselves into ideals and beliefs they helped establish in their own minds.

Grant and Sleeter have also offered another set of approaches to multicultural education. The first approach, teaching the exceptional and the culturally different, sees teachers enhancing their educational practices to bridge the achievement gap between Whites and students of color. This approach relies on the teacher truly understanding the students and meeting them where they are and building them up through lessons and methods that are designed to address their specific needs (Grant and Sleeter, 2007).

The next approach is known as the human relations approach. This approach integrates individual and cultural differences and similarities into an



exploratory experience in which, "Students learn to respect one another regardless of race, class, gender, or disability" (Grant and Sleeter, 2007, p. 68).

A third approach is called the single-group studies approach. This approach is primarily seen in college in classes such as Women's studies, Chicano studies, Disability studies, etc. However, this approach can be applied to units of study within the K-12 school system as unit portions of larger curriculums (Grant and Sleeter, 2007).

The next approach is the multicultural education approach which seeks to, "Reduce prejudice and discrimination against oppressed groups" (p. 70). This approach studies principles of dominance and differing perspectives and gives the students the opportunity to enhance their learning through the examination of the nature of racism, prejudice, and discrimination (Grant and Sleeter, 2007).

The final approach from Grant and Sleeter takes the last approach and adds a social action component to it. The multicultural social justice education approach takes the guiding principles of the previous approach and kicks it into high gear by giving students an opportunity to use their new-found knowledge to aid in the attainment of social justice and democracy within their school and local communities (Grant and Sleeter, 2007).

A primary assumption of multicultural education is that a final goal of the educational process is to produce educated and empowered citizens, prepared to vote and make decisions in a world that is filled with differing views, beliefs, customs, traditions, and ideas (Banks, 1997). This assumption is vital to the multiculturalism movement because it provides an aim to which teachers and

administrators can shoot for. Neil Postman suggests that the educational system is headed for great distress and even eventual failure if it fails to pursue a solid goal (Postman, 1995), and multicultural education seeks to give educators that goal. This is needed because, "Although it is essential that all students acquire basic skills in literacy, basic skills are necessary but not sufficient in our diverse and troubled world" (Banks, 2004). Basic skills are not enough, as students need to have a purpose for using those basic skills. A baker can have all of the ingredients needed, but without a purpose those ingredients are just that, ingredients. It takes purpose and action to turn ingredients into a cake or pie.

Multiculturalism also assumes that the idea of the United States as a "melting pot" is not accurate, and that viewing the United States as a salad is more accurate. The melting pot theory implies that all minority cultures in the United States should assimilate into the broader and more dominant "American" culture. This belief has been upheld by a great many educators, but viewing the culture in the United States as a salad has been more widely accepted by experts in the multicultural field (Hidalgo, et al, 1995). The salad image reveals a core ideal of the multicultural movement in that all of the different cultures aid in the creation of American culture, and by removing any one piece of the culture, it just is not the same as it was before.

#### Dimensions of Multicultural Education

Multiculturalism also encases five key dimensions that each need to be examined before a truly responsive curriculum can be achieved. The first dimension seeks to infuse the curriculum with content and perspectives from

normally marginalized groups such as minority groups, gays and lesbians, and women. Adding content and perspectives from these groups helps develop empathy and understanding for the plights these groups have had to overcome and are still overcoming. The second dimension asks that teachers aid their students in the understanding of how knowledge is constructed. This empowers students to make their education truly their own. The third dimension promotes the active reduction of prejudice and discrimination from the schools and communities in which the students live. By actively attacking ideas that are prejudicial and hurtful to others, students begin to develop their sense of civic responsibility and take on a more active role in furthering the ideals of democracy and justice. The fourth dimension pushes to reform education into a more equitable experience for all those involved. This includes not only changing curriculum, but also school structure, after school programs, and any other school related activity to actively represent the diversity in student populations. The fifth dimension requires that the environment of the school be altered to give students opportunities and experiences that will benefit them for the rest of their lives (Banks, 2004).

Multiculturalism also accepts the theory of multiple intelligences presented by Gardner in 1983 (Irvine, 1995). Jana Noel goes on to explain this theory by exploring the eight different forms of intelligence Gardner posed (Noel, 2008). Gardner suggested that each person contains differing level of skill in each of the intelligences, and it is the mix of those skills that aids in the determination of which styles of learning suits students best. The first intelligence is labeled

“Linguistic Intelligence” which focuses on the multiple uses of language. The second is “Logical-Mathematical Intelligence” which appropriately lends itself to being perceptive to numbers and patterns. These first two of Gardner’s intelligences tend to be the ones that education in the United States values higher than any other. The third intelligence is “Spatial Intelligence” which employs the uses of the visual realm. The fourth intelligence is “Musical Intelligence” and it seeks to view and understand the world through rhythm and sound. The fifth intelligence is “Bodily-Kinesthetic Intelligence” and is appropriated for all those that can do the amazing things with their bodies like dancing, skiing, and all those other coordinated type activities. Two of the remaining intelligences (“Interpersonal” and “Intrapersonal”) pursue an understanding of psychology. They seek to understand motivations and underlying cause and effect of human feeling. The final of the eight intelligences is the “Naturalist Intelligence” which is the attempt to understand the natural world. Those adept at this intelligence are keen to understanding the physical world as it relates to humanity and to nature (Noel, 2008).

By fully understanding how students fit into these intelligences, teachers can better develop ideas and lessons to increase motivation and student learning (Noel, 2008).

#### Stages of Cultural Identity

James Banks pleads for educators to acknowledge and examine the six stages of cultural identity, and aid their students in the quest for solidifying their own self acceptance, as it is a “prerequisite to the acceptance and valuing of

others" (Banks, 2004). In the first stage called "Cultural Psychology Captivity" (Banks, 2004, p. 295), students usually exhibit low self-esteem regarding their culture due to the negative images seen and negative conversation heard regarding their group from the dominant group. The second stage, called "Cultural Encapsulation" reveals students to have committed themselves to contact and communication solely within their own cultural group because they believe that their culture is superior to others simply because they are a part of it. The third stage brings students to a level where their culture is now respected and validated within their own minds, and pride in their "cultural pride is genuine rather than contrived" (Banks, 2004, p. 295). It is this stage that Banks claims students must reach before true democracy and justice can be observed regarding other cultural groups. After all, how could one expect students to empathize with people of other cultures if they do not truly identify with their own? Stage four is called "Biculturalism" and maintains that students can identify with their own culture and they want to participate in the mainstream culture as well. The fifth stage called "Multiculturalism and Reflective Nationalism" sees students not only valuing their own group, but also valuing and recognizing the beauty in other cultural groups as well. The sixth and final stage of Banks' stages of cultural identity is called "Globalism and Global Competency." In this stage, students can function not only in their own culture and in the dominant culture they live in, but also within different cultures from around the globe because they have developed the skills necessary to maintain healthy relations with people on a global scale. In this stage, no one culture is more important than another, and

"The primary commitment of these individuals is justice, not to any human community" (Banks, 2004, p. 297).

#### Other Guiding Principles

Jana Noel also devotes a large chunk of her book to creating an understanding of personal identity in order to further the impact teachers and administrators will have on the students they come into contact with (Noel, 2003). Noel insists that teachers and students both search their own lives to solidify their own cultural identity in their own minds. It becomes very difficult to learn about new perspectives and where they come from if one does not truly understand the roots of their own perspectives. Think of how shocking it must be for students who sit in classrooms across the country when the teacher describes the main ideals, values, beliefs, and cultural components of "American" society and they realize they adhere to none of it. The realization that they are not a part of the dominant culture must shatter some of their preconceived notions (Leiding, 2006).

Carolyn Jackson provides four guiding principles to developing one's multicultural core of understanding. "The first principle is that multicultural transformation begins in many places, such as communities, classrooms, schools, and especially within ourselves and in the ways we choose to value and approach our students" (2003, p. 61). The teachers' commitment to the students is what really lends one to becoming multicultural.

The second principle focuses on teacher collaboration and personal reflection. Understanding one's own points of view should be well reflected

upon. Etta Hollins describes it as being a “reflective practitioner” (Hollins, 1999, p. 11). Hollins suggests reflecting on specific areas of the teachers’ thoughts such as background experiences, professional knowledge and competence, vision for the classroom, processes implemented in the classroom, and focus of lessons (Hollins, 1999). Jacqueline Jordan Irvine also states that, “Reflection enables teacher to examine the interplay of context and culture as well as their own behaviors, talents, and preferences” (Irvine, 2003, p. 76). Reflection forces teachers to look inside themselves and their teaching methods to critically examine what is and what is not working, thereby not sticking to a formula. (Irvine, 2003).

The third principle from Jackson reveals a needed commitment from the teacher to professional and personal development in the area of multiculturalism. This development must extend beyond what the teacher already knows and reach into areas that may not be comfortable thinking about (Jackson, 2003).

The fourth and final principle simply asks teachers to step outside the box in regards to teaching methodologies and tendencies. Being able to see who the students are and reaching them through their own experiences and backgrounds is the key to unlocking the potential for learning in the classroom (Jackson, 2003).

Jacqueline Jordan Irvine also presents some multicultural principles of pedagogy that initiate some thought. The first states emphatically that culture shapes how students learn, how they organize their learning, and how they turn around and use that learning in their own way. The second principle declares

that since the first principle claims that culture shapes learning, culture is an important variable in the classroom (Irvine, 2003). The third and final principle claims that true learning is always connected to culture, and not the standardized tests that currently infest the halls of the nation's schools. "Culturally responsive teaching calls for assessment that is linked to instruction in tightly coupled ways that often make the assessment indistinguishable from teaching" (Irvine, 2003, p. 69).

Irvine also states that multicultural educators typically are exemplified by a few basic characteristics. The first is that these educators develop deeper relationships with their students. The second is that they hear the student's stories of their personal lives and react without judgment. The third is they give more wait time for students to think before responding to questions, and normal daily pacing is modified to fit student needs. The fourth is that they use a multitude of teaching strategies, changing constantly, and getting feedback from students in multiple forms such as summarizing, concluding, inferring, etc. The fifth is that they utilize those moments in teaching when an opportunity for further learning presents itself. These "teachable moments" do not occur often, but when they do, the teacher jumps at the chance to indulge the students for the sake of pure learning. The sixth is that they examine the cultures of their students and find appropriate methods for addressing their specific needs and wants in the classroom. The seventh is that they enter the community to find more ways to connect with students where they are. Finding connections within the community also allows for greater parental involvement, which leads to



higher learning. The eighth and final characteristic of a multicultural teacher is that they use and validate student's prior and cultural knowledge. Their goal is not to reconstruct their learning, but to connect what they already know to the material they need to know (Irvine, 2003).

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### White Privilege

One perspective multiculturalism stresses specifically to white teachers is "white privilege." Most white teachers see this privilege as a myth, yet its effects can be seen within the nation's prison system that predominantly houses people of color. White privilege in society allows Whites access to greater resources and greater means of escaping the gripping claws of poverty than it does non-whites. For students of color, this means they must work twice as hard to get to the same places white teachers can (Howard, 2006).

White privilege also reveals a culture that Lisa Delpit describes as a "culture of power." This culture of power contains rules and codes that must be adhered to if students are to be successful and gain access to that culture. Delpit also implies that the people in the culture of power want to remain in the culture of power, and that is why social institutions and programs are constructed; to make sure they stay in the culture of power. In other words, those that make the rules, make the rules to ensure that no one else will ever be in a position to make new rules (Delpit, 1995).

White privilege tends to be a force for guilt and negative feelings to those white teachers who actually acknowledge its existence, but Howard stresses that it should not form this guilt, but rather awakens a desire to pursue a white identity

that is a vehicle for social change in the classroom and in the community (Howard, 2006).

This white identity must be encompassed by multicultural ideals, with a firm realization that the white culture that has dominated Western society is not superior to other cultures. Much of the conflict regarding culture stems from the idea that there is one culture that other cultures should be assimilated into. This form of white dominance has covered the United States for decades, and it must be addressed before true healing can occur (Howard, 2006).

#### White Identity Orientations

Howard proposed a model by which white educators can monitor their own internal dealings with white dominance and white privilege. The three stages are fundamentalist, integrationist, and transformationist. The fundamentalist stage is characterized by denial of its own existence, fear, hostility, and avoidance of diversity, ethnocentrism, and supremacy ideas regarding their own culture (Howard, 2006, p. 103).

The integrationist stage follows with an interest in other cultures and a realization that other perspectives do exist, but still believe their own perspective and their own culture is the "right one" and others should strive to become a part of it (Howard, 2006, p. 106).

The third and final stage is the transformationist. A transformationist pursues truth from all different perspectives and desires to enhance learning by critiquing the dominance of one's own culture and seeking to challenge the ideas of ethnocentrism through social action (Howard, 2006, p. 110).

## Curriculum

When discussing the construction of curriculum it is important to note that curriculum is not just the books and materials used within a classroom, but also involves the rules the classroom is run by, the viewpoints the teacher does and does not endorse, and the ways in which learning is developed and validated within the minds of the students that enter the classroom. The posters on the wall are curriculum. The rules against hats are curriculum. The attitudes and actions a teacher allows or does not allow are curriculum. Curriculum is everything that happens in the classroom, from formal lectures, to informal comments made to students in the brief passing moments between classes (Sleeter, 1996). Students are influenced by every action and inaction they see from influential people, and who is more influential outside the home than the students' teacher?

It is also important to note that multiculturalism is far more than a simple curriculum set. When viewed as the ideas for teaching Geneva Gay says it is "A set of beliefs and explanations that recognizes and values the importance of ethnic and cultural diversity in shaping lifestyles, social experiences, personal identities, and educational opportunities of individuals, groups, and nations" (Gay, 1995, p. 28).

As the teacher begins to develop the curriculum for the classroom, it is important to remember that in order to truly become a multicultural educator, one must first reach into his or her own soul and develop his or her own multicultural identity (Nieto, 2000). By purposefully developing an epistemology and

pedagogy that reflects culturally relevant teaching practices, a true multicultural educator can emerge (Ambrosio, 2003). It is also important to note here that this road to becoming a multicultural educator is not easy and is currently not the most popular set of beliefs to conform to (Ambrosio, 2003).

A large portion of curriculum is the textbook, and it is vital that textbooks be examined for biases and stereotypes (Gay, 2000). Textbooks have typically emphasized beliefs and values that are consistent with white, Euro-centered, middle-class points of view. Textbooks that are trapped in this vein should either be eliminated from the curriculum altogether, or used to teach students how to examine materials for biases, stereotypes, and dominant culture ideals. Most multicultural educators would prefer the latter (Gay, 2000). Gay also advocates for examination of mass market media and the news in order to critically analyze the material for the same racist and bias images. This will promote critical thinking and give students motivation for excelling, since it ties into their world and their backgrounds (Gay, 2000).

It is also important that textbooks and curriculum validate students background in their own minds. "Students who do not see representations of their own cultures in texts are likely to lose interest in school-based literacies" (Adolescent Literacies, 2007, p. 5). If students never saw familiar representations in the text, they may come to view themselves in a negative light, lowering self-esteem and reducing learning in school. "A school experience that is multicultural includes content, examples, and realistic images of diverse racial and ethnic groups" (Banks, 1995b, p. 19). Student reading should also expose

students to texts that affirm or validate the students own life experiences (Perkins, 1999).

Multiculturalism also demands that the portrayals of people of different cultures and perspectives be authentic and real. Even if the students in a classroom are all white, students should be exposed to valid images of diversity in order to be prepared for working with diverse people in society (Athanases, 1999).

### Lesson Planning

Since multiculturalism is just recently beginning to gain favor in the general world of educators, there are few lesson ideas available online that represent true multicultural ideas. As such, multicultural specialists like Carl A. Grant, Christine E. Sleeter, and Paul B. Pederson have developed some resources for teachers who would like to view some samples of what multicultural curricula looks like.

In Turning on Learning, Grant and Sleeter use their five approaches to multicultural education as a framework for building a host of lessons that explore multicultural ideas in all grade levels and all subject areas. There are lessons for kindergarteners, high school students, algebra students, art students, and so on (2007).

Pederson also devised a reference source of activities in 110 Experiences for Multicultural Learning. The only drawback to this reference source is that it is geared toward college students. However, lessons can be revised and adapted

to fit many different age levels and many different classrooms as has also been done in this project (2004).

Another resource containing many teaching strategies that have shown success working with English language learners is Making Content

Comprehensible for English Learners by Eschevarria, Vogt, and Short (2007).

This book contains ideas and strategies for working with not only English language learners, but also low achieving students that may be hindered by unseen forces. The strategies contained are not only good for low students, but higher students as well, as they take on more leadership in the classroom.

A final resource that must be mentioned for incorporating multicultural ideas is major human rights and United States documents such as the Declaration of Independence, the Constitution, and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. These documents can provide a great resource for discussion regarding any issue concerning discrimination and human rights. These documents provide a basis for the democracy and justice that is ideal for this country, and understanding where these documents are being neglected can be invaluable in ascertaining what problems and issues students should address in the classroom.

The unit of instruction within this project is also a resource that can be used to get teachers started on their own multicultural journey.

#### Parental Involvement

With the educational climate the way it is today, it would be remiss not to mention parental involvement. This overwhelmingly underutilized resource of

students is a vital piece of the multicultural puzzle that cannot be ignored. Teachers need to find a way to get parents involved in the classroom or school activities because they are the student's best educator. For good or bad, the students will learn more from a parent in their lifetime than they ever will from a teacher (McGee-Banks, 2007).

Multicultural educators strive to include parents in order to provide means of communication to the home. "Students, parents, and teachers all benefit when parents and family members are involved in schools" (McGee-Banks, 2007, p. 446). Part of what makes parents so important is their knowledge of their children. Situations at home may pose impositions to the educational process, and a parent can be an extremely valuable ally if the lines of communication are open (Hidalgo, 1995).

Including parents and family members in school activities promotes engagement and allows the parents an opportunity to view what is being taught in the schools. Allowing parents to volunteer in the classroom is also a vital additive to the success of students, and it reinforces the value of parents to the students (McGee-Banks, 2007).

Etta Hollins also believes that parents are an asset, so she created a set of questions that teachers could give to parents and students to facilitate the establishment of positive communication with parents. These questions are best when administered at the start of the school year as they provide a rather intuitive glimpse into the student's perceptions of school, learning, and even their

family life (Hollins, 1996). Getting the parents involved early is a key to maintaining a positive and culturally responsive atmosphere in the classroom.

Because family is a part of the total makeup of a student's background and culture, it is vital that parents be involved in the educational process. To do this, there are several ways to directly involve parents. The first of which is to clearly articulate to parents the mission, vision, and beliefs of the school and classroom. This gives the parents a real sense of what the school is trying to do to help their child. The second is to interview parents to understand their questions, comments, and even their ideas for what can be done to assist their child. The third is to plan situations where parents can learn how to be involved in their child's education. Many parents do not know what to do to help and only need to know what they can do to increase the achievement of their child. The fourth idea is to assign a person to communicate with parents on a regular basis. This person would not communicate discipline problems, but rather involve parents in school activities as much as possible. The fifth idea is to put together a folder or binder with school resources that parents can access to help their students and themselves. The sixth idea is to set aside space in the school where parents and family members can meet to discuss the best methods for helping their children. The final idea is to involve parents by inviting them to school plays, assemblies, and even student presentations (King and Goodwin, 2002). Parental involvement is such a huge component of any educational endeavor that if not utilized to their fullest extent possible, everyone becomes the loser.



## Project Rationale

This project is heavily based on Banks transformative approach to multicultural education. The classroom structure was changed from standards focused, to a focus on promoting democracy and justice through examining different perspectives. This took the classroom beyond the contributions and additive approach Banks describes (Banks, 2004). The project also had strong roots in Grant and Sleeter's human relations approach. The curriculum piece was designed to raise student awareness of diversity and the validity of other worldviews and beliefs (Grant and Sleeter, 2007). As Geneva Gay suggested, it was through the various pieces of literature by Sandra Cisneros (of Mexican descent), Julia Alvarez (of the Dominican Republic), Maijuie Xiong (from Laos), Amy Tan (of Chinese descent), and Jean Fritz (an American born and raised in China) that this was accomplished. These differing viewpoints provided the basis for intense discussions of diversity and differing worldviews (Gay, 1995).

The project also focused on reflection, not only from the students, but from the teacher as well. At the behest of Jana Noel and James Banks, reflecting on one's own culture and its' influences is an important key to developing a multicultural curriculum. This project gave students an opportunity to develop and recognize their own cultural identity, as encouraged by Banks and Noel. The teacher required constant self-reflection of practice and classroom content to ensure the curriculum was culturally responsive (Noel, 2008).

The activities also provided students with opportunities to discuss discrimination, racism, prejudice, and injustice, and to formulate ideas for

combating those detrimental factors in society today. This is one of the biggest ideals advocated by the Center for Multicultural Education as evidenced from the two documents titled Democracy and Diversity and Diversity within Unity.

Due to the incredible amount of research available regarding parental involvement, especially the ideas and suggestions of King, Goodwin, and Hollins, it was essential that parental involvement be included in the project. Since parental involvement can increase student engagement in the classroom and in education in general, it was paramount that parents be included (Hollins, 1996; King and Goodwin, 2002).

In conclusion, multicultural education is a key not only to greater student learning, but also to advancing the ideals of democracy and justice across the nation and around the world. In this ever increasingly diverse global environment, it is imperative that students learn to work cooperatively in a multitude of situations and with a variety of people from different cultures and backgrounds. Through the educational lens of multiculturalism, students can be introduced to ideas and perspectives they may never see any other way.

## CHAPTER III

### Background of the Project

"We don't need your hypocrisy; execute real democracy, the most industrious of society; the unthinking majority (Tankian, 2007).

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This project began due to the needs of the students in the Kayman School District. After an initial examination of the principles and concepts designed by the Center for Multicultural Education, it was determined that incorporation of multicultural viewpoints into the curriculum for the Kayman Middle School was needed. According to the results of the examination, it was determined that the atmosphere at the school was not culturally responsive and needed to integrate multicultural ideas to enhance the education the students were experiencing. These middle school students grew up in a very rural and isolated setting, rarely seeing glimpses of different cultures and perspectives, and the goal of this project was to ensure that their educational experiences would expose them to viewpoints and perspectives they would not be familiar with. The language arts curriculum at the time of the project consisted of primarily male and Euro-centric viewpoints and supplemental materials were needed to incorporate new ideas and diverse learning experiences for each student. Materials were rarely from people of color or women, and when they were represented, it was usually in stereotypical fashion.

## Project Procedure

The project began with an examination of the guiding principles and concepts developed by the Center for Multicultural Education in their publication titled Democracy and Diversity, and Diversity within Unity. These publications lead to a deeper understanding of the areas of concern regarding the district and building relationship with diversity and its' implications. The next step was to dive into the related research to establish a foundation for the necessity of a multicultural curriculum and examine the theories and underpinnings of multicultural education in order to more effectively increase the multicultural awareness of both students and teacher. It was then necessary to examine the current curriculum for biases and stereotypes that would provide the antithesis to the work done in this project, and eliminate these portions of the curriculum, or provide a means to examine the issues of diversity as a class to learn of their existence, repercussions, and possible solutions. Critical evaluation of textbooks, literature, and other materials was paramount to the completion of this project.

The final act of the project was to develop a unit that specifically addressed diversity in as many forms as possible, including, but not limited to, race/ethnicity, gender, age, socioeconomic status, religion, exceptionality, language, and sexual orientation. Materials were examined and activities were chosen with the hope of opening the eyes of the students of Kayman Middle School to a world of social justice and positive relationships. Students were also asked to begin identifying their own cultural identity through writing, speaking,

reading, and self-reflecting. This would create more dialogue to be had throughout the coming school year, ensuring that the lessons of multicultural education did not stop at a single unit, but spread throughout the curriculum and activities all year long.

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### Project Development

Examination of curriculum material was a key to development of this project. Making sure the content was both relevant and free of bias took a measure of analysis that included knowing what types of comments, situations, or stereotypes may cause negative images of the cultures studied. Reading reviews of literature that could be used in the language arts classroom was a huge component of the project, and while there were many great selections available, many still contained forms of bias and stereotyping. Just because a piece of literature is written by or about a Hispanic or African American person, does not mean that it is multicultural. Most depictions of such persons within literature of the past have had negative consequences on the images and opinions of persons of ethnicity (Gay, 1994). It was also important to examine the different forms of diversity and make sure that as many different perspectives were examined as possible.

### Project Implementation

This project was developed to be implemented in the 7<sup>th</sup> grade language arts class at Kayman Middle School in the 2008-2009 school years, and while the unit is only a small part of the curriculum, the ideals and foundations of multicultural education would be implemented throughout the year. Future units

would be developed, and differing perspectives would always be presented in every aspect of the class. It is the hope of the author that the materials examined in this project would open the doors for teachers nationwide to examine their own curriculum and classroom to ensure that they are being culturally responsive and inclusive.

CHAPTER IV  
CURRICULUM PROJECT

Unit Introduction

Education shall be directed to the full development of the human personality and to the strengthening of respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms. It shall promote understanding, tolerance and friendship among all nations, racial or religious groups, and shall further the activities of the United Nations for the maintenance of peace (Universal Declaration of Human Rights, 1948).

Before implementing this curriculum, it is recommended that teachers and administrators examine their own school using the guidelines and principles set forth in the Diversity within Unity and Democracy and Diversity packets from the Center for Multicultural Education. These documents set forth a framework from which the curriculum presented was drawn. It is imperative that teachers and administrators understand the unique characteristics that guide a school devoted to a multicultural perspective as it strives for democratic and just ideals within the school and classroom before trying to recreate that atmosphere within their own school. These documents can be found in the appendix of this project, or on the website of the Center for Multicultural Education.

It is also recommended that teachers and administrators looking to incorporate multicultural ideas examine their own personal identities to ensure a solid foundational knowledge base from which to begin from.

The following curriculum piece was designed to be implemented at the beginning of the school year in order to create a democratic and culturally diverse atmosphere that will be felt for the remainder of the school year. It was designed as a three week-long unit, which is designed to set parameters for future units of discussion and study. As a language arts curriculum, it was time consuming, but not difficult, to ensure that reading and writing standards were adequately covered as well as the new content direction presented by this unit.

This project was also designed in coordination with a social studies instructor in the same school district. While both units are not required to be effective, it is recommended that both units be performed for all the students involved. To view the completed social studies project, please refer to the project titled "Redefining the Apartheid of American History: A Middle School History Curriculum" by Scott Sandberg, Master Teacher candidate at Central Washington University during the summer of 2008.



## Unit Plan

### Day One

**Materials Needed:** "What is Culture?" document, scenario list

**Vocabulary:** culture, stereotype, prejudice, racism, discrimination, language, diversity

**Objectives:** 1. Students will understand what culture is and identify what components make up a person or groups culture. 2. Students will understand the cultural elements of several different cultures.

**EALR's:** Reading 1.2.2 - Apply a variety of strategies to comprehend words and ideas in complex text. Reading 2.1.4 – Apply comprehension monitoring strategies before, during, and after reading: use prior knowledge/schema.

**Procedures:**

This multicultural unit began with an examination of what culture is and how it affects student's everyday lives. The teacher distributed the document entitled "What is Culture?" from the 1998 book Geography: the World and Its People. The teacher read portions of the document and asked for student volunteers to read as well. During the reading, discussion was facilitated from the many ideas of what culture is and examples were given based on the cultures in the immediate area of the community in which the school is located. In Kayman, the culture is primarily Hispanics and white farmers, both of which have very distinct characteristics.

### What is Culture?

If you wake up to rock music, put on denim jeans, drink orange juice for breakfast, and speak English, those things are part of your culture. If you eat flat bread for breakfast, speak Arabic, and wear a long cotton robe to protect you from the hot sun, those things are part of your culture.

When some people hear the word culture, they think of priceless paintings and classical symphonies. Culture, as used in geography, is the way of life of a group of people who share similar beliefs and customs. These people may speak the same language, follow the same religion, and dress in a certain way. They may not. The culture of a people also includes their government, their music and literature, and the ways they make a living.

A colorfully dressed dancer in South Korea reflects certain customs that are important to her. Many of her beliefs and customs have been passed down from distant ancestors. All of us hold certain beliefs and act certain ways because of what we've learned in our culture. What things are important in your culture?

Some 4,000 to 5,000 years ago, at least four cultures arose in Asia and Africa. One developed in China along a river called the Huang He. Another developed near the Indus River in South Asia, a third between the Tigris and Euphrates rivers in Southwest Asia, and a fourth along the Nile River in North Africa.

All four river-valley cultures developed agriculture and ways of irrigating or bringing water to the land. Why was irrigation important? Farming produced

more food than hunting and gathering, which meant that larger populations could develop. People then learned trades, built cities, and made laws.

The river-valley cultures eventually became civilizations, which are highly developed cultures. These civilizations spread their knowledge and skills from one area to another, a process known as cultural diffusion.

The kind of government, or political system, a society has reflects its culture. Until a few hundred years ago, most countries had authoritarian systems in which one person ruled with unlimited power.

When the people of a country hold the powers of government, we think of that government as a democracy. Citizens choose their leaders by voting. Once in power, leaders in a democracy are expected to obey a constitution or other longstanding traditions that require them to respect individual freedoms.

Language is a powerful tool, offering a way for people to share information. Sharing a language is one of the strongest unifying forces for a culture. Languages spoken in a culture region often belong to the same language family, or group of languages having similar beginnings. Romance languages, for example, come from Latin, the language of ancient Rome. Spanish, Portuguese, French, Italian, and Romanian are in the Romance language family.

From *Geography: The World and Its People* © 1998 by McGraw-Hill Companies.

**Activity: Identifying Culture**

After reading the article, students were asked to identify different cultural aspects of randomly drawn cultures within the groups at their tables. Prior to the lesson, the teacher cut many pictures out of magazines that showed a variety of different cultural elements. These cultural elements were not to be limited to ethnic, but to other cultural types as well. It is important to note here that the teacher must identify ideas as parts of the culture or stereotypes of that culture. Students created collages of the different pictures they gathered when they were certain that all the elements displayed matched to the culture they were given. Some pictures were duplicated to show that different elements can be a part of more than one culture. For example, a picture of a man reading a book may belong to an ethnic culture, a culture of education, or even a gender specific culture.

After the collage activity, a distinction must be made between stereotyping, discrimination, prejudice, and racism here, as students may be confused by their definitions. To do this, an activity was done with a set of scenarios in which students in groups needed to identify if the scenario was an example of discrimination, racism, prejudice or stereotyping. These scenarios are listed below:

**Scenario 1 (discrimination)**

Jeff and Carly both apply for a job with a big corporation. During the interview, both are asked the same sets of questions. Throughout the course of the

interview, the interviewer discovers that Carly wants to have a baby sometime in the near future. Using this information, the interviewer recommends that Jeff be the candidate to be hired for the job.

**Scenario 2 (prejudice)**

Alonso is working as a security guard in the local shopping mall. One busy Saturday, he notices two young African-American men walking into the electronics store. He follows them into the store and watches them as they walk around. It is obvious they are up to something, and it is Alonso's job to figure out what.

**Scenario 3 (stereotyping)**

Jill is a new manager of a department store that handles many phone calls each and every day. With a growing population of Hispanic people in the area, Jill decides to put Maria Lopez at the phone desk to handle the incoming calls, even though she does not realize that Maria knows no Spanish.

**Scenario 4 (racism)**

Nancy is the loan consultant at a local bank. Recently she interviewed a new customer applying for a home loan. The woman applying for the loan seemed to have everything in order for her loan, but because she was African-American, Nancy assumed the woman would waste the money and not be able to pay it back, even though her financial records were clean. Her loan was denied.

**Scenario 5 (prejudice)**

Jeremy was new to school and in his PE class when the teacher let the boys play

basketball. Jeremy and another boy were allowed to choose the teams, and because Jeremy knew very few people he chose the Asian-American students because he was sure they were good at basketball.

**Scenario 6 (discrimination)**

Julie applied at a local company that usually hires high school students to work on construction crews. Instead of giving Julie the construction job she wanted, the construction manager gives her a secretarial position at the company's headquarters. While Julie is leaving, she hears the construction manager tell a friend that he did Julie a favor since construction is a man's job.

Day Two

**Materials Needed:** videos from popular media, old English/language arts textbooks, poster boards.

**Vocabulary:** ethnicity, ageism, sexism, disability, religion, nationality, social status, heterosexism.

**Objectives:** 1. Students will be able to find evidence of discrimination in popular media and in written text. 2. Students will be able to verbalize how the discrimination took place.

**EALR's:** Reading 2.2.3 Understand and Analyze Story Elements. Reading 2.4.2 Analyze how an author's style of writing achieves the author's purpose and influences an audience.

**Procedures:**

The second day of instruction in the language arts class involved a discussion and examination of the eight major forms of discrimination including: ethnicity, sexism, ageism, disability, religion, nationality, social status, and heterosexism. These eight forms of discrimination were adapted from Duane Campbell's book Choosing Democracy. Examples were presented from videos in popular media and the different forms of discrimination were identified to ensure student understanding of the many forms discrimination can take. This required the teacher to view many different popular television programs and popular media to show the different forms of discrimination in action.

**Activity:** Uncovering Discrimination and Stereotypes

Once students understood the different forms of discrimination, they were given many older textbooks, including the current one the classroom uses, and asked to survey short stories for explicit instances of discrimination or stereotypes based on the eight major forms discussed. Each group was assigned different stories in order to expedite the process. The textbooks used for this project were:

- a. Holt Elements of Literature Level 7 (2005)
- b. Discovering Fiction Volume 1 (1988)
- c. Discovering Fiction Volume 2 (1988)
- d. Enjoying Literature (1992)
- e. Discovering Literature (1992)
- f. Holt Elements of Literature Level 8 (2005)
- g. Holt Elements of Literature Level 6 (2005)

After locating the various stories and instances of discrimination, students were to present their findings to the class and describe which form of discrimination was evident in the text. They were also to discuss whether or not the discrimination was implicit or explicit. After sharing these in class, the class discussed discrimination in popular media including music, movies, television, books, and video games.

### Day Three

**Materials Needed:** cultural pie charts, Remember the Titans movie, DVD player, TV/projector

**Vocabulary:** identity, social status

**Objectives:** 1. Students will become familiar with their own cultural backgrounds and its influences.

**EALR's:** Writing 1.1.1 Analyzes and selects effective strategies for generating writing and planning writing. Writing 3.1.1 Analyzes ideas, selects a manageable topic, and elaborates using specific, relevant details and/or examples.

**Procedures:**

At the start of class the teacher revealed a pie chart that revealed many of the cultural elements that influenced the culture of the teacher. These pie charts were based off the examples given in Jana Noel's book Developing Multicultural Educators and were enhanced and developed as a precursor to writing the students own autobiography (2008). This pie chart contains 14 different



categories the students must classify themselves in and identify key elements that influence their own cultural background. The categories are as follows:

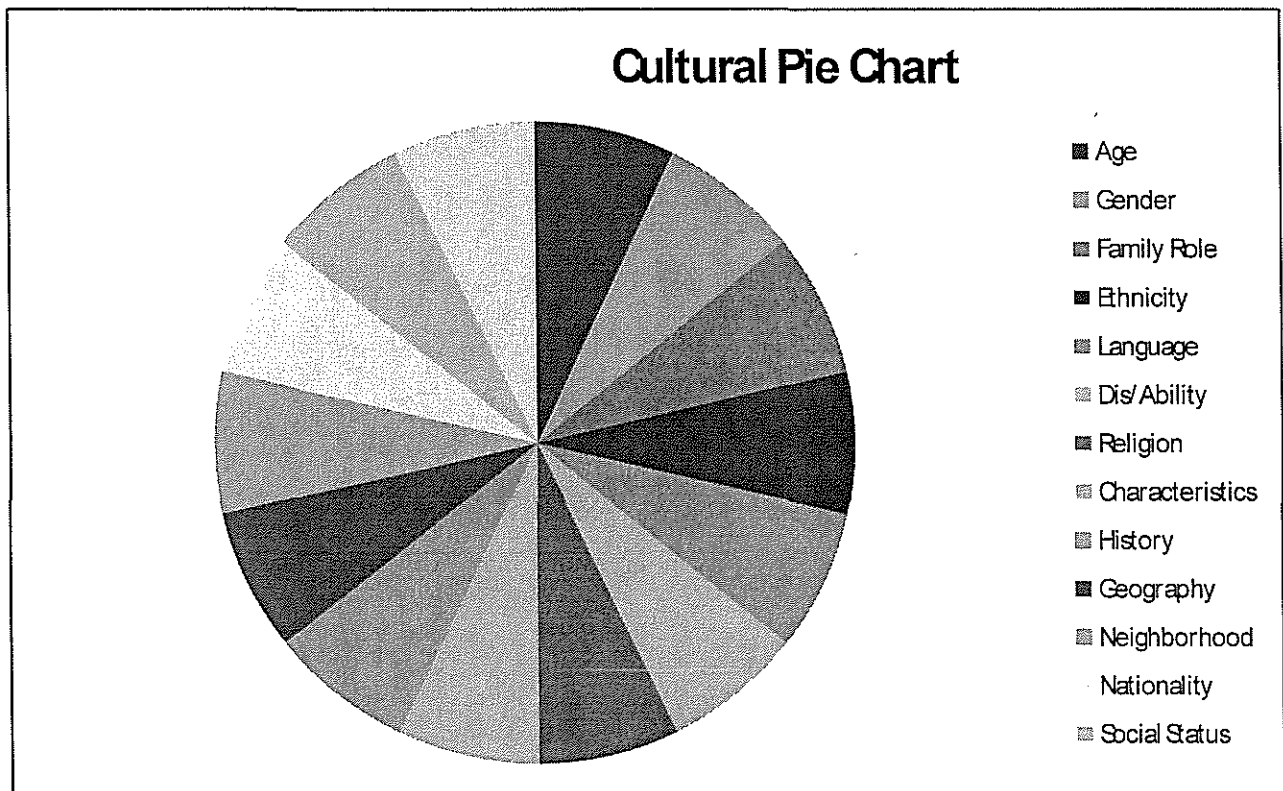
1. Age – how does the students age fit into their cultural background
2. Gender – how does the sex of the student affect their life
3. Family Role – what role does the student play in their own family
4. Ethnicity – what ethnic background gives the student meaning
5. Language – how does the languages the student does and does not speak play into their background
6. Disability or Ability – how does any physical or mental disability, or any giftedness affect the students educational and personal life
7. Religion – does the students involvement in religious activity play an important role, and do the religious beliefs play a huge role in the students life
8. Characteristics (Likes/Dislikes) – how do the students likes and dislikes frame their lives including recreational time
9. History (Personal/Cultural/Historical) – major events in the students personal lives, in the history of their culture, and worldwide within the lifetime of the student
10. Geographic Region – how does the community and geographic region play into the cultural background of the student
11. Social Status (Poverty/Middle Class/Rich) – level of income affects everyone, so how does the students income influence their lives and decisions

12. Neighborhood (Rural/Urban/Suburban) – does the student live in a small rural town, a large urban sprawl, or the nice suburbs of a larger city

13. Nationality – how does the location of the students ancestry play into their current lives

14. Current Status – how does current events and circumstances determine cultural background for the student in years to come

After these categories were identified and examined, the students were asked to place them in a pie chart, giving more space on the chart for items they believed to be of more importance to their cultural background than others. Students then shared their pie charts with a partner they felt comfortable sharing with.



**Activity:** "I Am" Autobiographies.

After students were done sharing their pie charts, the teacher handed out the "I Am" autobiographies assignment and went over the requirements. The handout is included below:

### **"I Am" Autobiography**

This assignment will ask you to take the pie chart activity and expand on it, creating a document that will reveal how different elements have integrated into your own cultural background.

First of all, take the comments you made regarding the 14 categories on the pie chart and put them into paragraphs, describing yourself. When necessary, use anecdotes, examples, and details to elaborate your statements regarding the 14 categories. The format for the paragraphs is listed below, and one full paragraph is due each day for the next five days. Your homework will be to finish writing the paragraph and read it to a family member. They need to sign and date it each night.

Paragraph 1 – age, gender, family role, disability/ability

Paragraph 2 – ethnicity, language, religion

Paragraph 3 – geographic region, neighborhood

Paragraph 4 – social status, history, nationality

Paragraph 5 – current status and conclusion

Each paragraph is to begin with the words "I Am." After finishing the paper, there will be a day for peer editing, revising, and general enhancing the paper for final turn in. These days will be labeled on the class calendar. Since your pre-writing

is mostly done, this assignment will focus on your ideas and content. Your grade for this assignment will be based on its completeness, and your inclusion of anecdotes, examples, and details to elaborate on the 14 categories. Also, since this is the first major paper of the year, there will NOT be a heavy emphasis on conventions, although a good edit should be done to make sure everything is comprehensible.

Following the discussion of this paper, students were given a few moments to discuss their plans for the paper in order to bounce ideas off fellow students. After the brief discussion time, the students were shown the first portion of the movie Remember the Titans with an emphasis on examining the relationship between the white and black football players. The students were asked to pay close attention to how conflicts were positively solved versus the ways they were negatively handled. Discussion questions for the film are listed below:

**Discussion Questions**

Why did the white football players dislike the black football players?

Why did the black football players dislike the white football players?

Describe the discrimination seen in this segment of the film.

Before discussion questions were answered, students were given a short time of “turn and talk” to confer with a partner before random students were asked to respond. This strategy gave all students a chance to verbalize their thoughts before being asked to respond in front of the whole class, allowing them to validate or revise their answers as needed. This strategy comes from the SLOP instructional model which notes this as a wonderful strategy for the inclusion of English Language Learners (Eschevarria, Vogt, and Short, 2007).

The remaining class time is reserved for work on the student’s autobiography.

While leaving the classroom, the teacher reminded students that their first paragraph of their “I Am” autobiography needs to be completed and signed upon returning the following day.

#### Day Four

**Materials Needed:** students autobiography, Remember the Titans movie, DVD player, TV/projector, Kool-Aid or Gatorade, a salad

**Vocabulary:** assimilation

**Objectives:** 1. Students will build their knowledge of cultural influences by understanding the concept of “assimilation.”

**EALR’s:** Communication 3.2.1 Understands how to use available media and resources to convey a message or enhance oral presentations.

**Procedures:**

Students watched the second portion of Remember the Titans again focusing on the relationships between the football players and how those

relationships change throughout the course of the movie. Discussion questions for this segment are listed below:

**Discussion Questions**

What do you see as the biggest problem between Gary and Julius?

How do you think their problem will be solved?

Again, students had a short period of “turn and talk” to confer with a partner before random students were chosen to answer for the class.

**Activity: Soup or Salad**

After the film, the teacher wrote the word assimilation on the board and defined it for the students, showing them the example of mixing Kool-Aid or Gatorade to represent the “melting pot” theory and bringing in a salad to represent the “salad bowl” idea. Bringing these items into the classroom encouraged higher attention rates and kept students focused on the discussion topic. Students were then asked to work with a partner to come up with their own way to represent both theories about American culture. Students were then asked to share their creative ideas with the class and explain how their idea represented the two differing theories.

The remaining class time is reserved for work on the student’s autobiography.

While leaving the classroom, students were reminded that the second paragraph of their "I Am" autobiography is due on the following day, signed by someone at home.

### Day Five

**Materials Needed:** students autobiography, Remember the Titans movie, DVD player, TV/projector, "Names/Nombres" by Julia Alvarez (p. 394), cultural pie charts

**Vocabulary:** ethnicities, exotic, heritage, convoluted

**Objectives:** 1. Students will further their knowledge of cultural influences by examining the topic of language within a multicultural short story. 2. Students will build their ability to identify cultural components in the lives of the characters from the stories being read.

**EALR's:** Reading 2.1.5 Apply comprehension monitoring strategies before, during, and after reading: predict and infer. Reading 2.3.2 Analyze and synthesize information for a specific topic or purpose.

**Procedures:**

Students watched the third portion of Remember the Titans again focusing on the relationships between the football players and how those relationships change throughout the course of the movie. Discussion questions for this segment are listed below:

**Discussion Questions**

Describe the changes in the relationship between Gary and Julius.

How has Gary's relationships with other people changed?

Again, students had a short period of "turn and talk" to confer with a partner before random students were chosen to answer for the class.

**Activity:** A Multicultural Reading

Following the discussion questions, students were asked to work with a partner to read the story "Names/Nombres" by Julia Alvarez. Their task was to examine the story for cultural components of the main character, Julia, similar to those cultural components used in the student's pie chart activity. They were asked to fill in as many categories as they could gather from the story, and pay special attention to the focus of language within the story. Their focus question was "How does language shape the life of Julia?" The students were asked to show some form of visual representation of their answer, whether drawings or written descriptions, and post them around the room for students to share, along with their pie chart for the character of Julia. A few moments were then given for students to move about the room and view the work of their peers.

The remaining class time is reserved for work on the student's autobiography.

While leaving the classroom, students were reminded that the third paragraph of their "I Am" autobiography is due on the following day, signed by someone at home.



**Materials Needed:** students autobiography, Remember the Titans movie, DVD player, TV/projector, “An Unforgettable Journey” by Maijue Xiong (p. 402), copy of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, poster boards

**Vocabulary:** refuge, transition, persecution, refugee, deprivation

**Objectives:** 1. Students will be able to understand how important the rights are of United States citizens. 2. Students will understand the document the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

**EALR's:** Reading 2.1.6 Apply comprehension monitoring strategies to understand fiction, nonfiction, informational text, and task-oriented text: monitor for meaning, create mental images, and generate and answer questions.

**Procedures:**

Students watched the fourth portion of Remember the Titans again focusing on the relationships between the football players and how those relationships change throughout the course of the movie. Discussion questions for this segment are listed below:

**Discussion Questions**

Even after the football team seemed to be getting along, what other problems showed up to make the unity they shared shaky?

How did the cultural influences of the area play a role in the racism and discrimination seen in this segment of the film?

Again, students had a short period of “turn and talk” to confer with a partner before random students were chosen to answer for the class.

**Activity:** A Multicultural Reading

After the film, students were given copies of the story “An Unforgettable Journey” by Maijue Xiong and a copy of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (Universal Declaration of Human Rights, 1948). The class examined the human rights document through discussion, and then moved on to the story. Prior to reading the story, it was important for the teacher to explain Communism and its influences on nations around the world. This was needed background information as it was an integral part of the story. This story was read using the round-robin reading strategy in which students read a small portion out loud to the class then call on another student to read and so on. Students were asked to pay close attention to the rights and freedoms people should have but were denied them within the story, and to think about how their rights according to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights were neglected. Students were given poster board and asked to illustrate the rights that were violated using pictures and/or words and post them around the room for the class to share. A few moments were then given for students to examine their peers work and discuss their poster boards.

The remaining class time is reserved for work on the student’s autobiography.

While leaving the classroom, students were reminded that the fourth paragraph of their "I Am" autobiography is due on the following day, signed by someone at home.

### Day Seven

**Materials Needed:** students autobiography, Remember the Titans movie, DVD player, TV/projector, "The Place Where Dreams Come From" by Sandra Cisneros (p. 624), post-it notes, access to computers and the internet

**Vocabulary:** ritual, dictated, texture

**Objectives:** 1. Students will be able to understand how family plays a role in the cultural development of a person. 2. Students will be able to identify people in their own lives that have influenced their lives.

**EALR's:** Reading 2.4.1 Analyze literary/narrative text and information/expository text to draw conclusions and develop insights.

**Procedures:**

Students watched the fifth portion of Remember the Titans again focusing on the relationships between the football players and how those relationships change throughout the course of the movie. Discussion questions for this segment are listed below:

**Discussion Questions**

Throughout the movie Coach Boon and Coach Yost presented themselves as people who did not give into racist ideas, yet both seemed to ignore each other when it came time to ask for help. What made them act in this way?

What benefits could be seen from the way the two groups of people finally worked things out together?

Again, students had a short period of “turn and talk” to confer with a partner before random students were chosen to answer for the class.

**Activity:** A Multicultural Reading

After the film, students went to the computer lab to research biographical information about acclaimed author Sandra Cisneros. At this point, it was the teacher’s discretion as to whether to provide the location of specific websites to research, such as [www.sandracisneros.com](http://www.sandracisneros.com) or [www.wikipedia.org](http://www.wikipedia.org), or allow students to search on their own. Students were told to find at least three important details about Cisneros life, but were encouraged to find details that other students would not uncover. These details were written on post-it notes and taken back to the classroom where they were placed on the white board. The white board had been drawn up similarly to one of the pie charts done previously in the unit, and the details from Cisneros life were placed into the various categories by the students that located them. As students placed their post-it notes in the categories they chose, they were required to justify why their post-it went in that particular category. Then students were given a chance to discuss Cisneros life and family.

Students were then given a copy of Cisneros story titled “The Place Where Dreams Come From” and were asked to read it silently to themselves.

Following the reading, students again discussed the story's revelations about Cisneros life and family, specifically elaborating on how her family played a role in her cultural development. They were then asked to choose a person in their own life that has influenced them as Cisneros family influenced her and prepare a short 60 second presentation of who that person is and what the person has done to influence their life. The students then shared their mini-presentation with at least two students in the classroom.

The remaining class time is reserved for work on the student's autobiography.

While leaving the classroom, students were reminded that the fifth and final paragraph of their "I Am" autobiography is due on the following day, signed by someone at home.

#### Day Eight

**Materials Needed:** student autobiography, Remember the Titans movie, DVD player, TV/projector

**Vocabulary:** edit, revise

**Objectives:** 1. Students will be edit and revise their autobiographies to standard.

**EALR's:** Writing 1.3.1 Revises text, including changing words, sentences, paragraphs, and ideas. Writing 1.4.1 Applies understanding of editing appropriate for grade level.

**Procedures:**

Students watched the final portion of Remember the Titans again focusing on the relationships between the football players and how those relationships change throughout the course of the movie. Discussion questions for this segment are listed below:

### **Discussion Questions**

Even though Gary's story didn't end as well as you'd probably like, there was much to learn from his story and the story of his football team. Describe what lessons you might take from this movie and how do they apply to this unit of study?

Again, students had a short period of "turn and talk" to confer with a partner before random students were chosen to answer for the class.

**Activity:** Read Around Groups (Perry, n.d.)

After the film, students were asked to pull out their autobiographies and prepare to revise and edit them. Each group at a table rotated their papers once to the left and had 2 minutes to read their partner's copy. During this time, no writing was allowed, only reading. After this, the student reading the paper needed to ask one of two types of questions on the document, and they had only 3 minutes to do so. The first is a clarifying question when something does not quite make sense. The other is an elaboration question when there is not quite enough information to really support a statement that was made. The student then needed to write one helpful suggestion for content improvement on the document. After this time was up, the papers rotated again to the right and

repeated the same process. This rotation repeated until the students received their own paper back.

This activity was included based on the identification of cooperative learning as a key ingredient to a multicultural curriculum (Sleeter and Grant, 1993).

At this point, students were asked to work with a partner to edit for conventions, focusing on capitalization and end punctuation. Not much emphasis was placed on conventions for the assignment, so this was merely an exercise at eliminating major problems.

The remaining minutes of class were reserved for drafting the final copy of the student's autobiographies which were due the following day at the start of the class period.

#### Day Nine

**Materials Needed:** "Fish Cheeks" by Amy Tan (p. 528), journals

**Vocabulary:** appalling, wedges, clamor, ruffled, muster

**Objectives:** 1. Students will be able to discuss and analyze the author's purpose for writing. 2. Students will be able to extend their learning beyond the text into their personal lives.

**EALR's:** Reading 2.4.5 Analyze ideas and concepts to generalize/extend information beyond the text. Reading 2.4.7 Analyze the reasoning and ideas underlying an author's perspective, beliefs, and assumptions.

**Procedures:**

The class began with students writing in their journals. This reflection dealt with the project up to this point discussing what they've learned and their responses to the movies and stories so far.

**Activity:** A Multicultural Reading

After the journaling, students were given copies of the story "Fish Cheeks" by Amy Tan. Students were asked to think critically as to why the author wrote this particular story. This story was read aloud by the teacher, pausing for discussion throughout.

After reading the story, the students were put in groups of three in which they were to plan a one-act play. The characters in the play include Amy Tan, her mother, and a friend. The one-act was to take place ten years after the incident described in the story and was a retelling of the story. The student playing Amy Tan was to retell the incident, with the student playing her mother interjecting to add her perspective of the fateful dinner. The final student was to play the role of a friend who asked about the Christmas Eve described in the story. This student was allowed to ask questions, and the goal of the play was to reveal the message of the story to the class.

After all the groups have finished, the class discussed the results of the plays and evaluated the purpose the author chose for writing the story. Then students wrote in their journals describing their reactions to this story and the plays they witnessed.

This simulation activity was included in the project as an activity advocated by Grant and Gomez in Campus and Classrooms as an activity that



promotes engagement and cross-cultural communications within student groups (2001).

### Day Ten

**Materials Needed:** "Homesick" by Jean Fritz (p. 206)

**Vocabulary:** internal conflict, external conflict

**Objectives:** 1. Students will understand the difference between internal conflict and external conflict. 2. Students will be able to analyze a person's cultural background to determine how it influences their writing.

**EALR's:** Reading 2.4.5 Analyze ideas and concepts to generalize/extend information beyond the text. Reading 2.4.7 Analyze the reasoning and ideas underlying an author's perspective, beliefs, and assumptions.

**Procedures:**

At the start of class students began by journal writing about what similarities and differences the students found in the stories up to this point. The students were asked to focus on elements found in the cultural pie chart created at the beginning of the unit. Following this brief period of writing, students were asked to share their entries with the rest of the class. The teacher then quickly explained the differences between internal and external conflict, giving examples of both from the previous stories read in the class.

**Activity:** Literature Analysis

After sharing their journal entries, the students were given copies of the story "Homesick" by Jean Fritz and asked to read the story silently or with a partner if they preferred. They were asked to specifically look for ways to identify

the cultural background of the author and lead character based on the 14 categories used in the cultural pie charts from earlier in the unit. They were also asked to locate different instances of internal and external conflict.

The students were then asked to create some sort of representation of the author's cultural background, whether written, drawn, or a collage of magazine clippings or any combination of the above listed methods. They had the remainder of the class period to devise their representation and were told that they would have to present the representation the following day and needed to be able to justify their reasoning using textual evidence for their conclusions.

#### Day Eleven

**Materials Needed:** cultural pie charts

**Vocabulary:** dominant culture, culture of power

**Objectives:** 1. Students will understand the differences between the dominant culture and the culture of power. 2. Students will be able to debate effectively.

**EALR's:** Communications 2.2.1 Uses communication skills that demonstrate respect. Communications 2.2.2 Applies skills and strategies to contribute responsibly in a group setting.

**Procedures:**

Class began with students writing in their journals a response to this question, "What is an American?" The teacher asked them to use the information gathered from this unit so far to determine what cultural qualities they would give to an "American."

**Activity:** Culture of Power Debate

After journaling, the class moved to creating a cultural pie chart for the “typical American.” Using popular media the class created a new cultural pie chart. The teacher then explained that this was the dominant culture of this society, and also the culture of power. In groups, the students then created a list of “rules” or “codes” that you must abide by to become part of the dominant culture. These lists were then melded together and discussed to come up with a class list of the rules and codes. Following this activity, the students were divided into three groups in which they were to prepare for a debate. The topic of debate was, “Assimilation into the Dominant Culture: Should we?” Team one was to take the assimilation or “melting pot” point of view, and team two was to take the “salad” point of view. Team three would be the audience and would decide who won the debate. The debate would follow the following format:

Side 1 – Opening Arguments (3 minutes)

Side 2 – Opening Arguments (3 minutes)

Side 1 – Rebuttal (3 minutes)

Side 2 – Rebuttal (3 minutes)

Side 1 – 2<sup>nd</sup> Rebuttal (2 minutes)

Side 2 – 2<sup>nd</sup> Rebuttal (2 minutes)

Side 1 – Concluding Arguments (4 minutes)

Side 2 – Concluding Arguments (4 minutes)

Following the debate the members of team three would need to confer for 5 minutes to declare a winner based on quality of the arguments made. In

addition to stating who won the debate, all members of the class were asked to use a slip of paper to cast their vote for which side they would agree with, regardless of which side of the debate they were on. These votes were anonymous, but final tallies were revealed to the class as a whole. This activity was adapted from "A Classroom Debate" from the book 110 Experiences for Multicultural Learning by Paul B. Pederson (2004).

### Day Twelve

**Materials Needed:** questionnaire from Culture in School Learning by Etta R. Hollins (1996). journals

**Vocabulary:** interview

**Objectives:** 1. Students will develop interviewing skills for a personal interview.

**EALR's:** Communications 1.1.2 Applies a variety of listening and observation skills/strategies to interpret information.

**Procedures:**

At the start of class, students wrote in their journal regarding instances in their formal schooling in which their parents/guardians have participated in the educational process. This included times when parents came for conferences, sporting events, academic presentations, or any other school-related event. After writing for a brief period of time, students were given the opportunity to share with a partner knowing that the partner was going to be the one to share the information with the class. The students then shared their entries with the class.

**Activity:** Parental Interview

The students then received a copy of the two questionnaires based on the book Culture in School Learning by Etta R. Hollins (1996, p. 67-77). The first questionnaire was for the student to take, and the second was for their parents to take. The students took a few moments to fill in their own questionnaire and then moved on to the parent edition. Using the parent survey, the students guessed at what their parents might answer by filling it in as their parent. The students then prepared to interview their parents/guardians at home that night. The teacher informed the students that they must not discuss any of the questions with their parents; they must simply ask their parents the questions and record their responses on their form. The students were to also ask their parents the questions from the form the students filled out and have them guess the answers. Again, students were not to discuss the questions with their parents. They were merely to ask and record.

**Student Questionnaire**

1. When I am not at school what I enjoy most is...because...
2. When I am not at school I spend most of my time with...because...
3. Of all the people I know, the one person I admire the most is...because...
4. If I could have just one wish granted, I would wish for...because...
5. If I could live any place in the world I would choose...because...
6. When I think about school my first thoughts are about...
7. My most memorable experiences in school are...
8. What I like most about my present school is...

9. My most painful or disappointing experience in school was...
10. My favorite subject is...because...
11. The kind of teacher I like most is one who...
12. What I want most from school this year is...
13. It would be helpful to me in getting what I want most from school if...
14. The biggest problem I expect to have in getting what I want most from school is...
15. I might be able to overcome this problem if...or by...
16. Some places I might go for help include...
17. I really believe I can get what I want from school if I...

This questionnaire is intended to create a deeper relationship with students and to truly understand some of their motivations and experiences in schooling. It is also recommended that the teacher complete these questionnaires (the applicable questions anyway) and share the responses with the students to foster better communication with the teacher.

#### Parent Questionnaire

1. My child has been most successful in school when...
2. Learning in school has been most difficult for my child when...
3. Teachers work best with my child when they...
4. I believe my child's favorite subject is...because...
5. I believe my child's happiest time in school was when...

6. I believe my child's most disappointing time in school was when...
7. What my child needs most from this school year is...
8. What I believe would be most helpful to my child this school year is...
9. The biggest school related problem I expect my child to have this year is...
10. This problem can be avoided or solved by...
11. I really believe my child will succeed in school this year if...

While on the way out of class the students were also asked to bring back the results of their surveys the following day.

#### Day Thirteen

**Materials Needed:** journals, parent and student questionnaires, internet access

**Vocabulary:** valid, invalid

**Objectives:** 1. Students will be able to connect multicultural studies with being able to solve real world problems. 2. Students will be able to differentiate between valid and invalid internet sources.

**EALR's:** Reading 2.4.3 Evaluate the author's reasoning and the validity of the author's position.

**Procedures:**

At the start of class the students retrieved their questionnaires from the interviews they performed the night before and their journals. They were asked to respond in their journals regarding the results of their parent interviews and how they corresponded with the answers the students guessed at and vice versa. After this brief period of writing, students were given time to share with a

partner any major revelations or startling information the students gathered from the interviews, remembering that the partner they are sharing with will be the one to present the information.

**Activity:** Solving World Problems

The students will then proceed to the computer lab where they will research a current world problem they believe could have been avoided or could be solved through an understanding of the concepts and principles learned during the course of this project. Their goal was to bring back information regarding a current event or problem, detail where they retrieved the information, and relate how they think the current unit of study applies to the problem. They were only given a short amount of time, so their haste was a must.

After returning to class, the students presented their findings in a quick report. Class discussion revolved around how the perspectives learned in this unit could apply to solving the problems or avoiding the problems all together.

While leaving the classroom, the students were told to bring any magazines, catalogs, or pictures from home they would like to use to make a collage of themselves the following day.

Day Fourteen

**Materials Needed:** tri-fold boards, magazine pictures, any pictures the students brought from home, cultural icons, construction paper, glue sticks, other art supplies

**Vocabulary:** collage



**Objectives:** 1. Students will use their understanding of culture to create a collage of their own culture based on their cultural pie chart and their autobiography.

**EALR's:** Communications 3.2.1 Understands how to use available media and resources in oral presentations. Communications 3.3.1 Applies skills and strategies for the delivery of effective oral communication and presentations.

**Procedures:**

The class began with students writing in their journals in response to this question "What have you learned about yourself during this project?" After responding in their journals, students were given an opportunity to share with a partner with the understanding that when finished, they would share with the class what their partner revealed to them.

**Activity:** "This is Me" Collage

After sharing, the students retrieved their personal culture pie charts and their autobiographies. Using these two items and a variety of pictures from magazines, catalogs, and pictures from home, the students will create a collage of their own culture with the intent of presenting them in a diversity fair the following day at school. Students needed to prepare a 1-2 minute presentation to be recited to each person visiting their station at the diversity fair, and they would also be presenting this presentation to peers throughout the day. Parents and community members were also invited to attend the diversity fair as a way to include parents and community members in the development of a positive social

atmosphere within the school and community. This forced students to examine the communicating they would be doing and prepare for how to change their presentation depending on their audience.

While leaving class, students were reminded to have their completed collages and speeches ready for presentation the following day.

### Day Fifteen

**Materials Needed:** "this is me" collage

**Vocabulary:** celebrate

**Objectives:** 1. Students will celebrate the diversity in their classroom and in their school through a diversity carnival.

**EALR's:** Communications 2.3.2 Applies intercultural communication strategies.

**Procedures:**

At the start of class, students were asked to proceed to the gym where they would set up their tri-fold board with their "this is me" collage at their prescribed spot.

**Activity:** Celebration of Diversity

While at the diversity carnival, students remained at their station to give their mini-presentations to any interested guests that came by. They were to limit their speech to 1-2 minutes so that they could present to as many people as possible. Throughout the morning, students got a chance to leave their station to fill out the following form based on the presentation of at least 10 other class members. They were reminded that they needed to use "classroom code"

language for this document, and when they were finished, they placed them in a box near the gym entrance without putting their names on it.

Name of Presenter	
List two pieces of this person's culture that was similar to your own.	
List two pieces of this person's culture that was different than your own.	
What did you like about this person's presentation?	

Following the presentations, the students were given all of the forms that were written up regarding their own presentation so they could view the comments made. The purpose was to not only reflect on how nice the presentation was, but to catch a glimpse of how similar and how different all of their classmates are. This activity was adapted from the "Quintessentially Me" activity developed by Grant and Sleeter in the book Turning on Learning (2007, p. 110)

## CHAPTER V

### Summary, Conclusions, and Recommendations

While multicultural views and perspectives are constantly being added to curriculums and classrooms, there is still a need for more to be done. Teachers across this great nation are ill-prepared to deal with the vast multitudes of differentiating beliefs and cultural values, and this causes even more division within the classrooms of America.

If students were truly given the opportunity to learn not only the basic skills needed to be successful in school, but also the value and beauty of the diverse world in which they live, authentic and lasting learning could occur. By exposing students to different views and beliefs, they are empowered to not only learn of the way other cultures act, but they are also given a chance to examine their own beliefs and ideals and validate them in their own minds.

Multicultural education aims to give students a chance to see actions and events from perspectives that are not their own, and by examining these alternate viewpoints, they are in a sense, "walking in someone else's shoes." Seeing events and beliefs from another's point of view will give students a more compassionate and comprehensive way to deal with problems, using their knowledge and skills to resolve conflict instead of ignoring the problems that permeate society.

Multiculturalism is also a key to maintaining a working democratic society through active citizenship and community involvement. Students that are

exposed to varying viewpoints will more likely listen to an argument against something they believe instead of merely discarding the position before hearing it. This provides a means of discourse and dialogue that can be beneficial for all.

It is the author's desire that teachers everywhere can and will use this document to begin their long journey toward being a culturally responsive and inclusive teacher. With a desire for truth and social justice, this country can become even greater than it already is, and the education of the students in this nation can be the catalyst to positive and lasting change not only in this country, but around the world.

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