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CALIFORNIA STATE UNIVERSITY

SAN BERNARDINO

HOLIDAYS IN THE PUBLIC SCHOOLS:  
AN ANALYSIS OF TEACHER ATTITUDES  
AND PRACTICE

A Project Submitted to  
The Faculty of the School of Education  
In Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements of the Degree of  
Master of Arts  
in  
Education: Elementary Option

By

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San Bernardino, California

1988

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## ABSTRACT

### HOLIDAYS IN THE PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Rebecca Schwarzer M.A.

California State University, San Bernardino, 1988

#### Statement of the Problem

Children come to school from diverse religious, cultural and socio-economic backgrounds and it should be the responsibility of public educators to respect and preserve the personal esteem and integrity of each one of them; yet in reference to holiday observances and activities some do not. The fundamental problem in certain instances is a focus upon the holidays celebrated by the majority and a failure to respect the differences of cultural, religious, and socio-economic minorities.

#### Procedure

This project's goal was to discover what holidays are observed, what holiday activities are planned for, how teachers feel about effects of holidays upon students, what guidance teachers have received and what assistance they would accept in planning curriculum for their students. This data was generated through an anonymous questionnaire

circulated among 200 K-6 elementary teachers in the Upland Unified School District.

### Results

52.6% of the questionnaires were returned. Results of the survey and comments reflecting practices in respondents classrooms and their attitudes about holidays were varied.

The majority of respondents reported that holiday activities are included in their curriculum about three to five days per month, although primary teachers did twice as much holiday activities as their upper grade counterparts.

Teachers responding, indicated that holiday inclusion in the curriculum causes more uneasiness (conflict, complaints, stress), for parents, less for teachers and very little for children. Figures did indicate small percentages of children who are perceived to be isolated by some observed holidays. Examples of this isolation include Jehovah Witness children, and children who are not included at Halloween and Valentine's because of either no costume or no Valentines.

Current responses to a replication of an Instructor poll of eighteen years ago asking "How should holidays be chosen for observance in the classroom?", closely paralleled the most often chosen response in the initial poll. 47.8% of one hundred participants in the original poll felt observance should be chosen "at teacher's discretion" and in

this project's replication 44.8% of the one hundred and five participants responded with the same reply.

84.7% of those responding to the questionnaire indicated they would use a curriculum handbook/guide that provides directions, guidelines and lessons for holidays in the classroom and one which emphasizes values inherent to diverse cultural/religious celebrations rather than symbols of sectarian holidays.

### Conclusions and Implications

While teachers did not feel large numbers of children were adversely affected by holiday curriculum they did acknowledge their concern for children who may feel isolated. 78.6% of the teachers responding to the questionnaire made an attempt to learn the cultural and religious celebrations of their students so that they might better meet the needs of their students.

The two major educational implications of this project are that a large amount of holiday activity takes place in public classrooms, particularly in primary grades and that teachers would welcome guidance that offers options and alternatives to meet their unique classroom circumstances.

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

With appreciation to my husband, Roy, and my sons, Bill, Jeff and Stephen who supported; to my students, each unique within his/her own circumstance who inspired; to the questionnaire participants who shared; to my advisor, Ellen who understood; to my friends, Chris and Francie, who sustained; and to my parents who set the example.

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"Knowledge should foster an in-depth understanding of the diversity and the commonality of human experience as manifest in the history and culture of the many racial, ethnic, and social groups which form our society and which comprise the global community."

California State Social Science Framework

1981

## CHAPTER 1

### INTRODUCTION

When six year old David arrived on the educational doorstep he carried the excess baggage of an already troubled existence. David had watched his mother burn to death in front of his eyes at the age of four. Mother's Day in a public school was another nightmare for David. Laura is another child who looks away when Mother's Day is mentioned. At the age of three months she was found in a bureau drawer wrapped in a bug infested blanket during a drug raid. Her grandparents, who conference carefully with her first grade teacher, say she has not seen her mother in five years. Little Michael, from the Philippines, says he will send his Mother's Day gift "across the ocean" to a nonexistent hope he holds in the corner of his innocent heart. His father says they have no idea where Michael's mother has been since his birth.

Shelly is a Jehovah Witness child who may have a cup of water while the rest of the children have punch and cupcakes during the other twenty seven children's birthdays. She is excluded from art projects involving Halloween, Thanksgiving, Christmas, Easter and any other holiday related activity.

Tina and Ryan are Buddhists who find many of our holiday activities to be perplexing and Ben and Rachael are Jewish children who wonder why two weeks are devoted to Christmas related activities in December and only ten minutes to a cursory explanation about Hanukkah that the teacher has to read out of an encyclopedia.

Elizabeth sleeps in a dog grooming shop with her parents and three brothers because they cannot afford to rent an apartment. Breakfast consists of packaged popcorn, lunch is free at school and the teacher wonders what dinner will be. On Valentine's Day Elizabeth is one of five children whose parents could not afford to find time, or money, for Valentines.

These children all come to school from diverse religious, cultural, and financial backgrounds and it should be the responsibility of public educators to respect and preserve the personal esteem and integrity of each one of them; yet in reference to holiday observances and activities in the public schools some teachers do not.

It is important to determine what holiday activities and observations take place in public classrooms, how teachers feel about the effects of their holiday curriculum upon their students, what holidays California's State Framework mandates for observation and what, if any, guidelines are available at the district and county level.

In addition, do teachers need or want some direction for curriculum development in the area of holidays in the classroom. This background information is an important prerequisite to the implementation of alternative holiday curricula that adhere to legal freedoms of the First Amendment while assuring children of poor socio-economic status and minority cultural and religious groups equal recognition of their core value system.

#### Statement of Problem

Research indicates that holiday observance in the public classroom is a delicate and complex issue that calls for legal clarification and curricular "first aid." Parents, teachers, and administrators alike hold conflicting viewpoints in relationship to holiday observances and activities and students of both minority and majority economic, cultural and faith groups are caught in the crossfire.

#### Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to survey a cross-section of teachers about what holiday activities they include in their classroom. Teachers were asked how inclusion of those activities should be determined and what effect they perceive holidays have upon children who do not celebrate certain holidays. In addition the project serves

as a needs assessment to determine if teachers would welcome a curriculum guide that offers alternative approaches, giving students equal recognition of their core value system, when including holidays in the classroom.

#### Significance of the Study

This study is significant because it provides new data on a topic that does not have a wealth of research material available. In addition, the study has the potential to lay a foundation for a comprehensive curriculum handbook that will provide directions, guidelines and lessons for holidays in the classroom that emphasize values inherent to diverse cultural and religious celebrations and activities rather than symbols of sectarian holidays.

#### Definition of Terms

In order to avoid confusion about key terms in this study, the following operational definitions from the perspective of the writer, are provided.

#### Economic Minority

For purposes of this research economic minority refers to students with limited financial resources unless otherwise indicated.

### Cultural minority

For purposes of this research cultural minority refers to students whose cultural experiences vary from mainstream American holiday experiences by nature of their nationality or whose primary home language isolates or creates a distancing from traditional holiday norms in the United States.

### Religious minority

For purposes of this research religious minority refers to students whose faith is not the predominately practiced faith within a school boundary or children whose families do not choose to participate in any faith.

One example would be the few Christian children in a predominately Jewish community school or the few Moslem children in a predominately Christian community school.

### Religious holidays

For purposes of this research religious holidays are those celebrated within the context of particular faiths such as Christmas, Hanukkah, Wesak, Maulid-Au-Nabi, Easter, Passover, and Rosh Hashanah.

### Traditional holidays

For purposes of this research traditional holidays are those that may originally have had religious roots but have come to be celebrated as part of their routine inclusion in



the calendar year such as Halloween, Thanksgiving, Valentine's Day and Mother's and Father's Days.

#### Cultural holidays

For purposes of this research cultural holidays are those rooted in the cultural backgrounds of particular ethnic groups or celebrated in geographic locations with high concentrations of a particular cultural group such as Cinco De Mayo, Saint Patrick's Day or Black American Day.

#### Alternative Holiday Curriculum

For purposes of this research alternative holiday curriculum would include alternatives for teachers, not with the intent of eliminating holidays but rather with the dual goals of respecting the home values of children's diverse backgrounds and providing a resource book on holidays for teachers that provides guidelines, multicultural lessons and objectives.

## CHAPTER 2

### REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

#### Religious and Legal Aspects

Holidays, religious, traditional and cultural, in the public schools create curriculum decisions for teachers that are difficult. Whether or not the issue is sensitive there is no question that the calendar works its way through the holiday maze with the precision of a finely crafted timepiece; therefore the issue cannot be skirted.

Recent literature in the area of holidays in the public schools is sketchy. It tends to focus on the problems rather than solutions. Little has been published on teacher attitude about holidays, and what is available is somewhat dated, confirming the notion that it is time for new data to be generated.

Three educators who have done research looking for answers and increased awareness are Meyer Eisenberg, Elaine Hollander and Judyth R. Saypol. While their research efforts have been in the field of religious holidays, they outline problems potentially inherent to any holiday not observed by the majority due to cultural and economic variations as well as religious ones.

Hollander and Saypol conducted a half-day workshop in Washington, D.C., designed to explore feelings. Thirty six educators came together and explored the topic of religious holiday activities in the public schools. The workshop confirmed the authors assumption that teachers "need and want guidance on this complex and delicate issue."<sup>1</sup>

The authors suggest four reasons why teachers continue to have sectarian holiday observances at Christmas and Easter. First, teachers do not know or understand the court decisions and their applicability in the classroom. Second, teachers arrive with personal attitudes/baggage based on their own life experiences. Third, teachers find it difficult to see the effect on minority religions and cultures and finally, teachers are unprepared for teaching in a culturally pluralistic society.<sup>2</sup>

Teachers participated in 4 sessions; 1) partner discussions on topics related to the workshop; 2) role-playing minority students in holiday situations and adults at a P.T.A. meeting discussing a suitable December holiday program; 3) a formal presentation on the First Amendment implications for holidays in public schools and; 4) a session to discuss questionnaire responses in small groups.

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<sup>1</sup>Elaine K. Hollander, Judyth R. Saypol, "Teaching About Religious Holidays in the Public School: A Workshop," Education, 97 (1976): 63.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., 64.

Of the thirty six participants twenty six (72%) completed four evaluation questions. Responses were mixed about the days program. 11-positive, 6-ambivalent, and 9-negative responses were recorded. When asked what was the most useful, 6-legal presentation; 4-all holidays/all countries should be included and; 3-school personnel should be more knowledgeable about the law were the replies. When respondents were asked about a follow-up workshop, 14 said yes, 10 said no and 2 gave a no response with modification. Finally in response to the question if a replication of the workshop should take place, 15 said yes, 2 said yes with reservations, 6 said no, and 3 gave no response.<sup>3</sup>

The data from this workshop serve to confirm this researcher's conclusion that viewpoints on holiday observance among teachers are conflicting. Before replication of the workshop, refinement should include more time for planning so participants who were unable to translate their intellectual understanding into classroom or assembly activities could resolve conflicts.

Teachers need to come to terms with holidays in public schools and this pilot workshop has potential, with modification, to be effective for increasing sensitivity to conflicts that might arise, as well as provide opportunities to share opinions and ideas.

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<sup>3</sup>Ibid., 70.

In the process of coming to terms with holidays in the classroom it is interesting to look at a follow-up article "Religious Holidays in the Public Classroom, No Easy Answers," in which Meyer Eisenberg, Hollander and Saypol outline issues involved in religious holidays in the public classroom in relationship to teachers and their sensitivity to the rights and feelings of minority faith students. Children may feel alienated, isolated and embarrassed by choices they are either pressured into or are inadvertently persuaded to make. Non-Christian children are forced to make choices between isolating themselves by not participating or contradicting their core value structure by participating in religious observances and activities contrary to their beliefs.<sup>4</sup>

The authors do not discount the fact that "religion plays an important part in the dynamics of our society,"<sup>5</sup> but the incorporation of religion in the public classroom calls for an understanding of free exercise of religion and separation of church and state. In an effort to sensitize teachers to the problems that arise the authors look at four areas; the First Amendment, the curriculum to be examined, the goals of public education, and workshops to increase

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<sup>4</sup>Meyer Eisenberg, Elaine K. Hollander, Judyth R. Saypol, "Religious Holidays in the Public Classroom No Easy Answers," Childhood Education, (October 1976): 85,86.

<sup>5</sup>Ibid., 84.

awareness and exchange ideas.<sup>6</sup>

Regarding the question of separation of church and state provided for in the First Amendment, the court recognizes that "subtle pressure to conform exists and cannot be ignored in areas where children of minority faith are exposed to holiday assemblies or activities."<sup>7</sup>

This serves to isolate and cause resentments that teachers should avoid. Yet clearly what should happen and what does may fall at two ends of the continuum of teacher sensitivity to children's needs. Teachers need to be willing to make an effort to familiarize themselves with the religious and cultural make-up of their classrooms so their holiday curricular decisions can equitably reflect their class population.

Teachers are cautioned "to examine the purpose and effect of a holiday curriculum to determine whether it is neutral in regard to religion,"<sup>8</sup> and through that examination analyze the goals of public education. One primary goal is to teach a better understanding of the cultures of different people. Educators must not avoid differences, but help children to see that "different does

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<sup>6</sup>Ibid., 85-88.

<sup>7</sup>Ibid., 86.

<sup>8</sup>Ibid., 85.

not necessarily imply 'better' or 'worse'."<sup>9</sup>

A final note of the article suggests workshops for teachers as a forum for sharing experiences and ideas about the complex issue of respecting the individual rights of every child, a task the authors candidly admit has "no easy answers."

What rights children have and the guidelines educators follow for holiday observance and activity at the district, county and state level are sometimes vague, and may be interpreted from varying perspectives.

#### District, State, County Guidelines

California's History-Social Science Framework makes reference to religious and cultural issues and the Education Code mandates seven holidays for observance in the public classroom. Those references, mandates and examples of two districts' guidelines for holiday activity follow.

#### District

Both the San Bernardino City Unified School District and the Upland Unified School District (districts where questionnaires were distributed for purposes of this project) have guidelines for Christmas in the case of Upland and guidelines for seasonal activity in the case of San Bernardino.

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<sup>9</sup>Ibid., 89.

Upland's memo, copied from the Moraga School District guidelines, reads:

With the approach of the Christmas season, school personnel need to be aware of the legal and educational problems that this season presents.

In summary, the legal guidelines and the relevant court cases state that the public schools must be neutral in the matters of religion; must show no preference for one religion over another, and must refrain from the promotion of any or all religions.

This does not mean, of course, that the schools should abstain from discussing relevant religious materials in their proper place in art, history or music courses. In that situation they are considered as curriculum material and not as a matter of observance. For instance, some Christmas carols may be considered important pieces of music to be studied during a course on the history of music. It is not advisable, however, that they be studied during December when their religious aspect is likely to over-ride their consideration as music.

As educators, we must be conscious of the fact that there are those children in our school system who do not observe Christmas. They may be non-Christian or may have no religious affiliation at all. Christmas celebrations and the preparation for these celebrations will make many of these children feel isolated or left out of school activities. Permitting a child to be excused from class or to be absent from Christmas activities only enforces the sense of isolation and alienation from fellow students. All children should feel welcome at all times.

Schools have an obligation to teach respect for difference and the themes of peace and brotherhood which are central to many religious observances. However, these themes should be ones that underlie everything that a teacher does and should be transmitted to the children as much by the teacher's everyday activities as by any specific reference to them. You do not need the religious holidays to do this.

An additional point needs to be considered. When so much is to be taught in such a limited period of time, we must be careful not to interfere with that limited time being given over large periods of activity time to preparation for Christmas programming.

I urge all school personnel to make a special effort to participate in the preliminary planning for the special programs which will take place just before our



winter vacation. It should be our responsibility to see that they reflect the concerns which have been stated above. Obviously, there should be no religious symbolism and religious music should be avoided.

Please keep us informed of your program development and of any reactions you receive from the Community.<sup>10</sup>

San Bernardino's memo, adopted in December, 1980, outlines the following.

#### GUIDELINES FOR SEASONAL ACTIVITIES

For a number of years, the District has been operating under a set of guidelines covering seasonal programs. The guidelines were developed to assist individual schools in planning activities that allow cultural activities without violating reasonable bounds between cultural and strictly religious observances.

At a recent meeting of the Board of Education, the subject of seasonal activities was again raised with considerable discussion about how schools deal with traditional programs at this time of year. These are the updated guidelines:

1. Cultural heritage should be stressed in the planning of seasonal activities.
2. All programs should include nonsectarian seasonal music.
3. All seasonal presentations should reflect feelings and practices of the individual school's student makeup.
4. Practice for special programs should not infringe on the planned instructional program.
5. Projects and room environment shall be planned in relationship with curricular activities.
6. Parents may ask that their child not participate in seasonal activities by submitting a request in writing to the principal's office.

Administrative Procedure Effective: December 1980<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>10</sup>Moraga Christmas Guidelines for Public Schools, September, 1977 (Recopied by the Upland School District).

<sup>11</sup>San Bernardino City Unified School District "Guidelines for Seasonal Activity," Educational Services, 777 North "F" Street, San Bernardino, 1980.

County

According to the office of the San Bernardino County Superintendent of Schools particular holidays to be observed are contained in the State Education Code and guidelines for observances in general and holiday activities are a district level matter.<sup>12</sup>

California State Education Code

The following references to cultural and religious matters and holidays are contained in California's Education Code.

Religious Matters Properly Included in Course of Study  
51511. Nothing in this code shall be construed to prevent, or exclude from public schools, references to religion or references to or the use of religious literature, art, or music or other things having a religious significance when such references or uses do not constitute instruction in religious principles or aid any religious sect, church, creed, or sectarian purpose and when such references or uses are incidental to or illustrative of matters properly included in the course of study.<sup>13</sup>

Portrayal of Cultural and Racial Diversity  
60040. When adopting instructional materials for use in the schools, governing boards shall include only instructional materials which, in their determination, accurately portray the cultural and racial diversity of our society.<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>12</sup>San Bernardino County Superintendent of Schools Office, telephone interview, March, 1988.

<sup>13</sup>History-Social Science Framework for California Public Schools - Education Code Requirements, Sacramento, 1981, 40.

<sup>14</sup>Ibid., 40.

## 37220. School holidays.

Except as otherwise provided the public schools shall continue in session or close on specified holidays as follows: (a) The public schools shall close on January 1st, February 12th known as "Lincoln Day," the third Monday in February known as "Washington Day," the last Monday in May known as "Memorial Day," July 4th, the first Monday in September known as "Labor Day," November 11th known as "Veterans Day," that Thursday in November proclaimed by the President as "Thanksgiving Day," and December 25th.<sup>15</sup>

Education Code Sections Requiring the Observance of  
Special Events:

## Lincoln's and Washington's Birthday Exercises

37223. All public schools and education institutions throughout the state shall hold exercises in memory of Abraham Lincoln and George Washington on February 12th and February 22nd, respectively, or on the day in which school is in session next preceding, if the specified day is a holiday.

## Anniversary of Adoption of Constitution

37224. All public schools and educational institutions shall include in the schoolwork on or near the anniversary of the adoption of the Constitution of the United States exercises and instruction for pupils suitable to their ages in the purpose, meaning, and importance of the Constitution of the United States, including the Bill of Rights.

## Conservation, Bird, and Arbor Day

37225. March 7th of each year, the anniversary of the birthday of Luther Burbank, is set apart and designated Conservation, Bird, and Arbor Day.

All public schools and educational institutions shall observe Conservation, Bird, and Arbor Day not as a holiday, but by including in the schoolwork of the day, suitable exercises having for their object instruction as to the economic value of birds and trees, and the promotion of a spirit of protection toward them, as to the economic value of natural resources, and the desirability of their conservation.

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<sup>15</sup>California State Education Code, 154.

Susan B. Anthony Day

37226. February 15th of each year, the anniversary of the birthday of Susan B. Anthony, is designated and set apart as Susan B. Anthony Day.

All public schools and educational institutions shall observe this day with suitable exercises, directing attention to the development of the political and economic status of women in the United States, through the efforts of Susan B. Anthony.

Black American Day

37227. March 5th of each year, the anniversary of the death of Crispus Attucks, the first black American martyr of the Boston Massacre, is designated and set apart as Black American Day to direct attention to the development of black people in the United States of America.

All public schools and educational institutions shall observe this day with suitable exercises.

Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Day

37227.5 All public schools and educational institutions throughout the state, shall on January 15th of each year, the anniversary of the birth of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., hold suitable exercises commemorating, and directing attention to the history of, the civil rights movement in the United States, and particularly the role therein of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.<sup>16</sup>

California State History -  
Social Science Framework

Along with the previous references to the Education Code cited in the 1981 California State History-Social Science Framework there are numerous statements in the Framework which lend support for a multicultural curriculum that highlight the importance of tradition, celebration and customs in the educational setting.

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<sup>16</sup>History-Social Science Framework for California Public Schools - Education Code Requirements, Sacramento, 1981, 44.

In the Values section of the framework it states that:

a basic part of any values goal must be an understanding of the similarities and differences that exist among peoples of the world. . . . students need, therefore, to have opportunities to: . . . Understand their similarities and differences in order to respect the rights of individuals with varying abilities from all social classes, races, religions, age groups, and both sexes.<sup>17</sup>

In the section on Specific Grade Level Recommendations each grade level includes suggested suitable topics that can apply to holidays and are as follows:

Kindergarten - special occasions in my life.

Grade One - exploring relationships of people in students' own homes and schools, as well as homes and schools in other cultures and societies, provides many opportunities to develop understandings and appreciations of how roles, ethnic heritages, traditions, the physical environment, and social and economic factors influence people's daily lives.

- Families - my own and others in the community and in the world.

Grade Two - American ethnic groups; their roles and contributions.

Grade Three - the diverse cultures and peoples who make up and contribute to our community.

Grade Four - the history of California and the diverse peoples who made that history.

Grade Five - the emphasis should be on people, focusing on the many and diverse individuals and groups who have helped shape our nation.

- What are some important ideas/values in which we as a people believe?

- What were the First Americans major accomplishments/contributions of the various groups?

Grade Six - In this grade students are introduced to the important concept of culture. They then explore its four basic elements in greater depth.

The four basic and universal elements of culture are defined as language, technology, institutions, and beliefs.

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<sup>17</sup>Ibid., 7, 8.

- The world's diverse peoples and the reasons for differences in appearance and behavior.
- Why human societies develop different ways of life or diverse cultures.<sup>18</sup>

When basic concepts are defined in the Framework the Anthropology section earmarks "beliefs or belief systems" and suggest a particular study may be "customs, holidays, art forms, folklore, methods of curing illness, markets, mythology, conflict resolution, and disputing processes."<sup>19</sup>

The new framework adopted by the California State Board of Education in July 1987 contains an introduction with seventeen characteristics of the framework, two of which speak to the issues contained in this project.

This framework incorporates a multicultural perspective throughout the history-social science curriculum. It calls on teachers to recognize that the history of community, state, region, nation, and world must reflect the experiences of men and women and of different racial, religious, and ethnic groups. California has always been a state of many different cultural groups. The experiences of all these groups is to be integrated at every grade level into the history-social science curriculum. The framework embodies the understanding that the national identity, the national heritage, and the national creed are pluralistic and that our national history is the complex story of many peoples and one nation, of e pluribus unum, and of an unfinished struggle to realize the ideals of the Declaration of Independence and the Constitution.<sup>20</sup>

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<sup>18</sup>Ibid., 14-21.

<sup>19</sup>Ibid., 22.

<sup>20</sup>California State Department of Education, History - Social Science Framework, Sacramento, 1987, 4.

This framework acknowledges the importance of religion in human history. When studying world history, students must become familiar with the basic ideas of the major religions and the ethical traditions of each time and place. Students are expected to learn about the role of religion in the founding of this country because many of our political institutions have their antecedents in religious beliefs. Students should understand the intense religious passions that have produced fanaticism and war as well as the political arrangements developed (such as separation of church and state) that allow different religious groups to live amicably in a pluralistic society.<sup>21</sup>

The new History-Social Science Framework divides the curriculum into literacy strands labeled Historical, Ethical, Cultural, Geographic, Economic and Sociopolitical. Some of the religious and cultural references in these sections include:

To develop historical literacy, students must understand the importance of religion, philosophy, and other major belief systems in history. To understand why individuals and groups acted as they did, we must see what values and assumptions they held, what they honored, what they sought, and what they feared. By studying a peoples' religion and philosophy as well as their folkways and traditions, we gain an understanding of their ethical and moral commitments. By reading the texts that people revere, we gain important insights into their thinking. The study of religious beliefs and other ideological commitments helps explain both cultural continuity and cultural conflict.<sup>22</sup>

To develop cultural literacy, students must develop a multicultural perspective that respects the dignity and worth of all people. Students should learn from their earliest school years that our nation is composed of people whose backgrounds are rooted in cultures around the world. They should develop respect for the human dignity of all people and understanding of different

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<sup>21</sup>Ibid., 6.

<sup>22</sup>Ibid., 10.

cultures and ways of life.

To develop cultural literacy students must learn about the mythology, legends, values, and beliefs of a people. Ideas are important; to understand a society, students must perceive what its members believe about themselves, what stories and tales explain their origins and common bonds, what religious tenets embody their ethical standards of justice and duty, what heroes capture their imagination, what ideals inspire their sense of purpose, and what visual images portray their idea of themselves as people.<sup>23</sup>

In the framework's section titled "Goal of Democratic Understanding and Civic Values" under National Identity one entry reminds educators:

to understand this nation's identity students must recognize that American society is now and always has been pluralistic and multicultural. From the first encounter between indigenous peoples and exploring Europeans, the inhabitants of the North American continent have represented a variety of races, religions, languages, and ethnic and cultural groups. With the passage of time, the United States has grown increasingly diverse in its social and cultural composition. Yet, even as our people have become increasingly diverse, there is broad recognition that we are one people. Whatever our origins, we are all Americans.<sup>24</sup>

In order to translate State Frameworks, Education Codes and district guidelines into active curriculum plans in the classroom, teachers need to gain a sense of who should be empowered to decide about holiday observances and activities. In the next section this issue will be explored.

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<sup>23</sup>Ibid., 12.

<sup>24</sup>Ibid., 16, 17.



Teacher Perspective

Teachers bring to their classrooms different perspectives on what holidays should be included in the curriculum and who should be empowered to choose those holidays. In a review eighteen years ago, admittedly dated, conducted by the publishers of Instructor, editors explored the holiday issue with 100 subscribers. While the response to the singular question "who should decide about holiday observances in public school classrooms?"<sup>25</sup> was not unanimous, 47.8% felt decisions about holiday observances in the classroom were the prerogative of the teacher.

Both holidays and patriotic observances were mentioned, but comments by participants indicated teachers were far more concerned with the need for more patriotic activities in the classroom. Results of the poll which were replicated in this researcher's project were as follows:

How should holidays be chosen for observance in the classroom?

At teacher's discretion	47.8%
At principal's discretion	9.1%
By teacher and principal	13.6%
Mandate of school district	13.6%
Mandate of state education department	13.6%
By district and state	2.3% <sup>26</sup>

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<sup>25</sup>"Opinion Poll: Who Should Decide About Holiday Observances?" Instructor, (November 1970), 10.

<sup>26</sup>Ibid., 10.

Comments were included to support participants' choices. While those who selected "at teacher's discretion" felt that teachers know their group and the climate of their classroom to make choices in the students' best interests, it was also clear that sensitivity to parent and community feelings needed to be exercised.

Those who felt principals should decide wanted faculty input and those leaving the decision to the district and state level felt an official hand in the matter would resolve the conflicts among too many varying opinions. The comments included lend support to a multicultural approach. One respondent commented, "the traditions of our world community need to be part of the child's culture."<sup>27</sup>

Although the poll took place eighteen years ago, this researcher assumes that most teachers still want control over holiday observances in the classrooms. The authority to decide would clearly vary among school districts and may be reflected in the religious and cultural population of a geographic location. Regardless of the class population, one respondent suggested that "a teacher can help the children appreciate and respect the beliefs of the minority."<sup>28</sup>

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<sup>27</sup>Ibid., 10.

<sup>28</sup>Ibid.

Revisions and Alternatives

Clearly there is merit in looking at the problems created by holidays in the classroom, but it is of far greater importance to those in the "educational trenches" to seek revision and alternatives to commonplace holiday curriculum that may impinge upon students of minority economic, cultural and religious variations.

Robert Spillane uses his article "I Wish the Grinch Would Steal All the Holidays" to call for revision of holiday curriculum in the public schools. Spillane, a former teacher and superintendent who is now an educational consultant, charges teachers with moving through the school year from one holiday to the next making plastic reindeer and Styrofoam turkeys more as a result of habit than a conscious effort to assess objectives.<sup>29</sup>

Among the problems Spillane sees with the celebrating of holidays simply because they are there are 1) blunting the holiday's purpose by orchestrating dates to accommodate a long weekend; 2) glorifying men, thus reinforcing the notion that half our students will never grow up to be influential or famous; 3) commercialization of every human sentiment; 4) isolating children of minority beliefs; 5) replacing the nativity with Rudolf the Reindeer and 6)

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<sup>29</sup>R. R. Spillane, PhD., "I Wish the Grinch Would Steal All the Holidays," Teacher, (October, 1972), 10-12.

improperly researching unfamiliar holidays in an attempt to provide equal time.<sup>30</sup>

Spillane couples his criticism with concrete suggestions. He calls upon teachers to do their homework in a multicultural sense and help the students to broaden understanding of the world they live in. He suggests tapping the children's knowledge of their own heritage, with parental help, to research music, food and family customs of diverse ethnic and religious representations.<sup>31</sup>

Spillane cautions against "historical misinformation in the name of holiday celebrations (Pilgrims in high hats, cherry trees and hatchets) and calls for teachers to analyze whether material is age appropriate for their grade level."<sup>32</sup>

While Spillane does not want holidays to disappear, he does challenge teachers "to look at holidays as part of the curriculum and afford them the same serious consideration given to the planning of math and reading."<sup>33</sup>

Considering the amount of time taken up by holiday activities in classrooms across the country, rationalizing the time away in the name of tradition should give way to

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<sup>30</sup>Ibid., 10-12.

<sup>31</sup>Ibid., 11.

<sup>32</sup>Ibid.

<sup>33</sup>Ibid., 12.

thoughtful consideration about the collective impact for multicultural and carefully planned instructional gain.

Kindergarten teacher Pat Timberlake, in her article "Classroom Holidayze" echoes Spillane's sentiments. She suggests that "some teachers plan their programs month by month with curriculum that merely consists of a string of holidays."<sup>34</sup> She charges that assembly programs and classroom and hall displays are stereotypes, and patterns used year after year. The prepackaged bulletin displays and cute craft projects evidence the work of the teacher and commercial companies rather than the children's creativity.<sup>35</sup>

Timberlake calls for reform from the social studies curriculum of the 1920s that suggested activities mainly related to certain holidays. She asks teachers to analyze the reasons why they incorporate holidays into their curriculum with six questions to consider before celebrating holidays with students:

- 1) Why should I include this holiday as part of the curriculum? What do I hope my pupils will learn?
- 2) Is the holiday appropriate for the ages and past experience of my pupils?
- 3) How much time and effort should be expended on the holiday?
- 4) What material will I use?

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<sup>34</sup>Pat Timberlake, "Classroom Holidayze," Childhood Education, (January 1978): 128-130.

<sup>35</sup>Ibid., 129.

5) What methods will I employ in the study of the holidays?

6) What will I avoid about the holiday?<sup>36</sup>

While Timberlake recognizes that teachers who know their pupils best will have answers to these questions that suit their unique situation, she also provides some advice of her own. She feels holiday inclusion should pertain to a purpose rather than routinely observed out of habit. She cautions against too much time spent in lieu of other important curriculum areas and suggests no more than three to five days of holiday related material at one time.<sup>37</sup>

Observances should be kept simple and a wide variety of materials including great works of art, classical music, poetry, resource persons and special holiday foods should not be overlooked. Methods employed should be open-ended and stress options for expression that are creative, such as plays written and performed by the children.<sup>38</sup>

Timberlake's list of things to avoid are teacher-centered art activities; commercial displays; inaccurate stereotypes; symbolic pictures or language beyond the comprehension of the students; and too much stimulation.<sup>39</sup>

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<sup>36</sup>Ibid.

<sup>37</sup>Ibid., p. 130.

<sup>38</sup>Ibid.

<sup>39</sup>Ibid.

Finally Timberlake calls for teachers to break away from traditional confines and invent a new holiday, perhaps "Bubble Day." Children can bring their own meaning to their own special holiday creations.

Timberlake's call for innovative curriculum planning, in respect to holidays, is taken one step further by Hughes Moir, Coordinator of Cooperative Services for Children's Literature and John F. Ahern, professor of social studies at the University of Toledo. They offer some concrete suggestions in their article "Non Traditional Books for Traditional Holidays."<sup>40</sup>

They call for the use of children's books to teach underlying values common to a variety of holidays. They write:

While holidays are a time of excitement for kids, they also create awkward situations. There's sure to be at least one child in every class, who cries over Valentine's Day, Christmas, or Hanukkah. Some schools in their attempt to remain religiously 'neutral' focus on symbols, not on meaning, artificial and commercial trappings, even if well meaning compound the problem.<sup>41</sup>

Moir and Ahern feel some tough questions should be asked at the beginning of the school year about school holiday celebrations. They ask the question, "Is it possible for a teacher to teach underlying spiritual meaning

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<sup>40</sup>John F. Ahern, Hughes Moir, "Non-Traditional Books for Traditional Holidays," Instructor, (August 1986), 80-81.

<sup>41</sup>Ibid.

of a holiday, yet avoid symbols and doctrines that identify religious groups?"<sup>42</sup>

The solution, for them, lies in books that teach values associated with our national and religious holidays. For instance, Columbus Day can be a period to learn about courage and what it means to be a discoverer. Halloween can be a time to talk about what frightens us; Thanksgiving, a day to experience the joy of being a family member; Christmas and Hanukkah, a time to learn to resolve conflict without violence and Valentine's Day, a day we help children understand the many meanings of love.<sup>43</sup>

Moir and Ahern include a bibliography of special books (included in the appendix of this research project) that reinforce related values. These values and Moir and Ahern's theory provide a framework of a timeline created by this researcher that could be used in the development of a holiday curriculum book. It would include holidays of all cultures and religions that stress values inherent to said holidays rather than symbols and doctrines. (Timeline included in the appendix of this project.)

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<sup>42</sup>Ibid.

<sup>43</sup>Ibid., 81.



Importance of Celebration

There is no question that the celebration of holidays is deeply rooted in cultural and religious traditions. Holidays, in fact, serve a useful purpose. According to British researchers and educators Donald Baker and James Last the crux of celebration is "the recall of time past, which, in effect, is asserting the abolition of the barriers between us and yesterday as well as the frontiers between us and the future."<sup>44</sup> Thus, holiday revelry serves to bridge the past to the present with promise for the future.

Baker and Last remind us that "despite cultural variation, we can still detect a universal desire to play - seriously and for keeps, which in fact, is to celebrate."<sup>45</sup> Therefore, keeping in mind the importance of celebration, one needs to put opportunities for said celebrations in perspective for public schools. Baker and Last challenge teachers by asserting "it is part of a teacher's business to provide children whenever possible with a living experience of celebratory modes in order to generate respect for differences and regard for similarities."<sup>46</sup>

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<sup>44</sup>Donald Baker, James Last, "Celebration," *Childhood Education*, (January 1978), 131.

<sup>45</sup>*Ibid.*, 131.

<sup>46</sup>*Ibid.*

The fundamental problem in many public schools is they focus upon the holidays/celebrations of the majority and fail to respect the differences of the minority.

While the majority may rule, it may not be appropriate to observe one groups' holiday at the exclusion of another groups' affirmation of life. If that sounds a bit too philosophical Baker and Last clarify the point by saying:

At the heart of celebration is the affirmation of life, manifest not just in the here and now, but continuing from the dark, backward abyss of time to the present. Celebration asserts the experience of life as a continuum and without denying the value of history, tacitly claims that history itself is a sequence of connected events giving meaning and significance to what we do now. We are what we have been, and what we are will determine what others will be when we have gone. Celebration, therefore destroys the barriers of time, that inevitably occurs in the context of clocks and calendars.<sup>47</sup>

If one is to accept Baker and Lasts' assertion that "though superficially different, celebrations have a common biological, metaphysical and psychic core and deep within their mystery, a common humanity,"<sup>48</sup> then it stands to reason that innovative and sensitive teachers should work harder to pull common threads of said humanity together to weave a patchwork quilt that will provide warmth for all those students, with their diverse cultural and religious persuasions, who have been left out in the cold by our

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<sup>47</sup>Ibid., 133.

<sup>48</sup>Ibid., 131.

present methods of dealing with holiday celebrations in the public schools.

The literature in the field of holidays in the classroom suggests a problem which needs clarification from the standpoint of not only teachers, but also administrators, parents and communities. The question arises, are teachers not only interested in holiday curriculum alternatives, but do they even analyze their holiday activities/objectives and the effects, thereof, upon students within their classes? Do teachers heed the statement of one minority culture student who said, "We have so much to give and yet, so much to understand. Send us a teacher who respects us, send us a teacher who knows who we are."

## CHAPTER 3

### DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

This study is an effort to discover 1) What holiday activities take place in the public classroom?; 2) How teacher's feel about holidays?; 3) What accommodations are made for minority faith, culture, and economic students?; 4) What teachers perceive to be the primary effect holidays have on students?; 5) Who should decide how holiday curriculum should be orchestrated? and; 6) What guidance teachers have available and what resource assistance they would use if it were made available? This study will be used as a needs assessment for a holiday curriculum book.

The design is a post-hoc study of teacher attitude and curriculum practices in the area of holidays in the public schools. A questionnaire, developed by this writer, was evaluated and modified as per instructions by the following California State San Bernardino University Education Professors: Dr. Ellen Kronowitz, Dr. Steve Wagner, Dr. Darleen Stoner, and Mrs. Marion Klein.

The anonymous questionnaire was field tested at one school site in San Bernardino in November, 1987.

Subsequently the questionnaire was circulated among a population of approximately 200 K-6 elementary teachers from

nine elementary sites in the Upland Unified School District. Approval was given by the Upland Superintendent of Schools after a review of the questionnaire. A letter of transmittal explaining the purpose of the study accompanied each questionnaire. Transmittal letters can be found in Appendix A.

The questionnaire was hand delivered to each school site and distributed by principals at faculty meetings. Completed questionnaires were returned in plain manila envelopes through district mail to the researcher's school and immediately mixed so responses from individual schools could not be compared or identified by school site.

#### Hypotheses and Descriptive Questions

Since the questionnaire covered a range of topics relating to holidays in the public classroom, two hypotheses statements were analyzed and additional data generated by descriptive questions was reported as either raw frequency data or in percentages as a means of gaining insight and perspective on the subject.

#### Statement of Hypotheses

1. There will be no statistically significant relationship at the .05 level of confidence between 1970 teacher's opinions regarding who should choose holidays to be observed in the classroom and teacher's opinions in this

1988 study.

2. There will be no statistically significant relationship at the .05 level of confidence between levels of teachers and numbers of days spent on holiday activity.

The data pertaining to the above hypotheses was organized into contingency tables and subjected to statistical analysis by the complex Chi-Square. The Chi-Square was used because the data analyzed was in frequency form. The complex Chi-Square was appropriate for this study because variables were compared. In the first hypothesis the independent variables were whether a teacher participated in the 1970 or the 1988 poll and the dependent variables were who should choose holidays to be observed. In the second hypothesis the independent variables were levels of teachers and the dependent variables were the number of days per month spent on holidays.

#### Descriptive Questions

In addition to the hypotheses, data from the descriptive questions on the survey, included in Appendix C of this project, were tabled and reported in the Analysis of Data chapter.

#### Profile of Upland

The Upland Unified School District provides an education program for over 10,000 students Kindergarten

through Twelfth Grade. Upland, with a population of 57,000 has a median home value of \$130,000 and the median income is \$25,582. Upland's motto is "the city of gracious living." Census reports indicate that 78.8% of the work force go outside their city of residence for employment.<sup>1</sup>

The population of Upland is predominately Anglo. School district figures released in 1985 parallel census figures which indicate Upland is 90% white. The Student Ethnic Summary for the past nine years shows a marked increase in Asian and Black students.

TABLE 1

## UPLAND STUDENT ETHNIC SUMMARY

	Am. Indian	Asian	Filipino	Hispanic	Black	White
1977	6	86	-	738	55	4945
1980	10	235	-	835	164	4657
1984	22	268	28	797	183	4212
1985	10	325	30	904	197	4417
1986	19	372	28	907	294	4829
1987	16	420	32	1059	366	4962

\* figures are K - 8

Source: Upland Unified School District, "Student Ethnic Summary, 904 W. 9th St., Upland California, 91786.

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<sup>1</sup>County and City Data Book 1986; U.S. Dept. of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, U.S. Govt. Printing Office, Washington D.C.

Upland has 32 churches, and no Synagogues although there is a small Jewish population in Upland that is served by temples in Ontario and Claremont.

While this researcher was unable to get accurate numbers for student religions represented in the district and teacher responses were only approximated since a student's religion is never directly asked, a home language survey from the district, included in the appendix of this paper, sheds light on the cultural diversity of the Upland Unified District.

All teachers within the school district hold a Bachelor's Degree, and over 30% have a Master's Degree or work completed beyond the Master's Degree.<sup>2</sup>

According to Dr. Loren Sanchez, Associate Superintendent of the Upland Unified School District, family patterns are changing. There are more single parents and more latch-key children, (children coming home to empty households). In the nine elementary schools in Upland parents were surveyed as to their indicated interest in Day Care Programs. Two hundred and twenty two parents responded on behalf of their three hundred and five children. In response to the survey Upland now has three schools with before and after school day care and projections for adding

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<sup>2</sup>Upland Unified School District, "Student Ethnic Summary, 904 W. 9th St., Upland, California, 91786.



another in the near future.<sup>3</sup>

Dr. Sanchez also indicated that the number of minority students is increasing, as evidenced by the Upland Ethnic Summary already cited in this section and the primary home language survey (included in the appendix of this research paper). Because there are more languages represented the scope of L. E. P. (Limited English Proficient) services, which has been previously geared to Spanish speaking children, will broaden. Upland has always had to address the needs of Mexican children because after the Chinese workers moved from the area in the late 1800s, the Mexican families came into Upland to work the citrus groves. Foothill Knolls Elementary School in Upland services children from the Los Olivas Housing Authority which has a large population of children of Mexican ancestry.<sup>4</sup>

#### Limitations of Study

- 1) Sampling bias may occur due to the fact that the study is "in house" (within the researcher's own district).
- 2) There may be a tendency for the delicate nature of the topic to cause a defensive reaction in participants who do an inordinate amount of holiday activity without regard to minority students.

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<sup>3</sup>Dr. Loren Sanchez, Upland Unified School District, Interview, October, 1986.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid., Sanchez interview.

3) All teachers may not respond to the questionnaire. A questionnaire that depends on voluntary response may not furnish results that are representative of a larger population.

4) Teachers who are interested in the topic may respond, while those who are not may not take the time to respond.

5) The complex Chi-Square provides only gross indications of relationships and does not allow for regression analysis to determine finite predictive values.

6) Care must be taken to avoid a Rosenthal effect by ensuring that questions are phrased as neutrally as possible.

7) Depending upon where the questionnaire is distributed results may fluctuate because of varied teacher as well as student population. Areas with different cultural, religious and economic mixes may elicit different results.

CHAPTER 4  
ANALYSIS OF THE DATA

Since the questionnaire covers numerous holiday topics, after looking at the results of the field test, data pertaining to the first hypothesis and related descriptive questions was analyzed and then the second hypothesis and additional descriptive questions were reported.

Field Test

One elementary site in the San Bernardino Unified School District was selected by this researcher to field test the questionnaire. Twelve questionnaires were returned in December of 1987. Results of the field test questionnaire, with a relatively small sampling, were reported as straight percentages within the context of the questionnaire itself.

Of the twelve teachers who responded seven were primary teachers and five were upper grade teachers. One male teacher and eleven female teachers responded. A breakdown of years of experience for primary teachers reflects 26 years, 18 years, 12 years, 10 years, 6 years, 6 years and three years. Upper grade teachers reported the following years of experience, 14 years, 11 years, 10 years,

4 years and 4 years.

## SURVEY ON HOLIDAYS IN THE PUBLIC CLASSROOM

San Bernardino Field Test

Please check

Primary 7 Male 1 Female 11Upper Grade 5 Indicate number of years of teaching \_\_\_\_\_

1. Check the holidays you plan activities for in your classroom. Put an X on the line for holidays you have never heard of. 1st line - activity  
Double underline - # never heard of.

April Fool's	<u>58.3%</u>	Flag Day	<u>66.6%</u>	No Ruz	<u>83.3%</u>
Arbor Day	<u>58.3%</u>	Halloween	<u>100%</u>	Passover	<u>16.3%</u>
Baisakhi	<u>83.3%</u>	Hanukkah	41.6%	Purim	<u>41.6%</u>
Basant	<u>83.3%</u>	King's Birthday	<u>58.3%</u>	Rosh Hashanah	-
Black History Month	<u>91.6%</u>	Kodomo-No-Hi	<u>83.3%</u>	St. Patrick's	<u>91.6%</u>
Children's Day	<u>25%</u>	Kwanza	-	Succoth	<u>66.6%</u>
Chinese New Year	<u>75%</u>	Labor Day	<u>41.6%</u>	Thanks-giving	<u>83.3%</u>
Christmas	<u>100%</u>	Mardi Gras	-	Tu B' Shvat	<u>66.6%</u>
Cinco De Mayo	<u>100%</u>	Maulid-au-Nabi	<u>75%</u>	Valentine's Day	<u>91.6%</u>
Columbus Day	<u>91.6%</u>	May Day	<u>58.3%</u>	Veterans Day	<u>50%</u>
Diwali	<u>75%</u>	Memorial Day	<u>33.3%</u>	Washington's Birthday	<u>75%</u>

Easter	<u>91.6%</u>	Mother's Day	<u>75%</u>	Wesak	<u>83.3%</u>
Father's Day	<u>83.3%</u>	New Years	<u>66.6%</u>	Women's History Month	<u>25%</u>
Grandparents Day	<u>25%</u>	Susan B. Anthony Day	<u>-</u>		

2. Circle your religion and check the religions you know are represented in your room. If you know the approximate number please indicate.

Buddhists	<u>        </u>	Jehovah Witness	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Protestant	<u>3</u>
Catholic	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <u>2</u>	Jewish	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Seventh Day Adventist	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Christian Scientist	<u>        </u>	Mormon	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Shinto	<u>        </u>
Decline to state	<u>6</u>	No idea	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Other	<u>        </u>

3. Please check the ethnic categories in your room and check the second column if curricular accommodations are made to reflect holidays peculiar to that ethnic/national group.

Am. Indian	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	German	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Korean	
Arabic	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Greek	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Laotian	
Black	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Hispanic	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Nicaraguan	
Cambodian		Indian	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Filipino	
Caucasian	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Japanese	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Tai	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Chinese	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Jewish	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Vietnamese	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

Other

4. Approximately how many children in your class fall into these categories?

a deceased father	<u>3</u>	a deceased mother	<u>        </u>
parents divorced	<u>30</u>	live with mother	<u>41</u>
live with a stepmother and natural father	<u>11</u>		

live with a stepfather and natural mother 28

live with father 1 live with grandmother 2

Please circle your response to questions 5 through 14.  
N.R. = No Response.

5. Do sectarian holiday celebrations in the public classroom cause uneasiness for students?

		16.6%	50%	24%	8.3%
1	2	3	4	5	
almost always	usually	sometimes	rarely	never	N.R.

6. Do sectarian holiday celebrations in the public classroom cause uneasiness for teachers?

	8.3%	25%	41.6%	16.6%	8.3%
1	2	3	4	5	
almost always	usually	sometimes	rarely	never	N.R.

7. Do sectarian holiday celebrations in the public classroom cause uneasiness for parents?

		66.6%	25%		8.3%
1	2	3	4	5	
almost always	usually	sometimes	rarely	never	N.R.

8. Does your class celebrate religious holidays with art activities (Christmas, Hanukkah, Easter, Rosh Hashanah)?

33.3%	16.6%	33.3%	16.6%		
1	2	3	4	5	
almost always	usually	sometimes	rarely	never	N.R.

9. Does your class celebrate traditional holidays with art activities (Halloween, Thanksgiving, Valentine's)?

25%	50%	8.3%			
1	2	3	4	5	
almost always	usually	sometimes	rarely	never	N.R.

10. Does your class celebrate cultural holidays with art activities. (Cinco De Mayo, St. Patrick's)

58.3%	25%	16.6%			
1	2	3	4	5	
almost always	usually	sometimes	rarely	never	N.R.

11. Do you attempt to learn the cultural and religious celebrations of all your students?

8.3%	66.6%	25%			
1	2	3	4	5	
almost always	usually	sometimes	rarely	never	N.R.

12. Does your school district or school site provide multicultural materials/handbooks/curriculum guides for holidays?

Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_  
If yes, do you use the material?

	8.3%	58.3%	8.3%		16.6%
1	2	3	4	5	
almost always	usually	sometimes	rarely	never	N.R.

13. Has your administrator discussed school district policies relating to celebration of holidays in the classroom?

	8.3%	25%	8.3%	50%	8.3%
1	2	3	4	5	
almost always	usually	sometimes	rarely	never	N.R.

14. Would you use a curriculum handbook/guide that provides directions, guidelines and lessons for holidays in the classroom that emphasize values inherent to diverse cultural/religious celebrations and activities rather than symbols of sectarian holidays?

25%	25%	41.6%			8.3%
1	2	3	4	5	
almost always	usually	sometimes	rarely	never	N.R.

15. What are the approximate number of days per month spent on holiday related activities, lessons, assemblies in your classroom?

None \_\_\_\_\_ more than 10 days 16.6% 5-10 days 25% 3-5 days 25%  
1-2 days 25%

16. During December does your class participate in Christmas projects?

yes 100% no \_\_\_\_\_

Approximately how many days? 5.75 days.

17. During December does your class participate in Hanukkah projects?

yes 58.3% no 41.6% Approximately how many days? 2.2 days.

18. Do you give your students a gift in December?

yes 91.6% no 8.3%

19. Do you receive gifts in December from your students?

yes 91.6% no 8.3%

20. Does your school have a Christmas program?

yes 100% no \_\_\_\_\_

Winter program? yes \_\_\_\_\_ no \_\_\_\_\_

21. Have parents raised questions about Christmas programs in either a positive or negative sense? yes \_\_\_\_\_ no \_\_\_\_\_  
If yes please comment briefly. \_\_\_\_\_
- 

22. How many children in your class did not dress up for Halloween? 9 students.

23. Did you dress up for Halloween? yes 100% no \_\_\_\_\_

24. Is it your experience that every child brings a Valentine for every other child in the class?

yes 58.3% no 41.6%



25. Do you give Valentines to your class? yes 100% no \_\_\_\_\_
26. Will your class make a Mother's Day card or present?  
yes 100% no \_\_\_\_\_
27. Can children make more than one card or present?  
yes 100% no \_\_\_\_\_
28. Will your class make a Father's Day card or present?  
yes 100% no \_\_\_\_\_
29. Can children make more than one card or present?  
yes 100% no \_\_\_\_\_
30. Do you decorate your bulletin boards with holiday material?  
yes 91.6% no 8.3%

Please check your responses to the following questions.

31. What is the origin of Valentine's Day?
- Birds choose mates on Feb. 14 for they know spring is not far away, people should follow suit. 16.6%
  - Valentine's took the place of a rough and noisy festival marking the time Romans became Christians. 33.3%
  - Commemorates those spared in the St. Valentine's massacre. \_\_\_\_\_
  - Dates back to a Greek myth in which Persephone was felled by Cupid's arrow. 33.3%
  - N.R. 16.6%
32. What is the origin of Halloween?
- Began by Celts who lived in the British Isles. They appeased the forces of evil by burning crops and animals. 33.3%
  - Day set aside by the Roman Catholic Church to honor all saints who had no special day of their own. 50%

- Day set aside to visit graves and churches and pray that the dead would rest in peace. 8.3%
  - Commemorates the hearing of the court held by the Lord of Death to expel evil spirits. 8.3%
33. Which statement best explains the legalities of religious holiday observances in public schools? N.R. 16.6%
- It is the prerogative of the teacher to establish a policy about religious holidays. \_\_\_\_\_
  - Public school districts may have religious music at winter programs. \_\_\_\_\_
  - Public Schools must remain neutral in matters of religion and show no preference for one religion over another. 83.3%
  - It is the prerogative of the school district to establish policy about religious holidays in the public schools. \_\_\_\_\_
34. In what way do you accommodate the religious or cultural differences of children who do not observe the holiday being celebrated?
- No activity at all is planned for holiday not observed by all \_\_\_\_\_
- Alternative activity provided for child 58.3%
- Child is sent to the library, office or another class \_\_\_\_\_
- Child participates in the activity 8.3%
- Child stays, but does not participate 33.3%
35. What do you perceive is the primary effect upon students of minority culture/faith groups when holidays of the majority culture/faith groups are presented?
- Increased understanding 25%
- No effect 16.6%
- Curiosity 25%
- Anger/Resentment 16.6%
- Acquisition of knowledge 33.3%

Isolation 8.3%

36. Please rank your feelings about how holidays should be chosen for observance and activities in the classroom by marking your strongest preference 1, second strongest 2 and so forth until you reach your least strongest preference with a ranking of 6.

At teacher's discretion 41.6%

At principal's discretion \_\_\_\_\_

By teacher and principal 33.3%

Mandate of school district 8.3%

Mandate of state department  
of education \_\_\_\_\_

By district and state \_\_\_\_\_ N.R. 16.6%

General reactions or comments are welcome and greatly appreciated. Thank you for your participation in this survey!

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Upland

Of the 200 questionnaires distributed to all nine elementary sites in the Upland Unified School District 105 were returned for a 52.5% response. The survey was taken between December 7, 1987 and January 7, 1988. Tables 2 and 3 provide a breakdown of the population who responded and their years of classroom experience.

TABLE 2  
 UPLAND UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT POPULATION  
 PROFILE OF RESPONDENTS TO HOLIDAYS IN THE  
 PUBLIC CLASSROOM QUESTIONNAIRE

<u>Grade Level</u>	<u># of Respondents</u>	<u>Approx. # of Teachers in District</u>	<u>% in District Participating</u>	<u>% of Those Responding</u>
<u>Primary</u>				
Female	64	109		61.0%
Male	1	4		.9%
Primary Total	<u>65</u>	<u>113</u>	<u>57.5%</u>	<u>61.9%</u>
<u>Upper</u>				
Female	27	60		25.7%
Male	9	18		8.6%
Upper Total	<u>36</u>	<u>78</u>	<u>46.2%</u>	<u>34.3%</u>
<u>R.S.P. Total</u>				
Female	<u>4</u>	<u>9</u>	<u>44.9%</u>	<u>3.8%</u>
<u>Teachers</u>	105	200 K-6		
Male	10	Teachers		
Female	95	in District		

TABLE 3

YEARS OF TEACHING EXPERIENCE OF UPLAND RESPONDENTS  
TO "HOLIDAYS IN THE PUBLIC CLASSROOM"

	<u>33-15 Years</u>	<u>14-6 Years</u>	<u>5-1 Years</u>	<u>Total</u>
Primary				
Female	15	18	31	64
Male			1	1
Upper				
Female	5	11	11	27
Male	3	6		9
R.S.P.				
Female	2	2		4
TOTALS	25	37	43	105

Analysis Related to Hypothesis #1

Hypothesis: There will be no statistically significant relationship at the .05 level of confidence between 1970 teacher's opinions regarding who should choose holidays to be observed in the classroom and teacher's opinions in the 1988 study.

Procedure

The data was organized into a contingency table and subjected to statistical analysis by complex Chi-Square. The 2 x 6 table was constructed according to the following.

Teachers were categorized as responding in either the 1970 or the 1988 studies and the columns of the table were labeled with the individual survey responses. The results of the statistical analysis are displayed on Table 4.

TABLE 4  
CONTINGENCY TABLE COMPARING TEACHER'S OPINIONS  
IN 1970 OF HOW HOLIDAYS SHOULD BE  
CHOSEN FOR OBSERVANCE IN THE  
CLASSROOM AND TEACHERS  
OPINIONS IN 1988

	Teacher Responses					
	At Teacher Discretion	At Principal Discretion	By Teacher and Principal	District Mandate	Mandate of State Dept. of Education	By District and State
1988 Teachers	47	0	18	8	15	17
1970 Teachers	47	9	14	14	14	2
	$\chi^2 = 22.901$		$C = .317$	$p < .001$		

The null hypothesis was rejected because analysis of the data by complex Chi-Square shows a statistically significant relationship at the .001 level of confidence between teachers responding in the 1988 study and teachers responding in the 1970 study. Therefore, there was a relationship between teachers polled now and teachers polled

eighteen years ago.

The strongest relationship was in reference to teachers wanting the decision-making authority on choosing holidays for observance in the classroom. The overall contingency coefficient of .317 suggests the relationship that exists was moderate. When looking at straight percentages the information on Table 5 was elicited.

TABLE 5  
RESPONSES TO THE QUESTION "HOW SHOULD HOLIDAYS  
BE CHOSEN FOR OBSERVANCE IN THE CLASSROOM?"  
REPORTED IN PERCENTAGES

Preference of who should choose	<u>1970</u> 100 respondents to Instructor	<u>1988</u> 105 respondents from Upland Unified School District
At teacher's discretion	47.8%	44.8%
At principal's discretion	9.1%	-
By teacher and principal	13.6%	17.1%
Mandate of school district	13.6%	7.6%
Mandate of state department of education	13.6%	14.3%
By district and state	2.3%	16.2%

While the highest percentage of those responding to the 1988 replication still wanted holidays chosen at teacher's discretion (44.8%), no one wanted principal input, yet more (17.1%), than in the 1970 poll, wanted a joint decision between teacher and principal. Fewer in the 1988 survey wanted a mandate from the local school district (7.6%) but a larger proportion were willing to accept the mandate of the state department of education (14%) and even more (16.2%), a combination of the district and state as opposed to only 2.3% eighteen years ago.

One teacher responding to this question commented "there needs to be clear guidelines by the State, it should not be left up to the teacher or principal. Maybe there are already clear guidelines, but I'm not sure what they are."

In respect to not knowing what the guidelines are there was a mixed reaction to the following question:

Descriptive Question

"Has your administrator discussed school district policies relating to celebration of holidays in the classroom?"

almost always	usually	sometimes	rarely	never
20%	9.5%	21.9%	27.6%	20%

Over 47% rarely or never have discussed school district policies or memos, like the one sent out by Upland's superintendent to administrators, cited in the



Review of Literature section of this paper. It is the prerogative of the school site administrator to use the memo with staff in appropriate circumstances. It is evident that some administrators choose to discuss the memo and related issues and others do not.

### Descriptive Question

Do teachers differ in their perception of what level of uneasiness holidays cause for students, teachers and parents?

	almost always	usually	sometimes	rarely	never
Students	.9%	3.8%	17.1%	60.0%	17.1%
Teachers	2.8%	5.7%	35.2%	37.1%	18.1%
Parents	1.9%	2.8%	51.4%	41.0%	2.8%

Teachers responding indicated that holiday inclusion in the curriculum causes more uneasiness for parents, less for teachers and very little for children. Teachers do differ in their perception of the uneasiness holidays can cause.

### Descriptive Question

Do teachers want a resource guide to assist them in the selection and development of holiday curriculum that emphasizes values inherent to diverse cultural, religious

celebrations and activities rather than symbols of sectarian holidays?

The results on this question were as follows when respondents were asked if they would use such a guide.

almost always	usually	sometimes	rarely	never
18.1%	31.4%	35.2%	8.6%	1.9%

Only 10.5% said they would rarely or never use a curriculum guide for holidays. 84.7% felt they would make use of it if it were available. Along with comments from respondents about the need for developing a handbook for holidays, the 84.7% positive responses to this question validate this researcher's impression for the need for a comprehensive book on the subject of holidays in the public schools.

#### Descriptive Question

Does your school district or school site provide multicultural material/handbooks/curriculum guides for holidays?

The response to this item was divided. 57.1% said yes and 42.9% said no. While the district's Instructional Materials Center does have multicultural material and information on holidays there are no handbooks or curriculum guides for holidays. Of the 57.1% who said there were materials, 44.7% used the material always, usually or

sometimes and 12.4% rarely or never used it.

### Descriptive Question

What holidays do you plan activities for in your classroom and what holidays have you never heard of?

Prior to reporting the results of this question a reminder of holidays mandated by the California State Framework, previously cited in the Review of Literature section, is in order. The following observances are in the California State Education Code for inclusion in the curriculum: Lincoln's (Feb. 12) and Washington's (Feb. 22) Birthday Exercises; Anniversary of Adoption of the Constitution (Sept. 16); Conservation, Bird, and Arbor Day (March 7); Susan B. Anthony Day (Feb. 15); Black American Day (March 5); and Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Day, (Jan. 15).

In the new History-Social Science Framework; California Public Schools Kindergarten Through Grade Twelve scheduled for publication in December 1987, Appendix B, previously cited in the Review of the Literature, which outlines mandated holidays was accidentally left out.

This researcher inadvertantly left the Anniversary of Adoption of the Constitution and Black American Day off the questionnaire list. The percentages of respondents who plan activities for the following holidays mandated by the state in this questionnaire were as follows: Lincoln's Birthday -

81%; Washington's Birthday - 77%; Martin Luther King Jr.'s Birthday - 63%; Arbor Day - 44% and Susan B. Anthony Day - 31.4%.

Perhaps percentages on these holidays would be higher if the state would provide more clearcut direction. Actually, percentages are probably higher than indicated if one considers work done on ecology and conservation ties in with Arbor Day, Women's History studies include Susan B. Anthony, Black History Month includes both Martin Luther King's Birthday and Black American Day and a study of democracy includes both a review of all our Presidents as well as the Constitution. Tables 6 and 7 provide a breakdown of the data from the 105 respondents about which holidays they plan activities for in their classrooms and which holidays on the questionnaire were never heard of by respondents.

Brief summary of holidays never heard of by respondents.

Baisakhi - (India) Hindu New Year

Basanth - (Asia, Africa, Eastern Europe) 1st day of spring on Muslem calendar

Kodamo-No-Hi - (Japan) Children's Day

Maulid-au-Nabi - Mohammad's birthday

Diwali - (India) - Hindu Feast of Lights

Kwanza - (African) - Independence Day

TABLE 6

## HOLIDAYS FOR WHICH RESPONDENTS PLAN ACTIVITIES

Holiday	Frequency (N)	%	Holiday	Frequency (N)	%
Halloween	103	98.1	Flag Day	53	51.0
Christmas	101	96.2	Grandparent's Day	51	49.0
Thanksgiving	96	91.4	Veteran's Day	51	49.0
Valentines	93	89.0	Arbor Day	46	44.0
Mother's Day	92	88.0	Chinese New Year	43	41.0
Women's History	89	85.0	May Day	40	38.0
Lincoln's Birthday	85	81.0	April Fool's Day	36	34.3
Father's Day	84	80.0	Susan B. Anthony	33	31.4
Washington's B'day	81	77.0	Labor Day	29	28.0
St. Patrick's Day	80	76.2	Children's Day	12	11.8
Columbus Day	79	75.2	Mardi Gras	8	8.0
Easter	78	74.3	Passover	8	8.0
Cinco De Mayo	73	70.0	Rosh Hashanah	8	8.0
Black History Mon.	72	69.0	Kwanza	3	2.8
Hanukkah	70	66.0	Purim	2	1.9
King's Birthday	66	63.0	Tu B. Shavt	2	1.9
Memorial Day	63	60.0	No Ruz	1	.9
New Year's Day	55	52.4			

TABLE 7

## HOLIDAYS NEVER HEARD OF BY RESPONDENTS

Holiday	Frequency (N)	%	Holiday	Frequency (N)	%
Baisakhi	80	76.2	No Ruz	68	65.0
Basanth	80	76.2	Tu B'Shvat	66	63.0
Kodamo-No-Hi	80	76.2	Succoth	61	58.1
Maulid-au-Nabi	78	74.3	Purim	50	48.0
Diwali	77	73.3	Children's Day	14	13.0
Kwanza	76	72.4	Rosh Hashanah	11	10.4
Wesak	70	66.6	Passover	6	5.7

Wesak - (Asia) - Commemorates Birth, Enlightenment and Death of Buddha

No Ruz - (Iran) -- Beginning of spring

Tu B' Shavat - Jewish New Year of Trees - trees stand for good, noble and worthwhile life

Succoth - Jewish Festival of the Booths, is a week of thanksgiving for the harvest and is five days after the Day of Atonement.

Purim - Jewish spring festival celebrates the victory over Haman and commemorates the deliverance of the Jews from destruction.

Rosh Hashanah - Jewish holiday that begins 10 days of Penitence that culminates in the fasting of Yom Kippur, the day of Atonement.

Passover-commemorates the escape of the Israelites from their bondage in Egypt and the end of a 430 year period of slavery.<sup>1</sup>

### Analysis Related to Hypothesis #2

Hypothesis: There will be no statistically significant relationship at the .05 level of confidence between levels of teachers and numbers of days per month spent on holiday activities.

### Procedure

The data was organized into a contingency table and subjected to statistical analysis by complex Chi-Square. The 2 x 4 table was constructed according to the following. Teachers were categorized as to their grade level and the

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<sup>1</sup>Alice Van Straalen, The Book of Holidays Around the World, F. L. Dutton, New York, New York, 1986, 1-192.

columns of the table were labeled with their responses to days per month they spent on holiday activities. The results of the statistical analysis are displayed in the Table 8.

TABLE 8  
CONTINGENCY TABLE COMPARING UPPER AND PRIMARY  
TEACHERS TO DAYS PER MONTH SPENT ON  
HOLIDAY ACTIVITIES

	Days Per Month on Holiday Activities			
	More than 10 days	5-10 days	3-5 days	1-2 days
Upper Grade Teachers	2	3	15	15
Primary Teachers	16	15	25	6

$$x^2 = 18.995 \quad c = .405 \quad p < .001$$

The null hypothesis was rejected because analysis of the data by complex Chi-Square shows a statistically significant relationship at the .001 level of confidence between upper grade teachers and primary teachers and the number of days spent on holiday activities. The contingency coefficient of .405 suggests a moderate relationship which is most evidenced by teachers in both upper grades and primary grades who prefer to spend 3-5 days on holiday activities.



In general primary teachers do spend a larger portion of the month engaging in holiday activities. While 50% of the primary teachers who responded indicated they spent 5 to 10 or more than 10 days a month on holiday related activity only 14.2% of the upper grade teachers spent 5 to 10 or more than 10 days on holiday activity.

In the Review of the Literature section of this project Educator Pat Timberlake suggested 3-5 days per month was appropriate.<sup>2</sup> Teachers, both primary and upper grade participating in this survey, responded with the highest percentages in this category with 42.9% of the upper grade teachers spending 3-5 days and 40.3% of the primary teachers spending 3-5 days; thus conforming to Timberlake's suggested time frame.

Time spent on Christmas activities by primary teachers was almost double that of upper grade teachers when computing averages, but approximately the same for Hanukkah activities.

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<sup>2</sup>Pat Timberlake, "Classroom Holidaze" Childhood Education, (January 1978): 130.

TABLE 9

AVERAGE NUMBER OF DAYS SPENT ON CHRISTMAS  
AND HANUKKAH IN DECEMBER

Grade Level	Christmas	Hanukkah
Primary	8.4 days	2.3 days
Upper	4.6 days	1.7 days
Total Average	6.2 days	2.1 days

While numbers of students who celebrate these holidays are unavailable because districts do not have religious breakdowns, teachers surveyed approximated that about 31.4% of their students were Jewish (probably a very high estimate) and 70.5% of their students were Christians.

22.9% of the teachers responding to the questionnaire declined to state their religion, 48% were Protestant, 20% were Catholic and the following percentages reflect the additional religions represented: 2.8%, no organized religion; 1.9% Christian Scientist; 1.9% Mormon; .9% Confucian; and .9% Jewish.

Of the total number responding to the questionnaire, 94.3% indicated they include Christmas activities in their curriculum and 5.7% did not. 67.6% include Hanukkah activities and 30.5% do not. Some indicated via their comments, that they include Hanukkah activities when they have Jewish children in the room, but did not have any

Jewish children this year.

Primary teachers in this study do spend more time on holiday activities than upper grade teachers.

### Descriptive Question

Have parents raised questions about Christmas programs in either a positive or negative sense?

45% of the teachers polled had received both positive and negative comments about Christmas programs. 25% of these polled said their school had a Christmas program and 41% said their school had a Winter program. Comments were as follows:

- "Would like more programs. Some state that the religious aspects of holidays could be stressed rather than just in a historical sense."

- "Jehovah Witness"

- "They look forward to the program."

- "Want more children to participate."

- "They were interested and excited and eager to help."

- "Parents demand performances."

- "Jehovah Witness - no participation in December program with Santa, Rudolph, presents, etc."

- "They want one!"

- "Now it's called a Winter program and the music reflects the change."

- "Most are positive. Our Christmas program is called a 'Winter Program' but most songs are Xmas songs."

- "Like holiday programs."

- "Both positive and negative reactions have occurred in last 4 years."

- "The majority of parents and P.T.A. groups want a Christmas program."

- "Look forward to see their kids program."

- "Generally positive and supportive of program."

- "They want them."

- "7th Day Adventists"

- "Jehovah Witness parents express concern."

- "Wanted program - but hassle."

- "Always want all children to participate."

- "Negative"

- "Are we having one, when?"

- "Just can't wait for programs."

- "Wanted a schoolwide program."

"Preventatives - worrying about possible problem (Jewish families) always seemed pleased with outcome."

- "P.T.A. usually wants to have one."

- "Some parents would like to insist on Xmas program.

Other parents are aggressively against it."

- "Whole school program."

- "J. Witness"

- "Some want one"
- "In previous years - now use Winter theme"
- "Low income parents do not raise questions."
- "Tell them not to but it is a Christmas program"
- "In the past a school 'Winter' program in December raised some questions."
- "Jewish or Christians complain about celebration of opposite holidays, but rarely."
- "How much gift exchange for students?"
- "Wanted to have one, but didn't want to."
- "Want to over do!"
- "They ask if we are having some type of programs in the year. We used to have a Winter program in Jan., Feb."
- "This year we had some insist that all our (over 600 students) participate. They were indignant when told that it was not possible."
- "Jehovah Witness parents have expressed disapproval."
- "Negative parents were strongly in favor of a Christmas program."
- "Not all children participate."

#### Descriptive Question

Does your class celebrate religious, traditional or cultural holidays with art activities?

TABLE 10

PERCENTAGE OF TEACHERS WHO PLAN ART ACTIVITIES  
FOR RELIGIOUS, TRADITIONAL AND CULTURAL HOLIDAYS

	Almost Always	Usually	Sometimes	Rarely	Never
<b>Religious</b>					
Overall	38.1%	37.1%	16.2%	5.7%	2.8%
% for Primary Teacher Responding	49.2	37.0	10.8	1.5	1.5
% for Upper Teacher Responding	19.4	41.7	25.0	11.1	2.8
<b>Traditional</b>					
Overall	70.5	22.0	4.8	1.9	.9
% for Primary Teacher Responding	87.7	12.3	0.0	0.0	0.0
% for Upper Teacher Responding	47.7	40.0	8.6	5.7	0.0
<b>Cultural</b>					
Overall	35.2	40.0	18.1	2.8	1.9
% for Primary Teacher Responding	43.1	47.7	7.7	1.5	0.0
% for Upper Teacher Responding	25.7%	37.1%	31.4%	5.7%	0%

Once again percentages for primary classes engaging in holiday activities are higher than upper grade classes. Traditional holidays seem to receive the most emphasis followed by religious and cultural.

#### Descriptive Question

Do you attempt to learn the cultural and religious celebrations of all your students?

78.6% of those polled indicated they sometimes, usually or almost always do. Only 16.2% said they rarely make an effort and 5.7% said they never do.

Reaction, in the form of comments on this subject was mixed. One respondent commented it was "none of my (meaning her) business to inquire and that "we try not to set people aside, why would I want to know their religious preference," while another commented, "Holiday observances in my class reflect the make up of the class. I am flexible and would change with the class."

#### Descriptive Question

What ethnic categories are represented in your room and do you make curricular accommodations that reflect holidays peculiar to that ethnic/national group?

TABLE 11

FREQUENCY DATA FOR ETHNIC CATEGORIES APPROXIMATED  
 BY TEACHERS RESPONDING AND IF CURRICULAR  
 ACCOMODATIONS ARE MADE

Ethnic Category	# Responding Who Had These Categories in Class	Curr. Accomodations Made	Ethnic Category	# Resp. Who Had Cat. in Class	Curr. Accomodations Made
American Indian	16	3	Nicaraguan	4	2
Arabic	16	2	Filipino	13	1
Black	75	47	Tai	7	-
Cambodian	1	-	Vietnamese	12	1
Caucasian	82	39	<u>Other</u>		
Chinese	40	18	Dutch		
German	13	4	Hawaiian		
Hispanic	84	44	Swedish		
Indian	17	-	French		
Iranian	17	-	Australian		
Japanese	23	8	Pakastani		
Jewish	37	17	Greek		
Korean	24	1	Hungarian		
Laotian	1	-	Afghan		
			Brazilian		



Teachers who responded tend to make curricular accommodations more often for students in the larger ethnic categories such as Black, Caucasian, Chinese, Hispanic, and Jewish and fewer accommodations for less often represented minorities.

The language census survey conducted by the Upland District in the spring of 1987 sheds some light on the variations of cultures represented in the district. Of the 5338 elementary students 176 (3.3%) spoke a primary language in the home other than English.

The languages represented include the following:

Spanish	Taiwanese	Cambodian
Chinese	Farsi	Urdu
Vietnamese	Philippino	Portuguese
Korean	Japanese	Hebrew
Arabic	Greek	Hindu
Rumanian	Telegu	Armenian
Swedish	Dutch	3

Some districts would have far larger representations and others fewer. These figures do not reflect homes where other cultures are represented, but English has become the primary language, but they do serve as indicators of the need for styles of teaching that are pluralistic.

### Descriptive Question

What do you perceive is the primary effect upon students of minority culture/faith groups when holidays of

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<sup>3</sup>Upland Unified School District "Student Language Census," 904 W. 9th St., Upland, California, 91786.

the majority culture/faith groups are presented?

Many chose more than one effect. The results were as follows:

Increased understanding	51.4%
No effect	13.3%
Curiosity	31.4%
Anger/Resentment	11.4%
Acquisition of knowledge	33.3%
Isolation	19.0%

While negative effects were perceived to exist such as anger/resentment and isolation, positive effects received higher percentages. The responses of curiosity, acquisition of knowledge and particularly increased understanding were noted by a third of those polled in the first two cases and by over one half of the respondents on the point of increased understanding.

Comments that confirmed the attitude of teachers feeling that holiday inclusion increased understanding were as follows:

Each class has a unique quality that only the teacher can identify. The many cultures in our society and in our classes need special consideration, but religion is never considered as a factor in observance. Many activities that increase understanding of other people are encouraged. Cultures of the students are examined as food, art, artifacts, music and photographs are shared in friendship. Parents also share in this cultural exchange.

I try to discuss holidays from as many different cultures as possible to encourage acceptance and understanding.

I feel children should be exposed to many religions and backgrounds. Openmindedness is important. Through our activities we do not push religion but caring and giving and understanding.

Children love to celebrate holidays even if it isn't culturally their own. They are naturally curious. They see so much around them outside of school also. Holidays provide wonderful motivation for writing, reading and art. I feel we become richer for knowing about each others cultures. Personally, I have friends from many other countries. My view of the world is larger and more understanding because of them. I do not teach religion to my students, but I expose them to a wonderfully diverse world. I feel I would be wearing blinders to ignore other cultures. Narrowminded people see things only their way. I don't have to accept others beliefs or customs, but I can understand my world and be a richer person for knowing about it.

### Descriptive Question

In what way do you accommodate the religious or cultural differences of children who do not observe the holiday being celebrated?

A number of teachers responded that children enjoy holidays, yet indicated an awareness of children who could not participate. In response to how these children were handled the following results occurred.

- |   |              |
|---|--------------|
| - No activity at all is planned for holiday not observed by all | <u>6.7%</u>  |
| - Alternative activity provided for child                       | <u>72.3%</u> |
| - Child is sent to the library, office or another class         | <u>9.5%</u>  |
| - Child participates in the activity                            | <u>10.5%</u> |
| - Child stays, but does not participate                         | <u>16.2%</u> |

Some teachers responded with dual solutions depending

upon the circumstances and others indicated they allow the child to make the choice. For example Jehovah Witness parents might indicate to the teacher that the child knows what she is allowed to do and may decline on her own. Unfortunately, particularly with primary Jehovah Witness children, for example, the child would start out the year declining a cupcake at a birthday, or to make a turkey at Thanksgiving and eventually may acquiesce to peer pressure and participate. What may appear to be clear-cut solutions for well meaning parents and teachers may not be so easy for youngsters who are forced to make difficult choices.

The questionnaire addressed other holiday issues that come up for children who may be affected on Mother's and Father's Day by the fact that they lost a parent or have an abundance of parents (natural and step) to make cards or gifts for. 25% of the teachers polled had students with a deceased father and 11.4% with a deceased mother. 47% of their students had parents who were divorced. Other variations of family structure included living with only a mother, only a father, in step families with new siblings, joint custody and with a grandparent, aunt, uncle, or in a foster home.

Most teachers 91.4% indicated that children could make more than one Mother's Day gift or card and 79% indicated they could do the same for Father's Day.

Some children's isolation on both Valentine's Day and Halloween was noted with the following information. While 71.4% of the teacher's students brought Valentine's for everyone in the class, 27% did not.

In their classrooms the teachers reported that 131 of their students did not dress up for Halloween. 59 of those students were upper grade students and 72 were primary students. 92.4% received gifts in December from their students. 7.6% of their students did not bring gifts to the teacher during December.

The questions about full participation in holidays also extended to the teachers. 80% of those polled gave students gifts in December, 89.5% dressed up for Halloween, 90.5% gave Valentine's to their class and 84.7% decorated their bulletin boards with holiday material.

When asked about the origins of two of the holidays that were celebrated by high percentages of teachers, Halloween, 98.1% and Valentine's Day 89%, those participating in the questionnaire were unsure. When responding to the origins of Valentine's Day, 24.9% gave no response, 11% marked the fictitious reply "commemorates those spared in the St. Valentine's massacre" and 40% marked the other fictitious reply "dates back to a Greek myth in which Persephone was felled by Cupid's arrow." The following percentages represent the two probable

explanations cited in The Book of Holidays Around the World by Alice Van Straalen.

- Birds choose mates on February 14 for they know spring is not far away, people should follow suit. 3.8%
- Valentine's took the place of a rough and noisy festival marking the time the Romans became Christians, 19.0%<sup>4</sup>

On the question of the origins of Halloween all responses were partially correct and met with the following percentages:

- Began by Celts who lived in the British Isles. They appeased the forces of evil by burning crops and animals. 32.4%
- Day set aside by the Roman Catholic Church to honor all saints who had no special day of their own. 21.0%
- Day set aside to visit graves and churches and pray that the dead would rest in peace. 13.3%
- Commemorates the hearing of the court held by the Lord of Death to expel evil spirits.<sup>5</sup> 9.5%
- No response 23.8%

While it is generally held that exceedingly small segments of society celebrate the true origins of either of these holidays and they are included more as a matter of course and tradition, it was clear that these two questions, particularly the one on Halloween contributed to one impassioned reply from the following respondent:

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<sup>4</sup>Alice Van Straalen, The Book of Holidays Around the World, F. L. Dutton, New York, New York, 1986, 1-192.

<sup>5</sup>Ibid., 189.

After responding I am upset that recognition of holidays deeply embedded in our culture and enjoyed for years as part of great art, music and drama - namely, Christmas and Easter are being suppressed! I have already this year, participated in a Halloween celebration, which children enjoy, but if I were to go to its roots, I would be delving into all manner of evil controlling, manipulating, killing, and sorcery. This celebration, with its black and evil connotations is just fine, but Christmas and Easter, with the story of the greatest love ever shown to mankind, in the birth, life, death and resurrection of Christ, is not to be mentioned. I feel we are duping our young children., We offer emptiness, but deny them the knowledge of great joy, selfless giving, peace of mind, light and love that is the season. We substitute many symbols, but offer no reality to cling to. Shame on us for giving up our heritage instead of offering it, with pride to newcomers in our land.

I also have already shared American Indian Folktales and superstitions, as part of our unit at Thanksgiving time - Here I am teaching all the religious ideas and stories about Indians, but can't mention my own! This is insane.

December is traditionally our time for 'Holidays Around the World' in Social Studies - I can talk about every celebration or folktale except the manger in Bethlehem. Why???

I'm'sure it's evident that I am upset. I want the carols back - I want the Christ child back in our Christmas. It is our heritage.

While her points are to be respected and more than likely agreed upon from many with a Christian perspective the response to the question "which statement best explains the legalities of religious holiday observances in public schools?" may well explain the conflict she feels so strongly, yet is the reality of what public schools are charged to do; "Public schools must remain neutral in matters of religion and show no preference for one religion over another, and must refrain from the promotion of any or

all religions."<sup>6</sup> 80% of those polled, including this teacher, indicated this response.

There is no question that reactions and responses to holidays in the public classroom are as varied as the unique children who come into those classrooms, the gifted teachers who impart wisdom, sensitivity and concern and the ideas that spring from their interchange. Researcher Elaine Hollander warned her readers that there were "no easy answers" and with that guiding principle in mind it is time to look at the educational implications of this project.

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<sup>6</sup>Guidelines for Public Schools, Moraga School District, 1977, reprinted and distributed by the Upland School District.



CHAPTER 5  
EDUCATIONAL IMPLICATIONS

After analyzing the data, the question is where does it all lead to in an educational sense? There are many facets to this volume of information, but in order to look at the implications in a systematic fashion three areas will be explored, 1) key issues; 2) suggestions for replication of this study with modifications and 3) an outline of this researcher's proposed curriculum guide.

The Issue at Hand

There is no question that many hours of instructional time during a school year are devoted to holiday related activities. This time has potential for heightening multicultural awareness, creating innovative curriculum and providing opportunities for sharing our humanity; this same time has potential for excluding religious, cultural and socio-economic minorities, filling curriculum minutes with too much holiday stimulation and sharing our humanity in an uneven manner without regard to diverse heritages.

Clearly the majority of teachers responding to this questionnaire (78.6%) understood the significance of learning the cultural and religious celebrations of their

students so that their curricular decisions could equitably reflect the unique population of their classroom.

21.8% of the teachers responding indicated a sensitivity to the possibility that students may sometimes have cause for uneasiness and 48.7% of those felt teachers may at times feel uneasy with holiday celebrations and activities.

Clearly, responses on the question of who feels uneasy about holidays in the classroom indicates the majority of the uneasiness is felt by parents and that children are rarely uneasy. Yet, without question, parents have more power to voice objection and articulate uneasiness. Children, limited in sophistication and opportunities for articulation and power may need avenues to respond, particularly if they fall into minority categories in reference to faith, culture or socio-economic status.

It would seem reasonable to assume that every district has some children who do not dress for Halloween, do not bring or receive a Valentine for all or from all; who have a deceased mother, or a deceased father and blended families. These circumstances may create awkward decisions for children on Mother's and Father's Day. In addition other children may have religious ties that exclude them during certain holiday activities.

While the percentages of students affected in some

districts are smaller than in other districts, those children still deserve the sensitive consideration of public educators who are charged to serve them.

The best way to serve the needs of our pluralistic student population is the challenge. A curriculum guide with options and alternatives for holiday observances and activities from which teachers could adapt to their circumstances while respecting the individual belief systems of all their students is this researcher's answer and will be outlined in the final portion of this project. Clearly the curriculum guide must adhere to the guaranteed freedoms of the Constitution and the legal constraints of applicable court decisions. Prior to presentation of this preliminary outline some suggestions for replication and modification of this study are in order.

#### Replication of Study

Prior to developing a curriculum guide results of a teacher survey on attitudes about holidays from at least one other district with different ethnic balances would provide an opportunity to compare data.

A modification of this study would be to devise an instrument to gather data on student, parent and community attitudes. In addition, community religious leaders and school administrators should be given opportunities to voice opinions.

### Holiday Curriculum Guide

The purpose of a holiday curriculum guide, for use in California, is to assist teachers with holiday curriculum decisions and activities. An additional aim of the guide would be to heighten sensitivity on this complex issue among teachers, administrators and communities.

84.7% of those responding to the questionnaire said they would make use of a curriculum guide for holidays if it was available. Clearly the educational implications of this response show a need for such a guide to be developed, and what follows is a preliminary outline for that guide to be developed in the summers of 1988 and 1989.

#### I. Overview of problem.

##### A. As perceived by:

1. writer
2. administrators, teachers
3. students
4. community, religious leaders

##### B. Review of the literature

##### C. Data generated from 1988 Master's Project

##### D. Replicated data from another district.

#### II. Rationale

##### A. Values clarification

##### B. Legal implications

III. Historical Perspective Holidays: Origins and Customs

- A. Traditional
- B. Religious
- C. Cultural

IV. Curriculum Design

- A. Goals
- B. Objectives
- C. Timeline for holidays

V. Additional Teaching Tools

- A. Sensitivity workshops
- B. Lecture presentation
- C. Extended Education Class

VI. Summary

Conclusion

Nestled in the drawer of this Master's candidate's desk there is a picture of the child described in the introduction of this project, young David, who watched his mother burn to death when he was four, and a thank you note from Shelly's mother, the Jehovah Witness child. The note says, "To thank you for the wonderful way you have of teaching. Thank you also for the respect you have shown toward Shelly as far as our beliefs are concerned. We really appreciate the effort in helping Shelly to not feel

left out."

Although the picture and note represent just two of the many children who have come through one public classroom they are constant reminders of children, just like David and Shelly who sit in classrooms across this country. It is with these children in mind that this project does not come to an end, but merely begins.

**APPENDIXES**

APPENDIX A  
Letters of Transmittal

Rebecca Schwarzer  
1367 Alta Ave.  
Upland, Calif. 91786

Elementary Grade Teacher  
Upland Unified School District

Dear Teacher,

I would appreciate your help. I am a first grade teacher at Cabrillo Elementary School in Upland. I am finishing the Masters of Arts, Elementary Education Option at California State University, San Bernardino. My project's success is dependent upon your gracious response to an anonymous teacher attitude survey about holiday observances and activities in the classroom.

I have received permission from your administrator to circulate a questionnaire which will provide the information I need.

The results of the survey will not be used to draw any conclusions about the schools in San Bernardino, teacher effectiveness or student achievement. Your individual responses will be anonymous and there will be no attempt to report information by grade level.

For the information generated by this survey to be representative of a large cross-section of teachers, it is essential that a high percentage of teachers respond.

Since the final portion of my project is dependent upon your prompt response I would be most grateful if you would place your completed questionnaire in the manila envelope provided at your school site.

Upon completion of the study results will be available at your school site for anyone interested.

Thank you very much for your time and cooperation.

With appreciation,

Rebecca Schwarzer



Rebecca Schwarzer  
1367 Alta Ave.  
Upland, Calif. 91786

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Thank you very much for your time and cooperation.

With appreciation,

Rebecca Schwarzer

APPENDIX B

UPLAND SCHOOL DISTRICT  
LANGUAGE CENSUS SCHOOL REPORT  
SPRING 1987

Limited English Speaking and Non-English Speaking

SCHOOL	SDC	K	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	TOTAL
Baldy View		1 Span	1 Span 1 Chin 2 Viet 1 Heb 1 Swe	1 Arme 2 Viet	1 Kor	2 Tai 1 Span 1 Viet 1 Kor	1 Chin 1 Viet	1 Tai 2 Viet 1 Chin			22
Cabrillo		1 Viet 2 Span 2 Kor 1 Chin 1 Arme	3 Kor 5 Span 1 Arme	1 Arme 1 Chin	1 Kor 1 Viet 1 Arb 1 Arme	1 Span 1 Kor		2 Span			26
Citrus		2 Span 1 Dut	2 Span 1 Jap	1 Fars 2 Span	1 Fars	1 Fars 1 Hind	1 Span 1 Fars	1 Span 1 Fars			16
Foothill Knolls		17 Span 1 Viet	4 Span	2 Span	5 Span		5 Span 1 Chin	7 Span			42
Magnolia		2 Chin 1 Kor 1 Gr	1 Chin		1 Span		1 Hind	1 Viet			8
Sierra Vista		1 Viet 1 Span	3 Span			3 Span	1 Chin	2 Chin			11
Sycamore			1 Span 1 Gr			1 Chin	1 Chin				4
Upland Elem.	1 Urdu	8 Span 2 Viet	6 Span 1 Fars 1 Cam	1 Span 1 Viet	3 Span	2 Span 1 Viet 1 Fars	4 Span 1 Urdu	1 Span 1 Ruma			35

LANGUAGE CENSUS SCHOOL REPORT - Continued

Limited English Speaking and Non-English Speaking

SCHOOL	SDC	K	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	TOTAL
Valencia			1 Chin 1 Span	1 Arme 2 Span	1 Chin 1 Span	1 Jap 2 Span 1 Chin	1 Kor 1 Span 1 Chin	1 Jap			15
Pioneer Jr. High									1 Por 1 Jap 1 Chin	1 Span 1 Kor 1 Jap	6
Upland Jr. High									5 Span 1 Kor 1 Pil 1 Cam 2 Chin 1 Arb	16 Span 2 Kor 1 Jap 1 Cam 10 Chin 1 Arb 2 Tel	46
TOTAL											<u>229</u>

Span = Spanish (124)  
 Chin = Chinese (31)  
 Viet = Vietnamese (16)  
 Kor = Korean (15)  
 Arb = Arabic (3)  
 Ruma = Rumanian (1)  
 Swe = Swedish (1)

Tai = Taiwanese (3)  
 Far = Farsi (7)  
 Pil = Pilipino (1)  
 Jap = Japanese (6)  
 Gr = Greek (2)  
 Tel = Telegu (2)  
 Dutch (2)

Cam = Cambodian (3)  
 Urdu (2)  
 Por = Portuguese (1)  
 Heb = Hebrew (1)  
 Hind=Hindu (3)  
 Arme=Armenian (5)

## APPENDIX C

## SURVEY ON HOLIDAYS IN THE PUBLIC CLASSROOM

Please check

Primary \_\_\_\_\_ Male \_\_\_\_\_ Female \_\_\_\_\_

Upper \_\_\_\_\_ Indicate number of years  
Grade \_\_\_\_\_ of teaching \_\_\_\_\_

1. Check the holidays you plan activities for in your classroom. Put an X on the line for holidays you have never heard of.

April Fool's _____	Flag Day _____	No Ruz _____
Arbor Day _____	Halloween _____	Passover _____
Baisakhi _____	Hanukkah _____	Purim _____
Basanth _____	King's Birthday _____	Rosh Hashanah _____
Black History Month _____	Kodomo-No-Hi _____	St. Patrick's _____
Children's Day _____	Kwanza _____	Succoth _____
Chinese New Year _____	Labor Day _____	Thanks- giving _____
Christmas _____	Mardi Gras _____	Tu B' Shvat _____
Cinco De Mayo _____	Maulid-au-Nabi _____	Valentine's Day _____
Columbus Day _____	May Day _____	Veterans Day _____
Diwali _____	Memorial Day _____	Washington's Birthday _____
Easter _____	Mother's Day _____	Wesak _____

Father's Day _____	New Years _____	Women's History Month _____
Grandparents Day _____	Susan B. Anthony Day _____	

2. Circle your religion and check the religions you know are represented in your room. If you know the approximate number please indicate.

Buddhists _____	Jehovah Witness _____	Protestant _____
Catholic _____	Jewish _____	Seventh Day Adventist _____
Christian Scientist _____	Mormon _____	Shinto _____
Decline to state _____	No idea _____	Other _____

3. Please check the ethnic categories in your room and check the second column if curricular accommodations are made to reflect holidays peculiar to that ethnic/national group.

Am. Indian	German	Korean
Arabic	Greek	Laotian
Black	Hispanic	Nicaraguan
Cambodian	Indian	Filipino
Caucasian	Japanese	Tai
Chinese	Jewish	Vietnamese
Other		

4. Approximately how many children in your class fall into these categories?

a deceased father _____	a deceased mother _____
parents divorced _____	live with mother _____
live with a stepmother and natural father _____	

live with a stepfather and natural mother \_\_\_\_\_

live with father \_\_\_\_\_ live with grandmother \_\_\_\_\_

Please circle your response to questions 5 through 14.  
N.R. = No Response.

5. Do sectarian holiday celebrations in the public classroom cause uneasiness for students?

1	2	3	4	5	
almost					
always	usually	sometimes	rarely	never	N.R.

6. Do sectarian holiday celebrations in the public classroom cause uneasiness for teachers?

1	2	3	4	5	
almost					
always	usually	sometimes	rarely	never	N.R.

7. Do sectarian holiday celebrations in the public classroom cause uneasiness for parents?

1	2	3	4	5	
almost					
always	usually	sometimes	rarely	never	N.R.

8. Does your class celebrate religious holidays with art activities (Christmas, Hanukkah, Easter, Rosh Hashanah)?

1	2	3	4	5	
almost					
always	usually	sometimes	rarely	never	N.R.

9. Does your class celebrate traditional holidays with art activities (Halloween, Thanksgiving, Valentine's)?

1	2	3	4	5	
almost					
always	usually	sometimes	rarely	never	N.R.

10. Does your class celebrate cultural holidays with art activities. (Cinco De Mayo, St. Patrick's)

1	2	3	4	5	
almost					
always	usually	sometimes	rarely	never	N.R.

11. Do you attempt to learn the cultural and religious celebrations of all your students?

1                      2                      3                      4                      5  
 almost  
 always      usually      sometimes      rarely      never      N.R.

12. Does your school district or school site provide multicultural materials/handbooks/curriculum guides for holidays?

Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_  
 If yes, do you use the material?

1                      2                      3                      4                      5  
 almost  
 always      usually      sometimes      rarely      never      N.R.

13. Has your administrator discussed school district policies relating to celebration of holidays in the classroom?

1                      2                      3                      4                      5  
 almost  
 always      usually      sometimes      rarely      never      N.R.

14. Would you use a curriculum handbook/guide that provides directions, guidelines and lessons for holidays in the classroom that emphasize values inherent to diverse cultural/religious celebrations and activities rather than symbols of sectarian holidays?

1                      2                      3                      4                      5  
 almost  
 always      usually      sometimes      rarely      never      N.R.

15. What are the approximate number of days per month spent on holiday related activities, lessons, assemblies in your classroom?

None \_\_\_\_\_ more than 10 days \_\_\_\_\_ 5-10 days \_\_\_\_\_ 3-5 days \_\_\_\_\_  
 1-2 days \_\_\_\_\_

16. During December does your class participate in Christmas projects?

yes \_\_\_\_\_ no \_\_\_\_\_

Approximately how many days? \_\_\_\_\_ days.

17. During December does your class participate in Hanukkah projects?  
 yes \_\_\_ no \_\_\_ Approximately how many days? \_\_\_ days.
18. Do you give your students a gift in December?  
 yes \_\_\_ no \_\_\_
19. Do you receive gifts in December from your students?  
 yes \_\_\_ no \_\_\_
20. Does your school have a Christmas program?  
 yes \_\_\_ no \_\_\_  
 Winter program? yes \_\_\_ no \_\_\_
21. Have parents raised questions about Christmas programs in either a positive or negative sense? yes \_\_\_ no \_\_\_  
 If yes please comment briefly. \_\_\_\_\_
- 

22. How many children in your class did not dress up for Halloween? \_\_\_\_\_.
23. Did you dress up for Halloween? yes \_\_\_ no \_\_\_
24. Is it your experience that every child brings a Valentine for every other child in the class?  
 yes \_\_\_ no \_\_\_
25. Do you give Valentines to your class? yes \_\_\_ no \_\_\_
26. Will your class make a Mother's Day card or present?  
 yes \_\_\_ no \_\_\_
27. Can children make more than one card or present?  
 yes \_\_\_ no \_\_\_
28. Will your class make a Father's Day card or present?  
 yes \_\_\_ no \_\_\_



29. Can children make more than one card or present?

yes \_\_\_\_\_ no \_\_\_\_\_

30. Do you decorate your bulletin boards with holiday material?

yes \_\_\_\_\_ no \_\_\_\_\_

Please check your responses to the following questions.

31. What is the origin of Valentine's Day?

- Birds choose mates on Feb. 14 for they know spring is not far away, people should follow suit. \_\_\_\_\_

- Valentine's took the place of a rough and noisy festival marking the time Romans became Christians. \_\_\_\_\_

- Commemorates those spared in the St. Valentine's massacre. \_\_\_\_\_

- Dates back to a Greek myth in which Persephone was felled by Cupid's arrow. \_\_\_\_\_

N.R. \_\_\_\_\_

32. What is the origin of Halloween?

- Began by Celts who lived in the British Isles. They appeased the forces of evil by burning crops and animals. \_\_\_\_\_

- Day set aside by the Roman Catholic Church to honor all saints who had no special day of their own. \_\_\_\_\_

- Day set aside to visit graves and churches and pray that the dead would rest in peace. \_\_\_\_\_

- Commemorates the hearing of the court held by the Lord of Death to expel evil spirits. \_\_\_\_\_

33. Which statement best explains the legalities of religious holiday observances in public schools? N.R. \_\_\_\_\_

- It is the prerogative of the teacher to establish a policy about religious holidays. \_\_\_\_\_

- Public school districts may have religious music at winter programs. \_\_\_\_\_

- Public Schools must remain neutral in matters of religion and show no preference for one religion over another. \_\_\_\_\_

- It is the prerogative of the school district to establish policy about religious holidays in the public schools. \_\_\_\_\_

34. In what way do you accommodate the religious or cultural differences of children who do not observe the holiday being celebrated?

No activity at all is planned for holiday not observed by all \_\_\_\_\_

Alternative activity provided for child \_\_\_\_\_

Child is sent to the library, office or another class \_\_\_\_\_

Child participates in the activity \_\_\_\_\_

Child stays, but does not participate \_\_\_\_\_

35. What do you perceive is the primary effect upon students of minority culture/faith groups when holidays of the majority culture/faith groups are presented?

Increased understanding \_\_\_\_\_

No effect \_\_\_\_\_

Curiosity \_\_\_\_\_

Anger/Resentment \_\_\_\_\_

Acquisition of knowledge \_\_\_\_\_

Isolation \_\_\_\_\_

36. Please rank your feelings about how holidays should be chosen for observance and activities in the classroom by marking your strongest preference 1, second strongest 2 and so forth until you reach your least strongest preference with a ranking of 6.

At teacher's discretion \_\_\_\_\_

At principal's discretion \_\_\_\_\_

By teacher and principal \_\_\_\_\_

Mandate of school district \_\_\_\_\_

Mandate of state department  
of education \_\_\_\_\_

By district and state \_\_\_\_\_

N.R. \_\_\_\_\_

General reactions or comments are welcome and greatly appreciated. Thank you for your participation in this survey!

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APPENDIX D

TRADITIONAL HOLIDAY TIMELINE

Month	Holiday	Seasonal	Value	Unit
September	Labor Day	Harvest	Cooperation	Comm. Helpers
	Grandparent's Day	Autumn/Fall Hay Ride	Self-esteem Self-expression Work ethic Respect for elders	Problem Solving Manners Safety Family Trees
October	Columbus Day	Autum/Fall	Courage	Explorers
	Halloween	(talk about what frightens us)	Fear	Costumes/Masks Literature Folk Tales Handicaps
November	Veteran's Day		Unity	Food Groups
	Thanksgiving	(joy of being a family member)	Defense Joy	Five Senses Friendship Feast
December	Christmas	Winter	Peace	Needs/Wants
	Hanukkah		Giving	Coping/Stress
January	New Years	(resolution of conflict without violence)	New Beginnings	Free to Be Me
	King's Birthday		Resolutions	Strength Bombardment
	Black History		Freedom/Leadership	
February	Groundhog Day	Animal Tracks	Friendship	Animals
	Valentine's Day	(understanding the meaning of love)	Love	Current Events
	Lincoln		Animal perservation	Government
	Washington			Friendship Grams
March	Women's History	Spring (zoo)	Strength	Women
	Arbor Day		Earth Awareness	Trees/growth
	St. Patrick's		Renewal	Literature
	1st Day of Spring		Ecology	Fables/Poetry Chicks

TRADITIONAL HOLIDAY TIMELINE - Continued

Month	Holiday	Seasonal	Value	Unit
April	April Fool's Day Easter		Humor Beauty Renewal	Baseball Riddles Plants Egg art Carnival/Circus
May	May Day Cinco De Mayo Mother's Day (Ladies' Day) Memorial Day		Respect of other cultures  Grief/Sadness	Mapping Dance
June	Flag Day Father's Day (Gentlemens' Day)	Summer	Patriotism throughout the world	Flags Crests Heritage
July	4th of July		Independence Democracy	Fire Safety Constitution
August			Environmental Safety Ecology	Water Safety Energy Conservation

NOTE: Timeline to be expanded to include a more multicultural array of holidays.

SOURCE: Rebecca J. Schwarzer

## APPENDIX E

## MOIR AND AHERN BIBLIOGRAPHY

Columbus Day - What it means to be a discoverer

The King's Fountain by Lloyd Alexander (Dutton, 1971), ages 7-11.  
A book that speaks of the need for personal courage.

Flying to the Moon and Other Strange Places by Michael Collins  
(Farrar, Straus, 1976), ages 10 and up. A former astronaut  
describes his memorable journey into space.

What's the Big Idea Ben Franklin? by Jean Fritz (Coward-McCann,  
1976), ages 7-10. A wonderful look at Ben Franklin's  
ingenuity.

The Glorious Flight by Alice and Martin Provenson (Viking, 1983,  
ages 6-9. This Caldecott Award book reveals the special  
courage involved in the first flight across the English  
Channel.

Halloween - Use this holiday to talk about what frightens us.

Ira Sleep Over by Bernard Waber, (Houghton-Mifflin, 1972), ages 6-  
9. Should Ira risk ridicule and take his teddy bear on his  
first sleep over?

There's a Nightmare in My Closet by Mercer Mayer (Dial, 1968),  
ages 4-8. The story's young hero overcomes his nightmare.

Bridge to Teribithia by Kathryn Paterson (Crowell, 1977), ages 10  
and up. When Jess's best friend Leslie dies she learns a  
powerful lesson in human compassion.

A Taste of Blackberries by Doris Buchanan Smith (Cromwell, 1973),  
ages 8-12. The story of a boy who learns to overcome grief  
and guilt.

Seaward by Susan Cooper (Atheneum, 1983), ages 12 and up. The  
lives of two young people are changed dramatically by their  
parents' death.

Thanksgiving - Time to experience the joy of being a family  
member.

Black is Brown is Tan by Arnold Aloft (Harper and Row, 1973),  
ages 4-8. The story of a biracial family who delight in  
each other.

Everett Anderson's Nine Month Long by Lucille Clifton (Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1974), ages 4-7. Everett Anderson, his mother, and his "almost" dad await the new baby.

Sunshine and Moonlight by Jan Ormerod (Lothrop, Lee and Shepard, 1981, 1982), ages 3-7. Companion book that captures the caring and sharing of a family unit.

Childtime: A Three-Generation Memoir by Eloise Greenfield and Lessle Jones Little (Crowell, 1979), ages 10 and up. A black American grandmother, mother, and daughter share sad times and joys.

Roll of Thunder, Hear My Cry by Mildred Taylor (Dial, 1971), ages 11 and up. The Logan family survives the harshness of racial prejudice.

Upon the Head of the Goat: A Childhood in Hungary 1939-1944 by Aranka Seigal (Farrar, Straus and Girous, 1981), ages 12 and up. The author recalls her childhood in Hungary during World War II when restrictions on Jews tore families apart.

Good Night, Mr. Tom by Michelle Magorian (Harper and Row, 1981, American Edition), ages 12 and up. Willie, an abused child, and Mr. Tom, a 60-year-old recluse, create their own type of family.

Christmas - Time to help children learn to resolve conflict without violence.

The Minstrel and the Mountain by Jan Yolen (World, 1967), ages 6-9. A wandering minstrel stops two foolish kings from waging war.

Bang, Bang You're Dead by Louise Fitzhugh (Harper and Row, 1969), ages 6-9. Peaceful coexistence is the message of this picture book.

Hiroshima No Pika by Toshi Maruki (Lothrop, Lee and Shepard, 1980), ages 8 and up. A grim story of a child who lives through the atomic bomb.

The Pushcart War by Jean Merrill (Scott Foresman, 1964), ages 9-12. A war between truck drivers and pushcart vendors turns into a classic kid's satire.

The Life and Death of Martin Luther King, Jr. by James Haskins (Lothrop, Lee and Shepard, 1977), ages 12 and up. This biography pays particular attention to peaceful methods to achieve racial equality.

Mahatma Gandhi: Father of Non-Violence by Catherine Owens Peare (Hawthorne, 1969), ages 12 and up. This book examines Gandhi's principles of nonviolence.

Valentine's Day - Day to help children to understand the meaning of love.

Amifka by Lucille Clifton (Dutton, 1977), ages 4-7. Amifka's father returns from the army, and Amifka is reassured of both his love for his father and his father's love for him.

Sloppy Kisses by Elizabeth Winthrop (Macmillan, 1980) ages 4-7. Emmy Lou stands up to teasing when she decides she needs her family's show of affection.

Goodbye, My Island by Jean Rogers (Greenwillow, 1983), ages 8-12. An Eskimo girl is forced to leave her beloved Island. This is the story of her last winter there.

Grandpa- and Me by Stephanie Tolan (Scribner's, 1978), ages 9-12. Kerry's special relationship with her grandfather shows the growth of love possible between younger and older people.

Merry Ever After by Joe Lasker (Viking, 1976), ages 7-11. Two weddings on the same day demonstrate how feelings of love are the same despite social class.

The Gift of Sarah Barker by Jane Yolan (Viking, 1981), ages 10-14. Newfound love reveals Shaker life in the 1800s and universal feelings of affection.

This Strange New Feeling by Julius Lester (Dial, 1982), ages 12 and up. Based on actual events, these three stories deal with loving relationships and freedom from slavery.



## APPENDIX F

## ADDITIONAL RESPONDENT COMMENTS

San Bernardino

- "I think what you do really depends upon the ethnic/religious mix of your students."
- "If you leave it to the teacher's discretion, (how holidays should be chosen for observance), over the years each child will be made aware of the diversity within our culture. When mandates begin, freedoms are lost, Every teacher is aware of separation of religion and state and is expected to be a professional when there are decisions to be made."
- "Halloween has been just a reason to dress up in a fun costume and to have a party. Very few children even know why we celebrate it. I don't know either, but its been a day for the children. I think children ought to know about great people in history who have made an impact on society, M. L. King, Abe Lincoln, George Washington. I don't usually put a lot of emphasis on St. Patrick's Day, Valentine's, etc., other than decorating the room."
- "With J. Witness - they make pumpkins not Jack-o-Lanterns, Evergreens, not Christmas tree, rabbits and chicks - not the Easter Bunny etc. This year I have no Jewish children - if I do we spend a couple of days on their holidays - Christmas we deal mostly with secular music and poetry, but no one seems to get upset with the folksong "Mary Had a Baby - state mandates Black History week, that's okay with me too."

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- "Our world is too small to focus only on the particular majority in which you are surrounded. Celebrations are important because they mark our connectedness historically and can serve as a bridge to understanding other cultures with whom we share our planet! Thanks for a chance to voice an opinion!"
- "This is my first year teaching and my entire class is Christian. If I were to have a student of another religion, I would accommodate their religion by providing an alternate activity. I try to keep my materials neutral (i.e., "holiday cards, seasons greetings, bulletin board)."

- "#36 How holidays should be chosen for observance was tough. Depends very much on the situation. Ideally, school district would provide information on all holidays to be celebrated so students could be informed on all holidays."
- "Holidays and holiday activities are part of social studies. Even the second grade text has a unit on holidays as a cultural part of American society. I feel we explain about them culturally. We have few students, if any, that don't celebrate in some way the holidays of the majority - Halloween, Christmas, Valentine's, Easter, St. Patrick's."
- "I hope this means you may be developing a handbook for holidays! I'd love it!!!"
- "Celebration or at least acknowledgement of holidays has much learning value - calendar, seasons, history, myths, respect for others, etc. I believe most teachers are very careful not to show religious preferences. The chief danger is spending too much instructional time on such activities, e.g., practicing two months for a Christmas (winter) program."
- "Holidays is one of our units in kindergarten."
- "The children love celebrating holidays - This teacher loves celebrating holidays."
- "I feel that an alternative curriculum would be greatly appreciated! We need activities to involve all students."
- "We can get too caught up in holidays, to consider the constitutional idea of separation of church and state."
- "Much of this was a waste of time!"
- "Would love to see the results of this survey! Could you post a copy at each school site you distributed surveys? Good luck finishing your Masters!"
- "I feel that holidays should be celebrated in Kindergarten!"
- "Each class is different - so problems arise if problem (parents) exist."
- "Holidays are part of culture."
- "I feel holidays are a part of every culture and would like to see a more widespread observance - maybe a monthly theme or culture? Schoolwide theme with parents, music, etc? Tied to social studies?"

- "Holidays are inherent in our culture and should be considered worthy of inclusion in the curriculum."

- "Children love celebrations of holidays. Holidays are part of the educational experiences and enjoyed by all. It provides excitement and interest in school."

- "I do not consider Black History or Women's History to be holidays. They were simply proclaimed to try to balance the historical perspective. There is also a great deal of difference between religious holidays and democratic personages holidays. All religions should be studied in public schools including ancient myths. Children would realize at some point (maybe as adults) that all religions are essentially the same - story of origins is a common one. Cultural literacy is a goal we should be striving towards. Children should be given info on all holidays as this adds up to shared knowledge - this is teaching shared content.

As to art - my art is art appreciation and knowledge of art - so activity is geared to artist (style, media, subject, etc.) Students can always incorporate holidays into their project if they desire. Any religion, for ex. Jehovah Witness, can participate.

This is the first year that we have not had to have a Winter Program (euphemism for Christmas Program). The upper grades will do a spring program. We have been able to have school instead of spending hours planning. It has been the most wonderful December!! Christmas is wonderful but can be spent in homes with our families. Your project is a thought-provoking one! I do hope that you will share results in some fashion."

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