

2008

## Promoting Higher Academic Achievement Among Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Students

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PROMOTING HIGHER ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT AMONG CULTURALLY  
AND LINGUISTICALLY DIVERSE STUDENTS

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A Project Report

Presented to

The Graduate Faculty

Central Washington University

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In Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree

Master of Education

Master Teacher

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by

Edna Morris

Spring 2008

ABSTRACT

PROMOTING HIGHER ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT AMONG CULTURALLY  
AND LINGUISTICALLY DIVERSE STUDENTS

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by

Edna Morris

Spring 2008

Designing a multicultural literature based library for use in the classroom setting to promote higher academic achievement among culturally and linguistically diverse students was the purpose of this project. Studies supporting the connection between culturally relevant literature and its use in the classroom with academic achievement among culturally and linguistically diverse students were summarized. The result of this research analysis supports the use of culturally relevant literature and activities with young children. The project provides brochures, resources and guides for use of culturally relevant literature with young children.

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## CHAPTER ONE

### INTRODUCTION

#### Background of the Project

“Immigrant stories are an important part of American history because the stories humanize the immigrant experience and provide a pivotal segue through which to delve into United States history”(Lamme, 2004 p. 124). Immigrant children face many challenges when they enter school. These can include coping with small and large changes in their life styles, dealing with their name, learning a new language, relating to previous generations and traditions, as well as maintaining family relationships and visitations to their homelands (Baghan, 2007). All immigrants share experiences that are similar. They have cultural traditions and miss their families and friends. When educators are sensitive to those experiences and challenges, allowance is made for an easier adjustment into their new world. By providing children with literature that brings their experiences to the forefront we ease their adaptation into their new environment (Agosto, 2007).

Since literature is a major source of communication, the integration of multicultural resources and materials into the curriculum can promote a “sense of belonging among immigrant and minority youth, facilitate student learning, foster acceptance of individual differences, and increase student knowledge about the world“(Agosto, 2007 p. 28). It can also provide non-minority children with information about the true nature of our diverse world.

The diversity of our world is immense and true understanding of that diversity can

promote empathy that allows for acceptance of others.

Multicultural literature fosters a more positive self-perception and a more positive view of school. These factors promote a better education. It is the responsibility of educators to make multicultural literature an essential ingredient in every classroom (Mathis, 2001).

### Purpose

The purpose of this project was to develop a mini library for primary grades with culturally relevant literature and curriculum that would enhance, support and deepen students' awareness of the challenges students from culturally diverse backgrounds face in their new world. Literature is a main source of communication for sharing opinions, values and experiences so it is vital that educators provide culturally relevant literature and encourage meaningful discussion in order to understand diverse backgrounds and experiences (Wan, 2006).

This project defines obstacles that many students from diverse backgrounds may encounter as they adjust to the new environment in which they find themselves. The project also defines some culturally relevant literature and means of using that literature to promote discussion in order to develop empathy towards others.

### Significance

By providing culturally significant literature and meaningful discussion, this established library, with primary level materials, provides opportunity for discussion about different cultures and their history. By promoting discussion, educators can

develop awareness and sensitivity towards each other. When individuals understand themselves and others, relationships can be nurtured in a positive manner.

Exposure to culturally relevant literature fosters this understanding (Agosto, 2007). This literature also fosters positive self-perception for the minority students which lead to a positive educational experience thus a better education ( Agosto, 2007). Literature and discussion can assist with students acquiring attitudes and skills that are essential to function in a multicultural society (Boyd, 2004).

### Limitations

The limitations within this project were that the literature and activities chosen were for primary level students. It was designed to address the diversity of students in Tukwila Elementary. At this time, the greatest number of our students are African American, Hispanic, Asian and the curriculum was designed with this population in mind.

This project does not include an assessment of the developed curriculum. Providing adequate time for meaningful discussion that would promote awareness and sensitivity towards self and others was a factor in implementation of this curriculum.

### Definition of Terms

The terms and phrases that are defined are to give both the reader and the author a common vocabulary:

**Culture:** a person's "ethnic, racial, linguistic, religious, gender, disability, political, geographic, age or socio-economic status" (Agosto, 2007 p. 28)

**Cultural Diversity:** differences in race, ethnicity, language, nationality, or religion among various groups within a community, organization, or nation. (Cayne, 1992)

**Cultural competence:** set of behaviors, attitudes and policies that enable educator to work effectively in cross-cultural situations (Cross, 1988) and “the ability to communicate, live, learn and work in cross-cultural situations” ( Multi-Ethnic, 2002, p. 2).

**Culturally relevant literature:** “literature that has accuracy, expertise, respect, purpose and quality of cultures” (Agosto, 2007, p. 30)

**Culturally relevant teachers:** those who utilize students' cultures as a tool for learning (Ladson-Billings, 1995)

**Culturally responsive literacy instruction:** instruction that bridges the gap between the school and the world of the student (Callins, 2004)

**Diversity:** reflection of differences, customs, traditions, and values (Wan, 2006)

**Minority Student:** a student distinguished by its religious, political, racial or other characteristics from the larger group or society. (Cayne, 1992)

In chapter two, extensive research was examined to establish rationale for using culturally relevant literature in the classroom. Strategies for use of the literature was researched and are discussed in chapter two.



## CHAPTER TWO

### REVIEW OF LITERATURE

#### History

It is predicted that in the next 50 years that the number of students whose parents speak a language other than English is expected to outnumber those children whose parents speak English as their primary language (Delit, 1995). This dramatic shift in demographic landscape of the United States is most pronounced in our public schools. According to the National Center of Education Statistics, this diversity constitutes 57% of the public school enrollment in the West. Nationwide this statistic has doubled since 1972 (NCES, 2004). The arrival of immigrants has provided diverse challenges for all school settings as it is the largest influx of immigration in our history and is “unprecedented in its diversity of ethnicity, class and countries of origin” (Baghban, 2007, p. 72). In 2002, “ethnically diverse students represent one out of four Washington state students. That is an increase of 378% since 1971” (Multi-Ethnic, 2002, p. 1).

Immigrant children face many challenges when they enter school. These challenges may include dealing with their name, learning a new language, relating to generations and traditions within their families and cultures, as well as maintaining family relations and visitations to their homelands (Baghan, 2007). They have cultural traditions and miss their families and friends. All of these contribute to the challenge of adapting to a new world in which language and customs are foreign to them. When each person in these children's lives is sensitive to these experiences and challenges, the

children adjust more readily to their new environment (Lamme, 2004).

All students live between the worlds of home and school, but for immigrant children, the disparity between their home and their world at school is vast. It is important for educators to assist in bridging this gap. While the student population is becoming more diverse, the educational staff remains predominately white and from middle class backgrounds. This “cultural and linguistic discrepancy between the children enrolled and the teachers who teach them underscore the need for all educators to develop the skills, knowledge, and most importantly, the attitudes to effectively teach in multicultural and multilingual settings” (Espinosa, 2005, p. 42). “Often the problem is not the cultural and racial diversity of the student population, but the way that educators and community members respond to it that will impact the self-esteem and academic success of students from varied cultural backgrounds” (Phuntsog, 1999, p. 98).

#### Rationale

It is vitally important that educators provide students with curriculum that will positively impact their learning and their self esteem. “Educators must become culturally competent and endorse policies that are culturally responsive” (Ford, 2007, p. 53). Educators play such a critical role in promoting an environment in which learning is fostered. “Educators' attitudes play a vital role either in empowering or disabling learning for students from culturally diverse backgrounds. The effectiveness of culturally responsive classroom practices depends upon the way the majority relationships are perceived at societal, community and school levels” (Phuntsog, 1999, p. 109).

“Educators must be culturally competent in the use of curriculum and effective teaching and learning strategies to ensure the academic success for *all* students” (Multi-

Ethnic, 2002, p. 2).

“From all indicators, many ethnically diverse and low socio-economic students are academically behind” (Multi-Ethnic, 2002, p. 3). It is noted that “children from different cultures, who, when they enter school speak little or no English, are highly vulnerable to under-achievement” (Espinosa, 2005, p. 42). “Culturally responsive educators recognize that students who do not feel valued in school settings are likely to develop lower self-esteem, which alienates them further from school learning” (Phuntsog, 1999, p. 104). All students “have prior experiences that frame their world-view; learn from childbirth and are lifelong learners; can academically achieve at high levels when they are appropriately taught; and are entitled to learn in a multicultural context” (Multi-Ethnic, 2005, p. 2). Knowing this, education needs to be meaningful and responsive to students' needs. As educators, it is imperative that we build a knowledge base and engage students in self-reflective activities to build cultural awareness. “Building a cultural base and engaging in self-reflective activity are considered crucial steps for teachers to develop learning activities designed to establish strong connections with students' home cultures” (Phuntsog, 1999, p. 106). When a teacher modifies classroom instruction so that the environment and those included in that environment respond positively to the student's home culture, it is defined as culturally responsive (Phunstog, 1999). Being culturally responsive in teaching facilitates the transfer of school taught knowledge to real life situations. It also allows for students to be exposed to knowledge of other individuals and other cultures (Neuman, 1994).

Keating (2004, p. 99) reinforced that one way to bring about an “awareness of others is through the focus of people's commonalities to begin discussion about

differences". When doing so, it is important to keep in mind that commonalities are "not the sameness, not as identical experiences, histories, ideas, beliefs or traits; instead they are defined as complex points of connections that enable us to negotiate among sameness, similarity and differences" (Clarke, 2005, p. 154). By studying literature, it "allows us to see that people of different cultures are more similar than different from each other" (Wan, 2006, p. 141) By sharing books with children opportunities are provided to "make explicit and to call into question the traditional, prevailing beliefs and views people hold of themselves and others" (Wan, 2006, p. 142). This allows for discussion and dialog through which a community with acceptance and tolerance can be established. By discussing books and the similarities and the differences in customs and situations, support for students is provided in "seeing that there is a range of customs and beliefs within any culture and that people from many cultures share similar customs and beliefs" (Herrell, 2006, p. 102). "Comparison and celebration of a variety of approaches and beliefs helps to build a cohesive community in the classroom" (Herrell, 2006, p. 104). As educators, "we owe it to our students to show them that no matter what their particular background might be, we respect and honor each and every child" (Agosto, 2007, p. 33).

An advocacy on behalf of students from minority backgrounds emphasizes the critical issue of making them feel included and accepted. Wham, Barnhart, and Cok (1996, p. 142) found that children in "Kindergarten, second and fourth grades, who were exposed to multicultural storybook readings in addition to school and home reading programs, seemed to develop the most positive attitudes towards differences".

Education needs to be meaningful and responsive to students' needs. With

integration of multicultural resources and materials into the school curriculum, educators can “promote a sense of belonging among immigrant and minority youth. This sense of belonging, facilitates student learning, fosters acceptance of individual differences and increases student knowledge of the world” (Agosto, 2007, p. 28). Educators need to use culturally and linguistically responsive and appropriate literature in order to create a knowledge base (Garcia, 2005). As educators is it imperative that we build that knowledge base and engage students in self-reflective activities to build cultural awareness. The literacy experience provided for children should encourage understanding of self and encourage better relationships with others (Clarke, 2005).

#### Use of Literature

Literature is a main source of communication which provides a vehicle for meaningful dialog for learning about other cultures and ethnicity. Since literature is important for sharing opinions, values and experiences, it is vital that educators provide culturally relevant literature and meaningful discussion to encourage understanding of diverse backgrounds and experiences. “The most important way for teachers to encourage insightful reading of multicultural literature is to model that behavior. They need to keep books about other cultures in the classroom and show that they value such literature” (Mathis, 2001, p. 163). By reading multicultural books to children, teachers can “significantly improve children's tolerance for differences and development of positive attitudes towards diverse cultures” (Wan, 2006, p. 142). When individuals understand themselves and others, relationships and interactions can be nurtured in a positive manner. Exposure to multicultural literature fosters this understanding. It also fosters positive self-perception for the minority students which lead to an improved

educational experience. Through literature, we share “personal aspects of one's culture and the ways in which ethnicity, geographic regions, religions, or other cultural groups are identified” (Wan, 2006, p. 141). By studying literature, we are allowed to “see that people of different cultures are more similar than different from each other” (Wan, 2006, p. 141). Multicultural storybooks used appropriately can enhance children's self-esteem and allow them to understand how and why each “culture behaves, believes or does certain things” (Wan, 2006, p. 142). Again, as educators we need to assist children in discovering the similarities and embrace the differences within our society.

“Educators insights and understandings of different ethnic groups have been greatly enhanced by exploring the richly authentic multicultural literature for children” (Wan, 2006, p. 142). “When teachers include books about the negotiation of another culture in the curriculum, children learn through reading that stories can be about people like them, that stories of their experiences are worthy of being in a book, and that other children have felt that way they do” (Baghban, 2007, p. 71). “Picture books can help with children's acculturation to the United States,...but it is important that the books focus on the day to day experiences of immigrant children and discuss important issues of learning how to live in a new world” (Baghban, 2007, p. 73). Through literature, we share “personal aspects of one's culture and the ways in which ethnicity, geographic regions, religions, or other cultural groups are identified” (Baghban, 2007, p. 77). As educators create libraries that provide culturally relevant literature for students to experience, they also enhance their understanding of ethnic groups (Baghban, 2007).

“Learning happens in social interactions and activities that are inherently culture-bound. Curricular materials relevant to the social and cultural experiences of children

engage interest and generate the enthusiasm to keep learning” (Baghban, 2007, p. 78). When sharing these books with children it is important to maintain meaningful discussions (Perini, 2002). Perini stresses the potential for multicultural children's books to support diversity curriculum and to raise to a conscious level cultural issues that are ignored in schools (Perini, 2002). By sharing children's books with students, one can provide opportunities to make students aware of and to provide opportunities for discussion of “traditional, prevailing beliefs and views people hold of themselves and of others” (Wan, 2006, p. 142). “The use of bilingual books in the classroom encourages students to value other cultures and languages” (Herrell, 2006, p. 164) “Including multicultural resources in the library fosters appreciation of other cultures and other ways of life among students from the majority culture” (Agosto, 2007, p. 29).

When educators include books of other cultures in the curriculum, children learn that stories can “be about people like them, that stories of the experiences are worthy of being in a book and that other children have felt the way they do” (Baghban, 2007, p. 76). “Multicultural storybooks are used to enhance children's self esteem, and to help them understand why and how each culture behaves, believes or does certain things” (Wan, 2006, p. 142). When choosing literature to validate our children, it is critical to choose literature in which the illustrations reinforce the text (Rust, 2004). African American authors emphasize that “it is critical that children of color see themselves doing things all children do in order to validate their existence” (Rust, 2004, p. 59). The literature can validate a child's life experiences. Literature can also buffer for alienation and discrimination. Educators need to encourage language and literacy development in a culturally responsive way and promote collaboration among students (Neuman, 1994).

It is vitally important for educators to “prepare young people to live in today's diverse global community with each other in harmony” (Wan, 2006, p. 141). A teacher's role in choosing appropriate literature, guiding discussion and promoting critical thinking when discussing this literature's content needs to be deliberate and informed. It is imperative that educators have insight into and an understanding of different ethnic groups. To do so, educators can discover the “richly authentic multicultural literature for children” (Mathis, 2001, p. 156). A multicultural library “represents an advocacy on behalf of students from minority backgrounds by making them feel included in classroom and school environments” (Agosto, 2007, p. 29). Using classroom materials that are relevant to social and cultural experiences of the children in one's classroom, teachers can generate interest and meaning to the learning that is occurring. When bilingual books are incorporated into the curriculum, they support the validation of the student's home language and allow them to use their knowledge of the home language to support their understanding of the text (Herrell, 2006). The use of bilingual books also encourages students to value other cultures and languages as well as validating bilingual student's home languages within the classroom (Herrell, 2006).

Discussion of the literature provides opportunities for students to move from comprehending to bringing personal feelings and issues to a more conscious level. Literature is a vehicle for not only teaching, but for providing a way of understanding and thinking about the world (Silver, 2001). The teacher plays a major role in facilitating these discussions so that the discussions are effective and responsive to each student's life and knowledge base. Educators must create an environment that is accepting and tolerant of diversity. It is important that educators provide an environment in which students feel



safe to hold discussions.

Studies have shown that “reading multicultural storybooks to children does significantly improve children's tolerance for differences and other children” (Wan, 2006, p. 141). When planning activities around literature, educators need to facilitate critical thinking and create lessons that have the potential to develop greater tolerance and understanding of others (Clarke, 2005). When educational settings fail to acknowledge cultural differences, instruction can be ineffective (Cifuentes, 2006). So it should be with care and intentional planning that educators use culturally relevant literature to promote cultural understanding and acceptance. Readers are empowered by reading stories. When children read stories with children's experiences of navigating life, it empowers not only immigrant children, but all children (Baghban, 2007). Instructional practices that address issues of culture and language create the greatest promise for helping culturally and linguistically diverse learners in becoming successful readers (Beaulieu, 2002).

Books can have the “ability to help us overcome insularity and they can provide cultural enrichment by teaching us about cultures and settings that are different from our own” (Loertscher, 2007, p. 51). Culturally relevant literature can validate an individual's life experiences and can buffer the feelings of alienation and discrimination. By reading multicultural storybooks to children the tolerance for differences and development of positive attitudes towards our diverse culture has been shown to significantly increase (Mathis, 2001). Multicultural literature tends to foster more positive view of self and of school which in turn allows for better education. These studies also emphasize the responsibility place on educators to make multicultural education an essential ingredient of every classroom (Mathis, 2001).

Maintaining a library that has books which focus on common experiences such as making the transition, making the connection and becoming assimilated into American culture assists in the validation of individuals and their cultural backgrounds. Perini (2002) has provided information on choosing contemporary multicultural children's books which provide knowledge so as to be comfortable presenting books in a culturally conscious manner. It is apparent that if children read books about children's life experiences that might differ from their own, they develop an understanding of children from other cultures. Through the sharing of these stories, children learn about diverse cultures and the history of those cultures (Ungar, 1995).

“To be able to read a story empowers the reader. To be able to read a story with examples of children who navigate a new life empowers immigrant children” (Baghab, 2007, p. 78). In the book *Fifty Strategies for Teaching English Language Learners* emphasis is noted for the need to validate the students' home languages at the same time that the understanding of text is supported. This can be done by providing text in students' native languages as well as in English. This also encourages students to value other cultures and languages as well as validate each and every student (Herrel, 2006). “The use of bilingual books and labels in the classroom encourages students to value other cultures and languages” (Herrell, 2006, p. 104).

Educators need to provide classrooms in which it is safe to communicate diverse opinions and behaviors (Paramesaran, 2007). By providing a multicultural library, educators represent and advocate on behalf of students from minority backgrounds. They do this by making them feel included in classroom and school environments. When educators do this we enrich every student's life and provide each student with wisdom to

live in today's diverse global community. Through literature and discussions in a culturally relevant setting, non-minority can also be taught the true nature of our diverse world (Agosto, 2007).

#### Summary

In conclusion, with the dramatic increase in immigration has come a great need for immigrant-sensitive curriculum. For school-age immigrant children, being able to express themselves and make friends is the key to their adjustment to their new lives and new environment (Ungar, 1995). Educators need to be intentional in their facilitation of adjustment of curriculum and work towards fostering students' understanding of each other. The challenge for today's teachers is to include “elements of the curricula that will optimize learning for students while maintaining their cultural identity” (Billings, 1995. p. 162).

## CHAPTER THREE

### PROCEDURES OF THE STUDY

#### Background

The purpose of this project was to develop a mini-library with culturally relevant literature and curriculum for primary grades that would enhance, support and deepen students' awareness of challenges students from culturally diverse backgrounds face in their environment.

It is vitally important for educators to “prepare youngsters to live in today's diverse, global community with each other in harmony” (Wan, 2006, p. 141). To do so in today's ethnically diverse classrooms, it is essential that books reflect students' cultural backgrounds (Shiohita, 1997). A multicultural library “represents an advocacy on behalf of students from minority backgrounds by making them feel included in classroom and school environments” (Agosto, 2007, p. 28). By sharing culturally relevant literature with students, educators provide opportunities to encourage students to discuss the “traditional, prevailing beliefs and views people hold of themselves and others” (Wan, 2006, p. 141). By sharing culturally relevant literature, we provide insight into and understanding of different ethnic groups (Mathis, 2001) which fosters students' learning (Agosto, 2007).

This bibliography and the activities for discussion provide a guide for educators who want to choose culturally responsive literature for primary aged students. It is a resource for educators to use when choosing culturally responsive literature for classroom use. The activities are to be used to promote discussion and facilitate understanding of

cultures through the literature shared with students.

### Procedures

Current relevant literature research which supported promoting cultural awareness, provided information necessary to create the book lists, and some activities to promote discussion. After reviewing the relevant literature, I compiled the information and found it supports the use of culturally relevant literature to improve students' learning.

In order to find literature that was culturally relevant, I visited Central Washington University's library, the Seattle Public Library, Renton Library and Tukwila Elementary Library. Children's librarians at the Seattle Public Library and Tukwila Elementary were consulted with at length. The English Language Learning teacher at Tukwila Elementary was also interviewed. We spoke about appropriate literature and activities that would promote cultural awareness and understanding. Authors were researched and books were reviewed to find literature that second graders could relate to, were culturally relevant and that would promote discussion. Resources were found that provided activities to promote discussion and enable the primary level students to look at cultures, compare and to find similarities and promote an awareness that would provide understanding. Generic activities that could be used with a variety of books, not just single text, were also researched.

A mini-library was created with literature that was relevant to social and cultural experiences of children in the primary grades at Tukwila Elementary. The literature was used to generate interest and understanding towards other cultures. Literature that was

written by authors who are knowledgeable about the subject matter was chosen. The criteria considered were that the book be historically correct and portray people and experiences in a positive manner because if students see people and characters similar to themselves in text, “the students are more likely to feel a vital part of the school culture which promotes success academically and socially” (Agosto, 2007, p. 29).

By using this literature for discussion, educators can enhance children's self esteem and promote understanding about why and how each culture does things (Wan, 2006). Activities were included to promote discussion among the students. The intent of the activities is to promote dialog and provide opportunities for students to analyze people and traditions. Discussion can provide an opportunity for students to move from “comprehending to bringing personal feelings and issues to a more conscious level” (Silver, 2001, p. 556). “Educators need to create activities that facilitate critical thinking and have the potential to develop greater tolerance and understanding of others” (Clarke, 2005, p. 151).

Brochures of the three most predominate ethnic groups in the second grades at Tukwila Elementary were created as well as a generic brochure and placed within the mini library that is housed in one of the second grades and also given to each teacher of grade two. The brochures included book lists and some activities that could be used with the literature.

Recognizing that “literature is vehicle for not only teaching, but for providing understanding and thinking about the world” (Silver, 2001, p. 557), educators play a major role in facilitating discussion so that the discussions are effective and responsive to the students' lives and knowledge base.

## CHAPTER FOUR

### RESULTS OF THE STUDY

This project was created to assist educators of primary level students in choosing culturally relevant literature. The literature would be used as an advocacy for the students to provide discussion about various cultures. The literature and activities provide an avenue for students to encourage them to feel more comfortable about themselves and others in the school setting as well as the world. Literature and discussion can all lead to improved academic achievement (Agosto, 2007).

After the research was compiled, literature from culturally competent authors was chosen. The literature that was grade level appropriate for the primary level was purchased and put into a mini library that was accessible to all second grades in Tukwila Elementary. Wan (2006, p. 141) has created a list of criteria to consider when choosing literature that is appropriate to receive the desired results – those of “preparing students to live in today's diverse global community” and increasing learning.

The criteria given by Wan (2006) concluded that literature should:

- have literary merit
- be age appropriate
- create possibilities for class discussions
- have enough cultural elements to enable students to obtain new cultural knowledge and increase understanding
- teach students to appreciate and accept cultures
- contain illustrations that reflect authentic portrayals of features of people and details of cultures

Book lists were created for the three most predominate ethnic groups in the second grade at Tukwila Elementary which are Hispanic, African and Asian. Included

with these lists of available books were other culturally relevant literature and some activities that would provide opportunities for meaningful dialogue about cultures so as to deepen understanding of the world in which they live. A major focus is to compare cultures, traditions, stories and find similarities. The brochures were placed in the library and also given to each of the grade two teachers at Tukwila Elementary.

One brochure is generic in that it has literature that crosses cultures, has on-line resources and a resource list of books with a variety of cultural activities. It contains activities that focus on role reversals so that students can be aware that all people are different and that generalities about stereotypical roles are not correct conclusions to foster.

The other three brochures focus on Hispanic, African American and Asian literature and activities. Each one contains a book list with literature that is conducive to class discussion. They each have a list of well respected authors and on line references. Each brochure includes activities to go with some of the literature to promote awareness and understanding of specific ethnic groups and people.



## Cultural Diversity

Clifton, Lucille

**The Lucky Stone**

Crew, Donald

**Bigmamas**

Keats, Ezra

**Peter's Chair**

Levine, Ellen

**I Hate English**

Munsch, Rober

**The Paper Bag Princess**

Polaaco, Patricia

**Just Plain Fancy**

Sakai, Kimiko

**SachikoMeans Happiness**

Speir, Peter

**People**

### Multicultural Resources:

*American Indian Reference Books for Children and Young Adults* by Barbar J. Kulpers (Libraries Unlimited, Inc.)

*Big Multicultural Tales* (Scholastic)

*Celebrating Diversity: A Multicultural Resource* by Luther B. Clegg, Etta Miller and William Vandehoof, Jr. (Delmar Publisher, 1995).

*Connecting Cultures and Literature* (Teacher Created Materials, 1992)

*Hispanic Books Children's Catalog* (Hispanic Books Distributors and Publishers).

*Kaleidoscope: A Multicultural Booklist for Grades K-8*, edited by Rudine Sims Bishop and the Multicultural Booklist Committee (NCTE).

*Literature Based Multicultural Activities - an Integrated Approach* by Mary Spann (Scholastic, 1992)

*Multicultural Language Activities for Young Children* by Dr. Dennis Kear (Good Apple, 1993)

*Multicultural Review* (Greenwork Publishing Group).

*Multicultural Teaching* by Pamela Tiedt and Iris Tiedt (Allyn and Bacon, 1990).

*Planning and Organizing for Multicultural Instruction* (Addison-Wesley, 1983).

*Read It Again!* by Liz Rothlein (Goodyear Books, 1993)

*The Horn Book Guide* (The Horn Book, Inc.)

*Through Indian Eyes: The Native Experience in Books for Children* by Beverly Slapin and Doris Seale (Libraries Unlimited, Inc., 1991).

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## African American Interest

Angelou, Maya

My Painted House, My Friendly Chicken, and Me

Boydston, Tonya

The Champ

Burns Knight, Kelly

Africa is Not a Country

Cameron, Ann

The Stories Huey Tells

More Stories Huey Tells

Julian, Dream Doctor

The Stories Julian Tells

More Stories Julian Tells

Carter, Don

Heaven's All-Star Jazz Band

Clifton, Lucille

Everett Anderson's GoodBye

Cunnane, Kelly

For You Are a Kenyan Child

Diakite, Penda

I Lost My Tooth in Africa

Mama Panya's Pancakes: A Village Tale from Kenya

English

Nadia's Hands

Feelings, Muriel

Jambo Mean Hello: Swahili Alphabet Book

Ford, Juwanda

Ringgold, Faith –

Aunt Harriet's Underground Railroad in the Sky

My Dream of Martin Luther King

Talking to Faith Ringgold

Tar Beach

29

Schroeder, Alan

Satchmo's Blues

Tarpley, Natasha

Joe-Joe's First Flight

Winter, Jeanette

Follow the Drinking Gourd

Yarbrough, Camille

Cornrows

### Multicultural Resources:

*American Indian Reference Books for Children and Young Adults* by Barbar J. Kulpers (Libraries Unlimited, Inc.)

*Big Multicultural Tales* (Scholastic)

*Celebrating Diversity: A Multicultural Resource* by Luther B. Clegg, Etta Miller and William Vandehoof, Jr. (Delmar Publisher, 1995).

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*Hispanic Books Children's Catalog* (Hispanic Books Distributors and Publishers).

*Kaleidoscope: A Multicultural Booklist for Grades K-8*, edited by Rudine Sims Bishop and the Multicultural Booklist Committee (NCTE).

*Literature Based Multicultural Activities - an Integrated Approach* by Mary Spann (Scholastic, 1992)

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*Multicultural Review* (Greenwork Publishing Group).

*Multicultural Teaching* by Pamela Tiedt and Iris Tiedt (Allyn and Bacon, 1990).

*Planning and Organizing for Multicultural Instruction* (Addison-Wesley, 1983).

*Read It Again!* by Liz Rothlein (Goodyear Books, 1993)

*The Horn Book Guide* (The Horn Book, Inc.)

*Through Indian Eyes: The Native Experience in Books for Children* by Beverly Slapin and Doris Seale (Libraries Unlimited, Inc., 1991).



**Together for Kwanzaa**

Greenfield, Eloise

**Me and Nessie**

Hamilton, Virginia

**The People Could Fly: The Picture Book**

Herron, Carolivia

**Nappy Hair**

Hopkinson, Deborah

**Sweet Clara and the Freedom Quilt****John Henry: An American Legend**

Keats, Ezra Jack

**For You Are a Kenyan Child**

Kroll, Virginia

**Masai and I**

McKissack, Patricia

**Mirandy and Brother Wind****Flossie and the Fox**

Musgrove, Margaret

**Ashanti to Zulu: African Traditions**

Onyefulu, Ifeoma

**A if For Africa****Emeka's Gift**

## African American:

Battle-Lavert, Gwendolyn  
 Flournay, Valerie  
 Galbraith, Kathryn  
 Grimes, Nikki  
 Havill, Juanita  
 Hooks, William  
 Howard, Elizabeth  
 Jackson, Isaac  
 Keats, Ezra Jack  
 Medearis, Angela

















## Hispanic Interest

Aardema, Verna

Corregueta and the Coyote

Ada, Alma Flor

The Lizard and the Sun

Alvarez, Julia

The Secret Footprints

Atkinson, Mary

Maria Teresa

Brown, Tricia

Hello Amigos

Head, Judith

Mud Soup

Katz, Karen

The Color of Us

Kruell, Kathleen

Harvesting Hope: The Story of

Cesar Chavez

Marzollo, Jean

Soccer Sam

Mora, Pat

Tomas and the Library Lady

Stanek, Muriel

I Speak English For My Mom

Podwal, Mark

A Sweet Year

Torres, Arthur

Abuela

Winter, Jonah

Diego

Vidal, Beatriz

Federico and the Magi's Gift

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## Multicultural Resources:

*American Indian Reference Books for Children and Young Adults* by Barbar J. Kulpers (Libraries Unlimited, Inc.)

*Big Multicultural Tales* (Scholastic)

*Celebrating Diversity: A Multicultural Resource* by Luther B. Clegg, Etta Miller and William Vandehoof, Jr. (Delmar Publisher, 1995).

*Connecting Cultures and Literature* (Teacher Created Materials, 1992)

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*The Horn Book Guide* (The Horn Book, Inc.)

*Through Indian Eyes: The Native Experience in Books for Children* by Beverly Slapin and Doris Seale (Libraries Unlimited, Inc., 1991).







## Asian Interest

Ashley, Bernard

Oversticks

Benrens, June

Gung Hay Fat Choy

Choi, Yangsook

The Name Jar

DEMI

Happy New Year! Chinese New Year!

Kites

Heo, Yumi

One Afternoon

Lin, Grace

Dim Sum for Everyone!

Fortune Cookies Fortunes

Kite Flying

Osbourne, Mary Pope

Day of the Dragon-King

Tigers at Twilight

Pittman, Helena Clare

A Grain of Rice

Recorvitz,

My Name is Yoon

Stuart, Michelle

Angel Child, Dragon Child

Tompert, Ann

Grandfather Tang's Story

Wong

Apple Pie, Fourth of July

Yang, Belle

Hannah is My Name

Yashima, Taro

Crowboy

Baker, Keith

The Magic Fan

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## Recognized Authors

Asian:

Chinn, Karen

Hamanaka, Sheila

Mahy, Magaret

Mills, Claudia

Pinkney, Brian

Stamm, Claus

Wallace, Ian

## Multicultural Resources:

*American Indian Reference Books for Children and Young Adults* by Barbar J. Kulpers (Libraries Unlimited, Inc.)

*Big Multicultural Tales* (Scholastic)

*Celebrating Diversity: A Multicultural Resource* by Luther B. Clegg, Etta Miller and William Vandehoof, Jr. (Delmar Publisher, 1995).

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*Planning and Organizing for Multicultural Instruction* (Addison-Wesley, 1983).

*Read It Again!* by Liz Rothlein (Goodyear Books, 1993)

*The Horn Book Guide* (The Horn Book, Inc.)

*Through Indian Eyes: The Native Experience in Books for Children* by Beverly Slapin and Doris Seale (Libraries Unlimited, Inc., 1991).













## CHAPTER FIVE

### SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATIONS

#### Summary

The purpose of this project was to develop a mini-library for primary grades with culturally relevant literature and curriculum that would enhance, support and deepen students' awareness of the challenges students from culturally diverse backgrounds face in their environment. This project was developed using current research supporting the idea that literature is a major means of communication and when integrated into the curriculum, it can promote a “sense of belonging among immigrant and minority youth” (Agosto, 2007, p. 28). Research was compiled and summarized and conclusions were drawn. Brochures listing culturally relevant literature and some activities to promote discussion were included. The goal of these were to provide educators with tools to empower all students, not just those with culturally diverse backgrounds, with knowledge of the diversity of the world and a better understanding and wisdom about today's diverse community.

Sources for this project included many research articles, books, studies and literature sources from culturally aware authors as well as culturally relevant literature. This information supported the concept that when providing culturally responsive instruction, educators need to become culturally relevant teachers and use responsive literacy instruction to foster student learning. In addition to the research, a mini-library was created with culturally, age appropriate literature for the grade two teachers at Tukwila Elementary. Brochures listing the books within the mini-library, as well as

additional culturally relevant literature, are provided with the library. This project was designed to be a resource for primary educators to create access to literature that was age-appropriate. Updating and expanding the lists and activities would be a top priority so as to include current literature and literature that is relevant to ethnic backgrounds of the students in the second grades in Tukwila Elementary.

### Recommendations

Recommendations would be that educators consider literature for use in their classroom that reflects the student's cultural background within their school. By providing a multicultural library, educators represent and advocate on behalf of students from minority backgrounds by making them feel included in classroom and school environments. When educators do this, they enrich every student's life and provide all students with the knowledge and wisdom to live in today's diverse global community. Through literature and discussion in a culturally relevant setting, non-minority students can also be taught the true nature of our diverse world (Agosto, 2007). "Educators' insights and understanding of different ethnic groups have been greatly enhanced by exploring the richly authentic multicultural literature for children" (Mathis, 2001, p. 156).

When this type of literature and class discussion is utilized, students seem more interested in each other's backgrounds, more comfortable sharing about their families and backgrounds and are more accepting of individual differences.

It should be with care and intentional planning that educator's use culturally appropriate literature to enhance classroom knowledge and awareness. The brochures can act as springboard to assist educators who want to develop culturally embracing classroom environments.

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