

INCREASING STUDENTS' PERCEPTIONS OF BEING VALUED THROUGH
THE STUDY OF MULTICULTURAL LITERATURE AND
ANALYSIS OF DIVERSITY RELATED ISSUES IN
A REGULAR LEVEL SOPHOMORE ENGLISH CLASS

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Abstract

The action research project report was created to remedy a lack of multicultural literature within the regular level sophomore English class and to assist regular level sophomore students' connection to their reading. The teacher-researcher also examined her students' own ethnic backgrounds, cultures, religions, economic status, gender, and/or sexual orientation in order to reinforce the students' abilities to feel comfortable; like they mattered in class. A total of 82 students participated in the study between August 2012 and January 2013.

The teacher-researcher believed that the students did not feel connected to what they were reading in English class and was concerned that they might feel disconnected from classmates and teachers due to the perceptions regarding their backgrounds, cultures, religions, economic status, gender, and/or sexual orientation. The teacher-researcher used three tools to document evidence: a teacher survey (n=18), a parent survey (n=52), and a student survey (pren=82/postn=81). The teacher-researcher found that in English classes, 85% of students did not feel judged by peers during English while 75% did not feel judged by peers in other classes. Students felt judged by all of their teachers based on their ethnic backgrounds, race, culture, gender, or, religious beliefs, gender, or sexual orientation, students feel judged about the same by all teachers. Students felt that teachers did not take the time to get to know them on a more individual basis (n=53, 68%). Lastly, students wanted to be recognized by their gender, ethnic backgrounds, and cultural backgrounds by their teachers.

The interventions and strategies were created by more pieces of literature into the curriculum ("By Any Other Name," "Miss Rosie," ("Lamb to the Slaughter," "Ex-Basketball Player," "Sierra Leone," A Long Way Gone, and "Gangsta Girl."); changing the emphasis on pieces that were already in the curriculum "The Pedestrian," Twelve Angry Men, and Inherit the Wind; adding videos and clips from MTV or YouTube (A Thin Line-dealt with sexting as an issue, A Student, a School and a Case That Made History: Bullied- a video that discussed bullying connected to sexual orientation, Hotel Rwanda-about genocide, "Diamonds from Sierra Leone"-music video by Kanye West); and creating new worksheets/graphic organizers connected to the literature. The researcher also created journal reflections, blog topics (which was an addition to the curriculum), created a new research speech, created a new speech connect with A Long Way Gone; small group activities, role playing, and large group discussion. Connected to all of the above, key topics about diversity were stressed.

Based on the post data survey completed by the students of the teacher-researcher, more students in the class felt that the teacher-researcher recognized them as being more than just students. The students enjoyed and appreciated the multicultural literature that was incorporated in the class and gained confidence when working in small groups and when it came to voicing their own opinions. Ultimately, the conclusion drawn by the teacher-researcher was the inclusion of more multicultural literature along with more discussion about diversity allows students to feel more connected to what they were reading, to each other, and to the teacher-researcher.

Chapter 1

Problem Statement and Context

General Statement of the Problem

There was a lack of multicultural literature studied within the regular level sophomore English class. Combined with this lack, the regular level sophomore student failed to feel a connection to what he/she was reading. This lack of awareness was also due to the lack of engagement in regards to the students own ethnic backgrounds, culture, religion, economic status, gender, and/or sexual orientation, which reinforced the students' abilities to feel comfortable and like they mattered in class. In order to analyze the problem, three tools of measure were administered. One tool was a survey for teacher of English at the teacher researcher's school. The second tool was a parent survey given to the parents of the sophomores enrolled in the research teacher's English 202 classes. The last tool was a survey administered to the students enrolled in the English 202 classes taught by the teacher researcher during the first semester of the 2012-2013 school year.

Immediate Context of the Problem

The teacher researcher that contributed to this action-research project teaches high school English/speech/and drama and was in her 31st year of teaching. Detailed information about her school and district can be seen in the sections below. Unless noted, the following information was retrieved from the *Illinois Report Card, 2011*.

The public high school, grades 9th -12th, was located in the northwest suburbs of Chicago, Illinois. It was located close to Interstate Route 53, I-90, and I-290. The school was also close to Woodfield Mall, Schaumburg Prairie Centre for the Arts, O'Hare International Airport, Allstate Arena, and the Sears Centre. The students came from four towns.

The population of the school was 2,424, during the 2010-2011 school year. The number of male students enrolled was 1253, and the number of female students enrolled was 1123. The district itself had 12,507 students and the state had 2,074,806 high school level students. The majority of the students was Caucasian (61%), with a population that was somewhat diverse. See the specific ethnic breakdown in Table 1 for a specific breakdown of ethnicity.

Table 1

Racial/Ethnic Background by Percentage

	Caucasian	African American	Hispanic	Asian	Two or more Races
School	61.1	4.3	10.7	20.9	2.9
District	59.5	6.0	17.3	14.5	2.6
State	23.0	18.3	23.0	4.1	2.8

Of the student body, 19.5 % came from lower-level income homes as compared to 26.2% district wide or 48.1% across the state. Continuing, only 3.1 % of the study body was considered to be limited in English proficiency. District English proficiency was 3.9% while the state is 8.8%. The percentage of the students within the school with IEPs was 11.1%, the district was 11.7%, and the state was 14.0%. Attendance rate was 96.1% for the school, 95.3% for the district, and 94.0% for the state. Chronic truancy was low at 0.9% as compared to 2.3% district wide and 3.2% across the state. The school's drop-out rate was also low (0.7%) when compared to the district (1.1%) and (2.7%) for the state. Gender wise, no specific breakdown was provided either about the school or the district itself. The mobility rate was 5.4% for the school, 6.3% for the district, and 12.8% for the state. The percentage of the student within the school with IEPs was 11.1%, 11.7% within the district, and 14.0% across the state.

The district had 805 high school teachers while the state had 128,262 teachers. There were 134 teachers within the specific school itself. Analyzing the make-up of the faculty, 68 of the teachers were male and 66 were female for a school of 134 teachers. According to the district, 48.6% of the teachers were male and 51.4% were female. When looking at the state, 23.1% of the teachers in the state were male and 75.9% were female. District wide, the teacher-to-student ratio is 18:1, similar to 18:9 for the state. The average class size was 23.2 within the school, 21.7 within the district, and 19.2 for the state.

The majority of the faculty was Caucasian (89.4%), as seen in Table 2 found below. No data was available about the specific racial and ethnic backgrounds about the teachers at the school.

Table 2

Racial/Ethnic Background by Percentage

	Caucasian	African American	Hispanic	Asian
District	89.4	1.7	5.2	3.0
State	82.4	6.1	5.0	1.2

The average teaching experience in years was 14.1% in district and 13.2% state. In district, 20.6% of the teachers had their bachelor's degree while 79.4% had their master's degree and/or above. Compared to the state, only 39.5% of the teachers had their bachelor's degree and 60.4% had their master's degree and/or above. The average teacher salary according to the district was \$97,127, well above state average salary of \$64,978. The student-to-teacher ratio in the district was 18.1 students to 12.9 certified staff. No teacher data was available for the school.

The average class size was 23.2 students for the school, 21.7 for the district, and 19.2 for the state.

In order to graduate a student had to complete 18 academic units of credit. Those credits included the following: a physical education course for each semester of attendance (or equivalent); successfully complete a minimum of: one unit of American History; one unit of social science survey or 1/2 unit of economics and 1/2 unit of government; three units of mathematics, one of the three required units must be Algebra I, one unit must include geometry content, and at least one course must be at the 300-level or higher; two units of science; one unit of world language, art, music or vocational education; four units of English; two years of writing-intensive courses, one of which must be English and the other of which may be English or any other subject. Students must also take one-half unit of consumer education (or equivalent); one-half unit of health; and 30 hours of instruction in safety education (driver education classroom instruction). If determined by an Individualized Education Program (IEP), a student may be exempted and allowed to participate in other curriculum that provides safety education; pass a qualifying examination on: the State and Federal Constitutions; students must participate in State testing at an appropriate level: either the Prairie State Achievement Examination or the Illinois Alternative Assessment, except as excused by State regulations (School Handbook, 2011-2012).

The overall academic goal is accelerating achievement for all students. Three underlying beliefs support the goal of accelerating academic achievement for all students. First, each student must have options for college and career upon graduation from the district. Second, the communication and mathematics knowledge and skill sets required for entry into college or vocational post-high school endeavors are increasingly the same. Third, students must obtain

“21st century skills” such as the ability to think critically, solve problems, communicate and listen effectively, access and analyze information and then apply what is learned, become self-learners, and collaborate and innovate to be competitive in a global economy. School and district leadership have inspired faculty at each school and within each department, to focus on the three underlying beliefs when designing instructional and curricular interventions to accelerate academic achievement for all students (Township High School District Academic Initiatives, 2011).

The District is effectively addressing the academic goal of student acceleration. At the same time, we live in a time of great demographic change in our schools and we are educating more students of poverty and of ethnic diversity than ever before: In 2000-2001, the percent of District students for the free and reduced lunch program was 6.28. In 2010-2011 that percent has increased to 26.4%. In 2000-2001, the percent of district students representing ethnic minorities was 25. In 2009-2010, that percent has increased to 36.9.

The 32.4% increase of economically disadvantaged students and the 43.6% increase in ethnic diversity among the students in District resulted in the development of initiatives to address very specific student needs. In order to help students reach the District goal of accelerating academic achievement for all students six strategies have guided the creation and implementation of academic initiatives: 1) Alignment of Standards, Assessments, and Curriculum; 2) Increase Literacy Instruction; 3) Increase Instruction in Mathematics; 4) Increased Rigor and Opportunity; 5) Increased Academic Support Outside the Classroom; and 6) Increased Support for Student Social/Emotional Development and Well-Being. Thirty-seven initiatives have been implemented in the schools to target the above six strategies. Another 39 initiatives implemented prior to the 2007-2008 school year are now established programs in the

schools. Seventy-six academic initiatives have been created and implemented. Those initiatives have been created with one purpose in mind: to best meet the needs of a changing student population to meet the goal of accelerating academic achievement for all students. Making a difference in the lives of our young people, of helping them become prepared for college or a career, is what keeps the educators in the District continuously improving programs for the better (Township High School District Academic Initiatives, 2011).

At the June 16 Board of Education meeting, a report was provided that summarized and documented academic progress for the 2010-2011 District goal of accelerating academic achievement for all students. Although significant progress was made in achieving the district goal, work must continue. In reviewing data of students meeting College Readiness Benchmarks, a performance discrepancy was noted between the achievement levels of students in disaggregated Adequate Yearly Progress subgroups. Certain student groups continue to have much higher percentages of students reaching the college readiness threshold. Effort must continue to close the achievement gap within each subject area and across the various student subgroups. The second measurement within the overall District goal for 2010-2011 focused on increasing the number of students enrolled in accelerated coursework and decreasing the number of students enrolled in developmental course work. The data illustrated a positive trend to enroll more students in accelerated courses and to enroll fewer students in developmental courses. Each school within the district experienced an increase in the number of students enrolled in Advanced Placement coursework, the number of students completing an Advanced Placement exam, and the number of students earning passing scores on the exams. Thirdly, student achievement was to be measured through implementation of the critical learning standard process. Throughout the school year, 22 courses have had course specific critical learning standards identified. In

addition, more are nearly complete and are being finalized for review and adoption by the Curriculum Committee and the Board of Education. To help reach its goal, the Board of Education approved a 2010 tax levy of \$194,606,455, which reflects a 3.1% over the 2009 tax levy (Township High School District 2010 Tax Levy, 2011, & Township High School District Academic Initiatives, 2011).

Graduation rate and ethnicity is explained in the Table 3. Make note that those students who were from economically disadvantaged families had the lowest graduation rate. Hispanics had the lowest graduation rate out of the different ethnic groups, at 95.2 % in the school and 86% is the state.

Table 3

High School Graduation Rate by Percentages

	Caucasian	African American	Hispanic	Asian	LEP	Students with Disabilities	Economically Disadvantaged	All
School	97.5	100.00	95.2	100.00	75.0	85.3	82.9	98.1
District	96.2	90.6	86.0	94.1	76.1	83.7	86.6	93.7
State	89.1	74.0	76.8	92.3	67.7	66.2	75.1	83.8

The average school day was made up of eight, 50 minute in length classes with 5 minute passing periods. A typical student's schedule includes math, a science class, English, physical education, lunch, study hall, a social science class or foreign language, and an elective: art, music, business education, applied technology, family and consumer science, English, or social studies (School Handbook, 2011-2012).

Students overall performance on all state testing where students either met or exceeded state standards was 70% within the school, 66.3%, in district, and 76.5% in, state. The Prairie State Achievement Test specifically, 69.8% of the students met or exceeded the Illinois Learning

Standards, 66.2% of the district, and only 50.5% of the students in the state met or exceeded overall. By looking at the below tables it becomes obvious that the limited English students and those students of two or more races have much lower scores than those students of other races.

See Tables 4 and 5 found below and Tables 6-9, on the following pages.

Table 4

Caucasian Reading by Percentages

	Academic Warning	Below Standards	Meets Standards	Exceeds Standards
School	3.4	26.0	52.3	18.2
District	4.2	26.5	51.8	17.5
State	6.1	29.6	49.4	14.9

Students who are Caucasian tend to meet or exceed standards (70.5%) in the school.

Caucasian students in the district (69.3%) and the state (64.3%) meet or exceed standards, when compared to the school totals.

Table 5

African American Reading by Percentages

	Academic Warning	Below Standards	Meets Standards	Exceeds Standards
School	25.9	33.3	33.3	7.4
District	17.3	53.7	26.5	2.5
State	18.5	56.7	23.2	1.8

Students who were African American in the school did not score as high on the test.

Only 40.7% of the students meet or exceeded standards. African American students in the

district (29.0%) and the state (24.0%) meet or exceed standards, when compared to the school totals.

Table 6

Hispanic Reading by Percentages

	Academic Warning	Below Standards	Meets Standards	Exceeds Standards
School	15.1	47.9	31.5	5.5
District	13.7	50.0	33.7	2.7
State	14.7	52.2	30.0	3.1

Students who were Hispanic in the school did not score as high on the test when compared. Only 37% of the Hispanic students enrolled in the school met or exceeded standards on the test. Hispanic students in the district (36.4%) and the state (33.1%) meet or exceed standards, when compared to the school totals.

Table 7

Asian Reading by Percentages

	Academic Warning	Below Standards	Meets Standards	Exceeds Standards
School	5.9	23.5	45.6	25.0
District	4.7	23.3	47.3	24.7
State	6.7	27.3	46.3	19.7

Students who were Asian in the school had the highest scores on the test. In comparison, 70.6% of the Asian students enrolled in the school met or exceeded standards on the test. Asian students in the district (72.0%) and the state (66.0%) meet or exceed standards, when compared to the school totals.

Table 8

Two or More Races by Percentages

	Academic Warning	Below Standards	Meets Standards	Exceeds Standards
School	0.0	42.9	21.4	35.7
District	4.9	35.8	37.0	22.2
State	7.6	35.9	43.6	12.9

Students, who are of two or more races, meet or exceed standards (57.1%) in the school.

Students who are of two or more races in the district (59.2%) and the state (50.5%) meet or exceed standards, when compared to the school totals.

Table 9

Limited English Proficiency by Percentages

	Academic Warning	Below Standards	Meets Standards	Exceeds Standards
School	60.0	40.0	0.0	0.0
District	57.0	39.2	3.8	0.0
State	55.5	41.0	3.3	0.3

Students who were of limited English proficiency in the school had the lowest scores on the test when compared. None (0.0%) of the limited English proficient students enrolled in the school met or exceeded standards on the test. Limited English proficient students in the district (3.8%) met standards and none (0.0%) exceeded standards. Within the state, only 3.6% of the limited English proficient students met or exceeded standards, when compared to the school totals.

The state also mandates that all juniors take the standardized ACT Assessment. The graduating class of 2011 ACT scores for English was 22.5%, the district was 22.4%, and the state was 20.3%. The reading scores for the ACT were 22.3% for the school, 22.3% for the district, and 20.5% for the state. The school was 2 percentage points higher than the state on average. These scores do not include the scores of students who took the test with special accommodations.

The school has one principal, one associate principal, three assistant principals, and a dean of students. The district has an average of 236 students per administrator. The average district salary for an administrator is \$128,269.00 as compared to the state salary of \$109,759.00. The school had 13 guidance counselors, 2 social workers, and 2 school psychologists. It had 1 special education coordinator, 1 director of technology with a staff of 5 full-time computer technicians, 1 full-time nurse, 1 registrar and 1 assistant registrar, 1 literacy lab coordinator, 2 guided study hall coordinators, 1 career trek advisor, 2 test make up coordinators, 4 faculty service secretaries, 1 Xerox operator, 22 secretaries, 1 police consultant, 36 teaching assistants, 2 part-time speech therapists, 1 athletic director, 1 auditorium director, 17 student supervisors, 23 cafeteria workers, and 31 on the custodial staff.

The high school opened in 1964. Its mission statement was “As a comprehensive high school with a long-standing tradition of academic excellence, the school community is committed to developing lifelong learners who are able to employ critical thinking skills in an increasingly diverse society” (School Handbook, 2011-2012). It was accredited by the North Central Association and had been recognized by the federal government as a Blue Ribbon Award winning school. It was known for its cheerleading, pom-poms, girls softball, girls soccer, boys

swimming, boys' water polo, band program, drama productions, peer mediation, Project Click-it or Ticket School of the Year, and had received the Governor's Hometown Award.

The school had two floors. It had a main office, a counseling/registrars office, a career resource center, a media center, a literacy lab, two guided study hall rooms, an auditorium, a swimming pool, one large gymnasium with two additional smaller size gyms, a multi-purpose weight-training/dance studio room, five computer labs, an atrium for meetings, a nurse's office, attendance office, a discipline office, an in-school suspension center, two female locker rooms, two male locker rooms, a student cafeteria, a faculty cafeteria, an in-house kitchen and cooks/bakers, science office, English office, world language office, math office, special education office, social studies office, art office, applied technology office, business education office, English as a second language office, and a physical education office. There was also a photo laboratory, two automotive/small engine rooms, a metal shop, wood shop, six music practice rooms, a choral room, a band room, and an orchestra room. There was a football field and bleachers, tennis courts, a soccer field, baseball field, faculty and student parking lot. The math and science department wing was recently renovated with state of the art equipment, laboratories, and now uses green technology.

Local Context of the Problem

The school district was located in the Northwest suburbs of Chicago, Illinois. The feeder schools are located in four neighboring towns close to the high school. Located near I-53, I-90, I-290, and O'Hare International Airport, the area was easy to get to.

The four towns' population average was 45,503. For the remainder of this section only two of the towns were analyzed to see the different ends of the spectrum when it comes to population demographics, home and occupation, community, and feeder districts. Town A

represents where the majority of the students who attend the high school live. Town B represents where the smallest number of students live. Town A's population increased 4.8% from 2000 to 2010. An average of 2.82 persons lived per household from 2005-2009 in Town A. Town B's population dropped -1.5% from 2000-2010. An average of 2.76 persons lived per household from 2005-2009 in Town B. Table 10 and Table 11 show gender, poverty, and ethnicity of the two towns (State and County Quick Facts Town A, n.d., State and County Quick Facts Town B, 2010).

Table 10

Town A Racial/ethnic/gender/poverty by percentages

Caucasian	American	Hispanic	Asian	Two or more Races	Male	Female	Economically Disadvantaged
56.6	4.8	14.1	22.7	2.6	49.3	50.7	5.7

The majority of the population was Caucasian (56.6%). A low percentage of the population was considered economically disadvantaged (5.7%).

Table 11

Town B Racial/ethnic/gender/poverty by Percentages

Caucasian	African American	Hispanic	Asian	Two or more Races	Male	Female	Economically Disadvantaged
78.6	2.6	51.5	2.7	2.1	48.5	51.5	2.7

Similarly, Town B's population was mostly Caucasian (78.6%) in make-up. Only 2.7% were considered economically disadvantaged.

Table 12 and Table 13 found show the age distributions of the towns (State and County Quick Facts Town A, n.d., State and County Quick Facts Town B, 2010).

Table 12

Town A Age Distribution by Percentages

5 years younger	18 years younger	19 year to 64 years	65 years and over
6.6	25.0	59.0	9.4

The majority of Town A is between the ages of 19-64 years of age (59.0%).

Table 13

Town B Age Distribution by Percentages

5 years younger	18 years younger	19 year to 64 years	65 years and older
5.5	23.5	60.8	10.2

Similar to Town A, Town B's population is once again, mostly in the 19-64 years of age category (60.8%).

Town A and Town B are close when it comes to educational attainments. Town A, 91.2% of its citizens were high school graduates with 42.1% of the population having a bachelor degree or higher. Town B, 94% of its citizens were high school graduates with 41.5% of the population having a bachelor degree or higher. Also, Town A's crime index was 1500 out of

3500 in 2010 (Town A Demographics, n.d.). Town B's index was 1300 out of 3500 in 2010 (Town B Demographics, n.d.).

Occupationally, Town A, 6.8% of the population was unemployed. When it came to types of employment, Town A, the largest industry was manufacturing (Town A Demographics, n.d.). See Table 14 for specifics.

Table 14

Types of Occupations by Percentages Found in Town A

Manufacturing	19
Retail	12
Professional/scientific/technical services	7
Finance and insurance	7
Transportation and warehousing	6

In regards to Town B, 0.018% of the population was unemployed Town B, manufacturing and retail/wholesale (5353 people) were the biggest industries. Town B had more types of business opportunities which offered more growth and opportunities for higher salaries. See Table 15 for specifics (Town B Demographics, n.d.).

Table 15

Types of Occupations by Number of People Found

Manufacturing	2688
Retail/Wholesale	2665
Professional	1912
Education/Health	1843
Finance/Real Estate	1298
Transportation/Warehousing	1037
Arts/Entertainment	1032
Construction	794
Others	542
Information	358
Public Administration	315

Town A was first formed by the Father and Son Construction, with a population of 8000, in 1959 (Gould, 2005). Town B was first settled by Elijah and Electa Hough in 1874 (Sanborn, 2005). Both of the communities have grown in population, industry, manufacturing, entertainment, etc. since they first were incorporated. The Forests Preserve District of Cook County offers both communities walking paths and bicycle paths. With Woodfield Mall, IKEA, Costco, and The Streets of Woodfield, shopping and nightlife was constantly changing. A vast array of restaurants of all styles and nationalities were close at hand for the busy households to enjoy. Close to The Sears Centre and The Allstate Arena, sports and other forms of entertainment were also nearby. Both communities also have active park districts where their residents can spend hours at parks, pools, etc. in order to relax. Town A had 9 parks for recreation (State and County Quick Facts Town A, n.d.). Town B had 18 parks (Town B Park District, n.d.). Both towns had skate parks, ice arenas, and recreational facilities open to the public.

The feeder school district included 27 schools: four specifically were junior highs while one was K-8. The district's mission statement was "It is the mission ofto ensure student success while fostering lifelong learning" (Feeder School Community Consolidated Demographics and Miscellaneous Statistics, n.d.). The district had a superintendent and five assistant superintendents and employed 1,188 full-time teachers. The average class size for the feeder schools was 23.50 students with an overall student population of 14,249. Property taxes represent 77% of the total revenues to run the feeder district. Property tax caps have had an impact on the district since 1991. Technology was available for all students to use during the school day at the feeder school (Feeder School Community Consolidated Demographics and Miscellaneous Statistics, n.d.).

National Context of the Problem

The cultural landscape of education and classrooms is constantly changing (Byrd, 1995). Beverly Daniel Tatum describes what she calls a "smog in the air" that relates to the "sociopolitical context in which schools exist. This context includes not only racism but also other biases based on human and social differences, including social class, language, religion, sexual orientation, gender, and other factors. Pretending that smog doesn't exist, or that it doesn't influence us, is to negate reality,"

(Nieto & Bode, 2012, p. 20). Too often teachers fail to look at all of the factors that can influence a student at school. A child cannot learn when his/her race, language, ethnicity, social class, are rejected or not considered valuable to education (Nieto & Bode, 2012).

Ultimately, the study of multicultural literature has many long-term benefits---increases student productivity, helps moral and cognitive growth, increases creativity and problem solving skills, helps to build achievement and respect, decreases stereotyping and prejudice, and helps students form a more adult or sophisticated view of the world (Ameny-Dixon, 2004). The studying of diverse literature will give the students power to communicate. “The more text-to-self and text-to-world connections students can make, the more equitable and powerful dialogue will be” (Chiariello, 2012, n.p.). Students need to be able to grow to their fullest potential. A way to make sure that all students achieve, schools must add to a child’s educational growth and not just cover what the curriculum guide suggests. In order to do this, schools must examine the diverse needs of their students: talents, believes, cultures, language background, family structure, etc. (Darling-Hammond, 2010).

Reflection

It is obvious that the socioeconomic area and overall diversity of the population (gender, occupation, education, economic status, etc.) has an impact on the students that attend the teacher researcher’s school. Helping to bridge any gaps that might be caused due to the students feeling like their diversity is unimportant was addressed in this study. Also, the impact of studying multicultural rich literature on the students will also be examined.

Chapter 2

Problem Documentation

Evidence of the Problem

The purpose of the action research project was to determine if there was a lack of multicultural literature studied within the regular level sophomore English class. The teacher-researcher was also interested in discovering whether or not the students felt connected to what they were reading. The final area of purpose relates to the importance of the students' ethnic backgrounds, cultures, religions, economic status, gender, and/or sexual orientation in regards to how they are perceived in class. The teacher-researcher used three tools to document evidence: a teacher survey (n=18), a parent survey (n=52), and a student survey (n=82). In the research project, participating students were 10th grade students enrolled in regular level sophomore English classes. Documentation of the problem occurred from August 24th-September 7th, 2012.

Teacher Survey.

The first tool the teacher-researcher used was a teacher survey completed by fellow English teachers at the teacher's school. The purpose of the instrument was to tabulate teachers' opinions and attitudes about multicultural literature and diversity connected to their students. The survey was created online using SurveyMonkey.com and was completed anonymously by the teachers. A total of 21 teachers were sent an email with the link to the website and given a timeframe of August 22nd through August 24th, 2012, for completion. Out of the 21 teachers emailed, 18 responded to the survey (n=18, 86%). Five questions were asked along with space to write additional comments. Figures 1-5 related to the five statements that were asked (See Appendix A.).

In Figure 1, the teacher researcher had the responders (n=18) address the statement “The English curriculum that I teach is multicultural in orientation.” Out of the 18 responders, one third (n=7, 38.9%) disagreed with the statement.

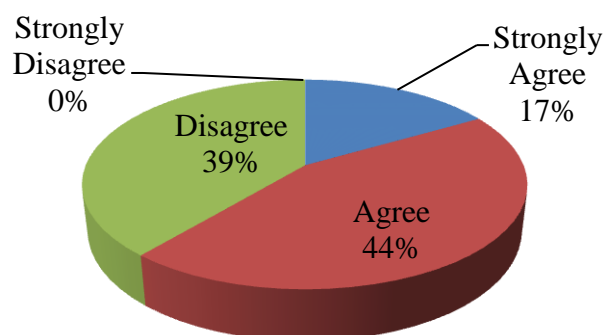


Figure 1: The curriculum is multicultural (n=18)

Figure 2 represents the responses given to the statement, “Students who are of different ethnic background, race, culture, religious beliefs, gender, or sexual orientation are treated equally by administrators and teachers.” The majority of the teachers (n=15, 94.1%) agreed or strongly agreed with the statement.

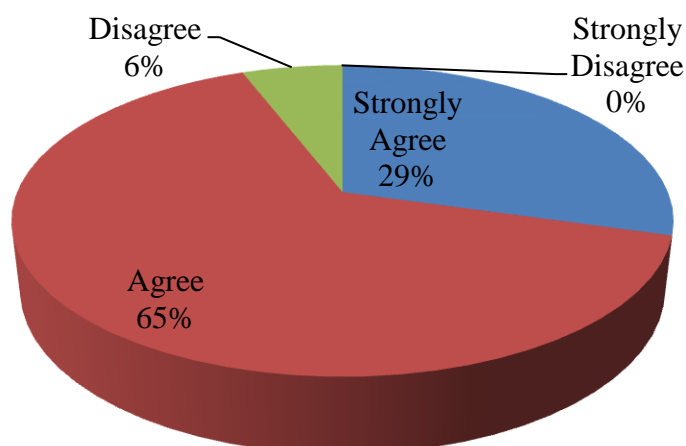


Figure 2: Students treated equally by teachers (n=16)

Figure 3 corresponds to the statement, “I expect less from the students who are considered the minority population at my school.” In total, half (n=9, 50%) disagreed or (n=9, 50%) strongly disagreed with the statement.

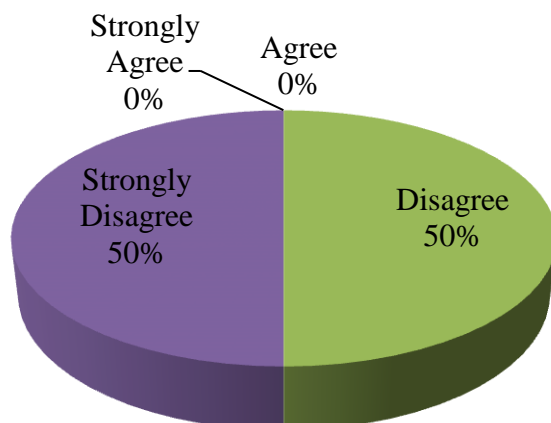


Figure 3: Teacher expectations (n=18)

Figure 4 shows the responses to the statement, “An achievement gap is noticeable between my students based on their ethnic backgrounds.” Three-quarters of the responders (n=13, 72.2%) agreed with the statement.

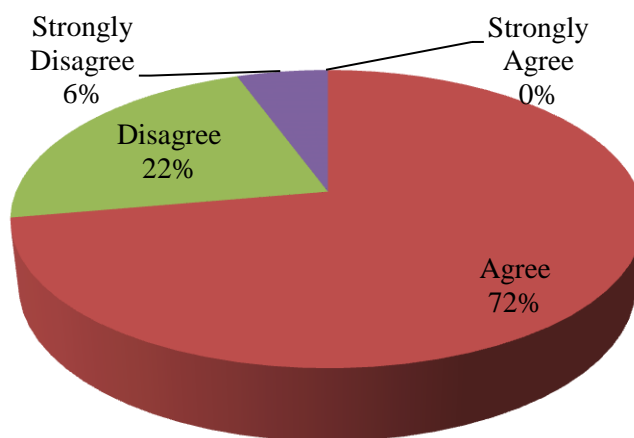


Figure 4: Achievement gap in students (n=18)

The last teacher figure, Figure 5, shows the responses to the statement, “I take the time to learn about my students’ demographics and take into account this information as I plan my lessons.” Although almost two-third (n=12, 67%) of the responders strongly agree or agreed that they take into account student demographics when it comes to planning lessons.

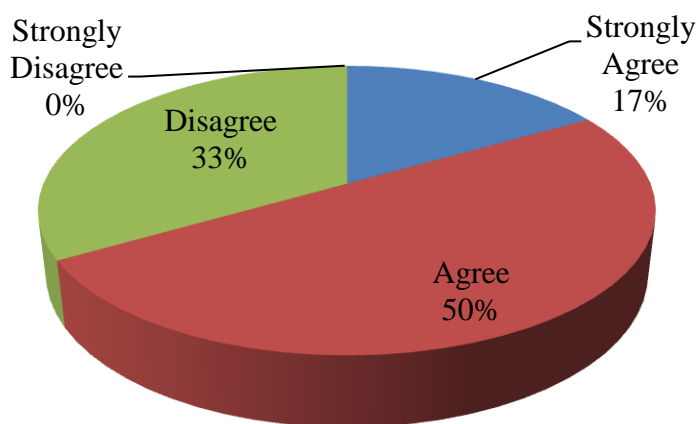


Figure 5: Students’ demographics and instruction (n=18)

The last section of the teacher survey gave the responders a chance to add comments in regards to diversity and multicultural concepts. Out of the original 18 responders, only four (22%) selected to add comments. One response was “I believe, with no prejudice, that a student’s culture and socioeconomic status can and does affect a student’s perception of and performance in school. Not all students of different background display this, but there is a noticeable amount.” A second comment was, “Unfortunately, some information about our students is not available. I believe if we knew more about our students, we could construct better lessons to meet their needs and interests.” A third comment related to question number five, “Number five is really a two part question: each part might not be the same.” The final comment was, “I feel certain classes have good literary multiculturalism. However, I feel the junior and freshman levels under-represent female authors.”

Parent Survey.

The second research tool used was the Parent Survey. The purpose behind the survey was to get the parental/guardian perspective about multicultural literature and diversity education. Parents received a survey to fill out with five statements along with space for additional comments. The surveys were distributed to the students to give to their parents on August 31st, 2012, with a return date of September 7th, 2012. An email was sent to all of the parents explaining that a letter of explanation and survey with statements connected to his/her son's/daughter's ethnic background, culture, religion, gender, and/or sexual orientation would be coming home as part of teacher-researcher's project. Out of 89 surveys sent home, just a little over half of the parents (n=52, 58%) returned the survey (see Figure 6 below). There were a total of five, Likkert statements for the parents to respond to on the survey. (See Appendix B)

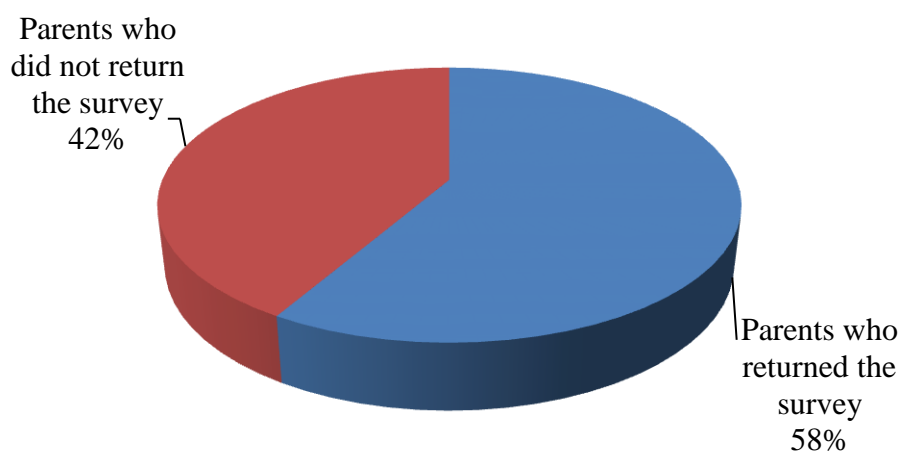


Figure 6: Parents who returned the survey (N=89)

The first statement of the survey is analyzed in Figure 7. This figure addressed the question, “My child is judged differently than his/her peers due to his/her ethnic background, culture, religion, gender, and/or sexual orientation.” Based on the surveys, one-third of the parents (n=18, 25%) strongly agreed or agreed.

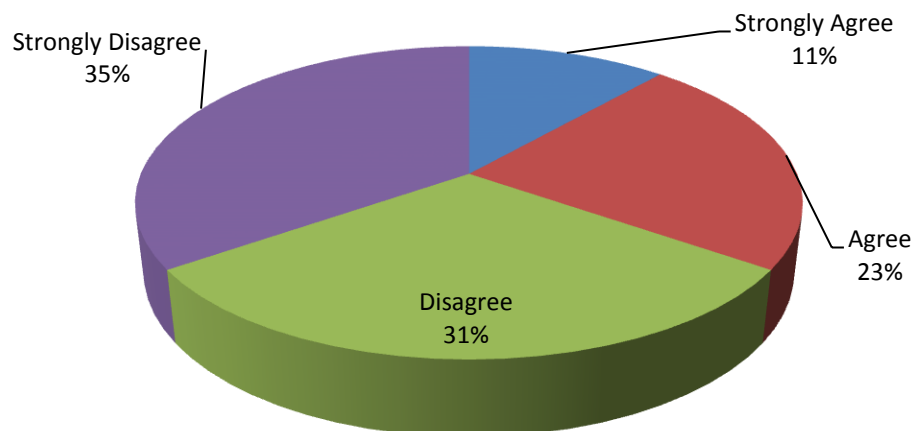


Figure 7: My child is judged by peers (n=52)

Figure 8 represents the responses to the statement, “My child’s ethnic background, culture, gender, and/or sexual orientation is/are important to his/her education.” The overwhelming majority (n=47, 90%), agreed with the statement.

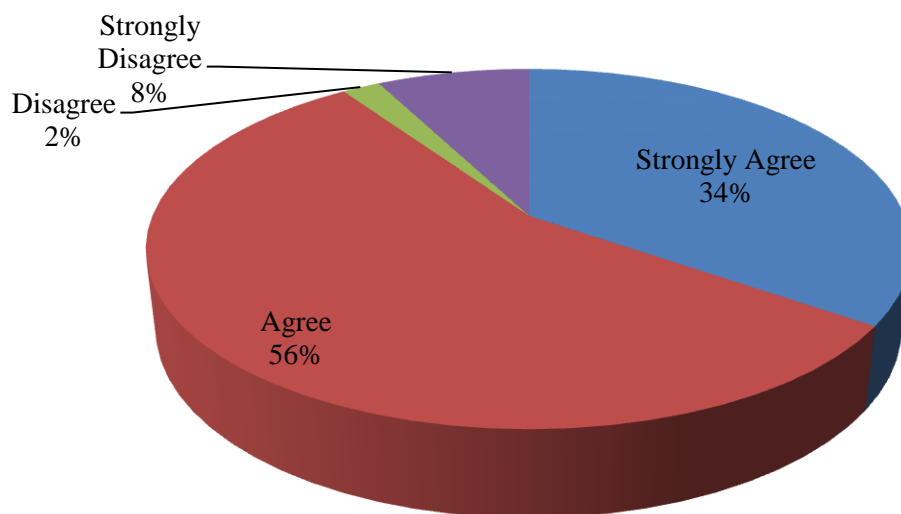


Figure 8: My child’s ethnic background and education (n=52)

Figure 9 reflects the responses to the statement, “My child feels safe at school due to or his/ethnic background, culture, religion, sexual orientation, and/or gender.” According to the pie chart, one-fourth of the parents, (n=41, 79%) disagreed or strongly disagreed with the statement.

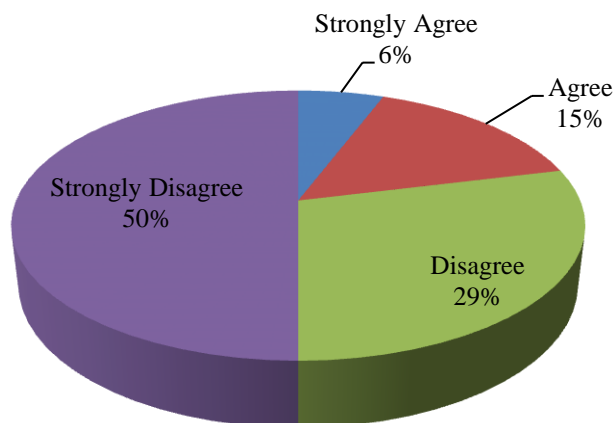


Figure 9: My child feels safe at school (n=52)

The tenth figure shows the responses to the, “My child should be exposed to literature about different backgrounds, cultures, religions, economic status, and/or gender.” One-fifth or 14 (21%) of the parents did not agree with the statement.

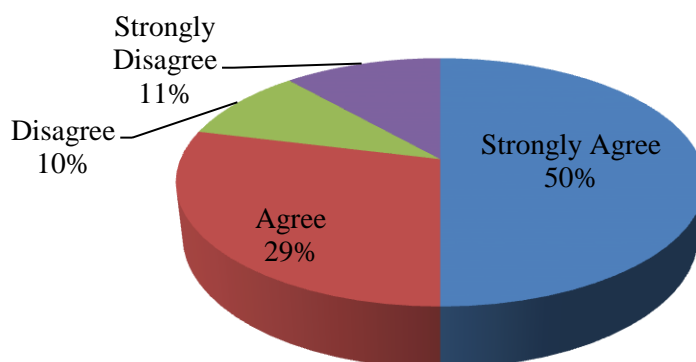


Figure 10: Exposure to multicultural literature (n=18)

Figure 11 the parents addressed the statement, “My child identifies with the characters in the literature that he/she reads for English class.” In regards to Figure 10, two-fifths of the parents (n=11, 27%) disagreed or strongly disagreed with the statement.

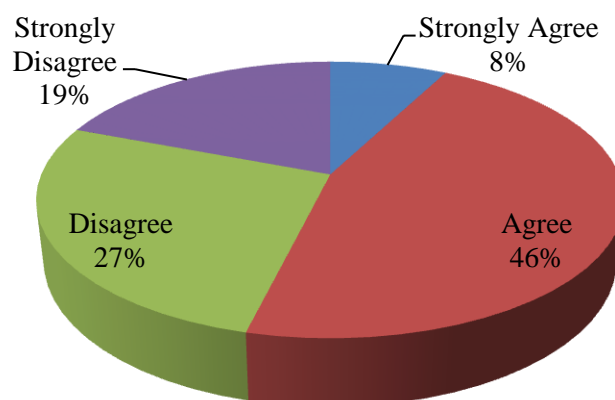


Figure 11: Student connection to characters in literature (n=18)

Student Survey.

The third research tool used is the Student Survey. The purpose of this survey was to gather information from the student perspective in regards to multicultural literature, diversity, and their education. The survey was completed during class on September 8th, 2012. Once completed, students placed the completed survey in a box located on a table in the class room. Out of a possible 89 students enrolled in the teacher researcher’s sophomore English classes, 96% (n=82) completed the survey. There were a total of nine, Likkert statements for the students to respond to on the survey (See Appendix C).

Figure 12 represented the student responses to the statement, “I have felt judged by my peers in English class based on my ethnic background, race, culture, religion, gender, and/or sexual orientation.” In English classes, students overwhelmingly disagreed or strongly disagreed (n=71, 85%), that they feel judged by peers in English class.

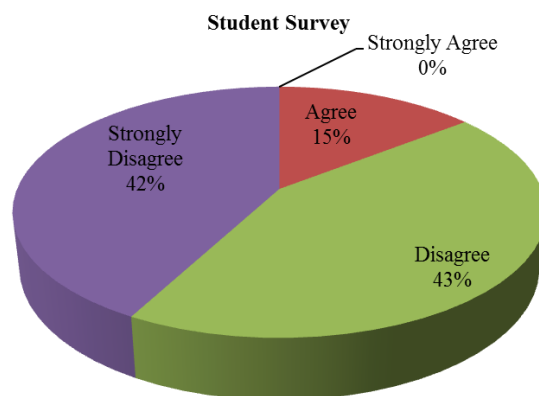


Figure 12: Students feeling judged in English class (N=82)

Figure 13 showed how students felt about being judged in other classes that they were enrolled in. The statement responded to was, “I have felt judged by my peers in other classes based on my ethnic background, race, culture, religion, gender, and/or sexual orientation.”

According to the data, where $n=24$, 29% of the students felt judged.

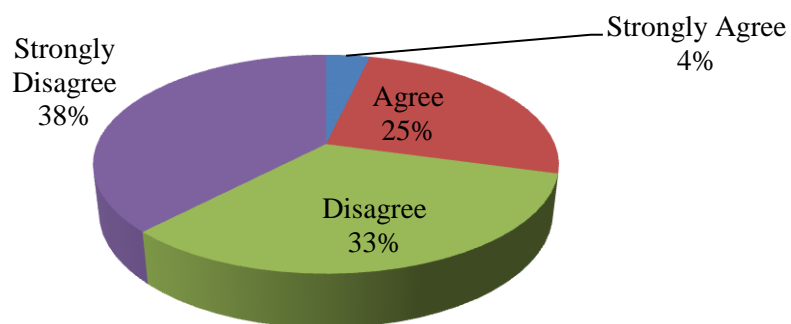


Figure 13: Students feeling judged in other classes (n=82)

Figure 14 related to the statement, “My ethnic background, race, culture, religious beliefs, gender, or sexual orientation is/are recognized by my English teacher.” The statement revealed 82 students, 45% disagreed or strongly disagreed.

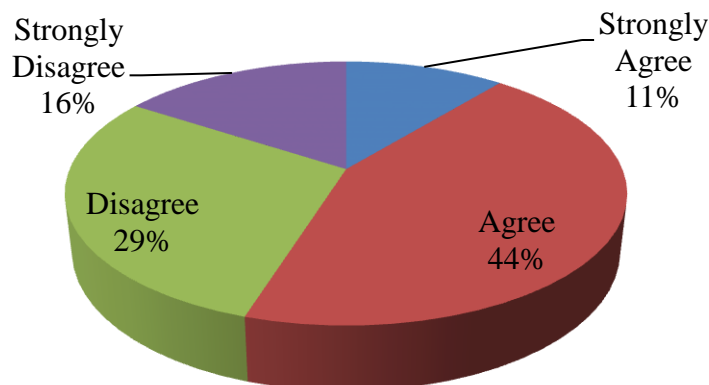


Figure 14: Ethnicity Recognized by English Teachers (n=82)

Figure 15 showed the student responses in regards to their ethnicity being recognized by teachers. The statement responded to was “My ethnic background, race, culture, religious beliefs, gender, or sexual orientation is/are recognized as being a part of who I am by my teachers.” Outside of English, 35 students, or 45% of the students disagreed or strongly disagreed with the statement.

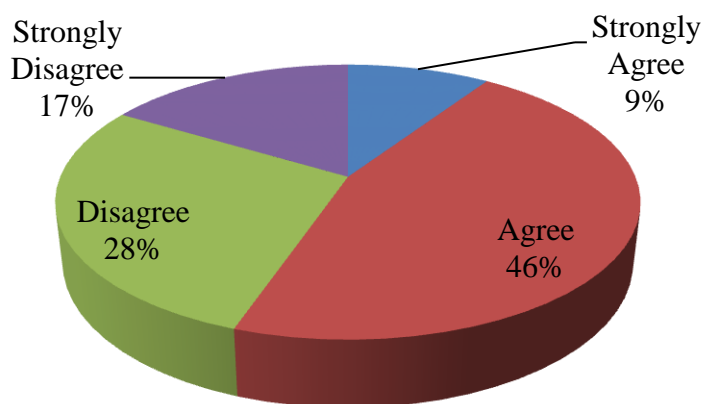


Figure 15: Ethnicity recognized by other teachers (n=82)

Figure 16 related to the statement, “There are times when I have felt uncomfortable or unsafe at school due to my own gender, ethnic background, religious upbringing, economic status, and/or sexual orientation.” Most of the students, (n=68, 83%) disagree or strongly

disagree with the statement.

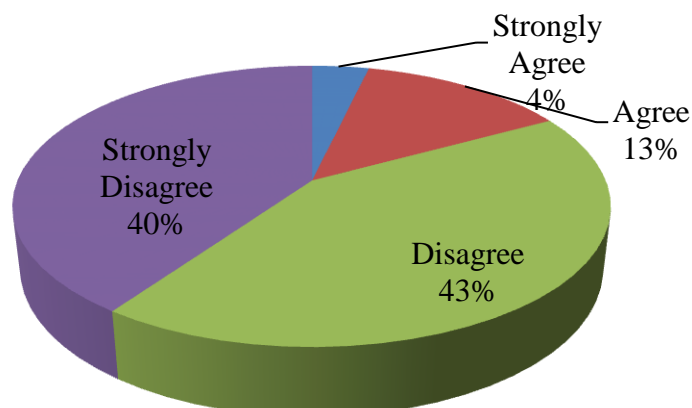


Figure 16: Students feeling uncomfortable at school (n=82)

Figure 17 demonstrated the student responses to the statement, “I feel that reading and discussing literature about different cultures, ethnic groups, religions, economic status, gender, or sexual orientation would add to my education and views of the world.” Three-fourths of the students (n= 63, 75%) agreed or strong agreed with the statement.

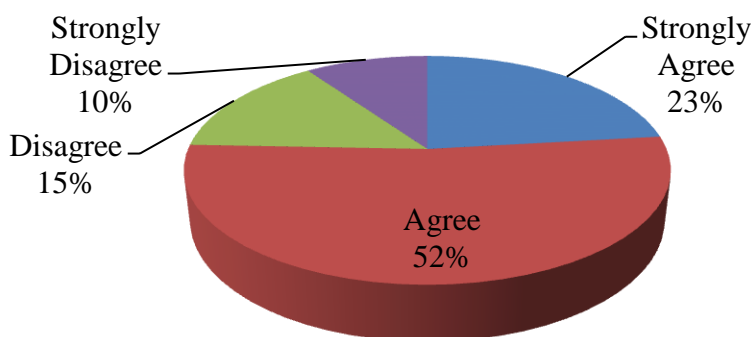


Figure 17: Multicultural literature and students (n=82)

Figure 18 connected to the statement, “My teachers take the time to get to truly know me as an individual based on my ethnic background, race, culture, religion, gender, and/or sexual

orientation and not just a number in class.” Out of students responders, three-fourths of the students (n=46, 68%) disagreed or strongly disagreed with the statement.

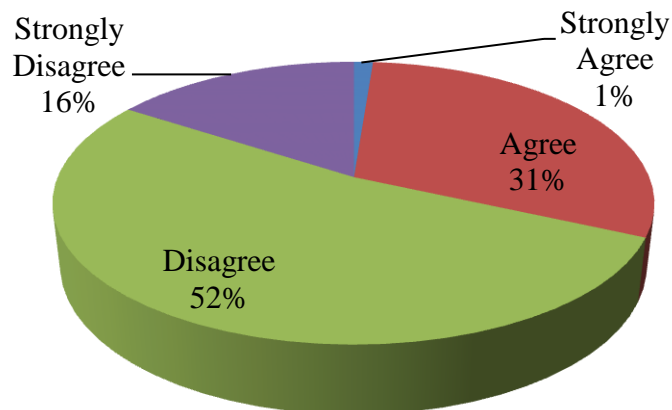


Figure 18: Teachers get to know me (n=82)

The last figure, Figure 19 (located on the following page), gave the students the opportunity to mark characteristics that were most important to them. The choices were ethnic background, religious upbringing, sexual orientation, economic status, cultural background, gender, and race. Out of the 82 students, there were 267 responses. Gender (n=82, 70%) was of main importance to them. The second most important factor was their ethnic background (n=82, 59%). Least important was sexual orientation (n=82, .012%).

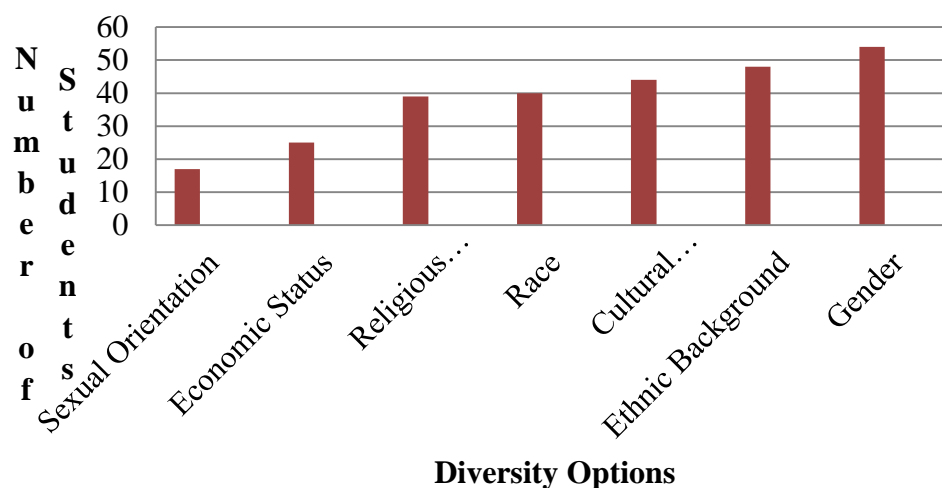


Figure 19: Students and identity (n=267)

Summary

It is clear from the data that from the teachers who responded to the survey, roughly two-thirds of the teachers (see Figure 1) believed that the literature they teach is multicultural in nature. Most of the teachers believed that students were treated equally by administrators and teachers (see Figure 2). It was interesting to see that there was a divide when it came to the teacher responses in regards to expectation and diversity related issues (see Figure 3). Figure 5 showed that three-fourths teachers, once again, believed there was an achievement gap. Ultimately, teachers needed to show more an awareness about their students' diversity related issues.

When it came to the parent survey, the most noticeable response was connected to whether or not they felt that their son/daughter's ethnicity, race, religion, etc. were important to their child and his/her education. It is clear by the data most of the parents (n=47, 90%) found the idea important (see Figure 8). Safety did not appear to be a problem with the parents (n=29, 79%) (see Figure 9). Exposure to world literature once again, two-thirds of the parents (n=29, 79%) felt it was important (see Figure 10).

Ultimately, the student survey's provided excellent information. In English classes, students felt comfortable about their diversity, but in non-English classes, there was a difference where 85% felt not judged by peers during English (see Figure 12), but 75% did not feel judged by peers in other classes (see Figure 13). When it came to teachers judging students based on their ethnic backgrounds, race, culture, gender, or, religious beliefs, gender, or sexual orientation, students felt judged about the same by all teachers (see Figures 14 and 15). Students appear to feel safe at school as well (see Figure 16). Students felt reading multicultural literature would add to their education. (see Figure 17). Students felt teachers did not take the time to get to know them on a more individual basis (n=53, 68%), (see Figure 18). Lastly, students appeared/wanted to be recognized by their gender, ethnic backgrounds, and cultural backgrounds in class (see Figure 19).

Reflection.

I believe that there is a strongest relation to how students perform and how they are viewed by a teacher as a person connected to their ethnic background, gender, cultural background, religion, sexual orientation, etc. If 55% of the students feel that their own personal diversity is important to be recognized, as a teacher, I need to make sure that students are able to comfortable and able to express their ideas, at least in my own class. I believe that students should be able to express their opinions connected to their diversity. I will implement open discussions about diversity and create materials connected to diversity to aid in my instruction. I will include more diverse literature and projects into the curriculum. Finally, students will show growth in their abilities to connect, share, and respect diversity in society.

Probable Causes

The lack of multicultural literature studied within the regular level sophomore English class was a concern. Adding to that concern, the regular level sophomore student failed to feel a connection to what he/she was reading. The possible reasons why this occurred needed to be researched. Therefore the teacher-researcher asked herself the following: What, then, are the causes behind diversity related issues and education? What impact does a student's diversity have on his/her ability to learn? The current push in education is to get students ready for tests, but at what expense? Is there evidence that correlates to the importance of student self-identity and his/her ability to achieve? These were the questions that needed to be analyzed and addressed.

Definition of the Problem.

According to Tom Friedman, "Globalization is changing everything about how we work, how we communicate, and, ultimately, how we live" (as quoted in Darling-Hammond, 2010, p. 3). Globalization and helping students connect and understand the roles that they play in society are closely connected. To fully understand the concept of globalization, people must understand that multicultural education is an important step toward globalization. Multicultural education is defined by the National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education as "Preparation for the social, political, and economic realities that individuals experience in culturally diverse and complex human encounters (1977, p. 4, as cited by Yang & Montgomery, p. 1). This is one perspective on the definition of multicultural education. It is, in part, the misunderstanding of multicultural education that causes the problem.

Therefore, since the United States view of multicultural education has been called the "melting pot" perspective," as quoted by McNergney and Hebert, 2001, in Ameny-Dixon, 2004

(p. 2); a confusion starts to develop. Another perspective, by Dr. James A. Banks, was concerned that multicultural education was only content driven, meaning it only connected to only a few subject areas such as the social sciences or English (Banks, 1998). As time progressed, a more complex definition was discovered by Sonia Nieto (2002, p. 346), as cited by Dell’Osso. She believes that multicultural education is “a process that challenges and rejects racism and other forms of discrimination in schools...accepts and affirms...the...ethnic, racial, linguistic, religious, economic, and gender...that students, their communities, and teachers reflect. Multiculturalism education permeates the school’s curriculum and instructional strategies, as well as the interactions among teachers, students, families, and the very way that schools conceptualize the nature of teaching and learning...multicultural education promotes democratic principles of social justice (Dell’Osso, 2008, p. 8). It is the variation of what multicultural education is or should be that adds to the problem. Semantics of what to call the new form of education at times gets the center of attention of educators; Intercultural Education vs. Multicultural Education (Grant, 2008).

Society’s Views of the Problem.

Furthermore, a disconnect within society exists when it comes to diversity and multicultural education. To start, society’s views on race and minorities can be problematic. The race breakdown in contemporary society is; Hispanics-the fastest and largest group 48.4 million; African Americans-second largest group at 39,059,000 million; people of color now make up one-third of the United States population (Nieto & Bode, 2012). These statistics become even more important with the viewpoint that some people have about minorities: those who are considered to be the minority are often labeled as being lacking in skills or deficient

(Byrd, 1995). Further, contemporary society is stuck in expecting low expectations from people (Nieto & Bode, 2012).

In addition to low expectations, society itself is part of the problem. Economic inequality is the highest it has ever been in United States history (Nieto & Bode, 2012). This growing divide hurts the children in society. According to statistics from 2007, 23% of U.S. children were living below the poverty level (Darling-Hammond, 2010). Connected to this are the “sociocultural factors (such as) poverty, ethnicity, low levels of parental education, weak family support systems, and students’ reactions to discrimination and stereotyping” (Nieto & Bode, 2012, p. 14). This divide adds to the problem of equity in education and misconceptions in society about race, diversity, and education.

The federal government also plays a role in the misconceptions as well. Legislation often governs what is taught to children in America (Purves, 1991). No Child Left Behind is a clear example of the government interference. Connected to this is a fear that some people have about globalization. Many people view globalization as a threat to America’s prosperity (Miller, 2011). A major reason why multicultural education is under fire is because it challenges the old way of thinking about America (Nieto & Bode, 2012). People, instead of seeing the strength in multicultural education, only see the negative. Also working against culturalism is the media that tends to “homogenize culture into a world where color, race, ethnicity, and gender are commodities” (Purves, 1991, p. 8).

Adding to the problem of multicultural education is the concept of achievement and education. President Barack Obama stated that there is a large race and achievement gap in the United States (Darling-Hammond, 2010). Truly understanding what the term Achievement Gap means is important to multicultural education. The term seems to imply that only students are

responsible for this lack of learning (Nieto & Bode, 2012). This is not the case at all. Many factors attribute to inequality of learning. Five factors that are major building blocks of inadequate education: high level of poverty combined with low levels of social support/allocation of funds for public education is not equally dispersed/inability to provide high quality teachers to all economic areas of the United States/lack of high quality curriculum/outdated school designs (Darling-Hammond, 2010). Darling-Hammond also added that "...funding systems and other policies create a situation in which urban districts receive fewer resources than their suburban neighbors, but schools with high concentration of low-income and 'minority' students typically receive fewer resources than other schools within these districts (2010, p.39). The end result is students', whose native language is not English, often feel that their language is not important (Nieto & Bode, 2012).

Ultimately, many people feel that schools are moving too slowly at incorporating multiculturalism into school curriculum. Too often, it is up to elective classes or after school activities and not the key curriculum to make the changes needed in education (Hu, 2008). Jump ahead two years in time, to 2010, and U.S. Education Secretary, Arne Duncan's statement, "I am worried that in this interconnected world, our country risks being disconnected from the contributions of other countries and cultures" (Miller, 2011, p. 2). American education is lagging behind other countries. The problem is severe. Perhaps, Beverly Daniel Tatum describes it best when she explains "smog in the air," and how it relates to the "sociopolitical context in which schools exist. This context includes not only racism but also other biases based on human and social differences, including social class, language, religion, sexual orientation, gender, and other factors. Pretending that smog doesn't exist, or that it doesn't influence us, is to negate reality" (Nieto & Bode, 2012, p. 20).

Cultural Impact and Fears.

Culture can cause fears to develop and fear causes conflict. Four key issues connected to social injustice, stereotyping, and prejudice are not understanding that differences exist between families; failure to identify differences in life-styles connected to neighborhoods; ignorance of American culture and what it is; and peaceful relationships between people (Taba et.al, 1952, as cited by Grant, 2008). Perhaps this fear or conflict is due to the lack of awareness of each society's cultural canon or differences are part of the problem (Purves, 1991). This lack of awareness is partly due to America's own history. During the 1940s, the make-up of cities changed due to migration of mostly blacks from rural America to urban America. The end result was traditional neighborhoods changed (Grant, 2008). The changing of neighborhoods added to the fear.

Next, monolithic national cultures have been challenged through-out the world by not only ethnic related classes, but by gender groups, religious groups, and popular culture (Purves, 1991). "Cultures are exclusionary by definition; people who have a culture see others as outside, above, or beneath them; and certainly very few people transcend cultures to become cosmopolitan" (Purves, 1991, p. 2). If different cultures view themselves as exclusionary, this can impact society as well. According to Bennett (2003), "micro cultures are expected to give up their cultural identities in order to blend in or become absorbed by the predominant mainstream society or macro culture" (as cited in Ameny-Dixon, 2004, p. 2). It is this blending that often becomes a problem when this greyness surfaces as bleaching of colors. The definition and importance of ones' culture becomes grey. People fear that multicultural education requires that all cultures be valued equal (Multiculturalism in education, 2002). The deleting of connections to one's culture is in contrast to conservatives fear that the students are no longer learning how to

be citizens of the United States, first (Hu, 2008). Another fear by some parents is the belief that multicultural education includes the teaching of religion. Some parents feel that different religions should not be taught in public schools as part of multiculturalism (Hu, 2008). A last fear is some people are afraid that multiculturalism will create more of a division where certain groups will have more rights than other ethnic groups (Multiculturalism in education, 2002). Struggles continue in regards to culture.

Additionally, too often multicultural education is taught without the connection to sociopolitical aspect of the world (Nieto & Bode, 2012). Also, multicultural education needs to make sure that we do not stereotype that people of the same background always share or believe in the same things (Nieto & Bode, 2012). Although stereotyping does exist, multicultural education needs to recognize the very real differences between western and non-western students' way of thinking. Western raised students who are more competitive, want power and control over others, want to achieve personal goals, and look towards the future while non-western students are oriented more towards social organizations and cooperation with others goals, and look at and think about the past (McInerney, D. M., & McInerney, V., 1996).

Students and Culture.

According to multimillionaire, Jim Rogers, "parents who really care about their children must also ponder this: are we doing enough to raise 'global' kids?" (Miller, 2011, p 2). If it is the role of schools to act as a foundation for raising global citizens, the current public school system has a lot of work to help create global citizens. Schools in the United States, and therefore students, are facing the largest global academic gap in history (Jost, 2010). Reading achievement is connected to lower achievement when a student's race, language spoken, and ethnicity are ignored (Lutkus, Rampey, & Donahue, 2006, as cited in Risko & Walker-Dalhouse,

2007). This lack of achievement can lead to dropping out of school. At times, students drop out of school because they no longer have an emotional connection to what is being taught (Jacobo, 1997). It is this disconnect that must be eliminated. A better understanding of why a student might drop out needs to be studied. Students that have an “economic disadvantage and poor academic achievement, are likely to have poorer self-esteem within the school context, poorer school confidence, and see little purpose in completing school” (as quoted by Graham, 1994, in McInerney, D. M., & McInerney, V., 1996. p. 3). Today students of different races do not tend to interact. The poorer a student is, the more likely he/she will attend schools that are inferior to those students who come from wealth, and too often, drop-out rates are high (Nieto & Bode, 2012). Unfortunately, one group of students that are the hardest hit when it comes to staying in school is Latino students. Latino students have the highest drop-out rate from high school (Nieto & Bode, 2012).

Also, “a mismatch between goal orientations help by students developed through socialization practices within families and cultural communities will have significant implications for student motivation, absenteeism, achievement, and retention” (McInerney, D. M. & McInerney, V., 1996, p. 3). This mismatch must be analyzed for a child to learn. A child cannot learn when his/her race, language, ethnicity, social class, are rejected or not considered valuable to education (Nieto & Bode, 2012). These factors help to define, which helps form who the child truly is. Students’, whose native language is not English, often feel that their language is not important (Nieto & Bode, 2012). Imagine not wanting to speak at school because of not feeling accepted. “As of 2008, 10.9 million school-aged children spoke a language other than English at home” (Nieto & Bode 2012, p. 28). This lack of acceptance can cause some students

to change how they act at school. Often students will hide their culture and language at school (Gay, 2000, as cited by Risko & Walker-Dalhouse, 2007).

Another important sub-group of students who also feel a lack of acceptance are lesbians, gays, bisexuals, and/or transgender. These students do not feel safe at school (Nieto & Bode, 2012). It is vital that today's educational environment makes everyone feel like they belong.

Ultimately, it is this lack of acceptance that can cause poor performances from students. "School-related factors include low expectations, particularly in schools that serve students who are both economically disadvantaged and from ethnic and racial minority backgrounds, as well as other practices and policies that jeopardize student learning" (Nieto & Bode, 2012, p. 14). The difference between a student's home culture and the culture he/she lives at school can have an impact on a child's academic performance (Nieto & Bode, 2012). In society people at times have not been appropriate or sensitive to how different ethnic groups and cultures like to be addressed. Language is constantly changing and we need to keep up with the changes (Nieto & Bode, 2012).

Furthermore, "Institutional discrimination generally refers to how people are excluded or deprived of rights and opportunities as a result of normal operations of the institution" (Nieto & Bode, 2012, p. 64). Another possible reason why students might feel unaccepted at school is students are profiled or categorized by teachers based on their appearances, behaviors, and who they hang out with (Nieto & Bode, 2012). To make the situation worse, often times, non-white students are taught by less experienced teachers or teachers who are not considered experts in their fields of study (Darling-Hammond, 2010). Economic situations accentuate the problem. "Almost 2.5 million children are retained in the U.S. classrooms, and low-income students, boys, and students of color are overrepresented in this number" (Nieto & Bode, 2012, p. 114). It is

amazing that more than half of all the children living in the United States live below the poverty level (Nieto & Bode, 2012).

Ironically, although diversity in schools and the country is increasing, so is segregation in our schools (Nieto & Bode, 2012). The step where students are able to take what they have read from cultures different from their own and connect to the world outside of their own is missing in the educational process (Purves, 1991). Students of all races need to be taught how to work in a democratic society-where everyone's views are positive (Banks, 1998).

No Child Left Behind Impact.

An additional factor to consider is No Child Left Behind. No Child Left Behind has an impact on how public education system is organized and run (Beveridge, 2010). To begin with, No Child Left Behind causes labels. No Child Left Behind overemphasizes standardized tests and labels schools (Jost, 2010). Teaching is impacted. Firstly, this impacts teachers and what they do in their classes. No Child Left Behind stresses only reading, math, and writing skills (Beveridge, 2010). Often, these impacts the way a teacher teaches his/her class. No Child Left Behind causes some teachers to teach for the test (Jost, 2010). According to Weiner (200), the major causal properties constitute two major determinants of motivation, namely expectancy and value. Expectancy refers to the subjective chance of future success while value refers to the emotional consequences of an outcome (as cited in Yang & Montgomery, 2011). No Child Left Behind has caused changes in all types of art classes: especially funding, scheduling, and teachers' professional development (Beveridge, 2010). Instead of helping out the educational process, NCLB harms the process. The worst impact is No Child Left Behind increases the resistance to providing equity in education for all (Jost, 2010).

Teachers.

Closely connected to the problem is public attitude toward teachers and multicultural education. The public attitude toward teachers also plays a role in a teacher's comfort zone when it comes to teaching (Nieto & Bode, 2012). Teachers need to be willing to push their own comfort zones. Also, there are misconceptions by the public about teachers when it comes to teaching of children of color. The public needs to be aware that "it is not the race of the teacher, but a set of cultural characteristics that make them effective with children of color" (Banks, 1998, p. 4).

Next, the educational system and therefore teachers have self-concept problems. To begin with, schools do not like to discuss race (Nieto & Bode, 2012). Add the fact that in current society, the public schools teaching staff is many times not representative of the diverse ethnicity and cultural backgrounds of their students (Szecsi, Spillman, Vazquez-Montilla, & Mayberry, 2010). Combine this factor with the lack of teacher exposure to different cultures, and the problem increases. Too often the problem lies in the lack of exposure to other cultures connected to our own biases and preferences (Szecsi, et.al, 2010). A need exists for change. A setback for multicultural education is the lack of teachers of color, lack of time, lack of power by teachers over what they teach, and bureaucracy (Yang & Montgomery, 2011). Teachers need to feel like they have a voice. In order to help the problem, teachers need to be aware of myths and stereotypes connected to race, gender, age, and ethnic groups (Ameny-Dixon, 2004). To reach the highest goal, there is a need for teachers to be willing to think and adjust their own personal cultural landscapes and how these personal views influence how we look and feel about the world we live in (Szecsi, et. al., 2010).

Therefore, one way to help the problem is through proper training. Few teachers have the right training (Byrd, 1995). To begin with, student teacher training programs can play a role in order to cause change. “A major goal of most teacher education programs is the development of teachers who are sensitive supporters of all students, embrace diversity, and plan and implement inclusive and culturally responsive instruction. Student populations, even within teacher education programs, are not always endowed with the desired attitudes and wisdom that allow them to embrace such diversity” (Szecsi, et al., 2010, p. 2). To help solve this problem, teachers need training in application skills, strategies, and pedagogical practices in order to help students with diverse backgrounds in their classes (Yang & Montgomery, 2011). For those who are already certified teachers, workshops or in-services are a way to help teachers begin to feel comfortable with diversity. Teachers need to have knowledge and in-services in order to comprehend diversity (Yang & Montgomery, 2011).

However, educating teachers will not be easy. Cultural competence is an ongoing process that is often slow and requires a long-term commitment (Yang & Montgomery, 2011). It is not learned overnight. Many teachers are too uncomfortable teaching about discrimination and inequality with their students (Nieto & Bode, 2012, p. 121). This could be because too often, teachers are not comfortable when it comes to diversity education. Teachers need to first judge their own confidence in dealing successfully with diversity issues in their classes (Yang & Montgomery, 2011). A challenge that teachers face is “how to challenge the silence about race and racism so that teachers can enter into meaningful and constructive dialogue with their students” (Nieto & Bode, 2012, p. 45). The process of learning about their students is time consuming for teachers (Lee, 2001, as cited in Risko & Walker-Dalhouse, 2007). Finally, in

order for all parties to learn, teachers need to high expectations of their students and show that they care about their students, no matter what color, race, etc. (Banks, 1998).

Literature Texts/Classes.

To fully understand multicultural education, literature and classes must be examined. Teachers are afraid and do not know how to “think outside of the box” and add multiculturalism into the curriculum (Dell’Osso, 2008, p. 6). Currently, there is not a lot of multicultural literature taught in public schools. This is ironic since the cultural landscape of education and classrooms is constantly changing (Byrd, 1995).

Too often, the literature that is taught in public schools is dominated by mostly white, male authors (Dell’Osso, 2008). When culture is taught, it is often taught in a narrow form. Too often when culture is taught in schools, separates the ethnic groups instead of intertwining the studies of the cultures (Purves, 1991). Many teachers simply do not possess the knowledge about multicultural literature to incorporate it into their curriculum (Dell’Osso, 2008). Perhaps school districts that are not sure what to do could follow the guidelines that the National Research Center on Literature Teaching and Learning is located in Albany, New York, has created. Its three main areas of research revolves around the teaching and learning processes connected to literature, curriculum and assessment of literature, and examining the social and cultural traditions on teaching and learning literature (Purves, 1991).

Another subject of debate is connected to how the literature is taught in a classroom (Purves, 1991). Many English teachers believe that only the classic pieces of literature can be considered good literature; therefore, modern literature cannot be included in curriculum because it is not considered to be classic in nature (Dell’Osso, 2008). Texts that are studied in class often do not connect to the students due to their varying backgrounds. Disabling texts are texts where

students' backgrounds are ignored (Chiariello, 2012). Literature that is taught often will not reflect the "values, facts, and attitudes, of the culture" under study (Short & Fox, 2003, as cited in Szecsi, et al., 2010, p. 3). A larger factor is that many teachers have a fear connected with multicultural literature and having to deal with parents, administrators, and peers when it comes to the literature and subject matter of the literature (Dell'Osso, 2008).

Continuing, educational canons must also be examined. Those who want reform believe that the traditional literature canons are now outdated and not current with trends in modern society (Multiculturalism in education, 2002). Canon reform is a hot issue on college campuses (Multiculturalism in education, 2002). "The makers of canons include editors, reviewers, librarians, historians, and others concerned with the determination of what shall be known of culture or a society" (Purves, 1991, p. 5). Problems arise due to limited funding of materials, constraints on curriculum, and possible censorship (Purves, 1991). This connects to what is taught in class and what is available for students to read. What works that should be read, who should read these works, and what order should these works be read by students are the questions to discuss (Purves, 1991). It is obvious that there is a need for more diverse literature in English classes. There is a demand for texts written by people of ethnic groups: Hispanic, African-American, Native American, Asian, women, homosexuals, and the physically handicapped (Purves, 1991). There are people who could act as cultural advocates. More people concerned with cultural canons are anthropologists and story tellers. It is through them that many cultures and societies that run the risk of being forgotten live on (Purves, 1991).

People need to remember that it is at school where the impact of culture on society can be discussed and analyzed. Part of a school's educational process should involve helping young people connect to the local, regional, and national culture of society (Purves, 1991). Being

aware of what makes us each unique is a key element to a thorough educational experience. Differences in culture, traditions, teaching methods, learning styles, can have a large impact (Byrd, 1995). This impact causes problems. The largest problems connected to being able to implement a more diverse literature program are time, money, availability, and use of materials (Purves, 1991). These four factors are hard to overcome.

Electives.

With the emphasis on testing and training to do well on the standardized tests, electives such as art, speech, and music are connected to multicultural education. However, the arts are no longer considered as being valuable to students or to teachers (Beveridge, 2010). There is too much variance between states when it comes to the fine arts (Beveridge, 2010) so the concept that electives enhance a student's education changes from state to state. Along with this problem, there is, at times, difficulty for some classes to incorporate multiculturalism into the curriculum. For example, public speaking classes may be the hardest to make cultural changes because of the notion that everyone should be able and expected to speak proper English, no matter what personal reasons that may exist as to why a person cannot (Byrd, 1995). Ultimately, harm can be done if these electives do disappear. People fail to recognize the importance and positive impact electives such as art, music, drama, etc. can have. An epidemic exists in today's society because music education programs are being cut; the end result being a loss of multicultural experiences for students (Jacobo, 1997).

Assessments.

Along with elective classes, assessments in general can hinder multicultural education. The use of standardized tests adds to the inequity found in public schools (Nieto & Bode, 2012). The use of standardized assessment helps create division. Assessment results are often invalid

because they don't consider a child's traditional ways (Culture and assessment: Discovering what students really know, 2011). Part of multicultural education is taking into account students' traditional ways of learning. Assessments fail to take into account traditional or cultural interpretations of math or science (Culture and assessment: Discovering what students really know, 2011). The tests are not showing what students truly understand. "Only a fraction of actual student knowledge is assessed by many test questions" (Nelson-Barber, as cited in Culture and assessment: Discovering what students really know, 2011, p. 45). Combined with the type of questions asked on tests, test creators and teachers often resort to labeling when it comes to student achievement and assessment. Teachers and test creators often assume that if students are of the same race or ethnic background, they share the same culture; when in reality, they often will not have this commonality (Culture and assessment: Discovering what students really know, 2011). It does not help when tests such as the SAT prove that a discrepancy does exist, at least class wise, when it comes to test scores. "Even the College Board, which administers the SAT, found in their own analysis that students whose families make more than \$220,000 a year score nearly 400 points more than students whose family income was less than \$20,000" (Marklein, 2009, as quoted in Nieto & Bode, 2012, p.117).

As mentioned previously, assessments, like those required for NCLB, impact the curriculum that students study. Because of the stressing of performance on tests, a teacher's ability to include curriculum that is creative and challenging to students is hindered (Nieto & Bode, 2012). With creativity being thrown aside, being able to appeal educationally to all students is at risk. The increase in assessments adds to an increase in students at risk. Students now spend weeks taking standardized tests, which connects to teachers teaching how to take/score well on a test as oppose to actually learning (Nieto & Bode, 2012). Too often

students feel like they are being left behind. Because many states are making passing a standardized test a graduation requirement, more students are dropping out (Nieto & Bode, 2012). However, the end result is the same; testing and test scores are what matter the most. Once again, teachers are driven to teach towards the test (Nieto & Bode, 2012).

Evidence of the Problem

The purpose of the action research project was to determine if there was a lack of multicultural literature studied within the regular level sophomore English class. The teacher researcher was also interested in discovering whether or not the students felt connected to what they were reading. Finally, how important is the students own ethnic backgrounds, culture, religion, economic status, gender, and/or sexual orientation in regards to how he/she performs in class. In the research project, participating students (n=82) were tenth grade students of the teacher researcher. The teacher researcher used three tools to document evidence: a teacher survey, a parent survey, and a student survey. Documentation of the problem occurred August 24th-September 7th, 2012.

Chapter 3

The Solution Strategy

Review of the Literature

To logically understand a way to enhance students' concepts about multicultural literature and diversity, a clear understanding of the history and impact on teachers need to be addressed. Only then can a possible solution to the problem be recommended by the teacher researcher.

Understanding History.

To begin with, people must realize that there is a history behind the perception of multicultural education. The Civil Rights Movement played a huge role in the awareness of multicultural education (Grant, 2008). As time progressed, groups such as the International Education Movement and Intergroup Education Movement wanted to include tolerance and diversity into educational curriculum (Grant, 2008). It is from these two movements that the need for change was identified in the educational system. Multicultural education became a necessity. Many multicultural supporters believe that a "person's point of view is formed at birth by virtue of one's ethnicity, gender and sexual orientation" (Multiculturalism in education, 2002, p. 2).

Teachers.

One group that is needed to make a change, are current teachers. Teachers need to be willing to adapt to the philosophy that they need to "know, care, and to act" (Banks, 1998, p. 7). This may mean a change on how teachers think about not only themselves, but also how they view their students. Teachers need to think of themselves as builders of a bridge that will link what is familiar to the students to what is new, therefore increasing their own bases of

knowledge (Chiariello, 2012). Teachers also must look at themselves and judge themselves in regards to social injustices, racism, etc. (Banks, 1998). If teachers are not willing to do this, then multiculturalism is hard to achieve. It is vital for teachers to understand where their students are coming from. Schools need to have strong connections to families in order for students to achieve (Nieto & Bode, 2012). Therefore, teachers must reach out to families and the school's surrounding communities for support (Dell'Osso, 2008). In order to make education equitable, teachers must understand social justice. Social justice means that a teacher knows all that he/she can about his/her students' demographics (Ameny-Dixon, 2004). Demographics are at our fingertips thanks to NCLB. When teachers make an effort to connect to their students' identities, students tend to have more success in school (Nieto & Bode, 2012). Since success for all students is a major educational goal, teachers need to be willing to make personal changes. Equitable education gives students what they need to achieve; teachers must be willing to change and adjust their teaching styles (Nieto & Bode, 2012).

Once again, teacher training can help teachers being able to handle different diversity related issues that might exist. Student teachers need to explore cultures different to them personally in order to promote a better understanding of cultures and the emotional development of their students (Szecsi, et al., 2010). In doing this, student teachers will be able to learn how family connections and values impact education (Szecsi, et al., 2010). With the correct training, student teachers will become stronger advocates for multiculturalism. Student teachers ultimately can become more cultural aware, and focus on higher levels of culturalism and the importance of cultural self-reflection (Szecsi, et al., 2010). This in turn can give student teachers direction once they are actually teaching in their own classes. Teachers need to be able to communicate to their students that they are capable of doing the work (Nieto & Bode, 2012).

Multicultural education are: dealing with inequality and helping to make equal education for all; due to equitable education, help in the raising of achievement for all students; and help students become productive members of society (Nieto & Bode, 2012).

To help create a more multicultural curriculum, understanding what should go into such a curriculum needs to be analyzed. First, people need to understand that the world-wide goal of multicultural education is to place emphasis on “multiple historical perspectives, strengthening of intercultural consciousness, and reduction of prejudice and all forms of discrimination as all members of a nation develop social action skills, become aware of the state on the nation, planet, and global dynamics” (Ameny-Dixon, 2004, p. 6). Connected, also, are the hidden strengths and talents of students. The definition of multicultural education is when all areas of school cover the needs and talents of students of diverse backgrounds to help in the equity of education for all (Grant, 2008). Therefore, multicultural education needs to be viewed as a tool. Multicultural education is a teaching tool where people learn about social justice, class discrimination, gender issues, racism, public housing, social services, and loss of freedom (Grant, 2008). In order to achieve the most out of a multicultural program, creators of the program need to remember that multicultural education “values diversity and encourages critical thinking, reflection, and action” (Nieto & Bode, 2012, p. 54).

In order to achieve the critical thinking, the ability to reflect, and to take action, teachers and students alike need to remember that multicultural education is valid both intellectually and socially (Multiculturalism in education, 2002). Social justice is a vital part of multicultural education. Teachers need to be aware of teaching in a social justice format: “ it challenges, confronts, and disrupts misconceptions, untruths, and stereotypes that lead to structural inequality and discrimination based on race, social class, gender, and other social differences;

...means providing all students with the resources necessary to learn to their full potential (material and emotional resources); ...draws on the talents and strengths that students bring to their education; and promotes critical thinking and support agency for social change” (Nieto & Bode, 2012, p. 12). Furthermore, schools need to recognize differences that exist. Schools need to learn how to affirm differences rather than deny them (Nieto & Bode, 2012).

If school start to accept differences, multiculturalism has a chance. Teachers, administrators, parents, and students need to understand the goals behind a more diverse educational experience. The goals are “a more equitable and effective educational system for ethnically and culturally diverse students, and a more democratic society in which there is much greater equality, freedom and justice in all spheres of life” (Gray, 2004, p. 39, as quoted in Grant, 2008, p. 2). Through multicultural education, society can change. Multicultural education helps in the development of respect and appreciation for all types of cultural diverse groups (Ameny-Dixon, 2004). In order to gain respect and appreciation of others, the five dimensions of multicultural education need to be included in a school’s curriculum.---1. Content integration; 2. Knowledge construction-help kids to understand and become critical readers and thinkers; 3. Teachers change their methods to help all students achieve; 4. Reduce prejudice in the classroom; 5. Change the school culture and social structure-get rid of labeling and grouping (Banks, 1998).Multicultural education is inclusive (Nieto & Bode, 2012).

“Recovering, preserving, and renewing cultural identity is an ongoing process of education, artistic expression, and cultural exchange” (Nieto & Bode, 2012, p. 346) A way to make sure that all students achieve, schools must add to a child’s educational growth and not just cover what the curriculum guide suggests. In order to do this, schools must examine the diverse needs of their students: talents, believes, cultures, language background, family structure, etc.

(Darling-Hammond, 2010). The new common core state standards open up the opportunity to incorporate culture. Multicultural education allows open discussions. Multicultural education allows the opportunity for open discussion to take place connected to human rights, social justice, culturalism, and history (Grant, 2008) Classes will be structured round issues of cultural diversity (Byrd, 1995). Along with the open discussions, impact on society will be explored. Multicultural celebrates diversity and therefore must stress social action (Dell’Osso, 2008). One major role is once talking begins, acceptance of others will be easy. This will require a change in behavior-talking, listening, will help enhance understanding and acceptance (Goulden, 1994, as cited in Byrd, 1995).

When teachers make an effort to connect to their students’ identities, students tend to have more success in school (Nieto & Bode, 2012). This includes all subjects studied. Combing subject matter, or interdisciplinary, is one method of instruction-combining history and world literature (Dell’Osso, 2008). When art and music are included in a school’s curriculum, students are more involved and committed to their classes (Jacobo, 1997). Music classes have their own special connection to multicultural education. Music education classes help students to develop their own connection to their own cultures ethnic music and the world around them (Jacobo, 1997). Being able to connect to their cultures and to the world around them will help them be more globally aware, making the human family sounder. As quoted by Schmid (1994), “music and the other arts offer a unique course to both the celebration and the pursuit for those humans, unifying factors that may keep us together (in Jacobo, 1997, p. 3)

For multicultural education to become a part of a school’s curriculum, many groups must work together. Partnerships with parents, students, administrators, and teachers is needed so a better understanding of the cultural demographics of the school can be studied and taken into

account bias (Culture and assessment: Discovering what students really know, 2011). All students should have an equal opportunity to explore diversity. There is a need for equitable resources for all students. Money to support multicultural education must increase. Funding will have to be increased from the federal and state level (Darling-Hammond, 2010). For education to truly be equal on all levels, funding, materials, teachers, etc. need to be readily available for all areas of the country. After all, equality education means that all students and teachers have access to the same resources and opportunities (Nieto & Bode, 2012, p. 9).

To work on achieving equality and multicultural orient curriculum one model to explore is a model designed by Carol D. Lee. “When we asked Carol D. Lee to share some ideas about teaching with a cultural modeling framework she reminded us that it requires teachers to complete a detailed analysis of what students know and what their out-of-school experiences are like. Student knowledge and experience can be joined with the strategies required for reading with understanding different types of texts that involve prior knowledge, text structures, vocabulary, and goals. This work can be the beginning of an intellectual journey that is rewarding for both teachers and students” (as cited in Risko & Walker-Dalhouse, p. 100). It is important to always keep in mind what the child already knows. The cultural modeling designed by C.D. Lee involves connections between content, literacy, and the knowledge and experiences of students (Lee, 2001 & 2004, as cited in Risko & Walker-Dalhouse, 2007). This model also helps students activate prior knowledge, understand literary terms better, and write about what they have read (Risko & Walker-Dalhouse, 2007). Application of what is studied is important to multicultural education. C.D. Lee’s model includes respect for other cultures and differences in general (Lee, 2007; & Lee, Rosenfeld, Mendenhall, Rivers, & Tynes, 2004, as cited in Risko &

Walker-Dalhouse, 2007). Her model allows students to explore, understand, and apply different cultures to their own lives.

Beside, Carol D. Lee's model, other models are also available to explore. To help Herrick High School (located in New York) achieve its goals of globalization and multiculturalism, they were not afraid to have guest speakers, buy new classroom materials, include a teacher training program, and examine academic journals (Hu, 2008). New Jersey, Connecticut, North Carolina, Indiana, and more than 20 other states have created task forces to study globalization and education (Hu, 2008). Major corporation and countries other than the United States have joined forces to help improve children's education. The Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation along with a nationwide campaign by Asia Society have invested money in schools that want to encourage integrated global awareness as part of their curriculums (Hu, 2008). Finally, the creation of immersion schools could be a way to solve the problem (Miller, 2011). Immersion schools are open to diversity and multicultural education.

Closely connected to the curriculum are assessments, including No Child Left Behind. Sharon Nelson-Barber, formerly the Director of WestEd's Center for the study of Culture and Language Education, a center that focuses on how a person's economic status states that language and culture play a role in how well students perform on standardized tests (Culture and assessment: Discovering what students really know, 2011). Currently, these areas are not examined when looking at test scores. If No Child Left Behind must provide all students the best education possible (Beveridge, 2010), then tests need to be redesigned. Test developers and teachers need to do a better job of assessing poor test results in regards to cultural bias (Culture and assessment: Discovering what students really know, 2011). Perhaps new ways of assessment need to be created. A possible solution to the issue of standardized tests is to use performance

based forms of assessment; portfolios, performance tasks, and student exhibitions (Nieto & Bode, 2012).

Included in the change will have to be the materials used in literature classes. There are three major functions of literacy curriculum, as written by Judit Kadar-Fulop (1988): to promote cultural communication broader than at home, with friends, or a specific location; promote cultural identity; and lastly, development of a person's individuality—all done with the use of cultural diverse literature and course study (Purves, 1991). When literature connects to students' culture, it helps students comprehend texts better and interpret literature better (Lee, 2001 & 2004, as cited in Risko-Dalhouse, 2007). Curriculum, K-16, connected to history, reading, and literature need to be looked at for its long lasting impact on students (Purves, 1991). This examination will act like a bridge, connecting students to the literature studied. After all, "To look at texts as the works of human beings who have a past and a culture is to see literature, ourselves, and our culture whole" (Purves, 1991, p. 13).

Therefore, curriculum must be redesigned so all cultures are represented and educated equally (Purves, 1991). Literature enables children to become involved in the lives of others; therefore, it can create multicultural understanding (Wham, Barbhart, & Crook, 1996, as cited in Szecsi, et al., 2010). Literature, written by white males only, needs to be supplemented with more current forms of literature and authors. Educators need to view "literature of men and women of all sorts of subcultures-racial, ethnic, national, regional, and local. Such texts should be read not as disembodied from their creators, but as intimate parts of their cultures" (Purves, 1991, p. 12). When selecting texts, teachers need to be aware of the type of texts they select. Texts must be enabling. Enabling texts "moves beyond a sole cognitive focus—such as skill and strategy development—to include an academic, cultural, emotional, and social focus that moves

students closer to examining issues they find relevant to their lives” (Tatum, as quoted in Chiariello, 2012, n.p.).

Next, students have an impact on education. If students can identify with what they read, they are more likely to learn (Dell’Ossso, 2008). Helping students connect to what they read should be important to teachers. Multicultural helps enforce the concepts that there is not just one way to view the world, no one specific culture is better than the next culture, and no specific political doctrine can fully represent the true definition of a person (Grant, 2008). Students are adaptable and are open to change. A student can connect to changes in his/her life through learning multiculturalism (Szecsi, et al., 2010).

Having equal opportunities to student multicultural literature is necessary. Equity pedagogy relates to the equal opportunities for all children, no matter what their economic or ethnic backgrounds (Ameny-Dixon, 2004). Currently, the educational system is not equal. The educational implications of “‘Equal is not the same’ means acknowledging the differences that children bring to school such as their gender, race, ethnicity, language, social class, sexual orientation, religion, abilities, and talents...; admitting the possibility that students’ identities may influence how they experience school, and hence, how they learn. Being aware of connections between culture, identity, and learning should in no way devalue children’s backgrounds or lower expectations of them...; accepting differences also means making provisions for them. When students’ cultural and linguistic backgrounds are viewed as strengths on which educators can draw and build, pedagogy changes to incorporate students’ lives” (Nieto & Bode, 2012, pp. 157-158). If student’ cultures were incorporated into classes, a whole spectrum of knowledge comes into play. In order for students to achieve, students must use critical thinking skills combined with cultural diversity activities (Jacobo, 1997). Students will

be more aware of new authors. Ethnic literacy will improve (Byrd, 1995). In turn, a student's own culture will be important to the learning process. A student's own cultural background will be validated (Goulden, 1994, as cited in Byrd, 1995). Text to life connections will increase because of the analyzing of more multicultural diverse literature. "The more text-to-self and text-to-world connections students can make, the more equitable and powerful dialogue will be" (Chiariello, 2012, n.p.). The end result will be making students stronger multicultural in order to deal with the rapidly, ever-changing, global world we live in. Long-term benefits---increases student productivity, helps moral and cognitive growth, increases creativity and problem solving skills, helps to build achievement and respect, decreases stereotyping and prejudice, helps students form a more adult or sophisticated view of the world (Ameny-Dixon, 2004).

Outcomes.

We have to help create an America where we have to balance diversity (Bank, 1998). A balanced America will help our younger society succeed. President Obama believes that a true education is well rounded (Beveridge, 2010). If this is true, then multicultural education needs to be incorporated into every school's curriculum across the country. Multicultural education is an essential part to school reform (Nieto& Bode, 2012). Without this reform, change cannot happen.

If this reform goes into effect, a person's multicultural self-worth will increase. Multicultural competence is when a person is aware of not only his/her own viewpoints on culture, but also his/her viewpoints on other cultures (Ameny-Dixon, 2004). Only positive can come from this reform. Tolerance of others will increase (Bryd, 1995). Imagine a world full of people who are tolerant of each other. Valid world views will improve (Byrd, 1995). The end result can only be positive, Once again, one school, Herrick High School in New York, after it

started to include a more diverse global curriculum, had some of highest standardized test scores in the state (Hu, 2008). Since test scores are part of the new way of assessing students and teachers alike, multicultural curriculum must be incorporated into curriculum sooner than later. Multicultural education incorporates all aspects of education: “school climate, physical environment, curriculum, and relationships among teachers and students and community” (Nieto & Bode, 2012). For the world to become stronger and more open-minded, multicultural education must be included in school reform. Multicultural education can lead to understanding and the ability to see life through someone else’s eyes (Nieto & Bode, 2012).

Project Objective and Processing Statements

As a result of an increased amount of multicultural literature studied, engagement in small group discussions in regards to the students own ethnic backgrounds, culture, religion, economic status, gender, and/or sexual orientation, students role played, completed research connected to media, created artifacts in a portfolio, and studied the impact of these forms of diversity that exist, during August 28th, 2012-January 15th, 2013, the teacher’s students were to become stronger global citizens due to their increase knowledge of world literature and concepts revolving around diversity issues.

In order to help ensure the project objectives were accomplished the teacher researcher:

- Constructed and implemented new lessons connected to multicultural literature.
- Constructed and implemented lessons connected to multicultural messages that exist in the media
- Designed research activities including parental input and the students’ ethnic background, culture, religion, economic status, gender, and/or sexual orientation
- Provided opportunity for small group discussion

- Created journal reflections based on the literature and media that were studied
- Created rubrics to grade artifacts placed in the students' portfolios

Project Action Plan

The following project action plan outlines the steps of data collection and intervention strategies that were implemented to complete the action research project. It lists the topics that were covered and the strategies that were implemented each week in order to accomplish the projected goal.

Prior to Documentation

Week 1 - August 13th, 2012-August 17th, 2012

Made copies of teacher survey

Made copies of student survey

Made copies of parent survey

Made copies of parent/guardian consent form

Pre-documentation

Week 2 – August 20th, 2012-August 28th, 2012

Emailed teachers survey on August 22nd, 2012

Gave parent survey and consent form, August 24th, 2012

Gave student survey, August 28th, 2012, fill out during class

Began analysis of surveys

Intervention Begins

Week 3-August 28th, 2012-August 31st, 2012

Introduction/definition of multicultural literature and diversity issues

Multiculturalism in the media-advertisements

Journal Reflection #1

Week 4- Week 5-September 4th, 2012-September 14th, 2012

Writing and multiculturalism/diversity

Gathering of evidence about diversity

Argumentation

Outlining

Small group discussion

Journal Reflection #2

Week 6- Week 11-September 17th, 2012-October 12th, 2012

Introduction to Issues Unit-Thematic Literature based unit:

“By Any Other Name” by Santha Rama Rau

“Two Kinds” by Amy Tan

Twelve Angry Men by Reginald Rose

“The Pedestrian” by Ray Bradbury

“Lamb to the Slaughter” by Roald Dahl

Issues in music

Impact of students’ ethnic backgrounds, cultural, religious upbringing, gender, sexual orientation on who they are-research activity using the internet, interactive survey with input from parents and/or family members and multimedia sources-end result-speech

Weekly journal reflections

Week 12-Week 13-October 15th, 2012-October 26th, 2012

Speeches

Small group discussions

Journal reflections

Bullying and diversity issues

Role playing

Week 14-Week 1-October 27th, 2012-November 28th, 2012

Literature unit----*Inherit the Wind*

Supplemental non-fiction selections yet to be determined connected to issues found in the play

Reflections connected to characters

Creation of artifacts

Week 18-Week 19-January 7th, 2013-January 15th, 2013

Literature Unit-*A Long Way Gone* by Ishmael Beah

Media influences

Audio clips from NPR-boy soldiers

Connections to self

Journal reflections

Creation of artifacts

Role playing

Speech

Method of Assessment

The final research tool used was a follow-up Student Survey. The purpose of this survey was to gather information from the student perspective in regards to his/her growth in regards multicultural literature, diversity, and their education. The survey was completed during class on January 14th, 2013. Once completed, students placed the completed survey in a box located on a

table in the class room. After the original survey taken in August of 2012, the teacher's enrollment dropped to 88 students.

Chapter 4

Project Results

The purpose of this action research study was to see if the incorporation of more multicultural literature would help the students feel more connected to what was being taught in their basic sophomore English class. Included in this study was if the teacher paid attention to her students' ethnic backgrounds, cultures, religions, economic status, gender, and/or sexual orientation in class, would the students learn more or feel more self-worth. In order to analyze the problem, three tools of measure were administered. One tool was a survey for teachers of English at the teacher researcher's school. The second tool was a parent survey given to the parents of the sophomores enrolled in the research teacher's English 202 classes. The last tool was a survey administered to the students enrolled in the English 202 classes taught by the teacher researcher during the first semester of the 2012-2013 school year. The total number of students involved in the study dropped to 81 by the end of the semester. The study ran from August 26th-January 15th, 2013.

Historical Description of the Intervention

Description.

A wide variety of methods were used as forms of intervention. Small group discussions, large group discussions, study guides and graphic organizers as aids to help in the analysis of literature studied. Role playing and script writing was included as well as the viewing of a variety of videos. Argumentation writing skills with the emphasis on diversity topics was a key emphasis as well. Blogs and journal entries by students were encouraged and expected from all of the students. Music and a variety of non-fiction articles were included in the study for

analysis. Ultimately, tests were also administered connected to the literature studied during the semester.

Week 1-The beginning of my project started with the week of August 13th-17th, 2012, where all of the clerical type of activities occurred. I made copies of the parent and student letters, assent form, parent permission form, survey letters, and surveys. I also created my teacher survey on surveymonkey.com. and the corresponding teacher letter. I also printed out the return envelopes for the parent surveys.

Week 2-The week of August 20th-24th, 2012, was still pre-intervention because I needed to wait for the parent permission slips to be returned once I handed them out to my students. I handed them out to my students on August 24th, as a homework assignment. During the English Department meeting as part of our Institute Day, I handed out the teacher information letter as well as told my peers to expect a survey to fill out via a link sent to them in an email. I was pleased by the positive response back from my peers about the subject matter of my study. By the end of the week I had 17 responses to my survey. I sent a follow-up reminder to the department on the 24th, reminding them about completing the survey for me. I also folded the parent survey and placed them in a return envelope for my students to give to their parents. It was a very tedious task.

Week 3-The week of August 27th-31st, 2012, I was finally able to start my intervention. On Monday, August 27th, I was able to collect the parental permission forms from most of my students. I gave a verbal reminder to my students to make sure that they brought in the signed forms. I handed out the parent survey letter and stressed the importance of the parents returning the survey anonymously in the self-addressed return envelope. This was handed out on Monday, August 27th as well. On Tuesday, August 28th, I had the students fill out their consent forms

along with taking the survey. The consent forms were turned in prior to completing the anonymous survey. The survey was placed in a box on the table located by the door as they exited the class room. Once I had the students' surveys, I started to analyze my findings. This was very time consuming, but seeing where my students' minds were when it came to their views on their own diversity and education was very interesting and somewhat surprising. I got one more response to my teacher survey and then I shut it down. I was able to print out the report from Surveymonkey.com. I also started to receive surveys back from parents. My students also completed the first of the non-fiction assessments required for the level as a pre-test.

Officially, my first week of interventions was August 27th-August 31st, 2012. My first intervention was a large group discussion and brainstorming session about what the word diversity means to them. The ideas were brainstormed and written up on the chalk board. This was the first opportunity to explore what the word diversity meant in general terms. They also were able to share their own viewpoints and definitions of diversity related issues. The ground rules were discussed in regards to everyone needing to be open-minded and non-judgmental. Every idea suggested was to be taken as a good idea.

We then brainstormed examples of literature that they have read that have included diversity related topics. It was obvious from their lists that they could not recall many selections from their freshmen English experiences. I then had them break into small groups and look at different examples of advertisements and fill out a worksheet revolving around the images that they saw. They had to discuss the images, slogans, etc. to the intended audience and relate the advertisements to stereotyping and prejudice. Connected to diversity we explored the concept of

advertisements and stereotyping. They examined print ads from magazines and I also showed some older commercials found online. Students were able to discuss in pairs and in groups the impact, if any, that these ads had on them personally or someone they might know. Ultimately, the students had to write a reflection in their journals about advertisements and stereotyping (See Appendix E).

Also during this week the students had to complete a non-fiction pre-test. The piece they had to analyze connected to diversity because it was about a real court case in United States history. They had to analyze a letter written by Bartolommeo Vanzetti, on the eve of his execution, "Dear Dante." Vanzetti wrote a letter to the young son of his co-defendant, protesting his own innocence and that of the boy's father, Nicola Sacco. Considered radicals at an anti-radical time, their trial and deaths led to international debate over their guilt or innocence, a question that to this date has not been settled.

Weeks 4 and 5-September 4th-14th, 2012 (Weeks 2 and 3 of interventions) I started my unit on argumentation/outlining skills and diversity. The unit itself ran from September 4th-September 11th, with daily instructions. (The final draft of the outline and paper were on September 21st, 2012.) This was a great follow-up to the role of advertisements and stereotyping. We first listened to music and discussed the concept of issues that exist in society as being a vital part of society and teen culture in general. We brainstormed current songs that they believe to be relevant to their generation. Working in pairs they used a Venn Diagram sheet to compare and contrast two songs and the issues found in the songs. After working in pairs they then shared their songs and ideas with another pair. Basic instruction on how to create an argumentative style outline and paper was covered. The use and importance of attention getting introductions and transitions were stressed. I was pleased with the discussions. I found it very

interesting to notice the differences between my three sections of sophomores. My third hour section was very sociable and did not want to stay on task. My fourth hour section did not want to discuss or really work with anyone else. My eighth hour was enthusiastic and very vibrant. Their discussions and insights about how people should be treated were inspiring. The only negative was the different work ethics of my three sections of sophomores. Trying to keep 80+ students all on the same page is a challenge. Ultimately, instead of doing a reflection these two weeks, they responded to blog topics instead.

Connected to this process, I handed out the topics that students could select from for their argumentation outline and paper. The topics (See Appendix F) were all famous quotes. Then we broke down the paper an outline section and its corresponding paragraph at a time. We literally took the outline and paper a section at a time. This continued September 4th-September 11th, 2012. As part of the process the students brainstormed ideas of support for their papers based on song lyrics, performers, books, television shows, movies, etc. Although I had the control of the quotes that acted as the foundation for the thesis of their papers, the support was unique to each student. It made the process of outlining and writing easier. I was able to start to get more of a read on their minds and how they view the world and themselves in the world based on the music, books, movies, etc. that they enjoy.

During the week of September 4th-September 7th, 2012, instead of a journal reflection, I had the students respond in a blog where it was more free-flowing and spontaneous for them (See Appendix G). It was my first time using the concept of a blog with my students. It was a little daunting from my perspective, but the kids enjoyed the freedom. Although my three sections of sophomores had their own reactions to the quotes: third hour was whiney and wanted to work together on the paper; fourth hour did not to work on writing at all; and eighth hour

wanted to discuss all of the quotes together as a group at first and had a hard time selecting on one quote and only one quote to write on for the paper.

I also started the Issues Unit. This unit is a thematic unit that included a variety of different genres of literature for analysis. We first brainstormed issues that exist in society in general. We drew correlations to our previous discussions when we did argumentation and analyzed commercials and advertisements. This week the main topics of discussion were homeless people, elderly people, mental illness, stereotyping of athletes, fears of the future, conformity, and technologies impact on society and our lives. Their second journal reflection revolved around these topics.

I also received the last of my parent surveys during this two week period as well. I was able to interpret my findings that I found to be interesting. I was disappointed with the number of parents who did not return the survey. I was hoping for a higher number since I provided a self-addressed, pre-stamped return envelope. I was able to see the lack of interest in what my students' parents thought about course curriculum. By the end of the semester, I could guess which parents either answered the survey in a more negative or non-caring way or those who did not bother to fill it out all.

Starting on Wednesday, September 12th, 2012, I introduced the Issues (Literature) Unit. After brainstorming, the first piece of literature that we examined was the poem, "Miss Rosie," by Lucille Clifton that deals with old age, respect, homelessness, and loss of mental capabilities. We also examined the poem, "Ex-basketball Player," by John Updike and discussed the concept of being stuck in the past, stereotyping of athletes, and a loss of direction. The students created sketches that symbolized one of the concepts from the poem. On September 14th, 2012, we read the short story, "The Pedestrian," by Ray Bradbury orally. We discussed the two definitions of

the word “pedestrian” prior to our reading. We also discussed technology and its impact on society during the time period when Bradbury wrote the story, technology’s impact now, and what the story predicted about technology in the future. I was able to supplement the reading with a YouTube video of a television show episode from the old television show, *The Ray Bradbury Hour*. The episode was “The Pedestrian.” Ultimately, they wrote a journal reflection based on the messages behind the short story and the changes seen in the television show (See Appendix H).

I thought that the two poems worked well with the concepts of being open-minded to the homeless and the elderly. This fit into the concepts of being more aware diversity wise well. “The Pedestrian” got them thinking about their generation communicates and how technology impacts who they are. We were able to discuss the pros and the cons to technology. This really did not quite fit with the concept of multicultural literature itself, but it did connect to their self-awareness, and this is vital to diversity.

Week 6-September 17th-September 21st, 2012, moving on to week four of the intervention process, I continued the Issues Unit with my students. We expanded our topics (racism, domestic violence, parent/child conflicts) connected to the literature studied. We added a twist on the topic of conformity, discussed the importance of one’s own cultural heritage, spousal relationships, self-worth, and history’s impact on literature. September 17th-September 21st, 2012, the main emphasis was on the non-fiction selection, “By Any Other Name,” by Santha Rau. We learned some British and Indian history so they could understand the time period of the piece. Although the piece was dated, we were able to connect the underlying message to their lives. In order to help them with this concept, I assigned their first research

speech of the school year (See Appendix I). For this assignment they not only had to ask their guardian/parents for help but they also had to research the meaning behind their names.

We also read a more light-hearted story written by Roald Dahl, “Lamb to the Slaughter.” We discuss the differences in his style of writing since he is a British writer. We also discussed his other works, *James and the Giant Peach* and *Charlie and the Chocolate Factory*. Although the short story we were reading dealt with spousal relations, murder, and getting away with a crime, we managed to make a bigger connection to his other writings and what their morals were. Due to the speech, no other writing was assigned in the form of a journal entry or a reflection. The students turned in their final drafts of their argumentative outline and papers. I thought that the two selections were excellent pieces of literature written by foreign authors that connected to not only basic Issues Unit themes, but they also connected to the research study in helping the students gain more awareness of foreign authors and the impact that their works can have on them personally.

Week 7-September 24th-September 28th, 2012. Students worked on the research part of the speech in preparation to type the required outline for their oral presentations. For homework they had to read a short story on their own revolving around the issue of heritage, assimilation, and child/parent relationships. At the end of the week we started the play of the unit. They had a worksheet about our judicial system that needed to be completed with the help of an adult (See Appendix J). The play itself, *Twelve Angry Men*, dealt with bigotry, prejudice, stereotyping, and peer pressure. Their reflection dealt with peer pressure (See Appendix K).

Week 8-October 1st-October 5th, 2012, week 6 of interventions, I first went over their non-fiction responses. We examined the concepts of bigotry as we went over their non-fiction to the Sacco and Vanzetti letter from the end of August. We were able to connect their responses to

Act I of the play. We also continued reading the play. I gave a mini acting lesson in regards to movement on stage and character development. We acted out the “Old Man” trying to get to the door sequence in the play along with the end of Act II. The three sections of sophomores, in their typically manner, reacted to the acting activity in their own ways. My third hour class could not stay on task and everything was a joke. My fourth hour I had to pressure them into participating. Once they did, they did loosen up, a little. My eighth hour class had a blast and really added character to their acting. It was a great exercise in how and why people might misrepresent the truth. Instead of a reflection in their journal this week they completed a blog entry each night about their feelings about the action of the play (See Appendix L).

Week 9-October 9th-October 12th, 2012, week 7 of the intervention. We finished the play and discussed the concepts of peer pressure and how it can affect adults as well as teens. I gave students the chance to practice their speeches in pairs as a change of pace. This was a more low-key week for the kids. We had been pushing hard, so some down time was good. The play was a great connector to some key issues that exist even in today’s society connected to diversity. We discussed how although the play was dated, the underlying themes were relevant to today’s society and what they could do to help change the future.

Week 10-October 15th-October 19th, 2012, the eighth week of interventions, I first assigned the Issues in Music assignment (See Appendix M). We were able to reconnect to our earlier discussion of music as a form of identity. We connected it to our earlier discussions about the importance of music in society and to different cultures. The students also took the Issues Unit Test. On October 15th, I started our study of bullying. The students filled out two surveys, anonymously, connected to school and bullying (See Appendix N and Appendix O). We

watched the movie, *A Student, a School and a Case That Made History: Bullied*. We were able to have some wonderful discussions after the movie.

Week 11-October 22nd-October 26th, 2012, the ninth week of intervention. Students first gave their speeches in front of the class. After speeches were done, the classes were broken into small groups that I selected. They had to write and brainstorm possible lines for a scene about bullying that they would later present in front of the class. I supplied the scenarios for each of the groups (See Appendix P). Class time was given to work in the groups. Once again, in regards to both the speeches and the role playing bullying scenes, my three sections of sophomores were different. In third hour, four students selected to not present a speech. All of them did participate in the role playing but it was hard to keep them on task and to take the assignment seriously. In fourth hour, two students failed to present their speeches. Their role playing scenes were at least serious, but they were not very involved. My eighth hour class, everyone gave his/her speech. Their role playing scenes were more involved and very serious. They treated the subject matter with respect.

Week 12-October 29th-November 2nd, 2012, week 10 of the intervention. The students first shared their music selections with the class. We were able to have great discussions in all of my classes in regards to the issues in the songs that they analyzed. We listened to many of their selections during class. Students were respectful and listened to each other's songs. No one was rude or said that anyone's song was stupid, which I must say, I was very thankful for and surprised after the problems with the bullying scenes and at least my third hour class. They enjoyed the sense of freedom that I trusted them with selecting music that was relevant to them but still appropriate for class. On November 2nd we discussed the concept of tolerance in

preparation for the play, *Inherit the Wind* that we will be starting next week. With third hour I talked about tolerance and the bullying scenes.

Weeks 13-16, November 5th-November 30th. Weeks 11-14 of the intervention. We first went over a power-point that discussed the historical aspects connected to the play, *Inherit the Wind*. We were able to have a good discussion about the acceptance or lack of acceptance of religions in today's world. We started to read the play out loud. We continued to read the play, *Inherit the Wind*, and the students completed the unit test over the play. In small groups they created newspapers dealing with either the time period of the play and its themes or they created brochures dealing with prejudice, banning of books, differences in religion, and the concept of small town values vs. big city life in contemporary society. The end artifacts were well done and well thought out (for the most part-I did not get 100% turn in rate). The students worked well together in their groups. I let them select who they worked with this time around. The end results reflected what they had learned to date in regards to issues connected to diversity (See Appendix Q).

For work outside of class during the Thanksgiving Break, the students read two non-fiction articles that dealt with background information in preparation for the memoir, *A Long Way Gone*, by Ishmael Beah, that we will be reading next. Students first had to respond to the question if they knew anything about Sierra Leone as a pre-reading question. After the reading they had to write a paragraph where they responded to a prompt about the articles (See Appendix R).

Weeks 14-16, December 3rd-December 21st, 2012, weeks 15 and 16 of intervention, were spent reading the book, *A Long Way Gone*. Along the way we were able to discuss and do additional activities connected to the underlying concepts of the book. We discussed and had an

activity connected to Blood Diamonds and rap music. We spent part of a class discussing the rap song, “Blood Diamonds” and the message behind the song. We were able to discuss, once again, the importance of music to ones’ culture. We also listened to an interview found on NPR about young rebel soldiers and made comparisons to the book and battles that are being fought for various reasons in contemporary society. We discussed how understanding what is going on in the world outside of suburbia is vital to their world. We started the discussion on the topic of how it really does not matter where a person lives, that the importance behind both friends and families is universal in nature. Friends and family transcends all cultures and all time periods. It made the world seem not so large. Connected to the book, this was an amazing assignment to end the action research project on (See Appendix S).

We read the book during this timeframe. Sometimes we read orally. Sometimes we listened to the audio form of the book read by the author. Sometimes they read silently. We had class discussions. They took quizzes, made predictions about the events in the book, etc. They took a test over the book prior to winter break. A speech assignment connected to them personally and the book’s themes were assigned as well for completion over winter break. Interrupting the reading of the book, a non-fiction article was introduced to the class. The students were able to work on their non-fiction analysis skills. One of my classes (due to a student intern) created their own original raps connected to the book and presented them to the class. The other two classes watched a movie instead.

Week 17-January 7th-January 15th, 2013. The last week and a half of the intervention had the students presenting their speeches. My third and fourth hour sophomores also watched the movie, *Hotel Rwanda*, and took the post student survey. My eighth hour class also did their speeches, but because I have a student intern, she taught a lesson where the class wrote and

performed their own original rap song based on different parts of the book. She taught them hip hop moves along with how to structure a hip hop song. They performed their numbers in front of the class. We did try to video tape them but the tape did not work. They too, took the post-student survey.

Students presented their speeches and turned in their outlines. They had their official non-fiction summative assessment for the semester. They also took the post research survey on January 14th, 2013. The last day of regular class for the semester was January 15th, 2013, where we had an overall discussion about diversity and a discussion about how the concepts would continue to be incorporated into the curriculum during the rest of the school year.

Interventions.

I selected the interventions that I did mostly due to my wanting to appeal to the interest levels of the students. I selected to include advertisements as part of my interventions because students are bombarded with advertisements constantly in today's society and as consumers; I felt a need for them to be aware of the stereotyping and gimmicks that are used to get them to buy certain products. It was an essay way to first address issues that exist in society. This led easily into incorporating music into my curriculum. Music is a vital part of most teens every day existence. I wanted them to feel comfortable with their music. I also wanted them to realize that the issues mentioned in the songs that they enjoy could be connected to the literature that we will be reading.

I decided to try my luck with them responding in a more relaxed way by having them respond by using a blog for a change. This gave my students some freedom to write and express themselves without added pressure. Along with this, including quotes connected to diversity helped broaden their awareness more.

I decided to include the two poems, “Miss Rosie” and “Ex-basketball Player” because I wanted to stress with my students the importance of acceptance of the elderly and having goals to succeed in life. These two poems also gave them an outlet to use their art skills in English class for a change of pace.

I thought that that the short story, “The Pedestrian” and finding the YouTube version would be interesting for the students to compare. Although Ray Bradbury is not a foreign writer, the issues in the story and television broadcast of the story I thought would make for an interesting discussion.

Santha Rau’s, “By Any Other Name,” gave me the opportunity to discuss with the class the importance behind ones’ personal identity connected to ones’ culture. I wanted to push them to think about their names and how they would feel if they were forced to change their names just because they are too hard to pronounce. I wanted to push them to truly think about the injustices that exist in the world. Connected to this selection, the idea of a research speech where they had to ask questions of their parents/guardians along with doing research on the internet, came to me. This gave each student the opportunity to connect with his/her family and to share a bit of who he/she is with the class.

Being able to share the short story, “Lamb to the Slaughter” with the students gave me the opportunity to show them a story written by an author they were familiar with from their childhood. Being able to discuss spousal relations, a serious topic, with the help of a somewhat comic story, was interesting.

Teaching, “Two Kinds” by Amy Tan gave those students who live in situations similar to the main character in the story to share their feelings about being in conflict with being the “good child” staying close to the values of their homeland and being the “bad child,” who wants to

become Americanized. Giving the students a chance to share and hear personal stories was a great experience for all.

I decided to make some additions to materials that I already had for the play, *Twelve Angry Men*. I wanted to stress the idea of stereotyping and how it has existed for a long time in society. I also wanted to stress the fact that even adults, at times, must deal with peer pressure. I wanted the students to start to think more before they react and/or speak.

I was excited to incorporate the movie, *A Student, a School and a Case That Made History: Bullied*, into my curriculum. Bullying has become a huge issue in society today. The concept of being tolerant towards all people, no matter what their sexual orientation may be, is important. I know that it was a risky topic to incorporate, but it is a timely subject. Too often I have had students who are gay feel loss and unaccepted at school and by society. I wanted to stress with my students that everyone, no matter what, is important and deserve respect and acceptance. I was excited to also include role playing in my classes as well. By the time this activity took place, I knew which roles I wanted students to play in order to see other people's points of view.

After all of the discussions about tolerance, I was able to add some additional questions on my study guide connected to the play, *Inherit the Wind*. The thought that two seemingly opposite viewpoints can exist at the same time and both should be considered was stressed and took on more meaning this year.

Ultimately, including the memoir, *A Long Way Gone*, into the curriculum was huge. Selecting a book that appealed to the music that many students enjoy listening to, combined with the concepts of family, friends, redemption, and the horrors of war; made the book a great choice. This book was included to emphasize the key essential concepts connected to non-

fiction (tone, audience, method, opinion, fact, context, purpose), but more importantly, it was selected to broaden their views of the world. History keeps on repeating itself when it comes to genocide, and I felt it was crucial for teens to become more globally aware.

Reflection.

I found myself becoming more aware of my students as more than just people that I teach. I feel that I truly got to know my students more for who they are as people. I have always thought of myself as a teacher who tried to connect to my students. It is not that I want to become their friend, but I want my students to feel comfortable in my class. I have always wanted them to open their minds and be more globally aware. I think that the incorporation of more multicultural literature and the openness to discussing diverse topics that exist in society, helped me to grow and learn from my students and for my students in turn too learn and grow from each other and from me as well. I think that I was able to reach many of my students, especially those in my eighth hour class since they were from the start more culturally diverse and open to discussion and academically inclined.

I enjoyed the challenge of completing the research and creating new materials to use with my students. I felt like my eyes were open wider by all that I was able to explore. Since I did the project by myself, I did not get the opportunity to work with another person as part of the process. I did share much of what I created with my fellow English 202 teachers and a few did do a few of my activities with their classes as supplemental activities. I was pleased with the changes that I incorporated into my sophomore English classes. I liked the changes and thought my students were up to the challenges.

There was some frustration on my part due to the differences in my three sections of sophomores. The immaturity of my third hour students did hinder their growth. My fourth hour

class was lazy and wanted the easy way out. They did not want to push themselves. This was not true for everyone in my third or fourth hour classes, but compared to my eighth hour that was so open and willing to adjust and discuss, it was hard. I could have spent twice as long on all of the materials with my eighth hour kids and they never would have complained. They were an inspiration to me that the world can become a more open minded place to live. I found it interesting that it was the class that was the most diverse ethnic wise that was the most willing to learn about other cultures and others views. My class that was the least varied ethnic wise was the least willing to learn and rise to the challenges needed to be addressed in my class.

Presentation and Analysis of Results

The purpose of this action research study was to see if the incorporation of more multicultural literature would help the students feel more connected to what was being taught in their basic sophomore English class. The teacher-researcher also wanted to see if she paid attention to her students' ethnic backgrounds, cultures, religions, economic status, gender, and/or sexual orientation in class, would the students learn more or feel more self-worth. The teacher researcher used one last research tool as a post intervention. This tool was identical to the first student survey with an additional section dealing with the specific pieces of literature read along with a few of the other items studied in class (See Appendix D).

Post Student Survey.

There was one post documentation tool completed and that was the student survey given to the students on January 14th, 2013. The survey was administered during class, to the three sections of sophomore English connected to the project. Out of a possible 88 students enrolled in the teacher researcher's sophomore English classes, 92% (n=81) completed the survey. There were a total of 7 Likkert statements for the students to respond to on the survey. The students

completed the survey anonymously and turned in the survey in a box located on the table by the door.

Figure 20 represents the student responses to the statement, “I have felt judged by my peers in English class based on my ethnic background, race, culture, religion, gender, and/or sexual orientation.” For post documentation, 90% (n=73) of the students strongly disagreed or disagreed that they were judged by their peers in English class.

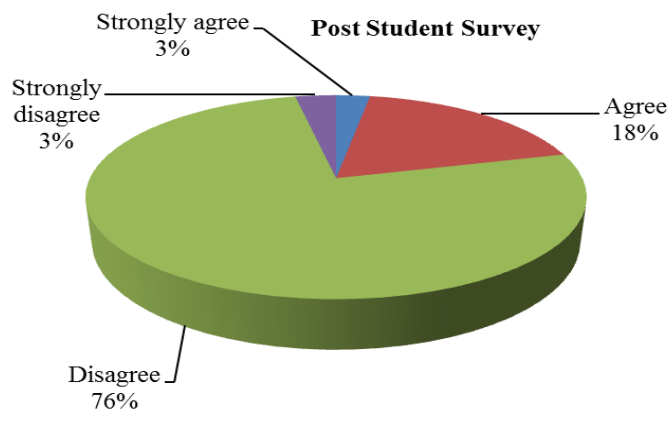


Figure 20: Students feeling judged by peers in English class

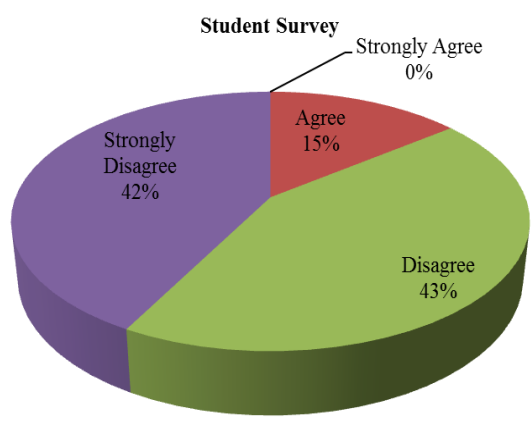


Figure 21: Pre students feeling judged by peers English class (n=82)

In comparing the pre and post student survey, there was a slight increase in the number of students who did not feel judged by their peers in English class. Although one less student completed the survey, there was a one percent increase in those who did not feel judged. There was an increase in those who agreed with the statement from 15% to 21%.

Figure 22 shows how students feel about being judged in other classes that they are enrolled in. The statement responded to was, “I have felt judged by my peers in other classes based on my ethnic background, race, culture, religion, gender, and/or sexual orientation.” Students, once again, felt mostly not judged by peers in other classes, or roughly, (n=68, 84%).

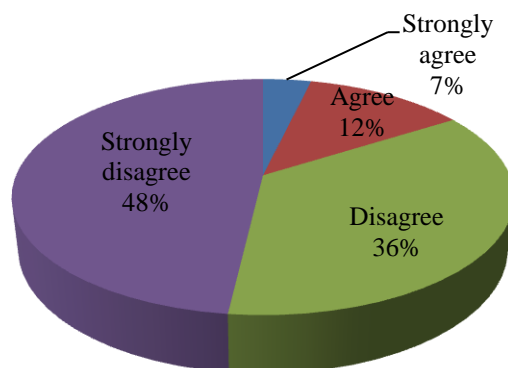


Figure 22: Post-students feeling judged by peers in other classes (N=81)

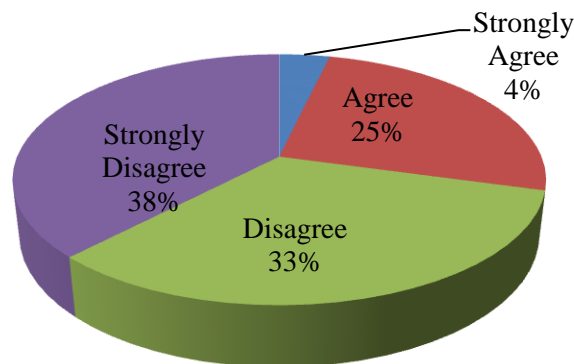


Figure 23: Pre-students feeling judged by peers in other classes (N=82)

The most marked difference between the pre and post survey is connected to the increase in those who felt judged in other classes. In the post survey, there was a decrease in the number of students who agreed with being judged. There was a change from 29% down to 19% or a 10% drop. This was positive even though the change did not occur during English class.

Figure 24 relates to the statement, “My ethnic background, race, culture, religious beliefs, gender, or sexual orientation is/are recognized by my English teacher.” Based on the post-survey, (n=56, 71%) almost one-third of the students in the class felt like I recognized who they were beyond being just a student.

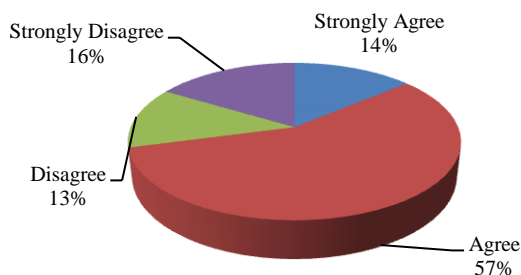


Figure 24: Post-student background being recognized by English teacher

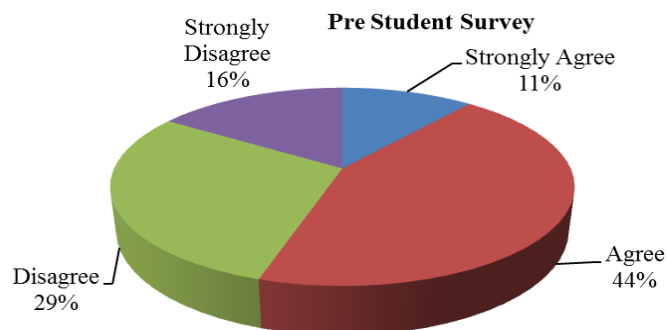


Figure 25: Pre-student background being recognized by English teacher

The change from pre to post survey, more students felt like I recognized who they were beyond just being students. There was an increase from 55% to 71%.

Figure 26 shows the student responses in regards to how other teachers judge them in class. The statement responded to was “My ethnic background, race, culture, religious beliefs, gender, or sexual orientation is/are recognized as being a part of who I am by my teachers.” More students feel like their teachers outside of English do not recognize who they are other than a student (n=42, 52%), compared to others (n=38, 48%) who feel like they do get recognition for who they are.

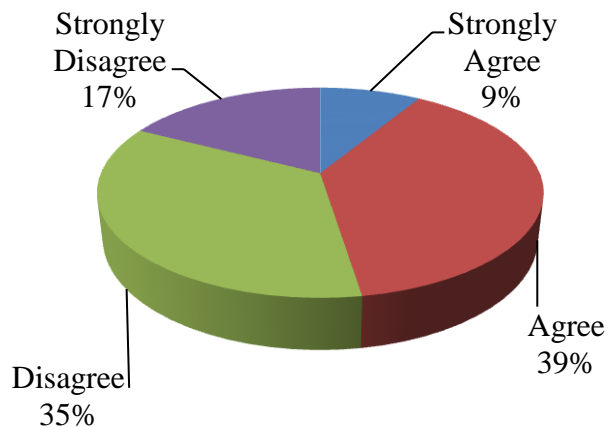


Figure 26: Post-students feeling other teachers judging on background

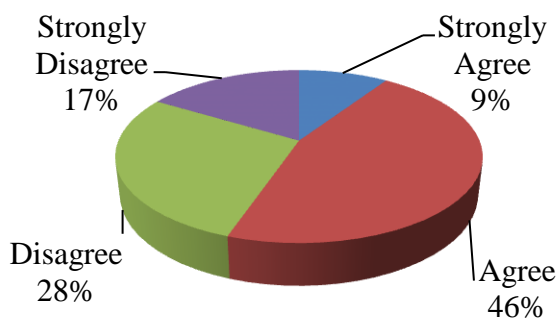


Figure 27: Pre-students feeling other teachers' judge

There was a slight difference pre and post survey when it came to feeling judged by other teachers. Pre-intervention was 45% (n=35) while post-survey was 52% (n=42).

Figure 28 relates to the statement, "There are times when I have felt uncomfortable or unsafe at school due to my own gender, ethnic background, religious upbringing, economic

status, and/or sexual orientation.” When it comes to feeling safe and comfortable at school, the students overwhelmingly (n=73, 90%) feel safe.

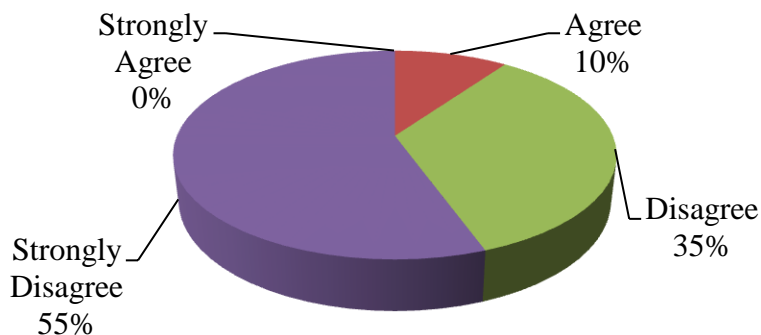


Figure 28: Post-students feeling uncomfortable or safe at school

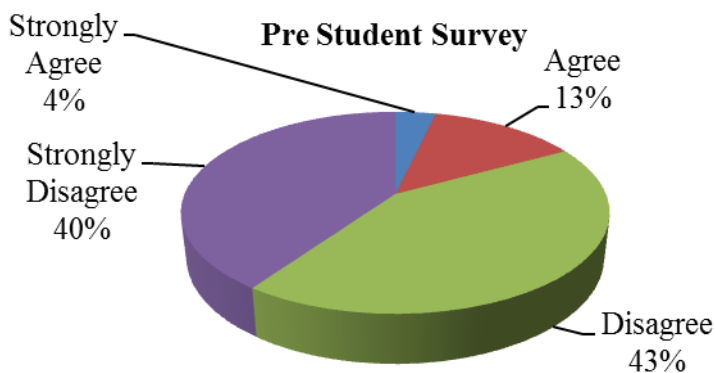


Figure 29: Pre-students feeling safe and comfortable at school

There was a 5% increase in the number of students who felt safe and comfortable at school from before the intervention to post intervention.

Figure 30 demonstrates the student responses to the statement, “I feel that reading and discussing literature about different cultures, ethnic groups, religions, economic status, gender, or

sexual orientation would add to my education and views of the world.” Students felt that reading multicultural/diversity oriented literature aided them in their views of the world (n=64, 77%).

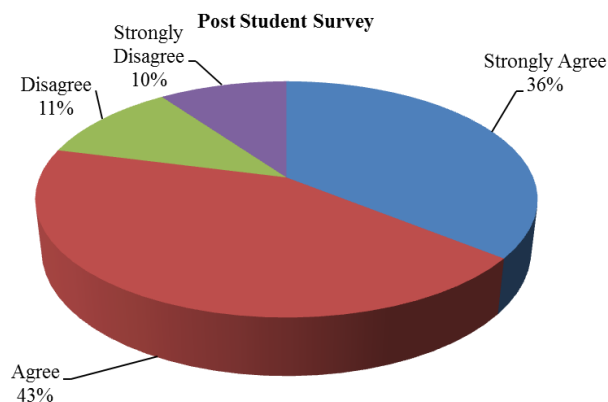


Figure 30: Post-students views on literature

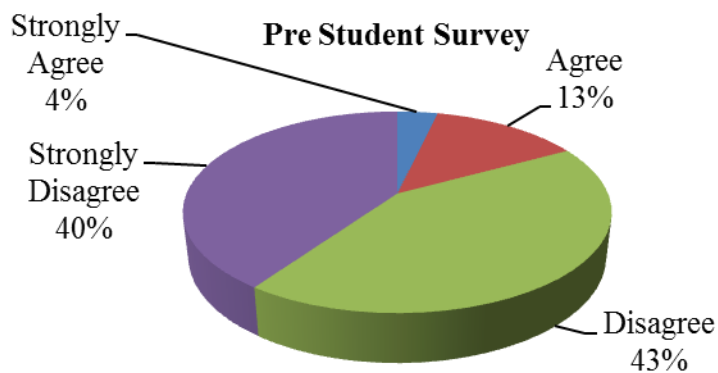


Figure 31: Pre-student views on literature

When comparing the pre and post survey and the impact of multicultural literature on their views of the world, there was a marked increase in those who agreed with the statement pre and post intervention. Pre-intervention, only 20 students (17%) agreed with the statement where post-intervention, 64 students (77%), with an increase of 60%.

Figure 32 connects to the statement, “My teachers take the time to get to truly know me as an individual based on my ethnic background, race, culture, religion, gender, and/or sexual orientation and not just a number in class.” Looking at the graph it is clear that students felt like their teachers get to know them better (n=55, 63%).

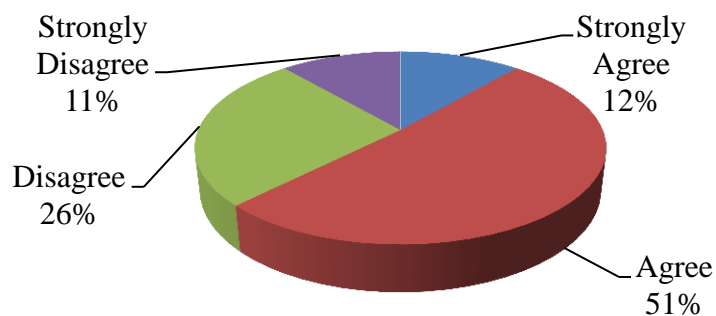


Figure 32: Post-teachers know me as an individual

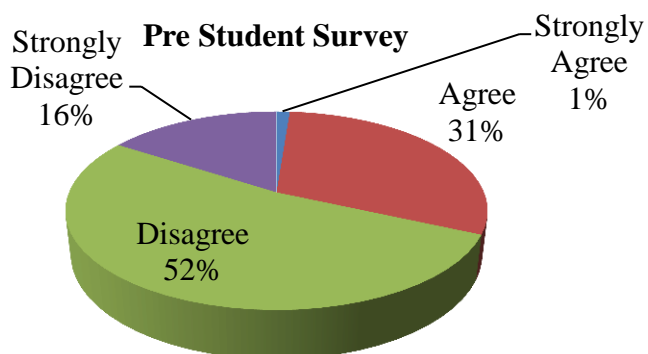


Figure 33: Pre-teachers know me as an individual

It is clear that students felt more like just a number pre-intervention (n=53, 32%) than post intervention (n=55, 63%) with an increase of 41%.

Figure 34, gave the student the opportunity to mark characteristics that describe who he/she was. The choices were ethnic background, religious upbringing, sexual orientation,

economic status, cultural background, gender, and race. Students felt more comfortable sharing their opinions this time around. Out of 81 students, there were 312 responses, compared to 267 responses from 82 students

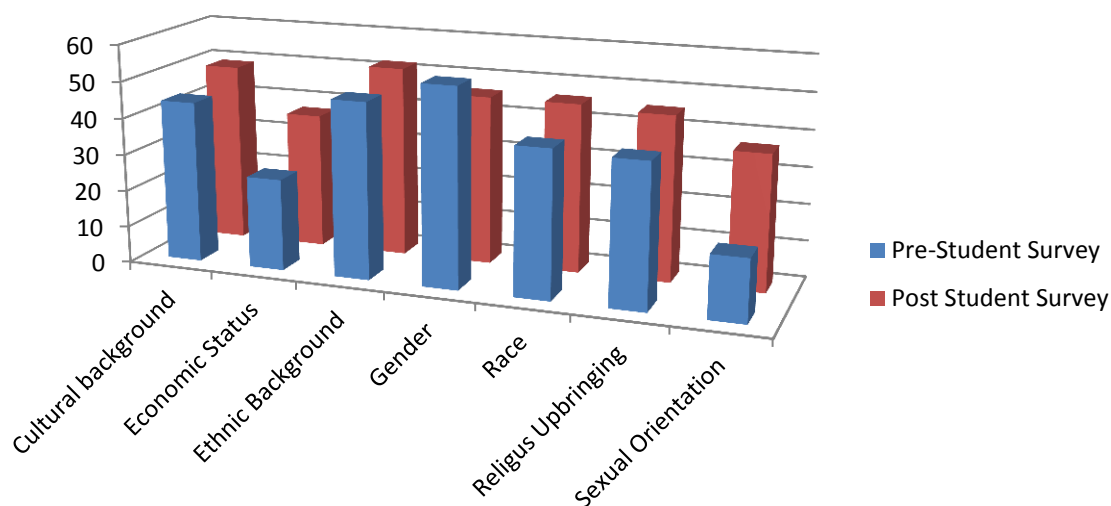


Figure 34: Pre/post student identity issues

From pre to post survey, there were differences in several categories. There was a marked increase in the category of sexual orientation. Pre-intervention, only 17 students or 20% thought that their sexual orientation was important to whom they are, where post-intervention, 37 students or 46%, felt comfortable sharing this as part of their identity. The only category where there was a decline was the gender category. Pre-intervention, 54 students or 66% thought that their gender was important where in the post-survey, only 46 students, or 57%, thought it was important.

The post-survey had one more section than the pre-survey. This last section dealt with the importance of the literature we read and/or activities that we did and if they had an impact on the students' views about diversity. All 81 students responded to the first nine items on the survey (n=81). The last activity listed on the survey only my eighth hour sophomores did since it was connected to my student intern, (n=30).

Figure 35 relates to the non-fiction essay, "By Any Other Name." Out of the 81 students 51 (n=51, 63%) felt that the selection added to their awareness about human diversity.

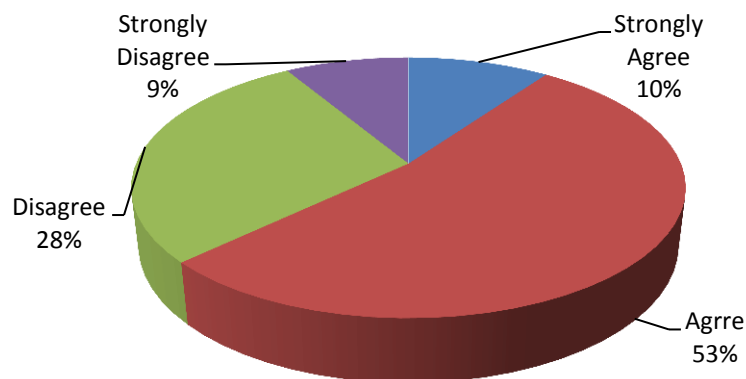


Figure 35: "By Any Other Name"

Figure 36 is connected to the short story, "The Pedestrian." The students (n=81) did not find the short story, "The Pedestrian" to be strongly diverse in subject matter (n=77, 94%).

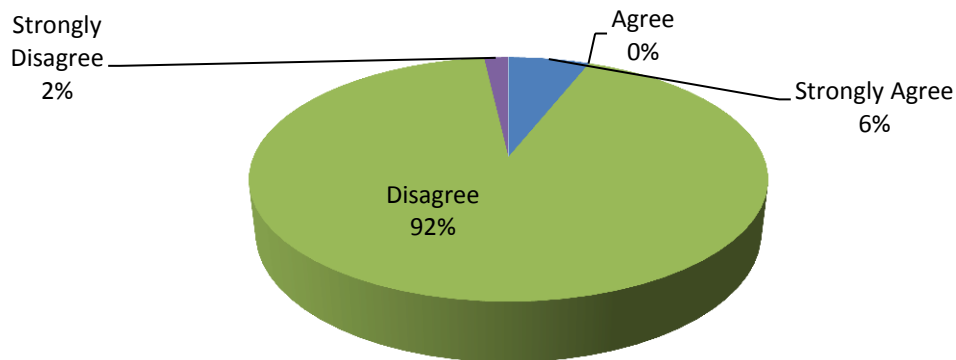


Figure 36: "The Pedestrian"

Figure 37 connects to the poem, "Miss Rosie." The students definitely felt a connection to the poem. Sixty-seven or $n=67$, 88% strongly agreed or agreed that the poem had an impact on them.

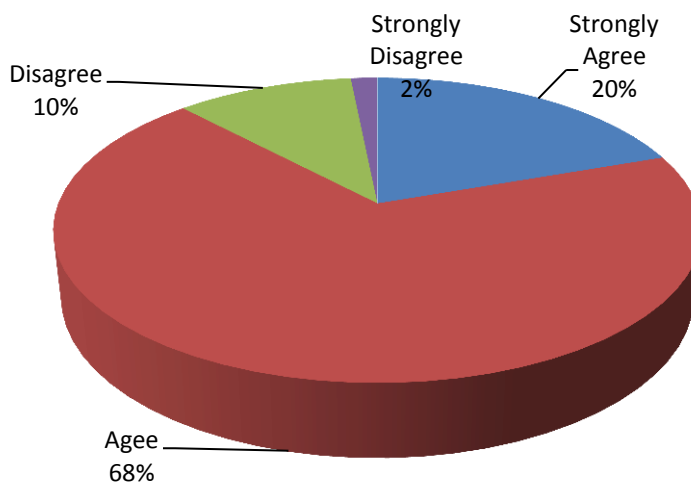


Figure 37: "Miss Rosie"

Figure 38 connects to the play, *Twelve Angry Men*. The students ($n=81$) clearly felt like the play had an impact on them since 62 students out of 81, ($n=62$, 76%) strongly agreed or agreed with the statement.

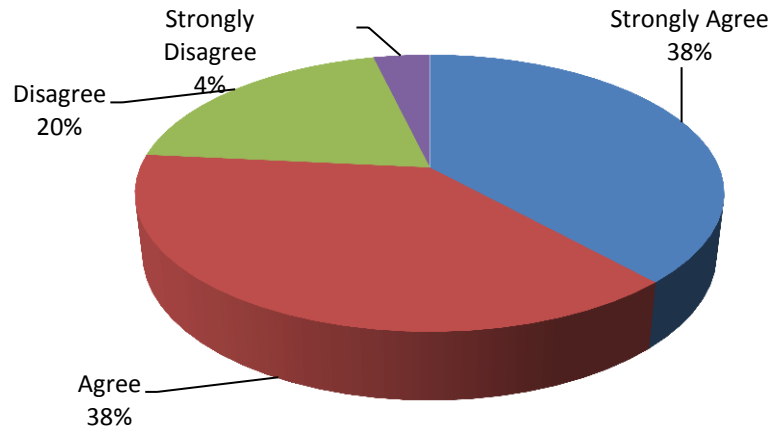


Figure 38: Twelve Angry Men

Figure 39 connects to the play, *Inherit the Wind*. The students felt somewhat of an impact on them personally in regards to the play since 46 students out of 81 ($n=46$, 61%) either strongly agreed or agreed that the play added to their concept of diversity.

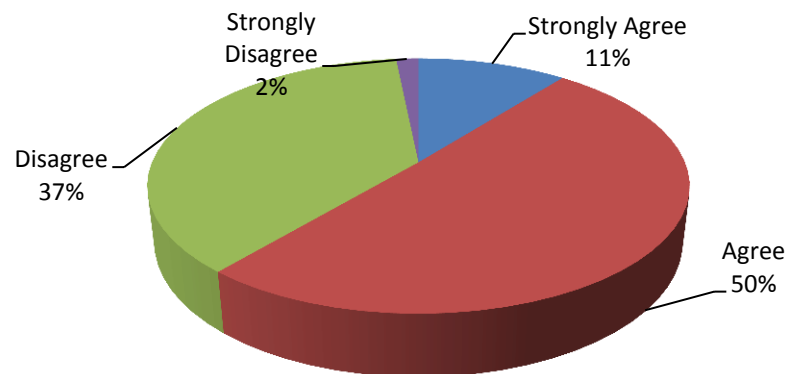


Figure 39: Inherit the Wind

Figure 40 relates to the book, *A Long Way Gone*. The book, *A Long Way Gone* had a large impact on the students since 78 out of 81 students, (99%) strongly agreed or agreed about the positive impact that it had on them.

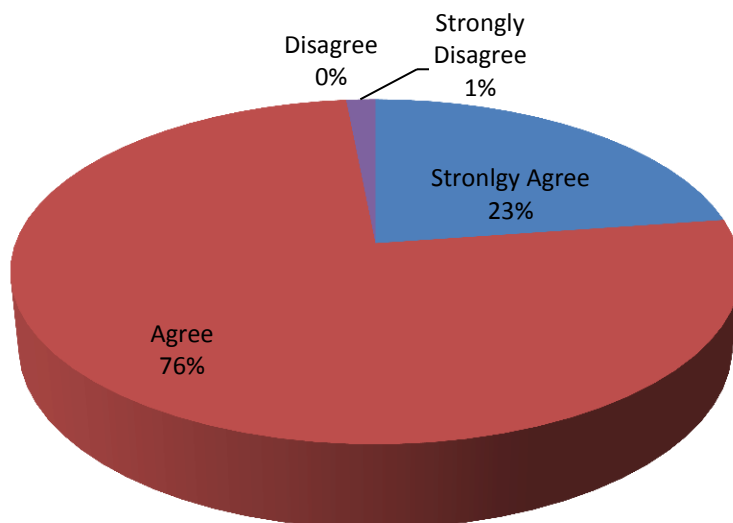


Figure 40: A Long Way Gone

Figure 41 connects to the video, *A Student, a School and a Case That Made History: Bullied*. The students strongly agreed or agreed since 68 students out of 81 felt an impact (89%).

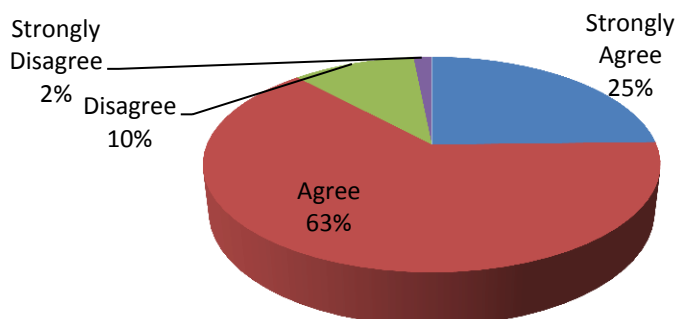


Figure 41: A Student, a School and a Case That Made History: Bullied Video

Figure 42 relates to the bullying role playing activity. The role playing activity connected to bullying found 59 out of the 81 students (79%) feel like the role playing had an impact on their views about diversity.

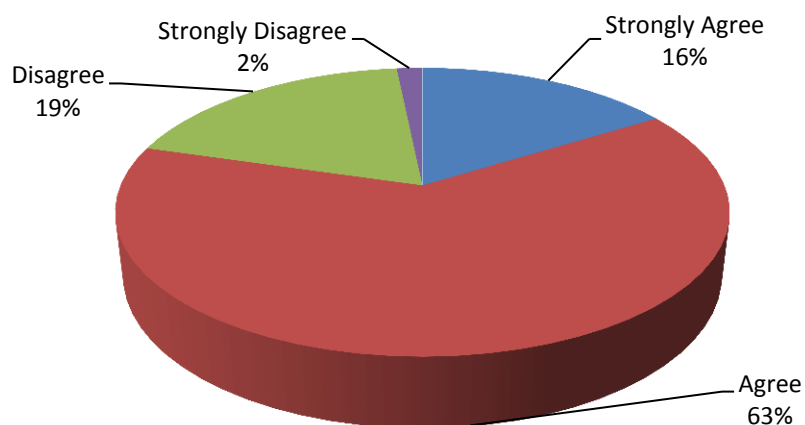


Figure 42: Bullying Role Playing

Figure 43 relates to the non-fiction essay, "Gangs and Girls." Reading about the impact of gang life on girls had an impact on 47 out of the 81 student (58%) who strongly agreed or agreed.

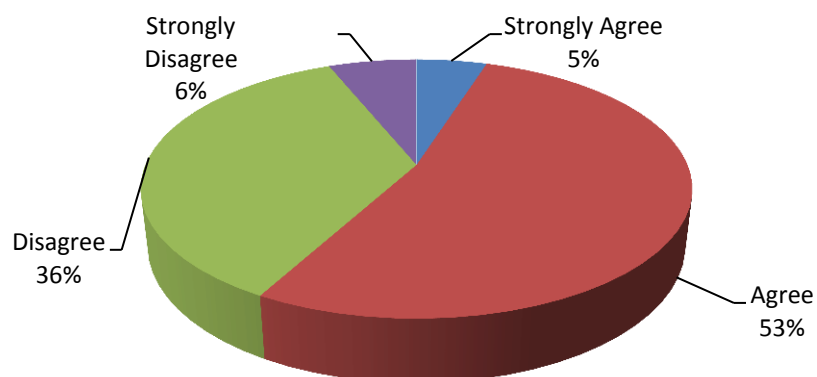


Figure 43: "Gangs and Girls"

Figure 44 connects only to my eighth hour's original Hip Hop numbers. My eighth hour class enjoyed and felt a connection to the original hip hop activity. Out of 30 students, 25 strongly agreed or agreed (86%) that the activity expanded their views on diversity.

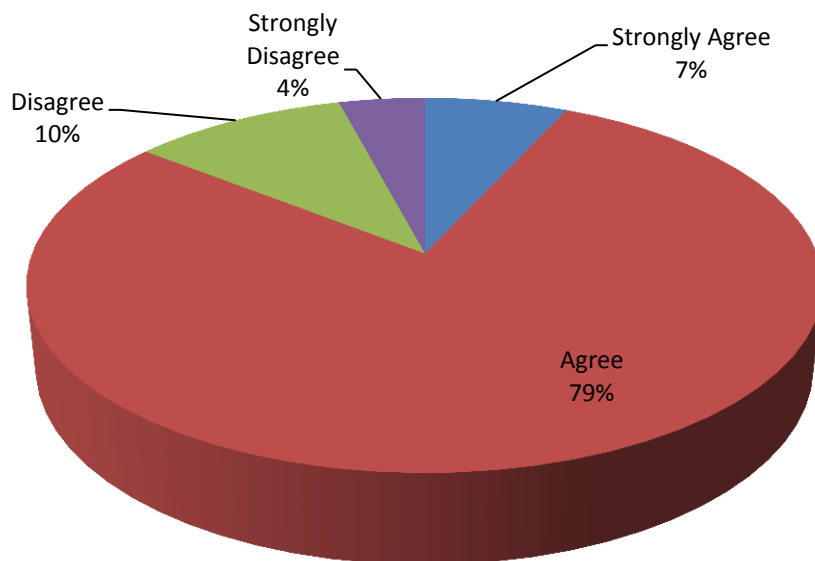


Figure 44: Hip Hop

Summary

Ultimately I was very pleased with the post survey completed by my students, especially when it came to them judging the literature and some of the activities that I did with them. I felt like all of my students grew and became more aware during first semester. True, there were two surveys where the students mainly marked off strongly disagree, but I could probably make an educated guess as to what two students filled out those surveys. In the process I think that the students gained a new appreciation towards literature and how it can have an impact on them,

personally. I also feel like a dialog was opened to where they felt more relaxed expressing their viewpoints. I think that they were surprised by the more relaxed environment in my class.

I was surprised that they missed the connection to the short story, “The Pedestrian” (see Figure 37). Otherwise, I was very pleased by their growth and willingness to share as seen in Figure 33, where 63% felt like teachers get to know them as individuals, compared to Figure 34, where 31% felt like teachers get to know them as individuals. A 41% increase was noted. Most importantly, when comparing the topics compared in Figure 35 (religious upbringing, sexual orientation, economic status, cultural background, race, ethnic background, and gender), there were more responses, 288 in the post survey compared to 267 responses.

Conclusions and Recommendations

Conclusions.

I conclude that I will continue to work on incorporating more multicultural literature into my sophomore English curriculum. I am planning on adding more awareness when it comes to diversity related issues. I feel a strong need to help my student become more aware of the world and that they have the power to help make a change for the better. I may only have four years left in my teaching career, but I still can have an impact on my students and they can impact me as well. I will work on trying harder to rope in the more immature students into the activities. I conclude that my students are more well-rounded thanks to the changes in the curriculum. I feel project really worked based on what they learned.

Recommendations.

Based on what was concluded, I will recommend that much of what I created be added to the sophomore level curriculum. I also will recommend that other levels of English start to incorporate more foreign authors into their curriculum. Junior English will not be able to since it

is American Literature, but they could include more ethnically diverse American writers into their curriculum along with literature that deals with more diverse subject matter.

If I could add something to my Action Research Project, I would have like to have also measured my students' grades and if they improved once their own ethnicity, unique diverse characteristics were recognized, since some of my initial research discussed how student achievement is connected to their diversity. I had no real way to judge this since I do not have access to their earlier grades. I would find this fascinating and definitely interesting.

I would highly recommend this subject matter to another student who is interested in multicultural literature and diversity related issues. I would try to incorporate the student growth in grades as well.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A
Teacher Survey

Please respond to each statement below by circling the answer that best describes how you feel.

- 1. The English curriculum that I teach is multicultural in orientation.**

Strongly agree Agree Disagree Strongly disagree

- 2. Students who are of different ethnic background, race, culture, religious beliefs, gender, or sexual orientation are treated equally by administrators.**

Strongly agree Agree Disagree Strongly disagree

- 3. Students who are of different ethnic background, race, culture, religious beliefs, gender, or sexual orientation are treated equally by administrators.**

Strongly agree Agree Disagree Strongly disagree

- 4. An achievement gap is noticeable between my students based on their ethnic backgrounds.**

Strongly agree Agree Disagree Strongly disagree

- 5. I expect less from the students who are considered the minority population at my school.**

Strongly agree Agree Disagree Strongly disagree

- 6. I take into account my students' demographics as I plan my lessons.**

Strongly agree Agree Disagree Strongly disagree

Please feel free to add any additional comments in regards to diversity and multicultural concepts that you wish to make.

Appendix B

Parent Survey

Please respond to each statement below by circling the answer that best describes how you feel.

1. **My child is judged differently than his/her peers due to his/her ethnic background, culture, religion, gender, and/or sexual orientation.**

Strongly agree Agree Disagree Strongly disagree

2. **My child's ethnic background, culture, religion, gender, and/or sexual orientation are assets to his/her education.**

Strongly agree Agree Disagree Strongly disagree

3. **My child feels unsafe at school because of his/her ethnic background, culture, religion, sexual orientation, and/or gender.**

Strongly agree Agree Disagree Strongly disagree

4. **My child should be exposed to literature about different ethnic backgrounds, cultures, religions, economic status, sexual orientation, or gender.**

Strongly agree Agree Disagree Strongly disagree

5. **My child identifies with the characters he/she reads about in school textbooks.**

Strongly agree Agree Disagree Strongly disagree

Please feel free to add any additional comments in regards to diversity and multicultural concepts that you wish to make in regards to your child's education.

Appendix C

Pre Student Survey

Please respond to each statement below by circling the answer that describes how you feel.

1. **I have felt judged by my peers in class based on my ethnic background, race, culture, religion, gender, and/or sexual orientation.**

English Class

Strongly agree Agree Disagree Strongly disagree

Other Classes

Strongly agree Agree Disagree Strongly disagree

2. **My ethnic background, race, culture, religious beliefs, gender, or sexual orientation is/are recognized as being a part of who I am as a person by my teacher(s).**

English Class

Strongly agree Agree Disagree Strongly disagree

Other Classes

3. **There are times when I have felt uncomfortable or unsafe at school due to my own gender, ethnic background, religious upbringing, economic status, and/or sexual orientation.**

Strongly agree Agree Disagree Strongly disagree

- 4. I feel that reading and discussing literature about different cultures, ethnic groups, religions, economic status, gender, or sexual orientation would add to my education and views of the world.

Strongly agree Agree Disagree Strongly disagree

- 5. My teachers take the time to get to truly know me as an individual based on my ethnic background, race, culture, religion, gender, and/or sexual orientation and not just a number in class.

Strongly agree Agree Disagree Strongly disagree

- 6. It is important for my teachers to recognize that the following idea(s) is/are important to whom I am as a person (mark off all that apply).

- ethnic background cultural background
- religious upbringing gender
- sexual orientation race
- economic status

Please feel free to add any additional comments in regards to diversity and multicultural concepts that you wish to make in regards to your education.

Appendix D

Post Student Survey

Please respond to each statement below by circling the answer that describes how you feel.

1. I have felt judged by my peers in class based on my ethnic background, race, culture, religion, gender, and/or sexual orientation.

English Class

Strongly agree Agree Disagree Strongly disagree

Other Classes

Strongly agree Agree Disagree Strongly disagree

2. My ethnic background, race, culture, religious beliefs, gender, or sexual orientation is/are recognized as being a part of who I am as a person by my teacher(s).

English Class

Strongly agree Agree Disagree Strongly disagree

Other Classes

Strongly agree Agree Disagree Strongly disagree

3. **There are times when I have felt uncomfortable or unsafe at school due to my own gender, ethnic background, religious upbringing, economic status, and/or sexual orientation.**

Strongly agree Agree Disagree Strongly disagree

4. **I feel that reading and discussing literature about different cultures, ethnic groups, religions, economic status, gender, or sexual orientation would add to my education and views of the world.**

Strongly agree Agree Disagree Strongly disagree

5. **My teachers take the time to get to truly know me as an individual based on my ethnic background, race, culture, religion, gender, and/or sexual orientation and not just a number in class.**

Strongly agree Agree Disagree Strongly disagree

6. **It is important for my teachers to recognize that the following idea(s) is/are not important to who I am as a person (mark off all that apply).**

_____ **ethnic background**

_____ **cultural background**

_____ **religious upbringing**

_____ **gender**

_____ **sexual orientation**

_____ **race**

_____ **economic status**

7. Please reflect on the multicultural literature and activities that we have studied/completed so far this school year in regards to if you feel that the piece had an impact on your awareness about diversity

“By Any Other Name”

Strongly agree Agree Disagree Strongly disagree

“The Pedestrian”

Strongly agree Agree Disagree Strongly disagree

“Miss Rosie”

Strongly agree Agree Disagree Strongly disagree

Twelve Angry Men

Strongly agree Agree Disagree Strongly disagree

Inherit the Wind

Strongly agree Agree Disagree Strongly disagree

A Long Way Gone

Strongly agree Agree Disagree Strongly disagree

Bullied video

Strongly agree Agree Disagree Strongly disagree

Bullying Role Playing

Strongly agree Agree Disagree Strongly disagree

“Gangsta...Girls”

Strongly agree Agree Disagree Strongly disagree

Original Rap/Hip-Hop

Strongly agree Agree Disagree Strongly disagree

Appendix E

Student Reflection #1-Advertisements

After the examination of advertisements and commercials during class this week, you should have a better understanding about the use of stereotyping used in advertisements. Do you have any strong feelings and thoughts about the messages that you saw this week? Brainstorm some ideas for fighting back against stereotypes perpetuated by advertisements.

Appendix F

Diversity Quotes

“Diversity in the world is a basic characteristic of human society, and also the key condition for a lively and dynamic world as we see today.”

-Jintao Hu (Current paramount leader of the People’s Republic of China)

“Diversity: the art of thinking independently together.”

-Malcolm Forbes (Founder of *Forbes* Magazine)

“For as long as the power of America's diversity is diminished by acts of discrimination and violence against people just because they are black, Hispanic, Asian, Jewish, Muslim or gay, we still must overcome.”

-Ron Kind (Wisconsin Democratic Congressman)

“I am certain that most composers today would consider today's music to be rich, not to say confusing, in its enormous diversity of styles, technical procedures, and systems of esthetics.”

-George Crumb (American Composer)

“I feel my heart break to see a nation ripped apart by its own greatest strength - its diversity.”

-Melissa Etheridge (Musician, activist)

“In a post-9/11 world, diversity has become even more important.”

-Jane Harman (Former Californian Congresswoman)

“It is time for parents to teach young people early on that in diversity there is beauty and there is strength.”

-Maya Angelou (American Poet and novelist)

“The freedom of thought is a sacred right of every individual man, and diversity will continue to increase with the progress, refinement, and differentiation of the human intellect.”

-Felix Adler (was a Jewish professor of political and social ethics, who founded the Ethical Culture Movement)

“We need to help students and parents cherish and preserve the ethnic and cultural diversity that nourishes and strengthens this community-and this nation.”

-Cesar Chavez (American farm worker, activist, co-founded the National Farm Workers Association)

“We need to reach that happy stage of our development when differences and diversity are not seen as sources of division and distrust, but of strength and inspiration.”

-Josefa Iloilo (was the President of Fiji from 2000 until 2009)

“What we have to do... is to find a way to celebrate our diversity and debate our differences without fracturing our communities.”

-Hillary Clinton (Current Secretary of the State)

“Diversity is not about how we differ. Diversity is about embracing one another's uniqueness.”

- Ola Joseph (Ola John is a Liberian-born Dutch football (soccer) player who plays for Benfica, in Portugal)

“Civilizations should be measured by the degree of diversity attained and the degree of unity retained.”

- W.H. Auden (Writer)

“If we cannot now end our differences, at least we can help make the world safe for diversity.”

- John Fitzgerald Kennedy (35th President)

“The wave of the future is not the conquest of the world by a single dogmatic creed but the liberation of the diverse energies of free nations and free men.”

-John F. Kennedy (35th President)

“Human diversity makes tolerance more than a virtue; it makes it a requirement for survival.”

-Rene Dubos (Microbiologist, Pulitzer Prize for General Non-Fiction for his book

So Human an Animal)

“At bottom every man knows well enough that he is a unique being, only once on this earth; and by no extraordinary chance will such a marvelously picturesque piece of diversity in unity as he is, ever be put together a second time.”

- Friedrich Nietzsche (German Philosopher and poet)

“Diversity: the art of thinking independently together.”

-Malcolm Forbes (Founder of *Forbes* Magazine)

“Infinite diversity in infinite combinations... symbolizing the elements that create truth and beauty.”

- Commander Spock (Fictional television character from *Star Trek*)

“As long as the differences and diversities of mankind exist, democracy must allow for compromise, for accommodation, and for the recognition of differences.”

-Eugene McCarthy (Politician from 1949-1971)

“We all should know that diversity makes for a rich tapestry, and we must understand that all the threads of the tapestry are equal in value no matter what their color.”

- Maya Angelou (Poet and novelist)

Appendix G

Blog #1-Quote Reflection

In a free style response, react to each other's first impressions of the quotes found on the persuasive writing assignment.

Appendix H

Student Reflection #2-*The Ray Bradbury Hour*: “The Pedestrian”

vs.

“The Pedestrian” Short Story

After reading the short story and watching the television play version of the story, first discuss which society looked more ominous to live in. Finally, discuss what current society can do to prevent “The Pedestrian” from becoming a reality.

Appendix I

Name Speech

For this assignment you will be giving a speech about yourself; about the day you were born, what your name means, and other basic facts about you personally.

Steps:

1. Complete research about your name and the day you were born. Use the below websites *only* to complete the online research for your speech. Complete the handouts for your notes.
2. If need be, find out the answers to questions that you must discuss if you do not already know the answers to the questions. Complete the worksheet.
3. Create a bibliography page that includes the internet sites that you used to create your outline. Go to easybib.com and create your bibliography page for free!
4. Create the outline following the outline provided to you. Remember that your outline should be in TOPIC FORMAT only-no sentences should be anywhere in your outline!
5. Practice your speech/present your speech! This speech has no set time frame. You need to just make sure that you cover all of the topics listed in the outline!

Outline Format

I. Attention getter

A. Explain your attention getter

- 1.
- 2.

B. Birth facts

1. Date of birth
2. Name of hospital
3. Time of birth
4. Weight at birth

5. Length at birth

C. Full legal name

D. Thesis/assertion

II. Transition-day facts

A. First fact

- 1.
- 2.

B. Second fact

- 1.
- 2.

C. Third fact

- 1.
- 2.

III. Transition-name meaning

A. First nationality

- 1.
- 2.

B. Definition of name

- 1.
- 2.

IV. Transition-personal meaning

A. Why were you given your name?

B. Do you like your name?

- 1.
- 2.

C. Family heritage facts

- 1.
- 2.
3. Etc.

V. Revised transitional assertion

A. Nickname

B. Parents' names

1.

2.

C. Clincher ending

1.

2.

Attention getters----State an unusual fact about yourself, state a line from a song, book, movie, etc. that describes you, ask a rhetorical question---all of these must be done in topic format-**no sentences!**

Sample thesis/assertion statement---Now let me explain more details about who I am: outline would look like: E. Now facts

Clincher endings----go back to your attention getter and expand on it in more detail, tell a story about your favorite childhood memory, toy, birthday, etc.—once again, in topic form!

*Your outline must be typed and double-spaced!

*Remember that you will have to manually create your outline-do not use a default outline from your computer, it will not be correct!

*Only the first letter of the first word next to each letter or number should be capitalized, unless the other word(s) are proper nouns.

*Since you are basically writing short phrases-do not add end marks after your ideas-except for the outline structure itself.

In order to research the day you were born, only look at the following websites!

SPORT FACTS-

www.baseball-reference.com

www.nfl.com

www.nba.com

www.nhl.com

www.pbs.org/kenburns/baseball/timeline

www.fmnh.org/baseball/timeline.html

www.baseball-almanac.com

www.sports-facts.com

www.todayinsport.com

SOCIETY/CULTURE FACTS-

www.hotfact.com

www.popculture.com

www.automobilesinhistory.com

www.motortrend.com

www.popculturemadness.com

www.pop-culture.us

search.teach-nology.com

www.listafterlist.com

ENTERTAINMENT FACTS-

www.hotpopsongs.com

www.movie2people.com

www.tvhistory.com

www.gazillionmovies.com

HISTORY FACTS-

www.todayinhistory.com

www.cnn.com

www.historychannel.com

www.historyorb.com

www.politicalgraveyard.com

www.on-this-day.com (this one has historical/music/sport facts)

In order to research the meaning behind your name, look at the following websites, only!

www.name-meanings.com

www.behindthename.com

www.kabalarians.com

www.babyzone.com/babynames

Research Questions

1. List and explain one major historical event that happened either on your specific month, date, and year of birth, list and explain one historical event that happened in the same month and date of your birth, or list and explain one historical event that happened during the month of your birth.
2. List one sports score/event and explain it from the date, month, and year of your birth, or during the month and year of your birth.
3. List one movie and explain facts about it that was popular during the month and year of your birth.

4. List one television show and explain facts about it that was popular during the month and year of your birth.

5. List one song and discuss it that was popular during the month and year of your birth.

6. List and discuss one famous car from the month and year of your birth.

7. From the www.popculturemadness.com website, what is one crazy idea that you discovered about the year you were born?

8. What is/are the nationality (ies) or usage of your first name?

9. What does your name literally mean?

Questions to ask your parent/guardian/or a relative

10-12. What is the name of the hospital that you were born and where is it located (city/state or city/country if born in a foreign country)

13-16. On what date, month, year, and time were you born?

17. How much did you weigh?

18. How long were you at birth?

19. Is there any significance to why you were named what you were named? (For example, I was named after my Godmother)

20. What country (countries) did your relatives and descendants originally come from?

21. What generation of your family was the last to be born in another country?

22-23. Do you celebrate any holidays in special ways because of your ethnic origins? If yes, list one and explain what it celebrates. If no, what is your family's favorite holiday to celebrate? Why?

24-25. Can you speak or understand any of your family's original language? If yes, what language do you speak or understand?

26-28. Was anyone in your family a victim or prejudice or discrimination as a result of nationality and ethnic roots? If so, what happened? How did that make you feel?

29-30. Do you think discrimination often has its basis in ignorance and insecurity? Explain your answer.

31-33. If someone berated you or insulted you because of your ethnicity, what would you do? Why? What can you do to stop discrimination against your country of origin?

34-35. What makes you proud of your ethnicity?

Appendix J

Judicial Questionnaire

For this assignment you will be interviewing an adult whose opinion and judgment you value and respect. This adult may be a parent, guardian, sibling, teacher, coach, activity sponsor, or even a neighbor. Once you decide who to interview, fill out the required information and write down that individual's responses to the questions.

Person you are interviewing:

Date and time of interview:

Your connection to that person:

1. What does the phrase "a fair trial" mean to you?
2. Do you believe every individual in our legal system receives a fair trial? Explain your answer.
3. Have you ever served on a jury? If you have, describe your experience. If you have not, would you like to serve? Why or why not?
4. Do you agree with the principle that it is an adult's civic duty to serve on a jury? Explain your answer.
5. Did you ever disagree with a jury's recommended verdict? What were the circumstances? Why did you disagree?

6. Why do you think so many people complain about courtroom verdicts?

7. Do you think juries are always fair and impartial? Explain your answer.

8. Do you think a juror might weigh and consider his personal experiences, good or bad, when trying to decide guilt or innocence? Explain your answer.

9. In the novel *To Kill a Mockingbird*, Scout learns to think about matters from another person's point of view and 'step' into that person's shoes. Do you think a juror should do this before he decides guilt or innocence? Explain your answer.

Appendix K

Peer Pressure

Reflect about a time when either you or someone that you know personally went against the crowd. How did this make you feel?

Appendix L

Blog #2-*Twelve Angry Men*

As we read the play, *Twelve Angry Men*, this week, each night please blog about your reactions to the characters in the play, their interactions with one another, their motivations, and relate them to contemporary society. Your responses should be free flowing but still reflective.

Appendix M

Issues in Music

This grade revolves around the world of music and how it connects to issues. You get to select your own song (from any time period, any type (folk, country, rap, blues, rock, etc.)). You will then analyze the song in regards to the issue(s) that are present within it. Follow the below steps in order to receive full credit for this assignment.

STEP ONE: Copy down the lyrics (words) of your song. Be sure to include the name of the song, author (if you know it), and the name of the performer.

STEP TWO: In one paragraph (or more if you wish) discuss the issue(s) that is/are present in the song. What does the song say about the issue(s)? Be sure to start off with a solid topic sentence. Explain what line(s) from the song help explain the issue(s). Be sure to list the line(s) from the song that discuss the issue(s).

STEP THREE: In one paragraph (or more) discuss why YOU feel the issue(s) in the song is/are issue(s). What impact do/does you feel the issue(s) has/have on society today? There is no right or wrong answer here. Just remember to support your answer with reasons.

Appendix N

Bullying Facts and Myths

In the blank write out the word TRUE or the word FALSE

True or False

- _____ 1. **Nearly one-third of American teens are involved in bullying.**

- _____ 2. **Fewer than 10% of American teens admit to bullying others.**

- _____ 3. **Students who are bullied usually participate in class and have good attendance.**

- _____ 4. **Most students who bully are insecure.**

- _____ 5. **Male bullies are not usually bigger and physically stronger than their peers.**

- _____ 6. **Witnesses often end friendships with the victim and feel guilty for not reporting the incident.**

- _____ 7. **Bullies have trouble making friends.**

- _____ 8. **Bullies do poorly in school compared to students who do not bully.**

_____ **9. Most bullies discontinue aggressive behavior in adulthood.**

_____ **10. Nine out of 10 LESBIAN/GAY/BI-SEXUAL/TRANSEXUAL
students have been bullied.**

Southern Poverty Law Center. (2010) *A student, a school and a case that made history: Bullied.* [Brochure]. Teaching Tolerance.

Appendix O

How Safe is Your School

In the blank, write either the words **AGREE** or **DISAGREE** in regards to each of the questions.

- _____ 1. Bullying is a problem in my school.

- _____ 2. Someone I know is sometimes afraid to come to school because of harassment.

- _____ 3. My school is unsafe for some students.

- _____ 4. I'm not sure what the procedures are for reporting bullying in my school.

- _____ 5. I've heard adults in my school make negative remarks about a student or about a particular group of students.

- _____ 6. I feel uncomfortable reporting bullying and harassment.

- _____ 7. At my school, there are no consequences for bullying.

- _____ 8. In my opinion, some kids deserve to be picked on or bullied.

Totals: _____ **AGREE**

_____ **DISAGREE**

Adapted from “Responding to Hate at School (www.tolerance.org), “Mix It Up (www.mixitup.org), and the U.S. Department of Education’s “Creating a Safe and Connected School Climate” (www.scusd.edu/safeschools) as provided by: Southern Poverty Law Center. (2010) *A student, a school and a case that made history: Bullied*. [Brochure]. Teaching Tolerance.

“How Safe Is Your School?”

Statistics



A Survey of 87 Students

Bullying Is A Problem at My School

Agree

Disagree

59.5% 40.5%

Someone I know Is Sometimes Afraid to Come
To School Because of Harassment.

Agree

Disagree

11.9% 88.1%

I'm Not Sure What the Procedures Are for
Bullying in My School.

Agree

Disagree

26.2% 73.8%

I've Heard Adults in my School Make Negative Remarks
about a Student or a Particular Group of Students.

Agree

Disagree

50%

50%

I'm Not Sure What the Procedures Are for
Bullying in My School.

Agree

Disagree

26.2%

73.8%

My School Is Unsafe for Some Students.

Agree

Disagree

32.1% 67.9%

At My School, There Are No Consequences for Bullying.

Agree

Disagree

11.9% 88.1%

**In My Opinion, Some Kids Deserve To Be
Picked on or Bullied.**

Agree

Disagree

3.6% 96.4%

**I Feel Uncomfortable Reporting Bullying and
Harassment.**

Agree

Disagree

39.3% 60.7%

Appendix P

Bullying Scenes

Scenario #1----Every day before lunch, a person gets his/her lunch money or lunch stolen.

For your scene you need a bully, a victim, a bystander, an ally, and if you have a fifth person, an adult figure.

Scenario #2----At least once a week, one student is physically abused by another student. This other student is a favorite of teachers.

For your scene you need a bully, a victim, a bystander, an ally, and if you have a fifth person, an adult figure.

Scenario #3----In the halls between classes, one student accidentally bumps into another student. The student who gets bumped into calls the other person fat or some other insult.

For your scene you need a bully, a victim, a bystander, an ally, and if you have a fifth person, an adult figure.

Scenario #4----During class, one student announces that being a homosexual can be fixed because it is a mental defect.

For your scene you need a bully, a victim, a bystander, an ally, and if you have a fifth person, an adult figure.

Scenario #5---Your older sister or brother keeps hitting and kicking you and says that he/she will hurt you more if you tell.

For your scene you need a bully, a victim, a bystander, and an adult figure.

Scenario #6----A friend starts calling you names, sending nasty text messages, and forcing you to give him/her things.

For your scene you need a bully, a victim, a bystander, an ally, and if you have a fifth person, an adult figure.

Scenario #7----A new student in class is a refugee. One student is making fun of the student's accent.

For your scene you need a bully, a victim, a bystander, an ally, and if you have a fifth person, an adult figure.

Scenario #8----You are a child of a lesbian/gay couple who adopted you when you were two. At school you are being called “gay.”

For your scene you need a bully, a victim, a bystander, an ally, and if you have a fifth person, an adult figure.

Scenario #9----You always do well on tests and quizzes and complete your homework. Someone wants you to let him/her copy your homework or tells you to send your answers to a test.

For your scene you need a bully, a victim, a bystander, an ally, and if you have a fifth person, an adult figure.

Scenario #10----Someone assumed because of your race, height, etc., that you are good a sport or specific subject. You cannot take their racist comments any longer.

For your scene you need a bully, a victim, a bystander, an ally, and if you have a fifth person, an adult figure.

Bullying Role Playing Evaluation**Roles-**

Bully	6	5	4	3	2	1
--------------	----------	----------	----------	----------	----------	----------

Victim	6	5	4	3	2	1
---------------	----------	----------	----------	----------	----------	----------

Bystander	6	5	4	3	2	1
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Ally	6	5	4	3	2	1
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Adult	6	5	4	3	2	1
--------------	----------	----------	----------	----------	----------	----------

Concentration	6	5	4	3	2	1
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Volume	6	5	4	3	2	1
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Class time	6	5	4	3	2	1
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Comments-

Appendix Q

Rachel's Character

Rachel says, "A thought is like a child inside our body. It has to be born. If it dies inside you, part of you dies, too!...I think the sickly ideas die mostly." (111) How did Rachel arrive at this attitude from the beginning of the play? What does this quote show about the growth that can take place in a person's point of view in society?

Structure-----

PARAGRAPH #1-

Opening Quote-----explain the quote----title of the play-----authors of the play----thesis statement

Quote #1-*(remember to include the page number for all of your quotes!)*

PARAGRAPH #2-How is Rachel feeling at the start of the play?

Locate two quotes from ACT I and discuss Rachel's attitude/concerns at this point in the play.

Quote #2-

Quote #3-

PARAGRAPH #3-How is Rachel feeling during Act II of the play?

Locate two quotes from ACI II and discuss Rachel's attitude/concerns at this point in the play.

Quote #4-

Quote #5-

PARAGPAH #4-How is Rachel changed by the end of the play?

Locate two quotes from Act III of the play and discuss Rachel's growth.

Quote #6-

Quote #7-

PARAGRAPH #5-

Revised thesis statement-key ideas from Acts I, II, and III. End with a final quote connected to Rachel's character.

Quote #8-

Appendix R

Sierra Leone Response

Step #1-Before you read the article, in a sentence write down what you know about Sierra Leone. If you do not know anything about Sierra Leone, then write a sentence stating this fact.

Step #2-Read the articles silently.

Step #3-In a complete paragraph (8-10 sentences in length), write what you learned about Sierra Leone. Is there any information that took you by surprise?

Appendix S

A Long Way Gone Speech

For this assignment you need to first decide which of the topic choices that you wish to discuss. You basically will be connecting the word to not only the book, *A Long Way Gone*, but your own life as well. Once you decide, complete your outline and a visual aide. After you have your outline and visual aide completed, PRACTICE!!!!!!! Your speech must be 4-6 minutes in length.

You must print out TWO copies of your neat DOUBLE SPACED final TYPED outline! I will let you select whether you wish to complete a sentence or topic style outline. If you select to complete and hand in and speak from a topic style outline, you will earn a half a letter grade higher on both the outline and the speech! You will not receive any extra credit if you speak from a sentence style outline! Do not mix the two different styles; either do an all sentence or an all topic style outline!

TOPIC CHOICES----

Family

Hatred

Revenge

Survival

Cultural awareness

Forgiveness

Friendship

Loss or suffering

Follow the below outline in order to make sure that your speech is set up correctly.

- I. Attention getter---Use a quote from the book, *A Long Way Gone*, which relates to the word you are selecting to discuss.
 - A. Explanation of attention getter
 1. Page number from book
 2. What is happening at this point and time in the book?
 - a.
 - b.
 - B. Define the word
 1. Commentary
 2. Commentary
 - C. Thesis statement (word to be discusses)
 1. First idea (Ishmael's life)
 2. Second idea (Event from your life)
- II. Transitional word/Ishmael's life
 - A. First quote
 1. Commentary
 2. Commentary
 - B. Second quote
 1. Commentary
 2. Commentary
 - C. Visual aide
 1. Commentary
 2. Commentary

III. Transitional word/your own life

A. Your story

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.

6.

Etc.

B. Explain visual aide

1.

2.

C. Lesson learned

1. Commentary

2. Commentary

IV. Transition/revised thesis statement

A. Impact of your word on Ishmael's life

B. Impact of the word on your life

C. Challenge the audience

D. Clincher ending-quote from the book

DUE DATE: _____

Your visual aid can be either a poster that you create on your computer or a power-point. If you select to do a power-point, you should have at least two slides-one for II and one for III (you may have more if you wish).