THE DEVELOPMENT AND ENACTMENT OF A MULTICULTURAL UNIT WITH FIFTH-GRADE STUDENTS: AN EXPLORATORY CASE STUDY

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This exploratory case study involved the development and enactment of a multicultural unit. As the population of the school continues to become more diverse there became a need to educate students to become more culturally aware.

The main purpose of the study was to raise students' awareness and appreciation for cultural diversity through carefully selected multicultural books. Three books were chosen for their authentic and diverse cultures and literature styles. In addition to the selected books, other components were identified including student projects, multimedia resources, and guest speakers. The secondary purpose of this study was to consider the contrast between the mandated curriculum used in previous years, and this multicultural unit designed to provide opportunities for students to develop their cultural competence.

This case study provided note-worthy findings that supported the idea of incorporating multicultural literature in the classroom. Students had a variety of reactions to the unit. Students' self-confidence rose and participation increased. Students proposed a call to action, remained after class to extend discussions, arrived early, and demonstrated empathy. The final finding was the contrast of the mandated curriculum to the multicultural unit. The multicultural unit offered: (a) writing opportunities, (b) complete texts, (c) speaking and listening skills practice, (d) authentic learning experiences through culturally relevant guest speakers, (e) personal student connections, (f) exposure to unfamiliar cultures, and (g) high interest lessons.

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

> *"The transformation in cross-cultural understanding occurs when people begin to accept that there are different ways of thinking and different values in other cultures" (Louie, 2006, p. 447).*

In 2012, the U.S. Census Bureau projected that by 2043, the non-Hispanic white population would no longer be the majority population in the United States; instead the U.S. would become a "majority-minority nation" for the first time. In other words, no group will represent more than 50 percent of the total population. While this may not seem like a startling statistic, it has become one globally, nationally, and locally.

Intercultural tension has been a part of the history of the United States since Native Americans fought to save their land and ways of life. Since then, other groups have found themselves facing the consequences of prejudice and stereotyping as well. The problem area is the disconnect among the various ethnic cultures. "The awareness of one's own assumptions, prejudices and stereotypes is a first step to be able to positively interact and learn from others. In this process lies the essence of intercultural learning" (Martins, 2008, p. 203).

This inquiry involved developing curriculum that I could use with students to support them in learning about cultures other than their own. From 2011 to 2017, the South Asian population more than doubled, from 11 percent to 27 percent, with an influx of students from India, Pakistan, and Korea, while the white population decreased from 85 to 65 percent in my

school. Because of this shift, I wanted to create lessons that engaged students in reading and responding to books that focus on raising awareness and appreciation for cultural diversity, including a focus on South and East Asian cultures, more specifically, the Korean culture. When I reviewed books in the school library that related to diverse cultures, I found that only three of the 354 books in the collection were on lists of recommended multicultural books.

I was interested in how teachers can prepare themselves to teach in an increasingly multicultural society by focusing on multicultural literature. Literature can provide mirrors for students to see themselves and others, and it can provide windows into their life experiences and the life experiences of others (Oswald & Smolen, 2011; Santora, 2013). In my position as an elementary reading specialist, I wanted to conduct an inquiry focused on developing curriculum that I could use with my students to support them in learning about people from countries and cultures other than their own.

2.0 REVIEW OF SUPPORTING SCHOLARSHIP AND PROFESSIONAL KNOWLEDGE

The population of the United States continues to become increasingly more diverse in race, religion, socioeconomic status, country of origin, family makeup, and language (U. S. Census Bureau, 2012). Within a diverse society, individuals have unique perspectives. Incorporating multicultural literature into the classroom can expose students to this diversity and raise their awareness of the cultures and experiences of themselves and others. Within the context of thoughtful discussions about literature, issues related to those perspectives can be broached.

Scholars have defined multicultural literature in various ways. In general terms, multicultural literature features people of diverse cultural, linguistic, socio-economic, and religious backgrounds who have been marginalized, and are considered outside of the mainstream of society (Salsas, Lucido, & Canalas, 2001). The mainstream of society would be those defined as ordinary or typical. Yokota (2001) also includes gender identity, sexual orientation, and disabilities when referring to multicultural groups. I subscribe to a representation of multicultural literature that includes the culture, beliefs, and experiences of all the above.

2.1 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORKS

An emphasis on multicultural literature can be situated within three key theoretical frameworks – reader response theory (Rosenblatt, 1989), critical literacy theory (Lewison, Flint, & Van Sluys, 2002), and culturally responsive/relevant pedagogy (Gay, 2002; Ladson-Billings, 1995, 2001). In Rosenblatt's transactional theory of reading, meaning is created during an interaction between the reader and the text; it does not exist within the text or the reader alone. The reader brings his or her own "assumptions, attitudes and expectations about the world" (Rosenblatt, 1989, p. 5) to bear on the text. In many cases multicultural literature introduces traditions and cultures students have not previously been exposed to. Thus, the literary context potentially becomes the one in which readers can expand their understanding and knowledge as well as question their assumptions. This notion of questioning is a key feature of critical literacy.

Lewison, Flint, and Van Sluys (2002) describe critical literacy as including the following dimensions: (a) disrupting the commonplace, (b) considering multiple viewpoints, (c) focusing on sociopolitical issues, and (d) taking action in pursuit of social justice. Being critically literate means paying attention to how a text positions people or a particular culture, or even how it may silence them (Leland & Harste, 2002). Multicultural literacy can elicit such questions and perspectives. Culturally responsive teaching can support teachers and students in exploring such issues.

Gay (2002) suggests enacting culturally responsive teaching or incorporating "*explicit knowledge* about cultural diversity" in the classroom to meet the "educational needs of ethnically diverse students" (p. 107). Cultural diversity may include cultural values, traditions, learning

styles, and relational patterns. Culturally relevant pedagogy as defined by Ladson-Billings (1995) emphasizes the impact of such pedagogy on students' ability to accept and affirm their cultural identity while developing critical perspectives that challenge inequities that schools (and other institutions) perpetuate. Culturally relevant teachers consider both the local and global culture and use that information when designing lessons (Ladson-Billings, 2001). Equally important, according to Milner (2005), is the need for teachers to engage white "mainstream students" in a multicultural curriculum because all "students will interact with multicultural, multiracial, multilingual, and multiethnic people in the United States for the remainder of their lives" (p. 392).

A culturally relevant teacher also supports the development of students' cultural competence. The notion of cultural competence includes learning about one's own culture to foster a sense of pride as well as learning about others' cultures, including their peers in the classroom, the school, the community, and across the world (Dover, 2013, as cited in Aronson & Laughter, 2016).

2.2 PERSPECTIVES ON THE USE OF MULTICULTURAL LITERATURE

Banks (2004) argues that in an increasingly diverse country, multicultural literature should be an important part of every school's curriculum. Colby and Lyon posit (as cited in Morrell & Morrell, 2012) that high-quality multicultural literature should celebrate diversity and challenge stereotypes. Morrell and Morrell (2012) argue that through multicultural literature, teachers can

instill a sense of self, global awareness, and academic language and literacies in their students. When using multicultural texts, these researchers note that it is important for teachers to promote a multicultural reading of the text including students' multicultural perspectives to the analysis of the text.

Berchini (2016) cautions teachers when implementing textbook publishers' lesson plans for a story written by or including a character of color under the facade of curricular inclusion. Simply because a story is labeled as multicultural literature, it does not necessarily mean that it is. There is a misconception that a person of color represented in a text indicates that a particular label may be assigned. In fact, that may not be the case. It is important to remember when teaching literature from a multicultural perspective, to foreground the culture, and not simply teach the story for skills-based objectives. For example, "The White Umbrella," a story about a Chinese girl and her attempt to reconcile her Chinese heritage with American cultural values is included in a popular literature anthology for middle school students (Wiggin et al., 2012). The lesson plan provides text-dependent, reading comprehension questions, but no questions focusing on social and multicultural issues. Berchini argues that the types of questions that teachers are encouraged to ask in the textbook divert students from considering multicultural perspectives.

2.3 RESEARCH WITH MULTICULTURAL LITERATURE

Research describing the use of multicultural literature in classrooms is quite limited. Most articles focus on why such literature is important and should be used, rather than on the way it

can be used and what the results of such use are for teachers and students. A search of articles on Google Scholar revealed several articles and chapters presenting rationales for using multicultural literature (e.g., Louie, 2006; Norton, 1990) or providing guidelines for selecting multicultural literature (e.g., Iwai, 2015; Oswald & Smolen, 2001; Wan, 2006). In the following section, I describe four studies that do provide some information about how multicultural literature was employed in classrooms.

Souto-Manning (2009) conducted an inquiry incorporating multicultural literature which took place over a two-year time frame in a first-grade classroom with 19 students. The group of students, some coming from government subsidized homes and others from million-dollar mansions, brought significantly diverse cultural backgrounds into the classroom. Souto-Manning made a startling observation early on in the school year. She realized her students had become accustomed to a polarizing model, one in which things were being classified as either "right" or "wrong" in the classroom. To change this, she knew her students needed to understand multiple perspectives, that more than one voice could be heard, and multicultural literature read-alouds would be a way to promote the change she was seeking.

Souto-Manning began by taking the interests of her students and creating a critical literacy curriculum incorporating multicultural literacy around them yet keeping in mind the pre-set curriculum standards. The first story the teacher read was Galdone's (1970) *The Three Little Pigs*. In Galdone's version, the Wolf eats the first two Pigs, and the Third eats him. Next, she read Marshall's (1989) version of *The Three Little Pigs*, which provided more of a visual description for those listening. The last story was *The True Story of the 3 Little Pigs by A. Wolf*

(Scieszka, 1996) in which the Wolf presented as an innocent victim. Juxtaposing these three texts opened dialogue for considering multiple perspectives.

Next, Souto-Manning read *The Story of Martin Luther King Jr.* (Moore, 2001) to focus on the problematizing of every day issues including prejudice, but the students were not able to make the leap from the book to her classroom. The book itself wasn't enough; the classroom dialogue was critical. She continued with realistic fiction multicultural books, more specifically those that applied to children, including a variety of perspectives with boys and girls, and inclusion and exclusion. Some of the books included *Goin' Someplace Special* (McKissack, 2001) and *The Other Side* (Woodson, 2001), thoughtfully selected to get to the conversations which needed to be explored, including race and segregation. The students began to understand gender discrimination and exhibit signs of empathy toward the characters in the books. For example, after the students listened to *The True Story of the 3 Little Pigs by A. Wolf,* one student commented that she never got to hear the Wolf's voice before, and another that this was very helpful in understanding another's point of view.

As the teacher read these stories, students began to question things happening in their own school. One student started tallying which children were taken out of class for special education, gifted education, and English to Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL). They noticed that all those going to special education were African American boys, those in ESOL were Asian or Latinos, and those receiving gifted services were white or Asian. The students discussed the results, unsure of whether this was racism in action or something accidental. They decided they wanted change and invited the principal to share in what they had discovered. The principal suggested they find a solution, and so they did.

The students decided to stay together, as a group, the following school year and give access of the resource teachers to the entire class, so each student could see what it was like to participate in gifted education, special education, Reading Recovery, and ESOL. They received approval from every parent for this to happen, and for the classroom teacher to move along with them to second-grade. That following year became a push-in model of 40-50 minutes per day with the support teachers serving as co-teachers, one in which they worked with *all* students in the second-grade classroom, a move towards equality as opposed to equity.

Another study making use of multicultural literature was conducted by Thein et al. (2007) which involved an examination of an eleventh and twelfth grade English class and their teacher with 14 students: eight identified as white, four as Asian American, one as African (Liberian), and one as Latino.

The teacher, Daryl, led classroom discussions focused around issues of power and inequity which were portrayed in the multicultural literature he selected. These included Hurston's (1986) *Their Eyes Were Watching God*, Allison's (1993) *Bastard out of Carolina*, and Dorris' (1987) *A Yellow Raft in Blue Water*. Thein et al. suggested that through an initial exposure to multicultural texts, students experienced tension as they tried to figure out how their beliefs and perspectives might apply to people of different cultures. Students seemed to alter their perspectives temporarily in order to "try on" a new perspective, or just become more critically aware of their own beliefs.

Daryl had students create dramatic monologues, act out characters in novels, participate in small group and whole group discussions with different discussion techniques, including

tentative hypothesis and the prototypical response. Finally, Daryl used writing to encourage alternative perspectives through the students' response journals.

A third study incorporating read alouds with multicultural literature by Sarraj et al. (2015) took place in an elementary school in West Texas with 17 fifth-grade students. Of these, 13 identified as white, two as African American, and two as Hispanic. Sarraj et al. based their inquiry on components of Sue, Arredondo, and McDavis' Cultural Competencies Model, including the awareness of attitudes, beliefs, and knowledge about other cultures. The program met the cultural expectations of the Reading Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS) for fifth grade. It had two purposes, focusing on self-awareness presenting the concepts of culture, values, stereotypes, in-group bias, and bullying, while also teaching about three primary cultures: Arab Americans, African Americans, and Latin Americans. The teacher selected three books to support these cultures, all meeting Freeman and Lebman's (2000) criteria of multicultural literature. The criteria included representing an authentic version of the culture and focused on deeply rooted cultural values.

The teacher introduced each culture with a short multimedia clip, followed by multicultural read-aloud, and then led a class discussion of the story. Then, the students were asked to respond to two open-ended questions in their journals. This occurred every day over a two-week period. Data from field observations by both the teacher and researchers as well as students' written assignments were collected and analyzed.

Sarraj and colleagues found four themes related to raising students' developing cultural awareness. These included: (a) curiosity about other cultures, (b) empathy towards the main character in each story, (c) viewing bullying as wrong, and (d) the importance of not making

judgments about others before getting to know them. The stories seemed to have "broadened their understanding" to certain cultural elements. According to the researchers, the results of the inquiry indicated the multicultural read-aloud program had a positive effect on the students' cultural knowledge and respect for others and emphasized a need for an anti-bullying program in the school.

Another study making use of read-alouds was conducted by Evans (2010) in a self-contained fourth-grade classroom in a large, urban school district. The students in the class were white (59%), Hispanic (15%), Middle Eastern first-generation immigrant (12%), Eastern European immigrant (12%), Asian first-generation immigrant (4%), and Native American (4%).

Evans' inquiry was driven from a critical literacy perspective, where students engaged with the text which led to transformative action. The teacher read multicultural books aloud to the class twice per week, students engaged in conversations about the texts, and responded in journals. They continued these conversations throughout the week, and had other multicultural fiction, historical fiction, and nonfiction books available for self-selection in the classroom as well. The teacher listened to students and the students listened to each other as they engaged in thoughtful dialogue and critical thinking about the books they were reading. The teacher selected the books in a particular historical sequence to ensure the students' understanding. The themes were tolerance and freedom through units focused on slavery, civil rights, the Holocaust, and war. Over the course of eight months, the teacher shared 50 multicultural books.

Evans collected videotapes, audiotapes, student journals, and field notes of her classroom observations. Analyses of these data sources revealed the students' heightened awareness about and acceptance of the values, beliefs, and social practices of other cultures and respect for people

unlike themselves. For example, after listening to many multicultural picture books read aloud, a student said that the experiences made her realize that it's good that people are different in the world, because if they weren't, then it might be a boring place. Others in her class agreed. A second example occurred after reading *Sister Anne's Hands* (Lorbiecki, 2000), a story about an African American nun who teaches white students in a Catholic school in which Ashlee, a student, noticed a character connecting with Sister Anne as human, and not just African American. Ashlee felt the author wrote the book so everybody could learn to treat African Americans the same as everyone else.

As indicated by the descriptions of the four studies above, multicultural literature has been found to influence students' perspectives about cultures other than their own. By selecting the appropriate texts, those with authentic representations of a culture, teachers can attempt to promote awareness of diversity and encourage identification with characters who are unlike themselves or those they know. The studies by Sarraj and colleagues (2015) and by Evans (2010) provide models for my investigation.

3.0 METHODS

Action research is the approach that best describes the present inquiry. According to Buss and Zambo (2016), action research involves "an action, or intervention, and the systematic study of that action through collection of quantitative data, qualitative data, or mixed-methods data" (p. 141). The action involves developing a unit intended to mediate students' development of multicultural awareness, implementing the unit, and analyzing student responses to the unit.

Within the action research area, this inquiry makes use of case study research methods. Merriam (1988), as cited in Duke and Mallette (2011), described case study research as having five characteristics including that it is: (a) *bounded*, to narrow the scope being/not being studied, (b) *particularistic*, to focus the inquiry on a specific person or program, (c) *descriptive*, so the researcher accrues a generous understanding of what is being studied, (d) *heuristic*, in that the inquiry enhances a reader's insight into the topic being studied, and (e) *inductive*, in that the data supports the findings. The bounded space for my study is within a reading support classroom with session's three to four times per week for 30-minutes; it is particularistic in that it is an investigation of a multicultural literature curriculum. The object of study is the class itself, changing from a paper-pencil class, to one with books, including multicultural studies, guest speakers, writing, speaking and listening skills, and comparing literature. The investigation is heuristic in that it may assist other reading specialists, learning support teachers, and classroom

teachers struggling with instruction using multicultural books. Finally, this inquiry is inductive as the data supports the findings.

Two research questions guide my inquiry:

- What are the features of a curriculum designed to raise students' multicultural awareness through literary experiences?
- How do fifth-grade reading support students respond to a curriculum focused on developing multicultural awareness through literary experiences?

3.1 RESEARCH SETTING AND PARTICIPANTS

This investigation took place in a K-5 elementary school located in the suburbs north of Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. It is a wealthy school district, with an average household income of $125,562, and an average household net worth of $608,878. The interaction was with a group of 13 fifth-grade students: 54% female, 46% male. Of those, 84% identified as white, 8% identified as Mexican, and 8% as Guatemalan.

3.2 CONTEXT

The specific context for this study was the small-group reading support for fifth graders. The usual curriculum for students in this group consisted of two programs. Study Island and Making Connections. Study Island is an online test preparation program whose materials can also be

downloaded and printed. Making Connections is a program that consists of short reading passages with teacher-directed activities focused on reading comprehension. Small group sessions took place three times per week for 30 minutes.

During most sessions, students read passages round-robin style and used highlighters to identify supporting evidence for responses to each question. To introduce a new skill, I explicitly defined that skill, showed an example, and then worked through several questions with students. For example, main idea is … then together, we highlighted the evidence for each corresponding answer. At the end of each skills packet in Study Island or the end of a chapter in Making Connections, students worked with a partner to complete a few questions. We then reviewed the answers as a group, and always cited evidence and wrote the number to the question next to what was highlighted. After several skills had been taught students took a quiz. This procedure was repeated over and over again. Students were not motivated and did not want to participate.

The lessons in the multicultural unit offered students something different, and hopefully, something more engaging, especially for those who had been in the reading support program since the third grade. This unit also allowed students to engage in opportunities with authentic literature, multiple opportunities to write in response to reading, speaking, and listening skills, comparing literature across genres, and an in-depth character analysis with multiple perspectives.

I acted as both teacher and researcher in this inquiry. As a forty-six-year-old white female, I found it difficult to teach and have honest, authentic conversations about cultures I have had few experiences with most of my life. I grew up in a small, rural area in Northeastern Pennsylvania, attended a very small K-8 elementary school, and a high school and university both with similar environments. I have taught in schools, for the most part, whose populations

mirrored mine. I undertook this study to enrich my knowledge base, my mind-set, and my curriculum. I wanted to know how my students would respond to a unit on cultural diversity.

3.3 READ-ALONG TEXTS

I selected a set of three texts for a unit on cultural diversity entitled "We Are Part of a Diverse World." The texts are: *Roberto Clemente: Pride of the Pittsburgh Pirates* (Winter, 2005), *Just Add Water* (Hill & O Hall, 2012), and *The Korean Cinderella* (Climo, 1993). I selected these texts because of their diverse range, focusing on a Puerto Rican athlete, a South Sudanese Lost Boy from the Dinka Tribe, and a Korean heroine in a traditional fairy tale.

Each book also has specific and interesting features. Roberto Clemente is a biography, but the author has written it using rhyming couplets. This book was selected for the study because of its connections to Pittsburgh, as well as Clemente's unwavering devotion to his home country, language, and culture. Although Clemente's dream, like many young Puerto Rican boys, was to play baseball in the United States, his loyalty remained with Puerto Rico. Presenting the Puerto Rican culture using Winter's biography of Clemente as a foundation encouraged students to learn about this culture and how proud its people are of their heritage.

Just Add Water is published by Water for South Sudan, Inc., a nonprofit corporation raising money to provide safe, clean water for South Sudan. The only way to purchase the book is by donating to the organization through their website. *Just Add Water* portrays the Sudanese culture from Salva Dut's perspective. Once again, this individual is proud to be from South

Sudan and is loyal to its people. Dut spent many years waiting to make the accepted refugee list to America, but once he did, he vowed to go back to South Sudan. This story was included in the inquiry because of Dut's steadfast dedication to his homeland and to his creativity in learning how to secure funds and equipment for safe water for the people of his country.

The last book in the unit is a fairy tale, *The Korean Cinderella*. This version of Cinderella is a combination of three variations of the story told to Korean children. It is also an example of how stories appear across different cultures. I selected this book because of the way the Korean culture is authentically represented. The illustrator visited Korea's museums to ensure her paintings were accurate. She wove art designs throughout the text inspired by markings painted on the eaves of Korean temples. She included *tokgabis*, or goblins, in the fairy tale which are common in Korean literature. Unique Korean fashion, knows as *hanboks* are included in the illustrations to give the reader an accurate representation of the Korean culture. Also, the book's Korean heroine prevails, which solidifies an asset-based perspective.

3.4 UNIT OVERVIEW

This inquiry investigated students' responses to the three multicultural picture books described above, and a series of activities related to those books that engaged them in developing an understanding of cultural diversity and how that diversity is represented in the Pittsburgh area. Although I read most of the texts aloud, students followed along and read parts of the texts specifically identified ahead of time. Students had printed copies of all three texts.

Careful consideration was given to the questions asked during the read-alongs. The questions were designed to focus on important ideas and also to encourage the students in thinking about the perspectives of the people whose experiences are described.

Each book was also the context for students to interact with people from the local area who shared knowledge about specific aspects of their culture. After reading about Clemente's use of Spanish to speak to his fellow-Puerto Ricans after winning the World Series, a student whose parents immigrated from Mexico and who speaks Spanish himself, shared his writing by reading it in his native language. Students talked about the importance of language. After reading about Salva Dut's experiences as a Lost Boy, students met Paul Deng Kur, a Lost Boy and author who resettled in Pittsburgh. After reading about the Korean Cinderella, students met the mother of Korean students in the school who shared information about her country.

The students wrote in their journals at the conclusion of most lessons, answering a specific question about what they learned or posing their own questions related to each book. In addition, each book, once read and discussed, was followed by a writing project, including crafting a literary response in the form of an "I" poem and writing letters to guest speakers. An "I" poem (Kucan, 2007) is one written from the first-person point of view, where the author takes on the perspective of a person, place, or object. Through this process, students had the opportunity to deepen their understanding of the person they read about.

Students had an opportunity to talk and write about why it might be important for them to understand people who come from countries and cultures that differ from their own at the beginning and the end of the unit.

This unit was developed incorporating instruction that students in a reading support room do not often receive. Typically, these students read single texts and answer questions about the text content. A focus on reading skills is preeminent. In contrast, the unit described here demonstrates sophisticated literacy instruction and is embedded within multicultural awareness lessons. Students were asked to consider multiple perspectives, compare three texts, analyze people and characters, compare people and characters across different genres, work with digital media, summarize, and draw conclusions. These were taught during core instruction.

Table 1 provides an overview of the unit activities. Appendix A provides the lesson plan for the launch and for the first book about Roberto Clemente.

Table 1: Overview of Unit Activities

Lesson	**Activities**	**Learning Goals**
Unit Launch	The students will: ● Engage with multimedia resources that emphasize the diversity of the world's population in terms of the country of origin, language, occupations, natural resources, and religion. ● Talk about why it might be important to understand people who come from places and cultures that differ from their own and then write about their ideas in their journals.	The students will begin to develop an understanding of: ● The size of the world's population, the diverse nature of the people who live in the world, and where the United States fits in. ● Why it might be important to understand people who come from places and cultures that differ from their own.

Table 1 (continued)

Lesson/ Text	Activities	Learning Goals
Roberto Clemente: Pride of the Pittsburgh Pirates (Winter, 2005)	The students will: ● View a PowerPoint presentation about Roberto Clemente that provides information about his background in Puerto Rico and his experiences in the United States. ● Listen to and participate in reading and talking about the Clemente text. ● Interact with artifacts mentioned in the text such as bottle caps and baseballs in order to understand Clemente's experiences. ● Watch a video of Clemente playing baseball for the Pittsburgh Pirates, an interview of him speaking in Spanish after winning the World Series, and another about his battle with racism and learning about American culture. ● Create "I" poems from the first-person point of view "becoming" Roberto Clemente, a baseball fan who admires Clemente, or one of Clemente's teammates.	The students will begin to develop an understanding of: ● Roberto Clemente's background as a baseball player from Puerto Rico who immigrated to the United States. ● What Clemente used to practice his baseball skills in Puerto Rico compared to authentic baseball equipment. ● How talented Clemente was, and how proud he was of his heritage. ● The difficulties Clemente faced as a Puerto Rican immigrant trying to become a successful professional baseball player in Pittsburgh. ● Gain a deeper understanding of multiple perspectives by composing an "I" poem.

Table 1 (continued)

Lesson/ Text	Activities	Learning Goals
Just Add Water (Hill & O Hall, 2012)	The students will: ● Review a map of the world and then Africa to locate Sudan. ● Review Water in Africa Infographic. ● See pictures of Africa, village life, women carrying water on their heads, a waterhole, and a typical one room schoolhouse. ● Listen to and participate in reading and talking about the Just Add Water text. ● Watch part of a documentary: The Gods Grew Tired of Us about three Lost Boys. ● Participate in an interactive presentation by Paul Deng Kur, Lost Boy and author who resettled to Pittsburgh. Paul Kur will give a talk on his experience in Sudan with the civil war and relocating to the United States, as the author from the Water text did. ● Compose letters to Mr. Kur to express their appreciation and to explain what they learned from his visit.	The students will begin to develop an understanding of: ● The water crisis in Africa and the impact it has on people's education, health, and work. ● Refugees, and what they give up when they leave their country of origin, but also what they gain. ● Salva Dut's background before he came to the United States as a refugee. ● The nonprofit organization Water for South Sudan that Salva Dut established to help raise money and drill wells for Sudan. ● Salva Dut's unwavering dedication to his home country

Table 1 (continued)

Lesson/ Text	Activities	Learning Goals
The Korean Cinderella (Climo, 1993)	The students will: ● Listen to and participate in reading and talking about the Korean text. ● Compare the Korean Cinderella to a Disney version of Cinderella using a Double Bubble Thinking Map. ● Review a map the world to locate Korea. ● Watch a video guiding them through scholar's *hanok,* a home in Korea similar to the one they read about in the story. ● Interact with authentic Korean art, garments, a decoration, and wedding *kirogi.* ● Develop questions for guest speaker, Sojin Yang, a parent of two children in the school who will present two *hanboks,* the traditional Korean garment worn to special occasions by some and daily by others. ● Participate in an interactive presentation by Sojin Yang. ● Compose letters to Mrs. Yang to express their appreciation and to explain what they learned from her visit. ● Use the *Hangul* to English alphabet to decode and figure out which name is theirs that has been hanging around the classroom.	The students will begin to develop an understanding of: ● How different versions of stories appear across different cultures. ● *Tokgabis* as they are woven into many traditional Korean stories. ● Korean wedding traditions, including wearing *hanboks* and the significance of *kirogi* ducks. ● Korean art, such as hand painted vases and paintings on the eaves of Korean temples. ● The Korean written language, *Hangul*. ● A Korean home, referred to as a *hanok.* ● Daily chores for a family in Korea, may include separating the rice, weeding rice paddies

Table 1 (continued)

Lesson	Activities	Learning Goals
Exit	The students will: ● Complete a Literature Chart to compare the three books in terms of the characters featured in each, the challenges they faced, and what the outcomes were. The chart also compares the settings and what the students learned in each text. ● Talk about why it might be important to understand people who come from places and cultures that differ from their own and then write about their ideas in their journals. ● Compare their initial responses in the unit launch to the prompt with the responses they wrote at the conclusion of the unit. ● Decorate the outside of their journals in a way of their choosing to represent the theme "We are a Part of a Diverse World." Ideas include drawing a picture, creating a word cloud, or writing a poem.	The students will begin to develop an understanding of: ● Relationships among the people featured in the books they read and discussed. ● Why it might be important to understand people who come from places and cultures that differ from their own. ● Trace potential shifts in their own thinking about the importance of developing an understanding of people who come from places and cultures that differ from their own.

3.5 DATA SOURCES AND ANALYSES

The primary data sources for this inquiry are presented in Table 2.

Table 2: Unit Data Sources

Kind of Data Source	**Examples**
Transcripts	● Launch and concluding discussions about importance of learning about people from countries and cultures that differ from their own ● Discussions about three unit books ● Interactions during presentations with guest speakers
Student artifacts	● "I" poems ● Response journals ● Letters to guest speakers ● Literature comparison chart

In analyzing the transcripts and student artifacts, I traced evidence of students' expressed interest, curiosity, and concerns about the people and situations in the texts and the presentations of the guest speakers, as well as possible connections to their own experiences and lives. I looked for changes or shifts related to those areas as well. I conducted a qualitative analysis of the data by analyzing students' responses in order to identify themes and recurrent issues (Strauss & Corbin, 1998). I also identified specific unit activities that seemed to promote student engagement and thoughtful consideration.

4.0 FINDINGS AND COMMENTARY

The data sources for this case study included transcripts of class sessions and student work. To capture what transpired from each class session, I used the technique of vignettes. According to Miles, Huberman, and Saldana (2014), "A vignette is a focused description of a series of events taken to be representative, typical, or emblematic in the case you are studying. It has a narrow, story-like structure that preserves the chronological flow and that is normally limited to a brief time span, to one or a few key actors, to a bounded space, or to all three" (p. 182). In this case, the bounded space was each set of class sessions related to a specific segment of the lesson sequence: the launch, the lessons for each book, and the conclusion.

4.1 VIGNETTE 1: UNIT LAUNCH

To introduce the unit, I asked students to respond to the following journal prompt: "Explain why it might be important to learn about places and cultures that differ from your own." Below are a few of the responses. (Note: All student names are pseudonyms and student spellings have been corrected.)

- It might be important to learn about places and cultures because you might only know one culture. (Kaylee)
- Because when you grow up you might want to travel. Also, because when you grow up people might ask about these. (Ethan)
- Why it's important to learn about different cultures and places is so other kids learn about other places so they can see new cultures and experience new things. (Jaden)

Five of thirteen students responded to the prompt from what might be considered a self-centered perspective; that is, they described what *they* might gain from learning about different places or cultures that would benefit them. An example of this is when Carrie wrote:

> It is important to learn about different cultures because if you go to another country with a different language/culture. First of all, if you go to a different country you should know a little of the language so you know what they're talking about. Also, you should know about their celebration so you don't miss out if it is very fun.

Following the journal writing activity, I showed a series of PowerPoint slides about world facts, including the world's population and total number of countries. We also watched a video that took the world's population of 7.5 billion and turned it into an imaginary global village of 100 people. The video represented world statistics with villagers in much smaller numbers, helping students visualize and therefore understand much easier.

After the video, I asked students to generate a list of cultural similarities among cultures. I directed them to consider what needs people around the world share. The students generated the following responses: currency, food, water, shelter, air, vegetation, and clothing. From that list,

they compared how the needs among the cultures were different. For example, when discussing clothing, José talked about a hat in Mexico being called a sombrero. I shared that in Korea a traditional piece of clothing is called a *hanbok*. Erin mentioned California rolls as a food item that she thought was from Japan. Another student added the word *sushi*. The class discussed that although specific clothing and food items originated in different regions, many items can now be found world-wide.

To conclude the lesson, I asked students to respond to the following journal prompt: "What does it mean to say, 'We are part of a diverse world'?" Some responses included the following:

- It means to be different than others. It also means the similarities that people share. It means we are different about the houses. (Sally)
- It means you can be different than other people in the same or different places. People can believe or wear different things. Some can be more employed. It can also mean you can eat different kinds of food. (John)
- It means that we all live in a world where a lot of cultures are. It also means we are all different. We do different cultures, celebrate different celebrations, or cultures. (José)

These responses seemed to indicate a wider view of culture as evidenced by the use of the words *people* and *some*. José's response seemed to indicate that he connected himself to the wider world through his choice of the phrase *we all.*

4.2 VIGNETTE 2: ROBERTO CLEMENTE: PRIDE OF THE PITTSBURGH PIRATES

As I prepared the students to participate in a read-along of the Roberto Clemente book, I had several goals on which I wanted to focus, but the primary goals were for students to begin developing an understanding of the challenges Roberto Clemente faced as a baseball player coming from Puerto Rico to play ball in the United States, and how proud Clemente was of his Puerto Rican heritage, including his commitment to his primary language.

As I introduced the book, students made guesses as to why Clemente's full name was Roberto Clemente Walker. José, whose parents immigrated from Mexico, has two surnames as Clemente did. José proudly shared his full name with the class and explained that in the Mexican culture children take on both parents' surnames: dad's in the middle and mom's last. Next, we discussed Puerto Rico, and Kaylee revealed that her mother's family was from Puerto Rico.

These contributions were opportunities for José and Kaylee to demonstrate their personal connections to the content, something that rarely occurred with the curriculum I used throughout the year.

After looking at photographs of Clemente playing in Forbes Field for the Pirates and of Clemente with his family, we began to read the book *Roberto Clemente: Pride of the Pittsburgh Pirates* (Winter, 2005). After reading most of the book, we watched a video of Clemente speaking in Spanish in an interview that took place when the Pirates won the World Series in 1971. We talked about the importance of language in a culture, and the times Clemente chose to speak in Spanish, even after learning English when he was in the United States. Then students

responded to the following journal prompt: “Why do you think Clemente chose to speak Spanish, instead of English, in the television interview?” Some responses included the following:

- Roberto Clemente speaks Spanish so Puerto Ricans viewing may understand or so they can understand or know his roots as an individual or a living being. (Alex)
- Clemente spoke Spanish because it was easier for him. He spoke Spanish so his mother and his boys could understand him. (Nate)
- I think he speaks Spanish because it might be nice to speak it because it was his language. And, it would be meaningful. (Sally)
- I think he did that to represent Spanish people, also to represent Puerto Ricans. (Ethan)

The first two responses seemed to indicate that some students were thinking about Clemente’s language choice on a literal level, that Clemente needed to speak Spanish to communicate with his fellow Puerto Ricans and family members. The last two responses, however, appear to indicate thinking on a deeper level, connecting Clemente’s pride and passion for his culture with his decision to speak Spanish at one of the most important moments in his life.

After completing the story, we watched a video describing Clemente’s struggle with racism and segregation. We discussed some examples of this, including reporters, Americanizing Roberto’s name as “Bob” or “Bobby,” and when he could not eat with his teammates in a restaurant when they traveled out of town. Students did not realize this happened to people of color who were famous athletes.

Next, I asked students to respond to a quote by Clemente: “Anytime you have the opportunity to accomplish something for somebody who comes behind you and you don’t do it, you are wasting your time on this earth.” I asked students: “Who are the ‘somebodies’ that Clemente is referring to?” Below are some of their responses:

- Roberto Clemente is talking about his family back in his home town in Puerto Rico or his teammates and his siblings, and that is who I think he is representing or fighting for in his quote. (Rhonda)
- The somebodies are other players that could come after Clemente. Other people looked up to him. He inspired kids and baseball players. A lot of people wanted to be the next Clemente. (José)
- The person might have been his mom or his dad. He wanted to show that his rewards are for them. And, maybe to anyone that they can do anything! (Sally)

These responses were more extended and thoughtful than those that students typically provided after reading the short texts in the mandated curriculum.

To conclude the lesson, I asked students to write an “I” poem. I explained that to compose an “I” poem, the writer has to imagine themselves as the person the poem is about. That person is speaking in the poem, sharing thoughts and feeling about themselves. Students chose from Clemente, his wife, one of his children, a reporter, a teammate, or a fan as the character focus for their “I” poems.

While writing, students interacted closely with the text and supporting materials to write from the perspective of that character. I provided an “I am” template (Levstik & Barton, 1997, p. 130) for students to follow. Appendix B includes the template of the “I” poem students used.

Students published their “I” poems using their school Google Drive accounts, and then shared them with their classmates. The examples that follow show two students’ in-depth understanding of a character’s perspective and important events in the story. For example, in Erin’s poem she wrote from Clemente’s jealous teammate’s perspective. She writes about being “a Pittsburgh Pirate on this losing team.” As the book stated, Clemente’s “new team, the Pittsburgh Pirates, was in last place” (Winter, 2005, p. 13). Then, the fans grew to like Clemente and the way he played with “*style”* (p. 13). The kids wanted to be just like him. Erin wrote, “I want to be famous but the attention is on him.”

“I” Poem by Erin

I am a Pittsburgh Pirate on this losing team.

I wonder if I’ll ever be famous.

I hear “booo” from the other team’s fans as Clemente steps up at bat.

I see so many faces with looks of disgust towards him.

I want to be famous, but the attention is on him.

I am a Pittsburgh Pirate on this losing team.

I pretend I am at the center of attention.

I feel super jealous as I hear, “CLEMENTE, CLEMENTE!” from our home team crowd.

I touch my heart.

I cry for fame.

I am a Pittsburgh Pirate on this losing team.

I understand we aren't good, and he is a rising star.

I say, "I wish he never set foot on this team!"

I dream to hit the flying ball.

I try not to be jealous.

I hope to win the World Series.

I am a Pittsburgh Pirate on this losing team.

In Kaylee's poem, she accurately described Roberto Clemente not feeling welcomed into Major League Baseball when she wrote "I wonder if I'll ever be accepted," and "I understand that I'm different." In the story, newspaper writers were quoted calling him "lazy" and a Latino "hothead" (p. 17). Clemente was a humanitarian and Kaylee portrayed that in her poem when she stated, "I want to help people." Evidence of this is found in the story when the author wrote, "His spirit grows in the charities he started for poor people in Puerto Rico" (p. 29).

"I" Poem by Kaylee

I am Roberto Clemente.

I wonder if I'll be accepted.

I hear the smack of my bat hitting the ball.

I see the fans cheering me on.

I want to help people.

I am Roberto Clemente.

I pretend to be with my family.

I feel the things people say to me.

I touch the bases as I run.

I worry about my family.

I cry for fame.

I am Roberto Clemente.

I understand that I'm different.

I say, "BELIEVE IN YOURSELF!"

I dream about being in a professional baseball league.

I try to be my best.

I hope to follow my dreams.

I am Roberto Clemente.

José shared his poem last. He had worked with his family to translate it into Spanish. He read his poem, which was a surprise to other students, because he had never spoken in Spanish at school before. Directly after the Spanish reading he read his poem in English. Below is his poem, in English and in Spanish:

"I" Poem by José	"I" Poema by José en Español
I am the great Roberto Clemente!	¡Soy el gran Roberto Clemente!
I wonder if I will ever get accepted.	Me pregunto si alguna vez seré aceptado.
I hear the ball go CRACK! as I hit it.	¡Escucho que la pelota cuando hace un ruido cuando la golpeé!
I see people look different at me.	Veo que la gente me mira diferente.
I want to be the best baseball player	Quiero ser el mejor jugador de béisbol en el

in the world.	mundo.
I am the great Roberto Clemente!	¡Soy el gran Roberto Clemente!
I pretend I am in Puerto Rico,	¡Pretendo estar en Puerto Rico, todo es
everything is wonderful there!	maravilloso allí!
I feel disliked by the reporters.	Los reporteros no gustan de mí.
I touch the old, dusty bat.	Toco el viejo y polvoriento bate.
I feel right at home,	Me siento como en casa,
it makes me feel better.	me hace sentir mejor.
I worry that people won't like my family.	Me preocupa que a la gente no le guste mi familia.
I cry when I am far from my family.	Lloro cuando estoy lejos de mi familia.
I am the great Roberto Clemente.	¡Soy el gran Roberto Clemente!
I understand that I am different.	Entiendo que soy diferente.
I say "thank you" to my coaches.	Digo gracias a mis entrenadores.
I dream that it is okay to be different.	Yo sueño que está bien ser diferente.
I try to fit in.	Trato de encajar.
I hope that I will be okay.	Espero estar bien.
I am the great Roberto Clemente!	¡Soy el gran Roberto Clemente!

When José stated, "I feel disliked by the reporters," he took the author's words about Clemente and interpreted them into thoughts and feelings. In *Roberto Clemente: Pride of the Pittsburgh Pirates*, Winter (2005) wrote that reporters "mocked his Spanish accent" and did not

like Clemente, calling him “lazy” and a “Latino ‘hothead’” (p. 17). José’s analysis of Clemente’s character was further grounded when he described Clemente’s unending attempts to gain reporters’ respect. “I try to fit in,” José’s poem claimed.

> Roberto swore he would be so good, he would have to get the respect he deserved...In his pocket was a bag full of bottle caps that he emptied into the hands of some kids. They threw him the caps, and he hit each one again, and again (Winter, p. 17).

After reading his poem José explained that both of his parents had immigrated from Mexico to the United States as children. Immediately, other students raised their hands with questions. Mary asked, “How did you learn to speak so fast in Spanish?” José described, “My parents have a rule: English is for school, and Spanish is spoken at home.” This level of engagement was not typical for the class. It was particularly atypical for José to be so involved and responsive to his peers.

The Clemente lessons seemed to engage students in substantive ways. They enjoyed participating in the read-along and were interested in how Pittsburgh looked in the pictures 50 years ago. Some thought the Pittsburgh Pirates had always played baseball at PNC Park, so this book captured their interest right away. Most students were able to relate to the story because they had been to a Pirates game, had seen the Clemente statue, or had driven across the Roberto Clemente Bridge. Others had a personal connection, such as a family member from Puerto Rico, or they, themselves spoke Spanish. One student even had a father who played professional baseball. This opened the door for significant class participation and discussion throughout the lessons, which, once again, was not typical for the class. The answers students provided became

more thoughtful and extensive as the lessons progressed, and less surface level as was noted when we reviewed Clemente's choice to speak in Spanish after the World Series win.

At the start of the unit, students weren't used to writing in our sessions, particularly not poetry, so when I told them that they would be writing "I" poems, sighs of resistance echoed around the classroom. However, this was a pivotal lesson in the unit. After explaining the assignment, students got to work and utilized the text for support, surprising themselves, especially the ease with which they were able to put themselves into another's shoes and capture a character's feelings so skillfully. Something unexpected was how diligently students worked on the assignment, without having to be redirected to stay focused on the task. This project seemed to boost students' confidence and they were eager to share their poems with their peers. A few students asked if they could enhance their projects by decorating them once they printed and mounted them onto construction paper, even offering to come in during recess to complete their projects. The excitement and pride in their work was a new and refreshing experience for these students. I also noticed students beginning to show up early to class and lingering after class to continue discussions we were having.

4.3 VIGNETTE 3: JUST ADD WATER

For this next book I had several goals in mind. First, I wanted students to begin developing an understanding of the water crisis in Africa and the impact it has on people's education, health, and work. Second, I wanted students to understand that there are many refugees in Sudan, and

what they give up when they leave their country, but also what they gain. Third, I wanted students to learn about Salva Dut's background before he came to the United States as a refugee, and the nonprofit organization, Water for South Sudan, Inc. that he established to help raise money and drill wells for Sudan. And finally, I wanted students to understand Salva Dut's unwavering dedication to his home country.

In an effort to build background knowledge, I introduced the book through a series of PowerPoint slides showcasing Africa and South Sudan on a map, the Dinka and Nuer tribesmen, and life in a typical Sudanese village. This helped to clarify several typical misconceptions, including the myth that it does not rain in Africa. Students were surprised to find out that South Sudan actually has a long rainy season.

Next, students watched the first five minutes of the documentary *The Gods Grew Tired of Us* (2006) about the Lost Boys of Sudan. I watched the students during the video as tears welled up in some of their eyes. They seemed to be demonstrating empathy for the people they saw. This empathy was revealed in their responses to the following journal prompt: "What did you learn from the documentary?" Below are some of their responses:

- In the documentary I learned the Lost Boys traveled far. They traveled far because of the government. They traveled by foot and by plane. In the Documentary it states, "The Lost Boys traveled 1,000 miles." (Carrie)
- I learned what Africans went through. An example of one is that women had to carry a bucket of water on their heads and walk a whole bunch, and the water is not clean. (Kaylee)

- I learned that both North and South Sudan and Salva Dut are in hardship. Also, the Lost Boys fled because of the war. (Evan)

From these responses, it appears as if students were beginning to reflect outward and empathize with the Lost Boys. They noted how far the Lost Boys had to travel, how far their journey was, and why they were forced to flee.

Then we read the first half of the book *Just Add Water* (Hill & O Hall, 2012). While discussing special things people from South Sudan enjoy, such as beautiful sunsets, family, and mangos, students explained that we had those same things here in America. I had to take some time to clarify that although mangos were accessible at our local Walmart, that did not mean that all fruits and vegetables available in stores are grown locally. This was quite a surprise to students since many had been to a local orchard and harvested goods including strawberries and peaches. It took some time to explain to them that a lot of what we purchase at our local store is imported from other countries, including South Sudan.

I asked students to respond in their journals to a specific statement in the book: “Why do you think the man said that Salva Dut would become spoiled in the United States and forget his homeland?” Below are some of their responses:

- He would forget his homeland because the United States has more things he needs and when he lives in a better place he’ll be happy. He’ll be happy enough to forget the negative things that happened in Africa. (John)
- I think this because the United States is not as poor, and Salva Dut has less stuff than the United States. He forgot his homeland and the bad stuff because he wanted to go

to the United States. He hoped life would be better there and he could get an education and come back. (Mary)

- Salva Dut will be in a new place and he will have a lot of things he didn't have before like electricity and he will be safe now. He will also have more water and he won't need to walk to get water. (Nate)

All three students responded to the prompt as most of the class did. When asked about becoming spoiled and forgetting his homeland, I am not sure if students didn't read the question carefully, if they didn't understand it, or if they simply focused on the second half of the journal prompt. Their responses appear to suggest that Salva Dut forgot the harmful things that happened to him in his homeland because he was able to have his basic needs met in the United States. One speculation I have is that students saw the good in Salva Dut, and the word *spoiled* didn't seem to fit in a sentence with him, not with what we had read thus far or had had in any conversations about him.

After finishing the story, I showed students a part of the documentary *Just Add Water*, from Salva Dut's nonprofit organization, Water for South Sudan, Inc. The film described Dut's quest to drill water wells and bring clean water to the people in South Sudan. Next, I presented the background of Paul Deng Kur, local Lost Boy and author, our guest speaker the following day. Mr. Kur came to the United States at the age of 18 with a second-grade education, and has since earned two master's degrees, one from Duquesne University, and another from the University of Pittsburgh. Students created a list of questions, and Mr. Kur visited the following day.

Mr. Kur spoke for 30 minutes and then students had the opportunity to ask the questions they prepared the day before. The principal and vice-principal as well as the English as a Second Language teacher were also part of the presentation. Here are some questions students asked Mr. Kur along with his responses:

- Have you visited your family back in Africa? (Erin) “Not yet.”
- What languages do you speak, and why did you learn all of them? (Alex) “Swahili, Dinka, English, Arabic, Amharic.”
- What is your job? (Greg) “I am a job coach at Goodwill for people with disabilities and work at Duquesne University as an office assistant.”
- What was your reaction when you were getting relocated to America? (Carrie) “I wanted to find my family, but I couldn’t. I was sad. I didn’t come at my own free will. But now that I’m here I love it, and I haven’t been back.”
- Have you met Salva Dut? (Jaden) “No, I haven’t met all of the Lost Boys, there are 4,000 here in America; I have met some, but not him.”
- What was it like when you were writing the book *Out of the Impossible* (Kur, 2014)? (Ethan) “I would delete it, so much I didn’t want to deal with, like my cousin getting swallowed by a python. It was tough. I would write and write all over again. It would make me really upset, it would bother me. I would wake up at night and write, then delete. It was not easy, it would flash me back. I remember there was a pond, you would think you would be safe to drink from there, but the landmines had been planted around, so as kids we were so thirsty because we had been walking for so

long without water. We would not stop from going in because this was the only option we had. You could explode but this was the only option left."

- Did you write any other books? (Mary) "I wrote about early marriage regarding some of my sisters who were married by the time they were twelve. I'm against early marriage for girls. The book is also meant to promote equal education. I'm from the Dinka tribe, and the prettier the girl is, the more cows she is worth, and I just don't like that idea."

The questions students asked indicate a connection between both Lost Boys' stories. In order to do so, students had to pay close attention to Mr. Kur's presentation and recall details from Salva Dut. Originally, I asked Mr. Kur to plan for a 30-minute talk to students, but he stayed for an hour and answered all of their questions. I was particularly impressed when students would ask follow-up questions. One example of this was when someone had asked Mr. Kur how many languages he spoke, and then several questions later, Alex asked which languages Mr. Kur spoke, and why he ended up learning all of them.

Students had the opportunity to write thank-you letters to Mr. Kur explaining what they learned from his visit. Students signed the letters personally and I mailed them. Here are two of those letters:

May 25, 2018

Dear Mr. Kur,

Thank you so much for educating us. Thank you very much for showing us your life. I was very interested about how you served in the army at such a young age. I hope you can talk to

other students and teach them about the many things that you encountered during your time in the South Sudan.

From,

Alex

Alex writes a very considerate thank-you letter to Mr. Kur. He appears to have found the presentation beneficial and encourages Mr. Kur to continue speaking to other students. Alex, labeled a behavior problem by teachers, was quite focused during this lesson. He asked thoughtful questions of the speaker and expressed genuine concern for Mr. Kur when he spoke about serving in the army as a child. When Alex turned in his thank-you letter, he asked what the next book we were going to read would be, with the biggest smile I had ever seen him have. This new-found excitement for class, partnered with the increase in focus and class participation prompted an email home. His mother was delighted.

May 25, 2018

Dear Mr. Kur,

Thank you for coming to our school. Your story helped me to be more thankful for my food, water, and my family. I learned so much and when I'm older I'm going to try to help Sudan too! Thank you for volunteering to come speak to us and share your story with us.

From,

Jaden

In Jaden's thank-you letter she writes, "when I'm older, I'm going to try to help Sudan too!" These words seem to indicate Mr. Kur inspiring a rise to action from Jaden, and to connect

what she is reading about in class to her own life. This kind of deep thinking and personal application, such as when Jaden said she learned to be thankful for the things she had in her own life, were not typical in our classroom.

The lessons from this story seem to have invoked a call to action in some students, and a deep reflection into what is important and what to be thankful for in their own lives. My goal in using the multicultural books to teach reading skills was to "alter the structure of the curriculum to enable students to view concepts, issues, events and themes from the perspective of diverse ethnic and cultural groups" (Smolen, Oswald, & Jenkins, 2011, p. 18), level three of four in Banks' description of multicultural education (2004). Banks's levels are described below:

- Level 1: the contribution approach, emphasizes holidays and heroes
- Level 2: the additive approach, emphasizes themes and content, supplements the current curriculum
- Level 3: the transformation approach, changes the curriculum, allows students to see issues from multiple/diverse perspectives
- Level 4: inspires students to consider and take action on social issues to help resolve them (Banks, 2004, p. 15)

Some students, including Jaden, seemed to address the fourth level.

4.4 VIGNETTE 4: THE KOREAN CINDERELLA

My goals for this book included students gaining an understanding that there are many different versions of stories that appear across different cultures. I also wanted the students to develop an understanding of Korean traditions related to weddings, literature, and art.

To introduce the book, we revisited a PowerPoint slide from the unit launch explaining literature across cultures. For the introduction of this portion of the unit I used Snow White. I explained that it was a fairy tale that had been told in many parts of the world, in many different languages. I displayed several Snow White book covers from different countries, including Germany and Albania. We also discussed Cinderella, and that 900 different versions have been told and written, beginning in China. I then played a video of a read-along Disney version of Cinderella.

I asked students what they knew about Cinderella. Surprisingly, the first 11 answers were provided by boys. I let the boys continue answering, without raising their hands, until a girl answered, to see how long the boys would be the answer providers. Two of the questions, how many step sisters Cinderella had and if she had a godmother or a fairy godmother, were being debated among the students. I interjected and explained that the multitude of versions could explain the difference in answers. In some versions Cinderella has two step sisters, and in others she has three. In some versions of the tale she has a godmother, in others it's a fairy godmother.

Before reading the Korean Cinderella story, students watched a short video providing a glimpse into a traditional Korean home known as a *hanok*. Next, students read the author's and illustrator's notes explaining the significance of *tokgabis*, or goblins, in Korean fairy tales and art

with brightly colored patterns on Korean temples. Finally, I showed a Google Slide presentation to students with different people wearing *hanboks*, traditional clothing worn daily in Korea hundreds of years ago, and now worn mostly for special occasions. Two people in the Google Slide presentation included Pittsburgh Steeler, Hines Ward, and tennis star Venus Williams. I wanted students to understand that anybody can wear a *hanbok*; some wear a *hanbok* to uphold the Korean tradition, others wear it to respect the tradition when visiting Korea.

Students were excited to begin reading the final book in the unit. We began by reading the first half of the book, and students identified the first *tokgabi* (goblin), a frog. In the author's note we learned that *tokgabis* can be "kindhearted or fearsome," (Climo, 1993, p. 41).

Next, students responded to the following journal prompt: "What have you learned about the Korean culture so far?" Here are some of their responses:

- I learned that people and things in Korea have very colorful stuff and that tokgabis are goblins in books there. (Greg)
- I have learned that their culture is very different from ours. I have learned that they wear hanboks for clothing and they live in hanoks. (Mary)

Greg seemed to reference the colorful eaves of Korean temples, which we had discussed in class, and how the illustrator used those colorful characteristics when illustrating the book.

Mary took a comparative approach, looking at Korean culture from an American perspective. She was able to grasp the difference between a *hanok* and a *hanbok*, a concept with which other students struggled throughout the duration of the lessons.

After reading the Korean fairy tale, I assigned students a partner(s) and asked each group to complete a Double Bubble Thinking Map for *The Korean Cinderella* (Climo, 1993) and a

Disney version of Cinderella. This map was a way to compare two stories, with the bubbles in the center being what the two stories have in common, and those on the outside highlighting what is unique about each story. My goal was for students to identify the similarities and differences across two cultural versions of the Cinderella stories. Next are three peer Double Bubble Thinking Maps.

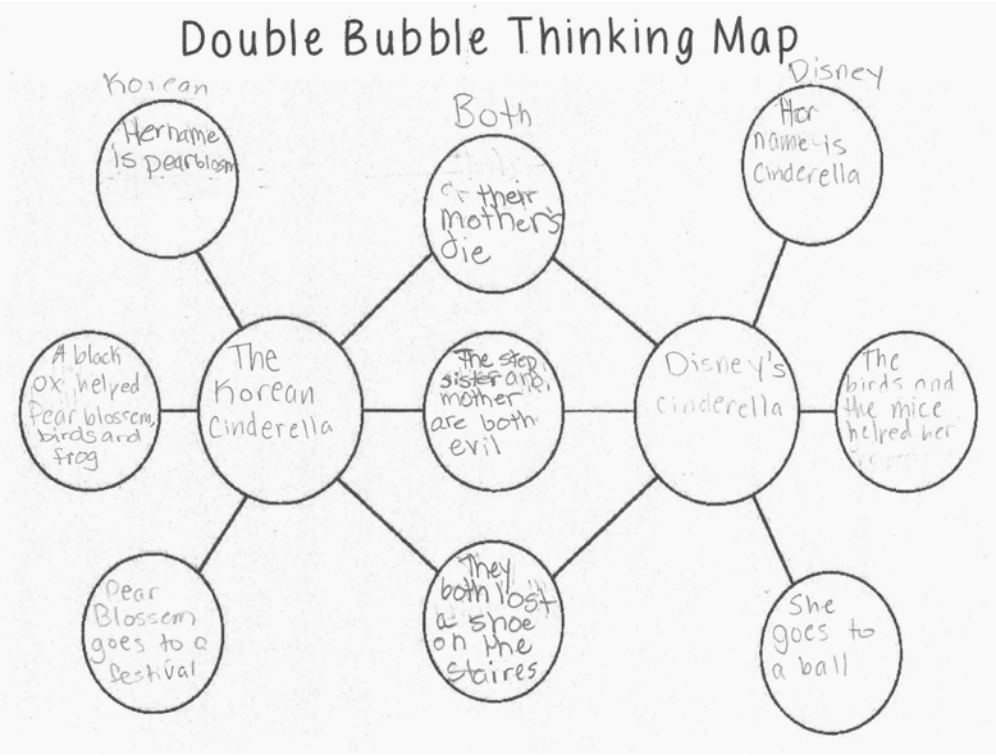


Figure 1. Evan and José's Double Bubble Thinking Map. The larger two circles in the center identify the stories being compared in the graphic organizer, and each smaller circle stemming out contain a detail. The three circles directly in the center, vertically, include the things Evan and José found both stories to have in common.

When comparing the two stories, Evan and José first labeled the circles going across the top, as this was the first time they had completed a map like this (see Figure 1). They asked me to review the directions a second time, and while I did, I watched José label them. I thought this was a good strategy to use. The boys had a difficult time deciding what would go in the boxes. They erased some of their answers, went back into both fairy tales, and decided on their final answers. One thing to note is that this was the only group of five that named all three of the magic *tokgabis* from *The Korean Cinderella.* These boys took the longest, but they made sure they included a lot of detail. One error on their map was that Disney's Cinderella lost her shoe on the stair, but Pear Blossom lost her sandal in the stream.

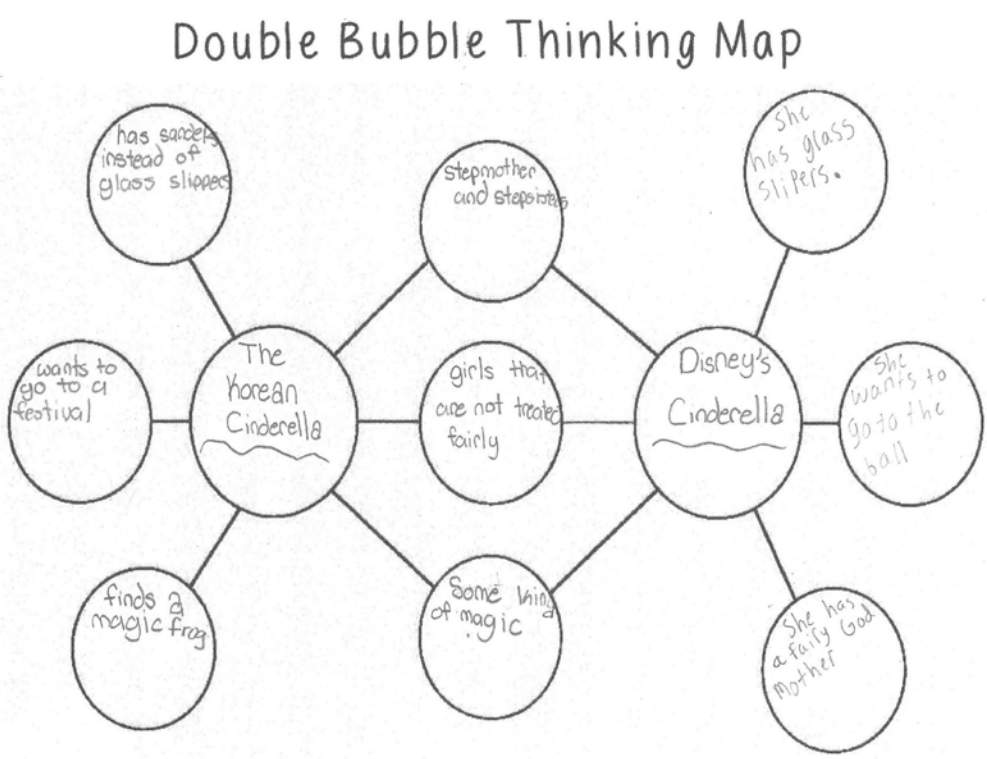


Figure 2. Carrie and Jaden's Double Bubble Thinking Map. Instead of comparing the stories, the students compared the main characters of each book: the Korean Cinderella (Pear Blossom) and Disney's Cinderella.

In the second example, Carrie and Jaden compared and contrasted the main characters (see Figure 2). Many groups considered both girls to be princesses because of how Pear Blossom was dressed at the end of the story. However, Carrie and Jaden asked specifically about that as they were completing this document. They reread the section at the end of *The Korean*

Cinderella (Climo, 1993) to be sure and asked for my help. I prompted them to return to the text for evidence when trying to figure out the answer to their question, and I emphasized that sometimes readers needed to figure out what was going on even though the information was not directly stated. The girls decided Pear Blossom was not a princess, but instead a noble-woman, married to a nobleman. In my opinion, they made great strides using their inferencing skills.

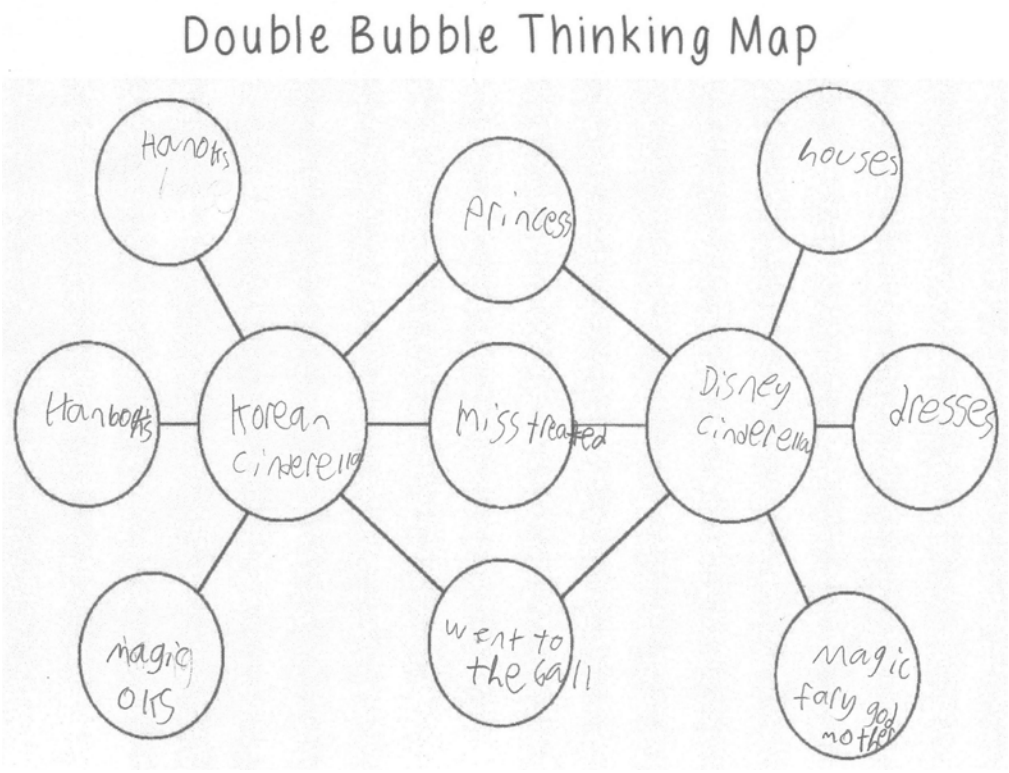


Figure 3. John and Nate's Double Bubble Thinking Map. The students pinpointed similarities and variations in the two fairy tales.

In the third example, John and Nate compared the two stories and identified their commonalities and differences (see Figure 3). One noteworthy aspect of their map was how they matched up the circles. For instance, in Korea, houses are known as hanoks, and the circles are both at the top of the page. The boys did the same for magic, with the Korean story having a magic ox, and the Disney story having a magic fairy godmother. One mistake the boys made was writing that both characters "went to the ball." Only the Disney Cinderella went to a ball; Pear

Blossom from Korea attended a festival. A second error found on this map was the detail stating both girls were princesses; only Disney's Cinderella was a princess. Pear Blossom married a nobleman. Although she did raise her rank in Korean society, she did not become a princess. The picture at the end was deceiving, as Pear Blossom was wearing a crown, but students had to reread carefully, and not make assumptions.

Next, the students wrote questions for our guest speaker, Mrs. Yang, a parent of two Korean students in the building. Mrs. Yang's husband was acting as an exchange professor at the University of Pittsburgh for one year. Below are some of the questions the students asked and the responses of Mrs. Yang.

- What kinds of foods do you eat in Korea? (Rhonda) "We have everything there. It is actually very similar to here now."
- Do you learn English there? (Erin) "Yes, we do learn English, but it's not easy to learn English, because it's such a different language from Korean. We start in third grade."
- Do people still live in hanoks? (Carrie) "Some people are going back to hanoks, because the apartments are so high, some 30 and some 50."
- Why are you moving back? (Greg) "My husband was a guest exchange professor, just for a year."
- What is the money called there? (Ethan) "We use currency called won."
- What jobs do they have? (Rhonda) "We have similar jobs to here, like your mothers and fathers would have."

- What kinds of cars do they have? (Mary) “We started with small cars, but we developed larger cars and now we export them all over the word. The Hyundai and the Kia are from Korea. The Korean government supported the development so we were able to do this quickly, in just 30 years, so there would be a lot of jobs for the people. The Samsung phone was also developed there.”
- What does it look like in Korea? (John) “It’s very mountainous, and we have four seasons, and that’s why we had the winter Olympics. It’s a peninsula. It’s a terrain. It’s a little like Pittsburgh, maybe not as much snow. It’s a small country.”
- What’s your favorite part about Korea? (Rhonda) “Seeing the development. My grandma used to tell me she never thought she would see a restroom inside a house.”
- But you have electricity now? (Mary) “Oh yes, we have everything like this.”

Based on the questions above, students seemed to be particularly interested in what life is like in Korea compared to the United States. Mrs. Yang was patient and understanding with the many questions students had and stayed well beyond her thirty-minute time frame.

Students took time to write thank-you letters to the guest speaker, Mrs. Yang. Below are two of the letters we mailed to her in Korea:

June 13, 2018

Dear Mrs. Yang,

Thank you for everything that you have done for us. We learned a lot about Korean things from you, like what it looked like before and after the war. We also learned that some of our phones and our cars are made in Korea. Thank you for bringing those hanboks in

and letting us try one on. We just want to say thank you for all that you have done for us. We hope you enjoy your time moving back there, but we will miss you.

Sincerely,

Mary

Mary's limited knowledge about Korea was enhanced by Mrs. Yang's visit. By looking at pictures of Seoul before and after the war, Mary was able to visualize what it looks like in Korea today. Mrs. Yang also brought in a *hanbok* and the students were able to touch it and try it on. We had talked about how the *hanboks* didn't have buttons, zippers and clasps, but once they saw it in person, it was much easier to understand. Mary explained that in her letter. She also mentioned the connection of Korean-made things here in America: phones and cars.

June 13, 2018

Dear Mrs. Yang,

Thank you so much for coming to our class to teach us about Korea. I learned a lot about the food, houses, clothes, and traditional hanbok celebrations. Also, you taught us what colors kings would wear, what old houses or hanoks look like, and about the war. I also learned about the Tanchõng from you. Thank you for coming to visit our class.

From,

Jaden

Jaden's letter shows how closely she paid attention to Mrs. Yang's presentation. She took that information, synthesized it, and was able to write a thank you back to Mrs. Yang in letter-format explaining what she learned. Jaden is a student who qualified for pull-out learning

support services last school year, but her family chose not to place her there this year. Instead, she was in a less restrictive, mainstreamed class with her regular education peers during ELA and in my class three days per week. Jaden is an example of a student who was able to express important ideas on her experiences with the book and related activities.

4.5 VIGNETTE 5: UNIT CLOSER

At the conclusion of the unit, students were matched with their partner(s) from the Double Bubble Thinking Map once again and asked to complete a literature chart entitled “We Are Part of a Diverse World” (Rosen & Hoffman,1992) using all three books. For each book, students were asked to identify the title, setting in which it took place, main character(s)/people, challenges the character/person faced, major outcomes, and what the partners learned about the culture featured. Next are three examples:

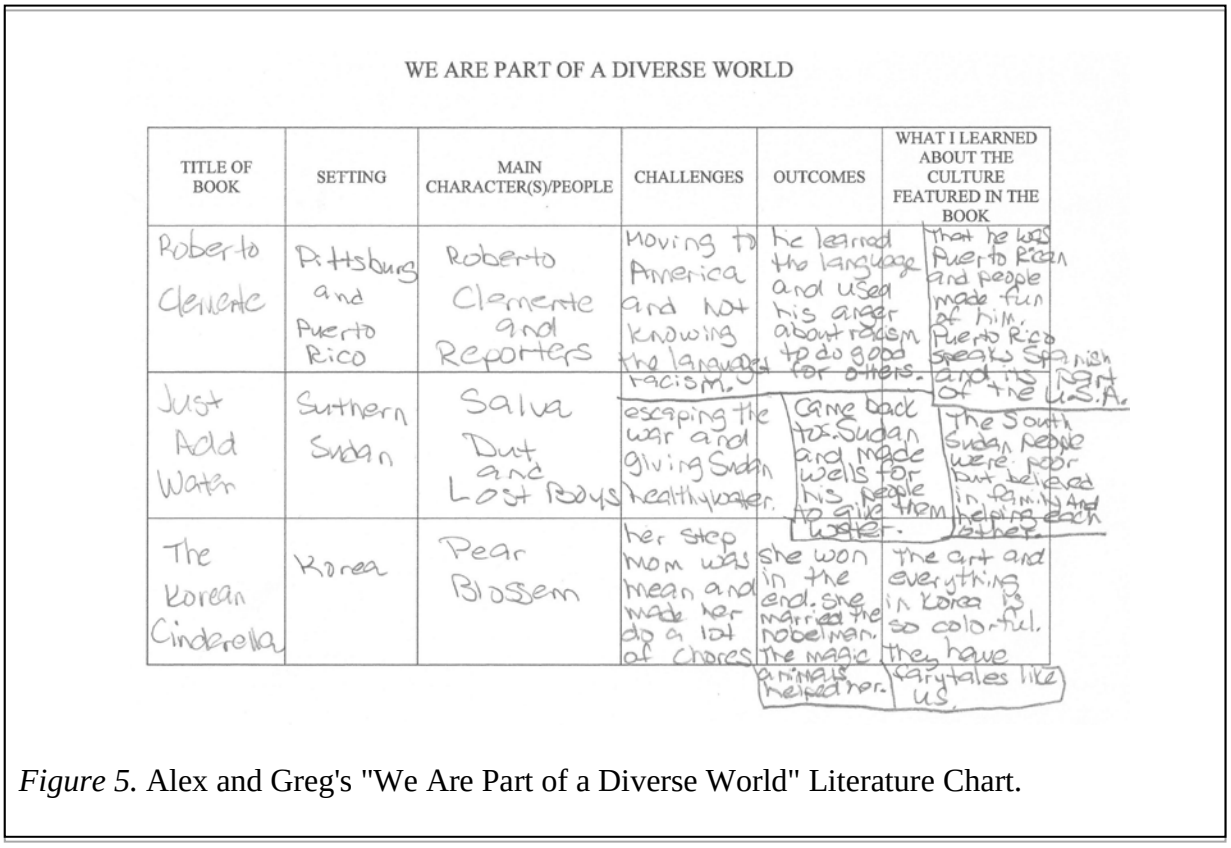
WE ARE PART OF A DIVERSE WORLD

Had 3,000 hits

TITLE OF BOOK	SETTING	MAIN CHARACTER(S)/PEOPLE	CHALLENGES	OUTCOMES	WHAT I LEARNED ABOUT THE CULTURE FEATURED IN THE BOOK
Roberto Clemente	Pittsburgh and Puerto Rico	Roberto Clemente	People were juging him for is calucose and the way he looks	Proburto Clemente over came his fear of comming to Pittsburgh	They had tropical flowers and rain forests. Spoke Spanish, had a lot of baseseball.
Just add Water	Suthern Sudan	Salva Dut	He had to walk from south sudan to Eathopia.	Had to walk miles without shoes, and he was able to escape the lions and bombs. He moved back and built wells now	Had dry and wet seasons. Not much money. More Poor than Us. No water. mangoes.
The Korean Cinderella	Korea	Pear Blossom	Her step mother was really mean and began a maid.	She outcame the step mother and sisters	There houses are colorful and they use ducks at weddings blue and white vases, hanboks

Figure 4. Mary, Rhonda, and Sally's "We Are Part of a Diverse World" Literature Chart.

In Figure 4, Mary, Rhonda, and Sally showed that they were beginning to develop an understanding about the Puerto Rican, South Sudanese, and Korean cultures. For example, they noted that in Puerto Rico, people spoke Spanish and played a lot of baseball. In South Sudan, the people didn't have much money, suffered from little water, but enjoyed mangos and seasonal weather. They also demonstrated an understanding of the challenges faced by the main characters. For example, they noted Clemente was judged for his culture, because of the way he looked, and that Pear Blossom's step mother was really mean to her.

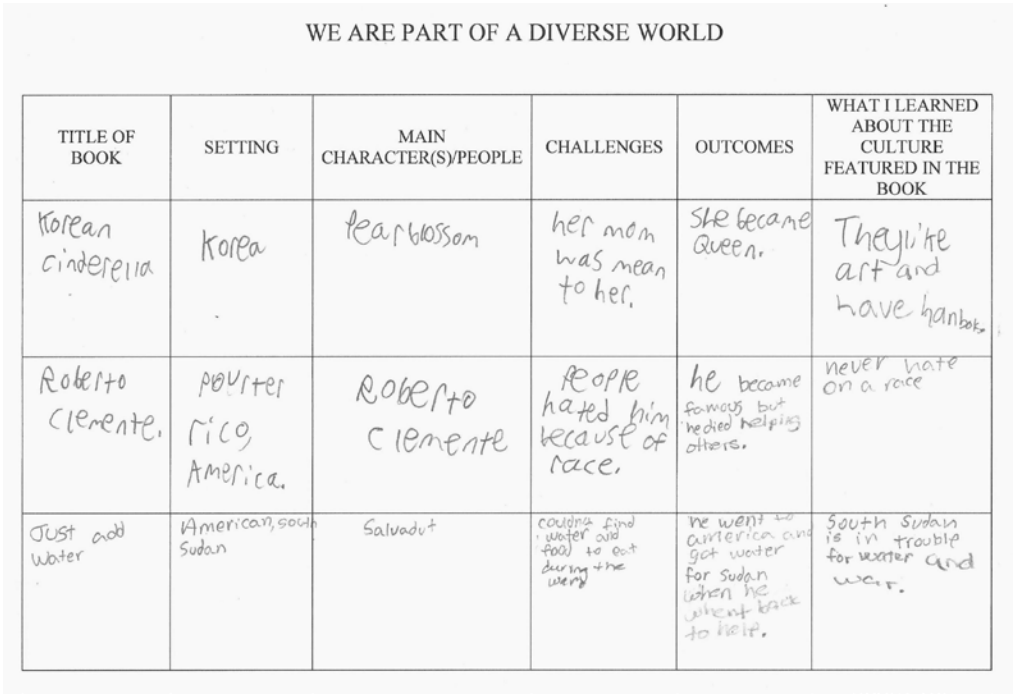


WE ARE PART OF A DIVERSE WORLD

TITLE OF BOOK	SETTING	MAIN CHARACTER(S)/PEOPLE	CHALLENGES	OUTCOMES	WHAT I LEARNED ABOUT THE CULTURE FEATURED IN THE BOOK
Roberto Clemente	Pittsburg and Puerto Rico	Roberto Clemente and Reporters	Moving to America and not knowing the language racism.	he learned the language and used his anger about racism to do good for others.	that he was Puerto Rican and people made fun of him. Puerto Rico speaks Spanish and is part of the U.S.A.
Just Add Water	Suthern Sudan	Salva Dut and Lost Boys	escaping the war and giving Sudan healthy water.	came back to Sudan and made wells for his people to give them water.	The South Sudan people were poor but believed in family and helping each other.
The Korean Cinderella	Korea	Pear Blossem	her step mom was mean and made her do a lot of chores	she won in the end. she married the nobelman. The magic animals helped her.	the art and everything in Korea is so colorful. they have fairytales like us.

Figure 5. Alex and Greg's "We Are Part of a Diverse World" Literature Chart.

In Figure 5, Alex and Greg described the Puerto Rican culture generically, as it being "part of the U. S. A." and that its people speak Spanish. Similarly, when they described South Sudan's culture, the two students considered culture from the people as they described them as "poor but believed in family and helping each other." For Korea, the students looked at culture as a whole, including art and fairy tales in their answer.



WE ARE PART OF A DIVERSE WORLD

TITLE OF BOOK	SETTING	MAIN CHARACTER(S)/PEOPLE	CHALLENGES	OUTCOMES	WHAT I LEARNED ABOUT THE CULTURE FEATURED IN THE BOOK
Korean cinderella	Korea	Pearblossom	her mom was mean to her.	She became Queen.	They like art and have hanbok.
Roberto Clemente.	pourter rico, America.	Roberto Clemente	people hated him because of race.	he became famous but he died helping others.	never hate on a race
Just add water	American, south Sudan	Salvadut	couldnt find water and food to eat during the war.	he went to america and got water for sudan when he went back to help.	South Sudan is in trouble for water and war.

Figure 6. John and Nate's “We Are Part of a Diverse World" Literature Chart.

In their chart (Figure 6), John and Nate successfully identified the title, setting, and main character of each book. An interesting notation on their chart was, “never hate on a race.” They included this in describing Roberto Clemente’s culture. Although this notation does not describe culture, it does reinforce the challenge that Clemente faced and may indicate that the students were impressed by that.

The final assignment to conclude the multicultural awareness unit was for the students to decorate the outside of their journals in a way that represented the unit theme “We are part of a diverse world.” Students had the opportunity to do so in any way they chose. Below are some of their journal covers:

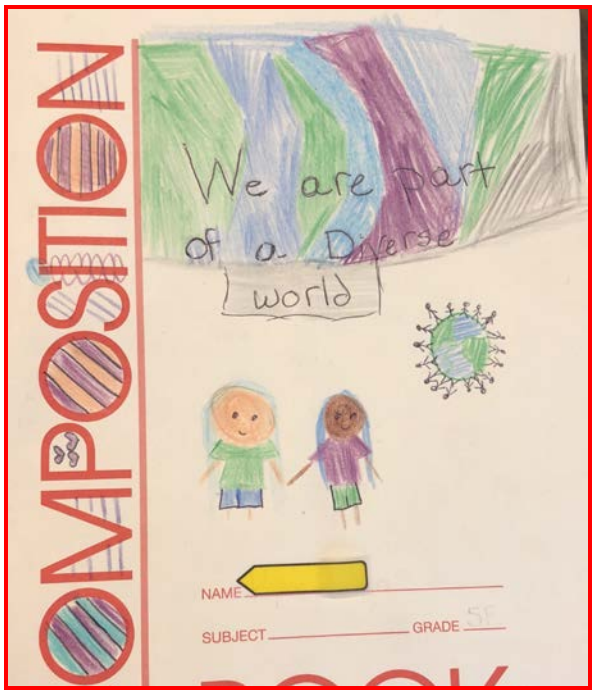


Figure 7. Rhonda's journal cover.

Rhonda’s journal cover represented culturally diverse people living in harmony, peacefully around the world. When she shared her picture with the class, Rhonda explained it as “all people from all around the world just getting along, no matter what they look like or where they’re from” (see Figure 7). According to Rhonda, the colorful pictures along the left side were representative of different flags from various countries.

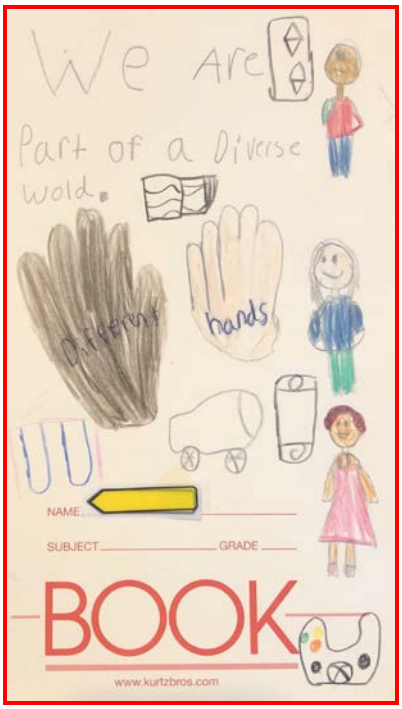


Figure 8. Jaden's journal cover.

Jaden's journal cover was unique. She chose to represent diversity in a multitude of ways. People can be diverse in their interests and their needs. Because of this, Jaden drew culturally diverse people, a walk-man, a game controller, hands (which she said also represented a baseball glove), a swing set, an iPod, and a watering tank (see Figure 8).

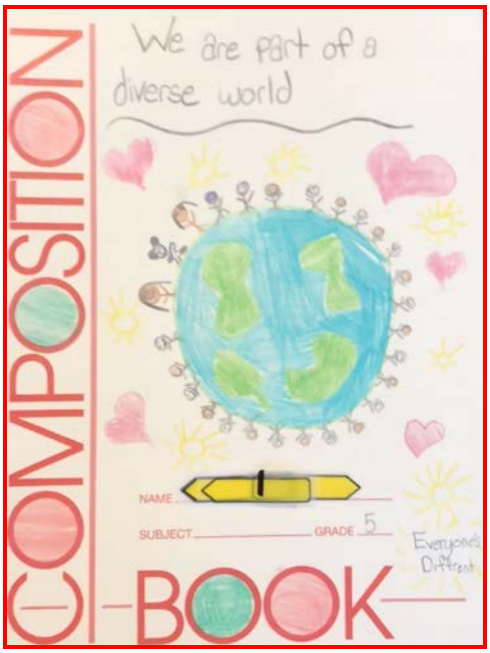


Figure 9. Carrie's journal cover.

Carrie's journal had a large picture of the earth surrounded by many hearts and suns along with the words "Everybody's Different." When Carrie shared her journal cover she stated, "To me, being part of a diverse world means everyone is different, and different kinds of people live in it. That's why I used different colors on the side" (see Figure 9).

5.0 SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

5.1 LIMITATIONS

There are obvious limitations to this study. The most significant limitation was my role as both teacher and researcher, or participant observer (McMillan & Schumacher, 2001). In my role as teacher I developed and enacted a multicultural literacy unit. As researcher, I collected data by recording, transcribing, and analyzing whole group discussions and collecting student artifacts, including students' journal responses, "I" poems, Double Bubble Thinking Maps, and Literature Charts. While in both roles, I was aware that my efforts were exploratory in nature and that I was engaged in very preliminary pilot-like work.

A second limitation of the study was the minimal number of participants involved. With 13 students enrolled in the class, the results cannot be generalized to a larger population of students. A third limitation was the duration of the inquiry, eight weeks with a total of eleven hours of class time for completion of the entire unit.

As an exploratory case study, this investigation shares the limitations of all case study research. One of the biggest concerns in case study research is the "presumed need for greater rigor" (Yin, p. 19, 2014). Following case study practices and procedures allows the researcher not to be influenced down this path. Another typical limitation is that the replication of similar

circumstances for case study research can be difficult. Also, generalizations cannot be made; only lessons learned and the possibly of a *working hypothesis* if results could be applied in understanding current research or "defining new research" (Yin, 2014, pp. 40-41). In addition to these limitations, theories may be questioned in case studies since they are a researcher's conclusions. Another concern is the significant amount of data to review. Finally, there is the possibility of the Hawthorne Effect, in which people alter their behavior when they are aware they are under observation (Yin & Heald, 1975).

However, the current inquiry also shares the potential power of case study research. Case study method allows for the opportunity to explore deeply and thoroughly into an event, allowing for the researcher to get an in-depth study of the participants or event. With a comprehensive look, new insight can be gained into phenomena that cannot be studied in any other way (Yin, p. 21, 2014).

5.2 FINDINGS

Despite the limitations noted above, there are noteworthy findings that contribute to the literature on curriculum that supports the development of multicultural awareness and cultural competence. My study builds on the work of Sarraj (2015) and Evans (2010) by describing a specific unit designed to address these questions:

- What are the features of a curriculum designed to raise students' multicultural awareness through literary experiences?

- How do fifth-grade reading support students respond to a curriculum focused on developing multicultural awareness through literary experiences?

5.2.1 Main Features Designed to Raise Students' Multicultural Awareness

The main features designed to raise students' multicultural awareness through literacy experiences within this unit include: (a) three selected literary texts, (b) multimedia resources, (c) student projects, and (d) guest speakers.

The book chosen to begin the unit was *Roberto Clemente: Pride of the Pittsburgh Pirates* (Winter, 2005). My rationale for choosing this book for the opening of the unit was its close ties to Pittsburgh. The school is located near Pittsburgh, one student's father had been a professional baseball player, and another student was fluent in Spanish. All of these personal connections were intended to peak the students' interest for the unit.

The second book, *Just Add Water* (Hall & O Hill, 2014), was selected as a way to expose students from upper-middle class communities to the South Sudan, the Lost Boy refugees, and the water crisis in a third world country. This book also served to clarify student conceptions about Africa including family loyalty, items exported to the United States, and the beautiful topography of Sudan.

The last book in the unit was a fairy tale, *The Korean Cinderella* (Climo, 1993). Many students assumed that all fairy tales originated from a Disney version of a story. Through this book I was able to show students an example of literature from another culture. In addition, the

book had authentic illustrations depicting important features of Korean culture, including clothing, wedding traditions, and *hanoks*.

A second feature of the unit was guest speakers. Two guests were invited to speak, one from South Sudan, and one from Korea. Deng Kur was invited to meet students and share his story because he is a Lost Boy and refugee who had migrated to the United States from South Sudan, just as Salva Dut from the text *Just Add Water.* Meeting him in person, hearing the stories of his harrowing travel out of South Sudan, seeing his physical scars, and being able to ask him questions was a memorable experience for students.

The guest speaker from Korea was key because there had been an influx of Korean students to the school. An introduction to the Korean culture was a benefit to all students as it empowered them to understand this culture, and the guest speaker did exactly that. She compared Korean daily life to that in the United States, including school, weather, food, history, automobiles, and explained that some things we use here, such as the Samsung phone and Hyundai cars are exported from Korea to the United States. The presentation provided opportunities for students to make connections for across cultures.

A third feature used to raise students' multicultural awareness was the use of multimedia resources. Google Slide and PowerPoint presentations were designed to introduce each culture before reading the book. Incorporating technology into the lessons kept students engaged as they viewed each country on a map, foods the country exported to the United States, trades each was known for, and unique things about each, such as art on ancient Korean temples, pictures of Roberto (Bob) Clemente's baseball cards, and the history and tribes in Sudan. Video clips brought the books to life. Students were able to watch Roberto Clemente play baseball and listen

to him speak both in Spanish and in English via archived videos. Students 'walked' through a *hanok,* a traditional Korean home, nearly identical to Pear Blossom's in *The Korea Cinderella* and were able to visualize everything once we read the book. Students viewed videos of the Lost Boys in the Kakuma refugee camp attending school, and then followed them as they boarded a plane and landed at the Pittsburgh airport. Students saw the expressions on the Lost Boys' faces as they walked into their new apartment, with electricity and endless running water. These experiences add to students' understanding on a much deeper level.

Another key feature in the unit was student projects. Students created "I" poems, engaging in critical thinking, and more specifically, deepening their understanding of character perspectives. Students also completed Double Bubble Thinking Maps with partners comparing two fairy tales from different cultures, making text-to-text connections. A third project students engaged in was writing thank-you letters to guest speakers. The letters served as a way for students to synthesize information presented and show their appreciation of what they learned in written format. Student journals were another artifact incorporated into the unit. Students responded to journal prompts after most lessons. Journal responses were a way for students to reflect and prepare for future lessons. Also, students completed a Literature Chart as a culminating project comparing the three main books of the unit, identifying the main characters, settings, challenges, outcomes, and describing what they learned about each culture, and then shared this chart with classmates. Finally, students chose different ways to decorate their journal covers representing the theme "We are part of a diverse world." Because students have different talents and preferences, I encouraged them to be creative.

5.2.2 Students' Reactions to the Unit

Students' shared unique responses to the unit. Self confidence rose as students began to work their way through the unit. Carrie asked when she would have the opportunity to share her "I" poem, as she wanted to go first. John eagerly volunteered, as he wanted to be the first student to describe his journal cover. Erin nearly got passed up when sharing her journal cover because she hadn't completed hers but went out of her way to ensure hers was presented in front of the class. These were students, in the past, who would not volunteer often, and certainly not to share their work with peers.

Students offered to come in during recess to make up lessons they were absent for, including listening to guest speakers, reading parts of a book, or completing an "I" poem. This was not typical prior to the new unit. Class participation in general was extremely high. Students seemingly enjoyed the topic, as students were involved in the discussion throughout the lessons, often without raising their hands. Again, this was not typical in the previous curriculum. Students showed up before class time and stayed after class was over; they continued the discussion and asked what the next class topic would be. Class was cancelled due to yearbook signings and three of the students showed up to ask if we could have class anyway; the students felt the unit was more enjoyable, so we had class with three students that day.

Some students had personal connections to stories and others were moved to a call to action in the unit. Those with personal connections identified with characters in the story and other students noticed. Some students were moved by what they read, felt empathy, or wanted to

do something to help those in the book. Through these texts, students encountered cultures that they probably never encounter otherwise.

5.2.3 Mandated Curriculum and the Multicultural Unit

The multicultural awareness unit was in stark contrast to what and how students were used to with the mandated district curriculum. In developing the lessons, I wanted to incorporate what I perceived to be missing pieces from the mandated curriculum I had noticed over the twelve years of teaching in the district. The unit gave me the opportunity to develop a literature curriculum for fifth-grade reading support students and provide opportunities for them to develop their cultural competence.

Anecdotal evidence suggests that students benefited from the newly designed curriculum as documented through their increased participation, attendance, writing opportunities, eagerness to learn, willingness to make up work on their own, making connections across multiple complete texts, developing empathy, and making personal connections within a book. However, the district is going in a different direction next school year.

The district intends to adopt a scripted comprehension program in the future, and selected teachers are piloting the program for grades three through five this fall in two of the seven elementary buildings. This program is a small group, supplementary intensive leveled intervention program targeted for struggling readers. The system consists of practice in reading, writing, phonics, and vocabulary. Students read and reread texts within the classroom, often reading alternative texts from their peers, as this program keeps each student on an instructional

reading level through progress monitoring. Teachers use prompting guides to deliver precise language to assist students in developing systematic reading behaviors when thinking within, beyond, and about the text (Fountas & Pinnell, 2015b).

I know that the commitment to this program is strong, so I do not think that I can provide evidence for the district to consider alternatives. However, I do hope to present the findings from this inquiry to additional upper administration in our school district and seek approval to teach additional multicultural awareness units next year for third and fourth grade students, after the district administers the state assessments in April. The English Language Arts department is currently undergoing a curriculum review; however, materials have already been piloted and ordered for the elementary reading specialists' department and newly hired MTSS (multi-tiered system of support) interventionists for the 2018-2019 school year and summer training is underway. The newly purchased materials, Sonday and 95% Group, are scripted phonemic awareness and phonics programs and will be progress monitored weekly through the school district's AimswebPlus benchmark screening tool. Because of the intensity of these programs for kindergarten through grade five, and a few other programs to fill in the gaps, there is not time for special units throughout the school year.

My plan is to seek permission to teach the unit I developed with fifth-grade students in the 2018-2019 school year, and to develop another unit for third and fourth graders. The start of the academic year seems the most logical time to enact the units. This is the time when we are traditionally spending time conducting screening assessments with students across the building and placing students into appropriate academic groups.

5.2.4 Recommendations for Further Research

If I am able to develop more units and enact them, and engage other reading specialists in doing the same, it is possible that I could collect evidence related to students' learning and development of cultural competence. This would require developing assessments of various kinds to tap into their learning and dispositions. For example, I could work in conjunction with the librarians to track students' selections of books related to the cultures we have studied in class. Also, I could interview students to better understand their interests and cultural assets in an effort to thread their cultures into the curriculum. Interviews after the units have been taught could demonstrate how the books and activities may have had an impact.

5.3 IMPLICATIONS

Now that I have completed this exploratory study, I would like to share with my colleagues some of the important conclusions that I am able to draw from my efforts. Our district also has a professional development component. I could request time to share these conclusions during a professional development session with other reading specialists across the district. Specifically, I would like to describe some important take-aways that I have learned. One take-away is the importance of developing a supportive community to work for change in my school district. Because some teachers and librarians have shown interest in my efforts to provide multicultural resources, I would like to build on this. Perhaps I could establish a book club or study group. In place of a routine classroom observation, our school district offers something more

nontraditional. Teachers can take advantage of a professional development community and present that to staff at the end of the school year. This book club, study group, or a combination of them would qualify.

One idea for a book club/study group combination would be to read *Rac(e)ing to Class: Confronting Poverty and Race in Schools and Classrooms* (Milner, 2015) with a group of teachers. I would ask for volunteers to join, with a description of the book focusing on those who teach students of diverse backgrounds or those interested in incorporating multicultural literature into the classroom. This book would provide the background knowledge, strategies, effective practices, and it would help to define critical terminology necessary to assist in teaching the cultural books. In the monthly, before school meetings, I would provide chapter assignments and questions to consider ahead of time for teachers, so all would be prepared to discuss. Following the Milner book, we would read *The Watsons Go to Birmingham-1963* (Curtis, 1995). While reading this book, we would practice the strategies learned in Milner's book.

I would also want to explain some of the challenges involved in the kind of work that I would like to continue: (a) locating picture books that are culturally authentic and asset-based, (b) developing more units and finding ways to use and share them, and (c) finding ways to advocate for change in my district. Many of the multicultural picture books I found were about refugees and immigrants, written from a deficit-perspective. While these books have their place in education, my focus is to showcase some of the positives each culture has to offer. That way, students from those places, know others who are, or meet someone from there one day, have a positive connection.

Developing units incorporating multicultural literature is time consuming, but one unit for one grade level may not be effective in making the kind of change necessary with our rapidly changing demographics. I also need to create assessments for each unit in an effort to prepare students for classroom, local, and state assessments. Locating guest speakers from other countries and aligning their schedules with the unit can difficult. However, ensuring this experience is authentic for students was a key component in the study. Once the units have been developed, finding ways to use them may be difficult. There are windows of opportunity around holidays and testing that I am hoping to incorporate one book per week in, as this coming school year specialists' time increases an additional day per week, and from 30 to 45-minute sessions.

One final challenge I anticipate is advocating for change in my school district. The district has purchased several new research-based phonemic awareness and phonological awareness programs for struggling readers this school year and has a strong commitment to a new reading comprehension program next school year. Being in the implementation phase of the newly purchased materials makes it difficult for me to advocate for setting these new programs aside to teach something I developed myself.

I have shared the findings of this inquiry with my administration and will continue to share with peers and superiors as I believe in the anecdotal evidence I found. As I develop more resources to complement the unit, and teach it again, I hope to provide more evidence to administration to support using it district-wide, at least during testing times and holiday weeks.

6.0 DEMONSTRATION OF SCHOLARLY PRACTICE

After completing the lessons, on nearly the last day of school, I explained the inquiry I conducted and shared some preliminary findings with all of the teachers and administrators in the elementary school building in which I conducted the study. Through a Google Slide presentation, I introduced teachers to multicultural books as windows, mirrors, and sliding glass doors (Bishop, 1990). I explained that all students benefit from seeing themselves reflected back in the pages they read, but they also benefit from seeing their peers and people from other cultures reflected as well.

A second reason to expose students to multicultural literature is so that they learn to have a more complete understanding of people with different cultural backgrounds. Sometimes students are afraid or stay away from others simply because they do not understand what they've never been exposed to. At that point I clarified my definition of multicultural literature, because not all researchers subscribe to the same definition. I explained that when I use the term *multicultural*, I refer to people of diverse cultural, religious, disabilities, socio-economic status, those outside of the mainstream of society, gender identity, sexual orientation, and age.

Next, I shared a message from a parent, whose child was not a student of mine, thanking me for allowing her daughter to check out books from my classroom library. I went on to explain that the third-grade student had checked out two books from the school library, immigrant and

refugee in nature, and were from her parents' home country and nearby: Pakistan and India. Her daughter was thrilled the school had secured new books this year, books with characters that mirrored her, and she couldn't wait to read them. She began to read it on the bus that day, and tears streamed down her face as she read what had happened to the refugees, why they ended up in those camps. Her mom didn't allow her to check books out from the library anymore, not about Pakistan or India. But when she reached out to me, her little girl began stopping in twice per week. I read all of the books prior to sending them home. I had been in contact with several authors because of this inquiry and had 25 books from those two countries already in my classroom. The mom explained how the girl and her father were reading one of the books I sent about the kite festival of Basant in Lahore, Pakistan and it brought back many memories of when he was a young boy making kites for that festival in Gujranwala, the neighboring city. She said it was a wonderful evening because of that book.

The teachers in the room appreciated the story, and one of librarians asked for some book ideas. I had a link for them embedded in the presentation, which was being shared, and explained that all 200 of my books were available for them to check out. Each book had a small explanation about the content.

Finally, I showed the three books I taught in the unit with fifth-grade students and reviewed some findings with the teachers, including students' showing up on time, asking what we would be doing in the next class (interest), coming in during recess, eagerness to stay after class, high amount of class participation, "I" poems, and incorporating writing into reading support. Two teachers commented after the presentation about how they had been borrowing

books for the past two years, what a great resource it has been, and a third thanked me for adding writing in to my instructional time.

Following the presentation, several teachers sent emails with a few book ideas they had, the librarian sent a link requesting book ideas to order for her library, and three teachers visited my class library. These actions are encouraging to me, and I hope to continue to find ways to continue developing my own teaching and resources and to support my colleagues.

APPENDIX A

WE ARE PART OF A DIVERSE WORLD

Note: This unit will consist of three read-alongs: *Roberto Clemente: Pride of the Pittsburgh Pirates* (Winter, 2005), *Just Add Water* (Hill & O Hall, 2012), and *The Korean Cinderella* (Climo, 1993). Each read-along will include five 30-minute lessons, followed by two lessons to conclude the unit. this is the first lesson.

LAUNCHING THE UNIT

Today we are beginning a new unit entitled “We Are Part of a Diverse World”.

PowerPoint:

Slide 1: Prior to introducing the unit, ask students to respond to the following prompt: “Explain why it might be important to learn about places and cultures that differ from your own.” Allow students 3-5 minutes to respond in writing in their journal.

Slide 2: Introduction to the unit “We Are Part of a Diverse World”

We start the unit by thinking about the world we live in. By the end of our lesson today, you will have a good idea about what the word *diverse* means.

Slide 3: Map of the world, facts:

Let’s start with some facts about the world.

There are more than 7.5 billion people living on the Earth today.

(live world population clock)

www.worldometers.info/world-population/

There are 195 different countries in the world today. (keeping track live)
http://www.worldometers.info/geography/how-many-countries-are-there-in-the-world/

Slide 4: The United States is not the country with the largest population. It's not the second largest population. Which country do you think is the most populated?
https://www.bouncymaps.com/#!/bouncymaps/world/-2102779806

Slide 5: Video comparing the world to a village of 100 people:
(length of video 3:33)
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QrcOdLYBIw0
People in these countries share a history and a culture – small brainstorming session about similarities of people all around the world-list on chart paper – what might they have in common?

Slide 6: People everywhere share certain needs, including food, water, clothing, shelter, natural resources, their freedom and safety. They also have unique and shared cultural values. Those include special foods, traditional clothes, houses, jobs, a government, art, literature, and their language. Some Japanese, for instance, choose to wear a kimono, and some in the Korean culture choose to wear a hanbok.

Slide 7: Natural Resources: What are they? Water, plants, animals, fresh air, etc.
they are located all over the world, but as you can see,
they are heavily concentrated in certain areas, so we rely on each other; we need each other to share resources. It's in our best interest to get along.

Slide 8: Water is a key natural resource. We depend on it for survival, as do plants and animals. We use it for farming, also known as agriculture. In some areas farmers need to take water to their plants, that process is known as irrigation and is crucial to their livelihood. We also cook with it, bathe, and use it to sterilize instruments in hospitals. Each country has a limited amount of water, known as their supply. As the supply is used or withdrawn, the water's supply lowers. This slide shows each country's ratio of water withdrawals to its supply, as a water

stress projection by 2040. This means it is predicted that there may be enough water for that area. For example, the Middle Eastern countries have an extremely high water-stress ratio. Many countries in that area have war, drought, political turmoil, and a large amount of salt water in their ground water supply because they are so close to the sea; all factors that contribute to the ratio. The United States' future climate, land-use changes, and growing human population predictions compared to its supply have its future ratio in the medium to high range, in the category just below the Middle Eastern countries.

Slide 9: Languages: There are at least 6,909 languages spoken around the world today. Many other countries require their students to learn English in schools, but often children don't attend school. In some countries, only the boys go to school, while the girls stay home to collect water, take care of the home, or do chores such as tend the animals. In other countries, only the wealthy can afford to send their children to school. In still other countries, there are no schools close by, or transportation. Other countries have tribal/village languages and also a national language they must learn, in addition to English if they do get the chance to go to school.

Slide 10: Some people around the world choose to work in the service industry, others in farming, construction, technology, mining, or as professionals. These pictures show some of these choices.

Slide 11: Occupations around the world: The U.S has the highest percentage of its jobs in managerial, professional, and technical, while Puerto Rico reports 77% of its jobs in service, South Korea 73% in service, and Sudan has in 80% agriculture.

Slide 12: There are approximately 4,200 religions in the world. The religions with the most followers are Buddhism, Christianity, Hinduism, and Islam.

Slide 13: Art: All around the world art is expressed in a variety of ways - through pieces of art (pottery, paintings), clothing, and architecture. Different countries' art has inspired others in architecture and in the way people dress, for example.

Slide 14: Literature: Stories are important in many cultures. Some stories or themes are shared across cultures. One example of this is the many versions of Cinderella, both oral and in print, dating back as early as the ninth century in China, with more than 500 versions in Europe alone, and 900 versions around the world.

Slide 15: One of the reasons it's important for us to learn about other cultures and places is if you look at the people living in the U.S., the number of people born in other countries is significant, and on the rise: 13.5% in 2013, the highest since 1910.

JOURNAL ENTRY Slide 16: What does it mean to say "We are part of a diverse world"?

We Are Part of a Diverse World

***Roberto Clemente: Pride of the Pittsburgh Pirates* (Winter, 2005)**

DAY 1 BUILD BACKGROUND INFORMATION & BEGIN READING

Connect the first book to the unit framework and build background for *Roberto Clemente: Pride of the Pittsburgh Pirates* by Jonah Winter.

PowerPoint:

Today we are going to begin a series of lessons about a book entitled *Roberto Clemente: Pride of the Pittsburgh Pirates*. I chose this book because it tells the story of a man who came from Puerto Rico to play baseball in the United States.

Slide 1: Roberto Clemente Walker was his name. In the Spanish culture, children take on the last name, or surname, of both parents. The father's last name is in the middle, and the mother's last name is at the end.

Slide 2: This is a map of the world, showcasing Puerto Rico and the United States. Puerto Rico is a territory of the United States and became one in 1898. That is when the United States defeated Spain in the Spanish American War. A territory means it is controlled by the U. S. government. Puerto Rico has a governor, not a president. There are 3.4 million people living in Puerto Rico.

Slide 3: This is the map of Puerto Rico as it is located in the Caribbean Sea. Notice how small it is compared to the neighboring islands of Cuba and the Dominican Republic/Haiti, and where it is located compared to Florida.

Slide 4: Clemente was scouted by the Brooklyn Dodgers when he was 17 years old. Major League Baseball rules in the United States prevented players from signing a contract before they were 18. So, he played for a professional team in Puerto Rico, the Santurce Crabbers, until he could play in the United States. Then he was offered a $10,000 signing bonus by the Dodgers in 1954. Clemente accepted, and then was offered $30,000 later that same day. Clemente kept his word to the Dodgers, declining the $30.000. First Clemente played for the

Montreal Royals before he became a Pittsburgh Pirate for the next 18 seasons.

Slide 5: Clemente did not play baseball at PNC Park; he played at Forbes Field, located where the University of Pittsburgh is currently in Oakland. The Pirates played at Forbes Field from 1909-1970. After playing at Forbes Field, the Pirates shared the Steelers' stadium until 2001 when PNC Park opened.

Slide 6: Home plate and part of the fence still remain from Forbes Field, and you can go see them at Posvar Hall and Hillman Library located on the University of Pittsburgh's main campus in Oakland. This is a picture of home plate on display at the University of Pittsburgh's Posvar Hall's floor, although it's not in its original spot.

Slide 7: Clemente was loved by the fans in Pittsburgh, and you can see why in these pictures.

Slide 8: This is a picture of Clemente's family, including his three boys, Roberto, Jr., Luis, and Enrique. His wife, Vera and his parents are also pictured. Roberto's father worked in the sugar cane fields, eventually becoming a foreman, or boss.

Slide 9: This is the cover of the book we will be reading, *Roberto Clemente: Pride of the Pittsburgh Pirates.* Jonah Winter, the author, is a resident of Pittsburgh and has written other books about baseball. He is also a poet and a painter. Raul Colon, the illustrator, saw Clemente play baseball in Puerto Rico and was inspired by him. He has illustrated several other books as well.

Begin reading the story:

Pages 1-2: What do you notice about Puerto Rico? What does the island look like? *(palm trees, sunny)*

What do the kids enjoy doing? *(playing baseball)*

Pages 3-4: What is Clemente using as baseball equipment?

Pass around the coffee-bean sack, and then the real baseball glove. What do you notice about the difference in padding when catching a baseball.

Pass around the soup can, then a softball, and finally a baseball. Do you see the size differences?

Notice the illustration on page four. Who are the three people? *(all are Clemente, as a boy, as a minor league player, as a professional ball player)*

Page 5: What does the author mean when he says "instead of being somebody, he was nobody"?

Page 6: A person's name is important, so hearing his name mispronounced must have made Roberto feel even more of a "nobody."

Pages 7-10: Why do you think the author referred to Clemente as a "jolt of electricity"? Back on page one, the author mentioned Roberto had "a fever to play baseball…" can you explain that or provide some evidence now that we've gotten to know Roberto better? What was he like?

Pages 11-12: *When reading this: be sure to point to the ball while reading the word 'inside.'*

Slide 10: Clemente was a great ball player. *Show authentic pictures of him playing, followed by the video on the next slide.* He trained with the Marine Corps during the winter as a Reservist from 1958-1964. This helped to keep him in shape. He could throw, catch, run, and hit, and is considered one of the greatest players of all time.

Pages 13-16

STOP HERE – Slide 11: Clemente could speak some English but he also spoke Spanish, especially at important public moments in his life. Language is part of a person's culture, so when Clemente spoke Spanish he was making a decision about how much he valued his culture. We are going to watch a video of Clemente being interviewed by a reporter after his team won the World Series in 1971. The translation of what Clemente said in Spanish is, "On the most important day of my life, I give blessings to my boys and ask that my parents give their blessings in Puerto Rico."

JOURNAL ENTRY Slide 12: Why do you think Clemente speaks Spanish, not English, in the television interview? Students will respond to the prompt with a few sentences in their journals.

DAY 2 FINISH READING STORY

Pages 17-18: Roberto had a lot of pride; explain that. *The reporters made fun of his Spanish accent; they couldn't pronounce his name, called him lazy, and called him a "Latino hothead." All of these things made him angry.*

Pages 19-22: Roberto called out the reporters for not giving him the credit he deserved. He asked if it was because he was Black, Puerto Rican, and proud of that fact. Do you think the Puerto Rican pride hindered *(held back)* Roberto's success or sparked it?

Pages 23-27

Slide 13: This is a newspaper clipping about Clemente's death at 38 years old on New Year's Eve. He died trying to take supplies to earthquake victims in Nicaragua where he coached amateur baseball players. Last year Puerto Rico had natural disasters of its own. Hurricanes Irma and Maria stuck the island within ten days of each other. Our federal government continues to send aid to assist the residents, including water, meals, grant money, generators to provide electricity, medical personnel, and military assistance to help with the clean-up and rebuilding. Other organizations and civilians donated money and time to help Puerto Ricans as well.

Slide 14: This is the Roberto Clemente Bridge, which leads straight to PNC Park across the Allegheny River in Pittsburgh. It is closed to traffic during baseball games; only pedestrians can use it. It connects the metropolitan part of Pittsburgh with the North Side, where the Pirates play.

Slide 15: Clemente was presented with three awards by the U. S. government after he passed: the Roberto Clemente Walker Congressional Gold Medal, the Presidential

Citizens Medal, and the Presidential Medal of Freedom *(the nation's highest civilian honor).*

Slide 16: The Roberto Clemente Award in Major League baseball is awarded to an all-around ball player who exemplifies the game of baseball, sportsmanship, community involvement, and the individual's contributions to his team.

Slide 17: This video is of Clemente and his battle with racism and segregation. At times, he couldn't eat with his team because of segregated restaurants or stay at the same hotel as the white players. He had a difficult time finding things in common with his teammates. (2:20)

Slide 18: Reporters insisted on Americanizing Roberto's first name. They referred to him as "Bob" or Bobby" which Roberto did not like. Here are three baseball cards showing Roberto Clemente referred to as "Bob."

JOURNAL ENTRY (Slide 19): Roberto Clemente said, "Anytime you have the opportunity to accomplish something for somebody who comes behind you and you don't do it, you are wasting your time on this earth." Who might be the somebodies who came behind Clemente? How did he accomplish something for them?

Respond to the prompt using a few sentences in your journal.

DAY 3 JOURNAL RESPONSES & "I" POEMS

Students may share their journal responses from the previous lesson.

Today we are going to be writing "I" poems about the story we just read. This is something we have done before, but let's review what an "I" poem is. With "I" poems, the narrator writes from the first-person point of view about a person, place, or object. In this case you are "becoming" something from the story. Your topics may include: Roberto Clemente, a teammate of Roberto's, a baseball fan, a newspaper reporter, Clemente's wife, or one of his children. We will be using a template which has all 12-line starters already created for you. Read

along with me. Next, let's refer back to one we wrote together earlier this school year and read it. Finally, I would like you to read the one you wrote for that assignment.

The first thing I would like you to do is to pick your topic from those listed, then brainstorm a list of ideas that go along with that topic. Once I approve that, you may begin writing a draft of your poem. Be sure to go back into the text to help support your thoughts.

DAY 4 PUBLISH "I" POEMS

You will continue working on your "I" poems. The goal by the end of the day is to publish and print them. The next time we meet, you will share your "I" poems.

DAY 5 SHARE "I" POEMS

The students will share their "I" poems. José will be the final student to share his poem. First, he will read his poem in Spanish, and then he will it translate it into English. When he is finished, José will explain when his family moved to the United States, and how they incorporate both languages at home.

Why do you think language is an important part of a person's culture? We talked about how Roberto Clemente felt it was important to speak in Spanish when he was interviewed after the World Series. Try to remember that conversation. Why does José's family continue to speak Spanish now that they live in the United States? Think about those things before you answer. *(Discuss.)*

JOURNAL ENTRY (Slide 20): If you went to live in a country where English was not spoken, would you learn the language but still keep using your own language as well? Why or why not?

APPENDIX B

"I" POEM TEMPLATE

I AM _____

I WONDER _____

I HEAR _____

I SEE _____

I WANT _____

I AM _____

I PRETEND _____

I FEEL _____

I TOUCH _____

I WORRY _____

I CRY _____

I AM _____

I UNDERSTAND _____

I SAY _____

I DREAM _____

I TRY _____

I HOPE _____

I AM _____

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