How can critical literacy be used to address social justice issues through a first grade social studies read aloud curriculum?

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HOW CAN CRITICAL LITERACY BE USED TO ADDRESS SOCIAL JUSTICE ISSUES THROUGH A FIRST GRADE SOCIAL STUDIES READ ALOUD CURRICULUM?

By

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A capstone submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts in Literacy Education.

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CHAPTER ONE

Introduction

Throughout my graduate education at Hamline University, choosing a capstone topic has been at the forefront of my mind. Each class I have taken has inspired me in a different way and sparked a different direction in which I could take this culminating project. Continually reflecting on my courses prompted me to continually reflect on my teaching in the classroom. During my graduate studies, I was introduced to critical literacy. Critical literacy is an approach to teaching that requires students to be active participants in the reading process. Students are taught to evaluate the author’s viewpoint and are challenged to view the text from alternating perspectives, leading to the analysis of power and discussion of social justice issues. I have been creating lessons using a critical literacy approach for my first grade students with increasing frequency during the last year. My interest and passion in critical literacy at the elementary level has led me to my research question for capstone: “How can critical literacy be used to address social justice issues through a first grade social studies read aloud curriculum?”

In this Chapter One I elaborate on my rationale for research including my professional background and teaching experience. I share experiences I have had while teaching with a critical literacy approach. I describe why I chose to revise my current social studies curriculum and how it connects to my passion for teaching through a critical lens.
Personal Background

When I began teaching, I was excited to impact students and create positive change in their lives. I started as a fourth grade teacher in a K-6 school located north of the Twin Cities Metro. My classroom population was diverse, I was excited by some of the challenges I would be facing and I was ready to tackle obstacles with creative solutions. I knew my students were at the age to question the world around them and search for their places in it. Therefore, I wanted to create a classroom environment that allowed my learners to flourish, and I was excited to share my love for learning and build personal relationships with students while empowering them to evaluate social justice issues and become advocates for themselves and what they believed in.

As the year went on I felt like my goal of positive change was overshadowed by teaching directives and curriculum demands. I knew I created positive relationships with my students but did not feel I had influenced them at a deeper level. While reading, students were capable of recalling important events and sequencing the plot of a story. However, rarely was I able to engage in a conversation with students connecting the text to their life or questioning why the author wrote the story from a certain point of view. I was not able to connect our learning to current events in the rich authentic way I imagined during my undergraduate studies. Furthermore, I had a difficult time motivating some students to connect to text at all. Our reading block felt like an isolated chunk of time in which we read, we read simply because we had to. It was apparent that students were respectful and willing to follow the guidelines during this time, but outside of a higher reading level, what were they gaining? When the reading block was over so were our stories.
My second year of teaching was even more eye opening. Our K-6 school transitioned to a K-3 school. Due to the efficient staffing of our new population and district budget cuts I received my first pink slip stating that my contract was over. That summer my principal contacted me sharing that there was a first grade literacy teaching position available. Our district adopted a partial Spanish Immersion program and my school was chosen to host it. I was hired as the first grade literacy teacher. I taught two sections of literacy and had two classes of students. When students were not with me, they were with my teaching partner who only spoke Spanish to students and taught math, science, social studies, health and art. My job was to teach in English and cover all first grade reading and writing standards.

I quickly learned that encouraging six year olds to question their world and views would be tough. Beginning of the year lessons were focused on walking in a straight line and only using two paper towels to dry their hands at the bathroom. My reading block consisted of our district supported basal curriculum and isolated phonics lessons. My six year olds did not know the world beyond their limited, lived experiences, and should they? I have spent the past five years as a first grade teacher. The students I teach are happy, they are learning, they are kind, but I want more for them than meeting standards and learning to decode words.

Maria Mitchell, the first female astronomer was quoted in the 1800’s stating, “We have a hunger of the mind which asks for knowledge of all around us, and the more we gain, the more is our desire; the more we see, the more we are capable of seeing” (as cited in Johnson, retrieved 2015). This quote encapsulates the why behind my research. Teaching students how to view the world through multiple lenses will open
doors for them and instill a desire to learn which goes beyond classroom standards and report card objectives.

**My Journey**

During my graduate studies I completed a course focused on critical literacy. While studying critical literacy I was initially left with more questions than answers, which intrigued me. The approach reminded me of the passions I focused on as a new teacher earlier in my career. The goal of this approach is for students to question information and view it with a critical lens, evaluating it from multiple perspectives and connecting the new information to their lives, sometimes challenging their beliefs or understandings of the world. I questioned whether I could create age appropriate lessons using this approach. I wondered if my students would “get it” and ever evaluate text at a critical level independently.

In an effort to put my new learning into practice I played with a critical literacy approach during my classroom snack read aloud. Typically I read to students during this time for enjoyment while they eat their snack. One of the first books I used was *King Jack and the Dragon*. *King Jack and the Dragon* is a story about three boys and creative play. They build a castle (cardboard box fort), fight dragons and beasts in the forest (backyard), and throughout the story they get picked up by giants (moms and dads) for bed. The goal of this lesson was to see what underlying ideas students could identify from the text. I wondered if they could go beyond the written story and make inferences about what the author wanted us to connect to or believe in. I also wanted to pay close attention to the engagement of students, focusing on those students who typically lose interest in our curriculum based basal read aloud lessons.
Before reading, students were asked to think about whose voices they hear in the text and whose voices are missing. This is a critical literacy strategy called problem posing. My students shared that they heard boys in the story but not girls. There is a page in the text that shows three boys fighting dragons and calling each other brave kings and knights. A female student raised her hand and shouted, “The author is telling us boys are braver than girls!” After further classroom discussion students came to the conclusion that the author should use both female and male characters in the book to show equality between the two genders. I was encouraged by the active discussion of students and their engagement throughout our forty minute snack read aloud. Typically, snack read alouds are ten minutes, just enough time for students to eat without stealing instructional time for other learning activities. However, on this day, through the use of a critical literacy approach, students evaluated the text, discussed the text, and responded to the text. *King Jack and the Dragon* is a well-illustrated piece of fictional text. Because of the student engagement, I began to wonder how I could use this approach in other areas of learning in our classroom.

After a few weeks of using a critical literacy approach during our snack read aloud time, I decided to apply the approach to our genre study of fairy tales. Students and I were researching the role wolves play in classic fairy tales. After a few days of reading multiple versions of *The Three Little Pigs*, and *Little Red Riding Hood*, I introduced a nonfiction text about wolves. The article I used was titled “They’re Back” and discussed the wolf population in the United States. While reading the nonfiction text students were encouraged to make connections between the wolves in fairy tales and the wolves in the non-fiction piece. This is a critical literacy strategy called juxtapositioning,
which is the practice of exploring multiple viewpoints and types of text while focusing on one topic.

Instantly a student shared that she felt fairy tales gave wolves a bad rap, “Authors of fairy tales make wolves seem bad. The author of this story (nonfiction article) says that wolves will leave people and animals alone if they have food in their habitat.” Other students shared similar feelings and made connections such as:

- “Wolves in fairy tales are hungry and eat whole pigs.”
- “Wolves in the wild are hungry and eat deer.”
- “Wolves in the wild eat deer unless the forest is cut down and no deer are there, then they have to hunt for other meat and farmers get mad when they eat pigs.”
- “If the forests were not cut down wolves would not eat pigs.”

It was exciting to see students engage so willingly in conversations about text and build on each other’s ideas through discussion. Through a critical literacy approach to instruction, students initiated conversations about character traits, compared and contrasted multiple pieces of text, and analyzed authors’ viewpoints and messages. In addition, through reading “They’re Back”, students had conversations about habitats, food chains, and deforestation which went above and beyond first grade science standards which focus on habitats.

During our fairy tale study I was also able to introduce students to hidden bias in texts and illustrations by asking them to critically analyze an illustration in James Marshall’s version of *The Three Little Pigs*. In the illustration the three pigs are wearing clothes. Two of the pigs are missing shirts. The third pig is carrying a briefcase and is wearing dress pants, a nice shirt, a vest, shoes and a hat. At the beginning of the story
students were shown the illustration and asked which pig they thought built the brick house. My first grade class agreed that the well-dressed pig built the brick house. They were right. The shirtless pigs not only failed at choosing quality house building materials but in the end they were left on the doorstep of the third pig looking for shelter. The same students were asked what message the author sent by the choices of clothing worn by the pigs. A student responded by sharing that the author was “accidently” saying that people who dress nicely are smarter than people who don’t.

Through a critical literacy approach to instruction, students are taught to look for messages in text, accidental or not. Furthermore they begin to recognize the power they have to choose the influence text has over them. The student led discussion that followed this read aloud focused on the hidden biases of people based on appearance. Students concluded that the message they want to send to the world is that it matters what you wear on the inside not the outside. They made an agreement to not treat people differently based on their clothing. If students are not taught to view text through a critical lens how will the accidental and not so accidental messages influence them?

In addition to an engaging classroom conversation, a critical literacy approach to instruction also encourages students to reflect on their learning through writing. After reading *King Jack and the Dragon* students created posters and narrative essays sharing their viewpoint on equality between boys and girls. A male student illustrated a boy and a girl walking out of a “wate (weight) store” both carrying 100 lb dumbbells. The caption said: “It doesn’t matter if you are a boy or girl it matters how much you practice being strong and exercising.” After our wolf study, a group of students worked together
to research deforestation and created a poster to hang in our classroom. The poster had a bulleted list of things we can do to save habitats.

Through a critical literacy approach to instruction I have engaged students in their learning. They have shown they possess the skills to actively evaluate text by extending their ideas into written projects and classroom discussions. These experiences have led me to question how I can be more intentional about using a critical literacy approach to instruction.

Further Rationale for Research

In addition to the experiences I have had using a critical literacy approach to instruction, I have also been led to research by a recent social studies conference I attended. At the conference, two young women spoke about the Black Lives Matter Movement and their words resonated with me. One of the women shared with a room full of teachers that her middle school and high school social studies classes were “awful” specifically because the curriculum never talked about her history as a Muslim American. She drew upon a point that I have question through my capstone process: is curriculum biased? Could curriculum include more culturally relevant and important teaching points? The conference reaffirmed my desire to develop a social studies curriculum using a critical literacy approach to instruction. This experience supports my rationale for researching, “How can critical literacy be used to address social justice issues through a first grade social studies read aloud curriculum?” Throughout my journey, I evaluate text currently used to teach social studies standards and supplement it with text that is not culturally biased. In addition, the curriculum I develop includes a place for all voices.
Summary

In Chapter One, I describe my personal background and my professional journey. I highlight experiences I have had using a critical literacy approach to instruction in a first grade classroom. I explained my rationale for research and my desire to create a social studies read aloud curriculum that uses culturally unbiased text and encourages students to evaluate information and social justice content.

In Chapter Two I connect my views and ideas to research. I define critical literacy and share research on the critical literacy approach to instruction, including theory and the key components of a critical literacy framework. Second, I share research on read aloud instruction. The third section in Chapter Two focus’ on curriculum building, including research about critical literacy and read aloud strategies used in the curriculum I create. This section also thoroughly describes backward design and how this curriculum template fits with the goals of my curriculum.

In Chapter Three I describe the methodologies of my research. I describe the setting and demographics of my district, school, and the classroom in which I create the social studies read aloud curriculum for. I identify what is currently being used to guide social studies instruction in my district, and share the unit I will use as a focus for my curriculum development. In Chapter Four I outline the social studies read aloud curriculum I create, including seven mini lessons. In Chapter Five I reflect on my capstone journey and evaluate my process.
CHAPTER TWO

Introduction

In Chapter One I highlighted my personal journey as an educator and how a critical literacy approach to instruction has helped me meet personal instructional goals. Through this approach I have been able to teach students to analyze and evaluate text. Students are able to identify whose voices are present in text and whose voices are missing, which has led to conversations about bias and equity. I have also presented students with multiple viewpoints of content, allowing students to evaluate the information and create their own point of view. In addition, my students began to advocate their point of view through writing. As a result, I want to expand on my experiences with a critical literacy approach by creating a read aloud social studies curriculum. This is how I formed my capstone research question: “How can critical literacy be used to address social justice issues through a first grade social studies read aloud curriculum?”

In Chapter Two I focus on three main sections. The first section focuses on current research around a critical literacy approach to instruction. First I define critical literacy. It is important to fully understand the goals and depth of a critical literacy approach to instruction. I share research on the theory connected to critical literacy approach. This research highlights the work of Albert Bandura and Lev Vygotsky. Next,
I use research to describe the key components of a critical literacy framework. The first section of Chapter Two details all four big ideas. The section ends with research about the critical literacy strategies I use in my curriculum design project. The research I highlight focuses on problem posing and alternative perspective strategies.

The next section in Chapter Two focuses on effective read aloud practices. For my curriculum design project I design a read aloud curriculum using social studies text. This section includes research about the practices I incorporated into my lessons and unit. First I share research about read aloud practices and background knowledge. Second I include research about vocabulary instruction during classroom read alouds. Next, I share research about read aloud practices and reading comprehension. This section concludes with research about read aloud text selection.

The third section in Chapter Two focuses on curriculum building. This section thoroughly describes backward design and how the template fits with the goals of my curriculum design project.

**A Critical Literacy Approach to Instruction**

In this section I define critical literacy and unpack the goals of a critical literacy approach to instruction. I describe the beliefs and theories of Albert Bandura and Lev Vygotsky and how a critical literacy approach to instruction supports their understanding of learning. Next, I identify the key components of a critical literacy framework. A critical literacy framework includes four big ideas; engaging students, guiding students, extending student thinking and reflection. Lastly I identify and describe critical literacy strategies used in my curriculum design project. These strategies include problem posing and alternative perspectives.
Defining critical literacy. Prior to my studies of a critical literacy approach to instruction, I defined critical literacy as the ability or instruction used to dig deeper into text. I viewed critical literacy as a way of reading to infer a character’s feelings or make assumptions about why an author chose to end the story the way that they did. Through my graduate studies I learned this was a surface level snapshot of what critical literacy is and can be. According to McLaughlin and DeVoogd, coauthors of Critical Literacy: Enhancing Students’ Comprehension of Text, critical literacy is “reading from a critical perspective involving thinking beyond the text to understand issues such as why the author wrote about a particular topic, wrote from a particular perspective, or chose to include some ideas about the topic and exclude others” (2004, p. 13). The authors’ definition of critical literacy highlights the power of the author and the influence text has on readers. Critical literacy is more than applying critical thinking skills to text, it is the base of equipping students with tools and knowledge that can be used to evaluate text and challenge the power of the author. Students are shown they have the power to agree or disagree with information and ideas.

Are authors biased and do they really target readers? According to Fisher and Frey, “all writers hope to transform the thinking of their readers. Texts may confirm what you, the reader, already suspected about an idea but need to have validated. Or it might cause you to question, critique, or take action” (2015, p.131). This can be very powerful when students are offered only one viewpoint on content. Some may argue that textbooks are doing a better job at including more cultural specific text and becoming more aware of their diverse audience of learners. McLaughlin and DeVoogd (2004), compare this effort to the learning that was offered years ago. They question why years
of teaching about Christopher Columbus from one viewpoint was ever considered to be valid instruction. If students would have been taught through a critical literacy approach to instruction, they would have questioned the social interactions of peoples beyond “The First Thanksgiving.” The authors highlight many other foundational history lessons such as World War II instruction lacking the viewpoints of Holocaust victims, or children or women. They also question why lists of great American inventors do not include populations of peoples that are not white men.

**Theory of critical literacy.** While understanding a critical literacy approach to instruction it is important to understand the theory behind it. Researcher Albert Bandura believes that behavior and beliefs are learned through observation of others (Tracey & Morrow, 2012). His theory and research solidifies my desire for teaching students to evaluate what they are observing or reading and how it influences whom they become. The research of Lev Vygotsky is also important when understanding this approach. Vygotsky believes that learning is social and meaning is made by discussion with others (McLaughlin & DeVoogd, 2004). A key component of a critical literacy approach to instruction is student voice and classroom discussion of text and social justice issues.

Social learning theorist Albert Bandura believed that behavior is learned through observations of others. As described by Tracey and Morrow (2012), during Bandura’s work he observed children and documented the type of cartoons they watched. Children were exposed to cartoons in which the characters were aggressive, in some samples characters were rewarded for their aggressive behavior, in other samples they were punished for their aggressive behavior. Bandura found that children who were exposed
to aggressive cartoons displayed aggressive behavior following the viewing of the cartoon. He also found that children who viewed characters being punished for aggressive behavior were less likely to repeat the aggressive behavior. Bandura’s work proves that children indeed learn through observation or influences of their environment. What are our children observing? Text and media in today’s society are filled with messages which target the youth in our classrooms. Whose messages are they and what are they teaching our students? Do students have the tools to evaluate the information and identify their position and power?

Morrow and Gambrell (2011), have become increasingly aware of the influence of print and video media and call on teachers to intervene. The authors (2011) argue that it is more important than ever for all educators to teach students to look for perspectives and bias embedded in text and media, including curriculum (p. 151). A critical literacy approach to instruction directly targets instruction in which students are equipped with tools to evaluate bias. Students need to know how to critically evaluate text and media or they will be left at the mercy of mass printed textbooks, basal readers, and television programming assuming the author’s viewpoint is both accurate and equitable. This common practice can unconsciously strengthen stereotypes and cultural gaps.

In a critical literacy approach to instruction students are taught how to evaluate text. This learning is strengthened through discussion with peers. Through discussion students become active participants in the reading and meaning making processes. Learning through social interaction is the foundation of social constructivist theory through the work of Lev Vygotsky, who believed that knowledge and learning happen through experience, discussion and reflection and that meaning is made through
interaction with others. Vygotsky also believes there is a deep connection between new learning and prior knowledge or past experiences (McLaughlin & DeVoogd, 2004). What if viewpoints and prior experiences are never challenged or discussed? Through Vygotsky’s work we know that students make meaning of text by connecting it to what they have already experienced or know. One of the best ways to make the meaning connection between new knowledge and prior knowledge is through classroom conversation and discussion.

How can reading and learning become more interactive and discussion based? Fisher and Frey (2015) support the use of instructional time on discussion of text. They acknowledge that classroom discussion moves the act of reading and learning from a private experience to a public one. However, these authors caution the overuse of question and answer during classroom discussion: “Simply telling students what they should think and know is insufficient and ineffective. In fact, it breeds dependency” (Fisher & Frey, 2015, p.31). Students need to be given the time to discuss new information through the lens of their experiences and past knowledge. If this is done privately the opportunity to address bias and learn from one another is lost. Later in this chapter I explain a discussion strategy called think-pair-share which enables pairs of students to discuss ideas and text first and then share out with the large group or class.

**Introduction to a critical literacy lesson framework.** A critical literacy framework includes four main components. It is important to point out that the critical literacy framework is a framework. It is a guide for teachers to follow, understanding that teachers also need freedom to allow classroom learning to directly influence the
discussion and knowledge sharing of students. This framework allows for flexibility of teaching.

McLaughlin and Devoogd (2004), designed a critical literacy framework to include the following four components:

- engaging students (pre-reading)
- guiding the students (during reading)
- extending students’ thinking (during and after reading)
- reflection (after reading)

In the next sections, I define each framework component in greater detail.

A critical literacy framework: engaging students. The first component of a lesson following the critical literacy framework is engagement. Engagement includes setting a purpose for learning, introducing text, and activating background knowledge on content (McLaughlin & DeVoogd, 2004). Laura Robb, author of Teaching Reading in Social Studies and Science (2003), uses the word “invest” while discussing engagement and prior knowledge. She compares the investment with that of the stock market because both investments can yield high reward. The idea that background knowledge needs to be activated connects back to what Vygotsky believed and is foundational in a critical literacy approach. In her research, Robb (2003), quotes Fielding and Pearson who state: “the more one already knows, the more one comprehends; and the more one comprehends, the more one learns new knowledge to enable comprehension of an even greater and broader array of topics and text” (p.100). This reminds me of the Matthew effect often referenced during vocabulary instruction, the rich get richer and the poor get poorer. In this example the rich would be students with vast experiences and prior
knowledge; the poor would be the students with limited relevant experiences and knowledge.

It is important to acknowledge that using a critical literacy approach to instruction can often times cause dissonance with prior knowledge. McLaughlin and DeVoogd (2004) find this beneficial and meaningful. These authors do point out that not all books will elicit a critical response for readers. Some books are better than others for critical literacy lessons because the content or tone causes the reader to view a common situation from an entirely different perspective, disrupting stereotypical and commonly held assumptions (p.55).

In addition to building background knowledge or adding to prior knowledge, students need to have a purpose for reading. In critical literacy lessons it is important to share with students the strategy that will be practiced and the text that will be used. Tracey and Morrow (2012) call this type of strategy instruction “metacognitive instruction,” the goal of which is to help readers become more aware of their own thinking during the reading process. According to the authors, metacognitive instruction needs to be explicit, meaning that teachers need to be very clear about the strategy being taught and how the strategy should be used during reading (p.73). In the social studies curriculum I develop, students will focus on two strategies: problem posing and alternating perspectives. These strategies are covered in greater detail later in Chapter Two.

A critical literacy framework: guiding students. The second key component of a critical literacy framework is guiding students (McLaughlin and DeVoogd, 2004). There are few research examples describing what this process looks like in a primary
classroom. In upper elementary grades and secondary classrooms, text is usually assigned to students or pairs of students. However, many of the examples found for younger students describe a group learning experience with a teacher led text. In these examples the teacher guides the students to independent practice of the strategies through think-pair-share.

Think-pair-share is a powerful teaching strategy. McLaughlin and DeVoogd (2004) suggest using think-pair-share because it solicits a response from all students. Typically during a lesson, few students have a chance to share their ideas or respond orally to new information. Traditionally one student is called on at a time. During think-pair-share, anytime the teacher reads something aloud, introduces a concept, or poses a question, he or she can immediately ask everyone in the class to turn to someone next to them and share their response or talk over new ideas. The discussion should only last a minute or two. The teacher then asks a number of students to share back in the large group (Daniels & Zemelman, 2004, p.134). It is very important for the teacher to recognize the role of facilitator during this process and take an active stance scaffolding instruction for students. The benefit of think-pair-share is the participation of students and a variety of viewpoints are able to be shared.

Another important aspect of a critical literacy approach to instruction is the way students connect text to their lives. Connection stems can be used to guide students for this purpose and should be woven into text discussion and think-pair-share opportunities. Connection stems are scripted prompts that focus student’s thinking while reading a variety of texts. The prompts are designed to encourage students to reflect on the new information gained from text and to monitor their reading (McLaughlin &
DeVoogd, 2004). In a primary classroom the connection stems give students a starting point to focus on or organize their thinking. A few connection stems I include in my curriculum design project are:

- That reminds me of . . .
- I remember when . . .
- I have a connection . . .
- If I were the character, I would . . .

As stated above, guiding students is an important component of every lesson. Through a critical literacy approach to instruction guiding students is done through discussion. Discussion happens through think-pair-share and the use of connection stems.

**A critical literacy framework: extending student’s thinking.** The third key component of a critical literacy framework is extending students’ thinking. “After reading, teachers help students extend their reading from a critical stance by engaging in critical discussions and taking action based on what they have read” (McLaughlin & DeVoogd, 2004, p.41). The two strategies I include in my curriculum design project to extend the thinking of primary age students are problem posing and alternating perspectives.

Problem posing is the act of identifying who is misrepresented or excluded from a text. Through this strategy students focus on author’s purpose and begin to question why the author included information and viewpoints or excluded other information and viewpoints. McLaughlin and DeVoogd (2004), suggest using the following questions to facilitate problem posing discussions:
McLaughlin and DeVoogd (2004), use The Giving Tree as an example to show how problem posing can be used. The Giving Tree is written by Shel Silverstein and is about a boy who continues to visit a tree. Each time he visits the tree, the tree gives him something to make him happy. After reading the story, students understand that the tree is a symbol for the boy’s mother. When they are asked whose voices are missing from the story they recognize that the mother does not have any one else. Students come to assumption that the author is sending the message that mothers need to be solely focused on their sons or children. Catherine Prudhoe (2012), also uses The Giving Tree with her students each semester. After reading the text she questions students about the implied gender of the tree, and which gender is always giving vs. which gender is receiving in the text. She goes a step further to question what message this suggests for girls/boys and men/women (Norris, Lucas & Prudhoe, 2012, p.59). Through the use of problem posing, students begin to identify the underlying principles or messages in text. By identifying these messages students begin to understand that they have the power to decide how the text influences them.

Alternative perspectives is another critical literacy strategy I use in my curriculum design project. This strategy includes direct instruction of identifying multiple
viewpoints in a story or the research of a topic. Alternative perspective explores the viewpoints of different characters in the story or different people in real-life situations. Sometimes the characters or people are present in the text and sometimes they are created or imagined by the readers. This strategy includes discussion about the differences between the varying viewpoints (McLaughlin & DeVoogd, 2004).

Sometimes the reader will read multiple texts to gain new insight from different perspectives. This is called juxtapositioning and it allows the reader to see that content can be viewed in more than one way (McLaughlin & DeVoogd, 2004). McLaughlin and DeVoogd (2004) define juxtapositioning as examining two texts or two pictures next to each other which can make the differences between them obvious. This strategy is used to help the reader disrupt the commonplace and see the text in a different way (p.49). Earlier in Chapter Two McLaughlin and DeVoogd argue the mistake of instructional practices around Christopher Columbus and The First Thanksgiving. Offering students a variety of text written from different viewpoints recounting The First Thanksgiving would be an example of using alternative perspectives. Students being asked to compare the contrasting viewpoints in text of settlers vs. North American Indians would be an example of juxtapositioning.

Another important aspect of a critical literacy approach to instruction is advocacy for change. To encourage advocacy, Fisher and Frey (2015), use the question “What does the text inspire you to do?” (p.17). Critical literacy is an approach that encourages cognitive dissonance, throughout the process of learning, student’s individual viewpoints may be challenged. Then what? Fisher and Frey (2015) stress through their research that this learning should be a platform for what to do next.
A critical literacy framework: reflection. The fourth key component in a critical literacy framework is reflection. The purpose is for teachers “to reflect on what you taught, why you taught it, how you think the lesson went, how the students reacted to the lesson, what you plan to do to continue teaching from a critical stance” (McLaughlin & DeVoogd, 2004, p.41). It is important for teachers to reflect and make sure viewpoints were equally identified and represented. Similarly it is important to have students begin to identify what they will do with their new learning in terms of advocacy.

In this section, research shows the importance of a critical literacy approach to instruction, the components of a critical literacy framework and the strategies used in a critical literacy approach. A critical literacy approach to instruction is the act of purposeful questioning which leads students to explore viewpoints and messages. The next section shares research on effective classroom read aloud practices.

**Effective Classroom Read Alouds**

Daily classroom read alouds are an essential part of an effective balanced literacy program in primary school classrooms. With the increase of responsibilities in today’s schools, researchers find themselves searching for ways to use classroom read alouds to make the most out of instructional time (Santoro, Chard, Howard & Baker, 2008, p.396). Read alouds make text accessible for all students despite their reading level. Through read alouds they can engage in new ideas and information and participate in discussions about text (Heisey & Kucan, 2010 p.666). In this section I identify important components of classroom read alouds. I begin by explaining the importance of prior knowledge. Next, I include research about vocabulary practices during classroom read alouds. Then, I explain the importance of read alouds and reading comprehension. The
section ends with research about the importance of text selection and selecting text that is culturally specific.

**Read alouds and prior knowledge.** According to researchers Marvin Minsky and Richard Anderson, a reader uses past knowledge and experiences and interacts with and constructs meaning from new information in written and spoken texts (Robb, 2003, p.37). This means, the broader a child’s background knowledge base is, the more successful they will be at understanding and storing what they are reading or what is being read to them. The background knowledge stored in our brains is called schemata. It is never complete. New learning connects to background knowledge and creates and strengthens the schemata (Robb, 2003). Effective teachers need to assess students’ schemata prior to reading and build their background knowledge if necessary. This is done prior to reading. In the curriculum I design this is done through classroom discussion. What do effective teachers do when background knowledge is not developed and students do not have content knowledge to participate in classroom discussion? According to Robb (2003), effective background knowledge instruction could include the use of photos, videos, text passages, stories, and read alouds. When students do not have sufficient background knowledge, effective teachers find ways to enlarge student’s background knowledge about a topic before moving forward in instruction (Robb, 2003, p. 40). Using a critical literacy approach to instruction one must find out what students already know. This is important in the social studies curriculum I revise because students may have limited background knowledge in the specific content areas.

Douglas Fisher and Nancy Frey (2015) call activating prior knowledge, frontloading. These researchers question how much frontloading is too much. They
argue that students need to be engaged in material and this engagement happens when they don’t have all the answers up front. Because of this, teachers need to be intentional about allowing problems to come up so students can be taught how to solve them, thus preparing students for a natural independent reading scenario (Fisher & Frey, 2015, p.13). The authors go on to say that certain texts call for more frontloading. If the text will be read once and discussed minimally, more frontloading is needed. If the text will be read multiple times, as is often done in a critical literacy approach to instruction, less frontloading will be needed. Fisher and Frey (2015) appreciate text that leaves students will more questions than answers after the first read, it keeps students wanting to read and learn more. It is important to find a balance between not enough frontloading and too much. It is also important to identify that a critical literacy approach to instruction can sometimes challenge a student’s background knowledge. Through instruction students may find their initial beliefs about a topic change.

**Read alouds and vocabulary.** According to Trelease (2001), most daily conversation whether between two adults or with children, consists of five thousand words we use all the time, called Basic Lexicon. There are another five thousand words used less often in basic conversation, together these ten thousand words are called Common Lexicon. Beyond Common Lexicon are words identified as “rare words” or “tier two vocabulary words.” These words determine the strength of one’s vocabulary and play a critical role in reading ability (p.17). How do we build tier two vocabulary words with first grade students? Morrow and Gambrell (2011) state that children’s books present more advanced, tier two vocabulary words than everyday speech (p. 227).
Reading aloud to students is a sufficient way for students to increase their tier two vocabulary.

Teaching in a partial Spanish Immersion program, my students receive their science, social studies and math instruction in Spanish. They will acquire most tier two vocabulary in Spanish. As a first grade student that means that you will be acquiring important vocabulary that will affect your reading success, through a language in which you have only one year of experience communicating. A read aloud curriculum that intentionally overlaps tier two vocabulary taught in Spanish will build student’s schemata, allowing them to make connections in both languages.

In addition to reading aloud to students, Morrow and Gambrell (2011), identify the importance of discussion after reading. Discussion after reading gives students opportunities to use new vocabulary in the more decontextualized setting of a book discussion (p.227). Using a critical literacy approach to instruction in a read aloud curriculum, students are read to then discuss the context of the story following the reading.

Read alouds and reading comprehension. Comprehending what is read is the most important part of reading and is the heart and soul of what reading teachers teach. Comprehension is the act of understanding and making meaning out of information. Teaching students to make meaning out of text is done through comprehension strategy instruction. Many studies have been done to research effective ways to teach comprehension strategies. According to Morrow and Gambrell (2011), children need to be taught how to be strategic while reading. Many early studies showed teaching reading strategies in isolation did positively increase comprehension gains of
students but the gains were short-lived and not sustained by students. The authors link this to learning to drive a car. When learning to drive a car students do not learn each skill independently, one day working on using the break and only stopping. The skills are taught and practiced in an authentic experience, driving. The same needs to happen for reading instruction. Students need to be taught to be strategic and use comprehension strategies in unison when needed.

How do we teach students to be strategic readers? One way is through classroom read alouds. While reading out loud teachers have the opportunity to model strategies and explain why they are being used. Teachers should use think alouds to help students “understand what strategic processes are, how to use them, under what conditions they might be used, and why they might be used” (Morrow & Gambrell, 2011, p. 260). The problem with current comprehension instruction at the primary level is the cookie cutter approach to reading comprehension strategies. As research shows, while teaching strategies in isolation students are not learning how to use strategies independently and what strategies to try when they get stuck. If they are not self-monitoring their reading, they may not even know they are stuck.

According to Gambrell and Morrow (2004), we must provide authentic learning contexts in which readers learn to negotiate and manage the entire process all at once. This means being an active participant in the process (p.263). Successful readers do not complete a difficult text by using one reading strategy. Through classroom read alouds teachers can model how good readers use strategies woven together to making meaning from the text. By integrating more read alouds into daily instruction through a
read aloud social studies curriculum, the amount of time students are active in the reading process will increase.

**Read alouds and text selection.** Selecting appropriate text is a very important part of the read aloud process. As stated earlier in Chapter Two, a critical literacy approach to instruction supports the use of text from multiple perspectives (McLaughlin & DeVoogd, 2004, p.55). In addition to varying perspectives in text it is important to use a variety of text types while reading to children. Good readers use different strategies for nonfiction text than they do for narrative or fiction. McLaughlin and DeVoogd (2004) state in their research that each content area has its own type of writing and text. As a result, students need tools to navigate each content area text differently. Furthermore, students need to be taught how to approach different styles of text and be aware of the differences (p.139).

Another important issue is the cultural representation in classroom text. Professor and author, Sharroky Hollie (2012), identifies three types of culturally responsive text: culturally specific, culturally generic, and culturally neutral (p.85).

- Culturally specific text authentically illuminate the experience of the group culturally and not racially. The text realistically taps into the norms, traditions, customs and beliefs of the culture in focus.

- Culturally generic texts feature characters that are members of racially minority groups. However, the selections contain few, if any, details that define characters culturally. The characters, plots, and themes blandly reflect America’s “common cultural ground” without exercising any depth to reveal the cultural diversity found in culturally specific texts.
- Culturally neutral text are not recommended as culturally appropriate. These feature characters and themes are about people of color but fundamentally are about something else. This type includes informational books that show people from diverse backgrounds engaged in activities from commonly told stories but with different faces.

Hollie (2012) recommends finding one piece of culturally responsive text or interaction for every mainstream title, state standard, or topic covered. Teachers need to be aware of the text that is being used in the classroom and make sure that students have access to a variety of viewpoints and cultures. I use Hollie’s recommendations in my curriculum design project for first grade students.

In this section I described the important components in effective classroom read alouds. Read aloud lessons need to have a pre-reading component in which prior knowledge is activated, allowing students to make connections between new learning and schema. Classroom read alouds increase students’ tier two vocabulary, making read alouds an effective way to teach content area material. Read aloud texts should be culturally specific, representing culture and not race, and include a variety of viewpoints.

**Backward Design**

In this section I share research by Grant Wiggins and Jay McTighe (1998). These researchers and educational consultants developed a backward design model to lesson planning. This section describes their model, which I use for my curriculum. I define all three stages of the backward design model and highlight the importance of planning instruction based on outcomes and standards rather than resources available.
Currently my district is very basal textbook based. In literacy for example, teachers have been given a basal series to follow. At the beginning of each unit there is a list of learning targets and outcomes. Teachers know what students should learn throughout the unit and teachers assess the learning at the end of the unit. However, do the targets affect the instructional choices and resources used? I would argue no. In this scenario, students are being taught through a prescribed manual using resources that could help them master material. The mastery of material is the afterthought of instruction, something that stands alone at the end of the unit. The backward design model calls attention to the question, “Why are we teaching the material? What is it we want students to know and do?” (Wiggins and McTighe, 2005). In my curriculum student learning needs to be the focus of each lesson, not the afterthought. Student focused learning happens by first outlining what students should be able to know and do at the end of the lesson. Wiggins and McTighe (2005) use the words “desired results.” They focus backward design lesson planning on the desired result of student outcomes.

Backward design, or understanding by design, is a lesson planning format designed by Grant Wiggins and Jay McTighe. This lesson planning process outlines material through three stages which each link to the outcome, or desired result of the lesson (Wiggins and McTighe, 2005). As stated by Wiggins and McTighe (2005), stage one of the lesson planning template focuses on desired results. What is it we want students to know or be able to do at the end of the lesson? This information is then tied to assessment and evidence which is stage two. How will we know if students have achieved the desired outcome? Stage three is the learning plan which is the final part of
the lesson planning template. Stage three includes the learning experiences necessary to achieve the desired outcome.

Stage one: desired results. On his consulting website, Grant Wiggins (2005) describes the importance of classifying the outcomes or goals of a lesson. Wiggins and McTighe (1998) classify outcomes as exposure, or mastery or enduring understandings. Stage one of the backward design model lists the desired outcomes of the lesson and includes an established overarching goal stating what students will be able to during or after the lesson. As a primary age teacher it is important to identify that some, not all of the material covered needs to be mastered. Some concepts are introduced with the expectation to expose students to the material. Wiggins and McTighe have space to identify this in their lesson planning template. This is important because all teachers will know they need to cover it but students don’t need to master it or be assessed on it. Wiggins and McTighe also differentiate between performance outcomes and understanding outcomes. In their lesson planning template there is an area to describe performance goals and what students will know or understand.

In addition to identifying the difference between mastery and exposure, and performance goals versus knowledge goals, stage one also includes enduring understandings. The enduring understandings are the underlying ideas that supports lesson content but are not as easily assessed (Wiggins and McTighe, 2005). Wiggins and McTighe (1998) describe enduring understandings as going beyond facts and skills and focusing on the larger concepts of life. The authors quote Jerome Brunner who challenges primary educators to question “is this material worth an adult knowing, and/or is knowing this material as a child going make students better adults?” (cited in Wiggins
and McTighe, 1998, p.4). The enduring understanding portion of a backward design lesson template could focus on the social justice teachings of a critical literacy approach to instruction. As stated earlier in Chapter Two, critical literacy is a process; it involves introducing students to a new way of thinking beyond the text and relating new ideas and knowledge to real world concepts of power and social justice.

Stage two: assessment evidence. Every backward design lesson has goals and outcomes which are matched to assessment. Stage two lists assessment evidence of the lesson. Wiggins and McTighe (1998) question, how will we know students have met the desired outcomes and standard goals, and what criteria will we accept as evidence of this? The researchers include assessment evidence as a part of every lesson or instructional interaction not a stand-alone at the end of unit. This is because learning is an ongoing event which a single “moment-in-time” test cannot evaluate (Wiggins and McTighe, 1998). It is also important to highlight the idea that assessment evidence is worked on before learning activities. The assessment and outcomes should not be driven by the resources available for teaching.

How is evidence collected? Wiggins and McTighe (1998) recommend a variety of assessments be included within a unit. Below is a list of some common assessments they use and a short description of each:

- Informal checks for understanding: whole group dialogue (think-pair-share, teacher observation of learning, informal discussion with students.
- Quizzes, tests, exams: variety of exams and test using multiple choice questions, written response questions, or open ended response questions and academic prompts.
• Performance based assessment: includes projects and performance tasks.

Wiggins and McTighe (1998) suggest choosing the assessment based on the outcome it is tied to and the amount of time needed to complete each assessment and the structure and setting of the classroom and students.

**Stage three: learning plan.** Stage three of the backward design model allows teachers to plan instruction while keeping a narrow focus on the desired outcomes and the assessment criteria or evidence. According to Wiggins and McTighe (1998), the series of questions teachers should ask is what knowledge and skills do students need to be able to understand to achieve the desired outcome. What activities will give them the tools to achieve the desired results? How can I teach and coach them and what materials and resources will I need? Stage three of the lesson plan template calls for a summary of learning activities which supports the idea of student led learning identified in a critical literacy approach to instruction earlier in Chapter Two.

Stage three of the backward design model does not hinder teachers from making choice about instructional materials used, and instructional methods used. The goal of this design is to focus educators on the outcomes of student learning while creating an instructional plan (Wiggins and McTighe, 1998).

In this section I shared the philosophy of Grant Wiggins and Jay McTighe (1998) and the backward design lesson plan model they created. I thoroughly explained each stage of the backward design lesson model and showed some connections to the critical literacy approach to instruction described earlier in Chapter Two.
Summary

In Chapter Two I connect my research question to research. My goal is to design a social studies curriculum using classroom read alouds and a critical literacy approach to instruction. As described in Chapter Two a critical literacy approach to instruction supports the social constructivist theory. Chapter Two defined critical literacy and connected the theory of a critical literacy approach to the work of Albert Bandura and Lev Vygotsky (McLaughlin and DeVoogd, 2004), who believed that students need to interact with each other through discussion to connect new knowledge to prior knowledge. In Chapter Two I also used research to explain effective read aloud practices, focusing on activating prior knowledge, vocabulary, reading comprehension and text selection. Chapter Two ended with research about backwards design which is the Wiggins and McTighe (1998) template I use for my curriculum design project. I defined each stage of the backward design model.

In Chapter Three I describe the methodologies of research. I restate my vision and goals for curriculum development and describe the curriculum design I use. Chapter Three also describes the setting and demographics of my district, school, and my classroom in which I create the social studies read aloud curriculum for. I identify what is currently being used to guide social studies instruction, and describe the goals for my curriculum design project. Chapter Four includes my curriculum. In Chapter Five I reflect on my curriculum and describe how this research experience has changed the way I attack my classroom planning.
CHAPTER THREE

Methods

Introduction

In Chapter One I described my personal journey with a critical literacy approach to instruction and connected it to my passions as an educator. I shared my experiences creating lessons using a critical literacy approach in my first grade classroom and how those lessons transformed the thinking of my students and created avenues to address social justice issues in the classroom. In Chapter One I also identified my capstone research question: “How can critical literacy be used to address social justice issues through a first grade social studies read aloud curriculum?”

In Chapter Two I defined a critical literacy approach to instruction and I shared research about the theory behind the approach. A critical literacy approach to instruction can equip students with the tools they need to evaluate information in text and challenge the power of the author or producer of the message (McLaughlin and DeVoogd, 2004). The research collected in Chapter Two directly relates to why I question whether a critical literacy approach to instruction will allow me to tackle social justice issues with my first grade students.

Later in Chapter Two I identified the four key components of a critical literacy framework, which are engaging students, guiding students, extending student thinking,
and reflection (McLaughlin and DeVoogd, 2004). I also shared the critical literacy strategies I use in my curriculum, which are problem posing and alternative perspectives.

Chapter Two also includes research about effective practices for classroom read alouds, including effective vocabulary instruction, the importance of background knowledge, reading comprehension and criteria used to select appropriate read aloud text. A key piece of learning from the read aloud practices is the differentiation between text. Hollie (2012) recommends using one piece of culturally specific text for each mainstream title, state standards, or topic covered. Culturally specific text is text that realistically taps into the norms, traditions, customs and beliefs of the culture in focus (Hollie, 2012). I notice in our current social studies curriculum text is very culturally neutral, the author may change the skin color of a character as an attempt to include other cultures but does nothing to include the culture of people into the text.

Chapter Two ends with research about a backward design template created by Grant Wiggins and Jay McTighe (1998), which I use in my curriculum design project. The backward design model fits well with a critical literacy approach because of the enduring understanding component, which Wiggins and McTighe (1998) describe as going beyond facts and skills and focusing on the larger concepts of life.

In Chapter Three I share my vision and goals for my curriculum development project and identify the research paradigm I use. I describe the setting and demographics of my district, school, and my classroom in which I create the social studies read aloud curriculum for. I identify what is currently being used to guide social studies instruction,
and share my rationale for why it needs to change. I also identify my goals for the curriculum I design and how I will evaluate the curriculum based on these goals.

**Research Paradigm**

While identifying my vision and goals for capstone, I discovered that professionally I operate from a transformative worldview. According to Creswell (2014), someone with a transformative worldview most likely relates the purpose of their research to social issues of inequities and power. The goal of their research is to create positive, transformational change in these areas. As a first grade teacher, I focus my action research on a curriculum design project. The goals of my curriculum design is to create a curriculum for first grade students that will promote equity, decrease bias and influence learners to evaluate information with a critical lens by creating a space where more perspectives are shared and all perspectives are valued.

My first grade literacy teaching philosophy is driven by a passion for equity and cultural studies. I am continually searching for text and resources that fit our reading basal curriculum targets yet offer a more authentic learning opportunity to students. The same needs to be done with our current social studies curriculum. The text we use needs to offer different perspectives and be culturally specific. As stated by Hollie (2012) in Chapter Two, culturally specific text offers deeper and more complex learning opportunities about culture versus race. This learning needs to be met with critical literacy strategies and ample time for discussion. I want to teach students to “how to think” not “what to think.” I use a critical literacy approach to instruction in my curriculum design to try to accomplish this. Research in Chapter Two states that a critical literacy approach to instruction equips students with tools to evaluate bias
(McLaughlin & DeVood, 2004). Students need to know how to critically evaluate text and media or they will be left at the mercy of mass printed textbooks, basal readers, and television programming assuming the author’s viewpoint is both accurate and equitable (Gambrell & Morrow, 2011). Through my curriculum design, students are taught using a variety of text from multiple perspectives, they will engage in guided discussion about text with classmates. All viewpoints need to be validated and accepted. Students are taught to connect new ideas with prior knowledge to strengthen or challenge what they already knew or believed. The goal is to attack stereotypes and underlying beliefs about the world and culture straight on.

Through my research I question if these social justice issues are too big of an undertaking for first grade. As stated in Chapter Two, most research and examples using a critical literacy approach to instruction focus on upper elementary and secondary instruction. Before I explain further the curriculum design project I complete, I first need to share more details about who I create the curriculum for.

**Research Setting**

In this section I provide information about my research setting. As part of the capstone process I will not be implementing the created curriculum. However, this section still shares insight to who this curriculum is designed for and how the demographics have influenced the curriculum choices made.

This is my seventh year working in my current school district. We are located fifty miles north of the Twin Cities metro. Currently, twenty three percent of our students receive free and reduced lunch. In terms of our district population, 91% of our
6,604 students are white, 99% of our students are native English speakers, 23% receive free and reduced lunch, and 13% receive special education services.

Looking at our MDE report card, one would think we have little diversity. What I have learned is that diversity is not directly tied to racial identity as I once thought. Diversity is more deeply tied to our cultural identity. According to Hollie (2012), there is nothing that we do racially that is connected to who we are mentally or behaviorally, we are locked into our racial identity by birth and perhaps genomes yet we remain free to be who we are ethnically or otherwise (p. 33). As a result of little racial diversity and the confusion between racial identity and cultural identity, teaching of cultures is not something I hear a lot about in my district. Through my curriculum design, I aspire to teach students to view text critically and I offer students text that is considered culturally specific so they can “see” beyond our “sameness” and racial identities.

The elementary school I design the curriculum for is a K-3 school and has over 500 students. There are five first grade sections, including three general education classrooms and two partial Spanish Immersion classrooms. I teach in our partial Spanish Immersion program.

As a first grade partial Spanish Immersion literacy teacher, I have 38 students split between two classrooms, 19 boys and 17 girls. I am responsible to teach all literacy standards to students. Students receive their social studies, science, and math curriculum in Spanish with my teaching partner. Our schedule leaves little time for “extras” in my classroom. I have a two hour literacy block in which to cover my literacy content and best practices for a literacy classroom. Currently all social studies content in our program
is taught to students in Spanish, their second language with which they have limited experience with. Through use of read alouds I can reinforce this learning by using social studies text in my classroom.

**Curriculum Development Process**

In this section I address the social studies curriculum currently in place and identify why it needs to be redesigned. I identify the objectives and standards of the unit I design and describe what is included in the unit. I describe a backward design unit and lesson template and give rational on why it is used in my curriculum design project.

**Current social studies curriculum.** Our current social studies curriculum was written by grade level teachers in an attempt to replace dated textbooks. The curriculum is divided into four areas of study, focusing on government, economics, geography, and history. Each area of study is divided into smaller units. The units are assigned content but the content is not written into specific lessons. Each unit includes standards covered, concepts and skills according to Bloom’s taxonomy, big ideas, essential questions, and resources.

As described above, the social studies curriculum currently in place is not a clear curriculum plan with unit and lesson plans, which is one reason I chose to focus on social studies for my curriculum design project. Currently, the materials used to teach social studies content is completely up to the discretion of the teacher. Using read aloud text that is readily available to them could prevent teachers from using text that is culturally specific. In addition, not having a clear outline to follow could prevent the type of classroom discussion that will address social justice issues with first grade students. As stated, the only guide teachers currently have is a list of objectives and a list of possible
resources to use, some which include the dated 1980’s basal social studies textbook. Using culturally neutral text and not discussing content but rather recalling facts could inadvertently strengthen negative stereotypes about cultures and races.

Using critical literacy strategies and principles, combined with culturally specific text will teach and encourage students to think about text and topics from multiple viewpoints and address barriers that are preventing social change.

For my curriculum design project I have chosen to focus on our current citizenship and government unit. This unit is typically taught at the beginning of the year and many teachers tie it into constitution day and the creation of classroom constitutions, or class rules. The overarching goal for the unit is for students to expand their understanding of America’s civic identity, determine characteristics of effective rules and demonstrate ways for citizens to participate in civic life.

According to our current curriculum, at the end of the current government and citizenship unit, first grade students should be able to:

- know that participating in a community is an important part of being a good citizen.
- know the Pledge of Allegiance and appropriate flag etiquette.
- identify the president of the United States and explain how the president is elected.
- identify an effective rule and how it is made.

I chose this unit of study because it had few current resources for teachers to use. The resources available are culturally neutral and the view of citizenship through these resources is biased. According to research in Chapter Two (Hollie, 2012),
culturally neutral text is text that focuses on multiple races by changing the color of a character's skin yet keeping the story the same. This type of inclusion of races is not recommended by Hollie, (2012) as being culturally appropriate especially as the main mean of teaching. As written, a current lesson goal of our social studies curriculum is for students to know that “good” citizens recite the pledge. Currently, I have students that do not recite the pledge, not because they are not good United States citizens but because of their families beliefs and culture. How will these students find their place in the curriculum the way it is currently designed?

Another goal of this unit for students to understand America’s identity. I question whether students will ever understand America’s identity if they don’t first know their personal identity. This unit needs to begin by teaching first about who we are and how we represent the world. The students need a picture of the world before they can learn how they fit into it. Through this exploration students can evaluate on their own what it means to be a good citizen.

Backward design. As stated in Chapter Two backward design, or understanding by design, is a lesson planning format designed by Grant Wiggins and Jay McTighe (Appendix A). Wiggins and McTighe (1998) focus the lesson planning process on the outcome. The backward design model fits my curriculum design project because students need to master social studies content and standards, yet how do you master the knowledge of social justice issues? This model allows me to clearly state social studies outcomes and enduring understandings. The enduring understanding component of backward design encompasses social justice, bias based, and equity based discussion
goals yet identifies that these concepts will live outside of the content and goals of each lesson.

Each lesson created in my curriculum include three stages and are slightly modified versions of Wiggins and McTighe’s original plan (Appendix B). Stage one lists the desired outcomes of the lesson and includes an established overarching goal stating what students will be able to as a result of the lesson. In addition to the established goal social studies standards and language arts connections are also listed. When I use the curriculum in my literacy class, I need to be able to show how the lessons can support and integrate common core language arts and reading standards. In addition to these standards and the established goal each lesson lists enduring understandings. The enduring understandings are the underlying ideas that support the classroom discussion during lessons. This discussion is driven and guided through critical literacy strategies. One of my research goals is to include critical literacy strategies in each lesson to increase students’ ability to evaluate information. In an effort to achieve this, I identify the critical literacy strategy used in each lesson at the beginning of the lesson.

Stage two lists assessment evidence and includes space for performance evidence and other evidence. Most of the lessons I create have a performance component. However, all lessons created rely heavily on student participation in classroom discussion, this is assessed by teacher observation and is included in “other evidence.” Stage three is the learning plan and includes all materials needed for lesson and a summary of learning activities.

**Timeframe.** The government and citizenship unit I create includes eight core lessons. As stated in Chapter Two, a critical literacy approach to instruction allows
students to take their learning deeper through discussion. Some lessons might provoke discussion that needs to be explored more, therefore effecting the amount time needed. Lesson text sets name additional text to facilitate further learning. Most lesson are designed to be completed in 45 minute blocks of time. Two of the lessons require two days to complete.

Evaluating the curriculum. As this is a curriculum design project, I do not intend to implement my developed curriculum. How will I know if I have achieved my curriculum goals if I am not implementing the curriculum with students? At the completion of my curriculum I need to evaluate it. To fully evaluate the curriculum I need to first relist the goals I have for designing it.

As described earlier in Chapter Three, our current social studies curriculum lacks varying viewpoints and text used is very culturally neutral. One goal I have for my curriculum is to use culturally specific text. As stated in the Effective Read Aloud Practices section of Chapter Two, cultural specific text focus’ on the norms, beliefs, and traditions of the culture in focus not the race (Hollie, 2012). At the completion of my curriculum design, I will assess the use of text using the categories culturally neutral, culturally generic, and culturally specific. Hollie (2012) states that for every culturally neutral text a culturally specific text also needs to be included. My goal is to design a curriculum in which each piece of culturally neutral or culturally generic text is matched by a piece of culturally specific text. To fully evaluate this goal at the completion of my curriculum, I will answer the question: “Does my curriculum include culturally specific text for each mainstream text, standard, or topic covered?”
Another issue I see with the current social studies curriculum is the lack of varying viewpoints. As described earlier in Chapter Three, one of the current social studies curriculum goals is for students to know and understand that being a good citizen includes knowing and reciting the Pledge of Allegiance. Currently in my classroom, I have a student who is not allowed to recite the Pledge. He stands quietly and respectfully during the Pledge but does not look at the flag and does not recite the words. The current social studies curriculum teaches him and his peers that good citizens know and recite the Pledge. What message does that send to him and what message does it send the other students about citizens that make choices against the norms of society? This is one example of an area of instruction that needs to be taught with a critical literacy approach to instruction. Through my curriculum design I hope to teach students to view the world from different perspectives. How is this measured and evaluated? According to Chapter Two, research has proven that through the use of critical literacy strategies students learn to evaluate information and text critically (McLaughlin & DeVoogd, 2004). As highlighted in Chapter One I have seen this at a first grade level. Because I am not implementing the curriculum I need to trust the research and evaluate my curriculum based on the use of critical literacy strategies. My goal is to include a problem posing or alternating perspective strategy into every lesson. To evaluate this, at the completion of my curriculum I will answer the question: “Do I include a problem posing or alternative perspective strategy in every lesson?”

The last issue I have with our current social studies curriculum is that text and resources are offered to teachers with little connect to goals and outcomes of lessons. Teachers are offered a resource bank of different text to cover certain topics but
the goals, outcomes, and standards are an afterthought. An educator could easily go through and read the text supplied with little thought to assessment evidence and the target of the lesson or text. In my curriculum I chose to use a backward design lesson template model. My goal is to clearly state the desired result of each lesson, differentiating between content mastery and enduring understandings. As stated in Chapter Two, Wiggins and McTighe (1998) describe enduring understanding as the larger than life concepts that go beyond skills and facts. In each lesson I try to include assessment evidence as suggested by Wiggins and McTighe. To evaluate my curriculum, upon completion I will ask myself: “Did I utilize the backward design model effectively, including desired results and assessment evidence for every lesson created?”

In this section I identified the three questions I will use to evaluate my curriculum. Each question is tied to big learnings in my literature review; a critical literacy approach to instruction, culturally specific text, and backward design lesson planning. As stated in this section these questions will be used in Chapter Four to evaluate my curriculum.

**Summary**

In Chapter Three I stated my rationale for research and connected it my research paradigm. I described the curriculum design I use and the setting and demographics of my district, school, and my classroom in which I create the social studies read aloud curriculum for. I identified what is currently being used to guide social studies instruction, and include specifics about the unit I will use as a focus for my curriculum development. Lastly, I restated my goals for curriculum design and developed questions for evaluating my goals upon the completion of my curriculum design.
In Chapter Four I describe in detail the curriculum I create using the Wiggins and McTighe backward design model. I explain why this is an effective template for my curriculum. I outline the planning and creation process and my rational for text and strategies used. Lastly I discuss the ways in which I evaluate my curriculum using the following questions discussed in Chapter Three:

- “Does my curriculum include a piece of culturally specific text for each mainstream text, standard, or topic covered?”
- “Does each lesson include a problem posing or alternative perspective strategy?”
- “Did I utilize the backward design model effectively, including desired results and assessment evidence for every lesson created?”

In Chapter Four I reflect on these questions and describe my curriculum evidence for meeting them.

In Chapter Five I reflect on the capstone process and the curriculum development process. I describe major learnings from my literature review and the curriculum development process. I share the implications of my research and describe the limitations I had while designing my curriculum. Chapter Five ends with my recommendation for future research and my plan for communicating my results.
CHAPTER FOUR

Results

Introduction

In Chapter One I elaborated on my personal journey as an educator and described how this journey has led me to my capstone research question: “How can critical literacy be used to address social justice issues through a first grade social studies read aloud curriculum?” In Chapter Two I shared research about a critical literacy approach to instruction, effective read aloud practices, and backward design which is the unit and lesson plan template I use for my curriculum design project.

In Chapter Three I described in detail my curriculum plan and rationale for curriculum choices. I shared the demographics of my district and the school for which I design my curriculum. I described what is currently in place for first grade social studies curriculum and how the curriculum I create better supports student learning. I shared the goals for my curriculum and how they connect with my research in Chapter Two. I also began to describe how I evaluate my curriculum.

In Chapter Four I finally share my curriculum! The curriculum I design integrates a critical literacy approach to instruction and read aloud social studies text. The text I chose is culturally specific and has been chosen to evoke critical discussion in the classroom. Critical literacy strategies, problem posing and alternative perspectives are used to teach students to evaluate text and media. Backward design lesson planning
template is used to organize lessons and keep the focus on student outcomes. The questions I will use to evaluate my curriculum are:

- “Does each lesson include a problem posing or alternative perspective strategy?”
- “Does my curriculum include a piece of culturally specific text for each mainstream text, standard, or topic covered?”
- “Did I utilize the backward design model effectively, including desired results and assessment evidence for every lesson created?”

Ultimately through my curriculum design project process I hope to answer my capstone research question: “How can critical literacy be used to address social justice issues through a first grade social studies read aloud curriculum?”

The unit I created is divided into eight mini lessons focusing on government and citizenship. The eight lessons I created support the current curriculum in place and have been designed to be used with some of the text currently used. I highlight this text in Chapter Four but do not describe lessons for these texts in depth in my curriculum. The eight lessons I created use a critical literacy approach to instruction and are designed to address social justice issues and teach students to evaluate information and text in their world.

First Grade Government and Citizenship Curriculum

The purpose of my curriculum is to teach students to evaluate text and address social justice issues in the classroom. I worry that students are being taught from one point of view and not questioning the information. As stated in Chapter Two, through a critical literacy approach to instruction students are taught to evaluate text and power (McLaughlin and DeVoogd, 2004). In my curriculum a critical literacy approach is used.
to teach students that it is important to view history and current life systems, such as
government, laws and rules from alternative perspectives. Additionally, through problem
posing students can learn to question power in different points of view.

Before jumping into the curriculum it is important to connect to what is currently
be used to address government and citizenship in first grade. Initially I planned on
redesigning our current social studies curriculum. As described in Chapter Three, our
current curriculum is a list of objectives and a list of read aloud text and internet videos to
address social studies standards and content. As stated in Chapter Two, Hollie (2012)
suggests using one piece of culturally specific text for every mainstream title or standard
covered. While analyzing the text and media support currently in place, I noticed that the
resources listed were culturally neutral at best. None of the resources addressed the
culture of peoples represented. In addition all resources were from a power dominated
viewpoint of what an ideal citizen should do. A good citizen recycles, votes, states the
Pledge of Allegiance, and knows the history of our American flag. What about good
citizens that do not do those things? Are they not “good”? Do we not value all citizens
and their viewpoints? Through these questions I discovered the current curriculum was
not the best foundation, therefore I decided to recreate a social studies first grade read
aloud curriculum not redesign it.

What I found while recreating the curriculum is that I began to lose the viewpoint
of mainstream power. I found it was important to use some of the text and media sources
from the current curricula plan so students can compare and contrast viewpoints. As
stated in Chapter Two by McLaughlin and DeVoogd (2004), varying viewpoints need to
be represented so students can learn how to evaluate the varying information. Therefore,
erasing the viewpoint of mainstream power would not be in the best interest of learning. In my curriculum there are eight mini lessons using backward design template which address social studies content through a critical literacy approach to instruction. I also highlight additional text from the current curriculum that can be used to balance the need for multiple viewpoints.

As described in Chapter Three, each lesson I designed begins by outlining the established goals of the lesson including the essential understandings. As described by Wiggins and McTighe (1998) in Chapter Two, the essential understandings include ideas beyond facts and skills. In my curriculum I questioned what I want to students to discover through our studies together. I then outlined what it is I want students to know and do at the end of the lesson. These outcomes are tied closely to assessment evidence. Lastly, each lesson includes materials and lesson activities. Each lesson is designed to teach in a whole group setting and be discussion based, using think-pair-share and connection stems as described in Chapter Two. As a result, the lesson activities are fairly detailed and scripted. It is important to identify that student input should lead the lesson. Below is a brief outline of each lesson:

- **Lesson One: The Color of Us.** (Appendix C) Students will identify race and begin comparing race vs. culture. Before students can understand an individual's responsibility in a community they need to try to understand the individual. This lesson is a building block to our lessons on identity. At the end of this lesson students will use multicultural paints to paint their skin color and complete the sentence “My skin is beautiful. My skin is the color of . . .”
• **Lesson Two: My Name is Yoon.** (Appendix D) Students will question if America is home to everyone who lives here. *My Name is Yoon* is written from Yoon’s perspective as an immigrant student who wants to change her name to assimilate to American culture. This lesson builds on the previous lesson about race and expands on the idea of culture. Students will identify the culture of Yoon’s family and the importance of keeping her name. It is important for students to understand that America is diverse. Later in the unit they will begin questioning who our rules and laws work for and who do they work against? The first few lessons are designed to allow students exposure to other cultures outside of the mainstream viewpoints.

• **Lesson Three: My Name is Sangoel.** (Appendix E) Students will continue to develop an awareness of others. *My Name is Sangoel* is another text from the perspective of an immigrant boy. Students will compare Sangoel’s school experience to Yoon’s school experience through juxtapositioning. They will begin to reflect on moving and assimilating in a new country.

• **Lesson Four: Power vs. Authority.** (Appendix F) Students will understand authority vs. power and identify why authority is used in the United States. I found this lesson through the Center of Civic Education (2005) and modified it slightly to fit the needs of my unit and incorporate critical literacy strategies. This is an important concept for students to
know while investigating voting and democracy and other foundations of the United States government.

- **Lesson Five: The Constitution and Rules.** (Appendix G) Students will understand the United States Constitution and identify how rules and laws are created in the United States. The idea of power vs authority will aid in lesson conversations. I also found this lesson through the Center of Civic Education (2005). Again, I modified it slightly to fit the needs of my unit and incorporate critical literacy strategies. During this lesson students will evaluate the classroom rules and vote on any changes that should be or could be made.

- **Lesson Six: What Can Go Wrong: Voting Rights** (Appendix H) Students will be able to describe how voting laws have changed in history. Our governmental system is designed to protect the rights of its citizens, but has it always? Does it now? Have we made mistakes before? Through this lesson students will learn about current voting rights and elections. This lesson includes two texts. The first is *Voting in Elections* by Jack Manning which outlines current voting practices. The next text used is *Elizabeth Leads the Way* by Tanya Lee Stone, this text describes the struggle in history for women’s rights to vote. Through juxtaposition students can identify what has changed.

- **Lesson Seven: What Can Go Wrong: Ruby Bridges** (Appendix I) Students will understand that sometimes power and authority can be used in the wrong way. Our governmental system is designed in a way to
prevent this, but does it? Have we made mistakes before? This lesson uses three online resources. The first two are literacy text that describes Ruby Bridges’ courageous journey. Through problem posing, students identify that the voice of Ruby Bridges is missing. The third resource used in this lesson is video interview with Ruby Bridges as an adult reflecting on her experience of integrating schools. At the end of this lesson students will write a letter to Ruby Bridges.

- **Lesson Eight: American Symbols.** (Appendix J) This unit ends with a lesson about American Symbols. Do students understand the meaning of American Symbols? Throughout this unit students have seen different viewpoints of American Citizens. What do our symbols mean to us? Students will end this lesson by choosing an American Symbol and creating a poster about the symbol.

The above eight lessons were designed to directly target social studies standards and to offer students a balanced view of content through a critical literacy approach to instruction and culturally specific text. The eight lessons should be taught in order and are sequential; each lesson is designed to build off of the content from the previous lesson. In the next section I will describe how I evaluate the curriculum using the goals and question set in Chapter Three.

**Curriculum Evaluation**

In Chapter Three, I outlined the goals I had for my curriculum design project. I then tied each goal to an evaluation-focused question. The first goal was to use culturally specific text. As stated in Chapter Two, culturally specific text is text that represents the
cultures of peoples, not only race (Hollie, 2012). My goal was to match each piece of culturally neutral text with text that is culturally specific. The second goal was aimed at evaluating if students would be able to evaluate text and address social justice issues. The research in Chapter Two states that this is a proven outcome of using a critical literacy approach to instruction (McLaughlin and DeVoogd, 2004). My goal for the Government and Citizenship Curriculum is to use critical literacy strategies in every lesson. My third goal was to use the backward design model (Wiggins and McTighe, 1998) effectively. A backward design lesson template includes three stages; stage one includes desired results, stage two includes assessment evidence, and stage three includes the learning plan. Have I included and effectively developed all three stages in my lessons? In this section I will evaluate my curriculum using the three goals identified above.

Does curriculum include critical literacy strategies? My first curricula goal was to use a critical literacy strategy in every lesson. I evaluate this goal by asking the question, does every lesson include a critical literacy strategy problem posing or alternative perspectives? My curriculum includes eight lessons. Below I highlight how each lesson meets the criteria of including a critical literacy strategy.

- Lesson one includes alternative perspectives (McLaughlin & DeVoogd, 2004) through the use of The Colors of Us, which highlights people of different races as they describe their skin color.
- Lesson two includes problem posing (McLaughlin & DeVoogd, 2004) using the text My Name is Yoon. Students are asked whose voices are missing in the story.
Lesson three includes juxtapositioning (McLaughlin & DeVoogd, 2004) which is an alternative perspectives strategy which involves using two text from two different viewpoints. In this lesson students are introduced to Sangoel through the text *My Name is Sangoel*.

Lesson four includes a lesson created by the Center of Civic Education (2005) defining the differences between power and authority. In this lesson the critical literacy strategy problem posing (McLaughlin & DeVoogd, 2004) is used by asking students whose voice is missing in the text and who is not represented.

Lesson five includes another lesson created by the Center of Civic Education (2005) teaching the United States Constitution. In this lesson the critical literacy strategy problem posing (McLaughlin & DeVoogd, 2004) is used by asking students whose voice is missing in the text and who is not represented.

Lesson six includes two pieces of text, *Voting in Elections* which represents mainstream power and the idea of equitable balanced voting and *Elizabeth Leads the Way* which represents the struggle for women’s rights and voting. This lesson includes problem posing (McLaughlin & DeVoogd, 2004) by asking whose voices are missing and juxtapositioning which allows students to compare the two texts.

Lesson seven focuses on civic rights and the story of Ruby Bridges. Again critical literacy strategy juxtapositioning (McLaughlin & DeVoogd, 2004) is used by viewing three types of text and media and comparing the viewpoints. Problem posing (McLaughlin & DeVoogd, 2004) is also used by asking students whose voice is missing in the different texts.
Lesson eight focuses on American Symbols. Students will explore American Symbols and discuss the symbols through the different viewpoints learned about through our unit. This will cover the alternative perspectives (McLaughlin & DeVoogd, 2004) strategy.

As described above all lessons include components of critical literacy strategies. In addition all lesson include think-pair-share which as stated in Chapter Two solicits responses from all students allowing for representation of all viewpoints (Daniels & Zemelman, 2004). Another piece of important learning from Chapter Two is the use of connection stems during learning reflection and discussion (McLaughlin and DeVood, 2004). Five of the lessons I created use connection stems.

Overall, I am pleased at how I was able to use so many of the critical literacy strategies researched in Chapter Two in my curriculum. The strength of meeting this goal is that through the use of critical literacy strategies, students will develop the skills and tools needed to evaluate power in text and the implications of text on social justice issues.

**Does curriculum include culturally specific text?** The second goal I had for my curriculum is to use culturally specific text which would offer students more opportunities to view events and content through alternative perspectives. To evaluate this goal I ask the question “Does my curriculum include a piece of culturally specific text for each mainstream text, standard, or topic covered?”

As stated in Chapter Two, Hollie (2012) recommends using a piece of culturally specific text for every standard addressed, mainstream title used, or topic covered. What is culturally specific text? How will I know if the text I chose meets the criteria? Hollie
describes culturally specific text as text that realistically shows culture in terms of beliefs and norms, customs and traditions. Hollie makes a plea with educators to make sure text does more than change the race of the characters which actually is more detrimental to different cultures than beneficial.

The text I have chosen for my curriculum is *The Colors of Us* by Karen Katz, *My Name is Yoon* by Helen Recorvits, *My Name is Sangoel* by Karen Williams and Khadra Mohammed, *Elizabeth Leads the Way* by Tanya Lee Stone, and a video interview with Ruby Bridges as an adult. There are five pieces of culturally specific text and media to counter eight lessons and topics covered. The lessons that do not include culturally specific resources are the two lessons that use content from the Center of Civic Education and the last lesson on American Symbols. Below is a list of text used and a description as to why I have classified them as culturally specific:

- *The Colors of Us*, by Karen Katz: This text is written by Karen Katz who adopted her daughter from Guatemala. It is a story about people from different races describing their skin color. It is culturally specific because it taps into the norms of each person while they are describing their skin color. It also does not use the words white or black which I appreciate. In the lesson I created I also told the backstory of the author and drew attention to the fact that within families there are often different skin colors. This text shows the diversity of Americans.

- *My Name is Yoon*, by Helen Recorvitz: This narrative text describes Yoon’s journey while navigating her new home and school in America. The author describes the struggle Yoon has assimilating to American
culture and her journey deciding it is okay keeping her Korean traditions and name. This text is culturally specific because it displays aspects of Korean traditions, norms and beliefs. It also accurately address the diversity of America and the pressure Yoon feels to assimilate to American culture.

- **My Name is Sangoel, by Karen Williams and Khadra Mohammed:** In this text Sangoel is a refugee. The depth of this text is endless. Sangoel’s family was forced out of Sudan. Safety was an issue. The authors accurately portray the struggle Sangoel and his family have trying to make America “feel” like home. This text is culturally specific because of the depth of culture represented. The norms and traditions are hit on in the story as well as the pressure Sangoel’s family has to “be” American.

- **Elizabeth Leads the Way, by Tanya Lee Stone:** This text is culturally specific because of the way it portrays women’s rights specifically the struggle for women’s rights to vote. The text gives a voice of power to a suppressed group in this time period.

- **Ruby Bridges video interview:** This video is culturally specific because it is told from Ruby Bridges. I appreciate the fact that she is direct in how she felt about white people as a result of the way she was treated in the streets on her way to school. The other resources used in this lesson identify the wrong doing but do so in a way to “protect” the image of those inflicting hate on Ruby. Ruby does not “protect” the image of white people. It is a message worded in a way that students need to hear.
In response to my second question for evaluation, “Does my curriculum include a piece of culturally specific text for each mainstream text, standard, or topic covered?” Yes I have met the culturally specific text criteria goals for my curriculum which were influenced by the work of Hollie as described in Chapter Two. I could continue to strengthen the curriculum in this area by finding more supportive resources for each lesson. As stated in Chapter Two a critical literacy approach to instruction is student led meaning, student discussion and feedback should guide the discussions. I would like to add more culturally specific text to each lesson as a resource for teachers to take students further when discussion supports it.

Is backward design used effectively? The third goal I had for my curriculum is to effectively use the backward design model as described in Chapter Two. Wiggins and McTighe (1998) include three stages in the backward design model. As defined in Chapter Two, stage one includes the desired results, stage two includes the assessment evidence and stage three highlights the learning plan. I questioned whether this design would fit my goal of using a critical literacy approach and if the components of a critical literacy framework would fit into the backward design model. According to McLaughlin and DeVoogd (2004) in Chapter Two, the critical literacy framework should include, engagement, guiding students, extending students, and reflection. The question I asked myself to evaluate this component of my curriculum was: “Did I utilize the backward design model effectively? I will focusing on identified outcomes and make sure they are linked to assessment evidence.

The major learning I had through my research in Chapter Two and the design in Chapter Four was how a critical literacy framework could blend into the backward design
model. As stated in Chapter Two, the backward design model is meant to focus the educator on the outcomes of the lesson (Wiggins and McTighe, 2005). It is not meant to replace or overtake effective instructional practices. I found that the enduring understanding component of the backward design template and the extending student thinking of the critical literacy framework worked really well together.

I was able to seamlessly include all three stages of the Wiggins and McTighe (2005) backward design model in my curriculum lessons. I found it easier to focus on content and standards and outcomes as a result of planning the curriculum the way described by Wiggins and McTighe in Chapter Two. I also appreciated the open endedness of the enduring understanding. I was able to make my goals for social justice conversations very clear in this portion of the planning process.

Now that the curriculum has been fully developed and I have had a chance to reflect on the evaluation pieces, I feel I did indeed meet all of my goals. I was able to find culturally specific text for lessons within the parameters set by Hollie (2012) in Chapter Two. The two lesson that I did not count as having cultural specific text were lessons four and five which used resources from The Center of Civic Education (2005). Every lesson includes critical literacy strategies. In addition, every lesson includes think-pair-share. The backward design lesson planning template proved to be effective in organizing lesson goals and outcomes tied directly to assessment evidence as well as creating effective learning plans.

Addressing the capstone research question. The thought that started this whole learning process for me was the idea that critical literacy could be appropriate for students in a first grade classroom. I began my capstone research for the purpose of
discovering how critical literacy could transform current first grade curriculum and practices. Throughout the initial planning stages I was able to narrow in on the smaller focus of addressing the needs of our current social studies curriculum. To accomplish this I formed the research question: “How can critical literacy be used to address social justice issues through a first grade social studies read aloud curriculum?” Throughout this process I am not sure I have a short answer to this question. I do however, have a curriculum that proves it can be done and pages of research to prove why it should be done. With the pressures of media in today’s society it is more important than ever to teach students how to evaluate text and media and give students the power of their own voice. This curriculum design process has given me the power to extend my learnings into other areas of curriculum in a first grade classroom.

In my experience as a first grade teacher I feel that all curriculum lessons are age appropriate. I am excited about the finished product. The texts and lessons are designed to provoke varying viewpoints through discussion. The possibility of teaching these lessons with students is extremely exciting to me! The idea that I have the power to teach students to evaluate the world and the idea that I can influence them to change the world is powerful. As a first grade teacher I have lacked evidence related to this passion, at times I have felt like a skills teacher more than a character teachers and influential presence in students’ lives. Through my research I have proven to myself that I can influence six and seven year olds in a world-changing way. More importantly, through my research I now believe that it is my responsibility to influence six and seven year olds in a world-changing way.
Summary

In Chapter Four I was finally able to share my Government and Citizenship curriculum. The curriculum I developed is comprised of eight lessons. Each lesson was highlighted in Chapter Four and is included in full detail in the appendix of my research.

My curriculum development goals were to use critical literacy strategies in each lesson, use culturally specific text and effectively use the Wiggins and McTighe (1998) backward design model. In Chapter Four I described in detail how these goals were evaluated and measured.

As stated in Chapter Four, my ultimate goal for the capstone process was to answer my research question: “How can critical literacy be used to address social justice issues through a first grade social studies read aloud curriculum?” Through my curriculum design and evaluation I have created a first grade social studies read aloud curriculum using a critical literacy approach to instruction to address social justice issues. The completion of my curriculum proves that it can be done. The research in Chapter Two proves why it needs to be done.

In Chapter Five I reflect on the curriculum design process and my learning. I describe the major learnings through my literature review and the curriculum design process. I share the implications of my curriculum. I share the limitations I had while creating my curriculum. In addition, I describe my plan for future research and how I will communicate my results.
CHAPTER FIVE

Reflection

Introduction

In Chapter One I introduced my capstone research question: “How can critical literacy be used to address social justice issues through a first grade social studies read aloud curriculum?” I described how this question was formulated due to my passion for equity and social justice education and my interest in addressing these topics in a first grade classroom. I shared experiences I have had using a critical literacy approach to instruction and why I thought this approach would work well to teach first grade students to identify bias and power in text while addressing social justice topics.

In Chapter Two I shared relevant research pertaining to my research topic. I focused this chapter on three main sections or ideas. The first section focused on a critical literacy approach to instruction. I identified the theory behind this approach and identified the strategies I would include in my curriculum. The second section focused on effective read aloud practices. This section included research about vocabulary acquisition through read aloud text, text selection, and reading comprehension. The third major section in Chapter Two introduced Wiggins and McTighe’s (1998) backward design lesson template. This section included the stages of backward design and the research supported why I decided to use this template in my curriculum design.
Chapter Three focused on the methods of my research. In this Chapter I described my research paradigm and the setting and demographics of my district and school in which I design the curriculum for. I also shared what is currently in place for first grade social studies and identified the areas I felt needed improvement. In Chapter Three I also discuss the way I adapted the backward design lesson plan template to meet the needs of my curriculum and blend with a critical literacy approach. Lastly, I shared the goals of my curriculum development and identified the criteria in which I would evaluate my curriculum.

In Chapter Four I shared my Government and Citizenship First Grade Read Aloud Curriculum. The curriculum focuses on teaching social studies content through read aloud text using a critical literacy approach to instruction. Chapter Four included a breakdown of each lesson included in the eight lesson curriculum. Chapter Four also included evaluation criteria which was based on the goals of my curriculum. My curriculum goals were to include a critical literacy strategy into each lesson, use culturally specific text and effectively use the Wiggins and McTighe (2005) backward design lesson model as described in Chapter Two. The ultimate purpose of my curriculum as described in Chapter Four, was to answer my research question: “How can critical literacy be used to address social justice issues through a first grade social studies read aloud curriculum?”

In Chapter Five I reflect on my personal capstone journey. This process has changed the way I look at read aloud text and the way I plan lessons for students. In Chapter Five I share my major learnings from the curriculum design process and connect them to my major learnings from Chapter Two, the literature review. Also in Chapter
Five I share implications of my research and connect the implications to the importance of all teachers using a critical literacy approach to instruction. I also share the limitations of my curriculum and discuss my plans for communicating my results and furthering my research.

**Major Learnings**

The capstone process has reaffirmed for me how important I feel critical literacy is. Through research in Chapter Two and application of research through the curriculum design process I believe more than ever that students need to be taught to evaluate text and exposed to multiple perspectives. Furthermore, I now strongly believe that learning is social and students need to have an opportunity to discuss new ideas to create knowledge. The idea of culturally specific text has been floating around in my mind professionally for some time. Through my research and application I have learned how important culturally specific text is and how easily it can be added to a curriculum. In addition, I have discovered the benefits of using backward design while planning for instruction. This section will highlight my major learnings from Chapter Two and describe how I applied new knowledge into my curriculum and what I learned through those connections.

**Literature review learnings.** The major learnings from research and development of Chapter Two, my literature review were the importance of a critical literacy approach to instruction, the value of culturally specific text, the importance of conversation in a classroom, and the value of a backward design lesson planning model.

Prior to my capstone research I had had a number of experiences with a critical literacy approach to instruction which is why I knew I wanted to focus my research
around it. Through research and the literature review portion of my capstone process I learned how important this approach is to education and society. As stated by McLaughlin and DeVoogd (2004), children are exposed to so much media; television programs, video games, print advertisement, radio advertisement, television advertisement, movies, books, magazines, comics, pictures. ...the list goes on and on. According to Fisher and Frey (2015) authors and producers of text and media have a very intentional message, and hope to transform their consumers. Coupled with the fact that the producers of these messages are typically influenced with motives of power and money, this is increasingly scary. If students are not equipped with tools and skills to view the power and influence in media where does that leave them? Where does it leave society?

Connecting to this, through my research in Chapter Two I was struck with the obvious connection between what we see and read and view to what we believe and do. Albert Bandura calls this learned behavior (Tracey & Morrow, 2012). In Chapter Two I referenced Tracey and Morrow (2012) and a study they shared by Bandura in which he observed small children and the effects of cartoon characters displaying aggressive behavior. He found that the children viewing the cartoons modeled the same aggressive behavior they observed (Tracey & Morrow, 2012). This reinforces the idea that students need to see and read more information and text from more viewpoints and perspectives. Alternative perspectives is a critical literacy strategy in which students learn to view information from multiple perspectives (McLaughlin & DeVoogd, 2004). This requires teachers to have these resources available for students, which is something I made sure to include in my designed curriculum.
Another major learning through my literature review is the idea that students need to discuss new knowledge to retain new knowledge. As stated in Chapter Two Vygotsky is a social learning theorist who believes new knowledge is constructed by connecting it to prior knowledge through discussion (McLaughlin & DeVoogd, 2004). This idea isn’t entirely new to me but the application of it has been. McLaughlin and DeVoogd coupled this research with the application strategies of think-pair-share and connection stems. Think-pair-share is a quick way to get all students involved in discussion, by having them think about a concept, share it with a partner and then share it with the large group. Students discuss the concept in pairs and then hear it discussed and have the opportunity to share in a large group setting (McLaughlin & DeVoogd). Connection stems is another strategy defined in Chapter Two by McLaughlin and DeVoogd, this strategy gives students an opportunity to reflect on their new learning by posed prompts or thought starters. These can be used in writing or through discussion. I applied this literature review learning to my current teaching and my designed curriculum.

The other major learning from my literature review is the Wiggins and McTighe (1998) backward design model. As stated in Chapter Two, backward design focuses on the outcome of student learning rather than the resources and learning activities. Currently I plan instruction based on the activities. When the lesson is planned I then ask myself what I should assess to show me that they learned. Sometimes identifying what students will learn is my last step in the planning process. According to Wiggins and McTighe, the outcome or desired result of what students learn should be the first step and every other part of the lesson including assessment and activities should align with the outcome. Again, this new learning for me is something I have applied to my teaching
and daily planning. It has made connecting my lessons to standards much easier and clearer.

**Curriculum design learnings.** The biggest impact of this process for me has been connecting my literature review learnings to the applicable process of curriculum design. As described above a major learning from my literature review was the importance of a critical literacy approach to instruction and the idea that every piece of text sends a message, sometimes not the message an educator intends to send. This idea increases the importance of teaching students to evaluate information. As a result of this learning, I knew it was important to include a critical literacy strategy into every lesson I created in my curriculum. What I learned was that I had to be very intentional about including a critical literacy strategy. As a result I added a section to the Wiggins and McTighe (1998) lesson plan, this allowed me to identify the strategy included. What I fear as a result of my learning is how often this is missed in daily lessons and curriculum. I will address this implication later in Chapter Five.

Another major learning for me was the goal to include more opportunities for students to discuss learning and content. As a result of the literature review I knew I wanted to use think-pair-share and connection stems in lessons. What I learned while planning is that these impactful strategies take time which may be a reason they are often left out of daily lessons in traditional curriculums. It is often quicker and easier for the teacher to give the information without stopping for student discussion and reflection time. Through experience in a primary aged classroom I also question if students can stay on task while discussing information. This is an area I want to develop more in my
classroom and experiment with the timing allowed for discussion which could affect how focused the discussion stay.

**Implications**

Throughout the capstone process I have learned the value of analyzing instructional choices. Prior to my research I trusted the current curriculum used to teach social studies content. The current curriculum teaches the standards that I know I am responsible for and covers the content of first grade expectations. I have never had a reason to question the validity or nature of teaching strategies or content. As a result of researching a critical literacy approach to instruction and learning about the importance of selecting culturally specific text I now feel myself analyzing every piece of literature used in my classroom. In addition, I have proven to myself that it is possible to address cultural differences and the imbalance of power with first grade students.

This idea brings me to one major implication of my research. What will happen if I don’t share my message? What will happen if other educators are not familiar with a critical literacy approach to instruction? Are social justice issues reserved for students mature enough to fully understand the intricate connections of people and cultures? Do we ever reach this level of maturity? Are social justice issues only the responsibility of educators who value the perspective of all people and will take the time to teach them? How many educators does this include?

As stated above, prior to research I trusted current curriculum and text used in curriculum to teach my learning targets in all subjects. I trusted the intentions of those who produced them. I am assuming many other educators have this same trust in the companies our districts have invested in. As a result of my research I advocate investing
in students. We need to teach students how to evaluate information and text using culturally specific and relevant text. Teachers need to tackle the bigger issues like race and culture, gender equality, and the equitable teaching of our history. If not, we will continue to grow in a space where inequities continue to exist.

Limitations

At the beginning of the capstone process, I knew I wanted to focus my research on a critical literacy approach to instruction. Initially while reviewing our social studies units I planned on recreating our History study which focuses on time now and long ago. I was excited to plan lessons about early inventors that included different genders and different races. When I started creating the curriculum and the lessons I realized I was making huge assumptions about the way students view the world. My lessons assumed students knew about race and culture and identity. What I discovered is that to tackle comparing time today with time long ago I would first have to start with who we are and how our current world works. In the middle of my curriculum development process I changed my focus to the Government and Citizenship Unit which is taught at the beginning of first grade.

My research question addresses social justice issues. This is an area that through my journey I am still fairly uncertain about. What I have questioned throughout is what social justice issues or education is appropriate for first grade students. Through my curriculum I prompt students through text to discuss race, cultures and how students not part of the mainstream population are viewed in American schools. Other lessons prompt students to evaluate our United States history, like voting laws and women’s rights. I liked the use of the Ruby Bridges clip in which Ruby herself is reflecting on her
experience as a child. In the clip, Ruby describes the hatred of the white people as she walked into school and how it would have been easy to dislike all white people as a result of this hatred. She credited her school teacher as being the influence for her to see beyond skin color. Her school teacher was a white woman who showed unconditional kindness and love to Ruby. I teach in a school in which the mainstream population is white. This clip is powerful because it shows students the mistakes of their own race. What I am left reflecting on or wondering is, did I address social justice issues and did I create a curriculum that tackled them appropriately?

Another major limitation for me has been the fact that my curriculum has not been implemented. It is difficult to plan the sequence of lessons, length of time needed for lessons and additional resources without actually teaching the unit. Because a critical literacy approach to instruction should be based on student needs I did the best I could to predict how first grade students would react and engage with the content. This could change while actually teaching the unit. The other limitation was planning the assessment evidence. Many of my lessons include journal prompts. Through my experiences with a critical literacy approach it is sometimes necessary to modify prompts based on where the classroom discussion went. Again, this is difficult to predict and I made the current curriculum plan based on how I think my students would interact with the material presented.

**Recommendation for Further Research and Communication**

The largest outcome for me as a result of my research, has been my commitment to better teaching. After researching the importance of a critical literacy approach to instruction and the value of culturally specific text I will never be able to go back to my
traditional way of teaching. I have come to the realization that if I am not teaching my students to evaluate text and media I am doing them a huge disservice to them, which will haunt them outside of first grade. I have also come to the realization that many educators do not know enough about this. Student in today’s educational system are being exposed to so many messages from the position of those in power. Our students will believe and learn only what we show them and teach them. It is our responsibility as teachers to do better for them. It is my responsibility as a colleague to share my message with other teachers. My first professional goal as a result of my capstone process, is to share my curriculum with my first grade team. I will also share my research with my district’s Director of Teaching and Learning.

To further my research I will continue to create lessons to cover the rest of our social studies standards. In addition I want to begin to analyze the text used in our core curriculum reading basal. Through the research in my capstone process I am committed to my new knowledge. As Fisher and Frey (2015) state, action is the last step of a critical literacy model. I have read the information, I have used the information, how will I change as a result of the information, what is my action? My action is commitment to better teaching.

Summary

I have reached the end of my capstone process. What led me through my curriculum development is the passion I have for critical literacy, culture, and equity. I knew I wanted to create a curriculum in which students would have to think about and evaluate their world. I knew this was a huge undertaking due to the age of my students
and the lack of research focused on primary age students. This process has been overwhelming at times, rewarding at others, but most importantly extremely beneficial.

As my capstone journey ends, it is important to identify my major findings: text, and media are directly targeting and influencing students. My students need to be prepared to evaluate the messages of mainstream power by acquiring the right tools and strategies. I am responsible to teach students to question text and messages, search for multiple viewpoints or perspectives, have conversations about big ideas, and provoke action or change. Students need to be inspired to take control of their learning and their world. This doesn’t happen on accident. It happens through thoughtful, intentional lessons about real world issues from educators who are committed to making a change in the world.
REFERENCES


Freed, K. Ruby bridges. www.readingaz.com: Reading A-Z.


Appendix A

Wiggins and McTighe Backward Design
# STAGE 1 – DESIRED RESULTS

**Lesson Title:** _____________________________

**Established Goals:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Understandings: Students will understand that...</th>
<th>Essential Questions:</th>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Students will know:</th>
<th>Students will be able to:</th>
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# STAGE 2 – ASSESSMENT EVIDENCE

<table>
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<th>Performance Tasks:</th>
<th>Other Evidence:</th>
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</table>

**Key Criteria:**

# STAGE 3 – LEARNING PLAN

**Summary of Learning Activities:**

Appendix B

Adapted Backward Design Plan
Adapted from Wiggins and McTighe (2005) Backward Design Plan

### STAGE 1 – DESIRED RESULTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Lesson Title:</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Established Goals:</td>
<td></td>
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<td>Social Studies Standards Covered:</td>
<td>Essential Questions:</td>
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<tr>
<td>Integrated Language Arts Skills:</td>
<td>Students will know and be able to do:</td>
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<tr>
<td>Critical Literacy Strategies:</td>
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### STAGE 2 – ASSESSMENT EVIDENCE

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<th>Performance Tasks:</th>
<th>Other Evidence:</th>
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<tr>
<td>Key Criteria:</td>
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### STAGE 3 – LEARNING PLAN

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Materials:</th>
<th></th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Summary of Learning Activities:</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Appendix C

Lesson One
Lesson One: The Color of Us

### STAGE 1 – DESIRED RESULTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Lesson Title:</strong> The Colors Of Us</th>
<th><strong>Duration:</strong> 1 day; 30-45 minutes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

**Established Goals:**
- Students will discuss race and culture and use comparison sentences to describe their skin color.

**Social Studies Standards Covered:**
- This lesson is not directly tied to the social studies standards of this unit. Before students can understand an individual's responsibility in a community they need to try to understand the individual.

**Essential Questions:**
- Who are we? What is our identity?
- Is there a difference between race and culture?
- Does race define who we are?

**Integrated Language Arts Skills:**
- author’s purpose
- main idea and details

**What students will know/be able to do:**
- Identify the differences between race and culture.

**Critical Literacy Strategies**
- connection stem: this reminds me of. . .
- think-pair-share

### STAGE 2 – ASSESSMENT EVIDENCE

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Performance Tasks:</strong></th>
<th><strong>Other Evidence:</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>classroom discussion participation</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
- students will create paintings of their skin color using multicultural paints
- students will write similes about their skin color
- students will use critical literacy connection stem prompt “this reminds me of” while describing colors with a partner

**Key Criteria:** Based on classroom discussion are students able to define the word race as skin color and separate it from culture? Do students understand that race does not define who we are?

**STAGE 3 – LEARNING PLAN**

**Materials:**
- paint swatches- 3 primary colors and skin color swatches
- cut white construction paper 8x8 squares, 1 per student +extra for mistakes
- multicultural paints and painting materials for all students
- pencils
- large KLU chart (template at the end of lesson)
- student writing templates (at the end of the lesson)
- student pair and share partners (depending on classroom management design)

_The Colors of Us_ by Karen Katz

**Summary of Learning Activities:**

***Students are seated in a large group area next to pair and share partners.***
• **Engage Students.** Display the KLU chart on the smartboard or chart paper. Direct students to **think-pair-share** with one another about what they know about skin color.

• Invite students to share with the whole group what they know about skin color, add their ideas to the KLU chart, under the K.

• Students may share that people can be black or white. If this happens, show students a piece of white paper and a piece of black paper. Explain to students that we are going to read about different ways to describe skin color, and the different shades of skin color we see.

• Introduce the word race. Race is a word for the color of our skin. Add this word to the classroom word wall.

• Explain to students that we are going to read a story about colors of people. “In the story the author describes skin color to foods and nature. Before we read, we are going to practice. For this activity you will turn and talk with your pair and share partners. You and your partner will start each answer with “This reminds me of . . .” When I hold up a color you will say “This reminds me of . . .” and share with your partner what the color looks like to you.” Using a sentence strip or white board write the words “this reminds me of . . .” (connection stems)

• **Guide Students.** Hold up the red swatch. “This reminds me of a shiny red firetruck racing to a fire. Maybe I could also say, this reminds me of a juicy red apple, just picked at the apple orchard.” (connection stems)
• Practice. “Let’s practice.” Hold up a blue swatch. “What does this remind you of?” Call on 4 or 5 students, making sure to remind students to start with “this reminds me of.”

• Practice with partners. Hold up another swatch before switching to the skin color swatches.

• Set a purpose for reading. “The story we will read today is called The Color of Us. The author of this story is named Karen Katz. Karen is a mama and wrote this story for her daughter. Karen’s daughter Lena was born in Guatemala. In the story we learn that Karen’s skin is the color of french toast. We also will learn that Lena’s skin is the color of cinnamon. Families can have a lot of different skin colors. While we read today think about the color of your skin and what it reminds you of. Is it the same as your family or a little bit different like Karen and Lena?”

• Read the story, The Color of Us by Karen Katz.

• **Extend Student’s Thinking.** Author’s purpose. “Author’s write stories to tell the readers a message. Sometimes they want to entertain us, sometimes they want to teach us. What do you think this author wants us to know or think about skin color?”

• Tell students to think of their skin color and it what it reminds them of. Have them share with their partners.

• Painting skin color. “Today we will be painting quilt squares to make a color of us quilt.” Show students the multicultural paints and demonstrate painting skin color. Paint the whole square, leaving no white spaces.
- After students paint have each student write what their skin color reminds them of using the lesson template.

- Add the written text to the painted square and display as a quilt in the classroom or in the school.

- **Reflect.** At the end of the lesson review the KLU chart and complete the L, what did students learn about skin color after the story and discussion? Have students pair and share ideas starting with the prompt I learned. . . . Ask students to share out to the large group and fill in the chart.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>K</strong></th>
<th><strong>L</strong></th>
<th><strong>U</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>This is what I know.</td>
<td>This is what I learned.</td>
<td>This is how I put it all together and what I understand.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Writing template to be printed, one for each student.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>I am _________________________________.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>My skin is beautiful.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My skin is the color of _______________________________.</td>
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</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>I am _________________________________.</th>
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<th>I am _________________________________.</th>
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<tr>
<td>My skin is beautiful.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My skin is the color of _______________________________.</td>
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</table>
Appendix D

Lesson Two
### Lesson Two: Names and Identity

#### STAGE 1 – DESIRED RESULTS

**Lesson Title:** Names and Identity  **Duration:** 2 days; 30-45 minutes

**Established Goals:**
- Students will discuss the importance of our names and begin thinking about the diverse culture of America.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Social Studies Standards Covered:</th>
<th>Essential Questions:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Not directly tied to the social studies standards of this unit, this lesson is a building block to our lessons on community and effective citizens.</td>
<td>- Who are we? What is our identity?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Is America home to everyone who lives here?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- How do stories change the way we think and view people?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Integrated Language Arts Skills:</th>
<th>What students will know/be able to do:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>author’s purpose</td>
<td>reflect on <em>My Name is Yoon</em> in their classroom journals</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Critical Literacy Strategies:**
- problem posing: Whose voices are missing the text?
- think-pair-share

### STAGE 2 – ASSESSMENT EVIDENCE
### Performance Tasks:
- journal reflection prompts:
  - day 1: Write about how Yoon and her family felt about moving to America.
  - day 2: Write about how you treat others who are different than you.

### Other Evidence:
- classroom discussion participation

### Key Criteria:
Are students starting to understand that people feel differently and deal with different challenges?

## STAGE 3 – LEARNING PLAN

### Materials:
- student journals
- My Name is Yoon
- KLU chart from mini lesson 1, to be added to throughout the unit

### Summary of Learning Activities:
- **Engage Students.** Begin lesson by reviewing the KLU chart from the previous lesson. Students completed what they learned about race. Prompt students to add an understanding to the U. Explain to students that this space will be used to write down what they understand and think about what they know and what they are learning. Reflect back to what students thought Karen Katz wanted them to know by reading *The Colors of Us.*
“After reading The Color of Us, we recognize that we are all different shades of colors. Think of how many shades of colors there are in the United States. We call the United States, America.” Show students a map of the United States. “We will be learning a lot about the people who live in America and how we work together.”

Set a purpose. “Today we are going to read a story about a character named Yoon. Yoon’s family lived in Korea. She and her family decide to move to America.” Show students on the map where Korea is and ask students how they think Yoon will travel to America. When people move from one part of the world to the other part we call it immigrating. You might hear the word immigration when we talk about people moving from one part of the world to America.”

“How many of you have had to move before, or read or heard a story about moving? People move for lots of different reasons. Think-pair-share with your partner why you think people move from one place to another. See how many reasons you can come up with.”

Guide Students. Read My Name is Yoon.

Extend Student’s Thinking. After reading. “In this story, Yoon was uncomfortable about using her name Yoon in her American classroom. Think-pair-share with your partner why she might have been uncomfortable.” Monitor the room and make sure all students are discussing. Recap what was shared in a large group. “Think-pair-share with your partner what changed between the middle of the story and the end of the
story?" Recap what was shared in a large group. “The author told us that
Yoon was uncomfortable about her name. Let’s think about what the author
didn’t tell us. What other things do you think might have been difficult or
uncomfortable for Yoon and her family in their move to America? It might
help you to think about your own experiences of moving or changing
schools. **Think-pair-share** with your partners what you are thinking.” Recap
what was shared in a large group.

- **Reflect.** In our journals today we are going to reflect on the parts of the story
  the author didn’t tell us. Each of you will write about what Yoon and her
  family might have gone through while moving. Some of you may write about
  Yoon and feeling like she needed a different name, some of you might write
  about having to move all of your stuff as far as her family did, maybe Yoon
  had to get rid of a lot of stuff because they couldn’t move it all. Some of you
  may write about the friends and family they left behind. Your only job is to
  write about Yoon and her family moving.”

**Day 2**

- Leave time for students to share their journal reflections from the previous
day. Tell students you will read A Name For Yoon again today but they will
  have to listen to it differently.

- **Engage Students.** “Yesterday I read the story A Name for Yoon. I will be
  reading it again today but today I want you to think about the people in the
  story that don’t talk. Authors write from the voices of a few characters. Today
  while I read your going to think about the people in the story that don’t
talk. We say that their “voices” are missing. This is tricky because we really mean their voices and thoughts. Let’s see if we can find people in this story that their voices are missing (problem posing). I wonder what they would say or how they would be feeling about the story.”

- **Guide Students.** Read *My Name is Yoon* again.

- pg. 7: “Whose voice is missing? What do you think the children are thinking or saying about a new student in the classroom?” (problem posing)

- pg. 11: “Whose voice is missing? (problem posing) What do you think the teacher is thinking? Why is the girl giggling and what message does that send to Yoon? Sometimes not using words can be hurtful. Yoon hears the girl giggling, what could the girl say to show kindness? Talk about a time you giggled at someone or they giggled at you? Think about how it felt.”

- pg. 17: “How does Yoon feel about her teacher? Why does she think her teacher is starting to like her? What does it mean to be patient? If you were in Yoon’s class would you need her to be patient for your friendship?”

- pg. 19: “Whose voice is missing? How might the kids feel about the “new kid” and how might they show her how they feel? Do you think it would be different if Yoon were the same as them? Think about you, how do you treat others who are different than you, how do you want to treat them?

- pg. 27: “What might the author accidently be saying about how to get a teacher to like you? How do you feel about this? Do you feel you need to do well and be smart for your teachers to like you and be proud of you?”
- **Extend Student’s Thinking.** Discuss the story. Student feedback should lead this discussion. The focus should be on identity, who we are, what we believe. Try to use the characters to tell the story.

- Add to the KLU about what we learned about who we are and what we believe.

- **Reflect.** Use student journals and prompt students to write about how they treat others who are different than them. Should we have to be patient for kindness?
Appendix E

Lesson Three
Lesson Title: Names and Identity  
Duration: 2 days; 30-45 minutes

Established Goals:
- Students will discuss the importance of our names as part of who we are and begin thinking about the diverse cultures in America.

Social Studies Standards Covered:
- Not directly tied to the social studies standards of this unit. This lesson is a building block to our lessons on community and effective citizens.

Essential Questions:
- Who are we? What is our identity?
- Is America home to everyone who lives here?
- How do stories change the way we think and view people?

Integrated Language Arts Skills:
- author’s purpose
- compare and contrast

What students will know/be able to do:
- reflect on the story in their classroom journals

Critical Literacy Strategies:
- juxtapositioning
- think-pair-share

Performance Tasks:
- journal reflection prompts:

Other Evidence:
- classroom discussion participation
| Day 1: How is school the same and different for Sangoel and Yoon? |
| Day 2: Write about how you treat others who are different than you. |

**Key Criteria:** Are students starting to understand that people feel differently and deal with different challenges? If we don’t struggle does that mean struggle doesn’t exist for others?

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### STAGE 3 – LEARNING PLAN

**Materials:**

- student journals
- My Name is Yoon
- My Name is Sangoel
- KLU chart from mini lesson 1, to be added to throughout the unit

**Summary of Learning Activities:**

- **Engage Students.** Begin lesson by reviewing the KLU chart from the previous lesson. Students completed what they learned about treating people who might be different in ways. Prompt students to add an understanding to the U. Explain to students that this space will be used to write down what they understand and think about what they know and what they are learning. Reflect back to what students thought Karen Katz wanted them to
know by reading *The Colors of Us* and what Helen Recorvits wanted them to know by reading *My Name is Yoon.*

- “After reading *The Color of Us,* we recognize that we are all different shades of colors. Think of how many shades of colors there are in the United States. We call the United States, America.” Show students a map of the United States. “We will be learning a lot about the people who live in America and how we work together. We also learned about Yoon, a girl who moved to America and tried different names before deciding that Yoon was her best name. Is Korea Yoon’s home or is America Yoon’s home? Does where you live become your home or where you want to be?”

- Set a purpose. “Today we are going to read a story about a character named Sangoel. Sangoel’s family lived in Sudan. He and his family were forced to leave their home to stay safe. His family left their home and Sudan in the middle of the night and went to a refugee camp. A refugee camp is a safe place for people trying to escape war. Yoon had a home in Korea before she came to America. She wanted to go back to Korea because she had comfort in her country. Sangoel does not have a home in Sudan. His family is coming to America for a home and comfort. Show students on the map where Sudan is and ask students how they think Sangoel will travel to America. When people move from one part of the world to the other part we call it immigrating. You might hear the word immigration when we talk about people moving from one part of the world to America.”
- Show the first few illustrations of the text and ask students to discuss the difference between Sangoel’s land and America.

- **Guide Students.** Read My Name is Sangoel. (Use think-pair-share during text discussion.)

- pg. 9: Discuss language. Have students imagine they moved to a different country and could not communicate. “What do mom and Mrs. Johnson do that doesn’t require speaking the same language?”

- pg. 12: Discuss belongings: “Sangoel and his family left their home in the middle of the night and lived at the refugee camp. What things do you think they left behind?”

- pg. 14: Discussing leaving mom: “How might Sangoel feel about leaving his mom to go to school? What will he need from his teachers and classmates to help him get through his first few days? What would you do to show him understanding and kindness?”

- pg. 19: “Why is Sangoel’s name important to him?”

- pg. 21: “Make a prediction with your partner about what he may have done or written on the almost white t-shirt.”

- pg. 25: “At the beginning of the story, mom and Mrs. Johnson communicate with their bodies by smiling. How is Sangoel communicating with his classmates?”

- **Extend Student’s Thinking.** Read the Author’s Note: Discuss names: “If you moved to a new country, would you keep your name like Yoon and Sangoel?”
• After reading. “In this story, Sangoel wanted to use his name Sangoel in his American classroom. Turn and tell your partner how this is the same or different than Yoon.” Monitor the room and make sure all students are discussing. Recap what was shared in a large group. “Yoon and Sangoel are different, they come from different countries for different reasons, did their classmates treat them differently or the same? Turn and tell your partner.” Recap what was shared in a large group. “A lot of students in America have things that are the same and different. Many kids in America were born here, others moved here from other countries. Some were forced to move here like Sangoel. What do all people need to do to accept and honor our differences?” Recap what was shared in a large group.

• Reflect. In our journals today we are going to reflect on Yoon and Sangoel’s experiences at school (juxtapositioning). How were they the same and how were they different?

• Add to the KLU about what we learned about who we are and what we believe.

Additional Resources:

Max Goes to School by Adria F. Klein

• Discuss Max’s experience at school and compare it to Yoon and Sangoel (juxtapositioning).
Appendix F

Lesson Four
# Lesson Four: Power and Authority

## STAGE 1 – DESIRED RESULTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Lesson Title: Power and Authority</th>
<th>Duration: 1 day; 30-45 minutes</th>
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### Established Goals:
- Students will understand authority vs. power and identify why authority is used in the United States.

### Social Studies Standards Covered:
- Students will identify the President of the United States and describe his authority in leading our country.

### Essential Questions:
- Who has the power to make and govern rules?
- What gives them power?
- How can someone get power?
- What is the difference between power and authority?

### Integrated Language Arts Skills:
- compare and contrast

### What students will know/be able to do:
- reflect on the power vs. authority in their classroom journals
- identify the President of the United States

### Critical Literacy Strategies:
- think-pair-share
- problem posing

## STAGE 2 – ASSESSMENT EVIDENCE
### Performance Tasks:
- in a large group setting students are able to identify Barack Obama as the President of the United States.

### Other Evidence:
- classroom discussion participation

### Key Criteria:
Do students know that authority is both a privilege and responsibility. People with authority have the responsibility to be fair. Students may began to question if fair is the same for everyone?

### Stage 3 – Learning Plan

**Materials:**
pages 1-19 of Constitution Day Lesson: What is Authority
student journals

**Summary of Learning Activities:**
- Follow Power vs. Authority lesson plan pages 1-19, using the following prompts and pausing points.
- Lesson pg. 4: Ruth and Jim did jobs without being told, **think-pair-share** something you do without being told.
- Lesson pg. 5: Power is when you tell someone to do something and they do it. **Think-pair-share** a time when you told someone what to do and they did it or a time when someone told you what to do and you did it.
- Lesson pg. 7: Discuss with students who in school has authority. Why do these people have authority? Authority comes with responsibility. What is the
responsibility of these people in school (ex. keep kids safe, teach kids, feed kids, keep them healthy, drive them to school safely. . . )

- Reflect back to page 4. Ask students to reflect back on the time they shared doing something when someone asked. Challenge students to decide if the situation had authority or power.

- After pg. 13 have a conversation with students about cost and benefit of authority. Who do rules work for? Read the lunch room story twice. On the second read have students identify whose voice is missing or not represented. Discuss how the rules are working for those people. Why isn’t their feedback included? (problem posing)

- Show students a picture of Barack Obama. Can students identify him? Does the president of the United States use power or authority? Have a conversation with students about how the President got authority. This conversation will be the starting point for Lesson Five.

Lesson Resource

http://www.civiced.org/resources/curriculum/constitution-day-and-citizenship-day

  o  Grade 1: What is Authority

Additional Resources to Expand Learning

- Brain Pop Jr. Government Set
  o  President
- Branches of Government
- Local and State Government
Appendix G

Lesson Five
Lesson Five: The Constitution and Rules

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>STAGE 1 – DESIRED RESULTS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Lesson Title:</strong> The Constitution and Rules  <strong>Duration:</strong> 1 day; 30-45 minutes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Established Goals:</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Students will understand the United States constitution and identify how rules and laws are created in the United States.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Social Studies Standards Covered:</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Students will identify how rules and laws are made in the United States.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Students will describe the purpose of the United States Constitution.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Important Questions:</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Who has the power to make and govern rules?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- What gives them power?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- How can someone get power?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- What is the difference between power and authority?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Integrated Language Arts Skills:</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- compare and contrast</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>What students will know/be able to do:</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- describe the United States Constitution</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- describe how rules and laws are made in the United States</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Critical Literacy Strategies:</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- think-pair-share</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- connection stems: This reminds me of. ..</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>STAGE 2 – ASSESSMENT EVIDENCE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Performance Tasks:</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other Evidence:</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
- students will create a classroom constitution dictating our classroom rules and laws
- classroom discussion participation

**Key Criteria:**
Do students know how rules and laws are created in the United States?
Does our current system benefit all citizens? Will the system work in our classroom?
What changes would we make?

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**STAGE 3 – LEARNING PLAN**

**Materials:**
- student journals
- Star Spangled Banner music
- current classroom rules poster

**Summary of Learning Activities:**
- Connect new learning to power and authority concepts from previous lesson.
  Challenge students to use the **connection stem:** This reminds me of (power/authority).
- In Step 7 play the Star Spangled Banner for the patriotic music.
- Step 8: students will create their posters in their student journals.
• Close lesson by having a discussion with students about who our rules work for and who they work against? Ask students how our rules would work for new students. How would we show new students that our classroom is a safe place to learn? Does our country show citizens that America is a safe place to live and work?

Lesson Resource

http://www.civiced.org/resources/curriculum/constitution-day-and-citizenship-day

  o Grade 1: The Constitution.
Appendix H

Lesson Six
Lesson Six: What can go wrong with power and authority?

### STAGE 1 – DESIRED RESULTS

**Lesson Title:** Voting  **Duration:** 1 day; 30-45 minutes

**Established Goals:**

Students will be able to describe how voting laws have changed in history. Our governmental system is designed to protect the rights of its citizens, but has it always? Does it now? Have we made mistakes before?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Social Studies Standards Covered:</th>
<th>Essential Questions:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Students will explore laws today with laws long ago. Students will compare time today to long ago.</td>
<td>• Who has the power to make and govern rules?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Is there authority used correctly?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Has this authority ever been used in a bad way?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• How have our views and opinions changed?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Integrated Language Arts Skills:</th>
<th>What students will know/be able to do:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Making inferences</td>
<td>• Describe how voting laws have changed.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Critical Literacy Strategies:**

- problem posing: This reminds me of. . .
- think-pair-share
- alternative perspectives
STAGE 2 – ASSESSMENT EVIDENCE

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Performance Tasks:</th>
<th>Other Evidence:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Reflect on learning about voting and elections in student journals</td>
<td>• KLU</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Classroom discussion participation</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Key Criteria:** Have our laws and practices always worked? We have had to make changes to systems we thought were good. Do we still need to make changes?

STAGE 3 – LEARNING PLAN

**Materials:**

KLU charts

Voting in Elections by Jack Manning

Elizabeth Leads the Way by Tanya Stone

**Summary of Learning Activities:**

- **Engage Students.** Using the KLU brainstorm with students what they know about voting.

- To build background knowledge for this lesson, first pre-teach about voting by using the book Voting in Elections by Jack Manning. This text is found on My On which is a district supported web based book collection. In this text the author address the fact that women could not vote 50 years ago. Go back to this point and ask students whose voice is missing (problem posing). Why couldn’t women vote? **Think-pair-share** your thoughts with a partner.
• **Guide Students.** Using the KLU ask students what they learned about voting.
  Add this information to the L.

• **Extend Student’s Thinking.** Share with students that we are going to read
  Elizabeth Leads the Way by Tanya Lee Stone. Tell students you are hoping we
  can learn more about the history of women and voting but through the eyes of a
  woman (**alternative perspectives**).

• The rules and laws didn’t work for Elizabeth Cady Stanton. What did she do?
  Did she have power or authority? How did she create change? In our lives we
  can search for ways to make change too. Prompt students to **think-pair-share**
  ideas about what they want to change.

• **Reflect.** Elizabeth Cady Stanton made it possible for women to vote. With
  what we have learned about America why is voting important? Elizabeth felt
  like the current voting law was not working for her, she tried to change it.
  Tomorrow we will learn about another law in history that wasn’t working for
  people and read about a little girl your age who used courage to speak out
  against the law. Using your student journals write about Elizabeth Cady
  Stanton, elections or voting.
Appendix I

Lesson Seven
Lesson Seven: What can go wrong with power and authority?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>STAGE 1 – DESIRED RESULTS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Lesson Title:</strong> What Can Go Wrong?  <strong>Duration:</strong> 1 day; 30-45 minutes</td>
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</table>

**Established Goals:**

Students will understand that sometimes power and authority can be used in the wrong way. Our governmental system is designed in a way to prevent this, but does it? Have we made mistakes before?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Social Studies Standards Covered:</th>
<th>Essential Questions:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Students will compare civic rights today with rights long ago.</td>
<td>• Students will understand that sometimes power and authority can be used in the wrong way.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Our governmental system is designed in a way to prevent this, but does it?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Have we made mistakes before?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• How can citizens prevent these mistakes?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• What can we learn from Ruby Bridges?</td>
</tr>
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</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Integrated Language Arts Skills:</th>
<th>What students will know/be able to do:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Compare and contrast information</td>
<td>• Students will write a letter to Ruby Bridges describing what they have</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
learned about her journey as a school aged child.

**Critical Literacy Strategies:**
- connection stems
- think-pair-share
- problem posing: Whose voices are missing?
- alternative perspectives

## STAGE 2 – ASSESSMENT EVIDENCE

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Performance Tasks:</th>
<th>Other Evidence:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Students will write a letter to Ruby Bridges addressing what they have learned.</td>
<td>Classroom discussion observation.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Key Criteria:** Do students see the differences between text and the mood authors can set around historical events?

## STAGE 3 – LEARNING PLAN

**Materials:**
- Student journals
- Classroom projector
- Reading A-Z login information

**Summary of Learning Activities:**
- **Engage Students.** Read Ruby Bridges from Read A-Z website. It is a projectable book. Project it for students to see.

- Show students the map at the beginning of the book and explain that over 50 years ago the United States did not agree on the rights of people.

- The government was using its authority to try to enforce laws that would give all people rights, but states were trying to show power by not following the rules.

- Show the map and explain the differences in states.

- **Guide Students.** Read Ruby Bridges from A-Z. Use critical literacy strategy **problem posing** and ask students whose voices were missing from the text.

- Have students **think-pair-share** to retell the story.

- Use the Scholastic Website to show students the interactive Scholastic News. Explain to students that you will be showing them another resource and their job is to see how the authors explain the events the same or different. Remind them that the author can make us feel a certain way about the information they are writing about.

- **Extend Student’s Thinking.** Again, after reading have students retell the story using **think-pair-share**.

- Again, ask students whose voice is missing.

- **Reflect.** Illustrate and write a few sentences about Ruby Bridges experience in student journals.

Day 2
• **Engage Students.** Review student journals and give students a few minutes to share out their work with the large group.

• Have students remind each other of whose voice was missing from yesterday’s study (**problem posing**).

• Explain that you will be showing a video interview of Ruby Bridges about her experience. Ruby is an adult now and she recounts her experience in the video (**alternative perspectives**). Ask students to predict what Ruby will say about starting a new school.

• **Guide Students.** Watch the video.

• **Reflect.** End the lesson by writing a letter to Ruby Bridges. Brainstorm content with students and write an example letter, before having students write one on their own. Create a display of student letters.

Resources Needed for Lesson:


3. [http://safeshare.tv/w/ss563e265133c4d](http://safeshare.tv/w/ss563e265133c4d)

Additional Resources to Expand Learning:

White Socks Only by Evelyn Coleman (**juxtapositioning**)
Appendix J

Lesson Eight
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Lesson Title:</strong> American Symbols</th>
<th><strong>Duration:</strong> 1 day; 30-45 minutes</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Established Goals:</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Students will be able to identify American Symbols and explain the meaning.</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Social Studies Standards Covered:</strong></th>
<th><strong>Essential Questions:</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Students will recognized American Symbols</td>
<td>• What do America’s Symbols stand for?</td>
</tr>
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<td></td>
<td>•</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Integrated Language Arts Skills:</strong></th>
<th><strong>What students will know/be able to do:</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Main idea and details</td>
<td>• Students will create a poster focusing on one American Symbol</td>
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</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Critical Literacy Strategies:</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• alternative perspectives</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• connection stems</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>STAGE 2 – ASSESSMENT EVIDENCE</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Performance Tasks:</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-----------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Students will create a poster for an American Symbol.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| **Key Criteria:** Do symbols mean different things for different people? |
### STAGE 3 – LEARNING PLAN

**Materials:**
- White construction paper for posters
- Colored markers and crayons

**Summary of Learning Activities:**

- **Engage Students.** Define the word symbols by describing to students that groups of people sometimes use symbols or objects to represent themselves. Ask students what the symbol is for our school and help them identify the school mascot and the school song. Ask them if they can do the same thing on a larger level by identifying the school district mascot. Also, identify state symbols and mascots.

- **Guide Students.** Connect the symbol discussion to America. Explain to students that there are symbols the United States. Use Ben’s Guide to explore United States Symbols. Make connection to the lesson previously taught in this unit.

- **Extend Student’s Thinking.** When students have explored Ben’s Guide as a large group, divide students into 6 groups. Place eight large papers around the room. One for each symbol explored. Large papers should be labeled and could include pre-printed pictures of the symbols.

- Students are going to take a brainstorm walk around the room. Each group will have 2-3 minutes with each poster before they rotate to a new poster. Their job
is to write what they know about each symbol and why we recognize it as a symbol for our country. Posters are also divided using connection stems.

- **Reflect.** End the lesson by reviewing the posters as a large group. Display posters in the classroom or hallway. Have students reflect on the lesson in their journals.

Resources:

| This reminds me of. . . | I remember a time when . . . | I have a connection because. . . |