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## **How Can Educators Use Multicultural Materials to Create a More Inclusive Classroom Community?**

Jenna Urick

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HOW CAN EDUCATORS USE MULTICULTURAL MATERIALS TO CREATE A  
MORE INCLUSIVE CLASSROOM COMMUNITY?

by

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A capstone project submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the  
degree of Master of Arts in Teaching.

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## DEDICATION

To my family and friends for your continuous support and encouragement throughout my journey to complete this project. Thank you to my Capstone Committee, Capstone advisors and to my peer-editors for taking the time to help guide and support me through this project.

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## CHAPTER ONE

### Introduction

#### Overview

Equitable representation in classroom material is a multidimensional issue which challenges us to think both in terms of understanding political agendas in the current power structure and utilizing this understanding in teaching theory and practice, multicultural materials, and resources in the classroom. This has led me to my research question: *How can educators use multicultural materials to create a more inclusive classroom community?* While thinking about this question, it is important to recognize the cultural biases within school curriculum, standardized tests, funding and textbooks. It is therefore imperative to establish relationships with diverse cultures so that permanent bridges can be built between the established school curriculums and the necessity of updated materials which reflect the current student populations.

Some may believe that in our progressive day and age young children are '*color blind*'. They do not notice race, and that bias/racial prejudices only develop through it being taught (Winkler, 2009). In reality, children as young as six months old are mindful of racial differences, and by the time they are in preschool (ages three to five) they can develop their own racial biases that do not always associate with the racial attitudes of adults in their life (Winkler, 2009). Dr. Ronardo Reeves has traveled across the United States to consult with schools and districts to help create a positive learning culture. Before he became a consultant he was a turnaround principal in Syracuse, N.Y. and he

was also a chief academic officer in Louisiana. As he has traveled to schools, a common phrase he would hear from educators is that they “don’t see race” (Ferlazzo, 2020). He goes on to say that when teachers do not see race they are leaving room for their personal biases. A common goal among educators is to create meaningful relationships with their students. Dr. Reeves suggests that it is not possible to create those relationships if teachers do not recognize a student's race, culture and the community they come from (Ferlazzo, 2020). Teachers can incorporate diversity and multiculturalism simply and authentically by using literature, games, technology, and community resources.

Being a part of the community and understanding students’ home environment may help create a safe space where students are able to express themselves and learn. By having multicultural material and resources available in the classroom, students who are Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC) will be able to see themselves in their own learning. A classroom that includes multicultural materials will represent all races, genders, social class, etc. Banks’ (1997) work states, “multicultural education seeks to create equal educational opportunities for all students, including those from different racial, ethnic, and social-class groups” (Banks, 1997). It is just as important for White students to be authentically learning about different cultures and how people are different from them. As teachers, it will be our job to create an environment that reflects the diverse cultures and groups in the classroom (Banks, 1997), so students feel important and seen.

In this chapter, I explain some context and background for how I picked my research question, and what my Capstone Project is. I also share my personal reasons about how I became interested and motivated to create a project around my topic.

### **My Journey**

I grew up in a suburb southwest of the Twin Cities that is predominantly White, 83%, in a predominantly White state, 80.3%, according to the United States Census Bureau (U.S. Census Bureau, 2018). Therefore, when I went to school I was surrounded by educators that looked like me, classmates that looked like me, and I could see myself in the material that I was learning. I attended Iowa State University for my undergraduate and that was also a predominantly White university with students, and faculty.

Throughout my educational experience I was not exposed to and did not learn about different cultures, people, beliefs, or races. It was not until I took my Education and Cultural Diversity class at Hamline University that for the first time I took the time to reflect on my past educational experiences, what exactly white privilege is, and what I can do as an aspiring educator. In this class we had open and tough conversations. It was important to my professor and classmates that we created a community where it was safe to have these discussions. I remember how in class we watched *13th* (2016) by Ava DuVernay and that documentary completely opened my eyes. I left class feeling mad, sad, and heart broken. It was at that point that I realized how I will always make sure to do my best to provide a safe, open, and representative classroom for all of my students.

The same feelings and emotions resurfaced again on May 25, 2020 when George Floyd died in police custody in Minneapolis, Minnesota. Following his death there have



been nationwide protests by Black Lives Matter and police brutality. George Floyd's death and the protest have generated a nationwide movement that is creating some change to the system. There have been police accountability bills introduced into Congress, corporations are recognizing Juneteenth, Mississippi is changing their flag, sports teams and companies are changing their names if they are offensive or promote stereotypes, and tributes and statues dedicated to Confederates are falling to the ground (McLaughlin, 2020). This movement is reminding me again of how important it is to continue to educate myself and listen, and to provide inclusive, and multicultural materials in my classroom. This has fueled my passion for researching, and talking about my topic because as an educator I can make a difference.

Hamline University gave me the opportunity to have multiple different teaching experiences at schools in and around St. Paul, Minnesota. My experiences at these schools allowed for me to teach within a diverse population of students. I had two different 40 hour clinicals, one that focused on teaching math, and the other that focused on teaching literacy. From these experiences I worked with Black, Hispanic, White and Asian students. This gave me my first opportunity to create the content and lessons for the day, but it was also one of the first times that I was consciously thinking about how and what materials I would use. For example, during my literacy clinical I had a group of three girls that were Black and they were all interested in science. One of the lessons I created was the story *Hidden Figures: The True Story of Four Black Women and the Space Race* (2016) by Margot Lee Shetterly. This story was about girls who loved math and science and they looked like my students. After we read through the story we talked

about each of the women more, and wrote down interesting facts about them. During this lesson my group was very engaged and excited to learn about these amazing women.

### **Student Teaching Experience**

I was a student teacher in Spring 2020, therefore COVID-19 interrupted my experience. I taught six weeks in person, and the second six weeks online. My cooperating teacher, and the whole first grade team, allowed me to be extremely engaged with distance learning. I was at a school where students had 1:1 iPad's, and students who did not have Internet access were provided a hot spot in order to continue learning.

The classroom I was in had students that were Black, Hispanic, Native American, White and Asian and it gave me the wonderful opportunity of working in a diverse classroom. While I was there we had a new student join our classroom from Honduras. My cooperating teacher was fluent in Spanish, and she also had another newcomer from Honduras at the beginning of the year. This allowed for the student to immediately have a connection with someone she could speak with in her native tongue, while also having a teacher to be able to communicate with. This was a really great experience for me because I still taught her in small and whole groups, but I had to find another way to communicate with her, however, it was also nice to know that if I needed help I could rely on my cooperating teacher to effectively communicate with her.

During the first six weeks of my student teaching, I was able to create relationships with the students. As I got to know them better, and was able to ask them questions about their interests and life I was able to create lessons that were more engaging to them. There was one particular student that comes to mind that shows how

important it is to establish trust and create relationships with students. I worked hard to get him to open up, and to trust me. He comes from a big family of six other siblings and he is one of the middle children. He struggled with school because it was hard, and was an English language learner (ELL) who only had English support from his older siblings at home. As I learned more about him, I was able to help motivate and give him positive reinforcement at school. He was a student that responded to praise because the attention and support gets divided among his siblings at home.

I am very thankful that I was able to have at least six weeks in the classroom with the students where I was able to create a relationship with them before Distance Learning. It made it a lot easier for me to provide feedback and instruction to the students because I spent the first six weeks in the classroom with them. After my student teaching experience, I realized that I wanted to address the need for representation in the classroom. I wanted to create a project that could be used by not only myself, but all educators in order to create a classroom community where every student feels seen and heard.

### **Research Question**

This project seeks to act as a guide, or a tool, for teachers to create a classroom that has multicultural materials. This will be something that teachers reference to gain ideas of materials to add, or how they can incorporate multicultural materials into lessons in order to represent all of their students. The resource guide was composed of four different categories that provided resources for creating a multicultural classroom. The first category talks about different multicultural books that are authentic, and provides an

accurate representation of different people and cultures. The second category describes how teachers can use technology to help students feel represented in the classroom. The third category is about different types of games that educators can use to play with the students inside and outside of the classroom. The fourth category is how teachers can use the community to create a strong relationship, and make the students' own community feel like a part of the classroom.

### **Summary**

In this chapter I have stated my personal and professional reasons and experience that brought me to my Capstone Research question: *How can educators use multicultural materials to create a more inclusive classroom community?* My Capstone Project focuses on providing teachers with a guide of multicultural materials that can be added to their own classrooms to make all of their students feel safe, represented, and seen. It also provides an opportunity for the students to learn from each other. The purpose of multicultural education is to “improve the learning and success of all students, particularly students from cultural groups that have been historically underrepresented or that suffer from lower educational achievement and attainment” (Partnership, 2013, n.p.). In Chapter 2, I review the literature and research that has provided information and the voice of experts to support this Capstone Project. The research is related to issues that the education system faces and that shed light on the importance of having multicultural materials in classrooms.

## CHAPTER TWO

### Literature Review

#### Overview

Chapter Two is a review of the research surrounding current issues in education from the research question: *How can educators use multicultural materials to create a more inclusive classroom community?* This chapter includes three different topics that will all have research to explain, and provide expert knowledge to the issues. The three topics are *the underrepresentation of educators, lack of representation in materials, and implicit bias in education*. Through the experience and education these are topics that were repeatedly shown when speaking about the funding, textbooks, standardized testing, representation, and equity in the classroom. The topics are directly related to this Capstone Project because a resource guide was provided for teachers that included ideas on how they can create an *inclusive* learning environment.

In this chapter, research is provided explaining the underrepresentation of educators and staff throughout school buildings. This section provides information about the value of having diverse faculty in education. It is expected that within the next five years students of color will make up more than 50% of the student population (King, 2016). It is more important now than ever that the representation of teachers and educators of color are being represented for students to see themselves in. By having more teachers of color and a more diverse staff in the school there will be more teachers to advocate for proper and authentic materials in order to meet the needs of all students.

The next section will discuss the lack of representation in materials of Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC) in literature, board games, and other materials in the classroom. It will explain how damaging underrepresentation can be for students who *only* hear and see white students in their education. When a teacher or school is adding multicultural materials and resources to a classroom they need to be authentic and steer away from misconceptions and stereotypes of BIPOC. The research will also talk about how important it is for white students to also be exposed to multicultural materials, and educators so that they can learn about cultures that are different from their own.

The third section of this chapter will discuss implicit bias in education. Implicit bias is the unconscious reaction, attitude, stereotype, and assumptions that affect behavior, and understanding. These unconscious reactions can lead teachers and other educators to make assumptions about students behavior and academic success relating to their race, identity, socio economic status or gender (Poorvu Center for Teaching and Learning, 2020). Making sure that educators understand implicit biases, and reflect upon their own practice and responses is essential for creating an equitable learning environment.

### **Underrepresentation of Educators**

There is an underrepresentation of educators of color in schools across the United States of America. It is expected that students of color will make up more than 50% of the student population by 2024, however a majority of the educator workforce is white (King, 2016). The U.S. The Department of Education Schools and Staffing Survey has shown there has been little change in making the workplace more diverse. In 2000, it was

found that 84% of the teachers identified as White, and in the most recent survey it showed that 82% of public school teachers identified as White (King, 2016). Can education in the United States recognize the value of having a diverse teacher workforce for all children? There has been an increase in hiring educators of color across the nation at the state and district level. The schoolwide culture, environment, community, and priorities that are created by the school administration play a significant role in helping to retain teachers of color at schools (Carver-Thomas & Saunders, 2019). Even though there has been an increase of teachers of color in schools, it is being overshadowed by the alarming rates of turnover that continue to undermine the efforts of diversifying the educational workforce. Carver-Thomas and Saunders (2019) say that the high turnover rate for teachers of color comes from insufficient preparation and mentoring, poor teaching conditions, and displacement from high-need schools. Professional Development (PD) is another area that is lacking in engaging and addressing the issues that teachers of color feel (Kay, 2019). Kay also said that there are few PD facilitators that look, or understand the emotional, psychological, and spiritual background for a teacher of color. Therefore, if a school wants more Black and Brown teachers, a way to start would be having more culturally responsive professional development days (Kay, 2019).

There are benefits to pairing students with teachers of the same race and it has positive impacts that can last years. In a study done by Johns Hopkins University (2017), it says that if a Black student has at least one Black teacher in grades third through fifth their probability of dropping out of school decreases by 29%. That probability of

dropping out increased to 39% for very low income Black students as well (Gershenson, et al., 2017). This study also showed that the students who had a Black teacher in their early education experience were 18% more likely to consider going to college (Gershenson, et al., 2017). The findings of this study replicated findings of a study done in Tennessee with students who entered kindergarten in the 1980's. The study in Tennessee showed that students who had a Black teacher in kindergarten through third grade were 15% less likely to drop out (Gershenson, et al., 2017). Teachers of color serve as role models for all students and have the potential to improve the academic outcome and school experience for students of color (Smith Kondo, 2019). Kay (2019) also found that allowing students to see themselves in their educators will help reduce the feeling that school is something that one needs to escape because they feel over tested, over disciplined, and not supported in their creativity.

Across the United States, in both general and special education positions, the teachers are mostly White even though nearly half of all students in the U.S. with disabilities are students of color (Fish, 2019). There is an overplacement of students of color in special education programs, however an underrepresentation of students of color in gifted and talented programs in schools throughout the U.S. (Michael-Chadwell, 2010). Teachers are some of the first to identify, support, and refer placements in special education and gifted and talented programs (COOC, 2017). Research shows that students of all races benefit from having teachers of color. The research has also shown that students tend to have positive relationships with teachers of color which results in fewer behavioral problems and higher levels of thinking (Fish, 2019). Teachers of color have



shown that they may have different approaches, and teaching styles to teaching than White teachers because of their own negative educational experiences. This could reduce the special education rates because teachers use their perceptions of academic performance and behavior to refer to children for special education (Fish, 2019). The overrepresentation of White students in gifted and talented programs in schools exists because of the traditional characteristics, high performance in the classroom, and high scores on standardized tests, associated with being gifted (Michael-Chadwell, 2010). Neena Banerjee (2017), an Associate Professor at Valdosta State University, found that a teacher's underestimation of a students' potential can have long- and short- term effects for students ability group placement. Students who have a teacher of the same race are more likely to score higher in math and reading (Banerjee, 2017), and have fewer behavior problems (Wright, et al., 2017), which can result in less special education referrals and more gifted and talented recommendations.

Schools that have a diverse staff and educators can help students of color be more successful in the classroom. Not only do teachers of color help students of color be more successful, they also benefit White students (Fish, 2019) and can introduce them to something that is different from their own experiences, beliefs, and culture. By having Black and Brown teachers students are able to see themselves, create relationships, and make connections with their teachers. When a school has more teachers that come from different cultures and backgrounds, they are able to connect with more students and authentically incorporate appropriate materials and experience into their classroom learning environment. Almost every teacher will bring their past experiences, negative

and positive, into their teaching style and the way lessons are taught. Therefore, when a school and classroom have diversity they are able to build more trust and have a better understanding of the different cultures and people that make up a classroom.

When educators incorporate multicultural education into their daily teaching practice it improves the academic success for students of color (Flinders & Thornton, 2004). All students need to understand the importance of how multicultural issues shape the social, political, economic, and cultural way of life in the United States (Flinders & Thornton, 2004). Teachers can authentically educate students with multicultural education by having diverse materials, and resources that represent all different types of students. They should be weaving multicultural materials, resources, content, perspectives, and experiences into the central core of the curriculum, instruction, classroom environment, counseling, leadership, policymaking, and performance assessment (Flinders & Thornton, 2004). There will be more research talking about multicultural materials and resources in the following section and how important it is for students to be represented in their space of learning.

### **Lack of Representation in Materials**

**Literature.** Literature and storybooks are a great way to promote multicultural awareness among elementary school students. Children are sensitive to cultural differences of individuals from different backgrounds; because they are in their formative stages of life it is a great time to begin teaching students about diversity (Kim, et al., 2006). By having a wide variety of diverse books it helps eliminate students from having a ‘single story’ mindset. Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie (2009) talks about “The danger of a

single story” in her Ted Talk. She grew up in eastern Nigeria and was exposed to primarily American and British books, so all of the characters she would read about were White, and blue eyed. It was not until later in her life where she was exposed to African books that had characters that looked like her, settings that resembled where she lived, and food and extracurriculars that were similar to what she knew. By using a diverse library in the classroom and using diverse books within lessons the teacher is rejecting the single story narrative and allowing students to feel seen (Adichie, 2009). Important things to remember when a teacher is choosing multicultural literature for their classroom is that the content ensures an accurate representation (Giordano, et al., 2020). It must also show understanding of the world of ethnic characters, it must see the world through the characters’ perspectives, and it should show how to relate self to the text and critique the portrayal of characters in the text and in popular media (Louie, 2006).

**Games.** There are more ways beyond just literature where teachers and educators can incorporate multicultural education into their classrooms. Teachers can use board games, playground games, and other types of multicultural games to increase representation in the classroom. Studies have shown that Black boys and girls and White girls tend to feel worse about themselves and can develop a lower self-esteem from the under representation of themselves in games, shows, and kids activities (Marques, 2012). The original *Guess Who?* game is an example that shows a drastic under representation of people of color, and females in the game. The characters included no people of color, only five girls, and 19 males (Beck, 2012). In 2012, a six year old wrote to Hasbro talking about how the game was not fair, and told the company how girls are just as

important as boys (Beck, 2012). Hasbro has since created a more diverse version of the game.

Hasbro corrected their game to include more diverse people after being confronted, but there has been research that has shown that diversity is still a problem within the children's games industry. A study by Pobuda in 2019 looked at the Top 200 board games, as ranked by BoardGameGeek, that showed the representation of designers by gender and race. The findings showed that 93.5% of the designers in the Top 200 board games were White Males, 4.1% were Non-White Males, and 2.4% were White Females. The artists behind the board games are slightly more diverse than the designers, here 81.2% of the artists are White Males, 8.2% are Non-White Males, 8.0% are White Females, and 2.6% are Non-White females (Pobuda, 2019). Children learn through playing and board games are a great tool to introduce children to a variety of different topics. By having more diverse board games in the classroom students are being exposed to different types of cultures and traditions (Tyler, 2019). "Passport to Culture" is a great example of where students can learn about different parts of the world. As students play board games they question and absorb everything that they are doing. This allows students a chance to learn something new and gain a better understanding of the different cultures around the world (Tyler, 2019).

Educators can bring playground games, morning meeting games, and other types of games (that go beyond board games) into the classroom from around the world as well. By teaching students sensitivity and respect for other cultures through games from the diverse cultures that represent a school and the world might be a way to minimize some

of the disparities that are embedded into the education system (Murphy & Maeda, 2012). Using only traditional American sports and games examples in the classroom can often widen the gap between students. A way to narrow that gap would be to introduce novel, innovative, and multicultural activities to the students by embedding the activities into daily classroom lessons. (Murphy & Maeda, 2012). As a teacher introduces multicultural games to students it will be important to talk about the history, and origin of the game to further expose students to different cultures from around the world (Murphy & Maeda, 2012).

**Technology.** Providing equitable access to technology allows for the infusion of effective multicultural teaching strategies and technology use in the classroom. These strategies need to be specific and valuable in order to guide multicultural teaching, technology should also allow for individual creativity and differentiation in teaching practices (Chisholm, 1998). One study focused on the potential benefits of reflection with cross-cultural exchange and how technology can bring those benefits into the classroom (Schwartz et al., 2003). By using technology to introduce cross-cultural contact it is a way to expose students and teachers to different cultures, educational values, and practices from around the world (Schwartz et al., 2003). When people experience a new culture, community, or even a new classroom it causes an increase in reflection. Their reported increase in reflection is about their identities as a new member, and about their personal goals and responsibilities related to the new community (Schwartz et al., 2003). Technology allows for students to interact with different cultures while staying and learning in their own school environment (Schwartz et al., 2003). Another way to use

technology in the classroom is with virtual field trips. Virtual field trips are a way that students can deepen their content knowledge, collaborative skills (Delacruz, 2019), and have an immersive experience when an in person field trip is not always possible (Han, 2020). Virtual field trips are also a great way to showcase the different cultures in the classroom where the classroom can explore the different origins, on days that are important to that country and culture (Bhouraskar, 2019). Technology in the classroom can help promote questioning, process thinking, strengthens self-esteem, and promotes equity. It also can help support differences in language, culture, ability, and learning styles when it is used effectively (Chisholm, 1998).

**Community.** A great resource for schools and educators to use when incorporating multicultural learning into their practice is families and the community. If educators are able to see and view students as children they become more likely to see that parents and the communities are partners. If educators have a partnership with families they are more likely to recognize the shared interest in supporting the child's learning, and work together to create opportunities for students (Epstein, 1995). One way for students to get involved with the community is by social or service learning projects. Not only does this help students learn the skills to become a positive community member (Maple, 2005), it also gives them the chance to meet and talk with real community members and the jobs they do for the community. One teacher created a nine week project around the mail system with her multi age kindergarten/first grade classroom. The purpose of this project was teaching the students how to work together, communicate, strive for accuracy and observe the world around them (Maple, 2005). During this project

the students were able to go to their local post office for a field trip and speak with the school's post office personnel (Maple, 2005). By creating a relationship with the community and inviting different members of the community into the classroom to speak and help with lessons students are able to see examples of people from different backgrounds succeeding in their professional field (Kampen, 2019). This might be a way to inspire students to think about what they can be in the future if they are able to make connections and see themselves in these community members (Kampen, 2019). Reaching out to parents, families, and members of the community to see what they can offer in different perspectives, or activities that an educator can incorporate into their classroom (Kampen, 2019). When a student is supported by school, family, and the community they feel significantly more secure and cared for. They have a better understanding of the goals of education, work harder to achieve those goals and reach their full potential, as well as build positive attitudes and behaviors which make them more likely to stay in school (Epstein, 1995).

In summary, this section spoke about how when students only see themselves through the lens of a single story they may begin to feel like they can not achieve or see themselves doing certain things in life (Adichie, 2009). When educators are choosing multicultural literature for their classrooms it is vital that they are choosing books that accurately represent the people and cultures it is written about. Literature is a great way to give a voice to people from different cultures and learn from new perspectives that are different from one's own (Louie, 2006). Teachers can also use board games, playground games, technology, and families and communities to incorporate more multicultural

materials into the classroom. Teachers can also find and introduce other games to the class from different parts of the world and start by explaining the background of the game to expose students to new cultures. Technology can be used to give students the opportunity to go on a virtual field trip and experience something new that they might not ever get the chance to do in person (Han, 2020). Inviting the community and families into the classroom to show real life experiences of different people, occupations, and experiences opens the world of possibilities to all students and creates a more inclusive and secure classroom environment (Epstein, 1995). The next section provides further research and information about implicit biases and how that can contribute to having negative consciousness for students of color and creating a poor relationship with them. It will also talk about how implicit biases can blind teachers and educators to having materials in their classroom that do not accurately represent a culture or minority group, but instead reinforces stereotypes and misconceptions.

### **Implicit Bias**

Being aware of implicit biases and stereotypes in the classroom. “Implicit bias (also called unconscious bias) refers to attitudes and beliefs that occur outside of our conscious awareness and control” (Ruhl, 2020). There are different examples of implicit biases with race, gender, sexuality, religion, socio economic status, and lifestyle. Implicit biases and stereotypes are commonly found within the criminal justice system, workplace, school setting, and in the healthcare system (Ruhl, 2020). Negative and positive thoughts, associations, and assumptions regarding different types of people than oneself are formed and can be related or impact conscious interactions (Kempf, 2020).



Teaching is the type of profession that is full of individuals who are well intentioned and want to see each child succeed (Staats, 2017). A way for teachers to help each child succeed is by being aware of the unconscious attitudes or stereotypes that can affect understanding, decisions, and actions that may not align with an educator's conscious beliefs and intentions (Staats, 2017). In the book *Thinking, Fast and Slow (2011)* by Daniel Kahneman talks about two different systems of thinking in the mind. System 1 is when one's thoughts are automatic and quick, with not a lot of effort and no sense of voluntary control. In contrast, System 2 is the conscious processing that is used with mental activities, and requires concentration to perform the task (Kahneman, 2011). These two systems are what help people make sense of what is happening around them everyday. Neuroscientists have said that a majority of people's cognitive processing occurs unconsciously, System 1, which can make someone's actions go against their stated intentions (Staats, 2017).

Research has been able to identify conditions in which individuals are more likely to rely on unconscious associations. These involve situations where there is incomplete information, pressure of time constraints, and when the cognitive control may be compromised like fatigue or having a lot on the mind (Staats, 2017). These are situations that teachers experience everyday in the classroom, so it is not surprising that teachers will act on implicit biases when making decisions (Staats, 2017). These implicit decisions can affect the way an educator disciplines students, teaches the curriculum, and chooses materials in the classroom for students.

Two types of disciplinary actions that are seen in schools are subjective behaviors and objective behaviors. Subjective behaviors are based more on an educator's personal opinion, feelings, or point of view. An example of subjective behavior could be different levels of noise in the classroom or different types of behavior that a teacher finds distracting. When disciplining a subjective behavior, it is seen from the teachers perspective and based on their personal preference regarding the behavior. Objective behavior is more factual and is based on measurements and school community standards or expectations. An example of objective behaviors would be bullying, using offensive or derogatory language and fighting. A teacher's experience and unconscious associations can interpret situations that contribute to discipline based on a student's race. Research has found that students of color were more likely to be sent to the office and face disciplinary actions for subjective behavior problems, while White students were more likely to be sent to the office for objective behaviors (Staats, 2017). Across the United States it is proven that students of color, specifically African American, are expelled from their schools at a higher rate than students who are White (Smolkowski et al., 2016). In the 2011-2012 school year, administrators used an out of school suspension to discipline 8% of African American students in elementary school compared to only 2% of White elementary school students. The number of out of school suspensions for African American students jumped to 23% for secondary students, compared to 7% for White secondary students (Smolkowski et al., 2016). These unconscious associations are the reason that one student might receive a warning for an unwanted behavior while another student is being suspended or expelled for the same reason (Staats, 2017).

In 2010 through 2014 there was a study completed by Michelle van Ryn et al., to examine a change in students' implicit bias towards African Americans. Students reported on their experiences with different curriculums that taught about disparities, racial climates, and role model behavior. Students also reported on the amount and favorability of having educators of color during school (Ryn et al., 2015). The study found that informal curriculum and interactions can impact a student's implicit bias negatively or positively. If a student has favorable interactions with African American educators it can help decrease implicit bias, whereas an unfavorable interaction can lead to an increase in implicit bias (Ryn et al., 2015). It is an educator's job to make sure that the materials and curriculum that are being taught have an authentic truth to it, and do not have harmful, hateful, or stereotypical ideals in it. This is found more so when teaching history, reading literature, or story problems. In mathematics, story problems are what humanize mathematics and allow students to create connections to what they are learning. However, from elementary to high school educators will find story problems that talk about consumerism, reinforce racist and sexist stereotypes, and reflect middle-upper class experiences (Bright, 2016). By knowing their students, educators are able to create a classroom environment that challenges biases thus allowing them the opportunity to learn and deflate the stereotypes they come across in problems. Educators can also change the problems to fit their student's more, so they are able to have that human connection with what they are learning in math (Bright, 2016).

The Minneapolis Public School district was scrutinized for spending 1.2 million dollars (Hawkins, 2015) on an early literacy program called *Little Books by Reading*

Horizons that included racist, and demeaning stereotypes against people of color and minority groups. This is an example of where implicit bias, explicit bias, and the lack of awareness comes in for wanting to include diversity into the curriculum without making sure that it does not reinforce negative stereotypes about people of color. One of the books that was in this literacy curriculum was called *Lazy Lucy* and was about an African-American girl who struggled to keep her hut clean. There was another book about people from Kenya and it talked about how people can run really fast there (Hawkins, 2015). *Nieko the Hunting Girl* was another story that focused on a Native American family hunting a woolly mammoth (a long extinct animal). The family lived in a cave where the mother would make mammoth bacon and friend dodo eggs. The illustrations have her in a headband and arrows in a quiver (Shiffer, 2015). The Minneapolis School District quickly removed the books from the curriculum, and the company Reading Horizon invited a diverse group to advise and help the company with books produced in the future (Shiffer, 2015). If educators are aware of the biases and inauthenticity of literature they can choose to not have that be represented in their classrooms so it does not harm or have negative effects on the students.

### **What Can Be Done?**

Removing or changing implicit biases can be difficult because someone often does not know that they even exist. However, there has been research that reveals there are some potential interventions, strategies, and suggestions in order to help these biases decrease (Ruhl, 2020).

Christy Boscardin, an associate professor at University of California San Francisco, completed research on ways to reduce implicit bias through curricular interventions in 2015. Educators can work to decrease their implicit bias by increasing their self awareness of it and by changing the cultural environment. Through her study she has shown that by being aware and having a conscious acknowledgement of one's own biases and seeking out active ways to dismantle those have a positive impact. Boscardin found that teachers and faculty can also participate in practicing reflective strategies, role modelings, and being aware of negative emotions that can trigger implicit bias in a stressful environment which has the potential to reduce unconscious biases. She suggests an increase in positive interactions with minority groups, and empathy skill development in order to decrease implicit biases in educators. Boscardin notes that having more positive interactions with minority groups and their community will replace automatic negative stereotypes with positive associations. Research has found that empathy towards different racial groups can be modified when changing the mindset of empathy from a fixed trait to a skill set improved with effort. By changing the mindset and providing opportunities for students and educators to further develop their skills through experiences that will help with decreasing the chances of implicit biases (Boscardin, 2015).

The Implicit Association Test (IAT) is a tool that measures the implicit attitudes and responses by looking at the automatic reaction time to stimulus associations (Whitford & Emerson, 2019). There are two different types of biases: implicit bias and explicit bias. Georgetown University defines implicit bias as operating outside of the

person's thoughts and beliefs unconsciously. It can be a direct contradiction to a person's vocalized values. Explicit bias is when a person is very clear about their feelings and beliefs. The related behaviors and reactions are delivered with intent and the person is consciously making the decisions (Papillon, n.d.). There are some controversies related to the Implicit Association Test because it is not always easy to accurately measure unconscious thoughts that make up implicit biases (Starck et al., 2020). According to Starck et al., another criticism of the IAT is that implicit bias associations come from one's social environment rather than the individuals themselves. However, implicit and explicit biases are still important because explicit biases have dropped overtime, but there's still a great majority of people who show racial biases when they are measured implicitly (Starck et al., 2020).

The IAT is available on the internet and has a purpose of allowing more people to gain the experience of checking one's own bias with convenience rather than having to go to a laboratory. By having the test available for people on the internet it acts as the equivalent of checking out an interactive exhibit from a museum (Greenwald et al., 2003). Once the test is completed a summary is given explaining how the person performed on the IAT with characterizations of showing "strong", "medium", "slight" or "little to no" associations measured by each test (Greenwald et al., 2003). It also provides additional information about implicit bias along with a list of frequently asked questions (Nosek et al., 2005).

A recent research study completed by Lueke and Gibson (2016) found that practicing mindfulness or brief meditation can help to decrease unconscious bias against

the target group with negative constructs. The study provided a 10 minute mindfulness audio before playing a game where the players had to partner with people of different races and ages to see how much of their money they would trust them with. The results indicated that the group who listened to the mindfulness audio first exhibited significantly less discrimination in the Trust Game (Lueke & Gibson, 2016).

Research by Belinda Gutierrez (2014) also found that adjusting one's perspective can reduce implicit bias and create more empathy for others. The study was completed at the University of Wisconsin-Madison with graduate students who were randomly assigned to play a video game or read a text online. The video game was called "Fair Play" and players assume the role of a Black graduate student named Jamal Davis. Throughout the game Jamal experienced subtle race bias while he completed the tasks and quests in order to obtain a science degree. Once finished participants took an IAT and answered questions about empathy towards Jamal (Gutierrez, 2014). The results showed that participants who played the video game showed the least implicit bias over the text readers.

This section was about how implicit biases negatively affect students of color and how they can unknowingly create a hostile learning environment for those students. There are two types of systems when it comes to how the brain processes and makes decisions. System One is having a quick and automatic reaction, and thought to something that is happening around them, also known as our implicit biases. System Two, explicit bias, requires mental thinking and concentration when making a decision or reacting to something (Kahneman, 2011). This section also provided research on how

implicit biases have an impact on the difference in how students of color and White students are disciplined in schools. It has been shown that across the United States students of color, specifically African Americans are suspended and expelled at a much higher rate than White students (Smolkowski et al., 2016). Research has also shown that students of color are more likely to receive an out of school punishment for subjective behaviors while White students would only receive that type of punishment for objective behaviors (Staats, 2017). This section also provided information and research on how the implicit and explicit biases lead to negative associations with people of color and inaccurate representations of people of color. This can also lead educators and schools to provide materials and curriculums that are not accurate and portray groups of people and cultures unauthentically. This section also mentions different ways that teachers and faculty can improve their implicit biases like being aware, reflecting on one's own teaching practice and reactions, or taking the Implicit Association Test.

### **Summary**

This chapter provided research and gave a voice to experts in the field surrounding issues in education related to the research question: *How can educators use multicultural materials to create a more inclusive classroom community?* It reviewed the three topics on how there is an underrepresentation of educators, lack of representation in materials, and implicit bias in education. From the research we found the importance of what it means to have students see themselves in the classroom, and in their educators. Research told us how when students of color have at least one teacher of color it gives them a higher chance of having a positive school relationship, and graduating high school



(Gershenson, et al., 2017). This chapter reflected on the importance of having authentic, and appropriate multicultural materials that go against what the stereotypes are to represent students, cultures, and people in an appropriate manner (Adichie, 2009). This chapter also talked about how reflecting and becoming aware of one's own implicit bias can increase the chances of rejecting stereotypes and having less negative unconscious associations with people of color, and different cultures (Staats, 2017).

The next chapter, Chapter 3, provides a detailed explanation about the resource guide research project that was investigated. It will provide a description of the different methods that were used in order to complete the project. These methods include the different research, observations, and surveys that were used to give an expert voice throughout the creation process. Chapter 3 also provides the rationale for why this resource guide was created, who it was made for, and how it can be implemented into the classroom in order to create an inclusive learning environment.

## CHAPTER THREE

### Project Description

#### Overview

The purpose of this Capstone Project is to answer the research question: *How can educators use multicultural materials to create a more inclusive classroom community?* Chapter Two's literature review provided a deeper understanding for the necessity of multicultural materials in the classroom. It investigated the problem of an underrepresentation of educators and materials in schools across the United States. It also researched how implicit bias contributes to the way that curriculum is taught, the type of materials used, and the way that students are disciplined in the education system. By having a deeper understanding of these topics teachers and educators will be more aware of the different materials that they are using to provide an education to students.

In Chapter Three I wrote about the description of the Capstone Project and the process of how I created a resource guide to help educators create a more inclusive learning environment by adding more multicultural materials into their classroom. The resource guide included different types of literature that authentically represent Black, White, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC) for read alouds and for books to be added to the classroom library. Another section included in the resource guide was different types of multicultural games that educators could have and play in the classroom. There were also resources on different ways that technology could be used to bring in multicultural education. The last section of the resource guide included

information on how the school community and local community can be used to create a more inclusive learning environment.

In Chapter 3 a rationale for the project is provided along with the research to support the methods behind it. A more detailed description of the project, setting, and the participants who the project was intended for is provided as well. A timeline was also provided that described the different steps that were taken in order to develop the project.

### **Rationale**

This project is an educator friendly resource guide that is accessible for educators. A resource guide is a list of solutions or items that are recommended to a specific audience with a description on what the item is and how it applies to one's profession (McQuaid, 2018). The resource guide that was created for the project is for educators to use so that they can create a more inclusive learning environment. The resource guide included different resources and active links to help make it the most user friendly, so educators can get the most information out of it. The resource guide included 62 different resources that educators can choose from in order to find multicultural material that fit best with their teaching style and classroom environment. The materials were selected based on six criterias researched by Gregory Hamot (1996). Each resource had at least two of the six criteria requirements in order to be a part of the resource guide. The project allowed teachers to use the materials in order to create a safe place where every student feels represented.

The research that was conducted in order to provide the most authentic multicultural materials was done through articles and books written about multicultural

materials and the necessity of being represented in a classroom. The resources then were checked with the six criteria created by Hamot (Hamot, 1996). The reason this project relied on research based was to make sure that the resources and materials being shared accurately represent different people and cultures. It was essential to make sure that these materials were straying away from any stereotypes that surround a community. For example, when choosing the different types of literature to include I wanted to make sure that the authors were a part of the community that they were writing about. This is another way to ensure authenticity when choosing materials to represent students in the classroom. Throughout my list I made sure to include the places and the cultures that make up the students in my third grade class. I have a student from France, a student with family in Sweden, a student with family in Singapore, and students with family all around the United States of America. I chose different types of virtual field trips between architecture, museums, art galleries, and castles. These virtual field trips can be an extension of lessons and are a great way to introduce students to cultures from around the world. The purpose behind the project was to make sure that the materials in the resource guide were authentic and represented each culture in a respectful, real and honest way.

### **Project Description**

Schools across the United States are becoming more diverse each year with the rising numbers of students of color. There have been some changes to meet the needs of creating a more diverse learning environment, but there is still room for improvement. Children start to have an understanding and gain knowledge of race and prejudice at an early age due to their associations with others and who they are surrounded by (D'Angelo

& Dixey, 2001). The Capstone Project helped educators that teach primary level students, kindergarten through third grade, find different types of materials such as books and games to add to their classroom that are inclusive and represent all types of children. The resource guide provided a list of different types of books that represent people of different color, backgrounds, gender, sexual orientation, and cultures in an authentic way. The list of books included an annotated bibliography that provided information at a quick glance for educators. It also provided an active link that brought educators to an online version of the literature. This allowed teachers to use the stories in the classroom even if they did not have a physical copy. The annotated bibliography also provided enough information for educators if they were interested in purchasing the book for their classroom. This guide also provided information about having multicultural games in the classroom. There was a list of games that are inclusive and have multicultural representation of different types of people. This included diverse covers, characters and different cultures being represented throughout the game. There was also a list of different playground games and morning meeting activities that come from different cultures. This allowed educators to introduce students to play new games while also learning about different types of people and cultures from around the world. Teachers were also provided with resources in technology that can be used in the classroom and schools to bring more multicultural learning to their students. These websites allowed educators to find virtual field trips, videos, stories, and music to give students the opportunity to hear the voices of a variety of different types of cultures and people. Finally, the resource guide provided information about communicating and working

together with parents and guardians and other community members to bring more representation into the classroom. The resource guide was sent out to educators in a Google document format. Educators were able to view the document and had access to the links. Educators were able to give their feedback and suggestions about the multicultural materials. The goal of the project was to bring awareness to the lack of multicultural materials in the classroom and how educators can change that. By moving forward using multicultural education that represents each and every student who walks in the door.

### **Setting and Participants**

The school where this Capstone Project was implemented was at a public school. The school was located in the western suburbs of Minneapolis, Minnesota. The district had all of the schools on one campus. The Primary school was K-2, the intermediate school was connected to the primary school serving grades 3-5. The middle school and the high school were parallel to each other. The opportunity to have K-12 students in close proximity allowed students to learn and mentor each other that created a unique learning environment that strengthened the community within the district. The school district had been committed to developing character education for the students for the past 20 years. Teachers and students were trained by national leaders in character education. The school was predominantly white with both students and teachers.

This year was affected by the Coronavirus and looked different from any other year before. The school started off as a hybrid plan where students had the option to choose distance learning or in person learning. This hybrid plan had students who choose

in person learning coming to school every day. The school hired additional teachers on a one year contract so that classroom sizes would be 17 students or less. This allowed teachers to create a space where desks were six feet apart and made the most for a social distancing classroom layout. Students and teachers stayed in their classroom all day except for going outside for recess with their cohort. Specials and lunch were held in the classroom in order to help not spread the virus through different cohorts.

The Capstone Project was intended for primary elementary teachers in grades kindergarten through third grade at the school. The resource guide provided multiple resources and materials that could be embedded into daily lessons. The elementary schools that this project focused on were the third through fifth grade intermediate level school and the elementary school connected to it that caters to kindergarten through second grade. The resource guide was distributed via a Google document. It was sent to each teacher's email address and placed in the shared folder as well, this way teachers had access to the document in different ways. The teachers were not able to edit the original document but they did have access to all of the links and information that was included.

### **Timeline**

This Capstone Project was completed in the fall of 2020 within the 2020-2021 school year. The resource guide was sent out to teachers in December of 2020. Teachers were able to access and look at the recommended materials and were able to start adding different items to their classroom on their own time. The resource guide was a great tool for teachers and educators to use for distance learning because it provided links to the stories that will take them to a direct read aloud online. It was also a great place for

teachers to look and add to their classroom library, games, and the other materials that students will be using throughout the day. This was a document that was intended to be updated with new information and materials as they are created and published. This way items on the resource guide can stay current and updated as the years go on.

### **Summary**

In this chapter an overview of the Capstone Project was given. There was a rationale behind the project idea and the methods on how the project was research-based. A description of the project was provided about the resource guide and how it helped educators create a more inclusive learning environment. The settings and the participants that this project was intended for was written about along with a timeline detailing the process of the project. Chapter Four will provide a critical reflection on the whole Capstone Project. It will focus on what I learned personally and academically from this process while creating the Capstone Project.



## CHAPTER FOUR

### Conclusion

#### Introduction

As I reflected back on the research project question, *How can educators use multicultural materials to create a more inclusive classroom community?* I recall wanting to create something that educators could actually use. I believe that creating an inclusive learning environment is something that every educator should strive for in order to have a space where every child feels seen and heard. One way to create an inclusive classroom is by having and implementing multicultural materials into lessons each day. With this in mind I believed that creating a resource guide with a diverse set of tools and materials was a way to accomplish this goal. The resource guide included different types of multicultural materials and resources in four different categories: literature, games, technology, and the community.

This project was created with a focus on primary school educators and students. The reason I wanted to focus on this grade level was because it is the grades that I am most interested in teaching. I am currently a third grade teacher and wanted to make sure that I could use the resources and materials that I found while I created the resource guide. One of my biggest goals while I was working on this project was to make sure that it was user friendly. I understand how busy educators are, especially during COVID-19 where everything is different, so it was really important to me that I created a resource guide that was easy to read and access the suggested materials. That is why I decided to create this resource guide using Google Documents that included descriptions and active

links on where to purchase or use the online resources. This way educators had all the information they needed to know about the material in one place.

### **Chapter Overview**

This chapter provides a personal and academic reflection on what I have learned while the capstone research project that was completed based on the research question *How can educators use multicultural materials to create a more inclusive classroom community?* Throughout this chapter the research question and the Capstone Project that was created is reflected upon. Chapter Four, also includes a review of the research and an analysis of the literature that was reviewed in order to add expert voices to the project. This is where I reflect upon the importance of the question and the research behind it as well. Next, the implications and limitations that occurred during the project are provided along with success and setbacks that took place for this project were reviewed.

### **Literature Review**

Chapter Two provided a review of research where experts in the field voices were shared about the underrepresentation of educators, lack of representation in materials, and implicit bias in education. Diving deeper into these issues painted a clearer picture of why it is so important to have multicultural materials in the classroom.

As it was stated in Chapter Two, it is expected that students of color will make up more than 50% of the student population by 2024 even when a majority of educators in schools are white (King, 2016). When a school has a diverse staff those teachers help students of color become more successful but they also benefit White students as well (Fish, 2019) by introducing them to materials and perspectives that are different from

their own experiences, beliefs, and culture. It is important that schools are creating an environment with a diverse staff that represents the community, along with providing multicultural materials throughout the school. When students feel like they are not represented, seen, or heard in their learning environment this can cause them to see themselves through the lens of a single story (Adichie, 2009). I believe, as educators, it is our job to make sure that we are creating a classroom environment where students feel like they belong. By having multicultural materials and inviting the community into the classroom it opens up the possibilities and gives students real life experiences to see themselves (Epstein, 1995). Taking the time to read, reflect, and learn how an educator can grow to create a more inclusive learning environment is essential to making each student feel welcomed.

Writing about implicit bias is important because I believe that it is strongly related to creating an inclusive learning environment full of diverse materials for students. Implicit biases and the unconscious associations it creates about people and the actions one takes is something that every person has even when they are not in alignment with one's conscious values or beliefs (Staats, 2017). I believe implicit biases can come into play when educators and schools are choosing curriculums, literature, and other resources to be taught in the classroom. In this section an example was provided of how this happened in the Minneapolis Public School District with a literacy program that portrayed people of different races and cultures poorly and reinforced stereotypes (Hawkins, 2015). I think that example shows the importance of knowing and looking at the authenticity of materials in the classroom. Once educators recognize the implicit

biases and stereotypes about different people and cultures, they can make sure that they do not have any materials in their classroom that would further intensify that misrepresentation. I also think that implicit bias is important to talk about in order to make people more aware. In order for educators to make a positive change they will have to take a more active anti-bias approach to issues regarding culture and race (Derman-Sparks & Edwards, 2010). Becoming aware and recognizing one's own implicit biases are the first step to decreasing these unconscious reactions.

My literature review provided me with plenty of insight and perspectives of how I wanted to create my resource guide project. Throughout the section I talked about and wanted to reinforce just how little representation there is, and how that can be damaging. Research has proven that it is beneficial for a student's education if they feel represented and seen in their classroom (Flinders & Thornton, 2004). I also think that it emphasizes the importance of finding truthful, authentic, and real stories that represent different cultures and people that stray away from stereotypes and negative connotations. By having diverse and culturally appropriate materials in the classroom educators are creating an inclusive environment that gives every student in the classroom the opportunity to see themselves in a positive light. It also gives White students the opportunity to learn and understand that there are different cultures other than their own.

### **Implications**

The goal for this project was to learn more about the importance of having multicultural materials in the classroom and how by having that it creates an inclusive learning environment. During the literature review, new information was learned about

how having multicultural materials allows students to see themselves in their learning (Adichie, 2009). It was expected that having these materials inside the classroom would help students make connections with their learning, but it also showed that students have more academic success with multicultural materials (Flinders & Thornton, 2004).

The main audience for this resource guide is for primary educators that teach grades kindergarten through third grade. The resource guide included different types of literature, games, technology, and community resources that teachers can use in their daily instruction. The resources that were chosen to be a part of the resource guide aligned with the criteria that was created by Gregory Hamot the criteria included:

1. Sound instructional content;
2. Awareness of culturally different learning styles;
3. A democratic orientation;
4. Development of mutual cultural understanding;
5. Preparation for life in a global society;
6. Teaching methods (Hamot, 2016).

The resource guide was created to be as user friendly as possible with the thought in mind that teachers are very busy, especially during the COVID-19 global pandemic. The resource guide provided an abundance of information to teachers so that they would only have to look in one place. For the literature resources, it allowed educators to quickly read what the story is about, the author, and where to listen to an online version of the book. For the games, if applicable, a link was provided for where educators could purchase a copy if they wanted to add it to the classroom. The resource guide also

included games that were not board games in this case a link to directions and how to play the game were provided. This interactive, user friendly resource guide was created with the educators in mind in order to give them more resources and opportunities to incorporate multicultural materials in the classroom.

### **Limitations**

Throughout completing this project there were many different researchers, experts, and resources found that were related to and helped with answering the research question I had. This made the process of finding and choosing material for the resource guide a little overwhelming. It made it easier to focus on what I wanted to provide by using the criteria before adding it to the research guide. I think it helped that I wanted these materials to be authentic and accurate when they were portraying a type of culture, group, people or community straying away from stereotypes and misconceptions.

There were some limitations that occurred throughout the process of creating the Capstone Project. One of the biggest limitations that occurred was the wide variety of resources that are available today. Therefore, the ones that I included in the resource guide are not the only ones out there. The resources that were selected for the resource guide were selected because they were authentic, and represented the different students that are currently in my third grade classroom. The materials that were selected for the resource guide also were intended for students in grades kindergarten through third grade. Therefore, there are plenty of other resources available out there that represent different age levels. This project is just the beginning for creating a resource guide that includes multicultural materials to create a more inclusive learning environment. Another

limitation that comes with this project is that not all of the resources are ready to use immediately. The literature resources can be used online through read alouds, and the non-board game games can be played immediately after reading the instructions. The other resources require time and money in order to have the materials ready to use in the classroom. I hope that this tool is as user friendly as it was intended to be and that teachers find use in the information and start thinking about their own ways how they can create an inclusive learning environment.

### **Success and Setbacks**

As I began working on this Capstone Project I knew that there would be a lot of information and research available for me to use. It was important the research that was conducted throughout this process focused on how multicultural materials create a learning environment where students feel seen and welcomed. From the experience as a graduate student at Hamline University, there was an emphasis on creating an inclusive classroom in almost every course that was offered. The theme of creating an inclusive classroom helped narrow the idea for the research question, so that the project had a clear focus.. Since I am currently teaching a third grade classroom and want my future career to stay within the primary age grades I decided to create a project for teachers who teach kindergarten-third grade. I feel that the importance of this project and what was created to support the findings completed were a success.

The research that was completed during this project proved to be successful in my classroom already this school year. By being more aware than ever of potential biases that arise in the classroom. There has been an increase in the use of different multicultural

materials and resources throughout lessons as well. Having honest conversations with students about what we are reading and learning and how we can learn from people that are different from one's self. I have taken steps to help decrease my own implicit biases from the tools that I found while I was completing the research for this project.

There were not any major setbacks that occurred during the research project. Every phase of completing the Capstone Project created and allowed an opportunity for learning and growth to take place as a person and for this profession. Since the process for completing the capstone required a lot of revising and feedback there were items that had to be changed completely that caused new sources and ideas to be found. While this was time consuming, it provided better research and information in order to create a stronger argument and proof to support the research question and project. Creating the resource guide itself took a lot of time and effort in order to make it as user friendly and as successful as possible. However, in the end I am proud and believe that the outcome of this project was a success.

### **Closing**

This chapter provided a deep reflection on the creation and methods during the process of creating this Capstone Project. It included a reflection on the research question, the importance of the question, a description of the project, and the research that went into providing an expert voice to support the question. Chapter Four also yielded a description for the implications and the limitations that were produced while completing the project. Finally, this chapter also discusses the success and setbacks that occurred throughout the process.



In conclusion, I have learned more than I could have imagined while working to complete this project both personally and professionally. I am committed to the research question: *How can educators use multicultural materials to create a more inclusive classroom community?* and will continue to find ways that I can create an inclusive learning environment and provide my students with multicultural materials through their learning. I feel incredibly lucky that I am just beginning my teaching career and will be able to use the knowledge, tools, and resources that were discovered while completing my capstone. I truly believe that every student who walks through the doors has a right to be able to see, hear, and have their identity represented throughout the learning that takes place in a classroom.

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