The effectiveness of multicultural storytelling on attitudes toward different cultures in the elementary classroom

Michele Patruno
Rowan University
THE EFFECTIVENESS OF MULTICULTURAL STORYTELLING
ON ATTITUDES TOWARD DIFFERENT CULTURES IN
THE ELEMENTARY CLASSROOM

by
Michele Patruno

Submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements of the
Master of Science in Teaching Degree in the
Graduate Division of Rowan University
June 28, 2001

Approved by
Professor

Date Approved: June 28, 2001
ABSTRACT

Michele Patruno
The Effectiveness of Multicultural Storytelling on Attitudes Toward Different Cultures in the Elementary Classroom
2001
Dr. Randall R. Robinson, thesis advisor
Masters of Science in Teaching

The purpose of this study was to consider the effects of multicultural storytelling and students’ attitudes toward different cultures within the classroom. It was hypothesized that exposure to multicultural storytelling in the classroom with a discussion period to follow will produce positive attitudes toward different cultures as opposed to students who are not exposed to the storytelling. The subjects of the study were fifty-five third grade students from a southern New Jersey suburban school district. The study consisted of an experimental and a control group. Each group was administered a pretest and a posttest to determine if changes took place. A t-test for independent and nonindependent samples, Pearson Correlation, and a sign test were administered to determine if there was a significant difference between the scores in terms of magnitude and direction. The t-tests indicated that there was a slight significance of difference between the scores. The correlation indicated that there were no significant differences in magnitude, however, the sign test showed highly significant differences in the positive direction.
MINI-ABSTRACT

Michele Patruno
The Effectiveness of Multicultural Storytelling on Attitudes Toward Different Cultures in the Elementary Classroom
2001
Dr. Randall R. Robinson, thesis advisor
Masters of Science in Teaching

The purpose of this study was to consider the effects of multicultural storytelling and students’ attitudes toward different cultures within the classroom. It was hypothesized that exposure to multicultural storytelling in the classroom with a discussion period to follow will produce positive attitudes toward different cultures as opposed to students who are not exposed to the storytelling.
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The following people played an invaluable role in the completion of this thesis:

My parents, Michael and Maureen Patruno, who have supported me both emotionally and financially which allowed me to complete this thesis.

Mr. Daniel Nardiello, Mrs. Sylvia Dawson, and Mrs. Denise McDermott, who welcomed me with open arms into their school and classrooms to perform my research.

Dr. David Kapel, who graciously guided me through the statistical procedures necessary to complete this thesis.

Last but not least, Dr. Randall R. Robinson, thesis advisor, who committed much time and effort into the successful completion of this thesis.
TABLE OF CONTENTS

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS ........................................................................................................ ii
LIST OF TABLES .................................................................................................................. v

CHAPTER

I. SCOPE OF THE STUDY ........................................................................................................ 1
   Introduction ..................................................................................................................... 1
   Significance of the Study ............................................................................................... 2
   Statement of the Problem ............................................................................................. 2
   Hypothesis ..................................................................................................................... 2
   Definition of Terms ....................................................................................................... 2
   Limitations of Study ...................................................................................................... 3

II. REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE .................................................................................. 4
   Introduction .................................................................................................................... 4
   History of Storytelling .................................................................................................... 4
   Context of the Problem ................................................................................................. 5
   Teacher’s Role in Incorporating a Multicultural Curriculum Within the Classroom ......... 7
   Opposition to the Implementation of a Multicultural Curriculum .................................. 8
   Summary ....................................................................................................................... 9

III. PROCEDURE AND DESIGN OF STUDY .................................................................. 10
   Introduction .................................................................................................................... 10
   Population and Sample ................................................................................................. 10
   Research and Design Procedure .................................................................................... 11
   Description of Instrument ............................................................................................ 13

IV. ANALYSIS OF FINDINGS ......................................................................................... 14
   Introduction .................................................................................................................... 14
   Tabulation of Raw Scores ............................................................................................. 14
   Tests for Significance .................................................................................................... 16
   Statistical Analysis Related to Hypothesis .................................................................... 22

V. SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS ....................................... 23
   Introduction .................................................................................................................... 23
   Summary of Problem ..................................................................................................... 23
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Summary of Hypothesis</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Summary of Procedure</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Summary of Findings</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conclusions, Implications, and Recommendations</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>REFERENCES</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>APPENDIX</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A Letter to Parents</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B Survey Instrument</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C Answer Sheet</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D Stories Read to the Students in the Experimental Group</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VITA</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Table</td>
<td>Page</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Experimental Group Raw Scores</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Control Group Raw Scores</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. t-Test for Independent Samples-Pretest</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. t-Test for Independent Samples-Posttest</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. t-Test for Nonindependent Samples-Experimental Group</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. t-Test for Nonindependent Samples Control Group</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Pearson Correlation Within Experimental Group</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Pearson Correlation Within Control Group</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Sign Test Within Groups</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Chapter One

Scope of Study

Introduction

I am visible – see this Indian face- yet I am invisible. I both blind them with my beak nose and am their blind spot. But I exist; we exist. They’d like to think I have melted in the pot. But I haven’t. We haven’t. ("Multicultural Pavilion," 2000, p.3)

This quotation, taken from Tejana Chicana poet Gloria Anzaldua, signifies the experience of many individuals in our society who feel left out and yet still manage to avoid blending into the melting pot of our dominant culture. Unfortunately the educational world has gained the reputation for excluding large numbers of individuals based solely upon culture, gender, class, ethnicity, disability, or religion (Onyekwuluje, 2000). Although the push for multicultural curriculum has been strong, there is much room for improvement. We should strive to help students embrace their cultural differences, not try to blend them with the American ideals (Williams-Carter, 1999).

The diversity of the United States as a whole is increasing tremendously; this is evident in our school systems. It is critical for children to be able to work effectively with people of other cultures, especially when they enter the workforce (Williams-Carter, 1999). With that in mind it is important for us to incorporate a multicultural curriculum into the classroom.

One way to accomplish this goal is to implement multicultural storytelling into the curriculum. According to Robin Mello (2001, p.1), "Storytelling is one of the oldest, if not the oldest method of communicating ideas and images." Storytelling allows for
students to challenge themselves regarding the ideals they presently know with relation to the newly gained information from the story itself.

**Statement of the Research Problem**

Does substantial exposure to a variety of cultures through storytelling as well as discussions to follow have a profound effect in acceptance of differences among children?

**Hypothesis**

Students who experience a plethora of cultures through the process of storytelling in the classroom will produce positive attitudes towards different cultures as opposed to students who do not encounter the multicultural storytelling.

**Definition of terms**

The following terms used within the study are operationally defined as:

- **Multicultural Story** - a story that includes the following characteristics; race, religion, culture, gender, class, different life situations or exceptionality.

- **Different Life Situations** – conditions in which children’s lives are affected due to the fact that they are a part of single parent families or are children of divorced parents.

- **Exceptionality** – a child or adult who has some form of disability, specifically wheelchair bound, blind, deaf, cerebral palsy, or children infected with HIV.

- **Storytelling** - a read aloud period lasting 30 to 40-minutes, which is followed by a brief discussion.
Multicultural Week- a five day period in school, which students are exposed to presentations, assemblies, and parties in order to celebrate the different cultures of society through tradition, dress, food, and religion.

Limitations

The limitations that may have affected this study were as follows:

1. The sample for this experiment was currently intact and therefore not random, which allows for error or chance to occur.

2. There was a minimal amount of time to complete the study due to the time restraints within the classroom.

3. The subjects were exposed to Multicultural Week in school during the implementation of the study, so the events during this week may have also influenced the children as well.

4. The nature of the topic of prejudice might cause people to respond in a positive manner, the way they believe the researcher would like to hear.
Chapter Two

Review of Related Literature

Introduction

The expectation of this study was to illustrate that the more accepting and knowledgeable students are of different cultures, influences the formation of positive attitudes towards these cultures as a whole. It was hypothesized that students who experience a variety of cultures through storytelling within the classroom will produce positive attitudes towards different cultures as opposed to those who do not have this opportunity.

The History of Storytelling

Storytelling will challenge students to reflect upon and discuss the issues that they face in this ever-changing society. "Storytelling is one of the oldest, if not the oldest method of communicating ideas and images…it is defined as a linguistic activity that is educative because it allows individuals to share their personal understanding with others, thereby creating negotiated transactions" (Mello, 2001). Students become involved in the stories they are told and sometime create a relationship with that story. The story in someway may create connection to an event in the student’s life. Multicultural storytelling challenges children to think of their own ideas from what they know and compare that to the information they have gained from the story itself (McCabe, 1997).
In addition storytelling offers a sense of relaxation in which the children have the opportunity to relax and enjoy the meaning and purpose of the story in the absence of the pressures of having to know the information for a test situation. Students feel open to express their ideas and begin to think on a deeper level once that pressure is lifted from them (Mello, 2001).

Context of the Problem

A vast majority of the literature that involves multicultural dimensions within the classroom agrees with the importance of incorporating a multicultural curriculum into schools. Within a 14-year span, 1976-1990, the United States population has had an increase in ethnic diversity; the following numbers will illustrate the point more clearly. The white, Anglo-Saxon population has decreased by 17% along with a decrease in the African American population of 2%, which comprises 16% of the total population. Meanwhile, Hispanics have increased 68%, representing 12% of the total population as well as Asian/Pacific Islanders who constitute 3% of the total population, which was an increase of 158% (Hernandez-Tutop, 1999). The population is developing into a diverse culture and it is necessary for our school systems to evaluate the need for a multicultural curriculum in order for children to have the ability to work effectively with people of other cultures, especially when they enter the workforce (Williams-Carter, 1999).

Books have the ability to illustrate for the reader the relationships, feelings, thoughts, and appearances of the characters. This not only gives minority students the opportunity to view themselves in the stories they read, but it also gives students of other cultures the same images (Ford, Tyson, & Howard, 2000). Books offer the children in the minority situations a feeling of self-worth and an appreciation and pride for their
heritage. Someone thought enough about their culture to write a story and the teacher felt that it was important enough to share the story with the class (McCabe, 1997). The children have the opportunity to share this sense of pride with the entire class. This also offers the students some meaning to their education, it is now relating to their lives (Davies-Gibson, 1994). In addition, Emma Duren states that multicultural storytelling will also allow students to examine their own stereotypes and prejudices along with the opportunity to learn more about different cultures (2000).

A majority of the research conducted for this study comes from McCabe (1997) and Wham, Barnhart, and Cook (1996). These two studies illustrate the importance of storytelling in enhancing awareness as well as appreciation for the differences among cultures. As Allyssa McCabe stated, “There is some evidence that reading stories about children from different cultures not their own can diminish prejudice, therefore, if minimal exposure to stories could reduce prejudice, then substantial exposure...might have a more profound effect, especially with younger children” (1997, p.468). This is a provocative statement in the area of multicultural storytelling. Does substantial exposure to other cultures through storytelling as well as discussions to follow have a profound effect in the acceptance of differences among children? The study previously cited (Wham et al, 1996) concerning multicultural storytelling found that the attitudes toward multicultural diversity became more positive or remained steady in the Storybook Reading Groups and became more negative in the control group, which were not exposed to the storytelling. These findings show that without the intervention the attitudes of the students actually decreased instead of remaining the same. This illustrates the
importance of incorporating a multicultural curriculum into the classroom (Wham et al., 1996).

In addition research conducted by Utley et al. has also stated the over-representation of minority students in special education (2000). The research illustrates one of the reasons for this over-representation is due to the fact that a majority of the educators today do not have the background knowledge regarding the cultural differences in relation to student achievement.

Teacher’s Role in Incorporating a Multicultural Curriculum Within the Classroom

First and foremost, it is extremely important that the educators of children obtain an appreciation for the diverse cultures of our society in order to expose children to non-stereotypical and positive views or concepts regarding diversity (Bolling, 2001). Children often model the views and actions of educators, therefore in order to allow students to have an open mind and appreciation towards different cultures, the educators must possess those same qualities, or else the purpose of the multicultural curriculum will be lost (Onyekwuluje, 2000).

Next the educator must choose the literature that they are going to share with their class. Sheryl Taylor states that there are three tips to examine when selecting multicultural literature. The first is to establish the significance of the theme and characters. Once this is completed the titles of the stories must encompass a plethora of genres. Finally, one must take into consideration who wrote the book and for whom the book is written (Taylor, 2000). In addition to the previous steps, one must also ask the
following questions: "Does the story include real and authentic characters; Are these characters depicted in active or passive roles; Are the actions true to life or stereotypical; Does the story increase understanding and acceptance; Do the illustrations reflect authentic portrayal of physical features and other details; What experiences have the author and illustrator had to prepare themselves for the book" (Bainbridge, Pantaleo, & Ellis, 1999). For the successful implementation of multicultural storytelling within the classroom to exist the teacher must not only have an open-mind to diversity, but must also have extensive knowledge regarding the various cultures to be incorporated into the program (McCabe, 1997).

Opposition to the Implementation of a Multicultural Curriculum

However, there is some skepticism or resistance to incorporating multicultural storytelling in the classroom. McCabe (1997) illustrates the resistance in her research; "Including diverse voices can conflict with teaching top-quality literature... If you teach a work from every group at every grade level, you’ll teach some bad habits" (1993, Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development). Unfortunately, this argument is based on the concept that what defines a good story is based on the white European standpoint, which again demonstrates the need for a multicultural curriculum. Also, some opponents do not feel that the demographic changes within our society are enough of a reason to implement a multicultural curriculum into our schools, while others believe that we are already doing enough to incorporate a multicultural curriculum (Williams-Carter, 1999). In addition it is important to bear in mind that the picture
books and storytelling experiences in no way present an alternative for real-life situations incorporating diversity (Bolling, 2001). People act differently then they would like to believe they would, when placed in certain situations. No matter what your standpoint, it is important to realize that some aspects of storytelling allow for people to explore stereotypes held about different cultures (Mello, 2001).

Summary

Although there has been resistance to the implementation of a multicultural curriculum within the classroom, a majority of the research is based on the importance of such a curriculum. The processes of multicultural storytelling presents children with the opportunity to ponder the ideas presented in the story and then compare that information with the knowledge base that they currently possess (McCabe, 1997). In addition the rise of ethnic diversity within the United States lends way for the implementation of a multicultural curriculum (Hernandez-Tutop, 1999). Storytelling presents minority children with feelings of self-worth and pride for their heritage (McCabe, 1997).

There is one area of multicultural research where the information is not so certain. Research conducted by Utley et.al. illustrates that there is an overrepresentation of minority students in special education. The research states one of the reasons this occurs is a result of the lack of background knowledge regarding the cultural differences in relation to student achievement that a majority of educators do not possess. Unfortunately there is insufficient information regarding this finding and further research needs to be implemented.
Chapter Three

Procedure and Design of Study

Introduction

The purpose of this study was to illustrate the effect that multicultural storytelling could have in an elementary classroom with regard to tolerance of other cultures. It was hypothesized that multicultural storytelling in the classroom will generate positive attitudes in relation to different cultures as opposed to students who do not encounter the multicultural storytelling. This storytelling will challenge students to reflect upon and discuss the issues that they face in this ever-changing society (Mello, 2001). In order to assess the effects of multicultural storytelling within the classroom, a number of steps must be taken.

Population and Sample

The population of the study consisted of 55 third grade students ranging in age from 8 to 10 years old with an equal number of male and female students. The sample for this study was taken from a large township in southern New Jersey. Twenty-seven of the students were eight years old, 26 were nine years of age, and two were ten years old. The population of the school was extremely diverse culturally as well as diverse in socioeconomic status. Out of fifty-five students forty of them were Caucasian, nine were African American, five were Hispanic, and one child was Turkish. The school was an English as a Second Language (ESL) school for the district. Many students were
bused to the school for that purpose. The ESL students possessed varying degrees in their ability to speak and comprehend the English language. The classroom was a mixture of all developmental levels of students. Students removed from the classroom and were brought to basic skills and gifted and talented programs, which eliminated the possibility of a weighted classroom.

Research and Design Procedures

The purpose of this study was to illustrate the effect that multicultural storytelling can have in an elementary classroom with regard to tolerance of other cultures. Due to the fact that the subjects of the study had been grouped into pre-existing classrooms, a quasi-experimental design was performed. A nonequivalent control group design was also incorporated into the study. The study consisted of one control group and one experimental group. The entire study was carried out over a seven-week period.

The study duplicated the research that was completed by Wham et al. (1996) with minor adjustments. The first adjustment was the grade level; this study only involved one grade level, which was third grade. The possibility of a random selection of the sample population was impossible due to the fact that the classroom was intact. Therefore a quasi-experimental study was implemented. The experimental and control groups consisted of 28 and 27 students respectively. Both groups were comprised of ethnically diverse student body.

Meetings to discuss the implementation of the study were scheduled with the principal and classroom teachers. In addition a letter describing the basic concept of the
study was sent home to the parents of the students in both the control and experimental groups. (see appendix A)

Prior to implementing the experiment a pretest was administered to both the control and experimental groups and the data was recorded. The results from the pretests were then statistically analyzed to determine if the two groups had any significant differences in the data. There were not any significant differences between the two groups and therefore the study was implemented to the experimental group. (for statistical results see Chapter 4).

The experiment consisted of read aloud stories (see appendix D), which incorporate different cultures as well as include a discussion period of 30-40 minutes at the end of each story. During the discussion period the students spoke about issues such as children teasing other children and how that might make them feel if they were the child, who was being harassed. In addition the children discussed the differences and similarities in beliefs and ways of life of the different cultures within each story and the importance of understanding those differences.

Throughout the study each week concentrated on a different culture for three out of the five days for example the second week of the study the stories were about African American lifestyles, the third and fourth weeks dealt with stories regarding children and adults with physical and mental disabilities. With the exception of the first and the last weeks, which will include stories that illustrate many cultures working and cooperating together as well as the effects that they have on others. Following the final read aloud, a posttest was administered to the students in both the experimental and control groups and the data was recorded.
Description of Instrument

The survey instrument (see appendix B) implemented in this study is based on a previous instrument used in the Wham et al. (1996). The reliability of the survey instrument was previously determined. In addition to the instrument each student was given an answer sheet (see appendix C) to fill out, while each question was read aloud to the students. A pretest was administered to both the control and experimental groups and the data was recorded. The pretest was implemented to determine whether the control group and the experimental group are essentially the same with regard to performance. Since the sample consisted of control and experimental groups, a t-test for independent samples was employed in the study with a pre-determined probability level of less than or equal to .05. The t-test for independent samples determined whether multicultural storytelling made a significant difference in the children’s attitudes toward different cultures.
Chapter IV
Analysis of Findings

Introduction

The purpose of this study was to explore the effects of multicultural storytelling on attitudes towards different cultures. The study involved two third grade classes. One class received the treatment of multicultural storytelling, while the other class did not experience the multicultural storytelling. A pretest and a posttest were administered to both classes. The results were then recorded and analyzed to determine if the hypothesis was to be accepted or rejected. Do students who experience a variety of cultures through the process of storytelling in the classroom produce positive attitudes towards different cultures as opposed to students who do not encounter the multicultural storytelling?

Tabulation of Raw Scores

The experimental and control groups were both administered a pretest and a posttest. The questions on the survey instrument (see appendix B) were divided into three separate categories. The first category was Diversity, which included questions that dealt specifically with ethnicity, race, or age. The questions that were considered for the diversity category were numbers 1, 3, 4, and 10. The next category was Special Education, which encompassed questions regarding both physical and mental handicaps. The questions in the survey that dealt with such matters are numbers 2, 6, 8, and 9. The
The final category was Family Environment. This category consisted of questions numbers 5 and 7, which related to family situations such as divorce and income respectively.

The students answered the questions by marking the answer sheet (see appendix C) with their response. The students had the option of marking a smiley face, a face without an expression, or a sad face. The smiley face was equivalent to a score of three, the face without expression was equal to a score of two and the sad face corresponded with a score of one. The following table illustrates the sum of scores, mean, and standard deviation of the tallied scores for the experimental group. Among the categories the mean of each shows an increase from the pretest results to the posttest results.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Sum of Scores</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Standard Deviation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Pretest</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Diversity</td>
<td>257</td>
<td>9.52</td>
<td>1.71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Special Education</td>
<td>171</td>
<td>6.33</td>
<td>1.61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family Environment</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>2.41</td>
<td>0.73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>491</td>
<td>18.19</td>
<td>2.91</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Posttest</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Diversity</td>
<td>276</td>
<td>10.62</td>
<td>1.27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Special Education</td>
<td>215</td>
<td>8.27</td>
<td>1.97</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family Environment</td>
<td>82</td>
<td>3.15</td>
<td>1.23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>575</td>
<td>22.12</td>
<td>3.40</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The data for the control group was gathered by the same token as the experimental group. Even though there were increases in the means of the pretest and the posttest with the exception of Diversity, which had a slight decrease in the mean, the difference between the means was insignificant. In addition the standard deviation varied among the categories with the biggest difference in the total scores. (see table 2)

### Table 2

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Sum of Scores</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Standard Deviation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Control Group Raw Scores</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Pretest</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Diversity</td>
<td>260</td>
<td>9.63</td>
<td>1.47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Special Education</td>
<td>171</td>
<td>6.33</td>
<td>1.15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family Environment</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>2.52</td>
<td>0.79</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>499</td>
<td>18.48</td>
<td>2.36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Posttest</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Diversity</td>
<td>200</td>
<td>9.52</td>
<td>2.02</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Special Education</td>
<td>183</td>
<td>7.96</td>
<td>1.92</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family Environment</td>
<td>71</td>
<td>3.09</td>
<td>1.10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>475</td>
<td>20.65</td>
<td>4.15</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Tests for Significance

A t-test for independent samples was administered in order to determine if there was a significant difference between the pretest for both the experimental and control
groups. In terms of Diversity, Special Education, Family Environment and the total score there were no significant differences. Therefore, as shown in table 3, both experimental group and control group produced similar results, which allowed for the continuation of the experiment.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 3</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>t-Test for Independent Samples-Pretest</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>t-value</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Diversity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Special Education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family Environment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

A t-test for independent samples for the posttest was then analyzed to determine if the experiment produced a significant difference between the experimental group and the control group. Special Education and Family Environment produced results that stated there was no significant difference between the two groups. However, the Diversity items within the survey generated significance between the two groups. The total score approached the significance level, yet did not achieve it. (see table 4)
In addition to the t-test for independent samples, a t-test for nonindependent samples was also administered to determine if there was significant difference between the pretest and the posttest within the same group. The data in table 5 from the experimental group illustrated that levels of significance were attained in both the Special Education items and the total score. Also the items associated with Family Environment approached the significance level but did not achieve it. The Diversity items did not reach the significance level. Therefore any changes in the Diversity scores could be attributed to chance.

### Table 4

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>t-value</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>.05 Significance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Diversity</td>
<td>2.19</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>significant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Special Education</td>
<td>0.55</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>ns</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family Environment</td>
<td>0.20</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>ns</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>1.33</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>ns</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Table 5

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>t-value</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>.05 Significance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Diversity</td>
<td>1.12</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>ns</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Special Education</td>
<td>2.47</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>significant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family Environment</td>
<td>1.84</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>ns</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>2.23</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>significant</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The t-test for nonindependent samples was also employed to establish significance between the pretest and the posttest within the control group. The data clearly demonstrated there were no levels of significance attained in the control group with regard to the pretest and the posttest. Therefore there were no significant differences between the responses in both tests within the control group. (see table 6)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>t-Test for Nonindependent Samples-Control Group</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>t-value df .05 significance</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Diversity 1.78 26 ns</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Special Education 0.59 26 ns</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family Environment 0.32 26 ns</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total 1.30 26 ns</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

A Pearson Correlation was then completed to determine if the students who scored highly on the pretest, scored relatively the same on the posttest. The correlations throughout all of the items within the experimental group did not attain levels of significance. The correlation values were extremely low and therefore show that the relationship between the pretest and the posttest were weak. The values appeared to be inconsistent. (see table 7)
A Pearson Correlation was then used to determine if the students' scores were comparatively the same on both the pretest and the posttest. As table 8 illustrates the levels of significance were not attained in any of the categories that were tested. Therefore the values of the data appeared to be inconsistent and did not show a relationship between the pretest and the posttest scores.
Due to the low correlation values previously stated, the implementation of a sign test was carried out in order to establish whether or not a directional change took place between the administration of the pretest and the posttest in both the experimental and control groups. The scores of the pretest were subtracted from the posttest scores for each student. The values were either positive in which the posttest was a larger value than the pretest, negative, when the pretest value was larger than the posttest, or zero in which the scores remained the same. The data illustrated that a majority of the sign scores were positive indicating a directional change.

The results of the sign test suggested that within the experimental group a highly significant difference was observed in terms of Diversity (0.001) and the total score (0.002). In the control group highly significant differences were detected in terms of Special Education (0.008). In addition the Special Education (0.026) and Family Environment (0.021) items in the experimental group were significant and approached high significance and the same for the Family Environment (0.038) items in the control group. There was no significant difference in the control group regarding the Diversity (0.588) and total score (0.500) categories.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Diversity</th>
<th>Special Education</th>
<th>Family Environment</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Experimental Group</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0.001</td>
<td>0.026</td>
<td>0.021</td>
<td>0.002</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>+ = 19</td>
<td>+ = 16</td>
<td>+ = 15</td>
<td>+ = 21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- = 4</td>
<td>- = 6</td>
<td>- = 5</td>
<td>- = 5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0 = 3</td>
<td>0 = 4</td>
<td>0 = 6</td>
<td>0 = 0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Control Group</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0.588</td>
<td>0.008</td>
<td>0.038</td>
<td>0.500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>+ = 10</td>
<td>+ = 17</td>
<td>+ = 12</td>
<td>+ = 15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- = 10</td>
<td>- = 5</td>
<td>- = 4</td>
<td>- = 7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0 = 3</td>
<td>0 = 1</td>
<td>0 = 7</td>
<td>0 = 1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Statistical Analysis Related to the Hypothesis

The data suggested that due to the low correlations between pretest and posttest scores and the results from the sign test, that there were significant differences within the data. The information obtained through the statistical analysis demonstrated that there were internal changes within the samples however the inconsistency of the results produced low correlation values. The sign test was administered to verify if there were changes in the direction of the results not the magnitude. The results from the sign test showed that changes did occur in a positive direction in both the control and experimental groups. However, the high significance level within the experimental group illustrated a change in attitude, which is the result of the implementation of the treatment.
Chapter V

Summary, Conclusions, and Recommendations

Introduction

The purpose of this study was to examine the effects of multicultural storytelling on attitudes toward different cultures. It was hypothesized that the students who received multicultural storytelling produced positive attitudes toward different cultures as opposed to students who did not experience the storytelling.

The students involved in this study were from a suburban community in southern New Jersey. This study included students from two third grade classes. One of the classes experienced a variety of multicultural stories, while the other class did not receive treatment of any kind. Both classes were given a pretest and a posttest. The data was recorded and analyzed to determine if the hypothesis was to be accepted or rejected. A t-test for independent samples in addition to a Pearson Correlation and a sign test indicated that overall there was a difference in positive attitudes toward different cultures as opposed to students who did not receive the treatment.

Summary of the Problem

The problem researched in this study was to determine if substantial exposure to a variety of cultures through storytelling as well as discussions to follow produced positive ways of thinking toward the acceptance of differences among children.
Summary of the Hypothesis

As research concluded minimal exposure to multicultural stories can reduce prejudice and increase positive attitudes toward different cultures (McCabe, 1997). Therefore, it was hypothesized that Students who experience a plethora of cultures through the process of storytelling in the classroom will produce positive attitudes towards different cultures as opposed to students who do not encounter the multicultural storytelling.

Summary of the Procedures

The subjects used in this research consisted of fifty-five (55) third grade students from a suburban school district in southern New Jersey. The two third grade classes were prearranged and studied the same material. However, one class was instructed with 30-40 minute periods of multicultural storytelling, unlike the other class.

All of the students were administered a pretest and a posttest measuring attitudes toward different cultures. The survey instrument (see appendix B) consisted of ten questions in which the students used an answer sheet (see appendix C) to record their attitudes or feelings. The data was then recorded and analyzed.

Summary of the Findings

The t-test of independent and nonindependent groups, Pearson Correlation, and the sign test were used to analyze any significant difference between the scores of both the experimental and control groups. The findings from the analysis of the scores
suggested that there were no significant differences between the two groups. In addition
the correlation test also stated that there was no significant relationship between the
groups. However, the Pearson Correlation only tested magnitude not direction.
Therefore a sign test was implemented which illustrated the positive change in scores.
The Pearson Correlations were low do to the fact that there was much inconsistency with
the differences in values that changed the scores and it was necessary to administer the
sign test.

Conclusions, Implications, and Recommendations

In this study the hypothesis stated that multicultural storytelling could positively
affect the attitudes of children toward different cultures as opposed to those who did not
experience this storytelling. The raw data was analyzed through a series of tests; t-test
for independent and nonindependent samples, Pearson Correlation, and sign test.
Through the combination of all four tests the results support the hypothesis. However,
the results do not strongly support the hypothesis.

However, informal information collected by the researcher indicated that some of
the students' exposure and familiarity with multiculturalism might have influenced the
results. During the research the class would have the opportunity to read through the
stories that were read to them on their own. A majority of the students would discuss the
stories and in some cases they would actually put themselves in a similar situation to one
of the characters in the story. For example: A student was reading a story about
prejudice against Jewish people. Her response was, “Wow, I wouldn’t like it if I didn’t
have Christmas. That’s not fair.” This student was beginning to display empathy for the
group that was being persecuted in the story. If one student was able to conjure up feelings of empathy toward a different culture, this study was a success.

Due to the weak support of the hypothesis, the following recommendations are based on knowledge of this study:

1. The study utilized only two groups of third grade students as the sample. To account for diversity within the groups and exposure to outside factors a greater sample size must be implemented. The use of a greater sample size will reduce the probability that the results rendered from the test happened by chance.

2. The time frame of the study is to be lengthened over an entire school year. To fully assess the differences between the groups, a longer period of time will be beneficial. This will allow greater exposure to the different cultures.

3. Additional research should also be conducted to determine whether or not a diverse school setting influenced the results. A majority of the studies completed in this area have included schools in which lack diversity among students.

Apart from the results of this research, there is a great deal of research that has supported the hypothesis that multicultural storytelling does positively influence attitudes toward different cultures. In addition, it is apparent from the results of this study that students who experience minimal exposure to multicultural storytelling produce positive changes in their attitudes toward different cultures. Further research in multiculturalism needs to continue due to the growing diversity of our country’s population.
REFERENCES


Freeman, J. (1998). Books that’ll take students to other places and times. *Instructor* 107, 19-21.


Appendix A

Letter to Parents
Dear Parents/Guardian;

Hello! My name is Michele Patruno and I will be student teaching in your child's class for the next sixteen weeks. I would just like to introduce myself and give you some background information. I completed my undergraduate degree in Sociology from Villanova University in Pennsylvania. I worked in the sports entertainment industry for two years and decided that my heart was really with children and I went back to school to become a teacher. So, I am currently enrolled in a full time Masters program at Rowan University that will allow me to accomplish my goal.

One of the requirements of the program is to write a thesis on any chosen topic. I have decided to complete my thesis on multiculturalism; specifically multicultural storytelling effect on children's attitudes toward different cultures. As a part of this thesis, I will be administering a survey to the children asking them to tell me how they feel about being in certain situations. Then I will read a variety of stories to the children from different cultures, including African American, Handicapped, Single parent families, Native American, etc.

I understand the sensitivity of this topic; therefore, if you should have any questions or concerns regarding the study please feel free to contact me at the school. If I do not hear of any concerns I will assume that I have your permission to complete the study. Thank your for your time.

Thank you,

Ms. Michele Patruno
Appendix B

Survey Instrument
Questions

1. How do you feel about sitting next to someone from another country?

2. How do you feel about playing a game with a hearing-impaired person?

3. How do you feel about going to a movie with someone whose skin color is different than yours?

4. How do you feel about listening to a story about someone who is old?

5. How do you feel about listening to a story about a family where the parents are divorced?

6. How do you feel about having someone over your house for dinner who is in a wheelchair?

7. How do you feel about living next door to a family who is poor?

8. How do you feel about listening to a story about a child who is blind?

9. How do you feel about listening to a story about a child who is mentally impaired?

10. How do you feel about sitting next to someone whose skin color is different than yours?
Appendix D

Stories Read to the Students in the Experimental Group
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Author</th>
<th>Title</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bateson-Hill, Margaret</td>
<td><em>Shota and the Star Quilt</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cohen, Janice D.S.W.</td>
<td><em>The Christmas Menorahs: How a Town Fought Hate</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>De Luise, Dom</td>
<td><em>Charlie the Caterpillar</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emmert, Michelle</td>
<td><em>I'm the Big Sister Now</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Goble, Paul</td>
<td><em>Dream Wolf</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lasker, Joseph</td>
<td><em>He's My Brother</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Litchfield, Ada</td>
<td><em>A Button in Her Ear</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Litchfield, Ada</td>
<td><em>Words in Our Hands</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lowell, Susan</td>
<td><em>The Three Little Javelinas</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Newton, Deborah, M.</td>
<td><em>Spider and the Sky God</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pollacco, Patrica</td>
<td><em>Chicken Sunday</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Powers, Mary Ellen</td>
<td><em>Our Teacher's in a Wheelchair</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ringgold, Faith</td>
<td><em>Aunt Harriet's Underground Railroad in the Sky</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spier, Peter</td>
<td><em>People</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wiener, Best, &amp; Pizzo, Phillip</td>
<td><em>Be a Friend: Children Who Live with HIV Speak</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Name:</strong></td>
<td>Michele Patruno</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| **Date & Place of Birth:** | May 23, 1976  
Voorhees, NJ |
| **Elementary School:** | Our Lady of Grace Regional School  
Somerdale, NJ |
| **High School:** | Paul VI High School  
Haddonfield, NJ |
| **College:** | Villanova University  
Villanova, PA  
Bachelor of Arts, Sociology |
| **Graduate:** | Rowan University  
Glassboro, NJ  
Master of Science in Teaching |