

2009

Identity & learning : a zine project

Dorrie Coman
California State University, Monterey Bay

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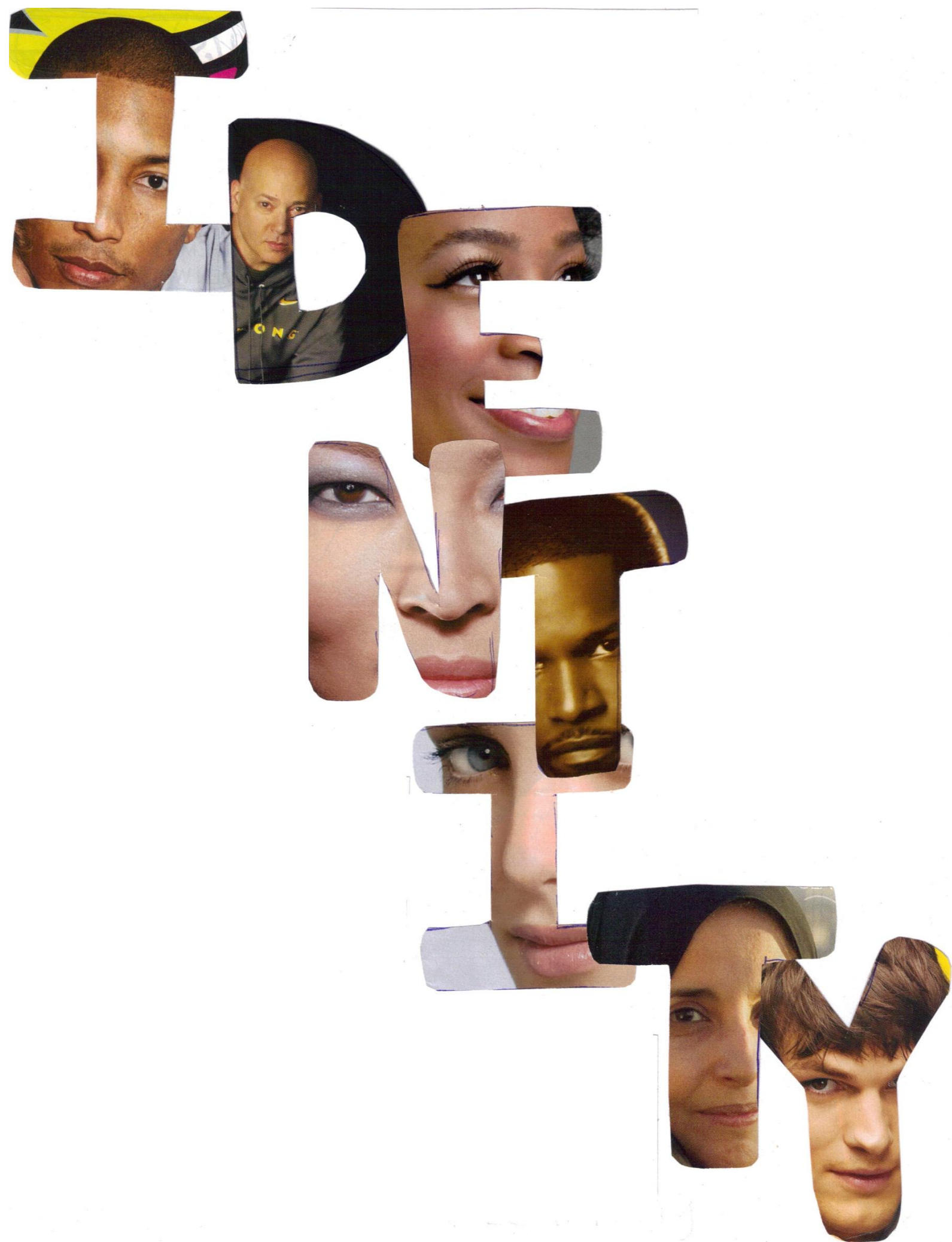


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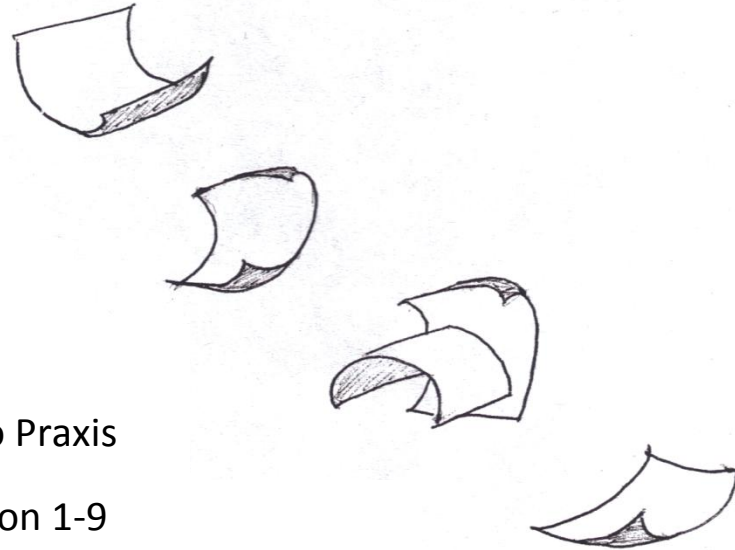
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It is my hope that this project not only helped the students involved become more deeply rooted in their identity, but that it also influences teaches and future teachers that before teaching the curriculum, writing, or math, they must first teach the students. What matters most is them, who they are, how they feel about themselves. Including students in learning through an anti-biased curriculum makes learning a part of who they are. This project is dedicated to those teachers who took the time to put me first.

Thank you!

Note: This zine was made as a bi-fold in the original print version. However, for this electronic version I still wanted the pages side by side in chronological order for presentation purposes so this version would not print and fold in the correct order.



The Liberal Studies curriculum, the Human Development curriculum, and my Service Learning experiences greatly influenced the development of my Capstone Project. The LS curriculum was a key factor in bringing educational issues to my attention; the Human Development curriculum taught me the importance of identity development in school-age years in order to create a happy, successful individual; and Service Learning provided me with a personal look at the way these educational issues and identity development play out in the school setting.

Through these experiences I realized that there is a lack of focus on individual identity in schools, as well as an erosion of cultural and ethnic identity. This may be the cause of many of the educational issues I learned about. I began to question their inter-relationships and how, as a future teacher, I could connect more students to school and learning. Research shows that students who feel connected to their schools are more successful. These issues shaped this Capstone Project. (See [Retrospective Appendix 3](#) for more information)

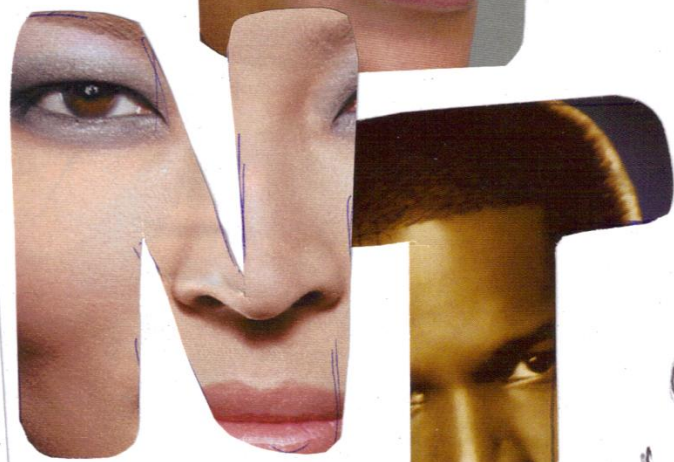


"Maintaining one's identity is the most basic human need and thus the motive underlying all human behavior." --Heinz Lichtenstein and Norman Holland, *Radical Pedagogy*



"Literature on culturally responsive pedagogy, as well as the successes of individual schools and programs indicates that teachers and schools can negotiate with students whose sociohistorically produced peer groups norms run counter to schooling." --Ann Locke Davidson, *Making and Molding Identity in Schools*

"Manifestations of identity and academic engagement are shaped not only by broad sociohistorical factors, but also by practices and relationships at the school level." --Ann Locke Davidson, *Making and Molding Identity in Schools*



"Subtractive schooling encompasses subtractively assimilationist policies and practices designed to divest Mexican students of their culture and language." --Angela Valenzuela, *Subtractive Schooling*

"People have many role identities each one corresponding to a social position they hold, and each having a particular value to them." --Nadia Flores-Gonzales, *School Kids/Street Kids*

and Learning

"Teachers and students drew on and integrated both academic and social resources as they developed models of 'self/knowledge,' models that simultaneously helped identify individual students and helped students learn the curriculum." -- Stanton Wortham *Learning Identity: The Joint Emergence of Social Identification and Academic Learning.*

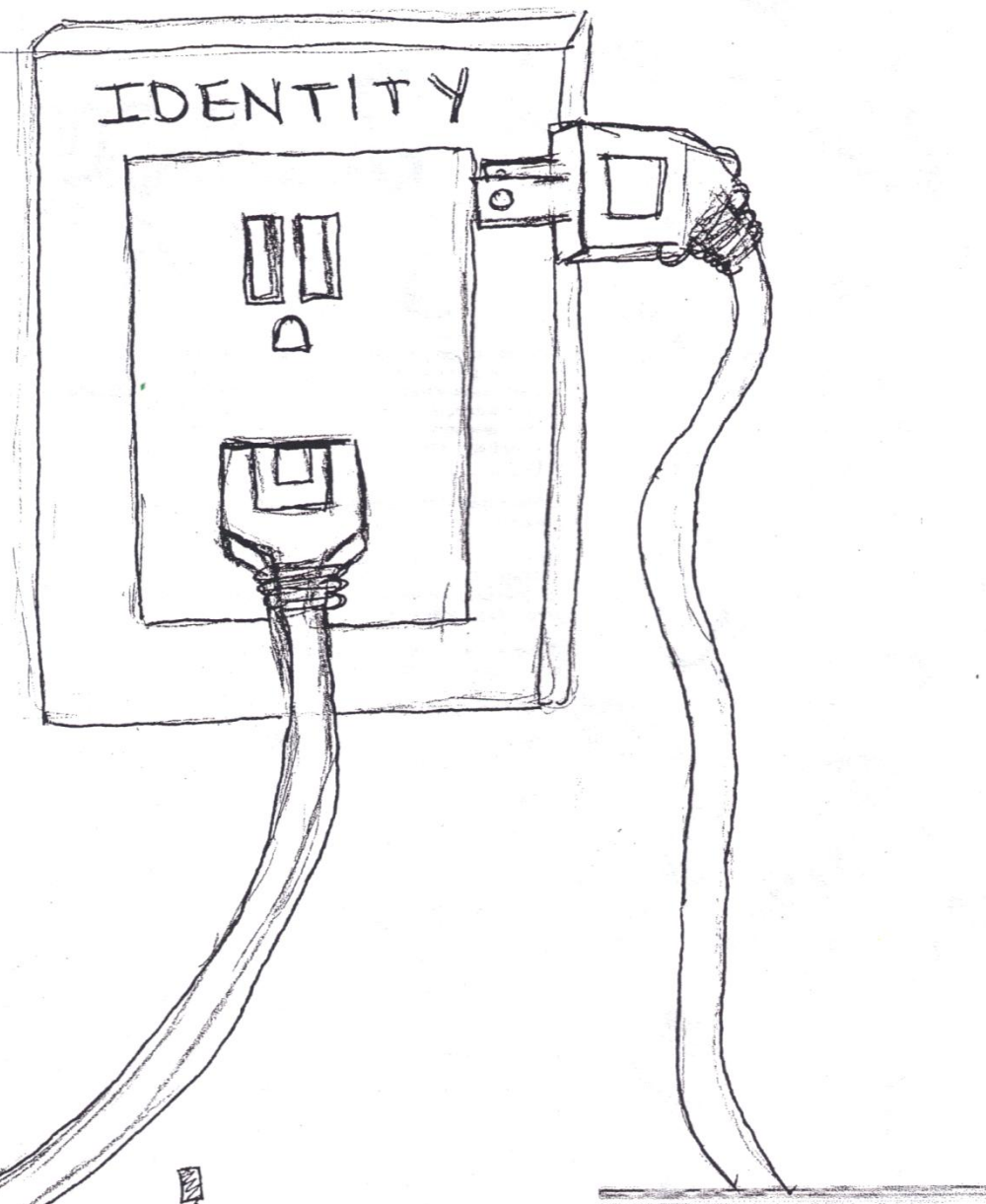


"Conceptions of self and the world affect how one's progress towards their goals is monitored, evaluated, redirected, re-evaluated, and pursued again. Thus, the self as a construct has far reaching implications for behavior, self-esteem, motivation, experience of emotions, and the world more broadly, and hence for interpersonal relationships, society, and culture." -- Angela Valenzuela, *Subtractive Schooling*

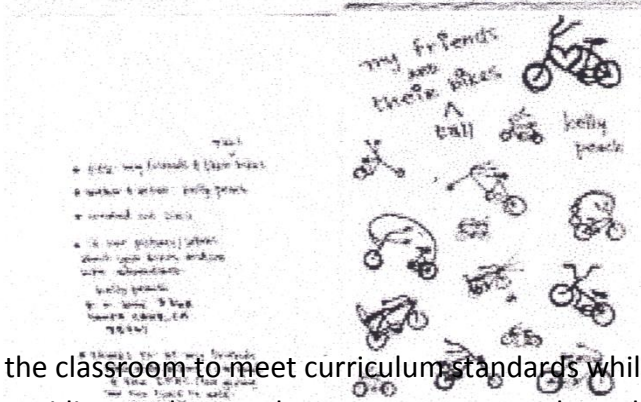
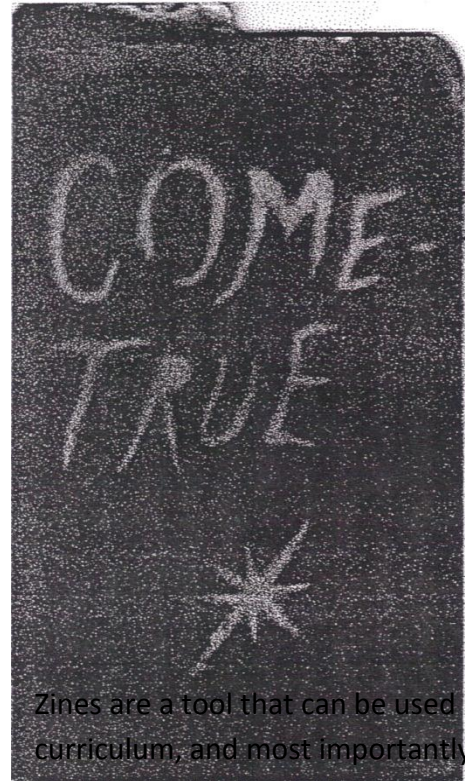
"When teachers withhold social ties...they confirm the belief that schooling is impersonal, irrelevant, and lifeless." --Angela Valenzuela, *Subtractive Schooling*



An Outlet For Identity



Zines



Zines are a tool that can be used in the classroom to meet curriculum standards while maintaining an anti-biased curriculum, and most importantly providing students a chance to express, explore, develop, and share their identity for the reasons found on the left hand page. Students will design, create, publish, collate, and distribute their own Zines using a variety of writing styles based on issues of identity including gender and ethnic identity. The lessons are not only designed to meet California Content Standards, but to focus on building and recognizing students' identities, while giving them educational and creative freedom. The lessons are outlined to guide the students through the process by first introducing the ideas of Zines and Identities, then examining the Zine process and issues of identity more explicitly, and then finally by creating a Zine. Don't know what a zine is? Continue for more info... (Lesson Plans Appendix 1Project Proposal Appendix 2)

In Schools

Students are forced to throw up their identity because it conflicts with institutional expectations of students, or what it means to be a socially acceptable student.

Culture

Language

Morals

Social roles

Religion

class

beliefs

Traditions

Students are:

- Required to be "Good" students and to follow rules and meet expectations.
- Grouped by age, gender, vocational/non-vocational, levels of achievement, socio-economic status.

This erodes individual identity and filters out cultural identity in order to create an end product of a socially acceptable student.



School practices such as student marginalization, certain rules, curriculum practices, perceived stereotypes, and the lack of relationships between teachers and students negate and undermine the recognition and development of students' individual identities. Educators are constantly trying to fix school problems through social reform, but the theories I have discovered through research indicate that if students identities and relationships are valued through the curriculum, students will be motivated to succeed. As it is in most classrooms now, students' identities are something they must "throw-up" when they enter the classroom doors.

**ACHIEVEMENT
GAP
DROPOUTS**

**FAILURE
STEREOTYPIC
MARGINALIZATION**

**N.C.L.B.
CROWDED
CURRICULUM**

**Issues Take Over Education
What happened to the students?**



**ACHIEVEMENT
GAP**

**PACKED
CURRICULUM**

FAILURE

DROPOUTS

N.C.L.B.

Many educational issues along with the educational practices mentioned on the previous page have become central to education and have ignored the students by forcing them to the background, which as mentioned before negates individual identity. This project aims to change that by making students apart of the curriculum so that they feel connected to the educational process and motivated to learn. In other words the goal is to make education a part of every students' identity so that they can and want to succeed in school. The idea is that by designing an anti-biased, student focused curriculum (through the use of zines) the issues and practices currently ignoring, negating, and eroding students' identities will be eliminated. (See Project Proposal Appendix 2)

Whatcha Mean What's A Zine?

What's A Zine?

Zines are a way for people to express issues and topics that are important to them through creating a mini magazine of any size and shape by themselves or with others that they then publish and distribute. Zines can contain comics, stories, recipes, drawings, poetry, essays, interviews, dairy entries, and any other kind of text. Zines are all about self expression and often about protest so the content can range to anything from racism to favorite bands.

I have included quotes from several research sources on zines, the most notable and helpful one in completing the project was Mark Todd's and Esther Pearl Watson's *Whatcha Mean What's a Zine*. I referred to this book several times doing research and to help guide the project process, as well as examples for the students.

(See Lesson Plans Appendix 1 and Project Proposal Appendix 2 for more information)

"Zine's are cheaply made printed forms of expression on any subject. They are like mini-magazines or home-made comic books about favorite bands, funny stories, sub-cultures, personal collections, comic anthologies, diary entries, pathetic report cards, chain restaurants, and anything else."

-- Mark Todd and Esther Pearl Watson, *Whatcha Mean What's a Zine*

"It was a half-letter-sized zine with a tiny booklet in the middle. It was covered with raw doodles and dense pages of text. The zine was irreverent and esoteric."

-Raina Lee, *Whatcha Mean What's a Zine*

"The necessary stuff you should include - A cover, body, contents, index, or title headings, text and art. Explanation of issue focus. Declaration of editor name and publication address."

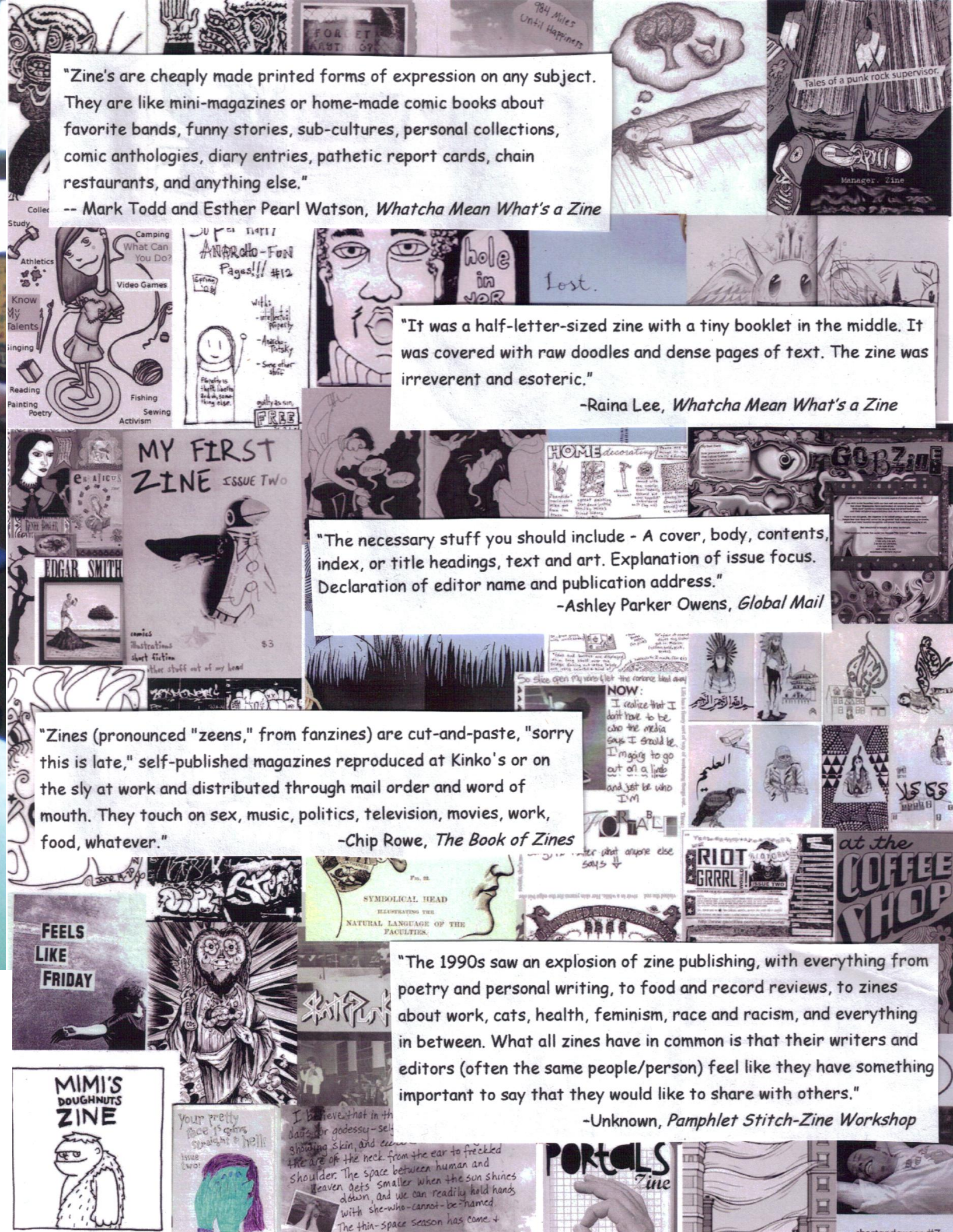
-Ashley Parker Owens, *Global Mail*

"Zines (pronounced "zeens," from fanzines) are cut-and-paste, "sorry this is late," self-published magazines reproduced at Kinko's or on the sly at work and distributed through mail order and word of mouth. They touch on sex, music, politics, television, movies, work, food, whatever."

-Chip Rowe, *The Book of Zines*

"The 1990s saw an explosion of zine publishing, with everything from poetry and personal writing, to food and record reviews, to zines about work, cats, health, feminism, race and racism, and everything in between. What all zines have in common is that their writers and editors (often the same people/person) feel like they have something important to say that they would like to share with others."

-Unknown, *Pamphlet Stitch-Zine Workshop*



Research

I enjoyed the research process researching identity and schooling, as well as Zines. It was interesting and relatively easy. I used Interlibrary Loan several times. (See Bibliography Appendix 5 for more information)

The Process

Praxis

And here we go...
15 1t-3rd Graders at Porter Youth Center in Seaside as my project guinea pigs.
(Continue on for more information.)

Lesson Plans

Lesson planning was a slow, tough process. I had a hard time finding other instances and examples of zines being used in education, but eventually found an awesome website connecting zine makers- and specifically zine teachers. (See Lesson Plans Appendix 4 for more information)

Session #1

- #1: Identity Discussion
- #2: Zine Explorers
- #3: I Am Poems

What's Identity?

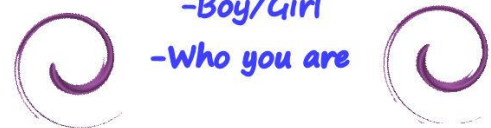
Students learn the meaning of identity and begin to internalize definitions of self.



ON THE BOARD:

What is Identity?

- You and what you like
- What you look like
- Where you are from
- Boy/Girl
- Who you are



Everyone has different identities
Can have commonalities

ON THE BOARD:

What's A Zine?

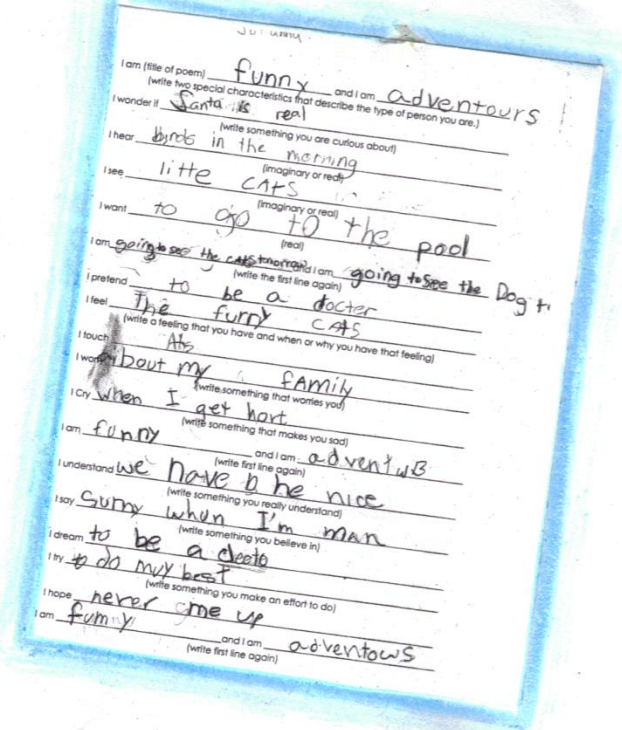
- About: Made to:
- People -Explain something
 - Bikes -Share work or ideas
 - Issues -Express identity

- Vs. Magazines:
- Homemade--paper/staples
 - Folded or sewn
 - Magazine without the "maga"
 - created by normal person
 - no gossip, fashion, etc

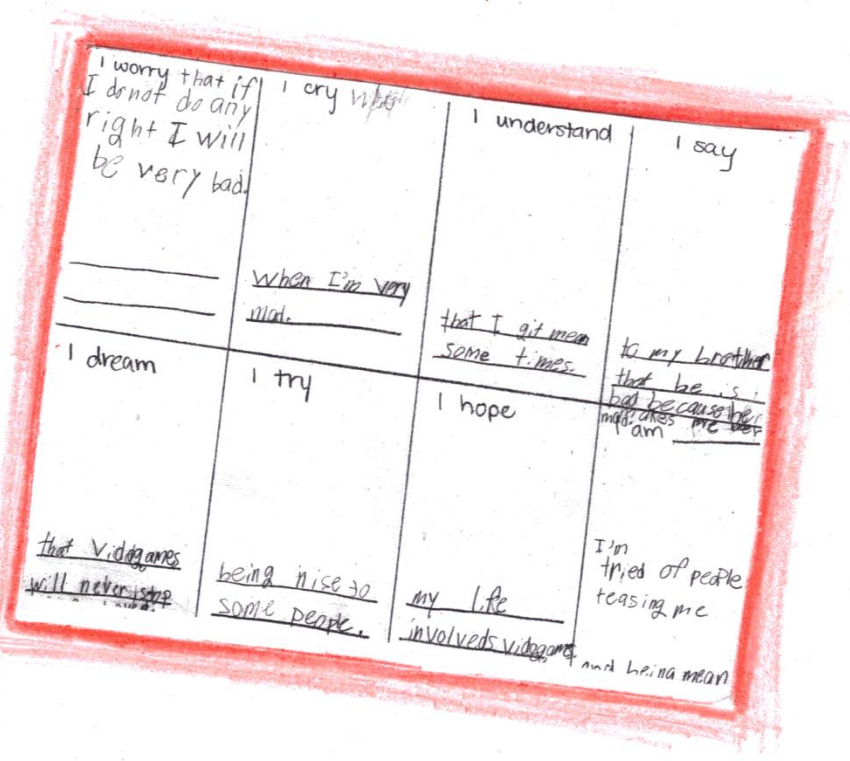
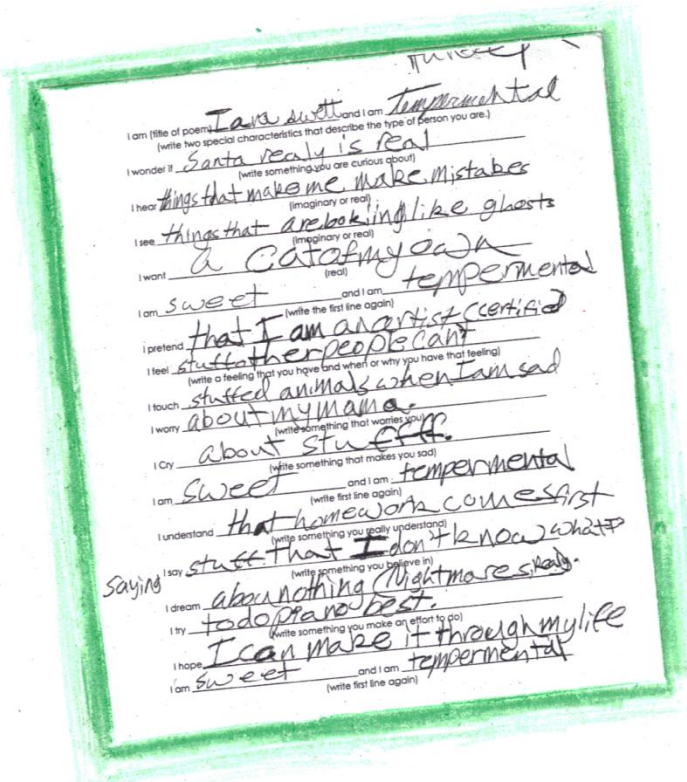
Definition:
Self made, published, and distributed work about someone's identity.

Whatcha Mean What's a Zine?- Zine Explorers

Students examine examples of Zines and understand them as a tool to express identity.



"I AM..."



After the many hours spent researching and lesson planning I felt very prepared for the first session, which ended up being successful even after worrying about how I was going to accommodate 1st-3rd graders that I wasn't expecting to have in the class. The students had an excellent discussion on the basics of identity and zines (as seen in the "On The Board" sections) and appeared to comprehend both topics. The "I Am Poems" were a fun project and I think they really helped to scaffold the idea of identity. However, because I didn't make the poems a part of the zines there was some disconnection there and next time it would probably be more valuable to connect them. Students liked that they had the option to draw or write the poems, although many of them never got to the drawing part. Some students needed help thinking more deeply about questions on the poem, but I think this just aided the process of recognizing their identities.

ON THE BOARD:

Stereotypes:

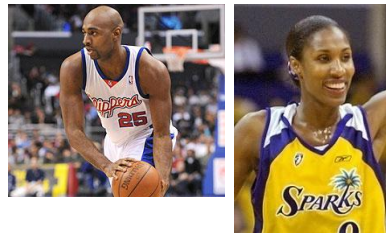
What We Know:

- Racism - Genderism
- Ageism - Appearance
- Judgements - Assumptions

Dictionary Definition:

- An oversimplified conception, opinion, or image

Which Basketball Player is Better?



Stereotype: Black men are better at sports. Race & Gender

Who is more successful?



Stereotype: Hot girl is more successful. Appearance & Gender

Session 2

- #1: Stereotypes Discussion
- #2: Making Judgments
- #3: Behind the Mask Activity

What are their careers?



Stereotype: White men are smart. Black men play sports/entertainment. Race

Who is better at sports?



Stereotypes: Disabled people cannot do things. Disability & Appearance.

Going into Session 2 I wasn't sure what to expect. The 1st-3rd graders understood the concepts in first session, but I wasn't sure if they were going to grasp the idea of stereotypes. First I asked the students what they knew about stereotypes and had them look up the definition in the dictionary. Then they made judgments on people in pictures and we determined what stereotypes were at play. Next the students wrote about a time they had been stereotyped or had stereotyped another person. Finally, we moved onto the Behind the Mask activity. Once again I was amazed at how well the students comprehended the concepts of stereotypes and connected them to themselves, especially seen in the Behind the Mask Activity. However, again I should have done a better job of connecting the concepts to zine creation as these ideas did not transcend into their zines.



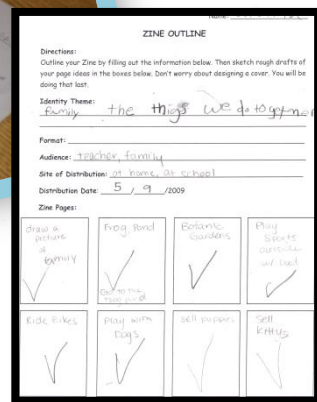
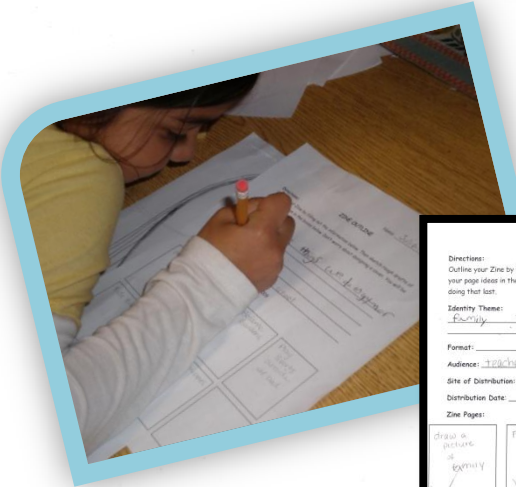
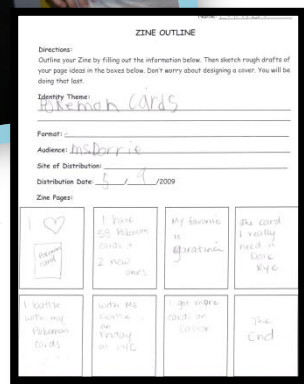
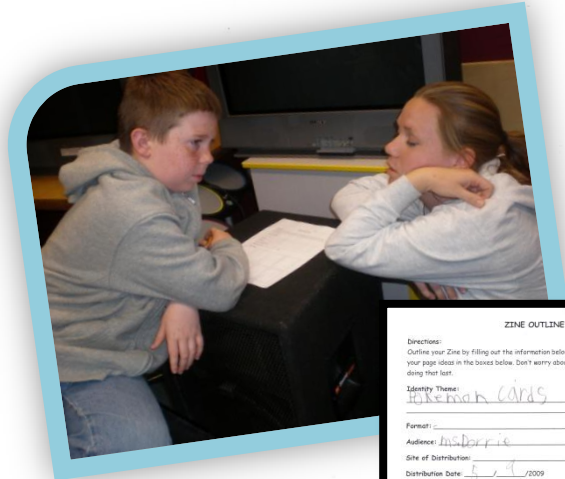
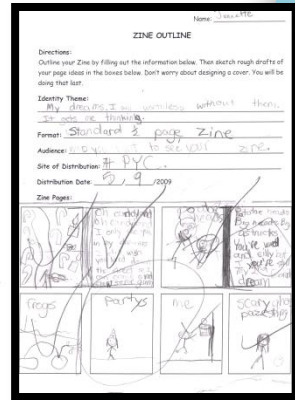
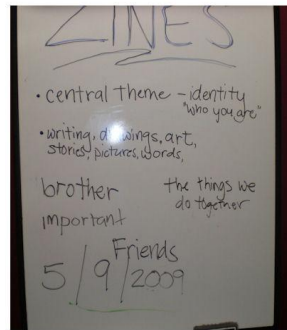
VS. This is what people see me as VS. This is who I really am.

Behind the Mask Activity!

Zine Outline

Students comprehend zining or writing as a process beginning with an outline, which they complete during this session using the I Am Poems and Mask activities.

ON THE BOARD:



Zine Work

Students use their outlines and therefore what they have learned thus far about identity to begin working on their zine.

Sessions

3, 4, & 5

During Session 3 the students and I discussed the importance of the planning and outlining process of writing in order to fulfill one of the 5th grade California Content Standards. As mentioned earlier I was worried that the younger students would be challenged by the 5th grade standards, but once again they surprised me. However, the internalization of the importance of outlining or planning writing would not happen for students until the next few sessions when the students were using the outlines as they created pages, putting checkmarks over the ones they had completed. Realizing this, I made sure to reiterate the discussion we had had.

A project issue that I began to see arise during this sessions was the absence of several children during various sessions because of the fact that the Youth Center is not a place the students are required to attend like school. This not only compromised the student's work and learning process, but also the outcomes of the project. In the end these students who would come occasionally ended up just helping other students with their zines versus trying to create their own.

Session 3, 4, and 5 were very busy and a lot of fun. As the students were working busy on their own zine pursuits I had the opportunity to work with students one on one helping them edit their work, guide the process, and think more deeply about their topic/theme. I discovered that this one on one teaching time aided in the success of the students understanding identity topics more deeply. This time was also important in building relationship between me, the teacher, and my students which identity research points out as being vital in the formation of a student identity because it gives students the opportunity to share and get feedback on their ideas and thoughts—their identity. While these sessions were successful identity focused work sessions there was a loss of focus on the content standards for two reasons, the inclusion of 1st-3rd graders and the time restraint. Next time there are several changes I would make to improve this issue (See Reflection Appendix 3).

Editing

Students understand editing as a necessary step in the writing process. Students learn editing symbols and practice giving constructive criticism.

ON THE BOARD:

Why Revise?

- Get new ideas
- fix misspelled words/learn how to spell
- share work
- fix/improve drawings
- Use dictionaries



"I can't tell what the story is about because you don't have any words. Maybe you should use some words."

Session

"Maybe you could add a page about why Transformers are important to you."

"You should write your poems on the computer because it has spell check."



Final Zine Session

Students make final edits, complete their zines, and prepare them for publication.



PLEASE, I
NEED HELP!



Session 6 focused on teaching another portion of the 5th grade content standards on writing regarding the revision process of writing. Students had to work in a pair to edit and make suggestions about each others work through a peer review interview (See [Lesson Plans Appendix 1](#)). I included quotes from the students that I wrote down as they were completing the process. I really think students gained important insight not only in ways to improve their zines, but about the importance of editing. This was especially apparent through our discussion as seen in "On the Board." However, as a teacher I could see why it would be important to include more writing for them to retain the importance of revision (See ["Project Now and In the Future"](#)). After the revision session our time had run out, but the students really wanted to work on their zines so I gave them some time to do that. This time was also valuable because it allowed them to make the changes to their zines while the discussions with their peers were still fresh in their minds. Next time I think it would be valuable to include the self-editing step, and some how the creation of actual drafts before the final draft so that students could learn

Session 7 was HECTIC! I devoted the session to finishing the zines because it was the day of the deadline we had all agreed on. As students were working hard to do that they needed extra help printing, editing, accessing supplies, sounding out words, hanging drawings on the windows to trace, etc. so the room was filled with "Ms. Dorrie, Ms. Dorrie, Ms. Dorrie." It was funny because I didn't even really notice until the secretary who was working in the room got annoyed by it. I was just so excited that they were excited and cared so much about the project. In the future I would consider having parent volunteers, or teacher's aids help at this stage (See [Reflection Appendix 4 for more info.](#))

Sessions

8

Finish, Copy, Collate

Final Zine Work and Publication

Students finish their zines, publish them with the copy machine, and prepare for distribution.

With a class full of students and one copy machine located at the front desk I asked another leader to watch the students who were finishing up their zines and I took the ones who were done in groups of three. By the time the hour session was over each student had their zine copied and was working to fold and staple. After the session they had some extra time and continued to put their zines together until they were finished. The students really enjoyed copying and collating their work. I think it gave the students a sense of pride for what they had created.

Session 11

Distribution, Sharing, and Final Thoughts
Students distribute their zines, read those of their group-mates, share their reactions, make and receive constructive criticism, and go through the final interview process.

I didn't know there were Pokemon like

It says that she is a good artist and really wants to be a singer when she grows up.

Can I have one?!?
Can I have one?!?


My sister did something nice in hers. She said I was cute and sweet. Can I make one?

Session 9 was supposed to include the final discussion, but the students were having so much fun sharing, collecting, and looking at their zines that we spent the whole session doing that instead. The quotes on the page are a sampling of what I observed during the session and when students were sharing with friends and family outside the group later. The students were really excited to share their work and enjoyed the positive feedback they received from friends, parents, and other staff members. The project will be exciting to carry on into the future at PYC because it will further root the students in their identity and eliminate educational issues and because after the sharing session there are so many more students interested in making a zine. It's interesting that the learning aspect of identity and zines extended past the classroom to other students, an implication I did not expect.

STUDENT ZINES


COMMENTARY FROM CLOSING INTERVIEWS AND PICTURES OF STUDENTS' FINAL WORK.

My Pokemon
Chris




Collection

Pikachu
He has red cheeks.
He does thunder-bolt.



Churon
He is a water Pokemon.
He does water gun.




I like Pokemon because they are cool. They are cool because you can battle each others Pokemon. I like certain Pokemon because they are stronger and have cool powers. I wish I could have a Pokemon to use. I would train them to be the best Pokemon.

3rd Grade Pokemon Theme 1/4 page Format

"I choose to write about Pokemon because I like to collect them and find out what they're powers are."

"I liked making zines because i got to look at Pokemon pictures and learned more about them."



Chris

3rd Grade Friend/Future Theme 1/2 Page Format

"I wrote a story I imagined about an adventure with me, a dog name Chestnut and a squirrel named Peanut."


"My favorite page in my zine is the concert page because I want to be a singer when I grow up"

3rd Grade Dreams Theme 1/2 Page Format

"I drew pictures and wrote poems about my dreams to tell people that my dreams are important."

"I learned more about me and how to make zines."

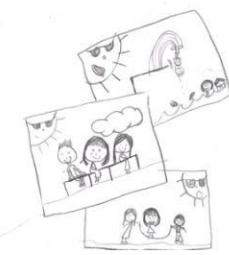
MY DREAMS



By: Jannette

Friends


Friends are very special, they never let you down, Even if you turn on each other they still never let you down.



Possibility Land


Possibility Land, Possibility Land Where you can do anything you want. Anything you do, it always comes to life.

So if you go to Possibility Land, you'll be surprised what you can do. So, go ahead and go And let your dreams come true.



Ghost

Ghost, zombies, bears, what will you ever do when they come to you. My idea is to run away so they don't get me because they might beat me up.



Jannette

We got our Rockstar Posters!

The good the Bad & THE UGLY

My name is Hunter. I have a pet named Chestnut. He has a squirrel named Peanut. Cool huh?



Hunter

These are the final zine works completed by some of the students along with quotes from their closing interviews. Their work involving identity, sharing themselves, etc. proves the success of the project.

(See Session 10 and Reflection Paper Appendix 3 for more information.)

**3rd Grade
Friendly Theme
Full Page Format**

"My zine is about animals who want to go to B.K., but don't have any money. Then I come along with some B.K. and give it to them."

"It's about when you do nice things you get nice things back."

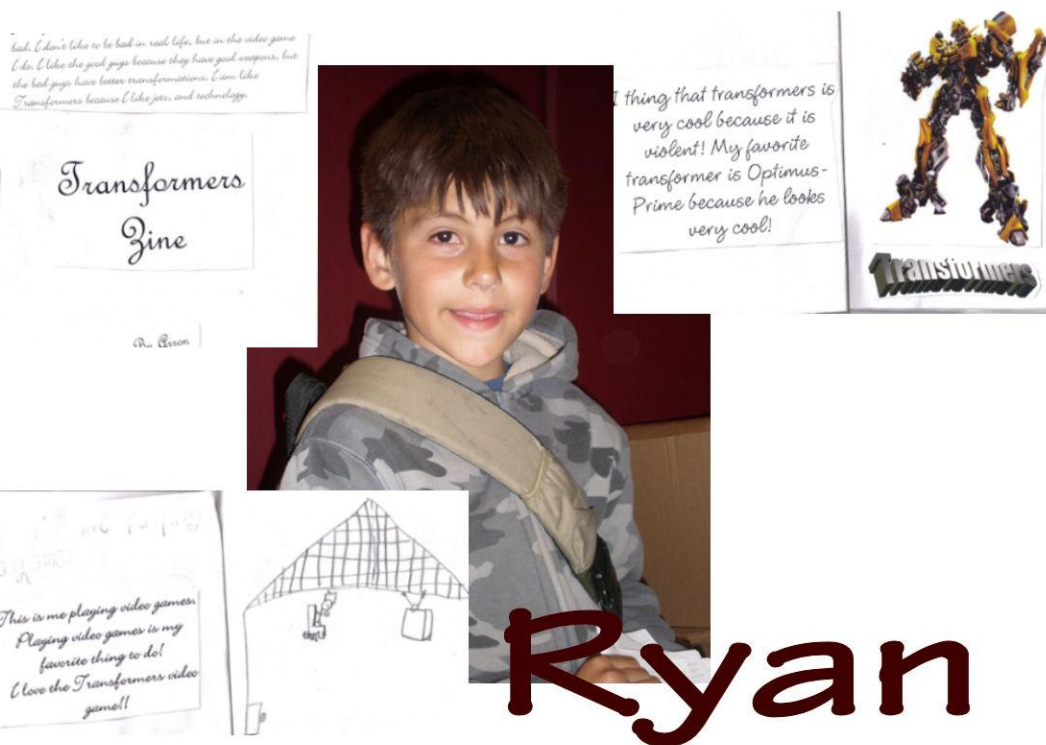


Jasmine

**2nd Grade
Transformers Theme
1/4 Page Format**

"I made this zine because I love Transformers"

"I hope I get to make more zines."



Ryan

**2nd Grade
Dragon Theme
Military Theme
Full Page Format**

"I made one about dragons and one about Military."

"My mind decided to write about these things because they are my hobbies."

"I made two zines because I rather do them than homework."



Igor

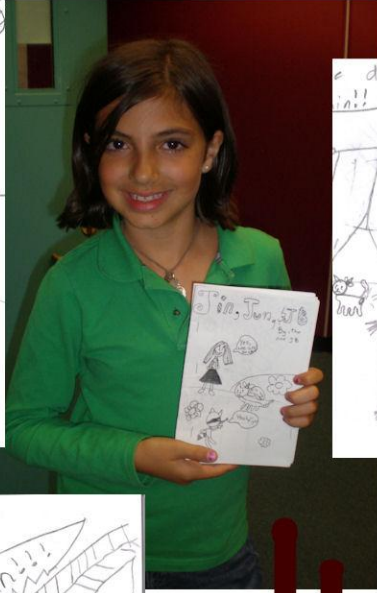
**1st Grade
Family Theme
1/2 Page Format**

"I wanted to share what my family does because it's something fun to do."

"From the project I learned what a zine is and how to make them."



Juliana



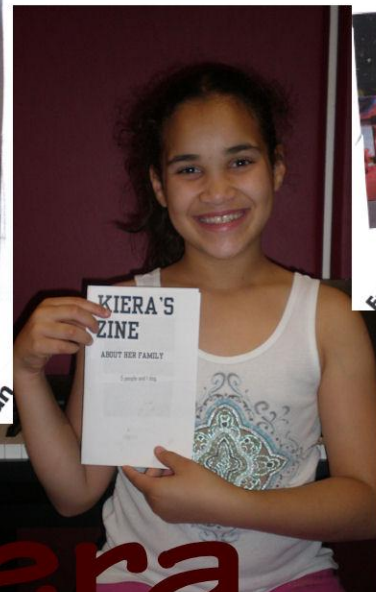
Julia

5th Grade
Pets Theme
1/2 Page Format

"I wrote my zine to be funny and to show people I like cats. Also, to teach them just to be yourself."

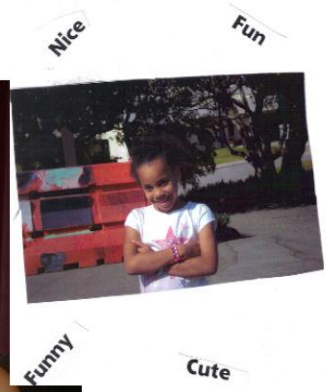
"Next I'm going to make a zine about my family and friends."

MYSELF



Kiera

MY LIL' SIS.



KIERA'S ZINE

ABOUT HER FAMILY
5 people and 1 dog.

4th Grade
Family Theme
1/2 Page Format

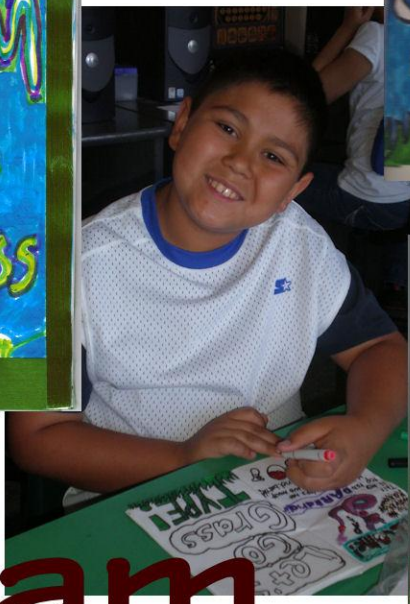
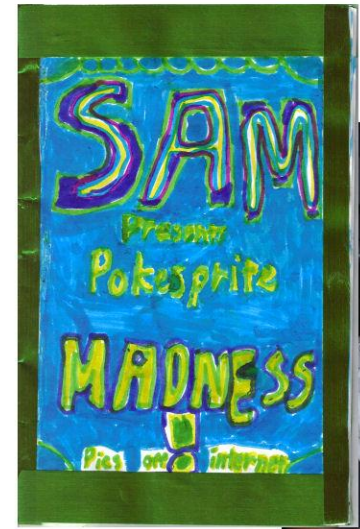
"My zine is about my family and the way they look and act."

"I wrote about that because all my family members inspire me."

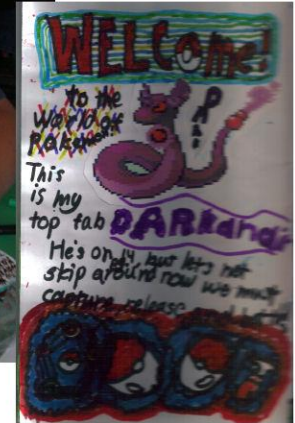
5th Grade
Pokemon Theme
1/2 Page Format

"I wrote about Pokemon because I like to create my own and I wanted to share them with everyone."

"I created the Pokemon in the Paint program on the computers then worked really hard to make my zine look nice."



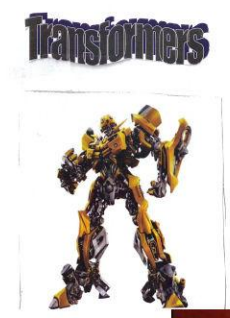
Sam



2nd Grade
Transformers Theme
1/2 Page Format

"I wrote about Transformers because I like them." and they're awesome."

This is a picture of Bumblebee. He is my favorite Transformer because he has lasers and he is the smallest. He is also the good guy just like me!



This is me playing video games. Playing video games is one of my favorite things to do. My VERY favorite video game I think is Transformers.



My Favs. Transformers Zine



Samuel

10th SESSION

Final Reflection

For the final reflection portion of the project, which also acted as the students' assessment, we all sat down for a reflection conversation, or as I told them an interview. For the interview I filmed the students as I asked them the questions. This page contains some the questions and the students answers. Some of the answers disappointed me, but helped me to come to a conclusion about what I can do better in the future. Overall however, their answers proved to me the overall success of the project. My favorite responses were to the question below. I think it provided the most insight into how students feel about school and learning, like it is work that they have to do and is not often fun, as well as something they don't feel apart of. If anything I think the project was most successful at making students feel like they were an important part of the class and the youth center. (For further analysis and reflection please see [Reflection: A Zine Project on Identity and Learning Appendix 4](#))

What did you learn?

"I learned about identity and not to judge people by their looks."

"Nothing."

"That if you do something nice, you will get something nice in return."

Did you learn anything about your classmates?

"I learned that Hunter wants to be a singer, a model or an artist."

"Not really."

Did you learn anything about yourself?

"I learned that I'm good at art. People actually liked my artwork."

"I learned more about Pokemon, my hobby."

"The military does lots of jobs."

Would you want to do a project like this in school?

"Yeah, because you only get the chance to share what you want in Kindergarten show and tell."

"Our class is full of other stuff, but we could do zines instead of journal writing and talk about identity and stereotypes."

"School would be more fun if we did stuff like this."

Would you make a zine again?

"Yeah, I'm working on another one already."

"Probably not, I can't copy things."

"If Ms. Dorrie does a zine project again."

The project
now

A personal checklist

Complete Capstone

Make improvements

Continue zines at PYC.

and in

**The
Future**

Use in future classroom

Continue to improve project

Publication?

Share with fellow teachers

Continue to recognize the issue of identity erosion and teach for the students!

How Liberal Studies Made Me

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Dorrie Coman

Appendix 1

Zines: Multi-style Texts about Identity

Author: Dorrie Coman

Grade: 4

Estimated Lesson Time: 8-10 about an hour long sessions

Overview:

Zines are a way for people to express issues and topics that are important to them through creating a mini magazine of any size and shape by themselves or with others that they then publish and distribute. Zines can contain comics, stories, recipes, drawings, poetry, essays, interviews, dairy entries, and any other kind of text. Zines are all about self expression and often about protest so the content can range to anything from racism to favorite bands.

Students will design, create, publish, collate, and distribute their own Zines using a variety of writing styles based on issues of identity including, gender and ethnic identity. The lessons are not only designed to meet California Content Standards, but most importantly to focus on building and recognizing students identities, while giving them educational and creative freedom. The lessons are outlined to guide the students through the process by first introducing the ideas of Zines and Identities, then examining the Zine process and issues of identity more explicitly, and then finally by creating a Zine.

Outcomes:

- Zines act as a way to unite the student's school identity with their outside identity, culturally, racially, socioeconomically, and academically, so that they become and are recognized as a holistic, intelligent and unique individual. In other words Zines are not only a curricular learning tool, but an outlet for identity allowing students to explore who they are, as well as the identity of their peers. This has many positive outcomes including every student feeling a part of the classroom and school community ideally leading to a higher rate of student motivation and therefore a higher student success rate. It also results in teachers and other members of the school community gaining insight into the identities of their students allowing them to build closer relationships with the students and to develop a curriculum that is important to their students.
- Other outcomes include: an anti-biased curriculum that meets each learning style, and an awareness of social justice issues surrounding identity--specifically stereotypes.

Content Standards:

Reading

1.5 Students use a thesaurus to determine related words and concepts.

1.6 Students distinguish and interpret words with multiple meanings.

Writing

1.0 Writing Strategies Students write clear, coherent sentences and paragraphs that develop a central idea. Their writing shows they consider the audience and purpose. Students progress through the stages of the writing process (e.g., prewriting, drafting, revising, editing successive versions).

1.1 Select a focus, an organizational structure, and a point of view based upon purpose, audience, length, and format requirements.

1.7 Use various reference materials (e.g., dictionary, thesaurus, card catalog, encyclopedia, online information) as an aid to writing.

1.10 Edit and revise selected drafts to improve coherence and progression by adding, deleting, consolidating, and rearranging text.

2.0 Writing Applications (Genres and Their Characteristics) Students write compositions that describe and explain familiar objects, events, and experiences. Student writing demonstrates a command of standard American English and the drafting, research, and organizational strategies outlined in Writing Standard 1.0.

Other Possible Topics/Standards that could be Included:

- Authentic Audience
- Publishing & Copy Write
- Also, the use of Zines in the classroom can occur across other content areas to combine English Language Arts Standards and Social Science Standards.

****Note****

The possibilities of Zines in education are endless with a little creativity. Ideally in order to gain all the positive outcomes the Zines would be a project to continue throughout the school year in combination with content standards if possible. Also, Zines can be used as an educational tool at all grade levels if changed to fit within the content standards.

Session #1:

Outcomes:

- Students are introduced to and begin to understand the definition of identity and how Zines are a tool to express identity.
- Students begin to recognize and share their unique identity through the “I Am...” poem activity, which they can use as a Zine page itself or as a guide for their Zine.

Outline of Activities:

1. What is Identity?
2. “Whatcha Mean What’s a Zine” --Zine Explorers

What is Identity?

Materials:

- Poster Paper
- Dictionary
- “I Am... Poem” worksheets
- “I Am...” example poem
- List of Adjectives
- Pencils
- Markers, Crayons, Colored Pencils

Procedure:

1. Ask students to talk to the people around them and come up with a definition for identity. Write their answers on the poster paper. Next have the students look up the definition in the dictionary then write that on the poster paper. Finally work with the students to come up with class definition of identity. Write it on the poster paper and save to post somewhere in the classroom.
2. Explain to the students that they are going to have the chance to share their identity through completing a poem called an I Am Poem. Read the I Am example poem ask the students what they learned about the person through their poem. Pass out the worksheets—let the students decide whether they would like to draw and write their answers, or just write them. While they are working walk around helping the students think deeper about who they are and describing it through the poem. Give them 10-15 minutes to work on the poem. If they don’t finish give them some time later or allow them to take it home and work on it.

“Whatcha Mean What’s A Zine” –Zine Explorers

Goal:

In this activity students will be working in small groups or pairs to determine what a Zine is.

Materials:

- Example Zines
- Magazines
- Zine Explorers Worksheet
- Poster Paper & Markers
- Pencils

Procedure:

1. Pair or group up students.
2. Pass out the Zine Explorers Worksheet, a Zine, and a Magazine to each group. Ask them to look at and examine each piece and fill out the Zine Explorers worksheet.
3. As they do this walk around to each group asking them to think more deeply about the differences, similarities, and goals of the two pieces.
4. After about fifteen minutes bring the students back together as a group and ask and discuss with them what a Zine is. Agree on a short definition, write it on the poster paper, and post.
5. Further discuss the idea of Zines:
 - a. The fact that they are a continuous publication.

Session #2:

Outcomes:

- Students take a deeper look at the issues surrounding identity, specifically stereotypes and how we can misjudge people based on their appearance.

Outline of Activities:

1. Stereotypes
2. Behind the Mask Activity

Stereotypes

Goal:

For students to develop an understanding of stereotypes, what they are, how they are used, who uses them, and why they are a problem.

Length: 20 minutes.

Materials:

- Stereotype pictures and notes
- Poster Paper
- Dictionary
- Lined paper and pencils

Procedure:

1. Review the definition of identity.
2. Write "Stereotypes" on the poster paper. Ask the students what they know about stereotypes and help them develop a working definition of them. Use the dictionary if necessary. Make sure to link stereotypes and identity.
3. Next explain to the students that you are going to be working with stereotypes to determine the identity of some people.
4. Hold up each set of pictures one by one. Have the students vote on the answer to the question. Ask some of them to explain their reasonings and note their answer on the poster paper.
5. Next have the students analyze which stereotype is at play in each of the questions and what the judgments are based on (appearance, race, gender, disability, etc.) and not their answers on the poster paper. Ask the students to determine if each one held true.
6. After the discussion ask students to think of and record a time when someone made assumptions about their identity based on stereotypes as well as a time they used stereotypes to judge someone.

(curriculum standards)

Behind the Mask Activity

Goal:

For students to further explore their identity by taking a look at who they are versus who people perceive them to be. Also, for students to explore the idea of different roles and how that influences their identity.

Length: 30 minutes

Materials:

- Pencils
- Colored Pencils/Markers/Crayons
- Behind the Mask Activity Worksheet

Procedure:

1. Finally tell the students that they are going to be thinking more about their identity and the idea of stereotypes by completing a Mask.
2. Pass out the Behind the Mask Worksheet. On one side of the mask students are to fill out the identity that people see. On the other side the identity they keep hidden or things people who are not their family or close friends might not know.
3. Inform students that they have 30 minutes to work on it, but do not have to complete the Mask. Also, that they can use words and pictures to express themselves and that the mask doesn't need to look like a face, but that it is a metaphor for identity.
4. Walk around and help students think more deeply about the concepts. Asking and answering their questions.

TIP: If students are having trouble understanding these the concept ask them to think about the judgments or stereotypes people might make of them. Also, ask them to think about the different roles they play—student, son/daughter, sister/brother, pet owner, athlete, etc. and how different people might think about them and their responsibility in those roles, as well as how they themselves feel playing those roles.

Session #3:**Outcomes:**

- Students have finalized the concept/theme of their Zine and its format and begin to create the Zine itself.

Outline of Activities:

1. Zine Outline
2. Begin Zine Work

Zine Decisions

Goal: For students to begin thinking about the identity theme they are going to create their Zine about and how they plan to go about representing the idea.

Length: 20 minutes

Materials:

- Zine Outline Worksheet
- Pencils
- Format Examples
- I Am Poems and Mask Activities
- Example Zines vs. Scribble Zine

Procedure:

1. Discuss the first step of the drafting process, outlining. Explain what it is and why it is important.
2. Pass out the Zine Outline worksheet and their completed activities. Ask the students to use these to help them develop a theme for their Zine. Many of them probably already have an idea about the theme they want to focus on, but help them to think more deeply about it.
3. Present the Format Ideas. Help students to decide their formats.
4. Present the idea of choosing an audience and help students decide theirs and therefore where they should distribute them.
5. As a class decide the distribution date of the Zine and remind students that this means everyone must be able to complete and copy their work by this date.
6. Before the session comes to a close present the Example Zines again and the Scribble Zine discuss the difference between the two and ask the students which one they rather read? Which one do they think the author took their time on? Ask them to keep this in mind in the creation of their Zines, but remind them that this does not mean their Zine has to be perfect because it is an expression of their identity- and who is perfect?
7. Collect students' outlines. If they have not finished they will have time during the next session.

Zine Work

Goal: For students to begin work on their Zines.

Length: 40 minutes

Materials:

- Paper
- Pencils
- Colored Pencils/Markers/Crayons
- Any other materials students need (see their Zine Outlines)
- Manila Folders (1 per student)
- Zine Outlines
- Zine Example

Procedure:

1. Pass out the students' Zine Outlines. Allow those who have not finished to work on doing so.
2. Pass out I Am Poems, Mask Activities, and Acrostic Poems so that students can develop these further if they decided to use them in their Zines.
3. Have examples on hand for students if they need to get some ideas.
4. Give students the free time to create. Walk around helping them, asking them questions, and giving them ideas.
5. At the end of the session have the students put their work in a manila folder with their name on it and file it away for the next session.
 - a. ****TIP**** Put the folders in a place where students can access them to work on them when they have some free time.

Sessions #4 & #5:

Outcomes: For students to get much of their Zine work completed.

Outline of Activities:

1. Zine Work

Zine Work

Goal: For students to begin work on their Zines.

Length: 60 minutes per session

Materials:

- Paper
- Pencils
- Colored Pencils/Markers/Crayons
- Any other materials students need (see their Zine Outlines)
- Zine Outlines
- Zine Example
- Students Zine Folders

Procedure:

1. Pass out the students' Zine Folders that contain all of their work thus far.
2. Have examples on hand for students if they need to get some ideas.
3. Give students the free time to create. Walk around helping them, asking them questions, and giving them ideas.
4. At the end of the session have the students put their work in a manila folder with their name on it and file it away for the next session.

Session #6:

Outcomes:

- Students have now completed significant work on their Zines and are ready to work on the revision process.

Outline of Activities:

1. 2nd Zine Exploration
2. Peer Edit
3. Zine Work

Peer Edit & Zine Exploration

Goal: For students to explore some excellent Zines, with the goal of coming up with better ideas for their own Zine pages and ways to make their Zines better and more appealing. For students to understand the editing process as part of the writing process.

Length: 20 Minutes

Materials:

- Zine Examples
- Activity Examples
- Poster Paper
- Students Zine Work
- Zine Revision Worksheet

Procedure:

1. Have students look at and discuss Zine Examples.
2. Ask them what they liked about the Zines.
3. Explain that this is a revision process and have them look at their own Zine Pages and a partner's and complete the Revision Worksheet.

Zine Work

Goal: For students to begin wrapping up their Zine projects and to include ideas they gained from the revision process.

Length: 40-60 minutes

Materials:

- Paper
- Pencils

- Colored Pencils/Markers/Crayons
- Any other materials students need (see their Zine Outlines)
- Zine Outlines
- Zine Example
- Students Zine Folders

Procedure:

5. Pass out the students' Zine Folders that contain all of their work thus far.
6. Explain to students that they are now working on their final publication copy so they need to start by making the suggested editing changes to their work so far.
7. Have examples on hand for students if they need to get some ideas.
8. Give students the free time to create. Walk around helping them, asking them questions, and giving them ideas.
9. At the end of the session have the students put their work in a manila folder with their name on it and file it away for the next session.

Session #7, 8:

Outcomes:

- Students are wrapping up their Zines and preparing them for publishing.

Outline of Activities:

1. **Cover Design**
2. Zine Work & Publishing

Cover Design

Goal: Students know what goes on a cover and why the cover is important.

Length: 10 minutes

Materials:

- Example Zines
- Example Books
- Zine Materials

Procedure:

1. With students look at the Zines and Books and write on the board the content of a cover.
2. Compare covers. Ask students which one's they like and what the covers say about the contents of the book.
3. Help them to design their own cover.

Zine Work and Publishing

Goal: For students to begin wrapping up their Zine projects and to begin the publishing process.

Length: 40-60 minutes

Materials:

- Paper
- Pencils
- Colored Pencils/Markers/Crayons
- Any other materials students need (see their Zine Outlines)
- Publishing Materials (varies on formats students have chosen)
- Zine Outlines
- Zine Example
- Students Zine Folders
- Access to a copy machine

Procedure:

10. Pass out the students' Zine Folders that contain all of their work thus far.
11. Give students the free time to finish creating.
12. At this point some students may be ready for publishing. Give them the necessary materials and guide them along the process. Each student's publishing process will be unique, but they should only need some guidance. Students will need access to a copy machine.
 - a. ****TIP**** I asked the office secretary ahead of time to help the students copy their Zines, but you may want to ask parent helpers or older students to help here.
13. At the end of the session have the students put their work in their manila folder. At this time if they have not yet finished their Zine work they are going to need to take it home as homework.

Session 9 & 10:

Goal: Students share their published zines with each other, their friends, and family. They complete the closing interview and final reflection discussion.

Length: 2 hours

Materials:

- Poster board
- Zines
- Camera
- Interview Questions

Procedure:

1. Allow sometime for students to share their zines. We had a zine party and everyone passed around, collected, and read each other's zines.
2. After giving students sometime to share take each student aside individually and ask them the following questions:
 - a. Tell me a little about your zine?
 - b. What do you think you did best?
 - c. What could you improve?
 - d. What did you learn from doing the project?
 - e. What did you learn about other people? About your self?
 - f. Would you make a zine again?
 - g. Why did you choose to write about that topic?
 - h. Who did you share with? Did they like your zine?
 - i. Whose did you like? Why?
3. After interviewing each student sit everyone down together as a group and discuss the project. Did they enjoy it? What would they like to do for the next zine?
4. I took some time at this point to explain why I was doing the project, to give them a chance to share themselves and learn how to write at the same time. Their reactions provided me with good insight for the future project.

Session #8 and #9:

Outcomes:

- To wrap up Zine work and to complete publishing so that the Zines are ready for distribution.

Outline of Activities:

1. Zine Work & Publishing

Zine Work and Publishing

Goal: For students to begin wrapping up their Zine projects and to begin the publishing process.

Length: 40-60 minutes per session

Materials:

- Paper
- Pencils
- Colored Pencils/Markers/Crayons
- Any other materials students need (see their Zine Outlines)
- Publishing Materials (varies on formats students have chosen)
- Zine Outlines
- Zine Example
- Students Zine Folders
- Access to a copy machine

Procedure:

1. Pass out the students' Zine Folders that contain all of their work thus far.
2. Give students some time to make final wrap-ups on their Zines.
3. Guide students along the publishing process.
4. At the end of Session #9 students should be ready to distribute their Zines. Guide them along this process if necessary, but like publishing students should be doing most of the work themselves.

Session Worksheets

I am (title of poem) _____ and I am _____ (write two special characteristics that describe the type of person you are.)

I wonder if _____ (write something you are curious about)

I hear _____ (imaginary or real)

I see _____ (imaginary or real)

I want _____ (real)

I am _____ and I am _____ (write the first line again)

I pretend _____

I feel _____ (write a feeling that you have and when or why you have that feeling)

I touch _____

I worry _____ (write something that worries you)

I Cry _____ (write something that makes you sad)

I am _____ and I am _____ (write first line again)

I understand _____ (write something you really understand)

I say _____ (write something you believe in)

I dream _____

I try _____ (write something you make an effort to do)

I hope _____

I am _____ and I am _____ (write first line again)

Zine Workshop

1. What is the Zine about?
2. How is it different from the Magazine?
3. Why did this person make a Zine?
4. What does the Zine look like? How was it made? What is it made out of?
5. What do you like and dislike about the Zine and Zines in general?

Session #2 Stereotype Pictures and Notes

















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10









Which Basketball Player is better?

1. Lisa Leslie:
 - a. #2 all-time in the WNBA in total rebounds and rebounds per game
 - b. #1 in total blocks and blocks per game
 - c. Scored 101 points in ½ of a game.
2. Mardy Collins:
 - a. Collins has air balled more shots than he's made since joining the Clippers.

What jobs do these people have?

1. Jefferey Dhamer:
 - a. Murdered 17 people.
2. Terry Crews
 - a. Earned Art Excellence Scholarship to Michigan State
 - b. Full ride athletic scholarship (football)-- later drafted to the San Diego Chargers
 - c. Actor, has played in many movies
 - d. Owns own entertainment company—Crews Arts Unlimited
 - e. Family man- 5 children

Who is better at sports?

1. Guy In Wheelchair
 - a. Plays on the National Wheelchair Basketball Association
2. Miss Dorrie
 - a. Is terrible at the sport

Which person makes the most money?

1. John Candy
 - a. Famous Actor and Comedian played in over 50 movies
2. Britney
 - a. My friend/working to be a model

Who is smarter?

1. Black Girl
2. White Boy
 - a. Boys and girls of all races/backgrounds have the ability to be smart.

Analysis:

- What are these judgments based on? (stereotypes, assumptions)
- Do they always hold true? So why do we use them?
- Determine what is being stereotyped in each example. (racial, dress, gender, etc.)

- Why do we have these stereotypes? Where do they come from? (media, school, parents, etc.)

Name: _____

ZINE OUTLINE

Directions:

Outline your Zine by filling out the information below. Then sketch rough drafts of your page ideas in the boxes below. Don't worry about designing a cover. You will be doing that last.

Identity Theme:

Format: _____

Audience: _____

Site of Distribution: _____

Distribution Date: ____/____/2009

Zine Pages:

Capstone Project Proposal

Student Identities and Zines

Dorrie Coman

2/20/2009

Appendix 2

Current educational practices and policies erode and ignore student's racial, cultural, socioeconomic, and gender identities forcing students to leave their unique characteristics at the classroom door in order to become socially acceptable. This erosion has many negative implications for students, including lack of motivation and interest in learning, failing, and dropping out. In the project, students created Zines, self-published self-distributed texts that include a variety of formats, mediums, and topics, with the goal of exploring and expressing their identity while meeting content standards. The objectives were to use what students bring into the classroom to motivate them to learn, to build an awareness and understanding of the identities of their peers, and most importantly to provide the students with the opportunity to become better rooted in their identity. The project outcomes include a *Zine Teacher Guide* that contains the projects goals, lesson plans, and students' achievements.

Introduction:

Heinz Lichtenstein and Norman Holland state that, “maintaining one’s identity is the most basic human need and thus the ultimate motive underlying all human behavior (Bracher, 2006, p. 3).” This is why lack of recognition for and development of individual student identities and the implications it has for students should be of great concern to educators, parents, and the greater community. Through school policies, regulations and practices, students are forced to put aside their individual cultural, ethnic, and racial identity because it conflicts with institutional expectations of students and what it means to be a socially acceptable student. This results in the erosion of students’ outside identities in order to fit the school identity and leads to students feeling uninterested and uninvolved in school. These feelings, in turn, contribute to failure or lack of success. As public schools across the United States follow the same policies and have the same general expectations of what it means to be a good student, the issue of schools eroding students’ identities definitely has local implications. These implications are apparent, not only through the number of drop outs and the achievement gap, but also through issues of teacher’s keeping students’ interest in learning and effectively teaching the curriculum. It is a problem that can be seen at every local public school, but the extent of the erosion differs depending on the school’s practices, the teachers’ awareness of the issue, and the individual students’ identities.

Through this project, my aim is to create social change through the installation of a curricular lesson/project that builds and recognizes each student’s individual identity with the goal of showing teachers that identity formation can easily be connected to the curriculum standards. Most importantly, my project aspires to stimulate the positive affects of linking students’ outside identities with their role as students.

Background & Motivation:

Through my educational experiences as both a student and an adult working with students, the issue of identity erosion in schools has been clear to me. Growing up in a small rural town where fifty percent of the

population is Latino, I saw and felt how schools and teachers stripped these students of their language and culture. In high school I can remember students coming into my classroom that knew very little English. They had moved to town with their parents; they were capable and intelligent, but the language barrier led them to failure and teachers were constantly pushing them to learn English without concern for their native language or culture. I remember having friends who hated school because they felt no connection to it; they didn't see the importance of obtaining a degree to work the same job they could work without it and eventually dropped out. As a teacher, I see students who are uninterested in school because they see no importance or relevance in the things they are learning. These experiences led to the conclusion that something is wrong in schools, that students are not allowed to represent who they really are or to engage in curriculum that supports their interests. This is a contributing factor to why so many students fail, shy away from school, and just don't care. They could not make "student" be a part of their identity because it wasn't fitting who they were. As soon as I reached this conclusion a year ago (thanks to curriculum in several of the class I took) I decided that identity would be the focus-issue for my Capstone. Then, last semester, I had the chance to define and work on a social change project in the LS Teaching for Social Change class, and I choose this as my overall focus. I worked with several of my classmates to define the problem and a project, and that was the beginning of my Capstone project.

The Specific Nature of the Problem:

The issue of public schools eroding students' cultural, racial, and ethnic identities affects every student from their first day of school onward. Whether they are male or female, have dark or light skin, their identities are somehow worn away throughout their schooling experiences. It is important to note schools work less effectively for African-American and Latino children, as well as children from low socioeconomic backgrounds (Davison, 1996, p. 19). In school the erosion prevents the very goal of public education-- to create a socially prepared, socially acceptable citizen. In public education in the United States, being socially prepared has come

to be defined by many things. First, being socially prepared is defined through the knowledge teachers are required to teach and students are required to learn-- the curriculum and content standards.

The curriculum often erodes identity by presenting information solely from the Eurocentric perspective. This occurs not only through Social Studies lessons based on English history, but also through the fact that students must know English to succeed in school. As Angela Valenzuela (1999) comments in her book *Subtractive Schooling*, "the curriculum therefore dismisses or derogates a large percentage of students' ethnicity, stripping them of their culture and language (p. 25)." Being a socially prepared citizen is also defined through certain behaviorisms, such as students raising their hands to speak or staying in their seats until excused. These behaviors are outlined by the school rules and policies. While, these policies may be important in maintaining structure, they are not culturally conscious and may not be what students are used to according to their identity outside of school. This causes destruction to their identity and meaning of themselves. All of these policies and practices require students to take on the identity of a "good student," a role that not only requires students to behave in certain ways that might strip them of their individual identities, but the "good student" role has little room for the recognition of the uniqueness among students' identities.

However, policies aimed at socially preparing and assimilating students are not solely responsible for the erosion of students' identities. Educators themselves play a role in this issue as well. As noted by Valenzuela (2008), many children, especially Mexican-American children's, sentiments towards school are strongly related to experiences with their teachers. In other words the relationships children build with their teachers are especially important in their attitudes towards schooling. The issue is that teachers can become so preoccupied with teaching the curriculum and finding the time to cover all the standard requirements, they loose track of the importance of caring for and building a relationship with the child, and listening to the students' core stories, an important part of helping the children make sense of who they are. This problem is furthered by the fact that

teachers are stereotypically Caucasian females who lack the knowledge about other cultures' languages and traditions and can act in ways or make requirements that invalidates the students' outside identity.

The consequences of eroding students' identities are important and noteworthy. If students' identities are being disregarded through the definition of education, educational practices and policies, and through educators' attitudes, then what message are children receiving and internalizing about themselves? These practices and policies, while important to maintain structure and accountability, are isolating and destructive to the students' views of themselves. Instead of students being interested, involved, and motivated in their education because the schools incorporate education meaningful to their identities, their cultural differences become markers of an identity to be maintained in opposition to the dominant school culture. This leads to the high rates of failure and the gap in achievement between minorities and their Caucasian peers, as well as the general non-interest in education.

Importance:

Identity erosion has obvious implications for students themselves, but these implications have a greater effect on the communities surrounding the schools and society as a whole. As mentioned previously, students who are unable to connect their outside identity to an educational identity face many issues including poor achievement, no interest in school, and even the possibility of dropping out. Not only will these implications affect the rest of these students' lives, but it will also have a major effect on their roles in society. According to Erickson in his *Psychosocial Theory*, "All people experience a matrix of specific stages throughout their lives where they either achieve the goal and can therefore grow and move onto the next stage, or they remain stuck at that stage until it is accomplished (Whitbourne, 2008, pp. 32-35)." According to Erickson's theory, from late childhood and adolescence into adulthood, individuals are working towards achieving identity. An individual who achieves a clear identity has a coherent sense of purpose regarding the future and a sense of continuity with the past. However, those who are in "identity diffusion," the opposite of identity achievement, will lack a

sense of direction and have vagueness about their purpose and an unclear sense of self (Whitbourne, 2008, pp. 32-35).

This leads to the conclusion that if students are unable to achieve a clear identity, then they are unable to establish and accomplish goals. Without goal-accomplishment, these students are unable to make valuable, productive lives for themselves, their families, or do valuable, productive things for the communities where they live. Also if all students are being shaped to think and behave the same way, diversity in thought, ideas, and culture within the community are lost. These are two major reasons why schools and teachers are responsible for creating an environment and curriculum that develops and appreciates individual students' identities. Although difficult in application, drop out rates and the achievement gap will decrease, and every student will more readily connect with education, creating the chance for social mobility through education, resulting in achieving success for themselves and productive contributions to the local community.

Literature Review: What's been done?

There are several developmental theories that stress the importance of identity formation in the school age years and into early adulthood. Two important theories are Erickson's *Psychosocial Theory* mentioned earlier and Piaget's *Identity Development Theory*. There are also several educators and educational reformers, a few who are mentioned previously who have written books, articles, essays, and speeches relating these theories to educational issues. These educators present pleas for politicians, school officials, and teachers to take notice and take action towards resolving the issue. In her book *Making and Molding Identity in Schools*, Ann Locke Davidson (1996), presents the call to action most clearly by saying that we need to "tie identity to social achievement and culture to schooling practices". If we don't students feel like they must pick between their racial identity and academic identity.

School reformers and teachers have made several attempts to try and solve the educational issues related to identity erosion. Examples of these attempts include the legislation of laws including the No Child Left

Behind Act aimed towards providing the opportunity for all children to succeed. Other attempts include decreasing class sizes and creating vocational tracks for students who are not successful in the academic track. While these reform policies have positive goals that aim to ease the issues of high drop-out rates, lack of interest in learning, and the high achievement gap, they remain unsuccessful and even end up further perpetuating the problems. Because the reforms are not identity focused, are poorly structured, and not financially supported, they are not successful. However, according to local educators I interviewed, while there have not been major educational reforms based on recognizing individual identity, there has been positive action in some schools and classrooms. Mostly these educators mentioned the inclusion of multicultural literature and the study of various traditions and celebrations across cultures. However, when asked whether the teachers believed these actions were successful in students feeling connected and interested in their education, the teachers responded that these practices are only successful during the specific lesson. When they return to teaching to the standards, the students again lose interest. When the teachers were asked their opinions on how to begin to solve the issue and work towards individual identity inclusion, many of them proposed ideas that the educational reformers propose in their books: to create a curriculum that is open and individually focused with intense interactions between students and teachers; to relate school learning to outside learning; to educate and train teachers about cultural inclusion and recognition in their classrooms and curriculum; and to create a curriculum that is completely multi-culturally focused, not just through literature.

Project Description:

As a future teacher who agrees with the teachers' opinions and educational reformers who believe that change comes for a curriculum that is inclusive of all students' identities, the project I plan to implement is to design and teach a lesson that I could use in my classroom to build and recognize students' cultural, racial, gender, and ethnic identities, while still addressing the required standards. This project aims to add to what is already being accomplished in terms of reducing and eliminating identity erosion. First, it educates teachers

about the importance and ease of identity inclusion in the curriculum, and second, and more importantly, it provides the students I work with the developmental benefits of building a clearer picture of themselves, the joys of learning because they find the material meaningful, and the opportunity to succeed.

More specifically for this project, I will design a lesson in which the students create and publish a Zine. These are self-published and self-distributed works that allow members of a community to express and discuss what matters the most to them. Through the creation of the Zine, the students will be able to express concepts and issues that are important to them through drawing, poetry, and/or essays. The Zine will act as a stabilizing force for students to navigate the various social and scholastic identities that they are faced with. Basically the Zine will act as a structure for students to analyze the “self,” but will also include learning requirements from the Language Arts Content Standards for California Public Schools. What makes this project so unique is the fact that it is focused on the individual, it gives students the opportunity to explore their identities, it includes curriculum standards, and gives students freedom in their education.

The community partner I with which I will be working is Porter Youth Center, an after-school program for school age children. I chose this organization for one main reason—I work there. At first I thought this decision could be taking the easy way out and might be problematic because it is not a classic classroom setting. However, after careful consideration, I came to the conclusion that the benefit of knowing the personal histories, likes and dislikes of the children who attend would better simulate a classroom environment and student-teacher relationship. Also, even though the center is not a “classroom,” learning, teaching, and identity development are a central focus of our programming and the project would work to further these. Finally, my personal attachment to and relationship with the children will better allow me to fully present the children with the benefits of the project. Porter Youth Center will also be a beneficial place to complete this project because being a military youth center, its population is culturally diverse and because the children have the added identity of being a military child.

The implementation of this Identity Zine Project will occur in eight two hour sessions over a two week period in March with a group of fifteen third through fifth graders. The first few sessions will be dedicated to an introduction of the idea of Zine’s in which students will define the medium, layout, and distribution strategy they will use for their Zine. During this time, we will also work on scaffolding ideas about racial, cultural, and gender identity, with students beginning to define their identities through activities and discussions. The activities and Zine introduction will be inclusive of content standards. The final sessions will focus on the construction of their Zines and will be based in Language Arts standards. The materials and supplies I will use for the project—paper, pencils, markers, computers, etc. will be provided by Porter Youth Center. At the end of the project, the lessons that I have created will be combined into a curriculum packet containing an introduction describing the importance of identity development in learning as well as individual lesson plans outlining the goals and outcomes, standards, materials, and activities of each two hour session.

The packet will also include tips I learn along the way, suggestions for continuing the project, and an analysis of the project as well as the children’s Zines as examples. The idea of creating this curriculum packet is to make it easy for other teachers to implement in a classroom. I am striving for clarity and quality. The success of my project will be measured through the outcome of my students’ Zine pages and whether or not they met the goals and outcomes of identity development as well as the content standards. However, even if there is no apparent growth, I believe the project will still be worthwhile because I will be able to analyze what contributed to the lack of success and develop other ways to fight the problem of identity erosion in schools.

Timeline:

What?	Completed By:
Lesson Plans	March 16 th , 2009
Sessions Completed	March 27 th , 2009

Conclusion:

The problem of identity erosion in schools is an issue that cannot be ignored. The tremendous negative implications affect students' educational career and life opportunities. If education improves an individual's chances of social mobility and is the motive underlying all human behavior, then doesn't it seem like the school system should purposefully pursue meaningful methods to instill this core human need? My project recognizes this issue and strives to make changes through identity-focused curriculum development and implementation.

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How Liberal Studies Made Me

How My Academic Experiences Influenced My
Capstone Project

Dorrie Coman

Appendix 3

Reflecting back on my experiences as I prepare to graduate and move on to the next phase in my life I couldn't agree more with the saying, "College is one of the best times of your life." My experience in college has provided me with so many opportunities that I wouldn't have had otherwise and I have grown tremendously as a person—intellectually, spiritually, and socially. The Liberal Studies outcomes based coursework integrated a broad view of a number of disciplines including humanities, natural and social sciences, and service learning and has shaped me into a well rounded intellectual individual (CSUMB, 2008). The curriculum focused on teaching me and my colleagues the knowledge necessary to teach in the state of California, as well as the skills necessary to survive in an educational system complicated with an endless amount of issues. While I hold all the knowledge I have gained as being important for my future career, there are certain experiences that have had the most influence on my development as a future teacher and specifically in the development of my Capstone Project.

For my Capstone Project I am confronting the issues surrounding identity and its effect on learning. Specifically I am examining how schools erode certain identities through specific educational practices and policies. My project entails the creation and imploration of a curricular project that focuses on building student's individual identities while meeting state content standards. The project is focused around the creation of Zines. Zines are a way for members of a community to express and discuss what matters the most to them by creating a piece of work and then self publishing it and distributing it to an audience of their choice. The idea is that each student will create and publish Zines based on topics that are important to them and who they are therefore allowing them to explore, reaffirm, and share their identity. In other words, the Zine will act as a stabilizing force for students to navigate the various social and scholastic identities they are faced with. The goal of the project is to encourage and promote the academic success of more students and to educate teachers about the importance and ease of incorporating student's individual identity into the curriculum. The reason I chose this topic is because the ideas and issues surrounding identity is one that has been very prevalent throughout my

academic experiences at CSUMB especially through the completion of my major emphasis—a minor in Human Development, as well as through my service learning experiences volunteering at local schools and educational organizations, and finally through specific coursework aimed at identifying educational issues and what is being done to confront them. It is also an issue that is important to me as a future teacher because it is central to the success of students and because it plays a role in many educational issues.

The Liberal Studies outcome based education is specified through Major Learning Outcomes (MLOs) which identify certain courses students must complete to meet these educational outcomes. Liberal Studies upper-division MLO 10 titled *Subject Area Emphasis* says, “Students create a minimum 12-unit, upper-division, curricular focus of study that expands the knowledge of humanities, mathematics, social sciences, natural sciences, technology, human growth and development, language studies, and the arts commonly taught in elementary school curricula (LS Advising, 2008).” For my focus I choose to further my understanding of human growth and development and chose to minor in Human Development. In Liberal Studies undergraduate learning outcomes students are required to complete a course in basic child development. The MLO is LD MLO IV titled *Human Development* says, “Students observe, reflect upon, analyze, and interpret behavior of individuals across the lifespan, focusing on child and adolescent development. Students understand and draw upon a variety of theoretical perspectives to instruct and interact with others. Students identify the influence of context on individual, family, and cultural development (LS Advising, 2008).” This MLO and the content I learned throughout the Human Development coursework were key in defining my capstone.

In my time as a Human Development student I have studied the cognitive, physical, and socio-emotional development of individuals at each stage in the lifespan including, infancy and childhood, adolescence, and adulthood. Throughout the curriculum and specifically through learning developmental theories by famous educational theorists like Piaget, Erickson, and Gardner I discovered a central theme: The social development of a child through schooling is a focus that is just as, if not more important, than teaching the required content

standards for the obvious reason that if a child does not become fully socially developed than they will struggle to be successful as an adult. Through the Human Development coursework outlined by the MLOs I learned about developmental theories and processes, completed Case Studies, and developmental research and found that a lack of social development had many negative implications—bullying issues arose, the achievement gap increased, the number of drop-outs continued to rise, the rates of teenage pregnancy and eating disorders rose, and more. The list is endless. This influenced my efforts to pinpoint an explanation for exactly why social development was lacking in education and what could be done to improve the circumstances.

At the same time I was gaining knowledge about the importance of social development through the Human Development and Subject Area Emphasis MLOs I was also experiencing the role schools, academics, and teachers play in the social development of a child through the fulfillment of the Liberal Studies Service Learning outcome. Service learning is a required component of all undergraduate and major coursework at CSUMB and a development that makes the college very unique (Service Learning Institute, 2005). As a requirement for the Liberal Studies major I completed Service Learning to fulfill LS MLO 2, *Social Foundations of Education*. The MLO states, “Students explore issues, problems, and solutions to schooling in a pluralistic society by viewing schools as social institutions that reflect and influence both the values and the cultural and political dynamics of a society at large. Students examine the historical and philosophical underpinnings of schools in the United States. Students investigate education professionals as agents of social change (LS Advising, 2008).” My service took place at a school in Marina called Marina Del Mar. There I worked in a very diverse third grade classroom aiding students in math and reading. Not only did I have the opportunity to work with the students, but I also had the opportunity to observe and hear from several of the teachers as well as the principle. Through my service and observations, as well as through the Service Learning coursework I learned several things about the issues, problems, political and cultural dynamics of education as outlined by the MLO and was able to relate what I was learning in my classes to my experiences interacting with the school community. There were so many

educational issues that stood out in my mind, but the ones that resonated the most were the issues surrounding the No Child Left Behind Policy because it directly affected the lack of social development in schools.

For the issues and problems they were facing Marina Del Mar was an amazing school. The teachers were tremendously dedicated and worked as a team to improve the lives and education of their students, but even they were feeling the negative effects of NCLB. No Child Left Behind, while having a positive goal to ensure the success of all students has resulted in many negative effects on education at Marina Del Mar and across the country. I found that teachers did not have time to stray away from the standards in order to teach other curriculum or even to spend more time on a concept students were struggling with. They were being forced to teach to a test. The effects of NCLB have gone even further at some schools where recesses have been shortened or eliminated along with subjects like Art and Physical Education because they are being viewed as unnecessary and a waste of time. As a future teacher who was learning about the importance of social development in the school age years the lack of it because of the NCLB policy was alarming and the affects it was having on students was even more frightening. Through Service Learning I was experiencing the effects of the loss of social development first hand. Student's who could not keep up, were not fluent in English, or felt unattached and unmotivated to complete the curriculum just fell of the track. My experiences as a Service Learner allowed me to make the connection between what I was learning in Human Development about the importance of social development and the negative affects a lack of it can have and how it is related to bigger issues in education. I began to question what specifically about social development was lacking and came to the possible conclusion that maybe these student's were not succeeding because they did not feel an attachment to the curriculum because of who they are—they're culture, ethnicity, family background—they're identity.

As my fourth year came to a close I felt overwhelmed by the issues and problems present in the educational system and began to feel discouraged as a future teacher. How could I as one teacher solve the intricate problem of social development or what I had concluded now as identity development and schooling?

Fortunately, the Liberal Studies outcomes I completed over the course of my final two semesters would seek to help me answer these questions. LS MLO 14 titled *Advanced Inquiry into Education* says, “Students build on foundational knowledge to reflect on cultural perspectives and contemporary issues in education. Students explain, critique, and evaluate current advanced topics in education (LS Advising, 2008).” The courses that meet these standards are LS 380 Teaching for Social Change and LS 383 Issues in Education, both of which were very influential in determining my Capstone.

In the Issues in Education course I had the opportunity to explore *different* types of schooling. I took a particular interest in a type of schools known as Democratic Schooling. The school is based on the idea that children are naturally curious and therefore natural learners. There are no classrooms, rather students are given the freedom to learn and explore their environment and what is interesting to them, what pertains to their identity. Students are central to this type of schooling, they make the rules, run the discipline, design the curriculum, and even teach the classes. This idea of education was hard to grasp at first, but after visiting the school and seeing the way it works first hand it was very enlightening. The experience was eye opening, unlike in many classrooms all of the students when interested in what they were doing and were motivated to learn. Not only were students learning, but they were learning through social situations therefore developing socially and given the opportunity to define themselves, to define their identity. This whole idea of Democratic Schooling lead me to the conclusion that when given the chance to develop as a person, to develop an identity, students will blossom.

As a future teacher who was now aware of all the issues within the public school system and was alarmed by the lack of individual identity development I was interested in exploring not only how schools negate individual identity, but how this might be the cause of many of education’s issues, such as the large number of drop outs, the achievement gap between races, and simply the unmotivation of certain students to participate in education, but after learning about Democratic Education I was also interested in discovering how to include

aspects of this type of education into public schools so that all students could have the chance to build their identity. So when LS380 Teaching for Social Change gave me the opportunity to explore this issue I jumped at it. Along with a group of my fellow students we began to scrap the surface of the issue. We researched what famous scholars, educators, theorists have said about the issue and came to the conclusion that public education's failure to recognize and develop student's identities does have major implications and may in fact be the cause of many educational issues. As a way of evoking social change regarding the issue we came up with the idea of working with a group of middle school students to create a Zine. In doing this project we began to discover how one teacher can make a difference and motivate students to learn by relating learning to who they are.

This is when it all came together for. What I had learned in Human Development about the importance of identity development in school age years through developmental theories like Erickson's Psychosocial Theory, what I had experienced in my Service Learning projects related to NCLB and how the policy was taking away time from critical social development and identity recognition, and finally what I had discovered about the success of students in an education that gives them the freedom to develop their identity were all connected through identity. Identity was acting as the motivating, or in the case of NCLB unmotivating, factor in students' academic success. Students whose identities were ignored or not connected to the curriculum were not becoming successful academically. This is why for my Capstone I decided to continue examining this issue with the hope that my project will evoke social change regarding the issues surrounding student's identities in school.

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Appendix 4

Reflection:
A Zine
Project:
Identity
and
Learning

May 1

2009

Reflection:

The students' creations of unique and identity-oriented zines, as well as thoughts expressed during the closing interviews, and the reaction of other students to the zines proves the project's success. Students met the outcomes of an identity-focused curriculum that helps to motivate them to learn, that provides them the opportunity to explore and share their identity, and that establishes a greater sense of classroom community. While the project was a success there were definitely barriers caused by the lack of time, the location, and the project's structure. These barriers challenged me as the teacher and could have hindered the success of the project itself. However, they did not cause the project to be unsuccessful. The benefits the learning experience provided me as a future teacher, as well as the improvements to the project as it continues into the future outweigh the negatives mentioned above. It is my hope that this Capstone Project evokes change in two ways. First, for the students who now have a greater connection between academic identity and personal identity, and second in influencing the ways current and future teachers view the importance of individualizing curriculum and providing opportunities for students to explore their identity within the content standards.

Outcomes:

The research I conducted prior to implementing the project led me to the premise that the project's connection with identity would:

- motivate the students to learn,
- provide students the opportunity to explore and build a stronger sense of self,
- build a stronger classroom community.

Something my research had not prepared me for, however, was the process of seeing it happen. The success of the project, even with the necessary improvements, astounded me.

The immediate evidence of the success of the project in terms of providing the students the opportunity to explore and express their identity is evident through the students' zines themselves. This is especially the case in the zines created by the fourth and fifth grade students for whom the project was originally designed. It is evident that each zine is a unique expression of personal characteristics that define the individual, including the things about which he/she is passionate. Some students focused on their families, others on their hobbies, and others wrote stories about their pets; all the zines are identity-focused, therefore meeting the outcome. The success of this outcome is also reinforced by the way the students responded to the project in their closing interviews. Many of the students expressed learning more about the identity topic on which they focused and were able to explain why it was important to them. This not only shows that students understood the basic concepts of identity, but more importantly it proves that zines are a successful tool for identity expression, exploration, and sharing in the classroom.

The project's connection to identity was obviously a motivating factor for students. The connection more or less tricks the students into thinking they aren't doing schoolwork because the process of learning is fun. The subject was important to them, and more importantly, it was defined by them. This identity-motivation to learning was apparent throughout the process. During group discussions when they were learning about identity concepts, students were interested in discussing how the topic related to them. Also, it wasn't hard to keep the students involved, influence them to complete the identity activities, or to work on their zines. In fact, it was the exact opposite. Students were always asking for time to work on their zines, and while completing one issue, were already coming up with ideas for the next one. The success of this outcome was also evident in students' excitement when it came time to publish and distribute their zines during the Zine Share Session. The way identity motivated the students was amazing; their eagerness to share their work showed the personal connection they had to the project.

The final outcome was the greater sense of community that developed from the project. A strong classroom community ensures the success of students because they feel important, recognized, and understood. The youth center setting is no different. The sharing and interview sessions demonstrated all students learned something new about their peers. The students were eager to share their identity as well as learn about others. They could explicitly answer what they had learned about each person through their zine. However, the most obvious proof of the creation of a stronger community happened during the zine work sessions when students were recognizing common interests with their peers and were voluntarily helping each other complete various aspects of their zines. This environment of mutual sharing--giving help and getting help—improved the zines and the culture at the youth center.

These outcomes show the success of the project in proving the importance of identity recognition and individualization in learning. That is, the importance of creating an anti-biased, student-led curriculum in order to motivate students to learn and to make them feel connected to the curriculum, the school, and education in general. With these outcomes in place, students are sure to be more successful academically and socially. Furthermore, it shows that zines are successful tools for accomplishing these necessary goals. The project allowed the students to relate academic identity to school identity, fostering a deeper connection between the two so that students become holistic, successful individuals.

Analysis:

While the outcomes of the project were successfully met, there were barriers that challenged the project's success along the way. These barriers arose due to the location of the project, the time restraints, and poor planning and structuring on my part.

Implementing the Zine project at Porter Youth Center, where I have worked for the past three years, had some positive outcomes, but also presented some unexpected barriers. The relationship that I had already developed with the students allowed me insight into their identity so that I could focus lessons specifically for

them and could help them create a clearer identity perspective for their zines. However, the fact that the Youth Center is not a classroom ended up being a major pitfall for several reasons. Instead of having students from one grade level as I had planned, I had a group of students spanning first through fifth grades. Not only did this disrupt the original curriculum standards I was working to meet, but it also disrupted the identity theme itself because younger students are not developmentally ready to understand abstract concepts of identity. This resulted in a loss of focus on the standards and a loss of depth in the identity lessons to the disadvantage of the older students. Another barrier presented by implementing the project at the center versus in a classroom was the restrictions on time. I was only able to have one-hour sessions with the students once a week, sometimes two, over a six-week period. This is different than in a classroom where a teacher and students would have the opportunity to work on the project daily. The timing compromised the quality of students' work and the depth to which we could explore identity lessons as a group. Short sessions sometimes a week apart caused the students to lose focus on identity concepts and the concepts of their zines. This meant taking time to refocus, consuming more time from the already short session. A final barrier of implementing the project at the youth center was the fact that, unlike school, the youth center is not a place where the students are required to be. Students would often be absent or picked up early and therefore would miss certain aspects of the lesson and work time, compromising the understanding of identity concepts and the zine work itself.

However, it wasn't just the barriers caused by implementing the project at the youth center that challenged the success of the project. Barriers also arose due to the time restraint caused by having to complete the project within a semester. First, lesson planning took more time than I had planned, which meant there was less time to implement the project itself. This also compromised the quality of the students' work because they had to rush to finish their zines by the deadline. It also compromised the quality of the identity lessons. Since I was pressed for time, I couldn't spend more time on specific topics that they didn't completely understand or that interested them.

The time restraints also caused a barrier in the success of meeting the curriculum standards. I couldn't focus on the process of writing-- outlining, drafting, etc. as much as I would have liked because I was rushing the students to finish their work, which meant the standards were not met. Finally, the time restraints took away from the process of assessment. Because I was rushing to teach them all the identity concepts and to complete the zine portion of the project, I lost a focus on the best way to test the students for understanding and therefore evaluate the project's success.

The outcomes were also challenged by the structure of the project. Even after spending a large amount of time lesson planning, more scaffolding was needed as well as a better scope and sequence. This resulted in a disconnection between the greater concepts of identity and the students' creation of the zines. This disconnect is evident through the fact that while the zines were identity-oriented, the greater concepts of racial identity, gender identity, stereotypes, etc. that we discussed during the identity lessons did not appear in the zine. It seemed the students grasped the ideas and concepts during the lessons, but the ideas did not transfer into the product. This disconnect was also related to the fact that I was trying to cover too many identity aspects in one project so that students were not provided the opportunity to think deeply about or make personal connections to the specific concepts.

Other structural issues of the project that unexpectedly challenged the outcomes were students needing or wanting a lot of individual help on their zines, as well as some students finishing their work long before others. These issues didn't have huge negative implications, but it meant that students didn't receive as much help as they needed and as I would have liked to give them.

The major barriers caused by location, time restrictions, and project structure resulted in compromising students' work, the meeting of curriculum standards, and the gaining of a deeper understanding of identity concepts. In the future when continuing this project, there are necessary improvements for the project to reach its full potential and more successfully meet the outcomes. Having my own classroom with a designated set of

students and a full year to develop and implement the project would eliminate most of the barriers. Not only would this allow me to make better connections to and more explicitly focus on the curriculum content standards, but it would provide the luxury of spanning an entire school year. This would allow for more scaffolding activities for identity topics, causing students to think more deeply about their identities and the identities of others. Ideally this would mean that students would create several zines throughout the school year with each one focusing on a different aspect of identity: gender, stereotypes, family, friends, and so on.

With a full year, the larger focus would be identity, but students would be exploring smaller concepts in more depth. This would mean that students would gain a wider view of identity concepts and therefore become more rooted in their personal identity. It would also allow me a clearer focus on the required Language Arts content standards for the grade I am teaching and how to fit those into the zine project. The zine project could possibly be used as the daily writing activity. Having a specific class and my own classroom would also allow me to hold individual meetings with the students about their zines so that each student would be getting the individual help they need and desire. Finally, in continuing the project in the future, it would be important for me to develop a strategy for assessing that students were actually meeting and understanding the content standards, and becoming more deeply rooted in their identity. Having a sharing session and closing interviews helped with this process, however, it would be more beneficial to figure out an assessment strategy that incorporates evaluation as students work through the project as well as at the end.

Learning:

Through implementing the project and the challenges I faced, I learned that even a project full of creative teaching strategies aimed to meet each student's individual needs will face challenges and need improvement. The project not only demonstrated the importance of individualizing curriculum to meet developmental goals, such as identity and social development, while teaching the required content standards to

provide for the success and academic motivation of all students, but also gave me first-hand experience of being a teacher.

Through teaching the project, I learned the hard work and significant amount of time it takes to plan creative lessons. Students don't realize the time commitment and work that goes into creating a full day of learning. It takes a lot of planning, research, and hard work. I learned the struggles of teaching and planning lessons so that students gain a deeper understanding of the concepts. I also gained an understanding of an issue I have heard many teachers mention over the years: not having enough time in the school day to teach the necessary material. Overall, I have come to realize that these issues come with the territory and are a part of being a teacher. Teaching is both an art and a science. If, as a teacher, I can influence students to love learning and accomplish the educational goals, then I have been successful.

Appendix 5

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