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Literature Review

Introduction

It is 6:45 am in the dead of winter. The sun has just barely peaked out of the corners of the universe and some teachers are already at school. What drives them to school each morning? Effective teachers are not driven to school simply because of the power behind their vehicle, but by the power of children's natural joy; contagious but soon forgotten because of ineffective instruction. If a student's curiosity is not nurtured in the classroom, vibrancy turns into mold, getting sourer and sourer with each breath of stagnant contained air. The climate of schools needs to change so students can breathe again, reaping the benefits of their own innate curiosity. Curiosity is a staple of critical pedagogy, a way of teaching that promotes the student as an active agent in the process of social justice. By critically examining the world, students can realize the interconnectedness of all things, further promoting morality and justice.

What is Critical Pedagogy?

Critical pedagogy is a way of teaching that arouses the human spirit so that discovery is possible; Discovery of self, discovery of others, and discovery of the world is engineered into critical pedagogy. The way society is structured currently, students are victims of what Ira Shor (1992) calls a "banking model" in her book, *Empowering Education.* This idea originally comes from Paulo Freire (1970) who exposed the flaws of a system that constructs students as empty banks, devoid of knowledge and in need of "deposits " of information from the "central bank of knowledge" or society. This model leaves the student out as an active agent in the learning process; students are not empty banks, they are rich with prior experiences (p. 31). Teacher centered, explicit instruction exploits children as empty banks. John Dewey notes that "the banking method is authoritarian politics…It denies the students' indigenous culture and their

potential for critical thought, subordinating them to the knowledge, values, and language of the status quo" (As cited in Shor, 1992, p.33). The agent of change has been the driving force behind the technological advancements of the last century, but by teaching didactically the current state of society is reinforced, which is contradictory to the means by which humans have made such tremendous advancements as a species. With each coin that is deposited into students' "empty" banks, knowledge becomes more abundantly meaningless; education is sending a message to kids that student voice is not valued in society, the status quo is most important. Then the question arises: Why should students even go to school if their voice isn't of importance? Who is benefiting from this "banking" way of educating students? (Meier) The power of critical pedagogy lies in its ability to answer these two questions.

Within critical pedagogy, students attend school to be agents of change in a society that is unfinished and requires their help. According to Joan Wink (2002), critical pedagogy "is a prism that reflects the complexities of the interactions between teaching and learning...it enables us to see more widely and more deeply [and] after looking through the prism of critical pedagogy...the basics aren't as basic as...we used to think" (p. 30). Both students and society benefit from critical pedagogy because learning involves the use of student voice to make meaning of all areas of knowledge. Instead of students going to school to maintain the status quo as an explicit pedagogy suggests, critical pedagogy views the power of student voice as an agent for social change as the reason school is mandatory. Critical pedagogy is so successful with students because students are connected to the content emotionally and deeply, further promoting curiosity and compassion. Critical pedagogy in the classroom is not a choice society should have to grapple with; it is a way of thinking that promotes morality and justice.

Relationship of morality development to Critical Pedagogy

Primary school education occurs when students' values are not yet completely solidified; student behavior, dispositions, and ideas of what is right and what is wrong are still formulating. If students receive direct deposits of "central knowledge" he/she may become academically stronger, but that does not guarantee education of the whole-child, meeting all steps in Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs. As educators it is our duty to develop students' sense of morality, and how justice is achieved in the world. Critical pedagogy allows schools to connect learning to students' lives in such a way that students can "interrupt their own behavior and reinvent themselves as agents of change" (Young, 1992, p. 18). In Young's (1992) article, "Challenging Heterosexism in a Public School," students were able to develop their own sense of self in the world through a critical pedagogical approach. In the article, Young utilized a critical multicultural pedagogy to teach students with situated privilege about homophobia and take action in the local school. As a result, students learned that they "can take action against injustice and make a difference" (p. 17). Through a deepening of morality, students were able to understand how justice functions in society, and the power it holds for the future; starting with the development of compassion, students transferred his/her morality to enact justice for the oppressed in his/her own school.

The arts are a highly effective way to develop morality in students through critical pedagogy. Bowie (2009) describes how integrating art into the curriculum "help[s] them (students) feel more confident about themselves through increased self esteem [which is] of particular significance for students with dysfunctional backgrounds" (p. 10). Art is a vehicle by which students learn self-expression skills, contributing to a sense of student voice. A sense of voice makes up the foundation of individuality, the first step in humanization. (p. 10) It is from

this starting point that students develop morality: behavior that distinguishes intentions, decisions, and actions.

Another perspective supporting morality and justice through critical pedagogy is gender justice education. The underperformance of boys in schools raises concerns of gender justice in schools today. Two teachers, Brad and Jennifer, spoke of their philosophies; each was evaluated based on its critical pedagogical attributes. The study showed that both teachers intended on engaging boys, but "Brad does so by reinforcing dominant constructions of gender, whilst Jen seeks to probelmatise such constructions" (Keddie, p. 208). In essence, both teachers sought to engage students through a relationship-based approach, but Brad reinforced the status quo, while Jen "enable[d] students to explore new ways of thinking about themselves and others" (Keddie, 2004, p. 213). Students develop a sense of morality when he/she can view the world from other perspectives, and by allowing divergent thinking as Jen did; students are able to develop as human beings, active in the societal processes and powers affecting people every day. This article really shows that teachers who do not have a critical pedagogical stance are not immoral people because clearly Brad wanted to have relationships with his students; however justice cannot be achieved by reinforcing the dominant ideology as Brad did in his classroom.

How interconnectedness relates to Critical Pedagogy

Restorative justice, a philosophical approach that emphasizes building and maintaining relationships, reflects several of the ideals of critical pedagogy. The origins of restorative justice come from seeing "the universe as wholeness, unity, and connectedness" and this direct link to others "gives us the responsibility to care for each other and help mend the webs that hold us" (Vaandering, 2010, p. 146). In order to uphold justice, people must have strong relationships with others, because community is as the key to humanization. All parts of society, business

social and ecological, rely on the combined efforts of individuals for success. In the business world different people take on different roles in a company to ensure the company's productivity. Socially, people stir up change in the community by organizing protests or showing support for people/actions, and ecologically all of earth's processes connect each and every human being on every continent because nature is not selective; the fate of the earth requires the environmental efforts of a whole globe not just individuals. Restorative justice says that "critical theory is a tool that expands the notion of relationship so that includes people's interactions not just with others but with their environment" (p. 173). Relationships are what make people human, and it is imperative that as a species people utilize their power. Even people who have gone to jail can be rehabilitated if a community accepts them and recognizes his/her self-worth. Vaandering notes "stigmatized shame can result in the offender reoffending" but it is interesting to also note that "most offenders are people who have been victims themselves" (p. 164). With critical pedagogy, the notion of community is upheld in that people are not selectively part of the "human web," it is an invariable right. The idea of a person going to jail becomes a question of societal structures not just individual wrongdoing, because restorative justice recognizes the interconnectedness of societal power, and structural victimization of people, societal structures that place selective barriers between people and their success in the world. In a restorative justice approach "students can express their emotions, deal with their feelings and find support for their growth in understanding relationships" (p. 166). Just like in education, teachers provide scaffolds to support student learning, in society people need to create communities that are scaffolds for the development of morality in children. Humanization, community, and conflict are central to the lives of both students and adults, supporting the notion that schools should be educating kids on morality development, justice,

and how interconnected the world is to prepare students to be agents of change in an ever-changing world (p. 171).

Attributes of Critical Pedagogy-*Affective*

Critical pedagogy in practice is defined by four attributes: affective instruction, democratic classroom structure, multicultural curriculum, and problem-posing dialogue. Within affective instruction, teaching through the emotions allows for the development of an interest in the human condition. In an affective classroom, Shor (1992) references Freire's conversation with Myles Horton in which, "both men insisted on the relationship of play and joy to critical thought and social change" (p. 25). Emotional connections link students with compassion, and compassion helps students think critically about their world and promote social justice. Space for emotions in the classroom is essential to the success of critical pedagogy because it allows students together "acknowledge their woundedness and then look through it to the source of the heart" (Vaandering, 2010, p. 162). Acknowledging shared emotions on issues that pose problems for students enables students to better help one another and oneself to combat social injustices.

Affective instruction begins with the earliest grades, as first grade teacher Kim Huber (2005) discovered in her great success with discussing social justice in the classroom. When Huber read books that discussed issues of social justice she found her students highly engaged, and "they made stronger connections to these books than to the 'happy books' that she usually read." (p. 258) Huber read books such as *Fly Away Home* and *The Lady in the Box* which both talk about homelessness, and Huber noticed her students working together to bring in food items to fight homelessness rather than competing to see who could bring in the most; students "started treating each other with more compassion and understanding" (p. 258). In reading social justice

books, students "were surprised and upset to learn that people could lose their homes for something that wasn't their fault" (p. 260). These first grade students connected emotionally to the characters in the stories, helping them to understand issues of social justice. Another first grade teacher Mary Brennan (2007) used critical pedagogy to teach needs and wants to her students. Students examined articles written on a woman, Grandma Ruth, who was forced out of her home due to company building. The students' emotional connection to Grandma Ruth through critical pedagogy is evident when students said, "We love Grandma Ruth and we care" while others drew pictures "to make [Grandma Ruth] feel warm and happy (p. 515). By discussing homelessness, a social justice issue, Brennan's students felt an emotional responsibility for Grandma Ruth, which further developed compassion and a belief in taking action on social justice issues.

Identity formation does not happen through rote exercise of fill-in-the blank sentences or flash cards, it occurs when students read books they see themselves in. In Bourke's (2008) study on fairy tales and critical pedagogy, students read *The Three Billy Goats Gruff*, and through a character role play activity students were able to see themselves in the story, enabling compassion to develop for certain unlikely characters. Bourke found that "the way children see themselves in books affects their identity formation" (p. 307). Once students considered other points of view, they are able to consider alternate ways of promoting justice, not maintaining the status quo. They were able to see the same story events from differing points of view, and consider possibilities other than maintaining the status quo

Attributes of Critical Pedagogy-*Democratic*

Civic responsibility is an inherent right of every individual living in the US, and yet it excludes the great population of students in schools. In order for students to turn 18 and become

informed, active participants in the democratic processes governing the United States, students must experience democracy long before the age of 18. Democratic classroom structure is an integral part of critical pedagogy in practice. Comber, Nixon, Ashmore, Loo, and Cook (2001) discuss a project done in a low socioeconomic community where students became active participants in the redevelopment of an area. The idea for an urban renewal project aroused from the reality of inhabitants of low socioeconomic areas. These people are usually being excluded from having a say in urban renewal projects, contributing to a loss of a sense of belonging. This type of teaching is democratic because it involves students interacting with the community through an interest in the human condition (affective) with writing, drawings, interviews, and discussions, to creating a plan for redesigning a space (democracy) (Comber, et. al, 2006). By using critical pedagogy to encourage social action, students were able to understand how to make changes in the community, which is a valuable tool in exercising civic responsibility.

The democratic attribute of critical pedagogy assumes the integrity of the individual; people are intelligent and able to make sound decisions. Democracy in the classroom is essential to critical pedagogy because it is a direct reflection of the policies and laws governing the "real world", and it shows students that "leaders can flourish only in communion with the people" (Freire as cited by Vaandering 2010, p. 157). The current set-up of schools now is what Ira Shor (1992) refers to as the banking model of education where ideas are poured into students' brain, with no consideration of the individual. Alternatively, critical pedagogy utilizes a democratic stance where students' individuality is considered as vital to the success of school curriculum and the greater society.

Larson (2006) describes critical pedagogy in the reading curriculum as critical literacy. Students in a classroom where critical literacy was the foundation of learning worked on projects

involving researching and communicating with others. Research oriented projects allow students and teachers to be at a more symmetrical power relation "which in turn generate[s] more authentic assessment practices" (p. 323). Symmetrical power relations is crucial to critical pedagogy because it reflects the principles of democracy where the people are thought to have the same power as officials to make decisions that affect society. By teaching in such a way, students can understand teachers are classroom leaders not dictators. Most accurately, teachers are facilitators of knowledge, just like democratic leaders are facilitators of citizen and country success.

Soares and Wood (2010) discuss democracy as an integral part of critical literacy success in elementary social studies classrooms. Soares and Wood (2010) conclude that, "By connecting historical and social injustices of the past to their [students] present world using critical literacy practices" students can become agents of civic responsibility, a hallmark of democracy (p. 492). In practice, an effective lesson/unit using critical pedagogical attributes must culminate with student action on issues of social justice being explored. This part of the lesson is so incredibly important because when discussing issues like homelessness that are often extremely disheartening, students need optimism for the future and taking action does just that. Taking action directly correlates with having a democratic classroom structure because just like in society, students are learning about a topic of great concern and trying to change it in the real world. Practicing democracy in the classroom gives students great empowerment in his/her own abilities, and allows for more engaging learning students can use in the future.

Critical Pedagogy and Interconnectedness

Democratic classroom structure also supports the notion of interconnectedness; our actions as human beings on earth affect the environment in which we live. Locke (2009) states,

"a focus on the cultural and ecological integrity of places that students inhabit...generates local knowledge and empowers them to sustain their environment and actively participate in democracy" (p. 98). By learning about the environment and the social inequalities that guide environmental practices, students can become empowered to enforce environmental justice, for the sake of future generations. Locke (2009) says "a critical approach to eco-justice would contribute to the democratizing of the decision-making process and widen the circle of decision makers to include all social groups" (p. 99). In essence, teaching environmental science within a critical pedagogical framework can potentially transform social inequalities within environmental practices to a more democratic, all inclusive decision making by the people of an area. Environmental justice education is yet another way critical pedagogy relies so heavily on democratic classroom structures for its success; beginning with emotional connections but *always* ending with democratic action.

Attributes of Critical Pedagogy-*Multicultural/Different Perspectives*

A key attribute of critical pedagogy is instruction that is considers multiple perspectives. The world is made up of all different cultures, and teaching topics through multiple perspectives allows students to have an accurate view of the world, preventing stereotypes from matriculating into truth. Young (2007) discusses the power of incorporating different perspectives in teaching in her article on heterosexism in a public school. Students in Young's class studied how situated privilege silences those people who are homophobic, and by examining life through a homophobic lens, students learned how unfair situated privilege is, and people don't even realize they are a part of the populating who is "situated." In the lesson students "work[ed] actively toward structural equality... for the redistribution of power and income among diverse groups" (p. 14). Students considered the perspectives of people who are homophobic in Young's

classroom which developed compassion in students, and this compassion led students to take action against homophobic stereotypes in their school. The power of critical pedagogy depends heavily on the consideration of multiple perspectives so students get a more well-rounded view of a topic.

An innovative way to incorporate multiple perspectives into the classroom was what happened in Dawson Elementary School. Gainer, Valdez-Gainer, and Kinard (2009) discuss their study on how fourth grade students considered multiple perspectives when exploring critical media literacy. In this critical pedagogy classroom students analyzed advertisements, ads, and various other media documents to consider the different perspectives of the author. From this project students "did not blindly buy into the lifestyle offered in the ad; instead they questioned the motives behind the creators of it" (p. 681). Students investigated the hidden meanings the advertisements conveyed, furthering understanding of why an author would want to convey such meaning. This activity made students more aware of how advertisements and the author's perspective can persuade readers to buy a product, making students more critical thinkers about ads they see in the real world. Soares and Wood (2010) discuss the effectiveness of using multiple perspectives in the social studies classroom. Teachers must prompt students to critically look at texts and recognize "what kind of person and with what interests and values wrote this text? What view of the world is this text presenting? How is power used and what effect does power have on others?" (p. 488). Teaching through critical pedagogy creates space in the classroom for students to consider the differing perspectives of authors, what shapes a perspective, and how perspectives can provide more insight on supporting social justice. When students consider multiple perspectives, he/she will have a more accurate view of the world, which will help him/her to succeed in today's diverse world.

Attributes of Critical Pedagogy-*Problem-Posing Dialogue*

As teachers of any subject, it is important to get students to think deeply and connect with material to maximize student learning potential. In critical pedagogy, the means by which students think deeply on subjects is through problem-posing dialogue in the classroom. In practice, problem-posing dialogue is when teachers "...use students' thought and speech as the base for developing critical understanding of personal experiences, unequal conditions in society, and existing knowledge "(Shor, 1992, p. 33). Teacher who practice critical pedagogy in the classroom always begin with what the student already knows about a topic, generate conversation based on prior knowledge and experiences, and subsequently facilitate discussion. Educators involve students in the meaning making process of learning by utilizing the power of social interaction as a learning tool.

In Bourke's (2008) account on using critical literacy with first graders, the power of his lesson on *The Three Billy Goats Gruff* sprung from the discussion of the text through problem-posing dialogue; "As the dialogues transpired, [he] began to liken [his] role as teacher to that of a bridge over which [his] students could cross in their progression from readers who accepted text as it was to readers who questioned text on a regular basis" (p. 306). Bourke defined his role in the classroom as a facilitator of knowledge, or a "bridge" his students could utilize to reach greater meaning and understanding. Instead of just settling on who the good and bad characters were in the story, Bourke urged his students to think deeper about the author's purpose in creating certain traits of characters, and consider the different points of view of each character. In discussing one colorful and one black-white version of *Little Red Riding Hood,* Bourke found that by using problem-posing dialogue, students were able to deconstruct certain narratives of

mainstream society; "students were deciding on good and evil simply by the colors presented in the illustrations" and through problem-posing dialogue, Bourke taught his students to argue with the meaning the texts were conveying.

As Crafton, Brennan, and Silvers (2007) put it, "Critical literacy is social: disrupting the status quo, questioning, studying taken-for-granted assumptions, acting for change" (Originally stated by Van Sluys, 2007, p. 513). Critical pedagogy is a tool teachers can use to change the lives of so many children because it empowers students with students' own profound thinking power. Problem-posing dialogue gives children the freedom to question the status quo and develop a deep understanding of social injustices so empowerment can ensue. A goal for education is for students to become productive members of society, so why not push it one step further and make education for students to become empowered members of society? It is ultimately the choice of the teacher, but the success of critical pedagogy, especially problem-posing dialogue is evident in accounts of practice. Third grade teacher Paul Skilton Sylvester (1994) transformed the social studies curriculum to entail a student-run classroom economy. This economy was named "Sweet Cakes Town" by the students, and students were able to manipulate themselves in a world that directly reflected the real world economy. Sylvester credits his curriculum's success "not in [his] personality as a teacher, but in the students' own creative power, which [he] tapped into by encouraging them to question, investigate, and interpret their experience of the world" (p. 311). The experience of "living the real world" inside school allowed students to see the consequences of their actions before those consequences became life-changing ones as adults, and this was achieved through higher-level questioning. The discussions of certain economic decisions students made, interactions between people, and how the real world works is what drove the whole curriculum to success.

Critical Pedagogy in Practice

Overwhelmingly, the success of critical pedagogy in classrooms throughout the globe is emphasized in teacher narratives. Numerous teachers have utilized critical pedagogy, a way of actively engaging students in text, for the purpose of social justice. Using the principles of critical pedagogy students develop through the use of critical literacy, teachers use books rich with societal injustices and problem-posing dialogue for students to actively construct a meaning of the story and determine how those injustices can be solved by taking action. This approach is often kept locked away from students for fear of disrupting the perceived innocence of childhood. However, Kelly and Brooks (2009) negated the fear of altered innocence by using teacher interviews in their study on teacher's assumptions about young children and teaching for social justice. Many "teachers expressed concern…that such a focus will simply make children feel badly or lead to harmful and divisive talk" however, research supports the notion that "childhood has been romanticized by adults" (p. 204). A teacher's choice to limit young students' exposure to an education rich with social justice issues is a function of a societal construction of age-appropriateness. Kelly and Brooks found that the more teachers were afraid to disrupt childhood innocence, the more neutral teachers became in the classroom. In Freire's book, *Pedagogy of Freedom* (1999) he states, "I do not see why I should omit or hide my political stance by proclaiming a neutral position that does not exist. On the contrary, my role as a teacher is to assent the students' right to compare, to choose, to rapture, to decide" (p. 68); teacher neutrality is impossible in the classroom. Just as students are active agents in society, teachers are active agents also, so it is not wrong to have biases or beliefs, but it is important to allow space in the classroom for multiple viewpoints on topics that are of interest and importance

to students. Life in the "real world" does pause for people until childhood is over, it continues on and children may have to face very grueling realties, such as death, but if students live in a fantasy, reality can become too overwhelming. In practice, the potential of students' ability to conceptualize big ideas of social justice are only realized if teachers give them a try. Second grade teacher Jesse put it wonderfully: "Kids are just as interested as anybody in issues of the world; they just don't sometimes see the whole picture. If you give them a chance to see that, why wouldn't they be interested in it?" (Kelly & Brooks, p. 213). When considering critical pedagogy in practice, it is imperative that teachers be cognizant of the capabilities of children; life happens to all human beings despite age, and critical pedagogy is a way for students to grow morally as humans. In critical pedagogy, when morality is developing students are able to see the interconnectedness of the world, which contributes to the ability to understand combat injustices.

As early as first grade, educators around the globe are finding ways to incorporate social justice issues into the curriculum. In a discussion of *The Three Billy Goats Gruff*, teacher Ryan Bourke (2008) employed critical pedagogy to help his students critically deconstruct the popular children's story. Students in Ryan's first grade class were prompted by him to discuss why the troll is so mean and why the author *made* the troll mean. This approach to text qualifies as critical pedagogy because it uses problem-posing as a way to make meaning of multiple perspectives, and students made meaning indeed. From this discussion in his class Ryan "interrogate[d] the use of darkness to equate black with evil and how students might cross-contextualize this notion from one text to another" (p. 307). This is problematic in a society that is proven to work when communities respect one another as equals, not as more privileged based on race. Critical literacy is so effective because it allows teachers to explore ways to develop

morality of children and experiences to explore what is right and wrong, because "the way children see themselves in books affects their identity formation" (As Stated by Hurley, 2005). Critical literacy is also proven to boost student engagement and quality of student art as seen in, *Out of the Box: Critical Literacy in a First Grade Classroom.* Leland, Harste, and Huber (2005) found that students made stronger connections to books about social justice issues, and the students "start[ed] treating each other with more compassion and understanding" (p. 258). This study was done in a small, white town, and so by using books that discussed issues such as race, books like *The Other Side* offered the children the perspective that "black people sometimes live in fear of dangerous white people" (p. 165). Critical pedagogy is even more important in rural areas because students get to experience diversity and issues of social justice that are often unseen in a monocultural setting.

Compassion development is evident in first grade teacher, Mary Brennan's classroom. Through critical pedagogy Brennan (2007) was able to get student to look deeper at the issue of homelessness in relation to societal structures by analyzing the newspaper's portrayal of a homeless woman named Grandma Ruth. Students were so empowered by the life of Grandma Ruth that they decided to write her a letter, expressing their concern for her situation. Mary's utilization of critical pedagogy allowed her students to "understand that there was a purpose and perspective behind every story…and like language, images embody messages regarding underlying power relations" (Crafton, Brennan, Silvers 512). In essence, students were able to learn about literacy, while connecting learning to his/her own morality and realization that all people and issues are interconnected and all people can benefit from each other's situation.

Many teachers are getting creative with critical pedagogy by creating projects that engage students in the several of its attributes. In The Elementary Bubble Project Gainer (2009) invents

a very innovative way to use popular media texts to develop critical literacy in the classroom. In a fourth grade classroom of mostly children from low-income families, students analyzed the meaning behind ads, and what messages the ads are trying to portray to its audience. Students "challenge[d] the primary message of the respective ad by highlighting a subtext with an alternative viewpoint" (p. 680). This way of teaching literacy enables students to employ critical thinking skills, and be more conscious of the perspectives and powers ads portray in the media.

Another teacher, Marg Wells (2001) used writing and social action to empower her students to make changes in their impoverished Australian community. Students drew pictures that "invited [them] to move from the personal, to the local, to the global" which "reflect[s] their interest in the neighborhood and their emerging understanding of themselves in relation to the people in the neighborhood" (p. 455). Students redesigned a local nature reserve the way they envisioned it, took opinion polls, and really became immersed in the possibility of social action in the local community. Wells' practice is representative of critical pedagogy because her students learned about a topic through problem-posing dialogue, and then took democratic action which is essential in creating moral, justice-seeking citizens.

Third grade teacher Paul Skilton Sylvester (1994) also got extremely creative when he had his students create their own classroom economy, simulating roles in society and the cause and effect of certain decisions. One of Sylvester's motivations for the project was the statistic that "in a study of twelve hundred Los Angeles high school students... [there was] a significant relationship between the 'economic returns' students anticipated from their education and how well they performed in school" (p. 310). Sylvester used the social justice issues and empowered students to be knowledgeable about economics, and how they can be active agents in democracy. This project enabled students to use real-world strategies to overcome real-world problems

before students are out in the world making mistakes that have real dire consequences. Sylvester was able to "create opportunities for repeated, meaningful applications of academic skills" and for students to imagine life differently than its current state (p. 324).

Lane Clarke (2005) began an exploration of self in her classroom by critically examining the influences on students' gender and identity. Students learned "how place influences the setting and characters of their narratives" and "how gender influences their identities" (p. 148). Students were engaged with hands-on exploration activities regarding gender identity by analyzing how clothes and outward appearance affect identity. Crucial to the notion of critical pedagogy was Clarke's focus on commonalities as "complex points of connection that enable us to negotiate among sameness, similarity, and difference" (p. 152). Through student-centered learning, issues of social justice aroused from student exploration, further developing students as moral, justified human beings. This instruction was absent of commands or universal truths, it was simply the students making meaning out of content, and it proved successful and highly engaging. In essence "teachers can explicitly lead students on a journey to recognize issues," providing scaffolding support as necessary to take learning to a higher level (p. 156).

Vivian Vasquez's (2003) collection of critical literacy lessons are very true to critical pedagogy in that they "reposition students as researchers of language, respect student resistance and explore minority culture constructions of literacy and language, and problematize classroom and public texts" (p. 8). Several great lessons are provided, but one that sticks out the most as a model of critical pedagogy is one of bringing social issues from the outside world into the classroom. Students in a third grade class were reading and discussing a story called, *White Wash*, a social issue book. The teacher found that students were eager to respond, and "kids who tended to be quieter found their voice after several days" (p. 36). By using minilesson to analyze

specific topics or emphasize specific skills, teacher Lee Heffernan was able to give students a voice and a moral groundwork for defending social justice.

Through the exploration of social justice topics, students of all ages can unpack big social issues in order to develop themselves as moral individuals, aware of how to combat social injustice in the world. By teaching critically, students realize how connected all things on earth are, and that enables students to see the world as one large community, dependent on strong relationships and trust in order for all to succeed. When one fails, the whole community fails, and that is the kind of ideology that has and will continue to advance humankind for years to come.

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Teacher 1-1st Interview

November 10th 2010

2:00 pm

Red=Laura Oakley

Blue=Teacher 1 from Showell Elementary School

- So tell me about the school you are teaching in.
- I would consider us to be somewhat of a rural school although we are located outside of a resort town, we serve a diversified population. Although we have few African American children in our school, our population is very diverse in terms of socioeconomic levels. We have quite a few Hispanic families that are in our school. And we represent a pretty good cross-section of the area.
- What are your students like this year?
- I would say they are pretty typical first graders. We have some who are already reading and are very advanced. Majority sort of fall in the middle, beginning of reading, and we do have some children who haven't experienced the academic enriched environment at home the other children have had, and therefore they aren't as accomplished.
- So a typical child is just a variety of different reading levels you are saying?
- Mhhm. And math levels and social development.
- So you have a range of socially developed kids?
- Mhhmm.
- What is your teaching background?
- Um, this is year 33. I spent 3 years in kindergarten and all the rest of my time has been in 1st grade. So this is my 30th year in first grade.
- You were in another school?
- No I was in Frederick County. All in Maryland. Frederick county first for 13 and I have been here ever since.
- Oh wow, thank you.
- Why did you choose teaching as your profession?
- Originally I chose it because I did not have a very good first grade experience and I think I was probably very active and I had not gone to kindergarten nor pre-school, so I was at home with my mom and she had taught me a lot of things, and the classroom I was in you were expected to sit in a desk the whole time, on a chair at a desk, and I remember getting in a lot of trouble. Um, because I don't think I was able to sit number one, and I

thought the teacher was very very mean. She was a first year teacher, she was a nun, and I don't think she really knew what she was doing at that point. So I decided when I was in her first grade classroom that I was going to be a first grade cause I knew I could do it better than she could.

- So ever since first grade you always knew?
- Mhhm.
- Did you do anything with teaching in high school or right after high school you went to college?
- Mhhm. Right out of high school went to college. I ran a little pre-school out of my backyard when I was a kid. I'd go around the neighborhood and collect all these little kids and bring em into my backyard and this other little girl and I would do stuff with them.
- Oh that sounds fun.
- Yeah. It was.
- So now into the more questions about my thesis. How can teachers use critical thinking in the classroom?
- By designing lessons where kids have to make choices.
- What would be an example of that?
- Let me think. If you set up, um, stations that required kids to do different kinds of thinking, and they got to choose which stations they went to. Stations that relate to a theme. I'm trying to think of one off-hand. Maybe if it were the harvest theme. Maybe at one station they could make a wreath, an art activity. Maybe another station would be recording sounds of autumn. But giving them variation from which they could choose because anything that gets them thinking. Instead of you delivering the curriculum and the material, you've got to get them discovering and get them to do the thinking. Setting them up for performance assessments where you actually give them a scenario, mock story, and they have to be decision-makers.
- So taking on the role?
- They have to be actively engaged in their own learning, because they aren't just gonna sit there and listen to us go, "blah, blah, blah, blah." It's not gonna happen.
- Yup. Um, how can teaching work in a way that's multicultural. I know you said it's not as culturally diverse, but it is socioeconomically diverse here, so.
- What was that question again?
- How can teaching work in a way that is multicultural?
- Oh, well you just, you need to build that in. I mean, you need to build in the perspectives of all different cultures. For example, um, celebrations. Celebrations can be different in different countries, so you can embrace all of them in a particular month. Usually December's a good time for that because there are many many different celebrations throughout the world, not all of them are centered around a Christmas. So I think by teaching all of them like Hanukkah, Kwanza, you are embracing all of them and saying,

"You need to be equally accepting." Same thing with families. One of the things that we do in our family unit is they make puppets that represent each one of their family members, and we see quite a diversity, but we celebrate that diversity by saying, "Yup that's right, your dad doesn't live with you, but he's still have your dad, but you got your stepfather too. And then we compare our families and just for the composition of the family and to celebrate, and they do a Venn diagram, and sometimes their families end up meshing exactly: mom, brother, child (points to self). So, those are the ways you can do that.

- Would you bring in books?
- Absolutely. Books, music, everything that can represent culture.
- How would you teacher multiculturally in other subjects like math or science?
- One thing you could do for science is celebrate the accomplishments of scientists from different countries and cultures. Math you can do the same thing. You can also, um, maybe do some math kinds of things that maybe are done in different countries. Maybe talk about the metric system. That's that's used all over the world but not here, without judging. That's the thing, is to be open.
- Just giving them a world view of how other people do it?
- Sure.
- And what topics, from your point of view as a teacher, motivate students the most, make them want to do.
- Science and social studies. Um, nature. Being outside. Working on the Nature trail. Hands-on where they're actively involved whether it be planting seeds because. That's what the plates on their desks are. They are harvesting seeds because that's our unit now. Well finish up at thanksgiving. So I save seed pods out of my garden and I bring them in and they harvest seeds and then we save them all winter long, and then they give them to their moms as mother's day presents.
- Those are the kinds of things that the kids love that stuff.
- And you did the rainforest thing. Was that a really motivating topic?
- Oh, big time.
- What topics seem to be the hardest for students to understand?
- I don't necessarily think they are topics. Um, they learn in an integrated way. So if you end up disintegrating your curriculum, like pretty much the way it is. We do reading here, we do math here, we do science here. That's hardest for them. If you can incorporate everything in a thematic unit that all ties together, that's the best way. It's when you start segmenting their learning that's what's hard for them, not necessarily by topic but my subject area.
- So doing the harvest in all the different content areas?
- Yes. Because we're reading nonfiction about harvest, we're reading it in our shared reading time, and we're integrating math as much as we can in this period of time. I'm trying to think of a more succinct example of the math. Oh, when we do our family unit,

one part of that family unit is the economics of how families provide for their wants and needs, and that's when we do money because that would make sense to do money, under the context of that. I think that's when kids learn the best. It's when you have separate themes.

- Yup. And how can teaching work in a way to give all students an equal chance in the world?
- You've gotta make sure that you're accepting and that you give those kids, you haven't had the advantages of a stimulating home environment, you've gotta give them more time, more of your time, to catch up. Kind of like a head-start, it's an after-start. Because it's not their fault you have to make sure that you don't blame kids or hold them accountable at this age for what their parent's decisions are. If whoever loves them or whoever takes care of them doesn't set up a homework time, so those kids are the ones that don't come in with their homework. How unfair is that to keep them in from recess? What you need to do is make provisions to make a homework buddy for them. So you have to be really careful that you don't judge those kids because of their home life. You have to be accepting.
- So you kind of bend the rules a little bit for them?
- You have to. If you want them to have a fair chance at life, you've got to give them a fair chance now. I see that happen over and over and over again, and so these kids get the same message all the way through school, that they don't measure up to the other kids. That they're second fiddle because of the situation that may be existing in their home, so you gotta bend the rules.
- So in the last thirty years with the formation of the Environmental Protection Agency, the need for environmental awareness has become a concern of global interest. So how can teaching work in a way to promote environmental awareness in students?
- Get em' outside. You gotta get em outside. Were fortunate enough to have a nature trail, and I work every year with my kids on the nature trail. You can't get them to love nature if they don't know nature, and that's part of the big problem now is that there's a nature deficit disorder going on because kids aren't outside, they're doing the video games. Parents are afraid to send then outside because the media dramatizes what happens to kids outside as far as the potential for kids of being kidnapped and all of that stuff, and it's no more dangerous than it ever has been. But you've got to get kids to love being outside, and just showing them the wonderment of nature, showing them different bark on trees, doing a bark rubbing, just getting them to love it. One of the things I love to do is we gather acorns cause I have a ton of them in my yard. I bring them in and I always end up throwing in some walnuts and other stuff, mixed nuts that I buy in the store, and we put them in 3 different areas on the nature trail, and then we go back and check the next day to see if they're still there, and sometimes we've even painted the nuts to see if we can see remnants of them having been eaten, and every year, they love that stuff, and every year the nuts are gone, and every year they are exclaiming because they

know that there's been an animal out there eating the food they provided. So you just gotta make them love it before they care about it. Why would you care about something you didn't even know about? Ya know?

- We generally think about emotions as the driving force behind the survival, decision making, communication, and happiness of human beings. How can teaching work in a way that creates compassion for other children in students?
- I think we do a pretty good job here at Showell with our four school rules. Reading books is a really good example for doing that. You have to be a role model yourself because they're watching you all time, and they're gonna do what you do more than what you say, just like with your very own children, and you've gotta model it for them. And every grown up in the entire school family has to be a model for compassion because they're gonna see the interaction and they're gonna take that on. And talking about things, role-playing is a really really good way to get them to experience, pseudo experience being compassionate, what it feels like. Doing a lot of cooperative learning things when you've got kids grouped heterogeneously. Paring kids intentionally for that purpose.
- So a lot of social interaction?
- A lot of social interaction. But I think first and foremost is the adults in the school community have to model compassionate behavior.
- To go along with that, what are your thoughts on the effects of classroom community on student success?
- Oh, huge. Because when they feel they are part of a class community, or I would even like to go further and say a classroom family, and that's what I refer to us as, were you're school family, they feel a part. That's when you can make up some of the difference that they may not have had educationally at home because you are part of another family, so you can make up for some of that deficit perhaps. Um, it's huge. I mean, they want to achieve. When they fell like it's important to you as their teacher, they want to please you they want to please everybody else in the classroom, and most of all they want to please themselves. All kids want to learn. And they all want to be successfully. You have to set up the environment for them to be successful. But I think they even try harder when that atmosphere has been established that people are bonded with each other and they care.
- Right. And we generally think of people in the US as having democratic rights and civic responsibilities. How do you see those factoring into teaching?
- In the way you interact with your kids, and also giving them some decision making power because it's not a monarchy. Even though you're the person in charge, giving them some say. For example, tell them the non-negotiables as far as let's say the state curriculum. This is what we've gotta do, but the way we do it is up for some play. We can decide that. They always come up with good ways to do it. Another example, when they were doing their projects from their non-fiction reading, I gave them a list of

projects from which they could choose, and they voted on the project that they wanted. So there's those democratic principles in place right there, and I didn't care, whatever they voted for was fine with me, and so we went with it. And the majority ruled. So you can build it in in all those kinds of ways. But I think it is important. And that they have to be responsible citizens. They are acting parts within the school and within the classroom family. Their opinion is important. Also, they've also got responsibilities. They've got responsibilities to clean up, be compassionate to one another, to take care of school materials, to complete their work on time, so see you've got to build in that responsibility too.

- To go along with responsibility, is there a way teaching could work for kids to have the responsibility to take action on issues of social injustice, things that aren't fair, is there a way that that could work?
- Mmhmm. I'm gonna give you an example. It's not as easy at this level. You're gonna be able to do a lot more of that with the kids at the age at BIS, because those kids are bigger, but I can give you a specific example. Years ago there was a field of milkweed down the street from where I live, and that's where I'd get a lot of the monarch larvae. And the gentleman who owned that property or who bought that property mowed down all the milkweed, so my first graders wrote letters to him. Oh my gosh, did we get a response from him! The compassion the first graders had was evident in their writing, and so he wrote us back, told us he was a landscape architect, he understood the plight of the monarch butterflies, that they were losing habitat. Went out, purchased milkweed, invited us to come, and so we made arrangements and our whole class went to that same meadow and planted more milkweed. So see, kids can do it. They do have power. But you just have to initiate it because they don't think like that, they don't think that they've got choices out there in that big world because they're little, but they do. And um another...that's not necessarily the same kind of case. But, yeah you just need to provide the examples for them.
- And the last question. That went by really fast. Um, it's just a quote so I am going to just read the quote and...it's by Paulo Freire and he says, "Education either functions as an instrument which is used to facilitated integration of the younger generation into the logic of the present system and bring about conformity or it becomes the practice of freedom, the means by which men and women deal critically and creatively with reality and discover how to participate in the transformation of their world." Now you can read the quote on your own if you need to look. And my question is how do you see his ideas factoring into teaching? So I'll give you a minute.
- Oh they definitely factor in to the teaching practice because you want to encourage their individuality. You want to encourage that creative thinking, the critical thinking in each person. And everybody has their own gig, their own gift, and you want to encourage them to develop that. We don't want a bunch of cookie cutter kids. Things are getting too difficult in the world not to have powerful thinking and problem solvers. You need to

start that thinking as early as possible by setting them up with the decision making. With problems they've gotta solve. I'm not talking about math problems, but the performance assessments. I'm gonna give you an example because that's the best way to do it. When we do place value, at the conclusion of that instructional unit, the kids have a performance assessment, and I give them a story about Trimper's Rides which is down on the boardwalk, they've got a whole bunch of amusement rides. I tell them that Trimper's has to close one of the rides, so the kids have to look at the data of which rides are the most popular, and they have to write a letter to tell Mrs. Trimper which ride needs to close, but see they have to think through the whole thing. You've got to set them up with thinking things, thinking scenarios, performance assessments, among many other things, but this person is definitely right because they have to deal critically and creatively because the problems are going to be changing all the time. And what happens with the conformity of just getting them to fit it and not question life they won't know how to solve the problems, and that's what kind of scary because we definitely do not want that to happen. Somebody could walk in, quote on quote, and take over the country and they won't even know that it's happening because they won't be able to think it through.

- How can teaching encourage that questioning?
- By setting it up right now. Starting in the very beginning, and like doing those performance assessments. By setting up lessons that incorporate the higher level thinking skills. You have to think about all those higher level thinking skills as you're doing your planning, so that when you are setting up for instruction those higher level thinking skills are built into instruction. See what I'm sayin?
- Right. Blooom's Taxonomy.
- Yup. You've got to do that. You've got to get kids evaluating, synthesizing, applying, all that kind of stuff. Analyzing. All those higher level thinking skills need to be built into your instruction, your instructional planning.
- And I know we are running out of time, in first grade… the highest level is creating Do you see that as possible and doable?
- Absolutely, at any level. You've just got to keep things open-ended for them.

Teacher 1-2nd Interview

November 17, 2010

2:00 pm

Red= Laura Oakley

Blue= Teacher 1 from Showell Elementary School

- So, how can social issues like racism and homelessness, be used for student exploration in the primary grades?
- Hmm. I don't know that homelessness should be something to be explored in primary grades cause they don't really understand that and they don't really understand the factors that cause that. An example would be, cause we've had this come up before, because they believe in Santa Claus. So why didn't Santa Claus go visit so and so when he came to my house and gave me all of these things? And that can sometimes happen, so you have to be really careful when you are talking about some of those social issues because they don't understand the disparity between different groups of people cause they think everybody's the same. Um. Racism is something that we can chat about when we talk about Martin Luther King, but it's not, because we treat everybody equally, that becomes that's their standard, their norm, so there isn't any reason to even think about racism because we don't experience it. So, we don't really delve into that expect to say, a long time ago things were like this because people weren't enlightened, but we only do that for special occasions like Martin Luther King because he was such a good leader as far as opening our eyes.
- So just pointing out the people that kind of led the way?
- Yes. And I don't know anyone other than Habitat for Humanity who's championed the homelessness. And I guess, see if they don't have a reality, that's not something we really experience in our school population, whereas in other places they might, and so it has to be experiential for little kids.
- So do you think if they experienced it, say in an urban setting—
- That would be way different.
- That would be way different. Could you bring it in then cause kids would be—
- Just as far as, I think you should only bring it in, cause see kids gets scared, so you have to be careful that you don't put a fear factor in there for them that this is going to happen to me. So, only in the fact that, yes sometimes it does happen, and there are things in place to provide shelter for them such as shelters, that open their doors, and isn't that a

wonderful thing, and we have soup kitchens, and isn't that wonderful thing that people care about each other? That's the stance I would take.

- Ok. And then how can learning about different cultures and perspectives be democratic in the primary grades? Like how you were saying last time, democratic meaning decision making. How could that—
- What was that again?
- How can learning about different cultures and perspectives be democratic in the primary grades?
- That everybody has choices, and everybody has cultural customs are just accepted because everybody has a right to make those kinds of choices. Um, that's probably—
- So just being accepting of those differences?
- Right. And non-judgmental. And celebrating different cultures. Bringing in artifacts from different cultures. Have to be careful not to put your, if you have any, which you should as a teacher, but if you have got some of your own attitudes you have to make sure you check those attitudes at the door when you walk into a classroom because it's very important that you're open and accepting of other people. And to me that should be a characteristic of a teacher to begin with, you shouldn't even have to check anything at the door. But if you've got issues, then you do need to check those at the door when you walk in.
- Ok. And you talked a lot about last time the thematic units you do, like on the harvest, so from doing those for a lot of years how do the thematic units arouse curiosity in kids? What is it that you do that makes them
- Mhhmm.
- Ya know, makes their curiosity come out?
- I don't feed them into what I want them to know. We set up learning experiences for them to discover. Ok. I just, I have to give you like—and I hope I didn't use this example last time. For example, when we were doing the harvesting—little kids need to have first-hand experience. In order to really grasp and understand something it has to be experiential so I was thinking how could I actually get them to be harvesters, to actually experience that concept of what harvesting is, so I saved seed pods from my garden at home and we brought them in and they actually harvested seeds from pods that we gathered and saved, and we saved them all winter. That's how you get that curiosity. But I didn't them they were seed pods, they discovered. I didn't even tell them they were flowers. I just said, "Look at this! What could it be?" Question, question, question, question. Coming up with enduring understandings, and framing them as big questions in your head for the whole unit, because questioning kids is what gets them to think. It's not about us "blah, blah, blah, blah." So when they realize that those dried up things I showed them were flowers, and I ask other questions leading them to the seed pods and the seed places in the flowers, we let them discover, wow what's that, that the were seeds

by them actually pulling apart the center of the black eyed susan. I said, I don't know check that out. I don't know what you got in there.

- So just doing it is the curiosity?
- Yup. Experiential.
- And then last time you talked about the families and how they made the puppets. So how can they learn about different perspectives of families by taking some sort of action?
- Um. Role playing is very good like that, and they can even use those family puppets to role play. I have even in the past, set up scenarios, role play scenarios, and assigning them roles, give them time to practice, and they put on a little puppet show, so they are actually assuming those roles. And drives it home a little bit.
- Ok. And then, um how can we as teachers get kids to make connections between subjects so students can see the overlap between subjects? Like I know you said that was a really hard thing for them to do, connect it all, and another part of that is, can current issues do that? Can current events kind of fill those gaps, or—
- The whole thing about making those connections is about doing a thematic unit. A unit that encompasses, that you plan, language arts, reading writing math, and social studies and science. Usually the social studies and science are going to be the content area for the thematic unit, and then you just bring in all the other subject areas, so that's how you do it, by connecting those. For example, the length of the day changes as we go into fall when we start studying harvest, So we talk about the tilt of the earth, we talk about the darkness, lightness, the length of the day, so that brings in some of the math thing: the tracking of how many hours of day we have sunlight. It's all just flows. It's one big flow.
- So the thematic unit allows for that flow?
- Yes, uh huh.
- And how do you get kids to think about their emotional connection to nature in the primary grades? I know last time you said they, in order for them to love nature they need to experience it, so—
- And that's how you do it; you get them to experience it.
- So how do you get them to feel emotional towards the earth?
- They naturally will. They just naturally do. It's all part of us. It's part of our human nature. When they are out there and they are looking at salamanders under a log, it forms naturally. All you have to do is just give them exposure and positive exposure outside.
- Moving quickly. Um and how can morality be taught or incorporated into math, science, and social studies? Teaching them how they know right from wrong.
- That's just something we infuse all the time. You gotta model it as I said before. You've gotta be a model of morality first. You've gotta make sure you're treating everyone in the classroom that way. That you love them all equally and have the same expectations for all of them, even though your delivery might vary according to the kid, but they know

your bottom line expectations are the same for everybody. You just have to model what is right. Um, and they know. We model it, we talk about it.

- Are there any activities that are kind of good to kind of show them what's good or not good, in a math, science, or social studies lesson?
- We do have some social studies materials. Um a democracy unit. They have some big books and the kids kind of analyze the big books. For example, one of them is on authority, one of them is on justice, and we can use those as constant materials and we do, and we infuse it throughout the reading curriculum, but there are packaged materials out there. What was that one we used to have? It was something, positive citizenship or something like that, so there are materials out there that we have available to us.
- Ok. That will help you kind of make that connection?
- Mhhm.
- Ok. Three more questions. How can group work function so that it's democratic and getting to the emotions, being affective? How do you structure it so that it's democratic and affective? Or *a*ffective.
- Well you can do it democratically by setting up roles for people, everybody could have a different role in the group without one person being the leader so that, and that's basically what you have to do for little kids. Everybody in the group has to have some type of role, and it's not necessarily a hierarchy and they won't look at it as long as someone has a role. For example, you're the supply person, um you're the discussion leader, you're the clean up person, and you're the peacekeeper. As long as everybody's got a role. And the affective part comes not so much from the set-up, well I guess the set-up would have something to do with it as the lesson I think they would be working on.
- So the actual material of the lesson would be the affective part of the lesson? What they're talking about and learning?
- Mmhm.
- Do you think that when they're in a group setting, do you think that, I mean it sounds kind of obvious that it builds compassion but—
- Yeah. Mhmm.
- So it can be both. Ok
- And of course you've gotta be sure you watch your grouping. Your grouping has to be purposeful. If you've got somebody that really needs some of that compassion, you wanna watch who you put them with. You want to put them with kids who are going to develop that in them. You're not gonna put em' with the roughest kid in the class. Ya know what I mean? So you're gonna look at the dynamics of your classroom?
- Like if a kid had needed a lot of social practice you'd put em' next to a kid that's gonna take them under their wing—
- Be real social
- And talk to them?
- Mhhm.

- Ok. And how can the practice of teaching work so that students genuinely care about other cultures and the perspectives of others?
- I think we've answered that already. I think just by studying other cultures, appreciating, getting into—looking at artifacts, doing the dances, looking at the clothing, appreciating the language, learning to count in another language, without being ethnocentric. Just accepting
- Just expose it to them?
- Mhhm.
- And our last one. How can teaching work to get kids to see the interconnectedness of all things in the world, that, what you do in the environment affects the plants, and all the connectedness of things? How do you do that?
- Well, you'd have to weave it into your lessons. I don't know that little kids, see they think the whole world is Berlin because that's the way their world is. They know that there is a world, but they can't tell you a difference between their country and state, so I think what you need to do is to start little. Like the example I gave you of the man with the milkweed, when the man cut the milkweed down. That you start with something small and if you can get it to the community level, that's gonna be about as far as you can get. You're not gonna see that in the primary grades.
- In the primary grades. So with the milkweed that was taking action in their community, so seeing the needs of the community and how you can—
- And that actually, hopefully the y could maybe see it was affecting the larger butterfly population of the world.
- Cause they know the butterflies fly off.
- Yeah, they got that. They knew that they flew off and that they went to Mexico. And if they didn't have any food they wouldn't get to Mexico.
- Right.
- Yeah, so. Any others?
- No that's it. Anything else you want to add?
- Nope I'm good.
- Ok.

Teacher 2-1st Interview

November 10th 2010

2:45 pm

- Alright, so tell me about the school you are teaching in.
- We're an intermediate school; we're the only intermediate school in (County). Most schools are either elementary or middle. We are a transitional school because we get kids from (school) and (school) and (school). We get (school's) fourth graders. And then we get all of the fifth graders from (school) and all of the fifth graders from (school), so we are kind of a unique school. 700 students, give or take 10 or 20, and we're pretty much self-contained. Fourth grade is totally self-contained. 4, 5, 6 combination. And then when they leave us they go to (school).
- What would you say on average, the diversity is?
- Percentage as far as race?
- Yeah, that and socioeconomic status?
- We are not a Title 1 school, we do not qualify but we definitely we have probably I would say roughly 40-50% that's on free and reduced lunch. Um, we have all levels. And that's really difficult because we have the very affluent students who come from like (street name). They're the ones whose parents own the hotels in (town), all the way to the low end whose parents are migrant workers. So we have a vast extreme as far as that's concerned.
- And what are your students like this year?
- My students this year are very very nice, but pretty low compared to years past. I think this year I have 21 students, 9 have IEPS, and they qualify for special education services which indicates they have a learning disability so that of course creates some difficulties to meet and reach all those needs. Overall, good students. Some behavior problems but in sixth grade that sort of comes with the territory.
- Mmhhm. What is your teaching background?
- My teaching background started at (school) in this grade, taught there for 3 years. Moved to (school) when it opened in 1976 because it was brand new school, loved it. It was great! Small neighborhood school. When we opened (town) had just started. So we were a school K through 5 of about 200 kids. Very personable. When you taught one student you knew the entire family. And then when that school got to grow and became too large to accommodate all the students, then fifth grades were moved over to this school and I came over as a fifth grade teacher and taught here in fifth grade for probably 3 or 4 more years, and then in 2004 I moved over into sixth grade.
- Ok. And why did you choose teaching as your profession?

- Always wanted to be a teacher. I always did, and I still do. I mean, I have no desire, never have, to go into administration. I think where you make the difference is in the classroom with kids. Sounds kind of trite, but I truly believe that.
- So since you were a kid you wanted to be a teacher?
- Mmhmm. Always wanted to. Always did the practice at home. Always loved that kind of stuff. Never really regretted it. There's days when you go home and you question why I do what I do. There has to be an easier way to make a living. But in the end it always turns out well.
- K. And how can teachers use critical thinking in the classroom?
- Um, critical thinking is really important in questioning and higher level thinking skills. We use it all the time in reading. Particularly in inferential comprehension where it's not stated but it's implied. I use critical thinking a lot of the time in connotation like why did the author choose this word as opposed to that word, and what difference does it make in meaning? So use it a lot with word meaning and vocabulary, but that's kind of where some kids excel. Even some kids that can't even write a composition they will excel in critical thinking. Perfect example. I had a little girl last year, (name given), didn't do well in writing but she did great verbally and the question was, "can you send a strong message with just a few words?" and she cited from Charlotte's Web where it was like "Help Me" in the web. I don't know if you know the story. And she, it was like wow, she nailed it. And there was a little girl where you kind of got lost cause she was just average, but she really thought about it, and she gave a great example that came from her own reading.
- How can teaching work in a way that is multicultural?
- Work in a way that's multicultural. Well, it works like I know for Cinco de Mayo, that's the one that stands out. We always have the ELL students that come in and they always bring us salsa and chips which is just a little thing, but we have a foreign language program here. Today the students in French had éclairs and French bread, and they got to share that. I have a little girl that's gonna be out next week and it's because of a religious holidays so she's gonna bring in recipes from her religious holiday. We deal with it a lot. Tomorrow is Veteran's Day and the kids are gonna share family history's that, whether they're black, white, green, purple, whoever in their family has served in the military and in what capacity. So I think we touch on it through holidays, foods, backgrounds.
- Students just sharing their backgrounds?
- Yeah. And being free to do that. Their clothing, ya know. I mean I think we're very tolerant here. I guess it's really silly to think that no one judges, but I think it's easily accepted to come in, in your native costume, or to share food of your native country. I don't think kids are judged that do that.
- And what topics do you think as a teacher motive the students the most?
- Topics. I think current events definitely. Um, they love mysteries. We went to the graveyard and did those rubbings, and that really motivated them because they could look

up people with their own names or family names. They loved it. Anything that involves them and gets them, and out of the classroom. Walking trips are great. And I really wish, actually for Veteran's Day I had made arrangements then for us to go back to the cemetery because and to put flags on veteran's graves. That would be a great extension of that activity. They just like things like animals, history, mysteries of history like Titanic, they love reading about things like that. They loved our novel because it touched on folklore, and beliefs in ghosts. Anything they don't really understand they love learning about.

- They want to figure it out.
- Yes, exactly.
- And what are the hardest topics for students to understand?
- Well I taught math for many years and believe you me I think it has to be math because it's a skill-based subject. I'm very fortunate I teacher reading now so if you don't succeed in spelling you might succeed in grammar, if you don't succeed in grammar you might succeed in grammar. There's so many different components, but in math you need to know that 6x6 is 36 to do those certain problems. And if you don't have those basic facts you're not going to meet success. And I know they use calculators I just think a skill based curriculum is tough to teacher because those kids that miss the lower skills can't move on.
- Is there a way to teach math—
- They use a calculator, they use times tables, but it's not the same because when you go to divide if you don't know 6x6 is 36 and you're now trying to divide 60 into 370, you've lost that basic understanding that 6 is gonna go into 37 6 times, everything builds on everything else, so if you don't have that foundation, whether you've got a calculator or times table, I think you're just missing the boat. So for me that was very difficult.
- Is there anything in your class in reading that maybe you'll talk about that are hard?
- I think grammar is sometime hard, but I do a lot with grammar. I really like that and I think for me, kids understanding grammar helps them in writing. I think that's the lost connection. Kids that have trouble writing have trouble usually because they don't have grammar. They don't know how to make a sentence or how to write a sentence. So I think for some it is hard but at the end of the year I always give them an evaluation like what did you think helped you the most this year, what did you think was a waste of your time, and invariably they say, "I may not have enjoyed the daily language review the most, but I learned the most from it," so I think its beneficial.
- And how can teaching work in a way to give all students an equal chance of success in the world?
- Wow. Wouldn't we love to know the answer to that one? Um, I mean, it should be the best of everything for each kids. Trying to meet their individual needs is the answer to the question. How do you go about doing that? Lot of times it's impossible to do that, but you have to have an awareness, so we write these action plans in our county where

we sit down and we actually go through their scores on MSA and we go through if they have an IEP, what their plan shows as their learning disability, what the accommodations are, and then we have to come up with an individualized student action plan for those students that have a need, and that really helps because that's the total picture of that kid. In that plan I have to write behaviorally what I'm going to do for that child. Sometimes it's harder than others. If you throw in a behavior problem that action plan is a lot harder to implement because there is another variable to deal with.

- So it's trying to meet the individual needs as much as you can?
- And being aware. You cannot be a teacher that sits at your desk, you can't. I think there's two things that make it. Being aware is one. You have to totally be aware. And two you have to be consistent. What you have as a rule today you have to have as a rule tomorrow. What you have as a rule for Johnny has to also be a rule for Bobby, and it can't change because I think that's when you run into behavior problems, where you're not consistent.
- Being fair?
- Yes. Kids want you to be fair. Kids are very astute. They know if someone is given an unfair break. Or, even if a kid's being picked on, cause I've had kids from other classes come in and say, "Oh, this teacher's really really not very nice to so and so." They pick up on that vibe, so I think you have to just to be fair. You treat people the way you want to be treated. Kids are people.
- Yup. Um, and then, in the last 30 years with the formation of the Environmental Protection Agency, the need for environmental awareness has become a concern of global interest. How can teaching work in a way that promotes environmental awareness in students?
- Wow. Well one of the things we do here, it's a minor thing but I think it has a big impact. My kids is the class that cuts up the plastic 6 packs of sodas that we get through the school, and just like today and yesterday on the Burmese python. Understanding how species can be invasive. I think Knowledge is power, and just letting them know about these things they then would know that if you buy a goldfish and the goldfish isn't what you want; you don't just put it out in the wild to take care of itself. So I think just teaching it as part of the curriculum is the best way.
- So it's kind of, informing them in articles and stuff?
- Mmhmm.
- And we generally think of emotions as the driving force behind the survival, decision making, communication, and happiness of human beings. How can teaching work in a way that creates compassion for others?
- Wow. I think one you have to be the role model you want them to be. I don't think you can expect compassion from them if you're not compassionate. Yesterday, they came back from science, three boys, you were here. I mean you have to take the time to listen to what they have to say and get their perspective in a situation that's non-threatening.

and you do that when no one else is around. And I think they see your compassion, and I have a hard time not saying things. like for example that man that killed that little girl in Salisbury. It's very hard not to put your own judgments out there, and to let them really know how you feel about things, but I think they can see that you're compassionate, and ya know, you're their role model, so I think you wanna emulate what you want them to be.

- And in instruction are there certain activities that could promote compassion?
- Well we do, we have a great guidance program, and they do come in once a month, like we do, we have this character education up here, "Character, It's all about." See that, "tolerance, attitude." So they will focus each month when they come in on a particular theme or character that they are, like bullying was a big one last month. Just talking and that's where you build compassion. But I think just the way you deal with things. Like you don't ignore a problem, you try to resolve it to the best of your ability, and um and be involved in what they feel and how they act. I just think some people think if you brush it under the rug it will go away but it doesn't.
- So talk to them and address it?
- Yes, address it.
- And what are your thoughts on the effects of a classroom community on student success?
- Like outside community?
- A classroom community? Like within here?
- Yeah.
- Well that's kind of interesting because in fifth grade they actually do a community in the classroom and they go to this place in Salisbury, it's actually a place, and before they go they have to elect a mayor, a pope, a postmaster. They do that in the classroom. And that day that they travel to that place, they take on that role within the tow, and I think that's pretty effective. And I know in social studies they do a whole thing on culture and how culture and people in the community play a role. In the classroom I do think were a community, I think were a family. Different people have different roles. We elect an SGA person and that person comes back and reports about the business of the school and we vote, and we do things in a democratic manner, so I think we are a community, were like a family, an extended family.
- And you would say that helps student success?
- Yes, definitely. Cause they feel comfortable here. Like for example last night I ran into Lawrence's grandfather at the little store. He was like oh, Lawrence thinks the world of you. Here, I'm gonna call him. I mean, that is community where parents and grandparents see you out and you get to talk to them at the grocery store and you get to talk to them about their kid. That's community. I mean it should be a team, working together. We're all on the same side helping these kids.
- Where am I? Ok. And we generally think of people in the US as having democratic rights and civic responsibilities. How do you see those factoring into teaching?

- Oh totally. Yeah. I think it's what we said earlier about solving problems. It's gotta be a democracy and you do have to have rules and you do have to follow the rules, and everybody's gotta be equal. When I taught the students superintendent's kid, he was no different than the other kids I taught. I mean you just need to establish that from the beginning that all will be treated fairly and equally. And follow that that is where the consistency comes in. You have to be fair, you have to be consistent.
- How could you enrich being fair with kids in a lesson or in curriculum? How could that work?
- Um, you mean as far as part of the curriculum that I teach?
- Yeah.
- Um, I guess in examples through stories like, we did a whole thing on Wait till Helen with character traits, and we said how the character changed throughout the story, and the one little girl was troubled cuase her mother had died, so she was really mean to people and nasty, and it was a blended family, so then we got into, "how many of you have live in blended families? How many of you can relate to this story? How many of you have been in the similar position where you know how Heather feels being treated by Molly in this way, and I think when they can relate to themselves that takes on a whole different feeling for them.
- So taking on the roles of others?
- Exactly. And relating to them. Putting yourself in that situation and how would you feel? Personalizing it.
- Does that help with democracy would you say?
- I think, yeah. I think it does. I think we'd all be better in real life if you took on the role of how my actions affect another person's actions and how I would want to be treated, whether it's a crime, or whether it's on the street I think we saw that happen after 911. Ya know, everybody was nicer to everybody because we stood back and re-evaluated and said, "What's important in life?" And it's being nice. I always tell the kids the first day of school I only have the one rule and that is to treat each other with respect because if you do that, if you're nice to one another, that pretty much takes care of all the other problems. And that would pretty much work in the world.
- So creating that compassion is something they will take on—
- And the empathy for the other person.
- Yup.
- Mmhmm.
- It's not about you; it's about you and someone else. Ya know, you can't be 100% of the total picture. You've gotta bring other people into it. Whether it's your mom or fellow classmate, a stranger on the street, the same thing.
- We're actually at the last part. It's a quote by Paulo Freire and you can read along with me because I know it might help but, "Education either functions as an instrument which is used to facilitated integration of the younger generation into the logic of the present

system and bring about conformity or it becomes the practice of freedom, the means by which men and women deal critically and creatively with reality and discover how to participate in the transformation of their world." How does that –

- So it sounds like he is giving you a choice because of this "or." Would you agree?
- Yeah.
- I would say I, me personally, the second part is more the way I feel. That we are trying to develop students who eventually become adults who can deal with reality in a way that works best for them regardless of what that way is. If they go to college, or if they become a skilled laborer, I think that's what our goal is. I don't think everybody should be trained exactly the same way because then you produce robots that are capable of doing the same thing. We've got to work towards people's individual strengths and develop those so that when they become adults they can discover what they do best and be successful.
- So how would that work in the practice of teaching?
- I think it works like what we said earlier like trying to find out what their strengths are and to make then confident, I think that's hugely important. They've got to feel good about themselves, and if they feel good about themselves they're going to be more successful. So I think you just build their confidence, you listen to them, you try to do what you think, like I'm not a parent but I always try to say, "If this were my child what would I do?" Ya know, I try to take on that role of this is what I would do if this were my child. So I try to handle my students in that same caring way. Be fair but be realistic. Ya know ya can't give in on everything but you can hear what they have to say then you explain why you feel the way you do, and then find a place in the middle because I think it goes back to that democracy. Ya know, yes I am the adult and I am the leader of the classroom, but really they have rights as well and I have to hear their rights and be fair to them.
- And you said about listening to the students. Could teaching work where say you said to the students, "We're going to be studying other countries" and asking them what they want to learn. Is that another way—
- Yeah. We just did that with non-fiction topics. Were you here that---
- Yup.
- Uh-huh. They brainstorm their non-fiction topics so what I want to do now is take their list of topics and sort of categorize them to see if there's any overlap cause then we'll do some grouping work and I wanted to know what their interests were because friends will always pick friends regardless. I may like clouds and you may like unicorns but if you're my friend I'm gonna like clouds too. So if you get it on paper and then you can systematically go through them and try to classify them based on shared common interest then you can have your groups made for you. So yes I do think that happens a lot. I'm gonna try it. It was just something I've never done before and I said this is the way I want to start non-fiction so we'll see how it goes.

- Getting their input?—
- Yes. I think their input is important and we don't do it enough. I know I don't. Um, and sometimes you can't always because you have this voluntary state curriculum you're supposed to follow and you have to be here and you know you've got a benchmark on Friday, so you know there's so many other things that sometimes you forget—You're on this rollercoaster that is out of control and it's easy to forget that you haven't asked them what they want to do. But I do try to get their input like for social things like when we went to the graveyard; they got to do whatever they wanted. I gave them guidelines but they could choose. "do you wanna work with a partner? Do you wanna work on names? Do you wanna concentrate on dates? Do you wanna concentrate on the actual epitaph?" So they do get a feeling of "I do have some say in what we're doing."
- And you're talking about choice? Would that be something that would go into promoting democracy?
- Absolutely.
- How would teaching work to promote civic responsibility? Like going out in the world and combating social injustice.
- Well we do a service learning project and last month we went to the nursing home and when we were there we interviewed the residents, and when we went there I taught them interview techniques and I told them about the uniqueness of the residents there. Some of them are older. Some of them can't see, some of them can't hear, so I think just by experiencing things like that where you just go and you're nice and you share yourself with another person builds on the democracy in a community aspect that enriches your lives as well as your students and the other people. They benefited but we benefited too. So it was like am mutual benefit to both of us. And I think you have to start small. I don't think everyone grows up having civic responsibility no matter how hard you try. I mean some people end up in jail so obviously the missed the boat. But I think by giving them experiences where they feel good about what they do is a step in the right direction.
- And how would teaching work like say you wanted to teach the issue of racism would there be any strategies?
- We would do sounder, sounder is the n word, and we address it right from the get go, before we start any novel we talk about the contexzt, the setting, the time period. How this word had such a huge impact on African Americans and so we just, if you you don't address it, you can't put it under that rug, so we just get it right out there. We just talk about it openly and then when we read the novel Sounder in the novel there are huge examples of racism. The father is treated horribly. the dog in the story is treated horribly by white sheriffs and they just take advantage of this family and it's very interesting because my African American students they totally can relate because they've heard stories; their ancestors have talked to them about it, but we also say that's the way it was that's not the way it is today. So we have learned from the mistakes of our past. There's things today like with the gay culture that ya know it's not race its sexual preference, so I

think as we go through time there is always going to be those people that are victims. And you just have to be tolerant. We're tolerant of each other, and I think it starts here. Like how I deal with you, and how you deal with the next person, and then how we deal as a group, and then we go larger; you go your way I go mine but were still dealing with people. So I think it's common good for mankind. But I'm very idealistic I meant you have to be having done the job for 38 years. I mean I just I really like my job. I mean I really like my job and I think I'm an idealistic person, I see the silver lining. I'm often the one that gets those children that have the biggest needs and I think that's compliment because I think that's because I've dealt with those kinds of kids in a positive way because kids can get branded by teachers and then they don't get a chance and you can't do that, ya know?

- So going back to what you were saying like how there's always going to be something that people kind of target? How could teaching work so say, you were saying people are kind of biased against people who are gay, how could you teach kids about taking action? In action we always think of civic responsibility as something that you need to do. How can teaching work to promote that action?
- Well I think probably you give them a mock situation, I know when we had our guidance lesson on bullying, if you don't take part you may not consider yourself as involved but if you witness it and you choose to do nothing are you really involved as being part of the problem? Which is a great question. And in my mind you are because I think that unless you stand up for that person they're not knowing how you feel. If you do nothing they don't really know how you feel. And the other thing people is people don't know how you feel that are bullying and harassing these people. So we always say, it's sometimes hard to make the decision on where to stand and where to get involved, but I think you need to. I always give, when I grew up there was a girl in my class, Patricia Walls, I'll never forget her. And they picked on this little girl in my class. And she was poor and she wore dingy clothes, and I always knew it was wrong that they picked on her, I never picked on her. But I never was brave enough to stand up for her either and to this day it still haunts me because you think to yourself, "I should have" and sometimes you have to get older to understand, and I had to get older to understand that, but I try to teach that to my kids. Every class I've ever taught knows Patricia Walls. She's never been forgotten because I say that all the time. It's not enough to be involved. Just cause you're not involved doesn't mean you're not part of the problem. Role modeling, getting scenarios, what would you do, and what is the right thing to do, and they should be able to apply that to other situations.
- And sharing personal stories like you did?
- Yeah. I always tell my stories, and they love it, but ya know sometimes it's just the perfect thing to make a point and then I guess they see me as being human, this a mistake I made and maybe they realize, wow she still remembers this how many years later and it

still bothers her, then this must have been a big deal, so I just think you need to talk to them about it, be honest.

- Be honest.
- Because a lot of times they go with the group.
- Especially in sixth grade.
- Particularly sixth grade. They are right on the cusp of where do they want to be, what kind of person do they want to be. Do they want to be cool and be bad, or do they, ya know? The hormones are raging. Puberty is kicking in. ya know, they are dealing with so much. And then on top of it they have to figure out how to deal with other people. It's hard.
- It's tough for them
- So is there anything you'd like to add?
- No! I mean these are great questions. Did you develop them?
- Yeah.
- Wow, I am very impressed you are very smart.
- Thanks.
- Yeah that's great. I like these questions. No, I think they cover pretty much everything. And of course it's idealistic. Ya can't take all the horses to the water and make em drink but hopefully they can all find their own way. Your ideal is you want 100% but you don't always get 100%.
- So setting high expectations?
- Mmhmm. And trying to be, I think every day, the best you can be. Honestly, I think that's my mantra from the beginning. Do the best you can do every day. Don't give up on kids, just every day if you have a bad day with a kid today don't assume tomorrow's gonna be another bad day. Start out fresh. So, I had a kid, RJ, he had a problem, he was sitting in the back row, right here actually, so I moved him up to the front row, so the next day he came in and he went to the front row, and I said, "Oh no you don't have to sit up here you can go back to your seat, every day is a new day," and he said, "well what if I wanna sit up here?" I was like, "oh you can but I didn't know you would." He goes, "yeah I like it here." So you can't figure em out.
- Going with what they want...
- Exactly, but I wondered if I said, "No you have to absolutely sit here today, would he have then forced the issue to have wanted to sit in the back row? But because I was like its whatever, it's fine with me wherever you choose to sit he was fine with it too. It's never been an issue since so that kind of solved that problem.
- Interesting.

Teacher 2-2nd Interview

November 16, 2010

10:40 am, 2:30pm

Red= Laura Oakley

Black= Teacher 2

10:40 am-11am

- So in the beginning of our interview last time you talked about the diversity of your school, especially the large range of SES. How can teaching work in a way that incorporates the perspectives of all students in that range, from high to low, by taking action on the social issues facing this area, which may include homelessness, unemployment, discrimination of lower SES/higher SES students?
- BIS. Showell?
- I meant lower socio economic…
- Oh. I read that as Showell Elementary School.
- Oh, I'm sorry.
- That's what I was thinking about when I was reading that.
- Oh, yeah I meant the range of socio-economic statuses. How can you—
- Um, it's a very very difficult task, one that you have to be aware of everyday, cause I think one of the best examples I can give you is we used to give a lot more activities to be done at home, and then we had a little girl who missed the bus from a field trip, when we realized where she lived and how little they had, it's not a reasonable expectations to expect a child in this position who has no resources whatsoever. I mean, they had a light that hung from a wire. That's how poor they were. So I think, just being realistic and giving it thought and contemplation, you have to be aware and realize, that yes those at the high end can accomplish this task, and then when you grade them you have to allow for that wide range, because it's not really fair to grade the student that went to Michaels and got all the stickers and art supplies and all that higher than someone who barely has probably enough money for food.
- How can you encourage taking action on those issues? Students taking actions? Could they do service learning, could they—
- Yes, yes, and we do, in those situations I've done a lot more in the classroom where I literally provide the materials. They're encouraged them to bring in things, but yes, you certainly can encourage that by sharing with each other. We have in my classroom a

community school supply place, where at the beginning of the year they can contribute extra school supplies for the use of all. Which I think is helpful. It just kinda brings that whole community service of that I am willing to give to those that don't have.

- So just by having a community supply bank that helps?
- Resource bank. Yup.
- Is there any way they can go out into the community and combat homelessness?
- Well there is one of our teams at our school does go to the (center) and they plant a vegetable garden and do housekeeping chores. Our team goes to the nursing home, so our team is not as service oriented, such as with homelessness but we fill a void of loneliness I would say. But yeah I think the empathy has to be there, and once again I think it's very much as a teacher you have to be a role model of how you're dealing with those kids in the classroom, and when kids see your empathy, your sympathy if you will, your regard, I think you just have to be that model that emulate in dealing with it.
- Right.
- And opportunities to go outside the school are limited. Realistically that'd be ideal to be able to have a resource to go and travel and help, but you get into all of those issues of transportation and permission slips.
- Yeah. Some of the articles that I read that this question is based on; kids realize in their community...I'm trying exactly how it remember how it went. There was a problem in the community, like they didn't have a nice place to go, like a nice little foresty place…
- Like a park?
- Mmhmm.
- So they didn't actually go out and do it, but they incorporated that idea that they wanted to have an impact on their community, so they drew pictures of what they would want it to look like, why would they want to have certain things, and they wrote and they drew, and it got them doing all those skills. So I guess that's what I mean by taking an issue and then they can see, oh wow I had an impact on that.
- One of the things my class is doing right now, and we have barely scratched the surface, but when first term ended and they, one of the things our school does is they recognize those students that are on honor roll and principal's list, and the first time it will say, "Proud Parents of a (school name) Honor Roll Student," and the second term thereafter they get a sticker that says "again, and again." And my kids, every year, and we've never done anything about it say, why do the principal's list kids get the same bumper sticker as honor roll because its must more difficult to be principals list because you need all As, honor roll you only need a 3.5. so I think that that is something that the kids, we talked about it, and I said if you feel strongly you need to write your concerns to the principal that there should be a distinction between the two levels of achievement. So yes, I think that's very important. It affects them personally b y writing a letter. You might let the administration know how you feel; they've probably not given it any thought.
- So writing letters, especially in your class—

- Yes, public opinion letters. When we went on our field trip, thank you notes, ya know following up. These people are volunteering their time and giving of their time to be at the church to tell you about the history. You need to recognize that's something they're doing freely of their own selves, and show appreciation. I don't think we do enough of that. Whether it be writing a thank you letter for a gift. I just think it's just a common courtesy, and that's- It's all part of being a good citizen, a good role model.
- Ok. And last time you talked about using higher level thinking skills in the classroom. How can those higher level thinking questions be used in a way that sort of nurtures the natural curiosity children have?
- I think it just is a perfect outcome. Like a question promotes a question, which promotes another question. And ya know, you've been in here enough to know, sometimes something will be said that totally takes up somewhere else, so the natural curiosity comes with them asking questions, and then me asking questions, and then getting more in-depth , and then getting more in-depth about the questions we ask. For example the other day we talked about the Burmese python which led us into what the country of Burma is now Myanmar, and we've found out its been in the news because that woman was let out of jail in that country, and all the kids are like, "I can't believe it, that we talked about this in class." And that in the news over the weekend that exact place was in the news. So it's creating that awareness, then they ask questions, and they're more apt to pay attention to it and make other connections when it comes up in the news or wherever. I just think the questioning is the natural curiosity. I think just getting them to think about things. And ask questions, ya know. Kids love to know more, and they love to get the teacher off topic, so they think they've accomplished both things, so
- But they're really learning. ..(laughter)
- They really are learning, but they think they've tricked me, but really I've tricked them.
- And we discussed last time how teaching multi-culturally can include using holidays, student backgrounds, and food. What are some ways teaching can take some of those issues multiculturalism poses such as racism, and have students break that done into what can be done in the school, community, and nation to solve the parts of the problem that still exist today?
- Um, I would say and I think I mentioned this last time about the current events issues, because it's much easier. It's hard to address some of those issues isolated. So if you can make a connection. We talked about the gay rights and the bullying when the guidance teachers come in, I think that's where a lot the connections can be made. Violence, the treatment of others. I just think then it's making them aware and making them empathetic.
- And connecting everything.
- And realizing, like with (student). We did that walk on her behalf because she's diabetic and she does wear an insulin pump. But no one would really know that but because she's in our class we can share that. And I have another little boy who allergic to nuts. And

that seems like such a small topic compared to a topic like racism, but really the way you deal with people who are different, whether it's genetically different, racially different, health concerns different, it's still the same thing. It's treating them with respect and dignity. So I think just doing it on a small basis will expand to a larger basis.

- Mhhm. They take that with them.
- Mhhm. It becomes part of their character. How you treat others and how you feel about the treatment of others.
- Mmhmm. And how is a sense of comfort in the classroom created during instructional time? I know you talked about being a good role model and having them be tolerant. Is there any way you could do that during class time?
- I try really hard to make, to be aware, I think being aware, there's kids that you can't push on certain days, I know that. Charlie had a bad day yesterday, he came in having a bad day, it just got worse, and he was eventual sent home by the administration, but I went down and I talked to him and I said to him one on one, "I think what you need to do Charlie is think about where you are now and to what caused this to resolve. And then go back, what was the cause and effect of the previous behavior so that you can actually go back and trace how you ended up here based on what you did previously. So ya know you just have to take time sometimes to hear them, listen to them. Sometimes you get so consumed on fitting the time in, you look at the clock and you know what you need to get accomplished in that period, but sometimes you have to be willing and flexible enough to just say this is more important at the time. We have issues that come up all the time, and sometimes I do team meetings. Like if there's an issue, last year particularly this worked a lot. There was a student who missed a lot of time, and my kids were on him on all the time. "You're always absent. You never let us win the attendance. Yack Yack Yack Yack." And I said ya know you're gonna get a whole lot more bees with honey than vinegar. We need to support him while he's here. And ya know we talked about it we talked about it as a class and said these are ways we need to work together to help him. I just think being honest and taking time to talk to hear and listen.
- Ok.
- It seems so basic, but I think we all need to be heard, and it's not a text message, it's not, it's one on one communication that they have very little interaction with these days. Everything's via text message, or computer, Facebook, or twitter or what have you. The y don't really have the time that people sit and talk to them one on one, or small group, and I think that's what's lacking, and that creates comfort.
- And last time you talked about walking trips being very motivating for students. How could walking trips be used with math, science and social studies?
- Well we used to have a walking club, and I was in charge of that, and when we did that we would have a focus each time we walked. One time we did the boardwalk and our focus was the dates of the building, and trying to come up with a timeline of what was built when. Another time we did a trip to Berlin and we focused on architecture and that

was pretty cool. And then of course when we went to the graveyard we focused on family names and plots. So I think the walking trips, I wish we do more of them after school, like right now there's a photography club and they do do walking trips, and one time it might be landscapes, and another time it might be structures, ya know what have you, but they try to zero in on a particular component on the walking trips. And with math you develop in social studies the timeline of the buildings, and in math what's the period of time and why was there a gap? Hypothesize was there a fire or was there a flood? Ya know what natural disaster? Ya know, it all relates. Right now we're doing the Egyptian masks. They made the masks yesterday, today in social studies they're discovering about the history of the Egyptian people, and in ILA we're getting ready to read, Who is King Tut? Really building on that whole theme. So it lends itself, time is the hardest part. Getting it to fit, and still following your voluntary state curriculum in a timely manner.\

- Right. You have to follow the state curriculum you can't just go walking (laughing)
- Right. We can't just go walking, and yet sometimes what are they gonna remember? The walking. Yeah.
- So, in going back to your comment on how students love to learn about anything they don't understand, what don't they understanding at the upper elementary/middle school level? What do kids want to they want to talk about that they don't understand what could that look like in practice?
- Wow. What they don't understand. I think a lot of times they don't understand the interaction between topics. For example, when I used to teach math, when we would start decimals I don't think they really understood that decimals are fractions, ya know it shows a part of a whole number, and then how does the decimal and the fractions then relate to whole numbers, I just think they're missing the links that connect. Like in reading the parts of speech. I don't think they really understand how understanding the parts of speech in grammar really enable them to write better sentences, which in turn creates better paragraphs, which creates better stories, personal narratives. That it's all related not separate entities.
- How could you use that idea of connecting in practice?
- Like probably what we're doing right now. And I'll tell you when I taught math I would just tie that in. I would make a point not to teach it in isolation, but to make that connection, like today when I was doing my lesson, trying to connect the nonfiction were doing today to the nonfiction we read on the Burmese python. Even though they're separate topics, they share lots of common characteristics. So, verbalize it, do activities that allow them to make those connections. Me telling them is not the best, them understand it and making the connection themselves is.
- So in instruction you are making the connection because you're verbalizing how they overlap?
- Yes. And yeah, trying to show them, ya know, this isn't an isolated topic, it connects to whatever. I know like when we used to do it in math, on my board you would do a

continuum of days, so if you showed the first day of school was one out of 100, then you would show that in the decimal form, fraction form, as well as a mixed number form once you got to over 1. So you try to show them that they're not isolated. I don't know if it works or not but that's what our goal is. And give them a lot of graphic organizers where they themselves are given the information and they have to categorize it. It helps them also make those connections.

- Ok. Cool. And then going back to what you said about math, how can math be taught in a way that uses problem solving while nurturing the natural curiosity children have?
- Math, it's skill based, so you've gotta get the skills down but you can do it in a number of different ways. Um, ya know just measuring. They love doing reading a recipe, measuring. Fractions are much more meaningful when you're actually pouring the milk into a cup and seeing that one half is twice as much as one fourth. So I think hands-on, get them involved, have activities that like with the map, they love doing anything that involves art, we're an arts immersion school so we use that a lot. And you just connect that to whatever content you're teaching. Like if you're doing character traits, and we did those ghosts early on, not only did we do the ghosts, which involved the measuring and the hands-on activity, but they had to come up with their name, their personality for their ghost, so that tied in the character traits that we discussed. I don't know it all links, it's all connected.
- And then, how could valuable tasks like the grammar you said the kids said they needed even though they didn't love it, how could that be taught in a way that is democratic, that uses student choice, responsibility, and teamwork?
- Wow, I guess they could actually choose the topics. Like if you wanted to do parts of speech one week they could select, ok this week let's do verbs and then come up with the activities. Um, which is the ideal situation. Time just, I mean, ya know what, it's just like you've gotta get it done, and I wish we did do more of that. And in a democratic society kids should have a larger role in selecting what they want to do. Now sometimes we do do that with novel selections. That once again is difficult because how do you select a novel you haven't read over another novel you haven't read? You might like to stick with the same author, and sometimes I will do that. I'll say ya know what would you rather do today? To some degree they get some choice in it, I guess because I'm driven by the VSC I know what has to be done; the order that I do them in is pretty much open. And I have a much greater flexibility in sixth grade than the K-5 teachers do. I mean I am so fortunate because I can vary it up to some degree. They allow me to make some more of the choices than in the lower grades. In the lower grades it's like you are on this page of this book at this time.
- Does that allow you to bring in the current events?
- Yes, that definitely does, and my 90 minute period does. The length of time I teach these classes also gives me much more flexibility in being free to being able to teach off-task if you will, and have them ask questions and get involved. And you can see how that goes I

mean in the little bit of time you've been in here, you can see how they will input things of interest in them, or a connection they have outside of school into something we are doing inside of school.

- They definitely seem very open.
- Like Veteran's day they all brought in their pictures of their people, of their family members who served in their armed forces, and they brought in a little history, weapons, things like that that's interesting to them and then you relate it to the holiday of Veteran's Day. Much more meaningful than just saying "Eh, ok what's a history? When did it start? What president declared it a holiday?" They feel like they're more interested because they have a personal connection to it.
- We should probably pause and come back to it.
- Ok.

2:35 pm

- So you talked about the need to be fair in the classroom in the last interview. So how could the idea of fairness be taught in a lesson in math, science, or social studies that is multicultural?
- Wow. A lot of variables in that. Let me think. Well I think social studies lends itself very well to a multicultural lesson on fairness because its across genders, across races, and its multicultural in those aspects, but as far as fairness I think you'd tie it in social studies with diplomacy and the constitution and the rights we are given in the Bill of Rights, and I think we run our classroom like a democracy. Like when we did SGA we absolutely have an election and we base it on character traits and what represented a good leader, so I think that's not necessarily multicultural although all the kids in my room make it multicultural. Does that make sense?
- So everyone has their own –
- Different take on it. Right, exactly.
- And what about science? Is there anything that comes to your mind?
- Only like I think about what I observed in fifth grade like the fairness of inventions and people being respected. Like we've talked about in my room the need to use a pseudonym, like when Ben Franklin wanted his brother to publish something in the old Richards almanac, he didn't want him to know he was the one responsible for writing those articles, so he would write under a pseudonym, and women would write under a pseudonym, so we kind of talked about that. Um,
- Like the history of science?
- Yeah, and the history of fairness. Like you would not be as readily accepted as an author if you were a woman, back in the 17-1800's so that kinda gets at the fairness. Is that fair

to be judged based on gender or race or ya know whatever category you are in? that would be fairness I think

- Ok, and then it's basically the same question but how could the idea of fairness be taught in math, science, or social studies that is affective, meaning involving the emotions?
- Mm. I think probably role playing. Ya know you take on the role of the person in the situation and you give then a scenario and let them know what it would be like to be in that situation. For example, in bullying, you become the victim. It would work really well with those kids that have those personalities, and then in my room those quiet quiet kids that would never think of saying a word to anybody. Let her become the bully and let someone who is aggressive be the victim,
- And then, how could the idea of fairness be taught in a lesson in math, science, or social studies that promotes social action in the school, community, or nation?
- I have no idea. Take it out to the community. Well the only, I told you the last time we interviewed about how the fifth grade does that in a fifth grade community. They actually go on a field trip where they assume the roles of a community and then they play those roles out when they get to that community. Locally I don't really know. I know occasionally kids will walk to town hall and see the involvement of elected officials. I think maybe that could be tied into an election year, like fairness. We did, see now all these ideas come to my head. We did talk about editorials when the election, the primary was going on and the general election earlier this month, about what's fair in a letter to the editor when you're running and I'm talking about you, how ethical that is and how far you can push the envelope before it becomes unethical. And the difference between a personal comment and one based on your beliefs about say the government in general. So we kind of tied it in with the election, cause I brought in political cartoons and they could, like you know when they talk about the oversized ears of Obama, have we crossed the line? And for different people that is crossing the line, and it depends on what your morals and ethics are. So I think maybe that would be fair. What's fair in advertising or in ya know cartoons or whatever?
- That's actually…one of the articles I read was called the "Bubble Project" and kids kind of fought back when people would advertise and they'd target kid or something, they'd make their own advertisements using humor. And it was, so that was kinda, it reminds me of that. Maybe they could take the political cartoon and turn it around to be more ethical.
- And see a lot of times they say college kids are targeted by the credit card companies, so ya know when it's any group that's targeted, then you could get at the fairness issue of that group.
- Mmhmm. Interesting. Ok, and how can service learning work so that students are actively solving a societal problem that exists such as poverty, racism, discrimination based on class, and like you said last time, have experiences that make them feel good, like when they went to the nursing home?

- Mmhmm. And see I think that's a societal problem because I don't think we take enough time and attention with our elderly. So societal problem is that our society is getting older and older and we're warehousing these people, and they're not really being treated, by the whole society as general, as important entities. They're sort of like ok they've done their service, now let's put them in a box and close the box. And I think kids need to be aware of that because unless kinds have a relative that's there, they may not see that as a problem. And then I think also, this ties right in with the fairness thing as far as um fairness in government. Ya know the ear marks we mentioned today. Is that really fair that you're gonna pass legislation because someone's paid you the money to think about that differently than you would have without the money? It all relates =, it all does in society, because ya know they go home, ok let's say, you go home, and your home is being repossessed by the banks. Then we go into that whole is it being repossessed because the banks were being unfair, because the um you were unfair in your expectations. Ya know? We talk about that a lot about the stresses on kids and families today.
- There are a lot of different variables
- How could you, not teach it, but how could that be used that in the classroom. Would you just talk about it? Would you do an activity?
- I think awareness, one, and um very often these Storyworks we get often will target one topic, and in guidance we talk about it, like for example when we read Sounder..huh that's my phone. Can you cut that off?

2:50 pm

- Yes, Sounder. We start out with a pre-reading activity and they are given a list of statements, and one of them is, "Is it ever ok to break the law?" And almost always the kids always put no cause that's what they're expected to say and that's what their trained growing up in society to say, but in the story the family is literally starving to death and there is no way to get food, and they try to hunt, so the father ends up stealing a ham and comes back to feed the family. Well, they don't really know he stole the ham but out of nowhere ham appears and they've only ever had ham once in their whole life. So, as we read that story and we talk about the situation and circumstances, then at the end we come back to that same set of statements and the kids have to re-evaluate them based on what they read in the story. And 9 time out of 10 all those kids that said no its never right to steal realizes hey, there may be situations where even though it's against the law, to save your family or to protect them from starving to death you might have to steal. So I think that's a really good technique: this is how I felt before I read it, this is how I felt after I read it based on the circumstances and we tie that in to how they are. Many of you are from divorced parents or many of you from parents who might be losing their homes to foreclosure. We never really talk about who's who, or you've lost a parent, a parent has passed away. Nobody bas to know who were talking about, but they then can

sensitize that to themselves, and I think that's really good because they can see, certain situations dictate certain behaviors that they hadn't really given thought to prior to reading a book, or discussing a scenario

- So they learn more about the rules of society and how there is a middle ground?
- Yes and how certain rules are broken based on conditions. Right or wrong, it changes their way of thinking
- You talked a lot how you're very idealistic last time.
- I am I am.
- So this is a very broad, general question, but how can idealism become reality in the classroom?
- Wow. I don't know. I just think that you have to be idealistic because if you're not, then you don't see the good that you're doing or any purpose to keep trying. Can it ever become the norm? I'm not sure that it can, but I think t to be an effective teacher/leader, you have to always be an optimist and always look at that glass as half full, and expect what you're doing to have a consequence that's positive cause then you're just spinning your wheels making no headway. I think these people that come into a classroom, you can't expect perfection, but you also have to look at is as I can make a difference. It may not be perfection in the end, but your role in these kids' lives have t have some positive influence on them. So you just strive for that every day. Whether you make them feel, like Cassandra, she can talk to me she knows she can, I don't judge her cause of the way she looks and dress, and yet other people in the school always are making comments to me about her way, and I say, I let them know, I really think that she puts herself out there outlandishly because she can't read, she knows she can't read, so they're gonna notice her for something besides the reading, so I think it's a cover up for her literally, but I wouldn't know that unless I knew her. So you see every kid is different, it's true, they're all unique and you just have to see what different kids tick. And sometimes you never figure it out. It's a 180 day term.
- So the idealism kind of like, believing in all kids. That's how it becomes reality?
- And I always tell them, no matter where you are, as long as you improve you've gotten better. So you can be the bottom kid in this class, as long as you improve, you've made yourself better. You maybe never will reach more than the bottom, but you can improve even at the bottom. You've got to start where you are and believe in yourself. So.
- That covers it. Two more.
- I knew I wasn't done.
- They're kind of short. So from your experience from working in an arts immersion school, what effect does integrating art have on increasing morality in students? So knowing right from wrong. How does art influence that?
- Well I think art is just another expression that some kids are very good in art, and so they can express themselves in art when they maybe cant express themselves in words, so I don't know if it teaches morality as much as it teachers freedom of speech, gives them a

venue of where they can be successful. And it's interesting because it's very often the kids that are very low academically that excel in the art, and so they become the kids that are looked up to by the academically superior kids. Morality, I don't know if it teaches morality at all. I don't know if morality is a part of that equation. I don't know if what I do teaches morality. I think I think obviously you strive to teach right from wrong and wrong from right, but everybody has their own ideas about that.

- Right. Well could art, cause art you said helps kids express themselves, and that's a good habit to have in life. Would that—
- Yeah, that would probably be stretching it a little, yeah. There are no rules in art so really that kind of breaks you out of a society where there are rules, so it's just kind of the opposite of a real society. So you can't drive until you're 16, but in art you can use red and pink, it doesn't matter. So yeah, maybe they can see that the freedom in art allows them to break the rules.
- It reminds me of that quote that you read last time about how you have to transform reality into what you want it to be.
- Yes.
- You can do that at any age with art.
- Would you say because the kids use art does that develop their character more do you think?
- I just think it develop their self-esteem more for some kids. I just think , what I really think is great about the art is, anybody, like I'm not necessarily good as an artist, Cassandra's outstanding as an amazing artist, Samantha is outstanding as an artist, and yet they both have limitations that they don't shine in other areas of the classroom. but you put a crayon or a pencil or some other artistic implement in their hand and they are gonna be the top of the top, and I think that's huge because that may be the only experience they have where they are at the top. So just by providing them that opportunity they can meet success in a way that maybe the top kid cant academically.
- So it gives them more of an equal chance? Something we talked about last time too.
- Yes. Yes. Almost an inverted chance of being equal. Like, for the artistic kid it's a better than equal chance, and for the non-artistic kid is a less-than equal chance at success. But see I think you have to provide all kinds of activities, so that every kid, whether you're athletic, you can dance, you can sing, whatever the case may be, so that you can shine with your special talent at times when no one else does. But you gotta try to reach everyone so that talent is always exposed. Tyler, I don't know what his special ability is, but as some point in the year hopefully he'll feel positive about something that he did better than most kids in the room
- Do you think, cause now I'm thinking all these things in my head, in my inclusion class we talked about maybe to help kids if they are lower, have them present something to the class that they're really really good at to boost their self-esteem and for all the other kid s to see them as an expert. Do you think if you did that in the classroom and you, maybe

used art or whatever else the child was successful at, that could boost morality in a way where kids can see, wow, look at that kid, look at his character.

- I think that's actually happening in this class this year, Charlie. I am telling you I have parents of kids take their kids out of this class this year because of his reputation. They did not want their kids in this class with him this year. The guidance counselor was one; hold their kids out of my class because he's in it. And I think he has been judged rightfully so, based on his past behavior, but you can't forever hold that against someone. Because that whole turning over a new leaf, when does that start? It starts every day, so ok he had a bad yesterday he got sent home, today he was perfect. He started out knowing, you can't forever hold that. You shouldn't be in education if you're constantly gonna hold a grudge ill call it, on someone or not give them another chance because that's not fair for you in life either, as an adult. No one wants to be held forever based on their past. And I think that happens sometimes by educators where ya know, I've had teachers in this school say, Oh Charlie he is so bad. How do you stand having him in your class and I'm like really irritates me, it just makes me really just wanna smack them because it's like, how dare you judge him. Ok, maybe you had a problem with the kid last year, but maybe the kid's changed. It's like you put a pre-conceived notion on this kid that you're gonna hold on that kid for the rest of all his life. How can you do that? We all make mistakes. And most of us move on with our lives. And Charlie will say that to me, he goes ya know certain kids in this room won't give me a chance because, and I'll say, "Well why do you think that is and he goes I know why that is it's because of what I did to them in fourth grade or— (Cut off by an announcement from principal)

3:00 pm

- Oh yeah, I was gonna say, so if you, how you were saying turning over a new leaf, if you had kids, not that every kid that presented their strengths to the class would be turning over a leaf, but I don't know, like sharing that—
- Presenting their positives
- Right. So is that in a way teaching what is right and what's wrong? Cause what's right is to always ya know have strengths and share those with others.
- We kind of did that in the very beginning of the year when we did our personal symbols. I don't know if you've seen them out there on the wall, but each kid, each student had to come up with a symbol that represented them. So we talked about the Nike check symbol and different symbols used in advertisement, and what they had to do was think about their strengths and their favorite things, colors, what have you, come up with a symbol, like a logo, that would represent them, and then they shared them with the class and explained and it was amazing how kids could go, "Oh, I didn't realize you were, you liked dance or, I didn't realize you were into horses." So it showed that there were commonalities that the kids didn't know about. So, yeah absolutely. They could shine that way because it didn't involve writing it was a symbol, art came out they could

explain their symbol, and some kids struggled because they weren't good artists, but they all did a good job. But the sharing of it was where listening they could hear, oh well I have like in Matt's case whose lost his dad, he could realize that someone else has lost someone important to themselves. So, yeah I would say definitely. Anytime you can share like that.

- So they can see the commonalities—
- Right. And that they're not that lone ranger, and they're not that different from everybody else.
- Interesting stuff. Like all these connections are going in my head.
- (Laughter)
- The last one, um, and this is very broad but how can students take action on social issues in the classroom?
- Um probably petitions, like what we want to do about the bumper sticker. They can certainly; ya know we talk about mock elections in here. They're not for real, but was it fair? We talk about current things that are going on where there's controversy. What is the right thing to do? Like with the money going out to countries in need. Should the money stay here? And like how do you make that decision? If your parents, if you were an immigrant and your family was still back in Haiti, would you feel differently about giving them foreign aid? So just kind of setting up scenarios and taking on different roles within those scenarios. Not just, you're an American citizen of the sixth grade, but ya know you're someone else. Would that affect how you feel about it? And then how do you make a decision about how to help all these people? Ya know once again making it personal to them and then having them look at it from another viewpoint besides their own.
- So you're saying in a mock decision they could become the decision maker and decide where the money goes, and then that would also tie in democracy and compassion and perspectives.
- Yes, and we do an outdoor education in the spring, and we do that, and it's sort of like to do with the environment but like there's only so much food and you have to choose between food and water. Or you can take some of each but you have to decide what percentage of each you are taking. And like when we used to this on the Marylofwer you're on the Mayflower and there are limited resources. What is the fair way to share those limited resources and who makes that decision? So you just once again, different little snippets where you can put yourself, "Oh, I would feel differently about," sort of like that question that came up with the layers of power on the Titanic. And Destiny she said, I only thought racism involved the African Americans? What we were doing made her think, "Woa, maybe it could involve other social classes or other groups of people." And that's what gets them changing their mind about things.
- Yeah, the socio-economic status is another way.
- Yup, exactly.

- And in India, in that case system where you're born into a caste and you stay in that caste forever. Of course I didn't get into that, but of course that's another good comparison to the way we do it here in the United States. But again, it's a judgment onto, each one of these kids growing up is going to have to become a productive citizen capable of making their own decisions, so what you try to do as an educator is give them a vast variety of situations where they have lots of practice in making similar situations, so when they have to and it counts, hopefully they make the right one whether its premarital sex or drinking, or using drugs, whatever ht case may be. Anything you do in the classroom I truly believe builds the person they will become.
- Making them prepared
- Yes absolutely. Because I think so many kids make the wrong decision because they've never had any practice making the right one. I mean the only way you get better at something is practice, so you gotta provide a lot, and I think that as a school system is where we're losing out, cause I don't think we're providing them with enough practice it's all geared to text items and being able to write a BCR, read and answer questions, and in education that's part of it, but there's so much more. There's a huge amount that we don't even begin to touch on.
- Yeah, like how are they going to go out into the world and be a citizen if they don't know how to make choices?
- Exactly, or ever have practice making this is right and this is wrong? But this is not wrong if you have to steal food for your family. So I like that a lot of the books we do read have that ethical thing in it. Like the one on Tuck everlasting, if you drink water you live forever. And all the kids start out going, "oh yeah I would drink the water I would want to live forever," and then after they read the story and they realize the Tuck's are stuck in time, and that all the family grows and dies, they get older, and that the world moves on without them literally because they're stuck in their time. They never age and then people start thinking they're possessed by the de vil. It allows them to see, "Woa what I initially just thought was all good, there are a lot of different details that go with that that I hadn't even thought of." And again, that exposes them to, "Woa. I just routinely made a decision to drink the water. That decision will affect me for the rest of my life, and if I wanna change my mind I can't," it's like committing a crime, its gonna affect you for the rest of your life and if you wanna take it back you can't, but you pay the penalty forever. So ya know if they are smart enough to link it, then hopefully they can apply it, ya know from their experiences. But you can't do it overnight. It's a day in day out job
- Like you said, Lot of different examples, lot of different ways to think about it.
- Right and a lot of different scenarios. And everybody, some kids will never get it, and some kids will get it like instantly. It just depends on what they've got at home, the support system they have with parents, and many other variables tie into it. Cause you have to figure you're only one person in their lives for 180 days, and hopefully you have

that impact to some small degree, and all those little impacts add and that builds a strong foundation, hopefully. And there's my idealistic nature again, I can't help it.

- (Laughter) Well I think we're done!

Teacher 3-1st Interview

November 16, 2010

10:00 am

Red= Laura Oakley

Black= Teacher 3

- So tell me about the school you are teaching in.
- This is um (name of school). I teach sixth grade. 6th grade is really a middle school grade, according to the state of Maryland, but there's no room at the middle school so we are housed in this building. It's an arts immersion school, all of the teachers in the building make an attempt to integrate arts whenever possible into their curriculum.
- Ok and what are your students like this year?
- They're no different than any other year that I've taught and this is my seventeenth year in this building. They come in all different shapes and sizes because they are at a changed period of time in their life when they're changing. They're growing and they're changing, which is actually a title of one of our units in (specific class).
- Oh, ok.
- But um they're challenging. They're at a point in their life where they should have mastered certain things in this particular content area, but most of them have not and that just comes off the top of my head as most. I don't have a percentage figure or anything like that, but just um off the top of my head I would say most of them haven't mastered what they should have mastered, so a teacher like me is usually have a dilemma., should you spend a lot of time re-teaching what they already should have come to you knowing, or should you move on?
- So are their reading levels lower?
- Their reading levels are , and this year I have children, 2 students who read on a first grade level of below, and I have several who read above a ninth grade level, and I have everything in-between. I think I have students who read on every single reading level from first grade to say tenth grade.
- That must be challenging to teach.
- What you do is help them select a book on their reading level. That can be difficult because we don't have tenth, ninth, eight, and seventh grade books here, so you have to guide them to a book that they might like outside this building. Public school libraries, like the high school library or a public library or book store where they can buy their own

books. Encourage them to ask for books for certain gift giving occasions, birthdays, Christmas, things like that.

- And what is your teaching background? Like how did you start off? How--
- I did not start teaching until I was 50 years old. I had another job before that. I worked on Capitol Hill in Washington DC for a congressman. And then when that congressman decided not to run for re-election I found a new job as well and that was in teaching. Got my certificate, and started teaching in 1994. I started at (school) in (town and state) teaching special ed students in ninth, tenth, eleventh, and twelfth grade all subjects like math, science social studies, English, citizenship, and so on. I also, during that year, I taught special ed for a half day at (school). The other half of my dad was spent in this building, (school). I was the first teacher to teach what they call FLEX. That's Foreign Language Exploratory. It was a pilot program. But I had done some extensive traveling before I became a teacher, and I think that the board wanted someone who had traveled to many different countries to begin teaching that foreign language program, and so I was selected for it.
- What countries did you go to?
- Too many to name. Maybe 27 or 30 different countries.
- Oh wow.
- I spent some time in Japan, spent a year in Paris, France, went to the University of Paris there and just wanted to find out what it was like to live in a foreign country so I settled in Paris for that year. And traveled, I just traveled in Europe and Asia.
- So was that around college age or before?
- That was after I graduated from college. I was 25 to 30 years old.
- That's really cool. And why did you choose teaching as your profession later? What made you do the switch?
- Actually, there is a story about why I did start teaching. When my first daughter was a kindergarten student at (school) I walked into that classroom for the first time and I said to the teacher, "Wow, I want to do this." I thought the room was just beautiful, I loved everything in it, and the kids were so enthusiastic, and the teacher was bubbly, and I really liked it. So she said, "well you can do this too" and I said, "Oh I think I'm a little too old for it," and she said "No, give it a go." So I did.
- And that's how—
- And that's how I became a teacher.
- That's cool. That's really awesome. And more to the questions on my thesis. Um, how can teachers use critical thinking in the classroom?
- How can they use it?
- How. Like what would it be like in practice? What would you do to—
- Well um, you, you can teach critical thinking. For instance, I would have to give you a for instance instead of a general.
- Ok Yeah.

- You can teach critical thinking, um, by just engaging students in higher level questions about selections they read, novels they read, nonfiction they read, especially nonfiction. Nonfiction, people read non-fiction more than any other thing. Really, fiction is reserved for those little fantasy books or you know the futuristic science books and things like that. But critical thinking, um that is the one particular skill that people need to get through life best. If you can learn to critically think, you can stop and analyze pretty much anything you come up against.
- How would that look like, you're saying you need it for your life, so how would that look—
- Well you need it for your life because you run into many unknown situations. You have to make inferences throughout life, you have to come to conclusions, you have to deduct.
- So it's just a tool to figure out the unknown in your life?
- Not always the unknown, but just to always be able to rationalize.
- Ok. And how can teaching work in a way that's multicultural?
- Well that's a really easy question. Um, because every single class that comes into this room is multicultural. Actually, multicultural to me doesn't just mean holidays and celebrations or the color of your skin, it goes far beyond that. It's gender, it's age, and it is of course, it is religion, and holidays, and celebrations, and ancestry, all rolled into one. And just being aware of it makes you, makes the teacher a better teacher. I have learned so much from students. Teachers learn a lot from students. I have a child right now who is absent for a holiday reason. He's um a Jewish person, so he is absent for that. And I have one who is out because of his Muslim religion. And then in the fall I had a student who fasted for the first month of school for Ramadan, and so when we went to lunch he had to go to the library, and I really felt pity for him for the first couple weeks, but then I had a conversation with him and I realized that that's the way he lives at home, he's allowed to eat dinner, at 8 o'clock in the evening he was allowed to eat. So no eating during the day, at eight o'clock at night he is allowed to eat. And ya know but after talking to him he said, "Ya know (teacher name) it's fine. It's something that's ingrained in me and we do it at home and it's a way of thinking, you just don't think about food. When you do you switch your thoughts to other things to get you through. And you're doing it for a reason and I'm learning the reason I'm doing it." And so I learned that from him.
- That's really interesting.
- Yeah I thought that little guy is really brave to be able to do this. And he was very, I wanna say, very eloquent when the other students, some of course some students made fun of him, and some kids were really "do you want my food? Ya know, can I offer you a cookie? I'm not gonna eat this apple do you want it?" And he was just really brave and eloquent about explaining it to them why he couldn't do that. I really admired him.
- Yeah. How would you incorporate those kinds of ideals, I know you said multicultural is religion, gender. How would you do that in the classroom? Like in a lesson?

- Well yeah you can do it in a lesson, and that lends itself to art, ya know artsy things. And by the way ya know um, art, you've been talking about that question you're asking me, art is not just looking at a painting and saying what you see in it or it's not just putting color with paint or crayon or colored pencil, on a piece of white paper. It is so much more than that, it is dance, music, poetry, plays, you name it, and what better way to make people understand the different cultures, than through a dance or through a play or through painting if you want it to be, or through crafts, sharing your um customs, bringing in your customs, bringing in food, bringing in garb, your dress, whatever. The list goes on and on. I don't really think you run out of ideas.
- So art is a really good way to bring in culture in the classroom?
- I think it's the best way. Absolutely. We're getting to write our names in hieroglyphics to understand the Ancient Egyptians.
- Oh wow.
- So that's what that blank board is there for. We're going to do some graffiti writing on it.
- Oh, interesting.
- Mhhmm. That's really cool. So what topics motivate the student the most, would you say?
- Umm, well of course, you're interviewing me. We've only been through 2 months of school here, but from what I see with this class, topics that interest them more than anything so far is what we're doing right now with Ancient Egypt and how we connect it to ourselves today. They like that. They like reading about mummies, pharaohs, pyramids, things like that. So I know that captures their attention. But we also read a ghost story in the beginning of the year, and that really captured them also because of certain questions you can ask them, "do you believe in ghosts?"
- Mysterious things. Ha-ha.
- Yes, mysterious things. It gets their critical thinking cells moving. "Well let me see now, my mom said my grandmother was here last night because this glass was not on this table, and my grandmother must have moved it. My grandmother is dead! Well she must have come to visit us."
- So mysteries, history.
- Actually, that's one of our units, mysteries in history.
- Oh ha-ha. That's convenient.
- Ha-ha it's very convenient. Critical thinking, how can we learn from the past? You think we can learn anything from King Tut?
- I'm sure, yeah.
- Well I'm sure we can. We actually, now this class didn't but in the past 2 years we have visited the King Tut exhibit that was in Philadelphia. We took our classes there and it was quite amazing. I really thought that this age group would not be interested in that because it's a high level exhibit, and you have to have some background, so this team, this team on this hall worked together to educate the children about background

knowledge about the Ancient Egyptians, pharaohs, and how they ruled, and um the topography of the land, the Nile, and things like that. and when we went to see the actual exhibit they could relate to everything, and they were quite amazed which I didn't think were going to be able to appreciate the antiquity of the artifacts they saw because they're very detailed and very elaborate carvings, paintings, whatever and they're preserved like they were made yesterday. The preservation is absolutely top notch. And the children actually recognized all of that. They had a great appreciation for that.

- So because they built that background knowledge in the classroom they were able to appreciate it more?
- Yeah, Mhhmm. That was the culminating activity for that unit, to actually go and see King Tut's artifacts.
- That is really meaningful.
- And ya know, just get a few inches from every one of em'.
- Mhhmm.
- I think most, I'm gonna say 99% of them appreciated it.
- So, so that's something that motivated them a lot. but what are some topics that are tougher for them to understand, or—
- Topics?
- Yeah, topics or concepts, anything that's hard for them.
- Are you talking about just in this content area of language arts?
- Yeah or just anything you, any of your experiences in general, ya know? Whatever comes to mind.
- Like for instance in math you mean?
- Yeah, anything.
- I used to be a math teacher as well, but. Um, well putting abstract concepts together, understanding abstracts even in art. You take an abstract painting and put it in front of a group of people, let's say 50 people. I think you'll probably get 50 different ideas about what that piece of art is about. Um, but, and in math assigning a number value to a variable, I think that is quite difficult for this age group. Um, asking them to put their thoughts on paper in a picture form if you're zeroing in on a thought and asking them to put their mind on a piece of paper in picture form is hard for most of them.
- Mhhmm.
- And over there on that board we actually drew grammar. It's hard to draw grammar because you can't hold grammar in your hand so it's hard to depict it in a picture, but they did it. They did it.
- So abstract is hard.
- Abstract is hard.

- And, how can teaching work in a way that gives students, all students, an equal chance in the world? When they leave school, how can teaching, how can what you do in the classroom impact that?
- Well, constant reassurance that you can do it if you try. Try, try hard, and that all kid will probably cross the finish line, but some will finish first. And some will get there much later, but eventually they'll cross the finish line. Is the finish line the same for every single person? No. You take a kid with special needs, that finish line is not gonna be the same as a kid that has an IQ of 160 and is on his way to being in the rocket scientist if you know what I mean, and by special I mean, with learning disabilities that absolutely prohibit them from becoming something in life that other people can become, and they can't. So, reassurance and and and um boosting their confidence and I don't think you can teach anyone self-esteem, but you can do it kind of like by osmosis, but just always telling them that they're doing a good job, and you like their hair and…
- Compliments.
- Yes, compliments all the time in every department of life, not just academics.
- Do you think there are any activities in the classroom that maybe would, like I know you said you can't teach it but, are there any activities that maybe might nurture that equality or—
- Well I think the one on one relationship between a teacher and a student is really probably the most important thing there. Ya know, just to let them know that when they come in here this is a welcoming place, a place where they can feel safe, a place where they can ask questions and not be ashamed of their question, a place where they know they're gonna get an answer and they're not gonna be put down.
- Right.
- Just has to be a welcoming, safe place where you want to come and you want to be a part of this community in this room, in these four walls right here.
- Ok. Um, and this next one's a little bit longer but, in the last 30 years with the formation of the Environmental Protection Agency, the need for environmental awareness has become a concern of global interest. So how can teaching work in a way that promotes environmental awareness in students?
- Well first off we have things that are right away at your fingertips like recycling bins for different products, paper, plastic, cans, aluminum, so we have that in place. And we talk about it all the time. We talk about um; see what was the final question again?
- Just how can teaching work in a way that promotes environmental awareness?
- Um, we have in place here, service learning activities that promote environmental awareness. We do beach clean ups, we do grass planting, um, we have a recycling club here, right here in this building. We take paper and make it into notepads.
- Right here? Or do they have to send it?
- I think they have to send it. I'm not in the recycling club but I know I get the notepads that come from the recycled paper, so we do that. Um, we have um have a little gardening

club that takes care of the plantings outside the building. And we, in my class, we often examine articles, selections in magazines and books, on this subject, environmental awareness, and but can I say what I think we should do is really um, I don't think we have a program in place and I think its sorely needed at least from sixth grade down, we don't have a space available within our day to teach current events.

- Like the oil spill?
- Yes, the oil spill. The ExxonValdeez. The um spewing of ya know, chemicals from smokestacks and factories and things like that. Even space trash, satellites and things like that that are up there that are not used anymore. Ya know, things like that, not just here on the earth but in space, in the space around us. Keeping our water clean, I think that's really important. And disposing of trash to limit landfills, we can do that just by recycling most of our trash. I have a recycling space at home, I have about 10 cans that I put, ten large trash cans that are designated things, and I have concluded you can recycle anything. I go to the landfill about once a month and I put the glass in the glass container, the aluminum, and so forth, the newspapers, cardboard, plastic, Styrofoam, ya know all of this, but you can recycle anything. If you use a paper towel you put it in your paper bin and then when you go to the landfill you put it in the correct container for paper. So if you just take a piece of meat out of the, ya know unwrap a piece of meat from the grocery, you take the plastic off the top and you have the Styrofoam tray it usually sits in. You wash it off and you recycle it.
- So just kids, like you were saying, kids need to learn about current events so they know—
- Absolutely. You unwrap a loaf of bread; you put that little plastic tie in your recycling bin, plastic.
- Mhhmm. Definitely, um, ok. And another long one but I'll show it to you cause it might be easier, um, we generally think of emotions as the driving force behind the survival, decision making, communication, and happiness of human beings. How can teaching work in a way that creates compassion between students?
- Well I think being a model is the most important thing a teacher can do. For instance, I had a parent in here today who sat through my entire class, and when he left he said, "I have never seen a person with more patience than you." So ya know, you got 22 kids in the room at one time, they're all different, they've all got different personalities, some can listen, some can't, some are fidgety some are not, some are emotional some are not, ya know you're putting out little fires all the time while you're teaching. You could be in the middle of a sentence and you still have to put out a fire. "Can I go to my locker? Can I go to the bathroom, can I go get a drink of water, and somebody said this to me and I don't like it" and this is in the middle of your active teaching. Ya know, they're asking you to make somebody stop calling you a name, and things like that so I just think being a reserved, listening person as a model, will show children how to keep their own emotions in check.
- So just being a model then.

- Just being a model, a role model all the time. Does that mean I don't get upset, no I do get upset quite often, but overall your general personality, you will develop a reputation of what kind of personality you have in the school, eventually that will come out if you're here long enough, so I like to think mine is reserved and and understanding, I'm a good listener, and if you show that all the time, all the time, all the time, children will pick up on that just like they pick up habits from home.
- Right, definitely. And just going on being a role model and everything, what are your thoughts on the effects of a classroom community on student success? I know you touched on that earlier.
- What was that?
- What are your thoughts on the effects of a classroom community on student success?
- Oh well community, yeah um, actually I tell the kids that all the time. You are part of a community in here. We all help each other, give each other support, talk about things together. I like to sit around and have whole class discussions. Of course my subject area lends itself to great to that. People have opinions, ya know developing their opinions and things like that, but yes listening is a great tool, needs to be taught. You need to listen to people, you need to look em'' in the eye when you're talking to them, listen, form your own opinions from what other people say…I think I forgot the question.
- Ha-ha, I think you got it though. The effects, so how having that classroom community affects their success, affects how they do in school?
- Everything that happens in a community class, what I call a community, it's funny you're asking that because I call this a community classroom where we all come and learn to get along, respect each other's opinion, respect the way each other looks, respect the way each other thinks, and so on and so forth, help each other, be respectful, and so on and so forth, and then you carry that forward in your life.
- Mhhmm, so this is kind of like a basis for them. They are learning all of that here and then—
- They take it with them just like they would take math with them in their head, one and one is two, and eventually you don't have to think about it, it's just natural.
- Ok, and then we generally think of people in the US as having democratic rights and civic responsibilities. How do you see those factoring into teaching, those responsibilities we have as teachers?
- Well I'll tell you—that's a good question I like it because you'll see if you look around you see I do not have any rules posted in my classroom.
- Yeah I don't see any.
- And you never will because I only have one rule: Be respectful to each other, and I always tell my kids in the beginning that goes for me being respectful to you. Teachers need to respect kids; kids need to respect teachers, and every adult in the building.
- So just that respect?
- The respect is major.

- And you say that relates to democracy and how—
- Absolutely. I think it's the absolute foundation of everything, is respect. I mean if you think of the way our country is right now, and I mean a lot of times you can answer these questions with a question. Do you think most republicans have respect for most democrats and the other way around? Do you think most people have respect for the president? I get a lot of things on my email, my hot mail that are absolutely are deplorable statements and pictures about the people governing our country. To me that is lack of respect. And I don't think that um people in other countries respect us like they should, I don't think we respect them.
- So that's the common ground we should be on everywhere.
- Absolutely that's the common ground, respect and understanding I would say.
- Mhhmm. And that goes back to the compassion you were talking about before.
- It's all tied together. You can't have one without the other really.
- Ok. Were actually on our last question and it's a quote so I'm gonna read it and then I'll show it to you cause it's kind of long. It's by Paulo Freire and it says, "Education either functions as an instrument which is used to facilitate integration of the younger generation into the logic of the present system and bring about conformity or it becomes the practice of freedom, the means by which men and women deal critically and creatively with reality and discover how to participate in the transformation of their world." So that's the quote. I know it's very long but the question is how do you see those ideas he talks about in teaching. in the practice of teaching?
- I see the critical and the creative part relating to um some of the questions you've already asked me about: getting along, communities, and creativity um, critical thinking, things like that, but I'm not quite so sure about bring about conformity. Ok, and if I'm reading it right, "the logic of the present system and bring about conformity." Why do we need to conform? Why does everyone need to conform that would be how I would answer that.
- Well if you read on it gives you the other side. Ha-ha.
- Ok, Education either functions as an instrument which is used to facilitate integration of the younger generation into the logic of the present system." Well that's true, it is an instrument, I mean a teacher gives a student the tools and then says go forth and use these tools to build, so education is the instrument. I can't stand in front of a room full of students and give answers, that doesn't do anything. But I can give the tools to thinking, critical thinking, and then they can go out and do what they want with it. Ok, and then it says, "And bring about conformity or it becomes the practice of freedom." What does? Education becomes the practice of freedom?
- Yeah, education as the tool. Like instrument like you were saying.
- Well I can see where that would relate, ya know once you're educated education comes with certain freedoms. Everybody has certain freedoms. I as a teacher have freedom. I

can choose to teach the way I want to, I don't go by a script so I have a certain amount of freedom in my classroom. Does that make sense?

- No, that makes sense.
- So and I can choose to think the way I want to think, I can develop my own ideas and opinions. That is my freedom to do that. That doesn't have anything to do with democracy, that's just people where you are, whatever country you're in. If you're educated you are free to think.
- Right, but does education bring about people to just conform to the way things have always been, or does it lead them to develop their own ideas and transform, like the end of the quote says, transform reality. So kind of like what you were saying, critical thinking and then transforming the reality that they're in.
- Into what?
- Into something new that they—
- Well I think that would be great I mean, ya know as long as it's not destructive.
- So do you see any of these, besides like you were saying about you have your freedoms as a teacher, how else would it work in practice, in instruction?
- And every walk of life, you have freedom in your own home to do what you want, you, a freedom is a strange word because you are free in so many ways and yet you are limited also. You can't just do whatever, you can't just yell fire in a crowded theatre for instance, and I'm not just talking about freedom of speech I'm talking about you you are you are limited by, by the human and community standards. You can't just, I'm not saying you can't create new ways of living or government, you can create new ways of living and you can create new ways of government, but it can't be destructive in any way. So you have to use your creativity and positivity.
- Right, to keep with the community like we were saying before. Like if you were gonna use your freedom in a horrible way that would break the community apart.
- That's right. I would think wouldn't you?
- Yeah.
- I mean, a quote like that you, it's open to interpretation. "Men and women deal critically and creatively with reality and discover how to participate in the transformation of their world." So this person, Paulo Frey-air apparently believes that the world is going to be transformed into something sometime down the road, right?
- I mean like you said it's open to interpretation.
- "And discover how to participate in the transformation of their world." Well, the world I guess is going to be transformed into something different years and years from now. It could be good, it could be bad.
- Do you see those things factoring into teaching and like the classroom at all? Like do we teach kids to learn the rules and that's it, or do we teach them to kind of—
- No, I do not teach kids to learn, I don't even think about things like learn the rules, behave, whatever. I don't think like that. I like to think that teaching, education, um;

it's the key to everything naturally. I like to think that as a teacher I am, I am um exposing children to, I'll just have to say critically think. To think and reason as an independent individual.

- So they wouldn't be conforming, they would be thinking about reality?
- Yes
- That goes along with the quote.
- But I mean I don't think people go through life thinking whether they are conforming or not, I don't think that happens very often. There are non-conformists, they like it, they have every right to be a non-conformist, but I don't think people, I don't ever think of myself as conforming.
- Mhhmm.
- I think of myself as being a reasonable, logical, critically thinking person and I know the difference between right and wrong, so in my thinking that leads me to the way I act, the things I say, the way I behave around, animal behavior, the way I behave around people. That's what education does, it, I don't wanna say it teaches because that's kind of like a euphemism, but without your education you are not going to be a positive functioning part of your society.
- So education helps develop you as a person, your character.
- It's everything, yes.
- Ok, is there anything you'd like to add of anything in the whole interview?
- I don't think so.
- No, ok well then we're done. Ha-ha.
- Ok.

Teacher 3-2nd Interview

November 17, 2010

2:30 pm

Red= Laura Oakley

Black= Teacher 3

- So last time you talked about how you feel schools need to have space to discuss current issues and events, like you said if you wanted to that would be a class. Could you tell me more about if there was that class and you were the teacher, what kinds of content, instructional techniques, and themes you might discuss?
- One theme would be becoming a better citizen, how to become a better citizen, citizenship, that would be a theme. How do you become an informed person? Informed enough to make logical societal decisions? Logical decisions on how to vote. Elected officials need to be representative of everyone, how do you decide how to do that? You have to be, I don't want to say taught cause that's not the word I'm looking for, but you have to be savvy enough to know there's ways to form opinions. You have to listen to people. You have to learn how to be part of a communicating society so you can listen to what people have to say, change your own opinion, add to your opinion, amend your opinion, and be open to what other people in society have to say.
- What kinds of activities would foster that in the class? Like would you have debates, would you…
- Well, definitely I actually had an after school debate club one time and I really liked it. I really liked it and I liked it sometime or another I've thought about doing that again and the kids really liked it. Course these are small kids so we debated small issues but issues that were important to them like longer recess and wearing uniforms to school instead of deciding what to wear yourself. And um long lunch periods, and different foods for lunch, things like that. so we had some issues that were important to them and they could discuss, didn't have to do much research, and it taught them how to listen to what other people had to say and how to rebut and how to put forth their own opinions, and how to be a respectful member of society.
- What kinds of current events—
- Current events that, that would have to be a part of it cause you ask a group of kids nowadays, does anybody ever watch the news, and this age group here 12 years old, you don't get many hands up, they will not watch the news, and that's part a lot it their age, and a part of it is what they go home to. A lot of kids go home to an empty house cause

their parents haven't arrived home yet, so they let themselves in and get their own snack, watch TV, whatever they want to, or play on the street, or play their x-boxes, and when parents get home they usually are tired, and I'm talking usually, not everyone. There are exceptions but usually the way things are nowadays is people when they get home they're tired and they can't spend the time they want to spend with their children. They don't have the time to devote to them, and part of to me, this is my opinion and what I wanted to do when I had my own children was partly modeling, as I said before, what I wanted them to be. And one thing I wanted my children to be was very informed, and in order to be informed you had to read the newspaper and/or read newsmagazines or watch news shows on TV. And as a result my kids are 28 and 29 years old right now and they are well-educated and very informed and I'm very proud of them because I think they are good citizens and they vote and they recognize the importance of voting.

- So that's how your class-- doing debates, doing all of that?
- It's hard to say what kinds of activities because as a teacher you are always inventing new activities. I have taught the same novel for instance the last 10 or 12 years and every year I have new activities with that novel. Some tried and true ones you're gonna do time and again, but there's always something new that comes up, and your activities should be a reflection of today, so what I did 1 or 17 years ago is probably not what I would do today. You want your activities to reflect modern and the past too. It depends on what you're doing. You can certainly do re-creations of history.
- So if you were talking about an issue that happened today that you needed to know events of the past, you could role model?
- You could. You could write plays, you can write poetry about modern things, I mean it's hard to pinpoint because there's too much to even mention.
- Right. And then you talked about the themes you have like "Mysteries in History," and "How can we learn from the past." How can those be taught in a way that promotes social action like going out into the school or town and trying to make a change on a societal problem that existed in the past and now exists in the present?
- And the question is what?
- How could you take those same themes and use them in a way that they can go out and act on issues that are still in existence today? Like maybe issues that would fall under those themes.
- Well you know how can we learn from the past? I'll just take one example, war. And we just finished with an election. Every single person that I listened to and read about who was running for an elective office, always made reference to past events, especially wars. Vietnam war, World War 2, things like that. Things that were recent enough that they could talk about. They certainly didn't talk about the civil war or the revolutionary war, but things in the recent past that they could make reference to. What else did they talk about in the past? Well they talked about bailing out Wall Street 2 years ago, that's the past. Did it work, didn't it work? We're gonna change. We want a change, we can't do

that again. We learned from that, they all said that. We learned from our mistakes, or we learned what was good. Some of the things we did were good, most was bad, so we learned from our mistakes. So we can learn from the past.

- Is there any way they could take all the content of it and then act on some of the issues that exist in the community or things like that?
- Some of the issues in the community. Well what would be one? Um, community issues. Um, I guess talk specifically about a community. Like Salisbury for instance, they just appointed a new police chief, a woman, first time ever in history. Is your question how can they take what they've learned and act on something?
- Yeah, how can they act on it and try to change a problem that they can see that exists in the school or even in the community?
- Well I think the best example I've already given is running for an elected office, or being a part of your town government. You can turn on TV or open up a newspaper and see things that kids do all the time. It doesn't always have to be adults acting on something. But there's evidence of kids having a lemonade sale and with the money buying something that the troops overseas need. Collecting food, we're having a community can drive right here in this school right now. What can we do with that? Well, we give it away to people who can't afford to buy food. There's two examples right there, and kids do it.
- Ok. Is there any way that those actions could relate to the themes you talk about in class?
- Well I think how can you learn from the past is the best one, and growing and changing; recognizing the need that you're not the only one who lives on this planet and everyone might not be as fortunate as you. There are plenty who are far less fortunate than you, so ya know it's like one for all and all for one type of thing.
- Building the community.
- Yeah.
- And your comment last time on the King Tut activity and how successful that was to talk about in class and then go see it, that really intrigued me, and if you could tell me more about what you did in the classroom before going on the trip, like what activities and projects did the kids do to really get them interested?
- Well one thing we did was we read a book called, Who was king tut, so by the time we got to the exhibit we really knew who king tut was, knew all about him, his lifestyle and everything. And I think the kids really related to him because he was called the boy king, so he was 10 years old when he assumed the Egyptian throne. He didn't stay very long; he died at a young age. I think he was 18 or 19 when he died as I recall. But during that time he married. Now whether or not they can relate to that I doubt, but ya know. By the time it got the exhibit, they had read the novel, who was king tut, they had researched the um discovery by Howard Carter of King Tut's tomb and that was intriguing because Howard Carter and his team or archaeologists searched for years for the king tut tomb and they were just bout to give up and come home when they found it, and the reading

the quotes from Howard carter and his team just describing the riches that were in the tomb and how they felt when the y went down there and saw king tut for the first time, ya know its really intriguing. It's almost equal to the titanic. People are enthralled by stories like this because it makes them come alive again. We made the masks, the death masks; we made canopic jars in the art room. Those are the jars the embalmers used to put organs that the dead people in, and then they would bury those with the mummy.

- So they made the jar and then they put stuff in the jar? What did they do?
- They would put the organs in the jars in the canopic jars. They would put hearts and livers.
- So what did the kids do in the art class?
- We made the jars. And the jars are unique to your personality.
- Ohh ok.
- And the all the jars, every jar looked different, just like every mask looks different; the jars look different as well. You put Egyptian symbols on it as well, and on the lid of the jar you might put like an icon, might be an asp or something else on the jar.
- So it was almost, everywhere the kids went they went they were doing something having to do with Egypt?
- For quite a while, yes. Because one thing they had to design their jar and their mask, and you wonder, you look at those masks hanging up there on the wall, those are some of the examples, why would someone choose to make theirs look like something freaky out of Halloween, and others tried to capture the true essence of ancient Egypt. But there's only one up there that really mimics the real King Tut which is kind of strange because kids that age usually, when you show them a finished product that clouds their mind to opening up to so many different other ideas because now they've seen what they're supposed to do. They've seen a finished a product and they want theirs to look like that. But you see there's only one up there that looks like that. The rest are pretty inventive. They're all very unique. That's just a few I mean they all made them.
- It's almost like if King Tut were today the masks would be different, and that's kind of like what they did.
- Mhhmm.
- Um and then also—
- So when they finally did get to the exhibit, everything they had read about and learned about, and actually had some hands-on activities was coming to life for them in Philadelphia when they went. It's kind of like, I can relate to it personally when I first went to Europe. I was 25 years old. I had read about the Eiffel Tower all my life, and I finally get there and I see it, I was disappointed. But with other things that I saw, some art things because I've always had a love of art, and the museums I went to, like for instance the Rex Museum where Rembrandt houses most of his art, um I was very impressed with all of it. I was not disappointed at all I was overly impressed. But with

the Eiffel tower I thought it was dirty, rusty, needed repair, but I was there seeing something I'd always read about and then I was there really looking at the real thing.

- So that really set the lesson to success because they got to go?
- Yes. Mhhmm.
- It's amazing. And then yesterday you also talked about how kids had difficulty with abstract concepts and putting their thoughts down in picture form like they did on the wall. How can using the emotions and higher level thinking help students to develop abstract thinking in math, science, and social studies?
- You say how can using their emotions help them develop their abstract thoughts?
- Yeah, and using higher level thinking.
- Mhhmm. Well, you can act things out. You can do a little activity with play dough and describing it you might think oh that's so elementary nobody wants to do that, but you have to think of yourself as sitting in a chair here, and everyone is given some play dough, and they're asked to look at a list of words on the board, and these words are abstract words more or less. I call em' abstract because they're not tangible things you can hold in your hand. For instance some of the words might be enthusiasm, freedom, love, patriotism, loyalty, um things, words like that. And you ask them to design those words with play dough, design enthusiasm with this jar of play dough, and that's all you tell them to do, and they do it, they'll think of something. They'll think of a smiley face or something to do that would show enthusiasm. If you asked them to design patriotism with this play dough they'll come up with something like a flag, or ya know a heart-shaped flag.
- So kind of like making a symbol. Taking an abstract concept and then—
- Usually symbols work best for them. Yes, but you can also ask them to mime things. So you can ask them to, the other day for instance I asked them to mime pouting. Because there was a story we read and the girl was pouting the story; she was pouting very badly. And I said stand up and show me pouting, and they all showed me, and they all looked different, all 22 of them looked different, but they all were right.
- So a lot of it is art?
- Very much so.
- Connecting it with art.
- Mhhmm.
- And then going back to the community. What are some activities that could help develop a community? Like a community classroom. What activities could you do?
- The community classroom you mean right here within the school?
- Mhhmm. Right, how could you help develop that closeness of a community?
- Well of course you ask children to work together all the time instead of asking children to work independently. Ya know, you ask them to work with each other. It's not always the same person. You have to ask them to work with everybody in the class, so they have to rotate themselves. Um, well a really neat activity, I mean I can only give you concrete

examples. So an example would be, not long ago, I said to the children I want you to line up, shoulder to shoulder, in order of your birthday, and you cannot talk to one another. And two of you will be blindfolded, and they did it. All 3 of my classes did it. There are a couple of mistakes in each class, but not major ones. But we started out with January and we ended with December at the end of the line. And then their task was to, the January birthday, if there was a January birthday person, he had to interact with a December birthday person. And a June would have to interact with another one, and so on and so forth. We made a chart for it and we rotated the next week, and it's just a way to get people up and working with different people. And also you can also do something like ask them to interview each other. And you give them specific questions and at the end, they all stand up and say one positive thing about the other person that they interviewed, so you have to say one positive thing, and then something that you learned about that person that you never thought you would learn about that person. And that gets everyone interested in everyone else. And then people say to each other, "you went snowboarding? I did too. Where did you go? Oh I've been there." And then they start finding out things about each other, so to me that is the ultimate community. Where you interact and you share common, um, experiences, and beliefs, and customs, and everything else. And speaking of customs, that's another thing I'm big on when it comes time before we go on winter break. We always do a customs things in here, and I ask parents to come in, and sometimes we do a food day and it might be all a Kwanzaa day, and then it might be a Ramadan day, might be a Christian day, and then ya know we might have a mixture of everything, but for one whole week it's something different every day. And I have learned so much about these kids that I never thought- I had a little boy bring in his baklava. The one I told you was out.

- Yeah for his religion.
- Yes, well he brought me the desserts today that they made, and I ate every one of them. I didn't share a single thing with anybody.
- Ha. It must have been good.
- It was really good. So it's that kind of thing that I really like. They love to come in and share their customs, they really do. What was the question? Ha-ha.
- Oh, no how could they develop a community? So they're sharing all their, things about them.
- So they become one. See these kids travel together all day long. They travel in a block. And they fuss and fight like brothers and sisters would at home, because they become very familiar with each other, so they really become a little family community. And you see there is a leader, like a mother and father. There's small people, they remind me of small children taking orders from the mother and father. Ya know, it's people who are enthusiastic about cleaning up the dishes at home, or picking up or whatever, do the same thing in here. People who are slackers at home do the same thing in here. But ya know they do learn from each other, ya know, and a lot of times from learning from each other;

what I mean is they start arguing, fussing and fighting sometimes, but eventually with my help most of the time, it all comes back together.

- Right, and they're back to the –
- And they're back to their family community. That's the only way I can think about it is a family.
- Yeah, well actually the next question, you've probably already answered it kind of, there's only two more, of activities that develop compassion.
- What are activities that develop compassion?
- Right.
- Well, I really, you want me to talk about some of the things that I have done?
- Yeah.
- Ok. One of our units is animals, it's called furried and feathered friends. We changed the name of it. Furried, fuzzied, and feathered friends. You can bring your animal in here if you want to. You have to tell me beforehand. I have to make contact with your parent. I have to know what kind of animal it is, and I'll meet you at the backdoor, right here. I've had everything from horses to goats to chickens in this backyard.
- Horses?
- Yeah.
- Wow.
- There is nothing that will develop passion and compassion more in people that interacting with animals, especially baby animals.
- Mhhmm. Puppies and kittens...
- Yeah, yeah. But I had one little guy bring his turtle in. He loved that turtle so much. Ya know, and you wouldn't think you could get that close to a turtle, but daggone he did. He really did. He got so close to that turtle. The turtle's name was Maynard.
- Aww. Haha.
- Mhhmm.
- So I love pets too, so just sharing that love with the class?
- Mhhmm. I think that is compassion because everyone is interested in you then. When you bring your animal in, everyone wants to know about you.
- Mhhmm, definitely.
- And our last one, um. It's kind of long but I'll show it to you cause I don't know if that will help to read it too, but on we talked yesterday about multiculturalism, and you said teaching multiculturally is more than just holidays, it's the gender, age, religion, ancestry. What are some of the ways teaching can combat some of the issues that go along with gender, age, religion, and ancestry in the school, community, and nation, in an effort to solve the parts of the issues that still exist today?
- Wow that's a tough one, and ya know that's not gonna happen overnight. That's an ongoing issue, has been in this country for hundreds of years, it's still ongoing. I don't

know, truthfully, if Martin Luther King were still alive today for instance, or if Mahatma Gandhi were alive today, or anyone who has been a leader involved in issues like this, what kind of score they would give the planet earth. How much progress have you made? That would be a really challenging question for them. Ya know, how much progress have we made since? So, what was the question?

- Oh, just about teaching multiculturally and how that could be transformed into action.
- And you have to try all the time. You have to try every day to teach tolerance, ya know, and indifference. That's basically it, I mean you have to live in this multicultural world because the globe is has shrunk so much, and is shrinking all the time. You can get from here to there in a matter of hours. You can call someone on the phone in a matter minutes you're talking to someone from Japan and you're interacting. Um, it's just a, I think most people, see that kind of question, I think it's leading into what is right and what is wrong kind of issues
- Mhhmm.
- What are some of the ways teaching can combat some of the issues that go along with gender, age, religion, and ancestry. So if you're saying what are some of the ways we can combat them, it says to me that maybe there's a lot of tension and how do we iron it out in other words, and my answer to you is, if I knew that I'd probably be a millionaire several times over. Because if I could snap my fingers and say this is the answer, that'd be great, but is there really an answer? You just have to keep trying because it seems to me that the world is in quite a turmoil, and yet we have been trying for quite a long time, to not be that way. And ya know, and all of these religions beliefs, everyone wants to live in peace and harmony, except for a few little pockets here and there, but everybody wants to do it but you don't see much evidence of it happening, unless you maybe track it over time like in this country ya know with, we don't have slavery anymore of course, but others things take its place. Do you know that just 10 years ago I went down to Disney World, and with my husband and our two children, two girls, and we s topped at a rest stop in Georgia. And a black lady came up to me while I was sitting on the bench waiting for everyone else to come to the car, and she asked me, Maam is it ok if I drink out of this water fountain?" Stunned me to no end, and I said well of course it is, and she said well are you sure cause I don't want to get in trouble?" very old lady, even had a cane, and I said yes of course it is.
- Wow
- So to me I think we've made some progress, and then something like that happens and it takes me back because I'm old enough, I lived in the times when there were riots in Cambridge and I went to John F Kennedy's funeral, I went to Robert F Kennedy's funeral, and I went to Martin Luther King's Funeral in Washington Dc when they all laid in state, and I was close enough to it, because I worked on capitol hill before I became a teacher, so I was up there for some of it just because I lived there. And I could see it. Well I witnessed it, and now ask me have we changed that much? No. Evidence of

change, we have changed some, and evidence of it is that we have some black leaders, one of them being we have a black president, that's a big change right there. But on the whole, can you name 5 black national leaders of this country on your hand sitting right here?

- No.
- That is one thing we can do to combat some of these issues, is to promote leadership among other cultures, other non-white cultures because white is predominantly the leadership of the country, it's predominantly the leadership of the schools. In this school here I think, I think we have two or three black teachers out of 100. I can't think of any other cultural teachers other than white that we have right here. I think that's a problem. Who do these children have to look up to if they're not white? Who of their own culture do they have to look up and to admire and say, "I want to be like you." There just isn't any, ya cant like I said, you can't even name five national ones sitting right here.
- So if that's the current state we're in, and especially you working on Capitol Hill I'm sure you have a lot of insights because you've seen democracy in action. Ya know you've seen people have riots and act on their rights. How could we do things like that in the school? Like is it possible? Do you think it would help any of the issues?
- Well I don't know. I, I, like I say, if I had the answer I'd be a millionaire several times over, but we've had programs here that address that issue, and quite frankly I can't see a significant change, I can't, if there is change it's too small to measure. We've had speakers here, we've had programs here, with people of other cultures come and perform for us, or who come and speak to us. I don't know if its maybe the age group here in this school that you can't see a measureable difference, so maybe some of those speakers and performers if they went to the high school let's say, they'd make a difference because that's a different age group of audience. But I'm not so sure here, I can't answer that. I wanna be really positive with the answer.
- Mhhmm.
- But I think my answer is neither here nor there with some of it, but with others you asked me how and I'm telling you my answer to how would be, we need more leaders of more ethnic backgrounds than white.
- To reflect how we are the melting pot.
- That's right. And we don't have it. And it's a strange, ya know, teaching is a strange profession because most teachers, well of course we all have certificates so we all have advanced degrees, and if you don't have one you have to get one or you won't stay in the profession. So you either have to get your masters or have an equivalency of it, and most of it get the masters instead of the equivalency because if you have to get, if you have to go 30 credits beyond your bachelors degree minimum, why not just go for the degree itself? So ya know that's what I did, and that's what most, I think all of my friends did. Went right for the degree. So when you think of it that way, we have the money to go to school, we had the money. We had to borrow it but now we have the jobs

where we can pay back the student loans. Alright. Now when I say we I'm talking about the whole school community here. So when you visit classrooms here you see teachers that look presentable, they look very nice, they drive nice cars, you automatically assume they are going home to a nice house because of the way they look and the things outside the school they share with you an vacations they take, sports they're into, activities they're into, whatever. So is it ok to assume, is it ok for a teacher to assume, that all of his/her students should be like them? I once took a girl home from school, whose ride did not show up, and I took her to (town name) and I dropped her off. That one experience of taking that girl home changed my life forever. I dropped her off at a house, two-storied, white clapboard house, kind of looked like if it was off-center, maybe leaning to one side, and the weather was kind of warm outside, it was in the spring. The windows were open, the front door was open. There was a big screen porch across the front, but the door to the screen porch was hanging loose so I could see all the way through the porch and all the way through that house to the kitchen which was in the back, and a hallway led to the front door to the back kitchen, and in the middle of the hallway there was a bare light bulb hanging from a wire, I could see that. Couldn't really see what the other rooms looked like, but the lights were on. It was dark outside that's why I brought her home, no one came to pick her up. And the yard was littered with like a permanent yard sale kind of look, except it was mostly refrigerators and toilets and bathtubs and cars and things like that. and I left there after I dropped her off, I left there and I was very upset to think that somebody lived in that house, and there were a lot of people in that house. And I came back the next day and I told my friend, I will never ever again never ever assign a big artsy project for a kid to do at home, or even a big writing project or anything because that child never would have been able to do it, that place where she live. Three days later the house burned down and 2 of the kids were killed in that fire. I have never to this day, it's been a while, I have never assigned a large homework assignments to any kid since then, it affected me that much, because it used to be I would assign those things, and then when the kid came in and didn't have it, I would fuss with the kid. It's not the kid's fault. Did I learn from that one? Yeah, and that s when I decided that I stand in front of a room full of kids every day, about 70 kids a day. I will never ever think that they came from the same house that I lived in growing up, with a mother and father who cared and taught me to read outside of this building. Took me to zoos, took me to movies, took me to plays, took me to the city, took me across the bay bridge. I will never assume that all of the kids in here have done what I have done because it's just not gonna be. And the first year I taught at (school), I taught special ed, I had 17 children. Not a single one of them had been to the western shore, and I put in for a field trip to take those kids to the Smithsonian and to see Washington DC, and I was denied by the principal. And then one of the parents heard I was denied didn't want me to take, "Oh no, you can't take these kids across the bridge. Half of them will run away, you'll never get em' back." That's what I was told. And then being a new teacher, didn't

want to make waves, didn't want to protest, and then one of the parents said, "I will help if you go," and then another parent chimed in, and eventually got the approval, but couldn't get a charter bus like everybody else who goes across the bridge. Every field trip that goes 100 miles gets a charter bus with a bathroom on it, nice ya know, couldn't do that, so had to find a bus driver who would be willing to take the kids across the bridge and I finally found one. For those kids that was the best field trip I have taken in my entire life. They were so interested, they must have spent 20minutes taking pictures of the Washing ton Monument, and then we went to the top of the Washington Monument and I couldn't get em' down. They were so enthralled with the view, and what's that over there and look at that. And when we got back to (town), the bus driver said to the principal, "If you ever need me to take these kids anywhere again, I will do it for free. It was the best trip I've ever had." I'll never forget it. It was my little success story right there.

- Wow.
- And I get teary-eyed just thinking about it because you see that opened a little door for maybe all of them I don't know, maybe all of them did, if not all maybe some, there's something outside of this little spot in this world. There's so much more out there, and if you have the opportunity you have to take it. That should be the message of every teacher. Take that opportunity; don't let it pass you by. And I have always lived by that, and I don't mean to toot my own horn, but just to tell you, when my two girls growing up, my own daughter studied in Europe and Australia, lived in Australia for a year. Cannot take that away from her. I struggled, my husband I struggled to get that money together because being married and two working people, we didn't get student loans or pell grants or anything like that, some scholarships here and there, but it's hard to get it when you're married and you're' making an income. Ya know they want you to pay for it all yourself. And I couldn't say no to my girls when it came to traveling and they had the opportunity. She went to Europe because she was part of (college name) field hockey team, and she was on the team and everybody knows how good a of a team that is, and they used to travel to Europe and play against other countries, and see that opened up a door for her, and ya know she said, "Mom, I just need to go over there and study for at least one semester." One semester led to two, and then when she came back it was Australia, and when she got over there she said, "I can't come home can I stay the whole year?" and we had to say yes. It was a hard financial battle, but the opportunity was there, you could not let it go by. Just could not let it go by.
- Right. And it seems like with your trip you found a way to make everything, make kids all have an equal chance in a way, ya know? Maybe they didn't have it from their family or parents, but the school provided that.
- So, would that combat some of the issues that go along with gender, age, religion, and ancestry in the school, community, and nation? Would that help to combat it? If you open a door for someone and they see what's on the other side, would that help combat

these things? I would say yes, wouldn't you? It's out there in the hallway. That's our little recycling club.

- Oh, the one you were telling me about.
- And they come in and get the paper, they're gonna put it in that big rolling thing, so there it goes.
- That's so cool how you talked about the loose-leaf. How you get that from the actual recycling.
- Mhhmm. Yup.
- I'm just gonna click this one off.

Laura Oakley

Unit Plan Outline

This section of the project is how critical pedagogy looks in practice, more specifically in an integrated unit plan on the oil spill in grade 5. The physical geography standard used throughout the unit plan is a fourth grade standard, but it is necessary for complete understanding of the topic. The subjects are integrated because the research and teacher interviews indicate that the most difficult task for kids is connecting subjects, and an integrated thematic unit does just that. (1.1.108-109) Art is integrated here because according to the *American School Board Journal* (2007) art improves critical thinking in kids (p. 8). The BP Oil spill was chosen as the topic because it is a timeless account of the worst environmental disaster to date. It is a topic that will have updated stories for years to come, so it is easily adaptable for future classrooms.

Laura Oakley

Interview Analysis

From interviewing three elementary school teachers, several key points emerged as integral pieces in developing lessons for a critical pedagogical unit plan. Teacher 1 talked a lot about the importance of thematic units in helping kids see the interconnectedness between subjects (1.1.108-109). Also, in order for students to critically think, they must make choices. An example of this in practice would be setting up stations around the room that relate to a theme, and students would get to choose which activities to engage with (1.1.50-56). In order to be multicultural, the celebrations and perspectives of others need to be built into instruction. An example of this in practice would be making family puppets, comparing families, and doing a Venn Diagram so students see they need to be "equally accepting" (1.1.76). In relation to getting kids to be environmentally aware, it is essential for kids to be outside because "You can't get them to love nature if they don't know nature" (1.1.142-143). In practice, students can do activities with a nature trail such as leaving colored acorns on the path and then investigating a few days later to see what acorns have been bitten by animals. To teach affectively students can read books, role-play, and do cooperative learning activities with heterogeneous grouping (1.1.162-153, 168-170). To teach democratically, students also need to make choices, vote on choices, share opinions, and have responsibilities (1.1.190-191, 199-204). To act on social injustices in the community, first graders can write letters as Teacher 1 did when a man cut down all the milkweed plants Teacher 1's class was using to feed their caterpillars. Taking action is important because "kids can do it. They do have power. But you just have to initiate it" (1.1.218-219).

Teacher 3 commented on many of the same ideas such as using higher-level questioning to support critical thinking, and teaching compassion by being a role-model, but Teacher 3 brought in several themes and ideas that can be used across the curriculum. "Learning from the past" and "Mysteries in History" are two themes students study all year long, and they can be used to integrate all subjects in a critical way. To teach mulitculturally, art is the best way because it provides multiple ways for students to understand something (3.1.125-126). To encourage environmental awareness students can do grass planting, beach clean ups, and be part of a recycling club that turns the recycled paper into notepads for the teachers to use (3.1.228-229). Teacher 3 felt that schools should have a space in the curriculum to discuss current events because it would help students make logical decisions in society, listen to others, and develop opinions (3.2.14-20). To act on social injustice students could run for an elected office, have a lemonade sale and use the money to buy something for the troops overseas, or collect food for the homeless (3.2.88-92). The most motivating activities for kids were one they could relate to, like the King Tut exploration where all subject areas included art focused on Ancient Egypt and King Tut, and then the culminating experience to see the King Tut exhibit in Philadelphia tied it all together for students. Teacher 3 said when they went to the museum they noticed and appreciated details that were so fine, but building that background in the classroom helped develop that appreciation.

To incorporate the emotions into the curriculum students could act things out, use play dough to sculpt abstract concepts, or bring in pets to develop compassion among students (3.2.166,255-256). To ensure all students have an equal chance at success in the world, field trips are great because door were opened for them outside of the immediate community (3.2.409-411).

To encourage curiosity in children, students can take on the role of whatever they are learning about, such as becoming harvesters during the harvest thematic unit Teacher 1 used (1.2.63-64). Democracy is developed in groups where students have different roles and power is shared equally among all students (1.2.129-133). For students to see the interconnectedness of all things by taking action, students must start small and then get bigger. For instance, students took action in the community by writing letters to the man who cut down the milkweed, and then the man replanted even more milkweed which could help students to see "it was affecting the larger butterfly population of the world" (1.2.174-175).

Teacher 2, a sixth grade instructor, said that to develop critical thinking, students can engage with higher-level questioning (2.1.47). What really motivates students is current events and anything they don't really understand (2.1.84-85). The hardest for kids to understand is skill-based subjects like math, and one way students can see a more real-world use for skill-based subjects is by using the skill for a purpose every day in the classroom. For example, Teacher 2 had students graph the continuum of school days using fractions, decimals, and percents. Also, using the skills in a hands-on, arts integrated way promotes children's' natural curiosity while also teaching skill-based subjects (2.2.204-210). Graphic organizers are also helpful when teaching skill-based subjects.

To encourage environmental action students can do activities with recycling such a cutting up plastic soda cases, and learning information about the real world because "knowledge is power" (2.1.45). In order to encourage compassion in students, the teacher must be a role model for compassion. To use democracy in the classroom there must be rules that are fair to all. In practice students could read stories about character change and take on the role of others to see how all people are related. By seeing the world from another person's perspective students

are nicer to each other and can re-evaluate what is important in life which can lead to better decision making in a democratic society (2.1.220-227).

Service learning can be used to combat social injustices such as taking a trip to a nursing home and interviewing patients, or participating in mock situations, role modeling, and telling personal stories of standing up for others because students are participating in "experiences where they feel good about what they do" (2.1.304). Service learning is also a way students develop compassion for others. Taking action in the community can consist of writing letters to school officials, public opinion letters, and thank you notes which also is a part of being a good citizen (2.2.81).

Walking trips with a different subject area focus each time is a great way for students to see the connectedness of subjects in the same location such as looking at local buildings and architecture. To evaluate fairness in society students can engage in letter writing, talk about ethics of political cartoons, and discuss "universal truths" and how sometimes they can be broken in certain situations (2.2.293-298). To teach affectively students need to role play out of his/her comfort zone (2.2.281-282). To develop morality art can be used because it allows students to break societal rules and be successful, which leads to higher self-esteem, and gives those kids more of an equal chance especially if they do not excel in other subject areas. Then, when other students see how talented his/her classmates are, other students begin to see his/her classmates more positively, teaching them that all people have strengths and to never judge people based on success in one area (2.2.428-434). Overall, to develop students' morality and democratic responsibilities, students need practice because "so many kids make the wrong decision because they've never had any practice making the right one" (2.2.521-522).

Overwhelmingly, all teachers spoke of how disintegrating subjects is most difficult for students, which supports the idea of curriculum integration. The set-up and activities in the classroom can be arranged so that they are democratic and everyone is treated equally, and talking about current issues is motivating for students and develops compassion and morality. In talking about current issues, higher-level questioning can be used to promote critical thinking.

WHAT IS OIL? Lesson Set 1-How Oil Forms

Science	Oil is a substance that formed from the remains of certain prehistoric organisms over long periods of time, in specific conditions.

Lesson: In groups of 4, with each student having a designated role in each activity, students will explore how heat, pressure caused oil to form during the Mesozoic Era. Students will learn about where the continents were in relation to one another, what the climate was like, and what the physical geography of the land was like during the Mesozoic Era to produce oil deep beneath the ground.

MD VSC: **Standard 1.0 Skills and Processes** Students will demonstrate the thinking and acting inherent in the practice of science.

TOPIC
A. CONSTRUCTING KNOWLEDGE
INDICATOR 1. Gather and question data from many different forms of scientific investigations which include reviewing appropriate print resources, observing what things are like or what is happening somewhere, collecting specimens for analysis, and doing experiments.

Critical Pedagogy:

- Democratic: Students are working in groups with assigned roles so there is shared responsibility among all students. (1.1.190-191, 199-204)
- Problem-Posing: Students will be using higher level thinking skills to complete this lesson. (2.1.47)

Math	Oil is a substance that formed over millions of years.

Lesson: Students will explore the concept of a million in this number sense lesson. First students will estimate how many days are in one million years, then use problem solving strategies to figure out the answer. How many people living to 85 would it take to get to one million years? Through problem solving activities students will develop a deeper understanding of how much a million years really is. Students can then create his/her own replica of one million years using the average age of dogs, one million fingers to determine how many hands it takes to get to 1 million fingers, etc.

MD VSC: **Standard 6.0 Knowledge of Number Relationships and Computation/Arithmetic** Students will describe, represent, or apply numbers or their relationships or will estimate or compute using mental strategies, paper/pencil or technology.

TOPIC
A. KNOWLEDGE OF NUMBER AND PLACE VALUE

INDICATOR

- **1.** Apply knowledge of fractions, decimals, and place value

Critical Pedagogy:

- Problem Posing: Students will be solving problems using higher level thinking skills such as creating his/her own model of what one million means. (2.1.47)

Social studies	Oil is found in certain geographical areas of the world that once were the right environment for the formation of oil.

Lesson: On Google Earth students will explore different regions of the world that are conducive to forming oil today (shallow marine environments with abundant sedimentation). Then, students will fly to regions of the world where oil has been found in great abundance and compare the two types of geographical locations. What is the same/different about them? How could shallow marine environments change to become a place like Saudi Arabia? Students could then decide where else oil might form in the world and why.

MD VSC: **Standard 3.0 Geography**

Students will use geographic concepts and processes to examine the role of culture, technology, and the environment in the location and distribution of human activities and spatial connections throughout time.

TOPIC

A. USING GEOGRAPHIC TOOLS

INDICATOR 1. Use geographic tools to locate places and describe the human and physical characteristics of those places

Critical Pedagogy:

- Democracy: In this lesson students have the responsibility to use technology independently and make decisions. (1.1.190-191, 199-204)

Language Arts	In many parts of the Middle East 6,500 years ago people discovered oil and its uses

Lesson: Students will read about the Babylon Bitumen, flaming arrows, black mummies, and the leak stoppers in heterogeneous groups of 4 using various forms of media (pictures, articles, and timelines). Each group will become experts on one of the 4 topics, and then pantomime his/her group's specific ancient way of using oil.

MD VSC:

TOPIC

D. ACQUIRE SOCIAL STUDIES INFORMATION

INDICATOR 1. Identify primary and secondary sources of information that relate to the topic/situation/problem being studied

Critical Pedagogy:

- Multicultural: Students are studying different Ancient cultures and how each of them used oil thousands of years ago.
- Democracy: Students are working in heterogeneous groups where all students have equal say in the final pantomime. (1.2.129-133)

Art	Art is used to enhance the multicultural aspect of the social studies lesson.

Lesson: Students will use the elements of the art of drama to create a pantomime, showing how each way of using oil was implemented.

MD VSC: **Standard 2.0 Historical, Cultural, and Social Context: Students will demonstrate an understanding of the history, traditions, and conventions of theatre, dramatic works, and other literature of the theatre.**

INDICATOR

- **1.** Express a range of responses to a variety of stimuli

Critical Pedagogy:

- Affective: Students are using his/her emotions to become the people who first discovered oil and produce a pantomime of those people using the oil.

WHAT IS OIL? Lesson Set 2-Properties of Oil

Science	Oil is a flammable, energy dense matter that is less dense than water.

Lesson: Students will explore the density properties of oil by performing the oil in water experiment. Students will use science processes to answer the question, "Can it float?" Students will be using various everyday materials in various phases such as paper, Styrofoam, Coca Cola, Apple Juice, Paint, and Oil to determine which can float on water and which sink. Students will hypothesize why they think this is true, and a discussion will ensue, with an explanation of why oil floats on water (it is less dense—what is density?). Students will be in groups of 4 where each person has a specific job.

MD VSC: **Standard 4.0 Chemistry**
Students will use scientific skills and processes to explain the composition, structure, and interactions of matter in order to support the predictability of structure and energy transformations.

TOPIC

D. PHYSICAL AND CHEMICAL CHANGES **INDICATOR**

- **1.** Provide evidence to illustrate that when a new material is made by combining two or more materials, its properties are different from the original materials.

Critical Pedagogy:

- Problem Posing: Students are using higher level thinking skills to hypothesize and conduct the experiment.
- Democratic: Students will be grouped and each person will be given a specific job. (1.2.129-133)

Math	Pressure is the force per area exerted on an object. Oil is formed under extreme pressure conditions.

Lesson: Students will work with real pressures that exist in the world today such as the pressure of car tires, pressure of the air around us, etc. Then, students will use problem solving strategies with numbers for amounts of pressure that exist underground for oil to form.

MD VSC: **Standard 1.0 Knowledge of Algebra, Patterns, and Functions**
Students will algebraically represent, model, analyze, or solve mathematical or real-world problems involving patterns or functional relationships.
TOPIC A. PATTERNS AND FUNCTIONS
INDICATOR 1. Identify, describe, extend, and create numeric patterns and functions

Critical Pedagogy:

- Problem Posing: Students will use problem solving skills and higher level thinking to analyze the pressures under which oil forms.

Social Studies	Oil is a flammable liquid so it must be transported very delicately by pipeline or ship to be stored in giant tanks, ready for processing.

Lesson: Students will read real-life accounts of people who transport oil to be stored in giant tanks. Students will also explore how oil is pumped from the drill site, through pipes, and how those pipes do not leak and interfere with groundwater. Lots of questioning, group work, and whole class discussion will be used.

MD VSC: **Standard 6.0 Social Studies Skills and Processes**

Students shall use reading, writing, and thinking processes and skills to gain knowledge and understanding of political, historical, and current events using chronological and spatial thinking, economic reasoning, and historical interpretation, by framing and evaluating questions from primary and secondary sources.

TOPIC

D. ACQUIRE SOCIAL STUDIES INFORMATION

INDICATOR 1. Identify primary and secondary sources of information that relate to the topic/situation/problem being studied

- TOPIC G. ANSWER SOCIAL STUDIES QUESTIONS

INDICATOR 3. Use current events/issues to answer questions

Critical Pedagogy:

- Multicultural: Students are reading several different accounts of people who work with transporting oil every day.
- Problem Posing: Students are discussing the topic of oil transport through higher level questioning.
- Affective: Students are developing compassion for others while learning about what it is like to transport oil.

Language Arts	The properties of oil are very different from common everyday liquids.

Lesson: Students will compare/contrast a common household liquid of his/her choice, research it's properties, and compare those properties to the properties of oil. Students will use conventions of standard written English to express his/her thoughts clearly with written

expression. Students can create a pamphlet, poster, poem, short story, summary, etc. to compare/contrast the properties of the two liquids.

MD VSC: **Standard 4.0 Writing**

Students will compose in a variety of modes by developing content, employing specific forms, and selecting language appropriate for a particular audience and purpose.

INDICATOR

- **2.** Compose oral, written, and visual presentations that express personal ideas, inform, and persuade

Critical Pedagogy:

- Affective: Students are able to express his/thoughts through several "potential affective venues" such as poems or short stories.

Art	

Lesson: Students will create a collage of emotions using various types of media (magazines, sound clips, video clips, etc) on a glog, indicating what he/she thinks working with oil and its properties would be like based on the personal accounts read in social studies.

MD VSC: **Standard 2.0 Historical, Cultural, and Social Context: Students will demonstrate an understanding of visual art as an essential aspect of history and human experience.**

INDICATOR 1. Determine ways in which works of art express ideas about self, other people, places, and events

Critical Pedagogy:

- Affective: This lesson deals with the study of other peopole's emotions, and the expression of the student artist's emotions in the actual collage.

WHAT IS OIL? Lesson Set 3-Refining Oil

Science	To turn oil into usable forms by separating it by different densities and boiling points.

Lesson: Using science processes and the characteristics of science, students will learn how temperature and density affect what products are made from oil. Students will explore how as temperature cools condensation occurs (phase change), and how gas rises.

MD VSC: **Standard 4.0 Chemistry**
Students will use scientific skills and processes to explain the composition, structure, and interactions of matter in order to support the predictability of structure and energy transformations.
TOPIC C. STATES OF MATTER
INDICATOR 1. Provide evidence from investigations to identify the processes that can be used to change materials from one state of matter to another.

Critical Pedagogy:

- Problem Posing: Students will be using higher level thinking skills to complete this lesson.

Math	Certain fractions of crude oil can be used to refine certain products.

Lesson: Students will learn about how much of a given amount of crude oil condenses into various forms such as gasoline, diesel fuel, kerosene, and butane. Through problem-posing students will be guided to their discovery of different fractions of crude oil and what they are used for. Students can then translate the fractional amounts into percents.

MD VSC: **Standard 6.0 Knowledge of Number Relationships and Computation/Arithmetic**
Students will describe, represent, or apply numbers or their relationships or will estimate or compute using mental strategies, paper/pencil or technology.
TOPIC A. KNOWLEDGE OF NUMBER AND PLACE VALUE
INDICATOR 1. Apply knowledge of fractions, decimals, and place value

Critical Pedagogy:

- Problem Posing: Students will be using higher level thinking to complete the task.

Social studies	Oil is used to make products that dominate the market today.

Lesson: In heterogeneous groups, students will explore all the different products oil is used to make. Students can then discuss where the products are made in the world geographically. The teacher will bring in such items and have students first guess which items are made with oil and which are not. The engagement of this lesson is included with the surprise students will feel when certain products they thought were not made with oil, in fact are. After the lesson, students will fill out a graphic organizer to classify all the different products used on the market that are made with oil. Then students can explore more items at home and find objects at home that fit into the categories created in class.

MD VSC: **Standard 6.0 Social Studies Skills and Processes**

Students shall use reading, writing, and thinking processes and skills to gain knowledge and understanding of political, historical, and current events using chronological and spatial thinking, economic reasoning, and historical interpretation, by framing and evaluating questions from primary and secondary sources.

TOPIC B. WRITE TO LEARN AND COMMUNICATE SOCIAL STUDIES UNDERSTANDINGS

INDICATOR 1. Use informal writing strategies, such as journal writing, note taking, quick writes, and graphic organizers to clarify, organize, remember and/or express new understandings

Critical Pedagogy:

- Democracy: Students are given choices for what products to choose from home.
- Multicultural: Students will be examining where certain products came from, incorporating different cultures around the world.

Language Arts	Different countries around the world house oil refineries to make various usable forms.

Lesson: Students will get into groups of 4, and each group will get to choose a country that refines oil. Then that group will take on the role of that country's oil leaders and introduce themselves to the other countries as if they were at a Global Oil Meeting. Each group member will be assigned a different job when the group is speaking to other groups so all people talk equally.

MD VSC: **Standard 7.0 Speaking**

Student will communicate effectively in a variety of situations with different audiences, purposes, and formats.

INDICATOR 2. Make oral presentations

Critical Pedagogy:

- Affective: Students are taking on the role of others, thus developing compassion.
- Democracy: Students will be given roles in groups and given equal time to speak.
- Multicultural: The perspective of various cultures is included in this activity because groups are taking on the role of his/her group's specific country and their perspective on oil refining.

Art	Art is the best way to enhance multicultural exploration. (3.1.125-126)

Lesson: Using various materials that are made from oil, students will use the elements of visual arts to create an "Oil Sculpture."

MD VSC: **Standard 1.0 Perceiving and Responding: Aesthetic Education: Students will demonstrate the ability to perceive, interpret, and respond to ideas, experiences, and the environment through visual art.**

INDICATOR 1. Identify, describe, and interpret observed form

Critical Pedagogy:

- Affective: Students are using emotions to construct his/her own interpretation of Oil through sculpture design.

DEEP SEA DRILLING & THE BP OIL SPILL- Lesson Set 1-Physical Geography of Ocean

Science	The topography of the ocean floor affects where deep sea drilling can occur.

Lesson: Students will use Google Earth to explore various features of the ocean floor. (shelf, slope, abyssal plain, mid ocean ridge, submarine valleys, etc.) The Gulf of Mexico will be specifically studied, and students will notice its gentle continental shelf feature as conducive to great amounts of oil.

MD VSC: **Standard 3.0 Geography**

Students will use geographic concepts and processes to examine the role of culture, technology, and the environment in the location and distribution of human activities and spatial connections throughout time.

TOPIC

A. USING GEOGRAPHIC TOOLS **INDICATOR 1.** Use geographic tools to locate places and describe the human and physical characteristics of those places

Critical Pedagogy:

-Problem-Posing: Students will explore ocean topography using higher level questioning.

Math	The Loop Current carries warm Gulf waters north to the poles, and the rate it travels can bring oil from the spill to northern regions.

Lesson: Students will analyze real data to determine how fast the loop current travels. Then, students can figure out how long it would take oil to travel up the east coast of the United States. Students will also consider how much oil each water molecule can hold, and if that would affect the rate of the loop current. Students could then take it a step further to examine where the oil that is left in the water is traveling to and how much is traveling. At the rate it is traveling, who could be effected?

MD VSC: **Standard 1.0 Knowledge of Algebra, Patterns, and Functions**

Students will algebraically represent, model, analyze, or solve mathematical or real-world problems involving patterns or functional relationships.

TOPIC A. PATTERNS AND FUNCTIONS

INDICATOR 1. Identify, describe, extend, and create numeric patterns and functions

Critical Pedagogy:

-Problem Posing: Students will be using higher level thinking to solve problems in this activity.

-Multicultural: Students are learning about how the oil can affect other people, not just those in the Gulf region.

Social Studies	The conditions at the bottom of the ocean where drilling occurs is drastically different from conditions at the surface.

Lesson: Students will combine their knowledge of pressure, topography of the ocean floor, and ocean depth to role play what it would be like at the bottom of the ocean when oil companies drill. Each group will get a different part of the sea floor to role play, and in groups of 4 students can come up with a short pantomime illustrating the conditions deep under the sea.

MD VSC: **Standard 3.0 Geography**
Students will use geographic concepts and processes to examine the role of culture, technology, and the environment in the location and distribution of human activities and spatial connections throughout time.
TOPIC
A. USING GEOGRAPHIC TOOLS **INDICATOR 1.** Use geographic tools to locate places and describe the human and physical characteristics of those places

Critical Pedagogy:

-Affective: Students are imagining what it would be like to be underneath the sea in different geographic locations.

Language Arts	The conditions under which companies drill for oil deep in the ocean are very different from the conditions on the surface, and they pose grave risks of polluting the water.

Lesson: Students will read a non-fiction article about deep sea drilling and respond in a written format to calculate the risks and benefits of deep sea drilling. After calculating risks/benefits students will write a persuasive paragraph detailing why companies should/should not drill in the Gulf.

MD VSC: **Standard 4.0 Writing**

Students will compose in a variety of modes by developing content, employing specific forms, and selecting language appropriate for a particular audience and purpose.

INDICATOR 2. Compose oral, written, and visual presentations that express personal ideas, inform, and persuade

Critical Pedagogy:

-Multicultural: Students are considering two perspectives and then deciding on one to write a persuasive paragraph on.

-Affective: The written response is driven also by emotions of which choice students feel is the best one.

Art	Pantomiming gets kids to understand different perspectives.

Lesson: **See Social Studies Lesson for this Lesson Set**

MD VSC: **Standard 3.0 Creative Expression and Production: Students will demonstrate the ability to apply theatrical knowledge, principles, and practices to collaborative theatre presentations.**

INDICATOR 1. Use a variety of theatrical elements to communicate ideas and feelings

Critical Pedagogy:

-Affective: Students are able to take on the roles of others in this activity, promoting compassion.

DEEP SEA DRILLING & THE BP OIL SPILL- Lesson Set 2-Oil in the Gulf of Mexico

Science	The Gulf of Mexico's unique geologic past has created conditions suitable for trapping oil deep below the ocean floor.

Lesson: Students will use higher level thinking skills to explore how the Gulf of Mexico was created over millions of years, and why it is suitable for trapping oil. Students will learn about how salt is great for trapping oil and why there was salt there (ocean regressed and drier climate). Students will get to take on the role of geologists in the field looking for places to drill, and he/she will have to decide which places are good to drill based on the rock layers, rock types, and fossils in the rock layers below the surface of the ocean.

MD VSC: **Standard 2.0 Earth/Space Science**

Students will use scientific skills and processes to explain the chemical and physical interactions (i.e., natural forces and cycles, transfer of energy) of the environment, Earth, and the universe that occur over time.

TOPIC A. MATERIALS AND PROCESSES THAT SHAPE A PLANET

INDICATOR 2. Cite and describe the processes that cause rapid or slow changes in Earth's surface.

Critical Pedagogy:

-Problem Posing: Students are using higher level thinking to complete lesson activities.

-Affective: Students will be role playing life as a geologist, further promoting compassion for the hard work geologists have in trying to find rocks where oil might be trapped.

Math	Countries around the world own parts of the Gulf of Mexico for deep sea drilling and the countries compete to be the top producer.

Lesson: In mixed role groups students will analyze real data to compare how many square miles of ocean is owned by countries for drilling purposes compared with how many square miles of the Gulf of Mexico those same countries own. Where is drilling most concentrated in one given area? What percent of the Gulf of Mexico is owned by oil companies? Is that fair? Why/why not? Students will then create different graphs to display information and share that information with other classes.

MD VSC: **Standard 3.0 Knowledge of Measurement**

Students will identify attributes, units, or systems of measurements or apply a variety of techniques, formulas, tools or technology for determining measurements.

TOPIC C. APPLICATIONS IN MEASUREMENT

INDICATOR 1. Estimate and apply measurement formulas

Standard 4.0 Knowledge of Statistics

Students will collect, organize, display, analyze, or interpret data to make decisions or predictions.

TOPIC A. DATA DISPLAYS

INDICATOR 1. Collect, organize, and display data

Standard 6.0 Knowledge of Number Relationships and Computation/Arithmetic

Students will describe, represent, or apply numbers or their relationships or will estimate or compute using mental strategies, paper/pencil or technology.

TOPIC A. KNOWLEDGE OF NUMBER AND PLACE VALUE

INDICATOR 1. Apply knowledge of fractions, decimals, and place value

Critical Pedagogy:

-Democratic: Students are working in mixed role groups with share responsibility, and are discussing issues of fairness, an attribute of democracy.

-Affective: In discussing fairness, emotions play a big part in determining the fairness of something, further developing compassion.

-Problem Posing: Students are using higher level thinking skills to complete the activity.

-Multicultural: Students are considering deep sea drilling from the perspective of several different countries.

Social studies	Deep seas drilling in the Gulf of Mexico has become increasingly prevalent in the last decade

Lesson: Students will revisit his/her risks/benefits calculation from Lesson Set 1's Language Arts lesson on the ocean floor, considering the needs/wants of humans, and the conditions of the ocean floor where drilling occurs. Students will read an article from National Geographic about the risks of deep sea drilling, and then students will read an article discussing the benefits of deep sea drilling, and students will re-evaluate prior decisions about drilling or not drilling deep in the sea. Students must gather evidence for his/her choice (for, against, neither) will have a debate on the topic.

MD VSC: **Standard 4.0 Economics**

Students will develop economic reasoning to understand the historical development and current status of economic principles, institutions, and processes needed to be effective citizens, consumers, and workers participating in local communities, the nation, and the world.

TOPIC A. SCARCITY AND ECONOMIC DECISION-MAKING

Standard 6.0 Social Studies Skills and Processes

Students shall use reading, writing, and thinking processes and skills to gain knowledge and understanding of political, historical, and current events using chronological and spatial thinking, economic reasoning, and historical interpretation, by framing and evaluating questions from primary and secondary sources.

TOPIC G. ANSWER SOCIAL STUDIES QUESTIONS

Critical Pedagogy:

-Multicultural: Students are considering different perspectives on deep sea drilling and making an economic decision as to which he/she thinks is the best.

-Problem Posing: Students will be using higher level thinking to evaluate the risks/benefits of deep sea drilling.

Language Arts	Creative writing allows students to use his/her emotions to connect with a topic and take on the perspectives of others.

Lesson: Following the steps on the writing process, students will create his/her own short story on the physical geography of the Gulf, how the oil was trapped underneath the ocean floor, and what is happening today with deep sea drilling. Then, students can refer back to the risks/benefits about deep sea drilling in the Gulf and create a poem stating his/her opinion on whether or not we should be drilling in the Gulf .

MD VSC: **Standard 4.0 Writing**

Students will compose in a variety of modes by developing content, employing specific forms, and selecting language appropriate for a particular audience and purpose.

INDICATOR 1. Compose texts using the prewriting and drafting strategies of effective writers and speakers

Critical Pedagogy:

Affective: Students are using his/her emotions to respond to the way he/she feels about deep sea drilling and if it is more beneficial than it is risky.

Art	Music is a great way to elaborate on poems and make them come to life in the classroom.

Lesson: Students will get in groups of 4 and combine each student's poem to form one giant "Deep Sea Drilling Jingle" using the elements of music. Instruments will be available for students to use also.

MD VSC: **Standard 1.0 Perceiving and Responding: Aesthetic Education: Students will demonstrate the ability to perceive, perform, and respond to music.**

INDICATOR 2. Experience performance through singing and playing instruments in general, vocal, and instrumental settings, and listening to performances of others

Critical Pedagogy:

-Affective: Responding through music incorporates the emotions.

Multicultural: Students are considering the point of view of classmates in his/her group to come up with one song using all perspectives.

-Democratic: All students are responsible for creating a poem and helping compose the final song.

DEEP SEA DRILLING & THE BP OIL SPILL- Lesson Set 3-BP Oil Spill

Science magnitude	The forces of heat rising, and how pressure is a function of mass in a given area were the reason why the spill happened, and at such great

Lesson: Students will use their knowledge of pressure to examine the size and shape of the drill pipe responsible for the spill in mixed role groups. Students will discover what types of material could prevent such immense pressures from escaping, furthering students' understanding of why the cement did not hold the oil back.

MD VSC: **Standard 5.0 Physics**
Students will use scientific skills and processes to explain the interactions of matter and energy and the energy transformations that occur
TOPIC A. MECHANICS

Critical Pedagogy:

-Problem Posing: Students will be using higher level thinking to solve questions in this activity.

-Democratic: Students are working in mixed role groups, each having equal responsibility in the activity.

Math	The cost of the oil spill is a function of several different factors, some ones that are controversial for putting a price tag on, such as wildlife.

Lesson: Using higher level thinking skills, students will experiment with real figures from the cost of the oil spill, from the cost of cleanup, cost of lost materials from the expensive oil rig, loss of human lives, and loss of sea life. Students will use their knowledge of number sense to compare figures to the whole cost, and decide whether or not it is fair to put a price tag on lives, which BP in fact did. Students will read the article entitled. "Tallying BP spill toll on wildlife, habitat" from USA Today to help decide the fairness of pricing animals.

MD VSC: **Standard 6.0 Knowledge of Number Relationships and Computation/Arithmetic**
Students will describe, represent, or apply numbers or their relationships or will estimate or compute using mental strategies, paper/pencil or technology.
TOPIC A. KNOWLEDGE OF NUMBER AND PLACE VALUE

INDICATOR 1. Apply knowledge of fractions, decimals, and place value

- **TOPIC**
- **B.** NUMBER THEORY

TOPIC C. NUMBER COMPUTATION

INDICATOR 1. Analyze number relations and compute

Critical Pedagogy:

-Affective: Students are discussing an issue of fairness which involves using emotions to best decide.

-Democracy: Students are discussing an issue of fairness, a democratic principle.

-Multicultural: Students are considering the cost of the spill from various perspectives.

-Problem Posing: Students are using higher level thinking skills to complete the activity.

Social Studies	Making an economic decision includes considering both wants and needs, but in the case of the BP oil spills, both the needs and wants of people and the BP company needed to be considered.

Lesson: Students will read articles, discuss in small groups, and use graphic organizers to figure out what the needs and wants of BP were in the case of the Gulf, and what the needs and wants of the people living in the United States are. Real-life interviews with people will be used to determine what the needs and wants of the people living in the US are.

MD VSC: **Standard 4.0 Economics**

Students will develop economic reasoning to understand the historical development and current status of economic principles, institutions, and processes needed to be effective citizens, consumers, and workers participating in local communities, the nation, and the world.

TOPIC

A. SCARCITY AND ECONOMIC DECISION-MAKING

INDICATOR 1. Explain that people must make choices because resources are limited relative to economic wants for goods and services in Maryland, past and present

Critical Pedagogy:

-Multicultural: Students are considering drilling from the perspective of BP and the people of the United States.

-Democratic: Students are working in groups with shared responsibility of the task at hand.

Language Arts	Reading nonfiction articles from different points of view helps students get a more complete understanding of a topic

Lesson: Students will read articles on what other countries think of the BP oil spill. Then, in groups of 4, students will take on the role of those countries in a jigsaw activity. Then, new groups of 4 will form, with each person coming from a different "country" and the "different countries" will discuss their opinions on the oil spill and try to come up with a solution so it does not happen again.

MD VSC: **Standard 2.0 Comprehension of Informational Text**

Students will read, comprehend, interpret, analyze, and evaluate informational text.

INDICATOR 1. Develop and apply comprehension skills by reading a variety of self-selected and assigned print and non-print informational texts, including electronic media

Critical Pedagogy:

Multicultural: Students are becoming people from different countries to discuss what different people think about the oil spill around the world.

Democratic: Each person in the group has an equal responsibility in the activity.

Problem Posing: Students must use higher level thinking skills to create a way they think might work to prevent more oil spills from happening again.

Art	Expressing opinions through creative movement facilitates deep understanding of topics from multiple perspectives.

Lesson: Students will use opinions of different countries on the Gulf oil spill to create an ABAB dance in jigsaw groups to express the oil spill from the perspective of 4 different cultures. Students will use the elements of dance to compose their piece.

MD VSC: **Standard 3.0 Creative Expression and Production: Students will demonstrate the ability to create and perform dance.**

INDICATOR 2. Develop the ability to combine the elements, aesthetic principles, and choreographic forms of dance to communicate meaning

Critical Pedagogy:

-Multicultural: Students are using 4 different perspectives to compose one dance

-Democratic: Each group member is vital to the success of the dance because each person has information of the countries needed to form the dance.

-Affective: Dance involves emotional expression.

HOW DOES AN OIL SPILL AFFECT HUMANS?- Lesson Set 1-Effect on Jobs

Science	

Lesson:

MD VSC:

Critical Pedagogy:

Math	Income and budgeting for people who relied on the Gulf for survival are affected by the oil spill.

Lesson: In groups of 4, each group being a different job affected by the oil spill (fisherman, BP Rig worker, Tourist Boat Captain, Gulf Coast seafood restaurant owner) students could explore how the oil spill affected the income of each job. Students will explore things like budgeting money and how a sudden loss of income is not compensated for in a budget. Could people prepare for such a dramatic loss in money? How much money is needed for survival and can these people survive with their current amount of money (use real figures of people's money).

MD VSC: **Standard 6.0 Knowledge of Number Relationships and Computation/Arithmetic**
Students will describe, represent, or apply numbers or their relationships or will estimate or compute using mental strategies, paper/pencil or technology.
TOPIC
C. NUMBER COMPUTATION
INDICATOR 1. Analyze number relations and compute
INDICATOR 2. Estimation

Critical Pedagogy:

-Multicultural: Different jobs and perspectives are used in this activity.

-Problem Posing: Students use higher level thinking skills in this activity.

-Democratic: Students are working in cooperative groups to discuss issues in society.

Social studies	Supply and demand in an economy affects the amount of jobs available, and the amount of money paid for certain jobs.

Lesson: Students will explore how the oil spill affected the supply and demand of jobs on the Gulf Coast. How did the salaries of some jobs change? How did that change affect people's budgets (refer back to math lesson)?

MD VSC: **Standard 4.0 Economics**

Students will develop economic reasoning to understand the historical development and current status of economic principles, institutions, and processes needed to be effective citizens, consumers, and workers participating in local communities, the nation, and the world.

TOPIC A. SCARCITY AND ECONOMIC DECISION-MAKING

INDICATOR 1. Explain that people must make choices because resources are limited relative to economic wants for goods and services in Maryland, past and present

INDICATOR 4. Describe regional economic specialization in Maryland and the ways people live and work

Critical Pedagogy:

Problem Posing: Students will be using higher level thinking skills to complete activity.

Multicultural: Students are considering how the oil spill affected different jobs in different ways.

Language Arts	Reading personal accounts of people from the oil spill helps develop compassion in students.

Lesson: Students will work in groups of 4 to read and discuss articles from different people affected by the oil spill (fisherman, BP Rig worker, Tourist Boat Captain, Seafood Restaurant Owner). Students will participate in literature circles where each person has a role. The roles are Discussion Director, Connector, Literary Luminary, and Investigator. Then, students will get in jigsaw groups to share the oil spill from the point of view of each profession. In mixed role groups, students will create collage of all the different ways humans are affected by the oil spill; each person will get a small square, and all the squares are connected so the 4 people have to be drawn in a way so all the puzzle pieces make on big picture.

MD VSC: **Standard 2.0 Comprehension of Informational Text**

Students will read, comprehend, interpret, analyze, and evaluate informational text.

INDICATOR 1. Develop and apply comprehension skills by reading a variety of self-selected and assigned print and non-print informational texts, including electronic media

INDICATOR 4. Determine and analyze important ideas and messages in informational texts

Critical Pedagogy:

Multicultural: Students are using the perspectives of the oil spill from multiple people to create one collage as a mix of all perspectives.

Democratic: Each student has equal responsibility in the task.

Affective: Visual art involves emotions.

Problem Posing: Students are using higher level thinking skills to evaluate informational text.

Art	**Visual arts aid in the understanding of a topic from multiple perspectives.**

Lesson: Students are using the elements of visual arts to create a collage of 4 different perspectives on how humans are affected by the oil spill. Each student gets to create his/her own picture of the perspective of the job he/she studied, but when all the puzzle pieces fit together they must all complete one big picture, so students must work cooperatively together to see how the jobs share certain characteristics.

MD VSC: **Standard 3.0 Creative Expression and Production: Students will demonstrate the ability to organize knowledge and ideas for expression in the production of art.**

INDICATOR 1. Create images and forms from observation, memory, and imagination and feelings

Critical Pedagogy:

-Multicultural: Students are using multiple perspectives to create one piece of art.

-Democracy: All students have equal responsibility in the project.

-Affective: Visual art involves emotional expression

HOW DOES AN OIL SPILL AFFECT HUMANS? - Lesson Set 2-Effect on Fishing Industry

Science	Humans living in the United States rely heavily on the Gulf Coast region for its fish, but the habitat fish live in is being destroyed by the oil.

Lesson: Students will explore what a fish needs to survive and the certain conditions of the environment needed for survival. Students will then explore how fish are affected by an oil spill, focusing on the reliance on the environment for an organism's survival. The lesson will use several higher level thinking questions and group work for exploration of the right environment for fish to thrive.

MD VSC: **Standard 3.0 Life Science**
The students will use scientific skills and processes to explain the dynamic nature of living things, their interactions, and the results from the interactions that occur over time.
TOPIC A. DIVERSITY OF LIFE

INDICATOR 1. Explain the idea that in any particular environment, some kinds of plants and animals survive well, some less well, and some cannot survive at all.

Critical Pedagogy:

-Problem Posing: Students are answering higher level thinking questions in this activity.

Math	The supply of fish in the Gulf must be enough to feed half of the United States Fish Industry, but the oil is ruining fish habitats and killing the fish.

Lesson: Students will use higher level thinking skills to solve problems related to probability. Students will explore how increasing the population size of a variable decreases its probability. If there is a population of 25 fish that are contaminated with oil and there are 50 fish in the total population of an area, what is the probability of reeling in a contaminated fish? Now if those same 25 fish swim to an area much larger that has 500 fish in it, how does that change the probability of reeling in a contaminated fish? Relating it to the oil spill more directly, we will discuss how safe eating fish from the gulf is today and how real scientists use probability to figure that out.

MD VSC: **Standard 5.0 Knowledge of Probability**
Students will use experimental methods or theoretical reasoning to determine probabilities to make predictions or solve problems about events whose outcomes involve random variation.
TOPIC A. SAMPLE SPACE
TOPIC B. THEORETICAL PROBABILITY

Critical Pedagogy:

-Problem Posing: Students are using higher level thinking skills in this activity.

Social Studies	Fisheries are a major part of people's lifestyles and ways of satisfying wants and needs in the Gulf Coast Region.

Lesson: Students will explore the role fisheries play in people's everyday lives by reading nonfiction articles written by residents of the gulf about how the Gulf Fisheries provide wants and needs. Art will be integrated to enhance the cultural appreciation for the uniqueness of people's lives on the Gulf Coast. (3.1.125-126) In cooperative learning groups, students will take an "interactive picture walk" using multiple tableaus to explore how fisheries influence people's lives on the Gulf Coast. Then, the teacher will take pictures of each "frozen image" groups portray, and create a scrapbook of images from the virtual class trip to the Gulf Coast.

MD VSC: **Standard 6.0 Social Studies Skills and Processes**
Students shall use reading, writing, and thinking processes and skills to gain knowledge and understanding of political, historical, and current events using chronological and spatial thinking, economic reasoning, and historical interpretation, by framing and evaluating questions from primary and secondary sources.
TOPIC A. READ TO LEARN AND CONSTRUCT MEANING ABOUT SOCIAL STUDIES

Critical Pedagogy:

-Multicultural: Students are reading several different nonfiction articles to establish an appreciation of the different lifestyles people having living on the Gulf Coast.

-Democracy: Students are working in cooperative groups where each person has equal power.

-Affective: Tableau involves the use of emotions.

Language Arts	Integrating other content areas into the language arts curriculum so students are reading to gather information is highly engaging for students and develops students as readers.

Lesson: Students will be reading and researching different species of fish that have been affected by the Gulf Oil spill to make more connections with the lesson on fish ecology in science. Students will be gathering information from a variety of sources, both on the internet and in books about students' individual fish. Research will be independent so at the end of the lesson we can all write an article on their fish to go in our "Science Experts Magazine," and so students

can create pictures of his/her fish with how the oil affected them written on the fish, and then display all of the fish on a bulletin board to represent the entire Gulf of Mexico.

MD VSC: **Standard 2.0 Comprehension of Informational Text**

Students will read, comprehend, interpret, analyze, and evaluate informational text.

INDICATOR 1. Develop and apply comprehension skills by reading a variety of self-selected and assigned print and non-print informational texts, including electronic media

INDICATOR 4. Determine and analyze important ideas and messages in informational texts

Critical Pedagogy:

-Multicultural: Students are working independently on researching species of fish so in the end we can learn about the oil spill from the perspective of many different types of fish.

-Affective: Emotions are engaged when students are learning about the harm that has be done to an animal, and then he/she has to draw the animal.

Art	Art is very effective in enhancing the appreciation for other cultures and lifestyles in the United States. (3.1.125-126)

Lesson: Students will use the elements of drama to create a series of tableaus in the social studies lesson of this lesson set.

MD VSC: **Standard 2.0 Historical, Cultural, and Social Context: Students will demonstrate an understanding of the history, traditions, and conventions of theatre, dramatic works, and other literature of the theatre.**

INDICATOR 1. Express a range of responses to a variety of stimuli

Standard 3.0 Creative Expression and Production: Students will demonstrate the ability to apply theatrical knowledge, principles, and practices to collaborative theatre presentations.

INDICATOR 1. Use a variety of theatrical elements to communicate ideas and feelings

Critical Pedagogy:

-Multicultural: Students are learning about life from the perspective of people living on the Gulf Coast.

-Democratic: Every student has equal power in the group.

-Affective: Tableau involves the use of emotions.

HOW DOES AN OIL SPILL AFFECT HUMANS?- Lesson Set 3-Effect on Consumers

Science	All life on earth is connected by what we eat; human diet can be traced to the ocean and to plants marine life eat, so humans are affected by the oil spill because of food source contamination

Lesson: Students will classify marine animals based on what they eat, and then students will explore what humans eat and how that can be traced all the way back into the Gulf of Mexico with animals eating plants. Students will then learn about how the oil spill has contaminated many of the plants also through group discovery activities.

MD VSC: **Standard 3.0 Life Science**
The students will use scientific skills and processes to explain the dynamic nature of living things, their interactions, and the results from the interactions that occur over time.
TOPIC E. FLOW OF MATTER AND ENERGY

INDICATOR 1. Recognize that some source of energy is needed for all organisms to grow and survive.

Critical Pedagogy:

-Multicultural: Students are learning about all the different forms of life that are affected by oil and how they all affect each other.

Math	A large number of consumers were affected by the oil spill in many different ways, especially related to food and jobs

Lesson: Students are going to graph different figures from the oil spill and compare them. For example, students will graph the percentage of consumers affected by the oil spill, and then more specifically in that population students will graph the percentage of consumers who lost their jobs due to the spill, stopped eating fish because of the spill, or stopped visiting the beach because of contamination. Students can gather data based on comparisons of the graph and

MD VSC: **Standard 1.0 Knowledge of Algebra, Patterns, and Functions**
Students will algebraically represent, model, analyze, or solve mathematical or real-world problems involving patterns or functional relationships.
TOPIC C. NUMERIC AND GRAPHIC REPRESENTATIONS OF RELATIONSHIPS

INDICATOR 1. Locate points on a number line and in a coordinate grid

Critical Pedagogy:

-Multicultural: Students are graphing and analyzing information from multiple perspectives.

Social studies	The people of the Gulf Coast were unfairly harmed by the oil spill, and raising money to help those individuals affected is a step in combating the problems the oil spill caused for the people of the Gulf Coast.

Lesson: Students will learn about other groups that have helped the people of the Gulf Coast region through fundraising. Students will learn about Children's Book Illustrators who banded together to help, Jimmy Buffet who held a concert to raise money, etc. Then, students will discuss ways to help raise money for the Gulf Coast victims using what they have learned from this Lesson Set. Such ideas most probably will be performing the virtual photo album tableaus for the school and asking for 1 quarter from each student/faculty member. In a school of 600 kids that is $150! Students would then send the virtual photo album they created, along with a letter (written in language arts) and the money collected to show how much students appreciate the culture of the Gulf Coast, and how they are trying to help some of the financial burden the oil spill has cost them.

MD VSC: **Standard 6.0 Social Studies Skills and Processes**

Students shall use reading, writing, and thinking processes and skills to gain knowledge and understanding of political, historical, and current events using chronological and spatial thinking, economic reasoning, and historical interpretation, by framing and evaluating questions from primary and secondary sources.

TOPIC

D. ACQUIRE SOCIAL STUDIES INFORMATION

INDICATOR 1. Identify primary and secondary sources of information that relate to the topic/situation/problem being studied

Critical Pedagogy:

-Democratic: Students are using their civic responsibility to enact change on a current issue.

-Multicultural: Students are sharing the perspectives of others with the entire school.

-Affective: Students are using emotions and developing compassion when helping victims of the Gulf Coast.

-Problem Posing: Students are using higher level thinking skills when discussing current initiatives to help victims.

Language Arts	Letter writing is a real life skill students can use to communicate ideas effectively and for a purpose.

Lesson: Students will write letters to the victims of the Gulf Coast expressing their compassion for their situation, what he/she has learned so far about the oil spill and its effect on their lives, and any other notes of appreciation for the unique Gulf Coast culture. Students will use the writing process when writing the letters.

MD VSC: **Standard 4.0 Writing**

Students will compose in a variety of modes by developing content, employing specific forms, and selecting language appropriate for a particular audience and purpose.

INDICATOR 1. Compose texts using the prewriting and drafting strategies of effective writers and speakers

INDICATOR 2. Compose oral, written, and visual presentations that express personal ideas, inform, and persuade

Critical Pedagogy:

-Multicultural: Students are using the various perspectives of people on the Gulf Coast in letters.

-Affective: Students are sharing their compassion for the Gulf Coast victims through letter writing.

Art	Visual art can be used to create advertisements

Lesson: Students will create posters advertising the "A Quarter a Kid" fundraiser and sharing of the tableaus using the elements of visual arts.

MD VSC: **Standard 3.0 Creative Expression and Production: Students will demonstrate the ability to organize knowledge and ideas for expression in the production of art.**

INDICATOR 1. Create images and forms from observation, memory, and imagination and feelings

Critical Pedagogy:

-Affective: Children are creating posters by using emotions to create visual art.

-Multicultural: Students are using the multiple perspectives of the oil spill to create posters advertising the fundraiser.

-Democratic: Students are practicing civic responsibility in preparing for a fundraiser that will help victims of the oil spill

HOW DOES AN OIL SPILL AFFECT ECOYSTEMS? - Lesson Set 1-Marine Ecosystems

Science	An oil spill pollutes the ocean, further affecting food chains of marine organisms.

Lesson: Using the activity "Hazardous Links, Possible Solutions" from Project Wild, students will examine how pollutants enter food chains, describe consequences of pollutants entering the food chain, and how regulations to control pollutants are used. Questioning will involve higher level thinking skills. This activity will be done in groups of 4, each person having a specific job (Group facilitator, checker-checks to see all group members understand, summarizer, and runner-gets materials).

MD VSC: **Standard 3.0 Life Science**

The students will use scientific skills and processes to explain the dynamic nature of living things, their interactions, and the results from the interactions that occur over time.

TOPIC E. FLOW OF MATTER AND ENERGY

INDICATOR 1. Recognize that some source of energy is needed for all organisms to grow and survive.

Standard 6.0 Environmental Science

Students will use scientific skills and processes to explain the interactions of environmental factors (living and non-living) and analyze their impact from a local to a global perspective.

TOPIC B. ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES

INDICATOR 1. Recognize and explain that decisions influencing the use of natural resources may have benefits, drawbacks, unexpected consequences, and tradeoffs.

Critical Pedagogy:

Democratic: All students have jobs in the group and share equal power.

Problem Posing: Students will be using higher level thinking skills in this activity.

Math	Over 20.1 million barrels of oil spilled into the Gulf of Mexico as a result of the spill, affecting a greater area of marine life.

Lesson: Students will explore the amount of oil spilled into the gulf by measuring how heavy 20.1 million barrels of oil would be, comparing that weight in gallons, comparing it to how many liters of soda that would be, etc. Students will then look at the rate of oil coming from the well and the distance the oil could have traveled at that rate. Students will be working in small groups on this lesson, with each group member having a specific job.

MD VSC: **Standard 3.0 Knowledge of Measurement**

Students will identify attributes, units, or systems of measurements or apply a variety of techniques, formulas, tools or technology for determining measurements.

TOPIC A. MEASUREMENT UNITS

INDICATOR 1. Read customary and metric measurement units

TOPIC B. MEASUREMENT TOOLS

INDICATOR

1. Measure in customary and metric units

- **TOPIC C.** APPLICATIONS IN MEASUREMENT

INDICATOR 2. Calculate equivalent measurements

Critical Pedagogy:

-Democratic: Students are working in small groups with individual jobs, spreading power equally between all group members.

Social Studies	Wildlife habitat is being lost due to the oil spill

Lesson:

Using a modified version of the activity "Shrinking Habitat" from Project Wild students will explore the elements necessary for habitat, and what happens to animals when habitat is lost. Students will be divided up into groups: herbivores, carnivores, vegetation, and oil companies. The herbivores and carnivores will use materials in the room (desks, chairs, the vegetation group) to create their habitat and then the oil company will come in to drill. The oil group can remove any resources they wish, but they have restrictions, and then after the activity students will debrief what happened and use higher level thinking to discuss the consequence of changing the land.

MD VSC: **Standard 3.0 Geography**

Students will use geographic concepts and processes to examine the role of culture, technology, and the environment in the location and distribution of human activities and spatial connections throughout time.

TOPIC

D. MODIFYING AND ADAPTING TO THE ENVIRONMENT

INDICATOR

- **1.** Describe how people adapt to, modify and impact the natural environment

Critical Pedagogy:

-Multicultural: Students are viewing habitat destruction for several different perspectives.

-Democratic: Power is shared equally among all groups and group members.

-Problem Posing: This lesson uses higher level thinking skills.

Language Arts	Cause and effect skills are effective in helping students organize newly learned information.

Lesson: Students will use what he/she has learned from this Lesson Set to complete a graphic organizer of the causes of marine ecosystem destruction (amount of oil spilled, rate, etc.) and the effect of all of the oil spilling into marine ecosystems (food chain, habitat, etc.). Then, with the graphic organizers students will write an ABAB poem, using emotions, about the causes and effects of marine ecosystem destruction.

MD VSC: **Standard 4.0 Writing**
Students will compose in a variety of modes by developing content, employing specific forms, and selecting language appropriate for a particular audience and purpose.
INDICATOR 1. Compose texts using the prewriting and drafting strategies of effective writers and speakers

INDICATOR 2. Compose oral, written, and visual presentations that express personal ideas, inform, and persuade

Critical Pedagogy:

-Affective: Students are using emotions to write a poem about the oil spill.

Art	Role playing using creative movement is beneficial to help students understand concepts in science

Lesson:

Students will learn about the food chain of marine organisms by taking on the role of an animal, researching that animal, inventing a nonlocomotor movement to represent his/her animal, and then as a class acting out the food chain in a domino effect (one animal eats another, which eats another, etc.). Then, the teacher will dress up and invent a nonlocomotor movement for oil and then students will role play how that will affect the food chain.

MD VSC: **Standard 3.0 Creative Expression and Production: Students will demonstrate the ability to create and perform dance.**

INDICATOR 2. Develop the ability to combine the elements, aesthetic principles, and choreographic forms of dance to communicate meaning

Critical Pedagogy:

-Multicultural: Students are studying the oil spill effects on marine food chains through the perspectives of all different organisms.

-Democratic: Each student participates equally in the activity

-Affective: Creative movement (nonlocomotor movement) involves the use of emotions.

HOW DOES AN OIL SPILL AFFECT ECOYSTEMS?- Lesson Set 2-Coastal Ecosystems

Science	The coastal wetlands and ecosystems of Louisiana have been damaged by the oil spill, particularly the inability of wetland grasses to protect habitats due to oil covering them and reducing their absorbency of water

Lesson: Students will investigate a wetland ecosystem and analyze issues and opinions relating to wetland management and protection, more specifically geared towards protecting wetlands from oil spills like the BP oil spill. Students will be working in groups, photo survey team, map survey team, plant survey team, and the water quality team to investigate wetlands. Students will also role playing Dr. Garcia, a dentist who wants to build an office on property iun Slidell, Louisiana, and students will research what Dr. Garcia should do, and then students will develop a flow chart advising Dr. Garcia of the process she should follow to build on a wetland.

MD VSC: **Standard 2.0 Earth/Space Science**

Students will use scientific skills and processes to explain the chemical and physical interactions (i.e., natural forces and cycles, transfer of energy) of the environment, Earth, and the universe that occur over time.

TOPIC A. MATERIALS AND PROCESSES THAT SHAPE A PLANET

INDICATOR 2. Cite and describe the processes that cause rapid or slow changes in Earth's surface.

Standard 3.0 Life Science

The students will use scientific skills and processes to explain the dynamic nature of living things, their interactions, and the results from the interactions that occur over time.

TOPIC A. DIVERSITY OF LIFE

INDICATOR 1. Explain the idea that in any particular environment, some kinds of plants and animals survive well, some less well, and some cannot survive at all.

Standard 6.0 Environmental Science

Students will use scientific skills and processes to explain the interactions of environmental factors (living and non-living) and analyze their impact from a local to a global perspective.

INDICATOR 2. Recognize and describe that consequences may occur when Earth's natural resources are used.

Critical Pedagogy:

-Democratic: Students are working in teams where everyone has an equal role in the activity.

-Affective: Students are role playing Dr. Garcia's decision which involves the use of emotions.

-Problem Posing: Students are using higher level thinking skills in this activity.

-Multicultural: Students are studying wetlands from the point of view of the organisms that live there and the people who wish to build there.

Math	Southern Louisiana contains 40-45% of the wetlands in the lower 48 states, and the marshes extend 30 miles inland.

Lesson: Students will explore the size of the wetlands in this activity involving fractions, percents, and area. Students will use higher level thinking skills in cooperative groups where students will use real data from the coastal wetlands of Louisiana to figure out what percent of the wetlands are used for fishing, got covered by oil, has houses built on it. Then students can discuss the implications these percentages have on the coastal ecosystems and future of the wetland.

MD VSC: **Standard 6.0 Knowledge of Number Relationships and Computation/Arithmetic**
Students will describe, represent, or apply numbers or their relationships or will estimate or compute using mental strategies, paper/pencil or technology.
TOPIC A. KNOWLEDGE OF NUMBER AND PLACE VALUE

INDICATOR 1. Apply knowledge of fractions, decimals, and place value

Standard 3.0 Knowledge of Measurement

- Students will identify attributes, units, or systems of measurements or apply a variety of techniques, formulas, tools or technology for determining measurements.

TOPIC C. APPLICATIONS IN MEASUREMENT
INDICATOR 1. Estimate and apply measurement formulas

Critical Pedagogy:

-Problem Posing: Students are using higher level thinking skills to complete this activity.

-Multicultural: Students are comparing and contrasting the coastal wetlands from the point of view of ecosystems and the point of view of humans.

-Democratic: Students are working in groups, where power is shared equally among all group members.

Social studies	The geography of the coastal wetlands influences goods and services in the Gulf Coast region

Lesson: Students will analyze the geography of Louisiana's coastal wetlands using Google Earth. Students will analyze the goods and services the wetlands provide, and how the movement of people has been influenced by the wetlands (fishing companies, tourism, restaurants, homes, etc.). Students will work in heterogeneous groups to discuss observations and conclusions.

MD VSC: **Standard 3.0 Geography**

Students will use geographic concepts and processes to examine the role of culture, technology, and the environment in the location and distribution of human activities and spatial connections throughout time.

TOPIC A. USING GEOGRAPHIC TOOLS

INDICATOR 1. Use geographic tools to locate places and describe the human and physical characteristics of those places

TOPIC C. MOVEMENT OF PEOPLE, GOODS AND IDEAS

INDICATOR 1. Describe and analyze population growth, migration, and settlement patterns in Maryland and regions of the United States

Critical Pedagogy:

-Multicultural: Students are analyzing the coastal wetlands from many different perspectives.

-Democratic: Students are working in heterogeneous groups which allows students to not be judged by their "level of performance," but by their cooperation with others in completing an activity.

Language Arts	Having coastal wetlands is very beneficial to the people of Louisiana for the resources it provides, but an oil spill can destroy the livelihood of people in Louisiana because they rely so heavily on the wetlands.

Lesson: Students will read personal accounts of how people benefit from the wetlands, and how people have not benefited from the wetlands since the oil spill. Through group discussion, role playing, and brainstorming activities students will formulate opinions on whether or not they would choose to live in the wetlands and why, using information acquired through class activities and reading.

MD VSC: **Standard 2.0 Comprehension of Informational Text**

Students will read, comprehend, interpret, analyze, and evaluate informational text.

INDICATOR 1. Develop and apply comprehension skills by reading a variety of self-selected and assigned print and non-print informational texts, including electronic media

INDICATOR 4. Determine and analyze important ideas and messages in informational texts

INDICATOR 6. Read critically to evaluate informational text

- **Standard 4.0 Writing**

- Students will compose in a variety of modes by developing content, employing specific forms, and selecting language appropriate for a particular audience and purpose.

INDICATOR 2. Compose oral, written, and visual presentations that express personal ideas, inform, and persuade

Critical Pedagogy:

-Multicultural: Students are reading personal accounts of people who have benefited/lost from relying on wetlands.

-Democratic: Working in groups promotes fairness and equality.

-Problem Posing: Students are using higher level thinking to complete the activity.

-Affective: Students are role playing what it would be like to be certain real life people which involves the use of emotions and develops compassion for others.

Art	Visual art is a great way for combining the differing points of view people have into one picture.

Lesson: Using the elements of visual art, students will create a picture of what living in the wetlands would be like before the oil spill and then after the oil spill.

MD VSC: **Standard 3.0 Creative Expression and Production: Students will demonstrate the ability to organize knowledge and ideas for expression in the production of art.**

INDICATOR 1. Create images and forms from observation, memory, and imagination and feelings

Standard 2.0 Historical, Cultural, and Social Context: Students will demonstrate an understanding of visual art as an essential aspect of history and human experience.

INDICATOR 1. Determine ways in which works of art express ideas about self, other people, places, and events

Critical Pedagogy:

-Affective: Visual art involves the use of emotions to convey meaning.

-Multicultural: Students are using different perspectives to create one image.

HOW DOES AN OIL SPILL AFFECT ECOYSTEMS?- Lesson Set 3-Bacteria affected

Science	Some organisms, like bacteria, are anaerobic and eat up the oil, creating oxygen "dead zones" in parts of the ocean that are detrimental to other creatures up and down the food chain.

Lesson: In heterogeneous groups students will learn about single-celled bacteria, how the bacteria produce energy, and how they reproduce so rapidly. Students will also learn the effects of the bacteria thriving off the oil (dead zones with no oxygen). How does the rapid expansion of bacteria affect other living things in the Gulf and the Gulf food chain? The activity will involve the use of higher level thinking questions.

MD VSC: **Standard 3.0 Life Science**

The students will use scientific skills and processes to explain the dynamic nature of living things, their interactions, and the results from the interactions that occur over time.

TOPIC B. CELLS

INDICATOR 1. Provide evidence from observations and investigations to support the idea that some organisms consist of a single cell.

TOPIC E. FLOW OF MATTER AND ENERGY

INDICATOR 1. Recognize that some source of energy is needed for all organisms to grow and survive.

Critical Pedagogy:

-Problem Posing: Students will be answering higher level thinking questions.

-Democratic: Students are grouped heterogeneously allowing power to be spread equally among each group.

Math	Bacteria in the Gulf are reproducing at an alarming rate, causing the amount of plankton, the base of the Gulf food chain, to decrease 90%.

Lesson: Students will gather data on the bacteria in the gulf, how fast they are reproducing, how many plankton there are at certain times before and after the spill, etc. Then students will organize the data in graphs and create stem and leaf plots of each, before and after the spill. The stem and leaf plots will help students interpret the data and allow them to compare bacteria before and after the spill with more accuracy. Students will work in groups to organize and interpret the data, with each person carrying out a certain role in the group (scribe, communicator, discussion leader, materials). At the end students will debrief the activity by

discussing the findings and what they could mean for the greater ocean food chain (less plankton=less marine life).

MD VSC:

Standard 4.0 Knowledge of Statistics

Students will collect, organize, display, analyze, or interpret data to make decisions or predictions.

TOPIC A. DATA DISPLAYS

INDICATOR 1. Collect, organize, and display data

TOPIC B. DATA ANALYSIS

INDICATOR 1. Analyze data

Critical Pedagogy:

-Democratic: Students have different roles within groups, ensuring equal power among all group members.

-Multicultural: Students are analyzing the oil spill from the perspective of bacteria and the greater population of marine life before and after the spill.

-Problem Posing: Students will be using higher level thinking throughout the activity.

Social Studies	In an effort to clean up the spill faster, chemical dispersants were used which may have damaged ocean life and coastal wetlands more than people expected.

Lesson: Students will read nonfiction articles about the dispersants used to clean up the oil in the Gulf and the effect it had on cleaning up the spill and the effect it had on wildlife. Students will compare the risks and benefits of using the dispersant, and try and figure out if it would have been better to just let the bacteria clean up the oil by using higher level thinking skills and heterogeneous group collaboration. Students will take on the role of BP officials in the decision making process of choosing to use the dispersant before acquiring information on its effects, and then again after learning about the effects the dispersants had on wildlife and coastal wetlands.

MD VSC: **Standard 3.0 Geography**

Students will use geographic concepts and processes to examine the role of culture, technology, and the environment in the location and distribution of human activities and spatial connections throughout time.

TOPIC D. MODIFYING AND ADAPTING TO THE ENVIRONMENT

INDICATOR 1. Describe how people adapt to, modify and impact the natural environment

- **Standard 6.0 Social Studies Skills and Processes**
- Students shall use reading, writing, and thinking processes and skills to gain knowledge and understanding of political, historical, and current events using chronological and spatial thinking, economic reasoning, and historical interpretation, by framing and evaluating questions from primary and secondary sources.

TOPIC D. ACQUIRE SOCIAL STUDIES INFORMATION

INDICATOR 1. Identify primary and secondary sources of information that relate to the topic/situation/problem being studied

Critical Pedagogy:

-Problem Posing: Students are using higher level thinking in this activity.

-Democratic: Students are collaborating in groups which is a common happening in democracy because everyone has the right to give input and be treated equally.

-Affective: Students are role playing BP decision making which involves the emotions.

-Multicultural: Students are learning about BP's role in the decision making process while also analyzing the facts of using the dispersant.

Language Arts	The issue of using dispersants vs. letting the bacteria cleans up all the oil is an issue of controversy since the spill.

Lesson: Students will use what they have learned from this Lesson Set to form an opinion of whether or not using dispersants was a good idea, and if we should or should not have just let the bacteria clean it up. Since students previously read and discussed this controversy in the social studies lesson students will be writing in this activity. Students will organize all the information learned from this lesson set on the topic of dispersants and bacteria in a graphic organizer, and then take a position and use evidence to back it up. Students will also include how it was to take on the role of BP officials (compassion) and how they feel BP made a good/bad decision and why.

MD VSC: **Standard 4.0 Writing**

Students will compose in a variety of modes by developing content, employing specific forms, and selecting language appropriate for a particular audience and purpose.

INDICATOR 1. Compose texts using the prewriting and drafting strategies of effective writers and speakers

INDICATOR 2. Compose oral, written, and visual presentations that express personal ideas, inform, and persuade

Critical Pedagogy:

-Affective: Students are using their experiences in the lessons and emotions to write a public opinion letter.

-Democratic: Students are exercising their rights as citizens to voice concerns and opinions to public officials.

Art	Color and shape, elements of visual art, can be used to express emotions and opinions.

Lesson: In this lesson students will be expressing their opinions on BP's decision to use dispersants to clean up the spill using the elements of visual art, color and shape. Then, students will write a 3 sentence description of why he/she chose the colors and shapes based on his/her opinion. Children will then go on a picture walk, viewing all the other artwork and opinions of classmates.

MD VSC: **Standard 3.0 Creative Expression and Production: Students will demonstrate the ability to organize knowledge and ideas for expression in the production of art.**

INDICATOR 1. Create images and forms from observation, memory, and imagination and feelings

Critical Pedagogy:

-Affective: Students are using their emotions to create visual art expressing opinion.

EFFECTS OF THE OIL SPILL ON THE FUTURE-Lesson Set 1-Alternative Energy

Science	The shortage of oil coupled with the damaging effects of the oil spill create a need for alternative energy.

Lesson: Students will learn about renewable and nonrenewable resources with an activity from *Project Learning Tree* entitled, "Renewable or Not?" Students will participate in simulations that demonstrate society's use of renewable and nonrenewable resources and the factors that make renewable resources sustainable.

MD VSC: **Standard 6.0 Environmental Science**

Students will use scientific skills and processes to explain the interactions of environmental factors (living and non-living) and analyze their impact from a local to a global perspective.

TOPIC A. NATURAL RESOURCES AND HUMAN NEEDS

INDICATOR 2. Recognize and describe that consequences may occur when Earth's natural resources are used.

Critical Pedagogy:

-Democratic: Students will be broken up into different teams and working cooperatively with equal share of power among all students.

-Problem Posing: Students will be using higher level thinking skills to answer some of the questions included in this activity.

-Affective: Students will be doing simulations which involve emotions because they are taking on another role.

-Multicultural: Students are analyzing resources from different countries, giving students a multicultural view on renewable/nonrenewable resources.

Math	The rate of oil consumption in the US and other countries is incredibly high, but the supply of oil is diminishing, increasing the need for alternative energy.

Lesson: Students will use real data about how much oil people use every day, every hour, and every minute in the US and other countries over the last 50 years. Then students will break that data up into different uses of oil and how readily they are used each day, further analyzing oil consumption from many different perspectives. Then, students will plot the data on line graphs and analyze how much oil consumption has increased over the last 50 years. Students can then compare this data with the amount of oil scientists think is left inside the earth and what our increasing rate of consumption means for the future. How much longer is it going to be until we need to completely rely on alternative energy?

MD VSC: **Standard 4.0 Knowledge of Statistics**

Students will collect, organize, display, analyze, or interpret data to make decisions or predictions.

TOPIC A. DATA DISPLAYS

INDICATOR 1. Collect, organize, and display data

TOPIC B. DATA ANALYSIS

INDICATOR 1. Analyze data

Critical Pedagogy:

-Multicultural: Students are analyzing the rate of oil consumption from many different perspectives.

Social studies	As population grows, resources decrease as seen with the Native Americans and early pioneers of the United States. Today we face the same crisis with a limited amount of fossil fuel left and an ever-growing population in need of alternative energy.

Lesson: Students will explore the lifestyles of Native Americans and early pioneers in relation to meeting needs with resources and attitudes towards the environment. Students will then compare their own lifestyle to the Native Americans and pioneer's lifestyles, discussing ways to live sustainable lives. The activity follows the lesson seen in Project Learning Tree called "A Look at Lifestyles." Students will be split in groups to discover the different perspectives of Native Americans, Early Pioneers, and Today.

MD VSC: **Standard 2.0 Peoples of the Nation and World**

Student will understand the diversity and commonality, human interdependence, and global cooperation of the people of Maryland, the United States, and the World through a multicultural and a historic perspective.

TOPIC A. ELEMENTS OF CULTURE

INDICATOR 1. Describe the various cultures of colonial societies and how the environment influenced them

Critical Pedagogy:

-Multicultural: Students will be analyzing and discussing resources and the environment from several perspectives.

-Democratic: Students will be working in groups where power is shared equally among all.

-Affective: Students will take on the roles of different people, Native Americans, Pioneers, and people of today which uses the emotions.

-Problem Posing: Students will be using higher level thinking in this activity.

Language Arts	Digital stories solidify concepts for students in a creative way.

Lesson: Students will read articles and do research on ideas for alternative energy that are already being used in the world today. Then, each person's findings will be presented in a digital story. Before speaking, students will write a script of what to say during the digital story.

MD VSC: **Standard 7.0 Speaking**

Student will communicate effectively in a variety of situations with different audiences, purposes, and formats.

INDICATOR 1. Use organization and delivery strategies at an appropriate level

Standard 4.0 Writing

Students will compose in a variety of modes by developing content, employing specific forms, and selecting language appropriate for a particular audience and purpose.

INDICATOR 2. Compose oral, written, and visual presentations that express personal ideas, inform, and persuade

Standard 2.0 Comprehension of Informational Text

Students will read, comprehend, interpret, analyze, and evaluate informational text.

INDICATOR 1. Develop and apply comprehension skills by reading a variety of self-selected and assigned print and non-print informational texts, including electronic media

Critical Pedagogy:

-Multicultural: Students are using technology to explore the differing perspectives of Native Americans and Early Pioneers.

-Affective: Students are using pictures to express mood and emotion in the digital story.

Art	Visual art can be used to express ideas and opinions about the future in a very imaginative and emotional way using the elements of visual art.

Lesson: Using what they know about the shortage of resources with our growing population, and the ideas people have already enacted for alternative energy, students will use the elements of visual art to display their idea of what the future will look like in terms of alternative energy. Will we be able to come up with an alternative for oil that is widespread enough to supply our demanding energy needs? What will the future look like with all the eco-friendly initiatives and technology?

MD VSC: **Standard 3.0 Creative Expression and Production: Students will demonstrate the ability to organize knowledge and ideas for expression in the production of art.**

INDICATOR 1. Create images and forms from observation, memory, and imagination and feelings

Critical Pedagogy:

-Multicultural: Students are considering all the viewpoints of the shortage of resources, sustainability, and alternative energy to create their own opinion.

-Affective: Students are using the emotions to come up with an opinion using art.

-Problem Posing: Students are using the highest level of thinking (create) when they are using old ideas and coming up with a new way of looking at the future.

EFFECTS OF THE OIL SPILL ON THE FUTURE-Lesson Set 2-Reducing Energy Consumption

Science	Reducing the amount of energy consumption for each individual can add up to a decrease in pollution that results from producing that energy.

Lesson: Students will identify ways to save energy in their daily lives and explain how saving energy can reduce air pollution in this lesson from Project Learning Tree called, "Waste Watchers." Students will be doing an energy audit of their homes, graphing the findings over a week's time, finding the average electricity uses, and coming up with ways to make the school a more energy efficient place by planting trees or shrubs on the grounds to block chilly breezes from making heat usage increase.

MD VSC: **Standard 6.0 Environmental Science**

Students will use scientific skills and processes to explain the interactions of environmental factors (living and non-living) and analyze their impact from a local to a global perspective.
TOPIC B. ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES

INDICATOR 1. Recognize and explain that decisions influencing the use of natural resources may have benefits, drawbacks, unexpected consequences, and tradeoffs.

Critical Pedagogy:

-Multicultural: Students are learning about reducing energy consumption by getting the perspectives of home usage and school practices.

-Democratic: Students are taking action in their school to reduce energy needs in an environmentally friendly way.

-Problem Posing: Students are using higher level thinking skills in this activity.

Math	To find out energy consumption, students must collect data and analyze it in terms of measures of central tendency to best devise a plan for reducing energy usage.

Lesson: In the Project Learning Tree activity, "Waste Watchers" students are using the math skills of collecting data, graphing data, and analyzing the data based on measures of central tendency (mean, median, mode) when auditing their home electricity meters. By using the math, students can devise an action plan for reducing energy consumption at home, and then later figuring out how to reduce energy consumption at school.

MD VSC: **Standard 4.0 Knowledge of Statistics**

Students will collect, organize, display, analyze, or interpret data to make decisions or predictions.

TOPIC A. DATA DISPLAYS

INDICATOR 1. Collect, organize, and display data

TOPIC B. DATA ANALYSIS

INDICATOR 1. Analyze data

INDICATOR 2. Describe a set of data (mean, median, mode)

Critical Pedagogy:

-Multicultural: Students are learning about reducing energy consumption by getting the perspectives of home usage and school practices.

-Democratic: Students are taking action in their school to reduce energy needs in an environmentally friendly way.

-Problem Posing: Students are using higher level thinking skills in this activity.

Social Studies	Oil is used to produce gasoline, and the shortage of this resource has raised gas prices and made the need for energy efficient cars even greater.

Lesson: Students will complete an activity from Project Learning Tree called "In the Driver's Seat." Students will gain knowledge about the differences in fuel economy between different vehicles, and explain strategies for reducing the amount of fuel used by vehicles. As a culminating activity students will create posters to hang around the school that explain fuel economy and why fuel economy and saving gas are important.

MD VSC: **Standard 3.0 Geography**

Students will use geographic concepts and processes to examine the role of culture, technology, and the environment in the location and distribution of human activities and spatial connections throughout time.

TOPIC D. MODIFYING AND ADAPTING TO THE ENVIRONMENT

INDICATOR 1. Describe how people adapt to, modify and impact the natural environment

Critical Pedagogy:

-Democratic: Students are taking action in the school community to spread awareness of fuel economy and alternative modes of transportation.

-Problem Posing: Students will be using higher level thinking skills throughout this activity.

Language Arts	Different countries around the world are inventing ways to use alternative modes of transportation such as mass transit, fuel-efficient cars, and biking.

Lesson: Students will read nonfiction articles about the usage of alternative modes of transportation in other countries. Students will be grouped by country, and then they will create jigsaw groups and combine all countries to make a group collage in the shape of a globe, of alternative modes of transportation across cultures. Each student will receive as piece of the globe and create a picture of their country's alternative modes of transportation, but all pieces must flow together to form one bigger picture. Students will use the elements of visual art to create this collage.

MD VSC: **Standard 2.0 Comprehension of Informational Text**

Students will read, comprehend, interpret, analyze, and evaluate informational text.

INDICATOR 1. Develop and apply comprehension skills by reading a variety of self-selected and assigned print and non-print informational texts, including electronic media

INDICATOR 4. Determine and analyze important ideas and messages in informational texts

Critical Pedagogy:

-Multicultural: Students are researching alternative modes of transportation from all different cultural perspectives.

-Affective: Visual art involves the use of emotions.

-Democratic: Doing jigsaw groups allow all students to share equal power and be equally important to the success of the lesson.

Art	Visual art can be used to represent different perspectives.

Lesson: Students will use the elements of visual art to create a collaborate collage of the different cultural perspectives on alternative modes of transportation.

MD VSC: **Standard 3.0 Creative Expression and Production: Students will demonstrate the ability to organize knowledge and ideas for expression in the production of art.**

INDICATOR 1. Create images and forms from observation, memory, and imagination and feelings

Critical Pedagogy:

-Multicultural: Students are researching alternative modes of transportation from all different cultural perspectives.

-Affective: Visual art involves the use of emotions.

-Democratic: Doing jigsaw groups allow all students to share equal power and be equally important to the success of the lesson.

EFFECTS OF THE OIL SPILL ON THE FUTURE Lesson Set 3-Maintaing Homeostasis in the Environment

Science	Homeostasis is a state of equilibrium in the environment that maintains itself through natural processes and allows for the sustainability of life on earth.

Lesson: Students will learn about homeostasis by studying real life examples in wildlife of how organisms and the environment maintain homeostasis. Then, students will examine how homeostasis has been disrupted by the oil spill and what effect the oil spill has had on marine organisms in the Gulf. Students will be grouped heterogeneously for this activity.

MD VSC: **Standard 6.0 Environmental Science**

Students will use scientific skills and processes to explain the interactions of environmental factors (living and non-living) and analyze their impact from a local to a global perspective.

INDICATOR 2. Recognize and describe that consequences may occur when Earth's natural resources are used.

- **Standard 3.0 Life Science**
- The students will use scientific skills and processes to explain the dynamic nature of living things, their interactions, and the results from the interactions that occur over time.

TOPIC A. DIVERSITY OF LIFE

INDICATOR 1. Explain the idea that in any particular environment, some kinds of plants and animals survive well, some less well, and some cannot survive at all.

Critical Pedagogy:

-Democratic: Students will be grouped heterogeneously, allowing for equal power to be shared among all students.

-Problem Posing: Students will be using higher level thinking skills in this activity.

Math	Measures of central tendency (mean, medium, mode) all serve as ways to measure homeostasis.

Lesson: Students will examine real data of numbers of different species of animals in the Gulf, graph the data, find the mean, median, and mode, and notice how all species fluctuate around a central number which proves homeostasis. Students will then plot data of numbers of different species in the Gulf, find the mean, median, and mode, and determine how homeostasis is being maintained after the oil spill in each species. Are some thriving? Are some really at risk of being completely wiped out? How can the environment get back to homeostasis?

MD VSC: **Standard 4.0 Knowledge of Statistics**

Students will collect, organize, display, analyze, or interpret data to make decisions or predictions.

TOPIC A. DATA DISPLAYS

INDICATOR 1. Collect, organize, and display data

INDICATOR 2. Describe a set of data (mean, median, mode)

Critical Pedagogy:

-Problem Posing: Students will be using higher level thinking skills in this activity.

Social studies	Several organizations and celebrities have joined together to raise awareness of the need to protect wildlife in the Gulf from the human need from oil and its consequences.

Lesson: Students will read articles, view video clips, and look at graphic representations of the action and impact organizations and celebrities have had on wildlife conservation in the Gulf. In particular, students will read about Sylvia Earle, an oceanographic researcher who has witnessed the change in the Gulf wildlife just in her lifetime. She has created the Mission Blue Partnership which is a global initiative that promotes protecting areas in critical ecosystems all over the world. Students will work in groups to discuss what the readings, and then a full-class discussion will ensue after all groups have discussed.

MD VSC: **Standard 6.0 Social Studies Skills and Processes**

Students shall use reading, writing, and thinking processes and skills to gain knowledge and understanding of political, historical, and current events using chronological and spatial thinking, economic reasoning, and historical interpretation, by framing and evaluating questions from primary and secondary sources.

TOPIC D. ACQUIRE SOCIAL STUDIES INFORMATION

INDICATOR 1. Identify primary and secondary sources of information that relate to the topic/situation/problem being studied

Standard 3.0 Geography

Students will use geographic concepts and processes to examine the role of culture, technology, and the environment in the location and distribution of human activities and spatial connections throughout time.

TOPIC D. MODIFYING AND ADAPTING TO THE ENVIRONMENT

INDICATOR 1. Describe how people adapt to, modify and impact the natural environment

Critical Pedagogy:

-Multicultural: Students are learning about wildlife protection from many different people's perspectives.

-Democratic: Students are working in small groups which allows for the equal distribution of power.

-Problem Posing: Students will be using higher level thinking in this activity.

Language Arts	The call to action for protecting wildlife in the Gulf for the sake of humans, ecosystems, and the global economy is dire. By writing letters and sharing information within the school setting, students can take action on the issue of the Gulf oil spill's impact on wildlife.

Lesson: Students will use what they learned throughout the unit plan to produce public announcements to the school community, sharing the need for protecting wildlife in the Gulf. Students will create public announcements and brief advertisements on the school TV station and announcements during the school day to spread awareness of the issue the need for oil has created, and to raise money to protect a plot of the Gulf's wildlife. Students will then write letters to the Mission Blue Partnership, telling Sylvia Earle all that they have learned throughout the unit plan, why they want to help, and what their school is doing to protect wildlife in the Gulf.

MD VSC: **Standard 4.0 Writing**

Students will compose in a variety of modes by developing content, employing specific forms, and selecting language appropriate for a particular audience and purpose.

INDICATOR 2. Compose oral, written, and visual presentations that express personal ideas, inform, and persuade

- **Standard 7.0 Speaking**
- Student will communicate effectively in a variety of situations with different audiences, purposes, and formats.

INDICATOR 2. Make oral presentations

Critical Pedagogy:

-Multicultural: Students will be considering all perspectives of people, wildlife, and countries affected by the oil spill to enact a school-wide social action project.

-Democratic: Students are working collaboratively to combat an environmental issue facing the entire world which uses democracy.

-Affective: Students are using their emotions to create a sense of urgency to help our this cause on a school-wide basis.

Art	Visual art can be used to create social action posters.

Lesson: Students will use the elements of visual art to create posters advertising the need to donate money to the Mission Blue Partnership fund so the school can protect a plot of the Gulf.

MD VSC: **Standard 3.0 Creative Expression and Production: Students will demonstrate the ability to organize knowledge and ideas for expression in the production of art.**

INDICATOR 1. Create images and forms from observation, memory, and imagination and feelings

Critical Pedagogy:

-Affective: Visual art involves the use of emotions.

-Democratic: Students are taking action on an environmental issue by using the democratic principles of freedom of speech.