

## CHAPTER FOUR: CONCLUSION

### Introduction

Chapter one examined two different approaches for teaching literature. On one side, the monoculturalists believe that a culture must have a shared notion of literature, and that this ought to be in the form of traditional Anglo-European. On the other side the multiculturalists believe that all cultures must have a voice in a society, and that literary instruction must reflect this. Also, chapter one explained how experience and stimuli cause individuals to cognitively grow and development. Given this, chapter one presented the reader with the rationale for literary instruction from the monoculture as well as the multicultural perspectives, and introduced the guiding question for this paper: how does the use of multiethnic literature affect student engagement? Chapter two explained the development of education in the United States, the development of reading instruction in the United States, the history reading materials used in schools, the formation of multicultural education, and the formation of multiethnic literature. In reviewing the history, it was noted that the paradigmatic shift of the Civil Rights era influenced reading research, as well as the societal expectations of schools. Also, it was noted that the approaches to reading instruction have changed during the last quarter of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. During recent years, the approach many teachers take toward literacy instruction is a combination of skill and literature, and the use of real literature, as opposed to basal or trades books, is at the heart of the new movement. Chapter three reviewed the research of multiethnic literature. The research reviewed in Chapter three was organized into five areas: Content Analysis, Teacher Analysis, Preoperations, Concrete Operations, and Formal Operations. Each of these studies were summarized and analyzed, based on the

conclusions provided. The research was reviewed to examine how the use of multiethnic literature effected the engagement of students. Chapter four is the concluding chapter of this paper. This chapter revisits the guiding question, how does the use of multiethnic literature affect student engagement, and uses a summary of the findings – based on the five areas: Content Analysis, Teacher Analysis, Preoperations, Concrete Operations, and Formal Operations from the initial review – from Chapter three to answer the question of the study, implications for classroom practice, and suggestions for further research.

#### Summary of Findings

How does the use of multiethnic literature affect student engagement? This was the guiding question for this review of the professional literature. This was an important question when you consider the ability of schools to influence political thought. Thought is shaped by exposure to stimuli, and is built upon by continued exposure.

Monoculturalists hold that students must be exposed to a single culture, and that it is through a common culture that cultural understanding is built. The culture that serves this end is Anglo-European, for the country was founded by peoples of this culture. Scholars such as Hirsch (1988) claimed that a culture can only be literate if everyone has the same underlying notion of literature, and literature that is deemed worthy is the literature of Anglo-European peoples. Multiculturalists hold that students need to be exposed to diverse cultures, and that it is the use of a broad cultural lense which builds cultural understanding.

Reynolds, Taylor, Steffensen, Shirey, and Anderson's (1982) study began the Content Analysis; their study suggested that the cultural schemata of the individual had an affect on their reading comprehension. This is appropriate given Jensen's (1998)

research on brain growth. The individual has dendritic communication, within their brain, that allows for understanding. Reynolds et al.'s (1982) notion of cultural schemata held that what the individual had learned, through existing in a cultural group, would influence their understanding. This is because the interactions within a cultural setting, shape and form inner brain communication, communication necessary for understanding. What this study suggested was that students of different cultural groups spoke and understood different languages, and this was reflected in their reading comprehension. The Caucasian students of Reynolds et al. (1982) study, had no experience with sounding, so their brain did not communicate verbal interplay as they read the story. Thus, the Caucasian students assumed that they were reading an excerpt from a fight. The African American students had the cultural experience with sounding, and thus the inner brain communication allowed understanding for differentiating sounding and fighting. This study began the Content Analysis section because it demonstrated how students' cultural background affected their comprehension of texts. However, this study was limited to two different ethnic groups, African American and Caucasian. More research is needed to determine how the cultural schemata of other ethnic groups affect the interpretation of written text.

Given the findings of Reynolds et al.'s (1982) study, Larrick's (1965) analysis of children's books was reviewed to determine what the role of non-Caucasians were. Larrick's (1965) study, as well as the follow-up investigations of Chall, Radwin, French, and Hall (1979), and Reimer (1992) indicated that preoperational as well as concrete operational students were reading literature that was predominantly Caucasian. Larrick's book analysis was conducted 10-years after the desegregation of American schools, and

the aim of Larrick was to determine if the books used in the schools reflected desegregated America. She found that the books used were not reflective of desegregation. Her study was weakened when she did not publish the methodology used for her findings, and when she generalized using terms such as "about." However, Larrick's study was replicated and is widely noted in literacy journals as a point of reference. In a followup study, Chall, Radwin, French, and Hall (1979) found that the late 60s and early 70s was a time of some inclusion for non-Caucasian groups, but Reimer (1992) indicated that the 80s and early 90s did not foster much multiethnic growth. Reimer's conclusions shared a familiar point of critique in that many of her conclusions were vague; Reimer omitted numbers from her conclusions, and did not give a specific number of how many books contained Caucasian or non-Caucasian characters. Given the above mentioned cautions, it is reasonable to conclude that the books students were reading during their preoperational through formal operational stages of development were reflective of the monoculture. Thus, students that have not constructed Eurocentric cultural schemata will not have the same textual understanding of the literature (Reynolds et al., 1982). Also, given that the materials published for children were of the monoculture, a teacher interested in fostering multicultural literature in her classroom is at a disadvantage because most of the published material was non-multicultural.

Given that teachers were provided with reading material that was reflective of the monoculture, Bean, Readence, and Mallette (1996) investigated how teachers could select young adult novels based on the multicultural typology of James Banks. This study indicated that it was possible for teachers to select novels that broaden students'

cultural schemata. The researchers selected the novels by analysis of the content using a believing and doubting method. During which, two different researchers would offer three responses to support the other rater's decision. The believing and doubting method was used to settle debates regarding interpretation. This strengthened the study's findings. It was concluded that the novels selected in this study contained main characters that examined their cultural experiences, and these experiences were used to structure cultural discussions in the classroom and provide for education that is multicultural.

The Teacher Analysis was necessary, because students receive their instruction from teachers, teachers who, as found in the Content Analysis section, may not have read multiethnic literature. In a survey of teachers, Carroll, Gregg, and Watts (1995) found that teachers differ on what was considered multicultural, many felt that sexual identity should not be considered a culture. This survey indicated that teachers were willing to expand the literary cannon, but that the teachers placed a greater value on the themes and topics of a literary work, than the ethnicity of the author. Carroll et al. (1995) collected the data from a limited sample population. The surveys were not strategically distributed, and the findings were limited in their ability to be generalized to a larger population. Gill's (1998) survey of university professors indicated that the majority of them were willing to teach literature from diverse ethnic and cultural groups. Although the Content Analysis' findings were discouraging for the use of multiethnic literature, the analysis of inservice teachers, as well as university professors, indicated some willingness to use multiethnic literature.

Bean, Valerio, Mallette, and Readence (1999); Cheveilier and Houser (1997);

Florio-Ruane and deTar (1994); Nathenson-Mejia (2003) investigated how the use of multiethnic literature affected preservice teachers. The overall findings suggested that the use of multiethnic literature served as a means to engage in ethnic / cultural discussions. These studies were important because the preservice teachers were to become teachers, who would teach students of various ethnic and cultural groups. Nathenson-Mejia (2003) found that over a three-year period, preservice teachers were able to use multiethnic literature, in the field, and that this helped the preservice teachers better understand their diverse students. The use of multiethnic literature helped expand their cultural schemata, and increased their understandings of ethnic groups, groups that may have been different from their own. These studies suggest that multiethnic literature can be the stimuli that causes brain growth, growth that increases communication, communication regarding different ethnic groups.

According to Piaget (1952), the child is in preoperations between the years two and seven. In this stage, the child attains language, but is not yet ready to think in logical terms. The preoperational child can represent the world symbolically with mental images, but all symbols and images depend upon the child's own perception and own intuition, the child in this stage is completely egocentric (Piaget, 1952). The studies of the preoperations section of Chapter three, investigated the effects of using multiethnic literature on the egocentric nature of the preoperational students.

Rowland and Hill (1965) found that the interest in reading and writing materials were influenced by racial content. It is important to note the date of this study, 1965, which was the same year as Larrick's (1965) study. Larrick (1965) found that African Americans were represented in only 6.7% of children's books. The African American

students of Rowland and Hill (1965) were not granted the opportunity of cultural schemata, in their comprehension of texts. This was because, as found by Larrick (1965), they were not represented in texts. The students were thirsty for their own culture in reading and writing materials. The Caucasian students did not have the opportunity for expanding their cultural schemata through reading and writing materials because these materials did not allow them to do so.

Preoperational students, while locked in the limited perception of their immediate surroundings, can have their perception of the world ethnically broadened, through the use of multiethnic literature. Studies by Litcher and Johnson (1971); Macphee (1997); Yawkey and Blackwell (1974) indicated that the use of multiethnic literature improved the attitudes of preoperational children toward themselves, as well as broadened their cultural schemata toward other ethnic groups. However, in the case of Litcher and Johnson (1971), it is important to consider that the subjects lived in an environment with a low number of African Americans, so it was not clear if the improvement of the subjects' attitudes would be the same had the subjects had prior schema regarding African Americans. Also, it is important to note that the Macphee (1997) study was conducted on her own classroom, and that her sample size was limited to her classroom. In a study with an even more limited sample size, Wan (2000) found that the use of multiethnic literature helped to create a sense of culture, as well as prepare a four-year-old Chinese American girl for school. The ethnicity of the characters was the same as the four-year-old girl, Chinese. So, it was not clear how this girl would react to books with a broader ethnic scope. However, as a whole, the studies of this section suggested that preoperational children do benefit from the use of multiethnic literature, and that their

attitudes toward themselves as well as other culture groups improved.

In researching the enhancement of multicultural awareness through storybooks, Wham, Barnheart, and Cook (1996) collected data on the attitudes of elementary school aged children toward multicultural diversity, and found second-grade to be the age when the greatest impact on students occurred. Wham et al.'s (1996) findings were reliable due to the researchers test-retest procedure. Second-grade children are seven and eight-years of age, and are developing through preoperational to concrete operations. Because of Wham et al.'s (1996) findings, it was necessary to investigate how concrete operational children were affected by the use of multiethnic literature. A group of studies were reviewed in Chapter three, this was under the subheading, Concrete Operations.

According to Piaget (1952), when the child is able to perform actions in the mind, or mental operations, then she has entered the stage of concrete operations. This occurs during the years seven through eleven. The concrete operational child is older and more cognitively developed than her preoperational counterpart. Her thinking has become more abstract, and she is becoming better aware of the world outside of her own. The findings of the studies reviewed in this section indicated that concrete operational students can conceive of a world that is ethnically different than her own; however, the effect that multiethnic literature had on students of this developmental stage varied depending on the ethnicity of the student. Taylor (1997) and Tyson (1999) found that the use of African American text engaged African American students. Tyson (1999) found that when African American students were reading African American stories, their means of questioning became more complex. Tyson set out to engage struggling African American readers, and engage them in reading using stories written by and about African

Americans. Tyson did just that; however, Taylor's (1997) Hispanic American students were not engaged in reading the African American culturally conscious books. Also, Taylor (1997) noted that the conclusions of this study only worked for the sample study, and that the results could not be generalized to the greater population. The failure of Taylor (1997) to calculate the significance levels of the results, weakened the findings of this study. In a similar study, Copenhaver (2001) found that African American children needed to read characters that were culturally like them, i.e. other African Americans, in texts, and that this could prompt the construction of complex literary understandings.

Research done by Leslie, Leslie, and Penfield (1972) and Walker-Dalhousie (1992) found that the use of ethnically diverse text helped to change the view of Caucasian students toward other ethnic groups. The different findings, between African American subjects and Caucasian subjects, indicated that both were willing to learn about ethnicity. African American students improved their engagement, when given the opportunity to read characters that were like themselves, and Caucasian students benefitted from the broadening of their cultural schemata.

When considering the findings of the Content Analysis section, that texts the majority of US students are reading are predominantly Caucasian, and apply this notion to the Concrete Operations section, these findings become alarming. African American students benefitted from reading books with similar characters, and Caucasian students had their understanding of the world expanded. According to Piaget (1952), this is developmentally appropriate. The research of the effects of multiethnic literature use, during preoperations, indicated that students' self esteem as well as perceptions of others, was enhanced. However, it is important to note that the overwhelming majority of the

studies dealt specifically with African Americans and Caucasians, and few of the studies were of other US ethnic groups. The research of the effects of multiethnic literature use, during concrete operations, indicated that these texts engaged students, as well as expanded students understandings of other ethnic groups.

Adolescence coincides with Piaget's final stage, formal operations. This stage occurs during the years eleven through sixteen. In this stage, the child's thought is more flexible, rational, and systematic (Piaget, 1952). The child's brain has developed the communication ability to understand multiple perspectives, and can evaluate these perspectives. Adolescence is the final stage of childhood, and it is during adolescence that the child is in her final phase of secondary schooling. The child is on the cusp of adulthood, and will enter the world which is ethnically diverse.

The studies of the Formal Operations section suggested that the advanced development of the students influenced their reaction to the use of multiethnic literature. Also, Jordan and Purves (1993) found that the socio-economic factors influenced the learning environment. Students in poor districts did not want to hear of other people's suffering, while students in affluent schools enjoyed feeling sorry for the protagonist, unless the protagonist challenged their privileged lifestyle. Much like the case of Reynolds, Taylor, Steffensen, Shirley, and Anderson (1982), cultural schemata played an important role in students comprehension. Lack of Catholic understanding, caused students to misinterpret Hispanic literature; ignorance of Native American creation stories caused Caucasian students to drop the "Grandma" from "Grandma Spider," while ignorance of poverty, within the United States, caused many Caucasian students to interpret "Nikki Rosa" as taking place in Africa. Students thought that all people in the

United States had indoor plumbing (Jordan and Purves, 1993).

The development of dendritic communication, as well as the complex nature of developed schemata, caused many students to resist the use of multiethnic literature. In the Spears-Bunton (1990) study, a Caucasian student was disruptive during the discussion of an African American text. As he was being removed from the classroom, he stated, "I hate Black literature." During this same study, a Caucasian student claimed that there was no reason for studying African American literature, because slavery was old news, and African Americans were the same as Caucasians. The dendritic structure of these students was deep, they thought of literature as monocultural. This was because, as seen in Larrick (1965); Chall, Radwin, French, and Hall (1979); and Reimer (1992), the students were not introduced to multiethnic literature throughout their development. Their knowledge regarding literature, did not entail non-Caucasian ethnic groups, nor did their knowledge of classroom discussions entail the challenging of their privilege.

The studies of this section, suggested that multiethnic literature, when used as a means to broaden cultural understanding, helped to change the schema of the individual. Henly (1993) as well as Totten (1998), found that the use of reader-response theory, engaged the formal operational student in multiethnic literature. Henly (1993) used reader-response as a means of teaching an African American novel with graphic language, sex, and rape. This study suggested that the combined use of the text, as well as reader-response, helped the students to learn compassion and responsibility. Students of Totten's (1998) research, studied the graphic nature of the Holocaust, by reading a Jewish poem. Totten (1998) found the use of poetry and reader-response, as effective means of fostering understanding of this historically significant event. Studying culture,

from the perspective of others, is challenging, especially to members of the Caucasian group, the group that has historically dominated public instruction.

Literature serves as a means to view other worlds, and thus broadens the cultural schemata of students. Athanases (1998) found that classroom discussion on cultural issues scaffolded readers' private reflections on the development of cultural identities. In a similar finding, Bean and Rigoni (2001) found that students offered multiple perspectives regarding a multiethnic novel, and were able to expand their understandings through debating and defending viewpoints. The Caucasian girl in Spears-Bunton (1990), who thought that there was no difference between African Americans and Caucasians, began to change her view after reading an African American text. Willis and Johnson (2000) found that high school students come to school with deeply rooted ideas, but through the use of multiethnic literature, and critical reflection, that their views could change. The findings of the 13 studies, reviewed in this section, indicated that students can be engaged through multiethnic literature, but that because of the students complex cognitive ability, the teacher must facilitate learning in an engaging manner, such as reader-response.

Perhaps the greatest implication that results from this review was not from the studies specifically, but rather how the studies were conducted. The studies that were conducted pre 1980, i.e. Koeller (1977); Leslie, Leslie, and Penfield (1972); Litcher and Johnson (1971); Rowland and Hill (1965); and Yawkey and Blackwell (1974) were all quantitative studies. These studies were all in accord with the period of emphasis upon scientific investigation in reading (Smith, 1986). The more contemporary studies were predominantly qualitative. The observation of the quantitative studies were focused,

organized, and measured clearly defined variables. In the qualitative studies, the research was more of an investigation into the development of human awareness. In an analysis of trends in literacy education, Swafford, Chapman, Rhodes, and Kallus (1996) noted that in two major practitioners' journals, *Reading Teacher* and *Language Arts*, the basic theme that linked ideas together was the classroom as a community of learners. This is social constructivist in nature, and reflects the whole language movement that Martinez and McGee (2000) noted was the largest teacher led movement of the last quarter of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. The research in this paper, as well as the research reviewed by Swafford et al. (1996) and Martinez and McGee (2000), suggested that the classrooms which were most desirable were classrooms that included the voices of all students, as well as the voices of all peoples. The research reviewed indicated that this can be done through the use of multiethnic literature.

#### Classroom Implications

It was the Civil Rights era that gave birth to the multicultural education movement (Banks, 2001), and it was the claims of unfair and biased education that caused Larrick to investigate the ethnic world of books written for children. Larrick (1965) found that the world of children's literature was predominantly Caucasian, and this finding was echoed by Chall, Radwin, French and Hall (1979) as well as Reimer (1992). These three studies were conducted post desegregation of US schools, and the latter two were during a teacher led movement toward literary instruction that used real authentic literature (Martinez and McGee, 2000), literature that was researched and discovered to be ethnically biased. Given that the classrooms had been desegregated, and that teachers were moving toward real literature, and that this literature was ethnically

biased, Bean, Readence, and Mallette (1996) provided a means for teachers to select novels that were multicultural. Although some teachers may not have had the background of non-monoculture literature, Bean et al. (1996) found that they could use a method for selecting books with diverse characters experiencing diverse stages of ethnic identity. The theme of all these studies was that the literature used in the classroom be culturally broadened, so that all students may benefit from an increase of cultural schemata.

Reynolds, Taylor, Steffensen, Shirley, and Anderson (1982) study indicated that cultural schemata influenced the readers' comprehension of a text. What the student knows, culturally, will have a bearing on her comprehension. The students' notion of culture can be expanded through the use of multiethnic literature. The Leslie, Leslie, and Penfield (1972) and Walker-Dalhouse (1992) studies found that students perception of themselves, as well as other cultures, could be broadened through the use of multiethnic literature. An analysis of content revealed that the materials used to teach children were not multiethnic, and the few books that contained non-Caucasian characters or themes, did so in a stereotypical manner (Chall, Radwin, French, and Hall, 1979; Larrick, 1965; Reimer, 1992). The research suggested that younger students were less resistant to multiethnic literature than older students. The cognitive development of the formal operative student is more complex than the concrete operational and preoperational student (Piaget, 1952). Her dendritic structure is deeper (Jensen, 1998), and her notion of literature and education is ethnically limited. Students develop expectations of what literature should be, and as noted in the Content Analysis section, this literature was ethnically biased. So, when these students were introduced to literature that challenged

their views of the world, it was met with greater resistance by older students than by younger. This was due to the notion of schooling being more complex for the formal operational child than the preoperational child. Or, to put it in simpler terms, it is hard to teach an old dog new tricks.

Bean, Readence, and Mallette (1996) found that teachers could select literature that was multiethnic using a method outlined by James Banks. Also, as noted in the Bean, Valerio, and Readence (1999); Cheveilier and Houser (1997); Florio-Ruane and deTar (1994); and Nathenson-Mejia and Escamilla (2003) studies, preservice teachers can have their cultural schemata expanded through the use of multiethnic literature, and in doing so will be better prepared for a classroom of ethnically diverse students. All students will be better prepared for an ethnically diverse world because the use of multiethnic literature will broaden their cultural understanding, and help them to better understand the students that they will begin teaching (Bean et al., 1999; Chevailier and Houser, 1997; Florio-Ruane and deTar, 1994; and Nathenson-Mejia and Escamilla, 2003). In a survey of teachers, Carroll, Gregg, and Watts (1995) found that 99% of teachers surveyed agreed that majority students (i.e. Caucasian), could benefit from reading books about people from other races and cultures. Based on this, teachers need to be engaged in the reading and discussing of multiethnic literature, prior to their teaching. It is likely that their formal schooling did not provide them experience with multiethnic literature (Chall, Radwin, French, and Hall, 1979; Larrick, 1965; Reimer, 1992). Exposure to multiethnic literature will broaden the preservice teachers' cultural schemata, and help prepare them for cultural challenges they may encounter while in the classroom.

Preoperational students are experiencing school for the first time. Their understanding of schooling is new, and how they will come to understand school, in later stages of development, will be based on this stage. Notions of race and ethnicity are not new to children of this stage (Litcher and Johnson, 1971). Preoperational students come to school fully understanding that there are different types of people. However, their opinions of different ethnic groups are not as deeply structured. Students, ages two through seven, are able to develop a less biased opinion of others, through the introduction, and discussion, of multiethnic literature( Litcher and Johnson, 1971; Macphee, 1997; Yawkey et al., 1974). Second grade was found by Wham, Barnheart, and Cook (1996) to be the year with the greatest impact. Based on this, it is necessary that an emphasis of pre K through second-grade curriculum be multiethnic literature. The students will expand their cultural schema, through the stimuli of multiethnic literature, and will develop to concrete operative students that are willing to continue building their cultural understanding.

Students in concrete operations are learning how to read and interpret literature in a more complex fashion than preoperative students. By giving minority students text that mirror themselves, text that they most likely have had little experience with (Chall, Radwin, French, and Hall, 1979; Larrick, 1965;Reimer, 1992), they will construct complex literary knowledge (Copenhaver, 2001). The Content Analysis section revealed that students were not reading multiethnic literature, so it is feasible that the students in late elementary / early middle school have not had exposure to multiethnic literature. By exposing concrete operational students to multiethnic literature, minority students will be more engaged (Altieri, 1995; Copenhaver, 2001; Koeller, 1977; Taylor, 1997; Tyson,

1999) while majority students will learn of groups besides the monoculture (Leslie et al., 1972; Walker-Dalhouse, 1992). The concrete operational student has had more life experience than preoperational students, so they will be able to bring more outside understanding to their literary interpretations, and with the use of multiethnic literature these students can expand their cultural schemata.

Students in formal operations have had much more life experience. They are ages 11 through 16, and have been in school through two developmental stages. As noted in the Content Analysis, many formal operational students have not had literature instruction that is multiethnic (Chall, Radwin, French, and Hall 1979; Larrick, 1965; Reimer, 1992). This caused some students to, initially, be resistant of literature about ethnic groups outside of the cultural norm (Spears-Bunton, 1990). The use of multiethnic literature, to engage the students, so that they develop ethnic understanding was not as simple as in the preoperations and concrete operations. In the research of preoperational children, the students were engaged, and developed ethnic understanding, simply by reading and discussing multiethnic literature (Litcher and Johnson, 1971; Macphee, 1997; Yawkey and Blackwell 1974). Similar findings were present in the research of concrete operational students (Copenhaver, 2001; Leslie, Leslie, and Penfield, 1972; Tyson, 1999; Walker-Dalhouse, 1992). The advanced development of the formal operational student, as well as the more schooling and life experience, has caused these children to have more complex dendritic structures. To simply give these students multiethnic literature, and expect them to interpret the text differently than they have been trained to, is not feasible. Students must be given not just the literature, but must also be provided with a safe atmosphere so that they may develop a broadened sense of ethnic and cultural

understanding. The research of the Formal Operations section showed that other methods need to be used, so that students will learn about other cultures. Reader-response (Henly, 1993; Totten, 1998) and journal writing (Bean and Rigoni, 2001) are ways to engage readers, and to have them construct their own understanding of different ethnic groups. The use of these methods reflect the findings of Martinez and McGee (2000), who noted that teachers were moving toward more constructivist methods. In the case of Henly (1993), reader response is an effective method, used to teach a novel with graphic language, sex, and rape. The students of Henly's (1993) study, showed that they were mature enough to deal with a graphic novel, as well as able to learn about ethnicity other than their own.

#### Suggestions for Further Research

The majority of the research reviewed in this paper pertained to African Americans; the overwhelming majority of the professional research pertains to African Americans. Larrick's (1965) groundbreaking research, research that has spawned over 25-years of followup research, pertained to African Americans. While African Americans are an important ethnic group, and have historically been discriminated against, and were at the forefront of the Civil Rights movement, there are numerous ethnic groups in the United States. More research is needed to establish the presence of other ethnic groups in books for children.

In trying to ascertain what the ethnic content of books read by children, Chall, Radwin, French, and Hall (1979); Larrick (1965); and Reimer (1992) all had limited sample sizes. A larger sample size, which included both major and minor publishers in combination with detailed records of the books school districts' purchase, could

determine the larger picture regarding the ethnic content of literature read by students. Also, with the exception of Wan (2000), all the research pertained to how the students were engaged with the text while in school. No research was conducted on what students read outside of the classroom, so it is not clear what students read on their own. Perhaps the use of multiethnic literature could engage children in reading outside of the classroom.

Followup research was often done within the year of initial instruction. More research is needed to determine how students develop through school, and into adulthood. Did the first-grade students of the Macphee (1996) study, continue with their empathy for others as they entered concrete operations or formal operations? Did the fifth-grade students of the Walker-Dalhouse (1992) study continue their understanding of the importance of culture as they entered formal operations? Did the students of the Athanases (1998) study, continue to develop their understanding of culture as they entered adulthood? None of the research provided followup information that showed any influence on the development of the student. Also, the qualitative studies under the Teacher Analysis section, Bean, Valerio, Mallette, and Readence (1999); Cheveilier and Houser (1997); Florio-Ruane and deTar (1994); and Nathenson-Mejia and Escamilla (2003), did not have member checking. If the participants of the above mentioned studies had the opportunity to verify some of the conclusions, then the findings would have been stronger.

Wham, Barnheart, and Cook (1996) investigated a small Midwestern community, a community that was 99% Caucasian, and determined the second-grade to be the grade that showed the most positive change of attitude toward multicultural diversity.

However, the sample population was small, and it is important to note that the sample was overwhelmingly Caucasian. More research is necessary to determine if second-graders of non-Caucasian students exude similar changes in attitudes. To do so, it would be necessary to investigate communities with mixed populations and/or high numbers of non-Caucasians. Also, this study was conducted in the Midwest, and the majority of the studies reviewed were from the Midwest and the Southwest. While the Midwest and Southwest are fine locations of this fine country, more research is needed to determine if there exists any regional differences that influence student engagement with multiethnic literature.

In researching the use of reader-response and multiethnic literature, Henly (1993) and Totten (1998) found reader-response method to be an effective means of engaging students. However, the findings were weak because neither study had triangulation. Totten (1998) conducted his investigation on a single class, so triangulation would have required that a second class use the method. Henly (1993) was part of an English department that was implementing a controversial multiethnic novel into their curriculum, so she used reader-response in all five of her 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> grade English classes. She only provided data for one class, thus lacking triangulation that would have strengthened the conclusions of this her study. Also, in her study, Henly (1993) was rather vague in her conclusions, and used ambiguous terms such as "near" rather than specifically stating the conclusion. Much of the research on formal operational students was based in multiethnic literature, as well as methods used to teach. More research is necessary to see if it was methods, such as reader-response, that engaged the students or if it was the literature itself. Also, more research is needed to determine which method is

most appropriate to teach multiethnic literature, or if such a method exists. Given the movement toward more constructivist teaching, further investigation is necessary into reader-response, investigation that avoids the flaws in presentation so that a method for best practice can be established for engaging students in multiethnic literature.

### Conclusion

Chapter one examined the reasons for a review of the professional literature regarding multiethnic literature. It explained the individuals' ability to cognitively grow and examined development; it introduced multicultural education and explained how it pertained to multiethnic literature. It discussed the importance of multiethnic literature in the classroom, and noted what factors affect its' use. Chapter one also discussed the opposition to multiethnic literature, and gave the reader limitations for the literature review. Chapter two explained the development of education in the United States, the development of reading instruction in the United States, the history of reading materials used in schools, the formation of multicultural education, and the formation of multiethnic literature. Chapter three reviewed the research of multiethnic literature. The research in Chapter three was organized into five themes: Content Analysis, Teacher Analysis, Preoperations, Concrete Operations, and Formal Operations. These themes were used to answer this paper's guiding question: how the use of multiethnic literature effected the engagement of students. The research reviewed in the Content Analysis section found that a limited number of multiethnic books were published for school aged children. The research reviewed in the Teacher Analysis found that multiethnic literature can be used to prepare preservice teacher for working with ethnically diverse students. In the Preoperations section, the research suggested that all children can benefit from the use

of multiethnic literature. This was similar to the research of the Concrete Operations section. However, the research in the Formal Operations section suggested that these students will initially be more resistant to the use of multiethnic literature, but that all students stand to benefit from its' use. The research was reviewed to examine how the use of multiethnic literature effected the engagement of students. Chapter four included a summary of the findings, based on the five categories from Chapter three, implications for classroom practice, and suggestions for further research.

Based on Jensen's (1998) research, the brain is structured by the experiences of the individual. Piaget (1952) indicated that individuals develop through stages, as they progress from birth through adulthood, and that their ability to cognitively internalize information is based on their developmental stage. The world is, and is becoming, more ethnically diverse (Banks, 2002); schools have historically been culturally biased toward Anglo-Protestants, both in terms of administration and instruction. The multicultural education movement, which began during the Civil Rights movement, aims to make schooling educative for all cultural groups. Multiethnic literature is a part of multicultural education; it relates to matters of ethnicity presented through literature. The literature that students have historically read is culturally biased (Chall, Radwin, French, and Hall. 1979; Larrick, 1965; Reimer, 1992). Introducing students to multiethnic literature, helped to engage minority students, and to teach Caucasian students about non-dominant ethnic groups. The more psychologically developed the student, the more complex the lesson needs to be. Also, the more psychologically developed the student, the more resistant they will be to things that are not norm. Multiethnic literature helps to engage students in reading, writing, and thinking about ethnic and cultural issues. This

will provide stimulus, that will cause dendritic growth, that will help brains communicate ethnic and cultural understandings, as students enter a diverse world.